

The Investigation on the English Clause Competences by the University Students in Indonesia

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Abstract—There are three kinds of clauses that are discussed in this study; they are nominal, relative, and adverbial clauses, and then each of these clauses has its own divisions. The article was oriented to the results about the university students' competences in these concerns. The study aimed to describe the results of the objective test that had been done by the students. The research samples consisted of 80 persons. The data were analyzed by using a mean percentage. The findings showed that the six semester students had got 12.50% of nominal clauses, 13.75% of relative clauses, and 38.34% of adverbial clauses, so that the mean percentage of the students' competences was 21.53%. It was suggested that all divisions of clauses be discussed in syntax class by showing more examples to the main problems faced by the students, so that they were able to differentiate among the clauses.

Keywords—*clause competence; english clauses*

I. INTRODUCTION

The English clauses are broadly divided into independent and dependent clauses. This article focuses on discussing dependent clauses which consist of nominal, relative, and adverbial clauses [1]. Each of these clauses has parts.

Nominal clauses have the parts of the finite and non-finite clauses and relative clauses have the form of the relative pronoun which is basically determined by personal or non-personal factor and the form which is determined by syntactic function within the relative clause. Adverbial clauses consist of conditional clause, comparison clause, contrast clause, reason clause, purpose clause, and result clause. In this article, all these clauses are investigated as the aspects of the students' competences. Besides, the problematic issues at the level of the English clauses are also included as the parts of discussion.

In a clause construction, the phrases have definite functions that should be used correctly. The functions of phrases are very crucial to fill in the subject (S), predicate (P), object (O), complement (C), and Adjunct (A). Thus, the phrases and their functions should be mastered by the students in learning English. The previous study found that the phrase is significantly important to analyze the parts of a clause by using machine translation [2].

The students' competence of English syntax can assist them to write essays. The problems to organize ideas in writing or

even in speaking can be overcome because this sort of competence functions as a guide to put the words in correct positions. Therefore, syntactic errors that are found in the students' paragraphs can be made use of the developments of instructional materials from the views of related subjects [3].

A phrase is a word or a group of words that form a particular meaning grammatically. The phrase may identify a referent, indicate the action, modify, or qualify grammatical elements in sentences [4]. Words are organized into phrases, groupings of words that are clumped as a unit and a sentence can be modeled as a set of phrases [5]. Hence, the areas of syntax cope with phrases and clauses. Syntax is the one dealing with the way in which words are put together to express thoughts or ideas sensibly [6]. Syntax establishes the coordinated system of form and meaning. Any thought in the language can be expressed in different forms. Sometimes two semantic descriptions in a sentence appear: real or concrete and idiomatic or figurative [7].

The sentence 'Ninik wishes that she could do as we told her' contains a finite clause; that is 'that she could do as we told her.' The specific term of this clause is a that-clause. The function of 'that' in this clause is a conjunction. The that-clause functions as an object; we can ask a question, such as 'What does Ninik wish?' Then, the sentence 'The book used in this subject is very helpful' contains a non-finite clause; that is 'used in this subject.' The specific term of this non-finite clause is a past participle clause. The function of this clause is a post modifier of a noun phrase.

The other two types are relative clauses and adverbial clauses. The relative clauses are determined by a personal or non-personal factor or by syntactic function. The relative clause which is determined by a personal or non-personal factor may be exemplified in a sentence 'Indonesian is a national language which is spoken by the Indonesian people.' The clause 'which is spoken by the Indonesian people' is the so-called a relative clause' which is determined by a non-personal factor. The independent clause here is 'Indonesian is a national language.' In the sentence 'Novita whose ring was lost a few seconds ago looks very sad now' contains a relative clause which is determined by a syntactic function; i.e. whose ring was lost a few seconds ago. The sentence 'Novita looks very sad now' is also called an independent clause.

The next is concerned with the adverbial clauses. These clauses have six divisions; they are conditional clause, comparison clause, contrast clause, reason clause, purpose clause, and result clause. The example of conditional clause contains in this sentence ‘If you like my short stories, I shall tell you more.’ The clause ‘If you like my short stories’ is a conditional clause or an if-clause.’ Another division of adverbial clauses is a comparative clause. In a sentence ‘Of course, you are younger than I am’ contains a comparative clause; that is ‘than I am.’ Another one is a contrast clause which is indicated by the use of a subordinating conjunction ‘even though.’ The example of this clause can be seen in ‘She understands Chinese a little, even though she has learned a lot.’ The clause ‘even though she has learned a lot’ is a contrastive clause.

The language is considered by a linguist as form, namely sounds or letters and their combinations into larger units, such as words, sentences, and so forth. This is the problem of syntax in a language form [8 The sentence ‘Syam did not come to your birthday party last Sunday because he went to his village’ contains a clause which is the so-called a reason clause.’ This clause division is indicated by the use of conjunction ‘because.’ In a sentence ‘He has studied smartly, so that he can succeed in his test’ contains a purpose clause, namely ‘so that he can succeed in his test.’ The conjunction ‘so that’ is a subordinating one which is used to combine the independent clause ‘He has studied smartly’ with another clause. The last dependent clause which is discussed here is a result clause. The example of this clause is found in a sentence ‘They work so hard that they can finish their work soon.’ A part of the sentence ‘so hard that they can finish their work soon’ is a result clause.

II. METHOD AND MATERIALS

The research issues of the learning products dealt with the university students’ competences of the English clause level. The research variables were the types of dependent clauses with their own divisions as their indicators. The instrument consisted of ten items of the objective test. The aim of test was to gather the data about students’ competences of those clause divisions. The populations were the sixth semester students of English study program of Faculty of Letters. The research samples consisted of 80 persons who had not got the syntactic materials.

In a competence test, the test participants were instructed to choose the correct division of each underlined constituent and circle its number provided in brackets. The correct and incorrect options of the test results had been done through a tally account, and then they were counted, so that the quantity of data was found. Further, the data were put as a table in order to see the organization of data. The soft data that had been prepared were analyzed by using a mean score percentage. The results of analysis were classified and interpreted for gaining the research statements.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The results of this study include both the students’ competence of the English clauses and their problematic issues.

These two have been included in Table 1 and Table 2, respectively.

TABLE I. STUDENT COMPETENCY AT THE ENGLISH CLAUSE LEVEL

No	Types	Quantity	Score	Percentage (%)
1	Nominal Clauses	10	1.25	12.50
	1.1 finite clause	13	1.63	16.25
	1.2 non-finite clause	7	0.88	8.75
2	Relative Clauses	11	1.38	13.75
	2.1 by personal or non-personal factor	17	2.13	21.25
	2.2 by syntactic function	5	0.63	6.25
3	Adverbial Clauses	30.67	3.83	38.34
	3.1 conditional clause	47	5.88	58.75
	3.2 comparison clause	53	6.63	66.25
	3.3 contrast clause	31	3.88	38.75
	3.4 reason clause	24	3.00	30.00
	3.5 purpose clause	2	0.25	2.50
	3.6 result clause	27	3.38	33.75
Total		51.67	6.46	64.59
Mean		17.22	2.15	21.53

Table 1 contains the students’ competencies regarding English clauses, namely nominal clauses, relative clauses, and adverbial clauses. The results of competencies achieved by the 6th semester students are 12.50% for nominal clauses, 13.75% for relative clauses, and 38.34% for adverbial clauses, so the average percentage achieved is 21.53%. The smallest part of the adverbial clauses competencies is the purposive clause (2.50%), while the other parts exceed the existing parts of the nominal and adverbial clauses. The greatest competence achieved is a comparison clause (66.25%). Then, greater competence than the others is the conditional clause (58.75%).

TABLE II. PERCENTAGE OF PROBLEMATIC ISSUES AT THE ENGLISH CLAUSE LEVEL

No	Types	Key (K)	Incorrect Options (Q)			
			1.1	1.2	2.1	2.2
1	Nominal Clauses	12.50				
	1.1 finite clause	16.25	K	2.50	18.75	1.00
	1.2 non-finite clause	8.75	35.00	K	7.50	0
2	Relative Clauses	13.75				
	2.1 by personal or non-personal factor	21.25	22.50	33.75	K	7.50
	2.2 by syntactic function	6.25	10.00	12.50	40.00	K
3	Adverbial Clauses	38.34				
	3.1 conditional clause	58.75	12.50	8.75	2.50	2.50
	3.2 comparison clause	66.25	2.50	6.25	7.50	2.50
	3.3 contrast clause	38.75	22.50	12.50	7.50	7.50
	3.4 reason clause	30.00	27.50	5.00	13.75	2.50
	3.5 purpose clause	2.50	8.75	2.50	3.75	10.00
	3.6 result clause	33.75	2.50	5.00	16.25	10.00

TABLE III. PERCENTAGE OF PROBLEMATIC ISSUES AT THE ENGLISH CLAUSE LEVEL

No.	Types	Key (K)	3.1	3.2	3.3
1	Nominal Clauses	12.50			
	1.1 finite clause	16.25	12.50	1.25	3.75
	1.2 non-finite clause	8.75	2.50	10.00	7.50
2	Relative Clauses	13.75			
	2.1 by personal or non-personal factor	21.25	5.50	0	1.25
	2.2 by syntactic function	6.25	23.75	2.50	1.25
3	Adverbial Clauses	38.34			
	3.1 conditional clause	58.75	K	11.25	0
	3.2 comparison clause	66.25	1.25	K	6.25
	3.3 contrast clause	38.75	3.75	1.25	K
	3.4 reason clause	30.00	15.00	1.25	1.25
	3.5 purpose clause	2.50	6.25	1.25	5.00
	3.6 result clause	33.75	2.50	2.50	3.75

TABLE IV. PERCENTAGE OF PROBLEMATIC ISSUES AT THE ENGLISH CLAUSE LEVEL

No.	Types	Key (K)	3.4	3.5	3.6
1	Nominal Clauses	12.50			
	1.1 finite clause	16.25	22.50	7.50	0
	1.2 non-finite clause	8.75	0	23.75	5.50
2	Relative Clauses	13.75			
	2.1 by personal or non-personal factor	21.25	2.50	0	5.00
	2.2 by syntactic function	6.25	2.50	1.25	0
3	Adverbial Clauses	38.34			
	3.1 conditional clause	58.75	3.75	0	0
	3.2 comparison clause	66.25	0	0	7.50
	3.3 contrast clause	38.75	1.25	0	5.00
	3.4 reason clause	30.00	K	0	3.75
	3.5 purpose clause	2.50	8.75	K	51.25
	3.6 result clause	33.75	21.25	2.50	K

The students' competences in Table 2 indicate that the students feel confused to differentiate between finite clause and non-finite clause, the relative clause determined by personnel and non-personnel factors and the relative clause determined by syntactic function factors, and among the six adverbial clauses. The students fail to recognize the finite clause (83.75%), non-finite clause (91.25%), relative clause by personnel and non-personnel factors (78.75%), and relative clause by syntactic function factors (93.75%). And, the most problematic issue that the students have is to determine the purpose clause; their failure is 97.50%. As for examples, the students have identified the reason clause (22.50%) for finite clause, the finite clause (35.00%) for non-finite clause, the purpose clause (51.25%) for result clause, and the contrast clause (22.50%) for finite clause.

The description above explains that the students are still confused with one type with the other types of clauses. Thus, it is necessary to explain the similarities and differences that each

type has, so that one type with the other types can be well recognized. The implication of these statements suggests that those students be trained intensively to acquire morphological and syntactic categories with their related features, so that they will be able to use these categories with their features in their interactive utterances [8].

IV. CONCLUSION

The English clauses discussed in this article are concerned with dependent clauses; they are nominal, relative, and adverbial clauses. Each of these has its own divisions. In this article, all these clauses are investigated from the aspects of the students' competences and their problematic issues. The research results reveal that the students' competences of relative clauses are greater than the nominal clauses (13.75% > 12.50%), the greatest percentage of competences is the adverbial clauses (38.34%). The results also reveal that the students get the problematic issues to differentiate among the types of clauses. They fail to recognize the types of clauses from the others. The research recommended that the lecturers show the analyses of clauses to the students in terms of phrases, so that the students know the definite functions of all phrases in clause constructions.

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