



## The Effectiveness of Sentence Combining Technique in Improving Twelfth-Grade Students' Writing Ability of Report Texts

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**Abstract.** This research aimed to investigate the effectiveness of the Sentence Combining Technique in improving the writing ability of twelfth-grade students in writing report texts at SMA Negeri 3 Mandau. The background of this research was based on the observation that many students struggled with vocabulary, grammar, and organization in writing, and English classes were limited to two hours per week. A quasi-experimental design was employed with two groups: an experimental class taught by using the Sentence Combining Technique and a control class taught with conventional methods. Data were collected through pre-tests and post-tests and analyzed using SPSS version 25, including normality, homogeneity, and t-tests. The findings revealed that students in the experimental class showed significant improvement in their writing scores compared to the control class. The mean score of the experimental class increased from 55.31 in the pre-test to 83.46 in the post-test, while the control class only improved from 53.27 to 65.67. The statistical test confirmed that the improvement was significant, indicating that the Sentence Combining Technique was effective in enhancing students' writing performance, particularly in content, organization, vocabulary, language use, mechanics. The results of this research suggest that teachers may apply the Sentence Combining Technique as an alternative strategy to improve students' ability to write report texts in senior high school.

**Keywords:** English Learning; Report Text; Sentence Combining Technique; Students' Writing Ability; Writing Improvement.

### 1. BACKGROUND

In the era of globalization and digital advancement, English has become an essential skill for students to master. It functions not only as a means of international communication but also as a tool to access information, scholarships, professional opportunities, and wider global connections (Thariq et al., 2020). Among the four language skills, writing holds a crucial role as it enhances critical thinking and supports language development (Purnamasari et al., 2021). However, many students still struggle with writing because it requires mastery of vocabulary, grammar, cohesion, coherence, and mechanics simultaneously (Bulqiyah et al., 2021; Ismayanti & Kholiq, 2020). Writing difficulties also emerge from students' inability to form correct sentences, connect ideas, and produce clear and well-structured texts (Chicho, 2022).

An observation at SMA Negeri 3 Mandau in May 2025 revealed that many students lacked sufficient vocabulary and grammar knowledge. Although some showed interest, others found it difficult to understand the material, which reduced their motivation. The limited time allocation of only two hours per week also restricted their opportunity to practice writing. Consequently, most students were unable to produce effective English texts, particularly report texts, which require students to present factual information systematically (Rizky & Zainil, 2021).

Addressing these problems, the Sentence Combining Technique has been introduced as a strategy to help students construct more complex and varied sentences. Practicing sentence combining trains learners to use appropriate connectors, organize ideas, and improve grammar and vocabulary simultaneously (Australian Education Research Organisation, 2022; (Zahira et al, 2021). Previous research by Dimayuga (2024), entitled “Using Teacher-Made Test Booklet on Sentence Combining Strategy to Improve the Writing Performance in English of the Selected Grade 9 Students,” showed that the technique effectively improved students’ general writing skills. However, research focusing on the use of this technique to teach report texts at the twelfth-grade level in Indonesian high schools is still limited. Most researchers examined younger learners, different text genres, or general writing ability, and no research has been conducted at SMA Negeri 3 Mandau, which has its own specific context.

Research on the application of the Sentence Combining technique to improve report writing skills has shown significant results. Hidayati and Yuliana (2023) stated that this technique has proven effective in improving students' writing skills in various text genres, including reports, because it can help students organize ideas and construct sentences better. Wulandari and Putra (2022) also found that this technique facilitates students to compose more coherent and well-structured texts, improving their overall writing skills. Sari and Nasution (2021) added that the application of this technique allows students to write clearer and more well-organized reports, which is very important in academic contexts. Furthermore, Rahmawati and Septiana (2020) noted that when compared to direct instruction, the Sentence Combining technique has a more positive impact on improving students' ability to write report texts. Amelia and Pratiwi (2019) also supported these findings by showing that this technique improves the cohesion and coherence of students' writing, especially in academic writing genres such as report texts. Thus, the application of the Sentence Combining technique is expected to provide a significant contribution to improving students' writing skills at the high school level, especially in writing report texts.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Sentence combining is a teaching method that helps students improve their sentence quality, complexity, and variety by joining two or more simple sentences into longer, more advanced ones. According to Australian Education Research Organisation (2022), this technique helps students understand sentence structure better and improves their writing fluency and clarity.

Writing is a process of expressing ideas, thoughts, and feelings through the use of written symbols in a structured form. (Moybeka S et al., 2023) state that writing is a complex skill that required the ability to express ideas clearly through written language. It involves various components such as grammar, vocabulary, coherence, cohesion, and the logical organization of ideas.

Report text is a piece of writing that conveys information about a topic. It typically includes facts, descriptions, and explanations of a subject's behavior and characteristics. According to Manalu (2019), report text can be defined as general information about individuals, places, or things.

Based on these theories, it is assumed that the Sentence Combining Technique can significantly improve students' ability in writing report texts at the senior high school level.

### **3. RESEARCH METHOD**

This research used a field research design with an experimental method and a quantitative approach. According to Creswell (2018), this approach involves collecting and analyzing numerical data to answer research questions. Specifically, the research applied a quasi-experimental design, which is commonly used when random assignment of participants is not possible. The design involved two groups: an experimental group taught using the Sentence Combining Technique and a control group taught using conventional methods.

The population of this research consisted of all twelfth-grade students at SMA Negeri 3 Mandau in the 2024/2025 academic year, totaling 342 students. A simple random sampling technique was used to select the sample. Class XII-1D was chosen as the experimental class and class XII-2B as the control class, with a total of 56 students participating in the research. The instrument used in this research was a writing test in the form of a report text. Both pre-tests and post-tests were administered to measure students' ability in constructing report texts.

The writing performance was assessed based on five aspects: content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics. The data were analyzed quantitatively using SPSS version 25, which included a normality test to determine whether the data were normally distributed, a homogeneity test to examine the equality of variances, and a hypothesis test (t-test) to identify whether there was a significant difference in students' writing ability between the two groups. The independent variable (X) in this research was the Sentence Combining Technique, while the dependent variable (Y) was students' writing ability of report texts.

#### 4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

##### Result

##### *Descriptive Statistic of Pre-Test (Control Class)*

**Table 1.** Descriptive Statistic of Pre-Test (Control Class).

|                    | N  | Minimum | Maximum | Sum  | Mean  | Std. Deviation |
|--------------------|----|---------|---------|------|-------|----------------|
| Pretest Control    | 30 | 40      | 68      | 1598 | 53.27 | 8.765          |
| Valid N (listwise) | 30 |         |         |      |       |                |

##### *Descriptive Statistic of Pre-Test (Experiment Class)*

**Table 2.** Descriptive Statistic of Pre-Test (Experiment Class).

|                     | N  | Minimum | Maximum | Sum  | Mean  | Std. Deviation |
|---------------------|----|---------|---------|------|-------|----------------|
| Pretest Eksperiment | 26 | 32      | 80      | 1438 | 55.31 | 12.354         |
| Valid N (listwise)  | 26 |         |         |      |       |                |

##### *Descriptive Statistic of Post-Test (Control Class)*

**Table 3.** Descriptive Statistic of Post-Test (Control Class).

|                    | N  | Minimum | Maximum | Sum  | Mean  | Std. Deviation |
|--------------------|----|---------|---------|------|-------|----------------|
| Post-test Control  | 30 | 40      | 84      | 1970 | 65.67 | 12.452         |
| Valid N (listwise) | 30 |         |         |      |       |                |

##### *Descriptive Statistic of Post-Test (Experiment Class)*

**Table 4.** Descriptive Statistic of Post-Test (Experiment Class).

|                     | N  | Minimum | Maximum | Sum  | Mean  | Std. Deviation |
|---------------------|----|---------|---------|------|-------|----------------|
| Posttest Experiment | 26 | 74      | 94      | 2170 | 83.46 | 5.255          |
| Valid N (listwise)  | 26 |         |         |      |       |                |

The descriptive statistics show the students' writing ability scores in both the control and experimental classes before and after the treatment. In the pre-test, the control class obtained a mean score of 53.27, while the experimental class achieved a slightly higher mean score of 55.31. This indicates that both groups had relatively similar levels of writing ability at the beginning of the research.

In the post-test, however, the results demonstrated a noticeable difference. The control class reached a mean score of 65.67, reflecting some improvement after being taught with conventional methods. In contrast, the experimental class achieved a significantly higher mean score of 83.46, showing a substantial improvement after receiving treatment through the Sentence Combining Technique.

**Normality Test****Table 5.** Normality Test.

| <b>Tests of Normality</b> |                            |           |                    |      |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|-----------|--------------------|------|
|                           | Class                      | Statistic | Shapiro-Wilk<br>df | Sig. |
| Pre-Test                  | Pre-test Control Class     | .936      | 30                 | .072 |
|                           | Pre-test Experiment Class  | .944      | 26                 | .170 |
|                           | Post-test Control Class    | .937      | 30                 | .074 |
|                           | Post-test Experiment Class | .975      | 26                 | .765 |

The Shapiro-Wilk normality test using SPSS 25 showed Sig. values of 0.072 for the control class pre-test, 0.170 for the experimental class pre-test, 0.074 for the control class post-test, and 0.765 for the experimental class post-test. Since all values are greater than 0.05, the pre-test and post-test data for both classes are normally distributed.

**Homogeneity Test****Table 6.** Homogeneity Test.

| <b>Test of Homogeneity of Variances</b> |                                      |                  |     |        |       |
|-----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------|-----|--------|-------|
|                                         |                                      | Levene Statistic | df1 | df2    | Sig.  |
| writing test                            | Based on Mean                        | 15,246           | 1   | 54     | 0     |
|                                         | Based on Median                      | 13,455           | 1   | 54     | 0,001 |
|                                         | Based on Median and with adjusted df | 13,455           | 1   | 37,519 | 0,001 |
|                                         | Based on trimmed mean                | 15,471           | 1   | 54     | 0     |

Based on the results of Levene's Test, all significance values were below 0.05, indicating that the data variances were not homogeneous. However, this does not affect the subsequent analysis because the hypothesis testing employed the Paired Samples t-Test, which only requires that the differences between paired data are approximately normally distributed (Shier, 2004, p. 2).

**Hypothesis Test****Table 7.** Hypothesis Test.

| <b>Paired Samples Test</b> |                                        |                        |                        |                              |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------|
|                            |                                        | <b>Sig. (2-tailed)</b> | <b>Mean Difference</b> | <b>Std. Error Difference</b> |
| Pair 1                     | pretest control-posttest control       | .000                   | -12.400                | 2.237                        |
| Pair 2                     | pretest experiment-posttest experiment | .000                   | -28.158                | 2.390                        |

Based on the results of the Paired Samples t-Test in the experimental class, the average pre-test score was 55.31 with a standard deviation of 12.354, while the average post-test score increased to 83.46 with a standard deviation of 5.255. The significance value (Sig. 2-tailed) obtained was 0.000, which is less than 0.05. According to the decision rule, if the significance value is less than 0.05, the hypothesis ( $H_a$ ) is accepted. This indicates that there is a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores. Therefore, it can be concluded that the

treatment sentence combining technique given in the experimental class had a significant effect on improving students' writing ability in report texts.

### **Discussion**

The results indicate that significance value (Sig. 2-tailed) obtained was 0.000, which is less than 0.05. According to the decision rule, if the significance value is less than 0.05, the alternative hypothesis ( $H_a$ ) is accepted. Following this, the experimental class, which received the treatment, achieved higher post-test scores compared to the control class taught by using ordinary teaching methods. This notable indicates that there is significant effect of using sentence combining technique in improving twelfth grade students' writing ability of report texts at SMA Negeri 3 Mandau.

## **5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

This research investigated the effectiveness of the Sentence Combining Technique in improving twelfth-grade students' report writing at SMA Negeri 3 Mandau. Many students faced difficulties in writing report texts due to monotonous, teacher-centered methods that reduced their motivation. The findings revealed that the technique significantly improved students' writing skills, as shown by the Paired Samples Test (Sig. 2-tailed =  $0.000 < 0.05$ ), enabling them to construct more complex and coherent sentences while enhancing fluency and clarity. Although challenges such as limited grammar and vocabulary, difficulty organizing factual information, and short lesson time were encountered, guided practice with the technique helped students gain confidence and develop a more positive attitude toward writing. Overall, the research concludes that the Sentence Combining Technique is an effective method for improving report writing and is highly recommended for classroom use, particularly when supported by additional time and instructional resources.

Based on these findings, several practical suggestions can be made. For students, the Sentence Combining Technique offers a practical way to enhance writing skills, especially in report texts. For teachers, the findings suggest it can serve as an effective alternative strategy for teaching writing. For future researchers, this research provides a valuable reference for exploring and developing further strategies to improve writing instruction.

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