

# An Analysis of Syntactic Structures and Error on the Relative Clause as Found in Students' Academic Writing at the Sixth Semester Students of English Department

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study is to analyze syntactic structures on the relative clause and errors in writing relative clause. The type of research used is descriptive qualitative. The population of this research was the sixth semester students of the English Department consisting of 143 students. The researcher took 20% population. The sample was selected through random sampling techniques and the researchers took 28 samples. The data were collected using documentation. The result shows that there were many relative clauses and errors in writing the relative clause. There are 24 relative clauses in class A, 37 relative clauses in class B, 20 relative clauses in class C and 27 relative clauses in class D that represented by parsing diagram. Students also make errors in writing relative clauses where there are 4 types of errors made by students in a relative clause. The types of errors are omission error, addition error, regularization error, and misordering. The students made 39 omission errors, 1 addition error, 21 regularization errors and 8 misordering. Thus, it can be concluded that there are 108 relative clauses that analyzed by parsing diagram and the total errors who made by students of the sixth semester of the English Department of IAIN Bukittinggi is 69 errors in relative clause. Based on David P. Harris theory, 69 is fair level so that students' understanding of the relative clause is fair.

**Keywords:** syntactic structures, relative clause, error

## Introduction

Syntax is a study that discusses the structure of a sentence where there are several components that must be understood. Syntax makes phrases and sentences an object of analysis. According to Yule, "when we concentrate on the structure and ordering of components within a sentence, we are studying the syntax of a language" (2006:86). It means that syntax is one of the branches of linguistics that studies rules that determine how words form phrases and phrases form sentences. The sentences can be analyzed by representation of syntactic structures. Representation of syntactic structures can be presented in three ways: statements of the correct sequence of the parts of speech (syntactic categories), by series of transformational rules and by parsing diagrams. Syntactic categories are indefinable sentences are only those components that follow the words and do not undergo any change or transformation. Transformational rule is the sentence has begun to be determined syntactic structure simply by issuing two elements of the sentence. The two main elements are NP and VP. Parsing diagrams are the parts of a sentence are shown in a graphical way that emphasizes the hierarchical relationships between the components of a sentence (Tom, 2018). The three representation of syntactic structures above can be used to analyze the components of the sentence.

There are several types of sentences and clauses that can be analyzed like simple sentences, compound sentences, complex sentences, noun clauses, relative clauses, etc. Alice and Ann (1999:209) stated that relative clauses are also called adjective clause. Among them, the researchers choose the relative clause (adjective clause) to be analyzed. Philips (2001:221) defines relative clause as an adjective clause in his Longman Complete Course for the TOEFL. Philips (2001:221) said that adjective clause is clause that describes a noun. Because the clause is an adjective, it is positioned directly after the noun that it describes (Rosa, Muryanti, Mulia, & Jaya, 2008). It is clear that the clause functions to explain the noun in front of it either as a subject or as an object. Penny and Tim ELC said, "usually it was initiated by relative pronoun or relative adverb such as: who, whom, whose, which, where, when, why, and that" (2016:659). These pronouns function at the position of the noun in clause described.

Relative clause is an important part of learning English. To understand the relative clause requires a high comprehension because it includes material that is quite difficult because of the relative clause

contained in a complex sentence that has one independent clause with at least one dependent clause. Alice and Ann stated, "relative clauses are either restrictive (necessary) or nonrestrictive (unnecessary)"(1999:210). Restrictive clause (essential/defining relative clause) is a clause added in a sentence, necessary in that sentence because it affects the meaning that exists in the sentence and is not accompanied by a comma. While Non-restrictive clause (non-essential/non-defining relative clause) is a clause added in a sentence but not required, the presence of a non-restrictive clause in a sentence is indicated by a comma.

Based on interview that researcher did with the lecturer and some of the sixth semester English students from the English students of State Islamic Institute Bukittinggi in academic year 2015/2016, the researcher found some problems about the students' writing ability on relative clause. The first, the lecturer said that the ability of students about syntactic structures was at the middle level and many of them were confused in learning one of the materials in the linguistic introduction. In the learning process, only 30% from 77 students that truly understand syntactic structures in making sentences. The main factor that causes them difficulties in learning syntactic structures is that students are too fixated on sentence patterns, lazy in learning formula (constituents in the sentence) and lack of mastery of grammar.

The second, they were difficult to understand the usage of relative pronouns, so they are wrong in writing because they did not know what relative pronoun that will be used in the sentences, many of them incorrectly used relative pronouns primarily to use which, that, whom, whose, and who. It was supported by the lecturer, the lecturer said that mistakes that are often made by students in making the sentence relative clause are they cannot distinguish the usefulness of each of these relative pronouns (who, which, whose, that, where, and whom).

Based on problem above, this study was focused on the analysis of syntactic structures and error in relative clause. The relative clause is the topic of discussion in this study because it can be found in many aspect of language either in written or oral communication. Beside, some sixth semester students are still confused about the syntactic structure and relative clause. In this case they should understand how to make syntactic structure and relative clause.

## **Method**

In designing this research, the researcher uses descriptive qualitative research. Descriptive research is the culmination of the entire research because it has many branches that concern natural phenomena or man-made either in the form of numbers or not. Dantes (2012:51) states that descriptive research is a study that seeks to describe a phenomenon or event systematically as it is. Descriptive research is done to obtain information about the current state. The purpose of the research is to describe the phenomenon existing in the field to get the information. Yusuf (2014:328) adds that researchers in qualitative research try to understand the meaning of an event by trying to interact with people in the situation or phenomenon. It means the researcher must communicate with the informants either directly or indirectly.

Based on explanation above, the researcher used descriptive qualitative method. Moreover, the goal of the research is to analyze syntactic structure and error in relative clause at the sixth semester of English Department of IAIN Bukittinggi at the academic year 2015/2016.

## **Participants / Subject / Population and Sample**

In collected the data, the researcher take sixth semester students of English Department of IAIN Bukittinggi as informant. The informant is chosen in order to take information of the research. The informant must be people who have desired information and are likely willing to give it. The informants of this research are the sixth semester students of English Department of IAIN Bukittinggi. There are four classes as being presented in the table below.

Table 1. The Total Number of Sixth Semester Students

No	class	Total number of students
1	a	35
2	B	31
3	C	39
4	D	38
<b>Total</b>		143

There are four classes of the sixth semester as seen in the table. Class A comprises of thirty five students, class B has thirty one students, class C has thirty nine students and class D has thirty eight students.

So, total number of the students is one hundred and forty three students. However, the researchers did not take all of the population as the source of the research because the total number of students more than one hundred.

The researcher uses random sampling based on Arikunto's statement (2013:174); purposive sampling technique is a technique which is used by the researcher with the consideration. It means that the taking of sample members from the population based on competence of the members. Arikunto (2013:120) also states that if the research has less from one hundred respondents, it will take all of the respondents as the sample. On the other hand, if the research has more than one hundred respondents, 10% to 25% can be taken as the sample by the researcher. The researcher will take 20% respondents. So, there are will be 28 students as informants. Thus, the researcher analyzed background of proposal seven samples in each class. The informants that would be chosen by the researcher is the sixth semester English Department of IAIN Bukittinggi.

### **Instruments**

Arikunto (1998:120) states that instrument is the tool of the research which is used by the researcher for doing the research. The instrument that is going to be used in this research is documentation. Documentation is a technique of data collection by using document. According to Nana (2005:221), documentation is a technique of collecting data to collect and analyze the document, written document, image and electronics. In this research, the researcher used the written document. Moreover, Arikunto (1998:236) states, documentation is search the data about circumstances or variable which is alike note, transcripts, books, newspaper, magazine, precast, meeting noses, ledger, diaries and etc. Based on the explanation above, the researcher would analyze the students' writing ability in relative clause by using documentation technique. The purpose of documentation is to know syntactic structures on the relative clause and error do by the students in relative clause. Documentation was used by researcher to find out syntactic structures on the relative clause and error do by students in relative clause.

### **Data Analysis**

In a research, analyzing the data becomes important process in order to get the valid data. Sugiyono (2016:207) explain that data analysis is an activity after data from all respondents or other data sources collected. While Yusuf (2014) argues that data analysis is one of the steps in research activities that determine the accuracy and validity of research results. In this research, the researcher analyzed the students' assignment documentation by using the procedures of error analysis. In analyzing the data the researcher consult it with the expert. In analyzing the data the researcher used the procedures proposed by Andrew Radford (1981), Rod Ellis (1997) and Harris (1969).

**Andrew Radford →** used to analyze syntactic structures on the relative clause.

Set of sentence formation (categorical) rules :

1. S → NP – Aux/AUX – VP
2. VP → V – (NP) – (ADVP/Adv) – PP – AP – VERB
3. PP → P – NP
4. NP → DET (Art/adj) – N – Pro – PN – QP
5. AUX → MODAL – PROG
- 6 ADVP → DEG – Adv
7. AP → DEG – A
8. VERB → AUX – V

This list of symbols and abbreviations is summarized below.

1. S → clause/sentence
2. NP → noun phrase
3. Aux/AUX → auxiliary
4. VP → verb phrase
5. V → verb
6. PP → prepositional phrase
7. Adv → adverb
8. P → preposition
9. DET → determiner
10. Art → article
11. Adj → adjective
12. Pro → pronoun

13. PN → proper noun
14. AP → adjectival phrase
15. QP → quantifier phrase
16. PROG → progressive auxiliary
17. ADVP → adverbial phrase
18. DEG → degree adverb

**Rod Ellis** → used to analyze error on relative clause.

1. Identifying errors In identifying errors, the researcher would compare the sentences students' produce with what seem to be the normal or "correct" sentences in the target language which correspond with them.
2. Describing errors
3. There are two ways in describing errors that are classify errors into grammatical categories or identify general ways in which the students' utterances differ from the reconstructed target-language utterance.
4. Explaining errors  
Explaining the errors made by students. In explaining the errors, the researcher would explain all of the errors made by students. It will be explained in what types of error and the reason why it is error.
5. Error evaluation  
In this process, the researcher concludes the most errors made by students. By the concluding the errors, perhaps it would be lesson for the students in what aspect that they are lack.

Then to determine the ability of students in a relative clause, the researcher analyze by these following steps:

1. Arrange the students' error in the table and found the level achievement of each student based on the table of **Harris**.

Table 2. The Measurement of the Students Achievement

Criteria of Mastery	Level of Achievement
90 – 100	Excellent
80 – 89	Very good
70 – 79	Good
60 – 69	Fair
50 – 59	Poor
0 – 49	Very poor

2. The researcher describe the detail error of each students and each categories errors into the table.
3. The total errors of each category arranged into the table.
4. The researcher conclude the result of the students' errors

This procedures was used to know syntactic structure in many language especially English language and error in relative clause. The researcher will use this rule to analyze syntactic structure in relative clause and error in relative clause that obtained from students' academic writing (document analysis) that is background of proposal academic year 2015/2016.

## Results and Discussion

Generally, the researcher could say that there were 24 relative clause in class A, 37 relative clause in class B, 20 relative clause in class C and 27 relative clause in class D that analyzed by using parsing diagram. The students also make error in relative clause. Class A have 4 students make omission error, 1 student make addition error, 3 students make regularization error, and 4 students make misordering. Class B have 6 students make omission error, no one make addition error, 4 students make regularization error, and 1 student make misordering. Class C have 5 students make omission error, no one make addition error, 3 students make regularization error, and 1 student make misordering. Class D have 5 students make omission error, no one make addition error, 3 students make regularization error and 1 student make misordering. The description can be seen in the following diagram:

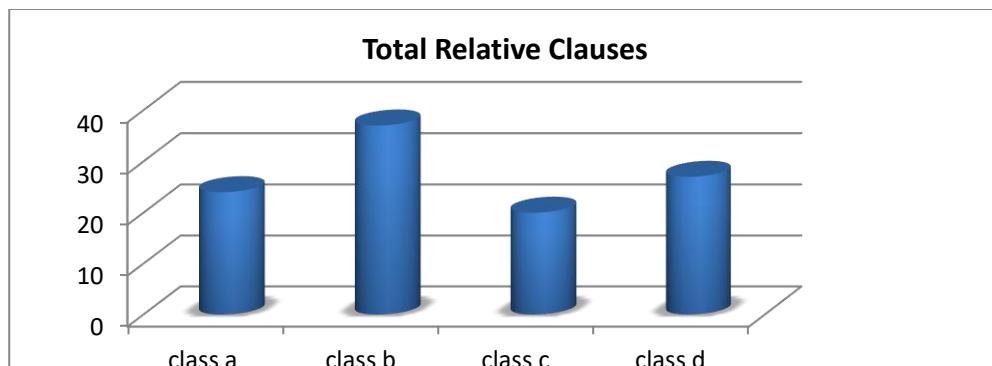


Figure 1. Total Relative Clauses in Each Class

### **Total Students who Have Errors in Using Relative Pronoun in Relative Clause**

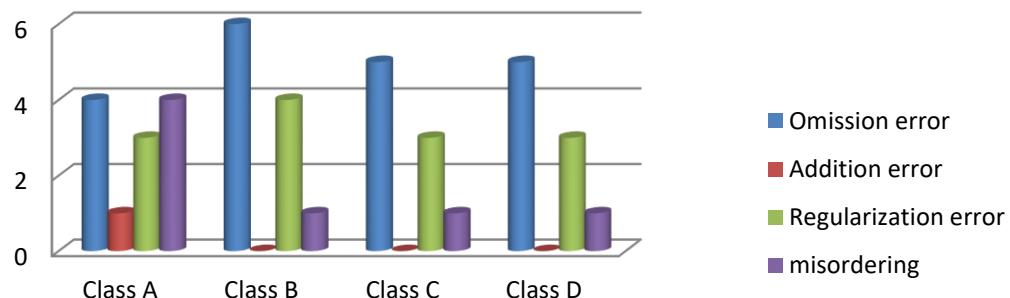


Figure 2. Total Students Have Errors in Using Relative Pronoun in Relative Clause

Table 3. Students Errors in Relative Clause (relative pronouns category)

No	Name	Relative Pronouns							Total
		Who	Whom	Whose	Which	That	Where	When	
1	AR	That (miso)	-	-	That (Reg)	That (omis)	-	-	5
		Who (omis)				That (omis)			
2	FR	Whom (Reg)	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
		Whom (Reg)							
3	HD	-	-	-	-	That (omis)	-	-	2
						That (omis)			
4	HY	Whose (miso)	-	-	-	Whom (miso)	-	-	2
						Whom (miso)			
5	SA	-	-	-	That (Reg)	-	-	-	3
					Which				

							(Add)				
							That (Reg)				
6	PN	-	-	-	-	-	That (omis)	-	-	-	2

							That (omis)				
--	--	--	--	--	--	--	----------------	--	--	--	--

Table 3. Cont

							That				4
7	DTR	Who (omis)	-	-	-	-	That (omis)	-	-	-	
		Who (omis)									
		Whose (miso)									
8	MRR	-	-	-	-	-	That (omis)	-	-	-	3
							That (omis)				
							That (omis)				
9	FR	Whom (Reg)	-	-	That	That	-	-	-	-	5
					(Reg)	(omis)					
							That (omis)				
10	SJ	Whom (Reg)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
11	LAS	-	-	-	-	-	That	-	-	-	1
							(omis)				
12	NL	-	-	-	Which	That	-	-	-	-	4
					(omiss)	(omis)					
							That (Reg)				
							That (Reg)				
13	MA	-	Who	-	That	That	-	-	-	-	5
			(Reg)		(Reg)	(omis)					
							That (Reg)				
							Which				
14	HM	-	-	-	-	-	That	That	-	-	3
							(omis)	(miso)			

										That (omis)
15	SM	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
16	YY	-	-	-	Which (omis)	That (omis)	-	-	-	2
17	MA	-	-	-	That (Reg)	-	-	-	-	2
										That (Reg)

Table 3. Cont

18	PLR	-	-	-	-	That (Reg)	Which (miso)	-	-	3
19	DS	-	-	-	-	That (omis)	-	-	-	2
20	MRH	-	-	-	That (Reg)	That (omis)	-	-	-	4
						That (Reg)				
21	TR	-	-	-	-	That (omis)	-	-	-	2
22	SR	-	Whom (omis)	-	-	That (omis)	-	-	-	2
23	RM	-	-	-	-	That (omis)	-	-	-	4
						That (omis)				
24	NS	-	-	-	That (Reg)	-	-	-	-	1
25	RFY	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
26	NA	-	-	-	That (Reg)	That (omis)	-	-	-	2
27	ASA	-	-	-	-	That	-	-	-	1

								(omis)	
28	H	Whom	-	-	-	That	-	-	2
		(Reg)				(omis)			
Total		11	2	0	19	35	2	0	<b>69</b>

*Inf:*

- Omis : omission error
- Add : addition error
- Reg : regularization error
- Miso : misordering
- 

Table 4. Total Students Errors in Relative Clause (types of error)

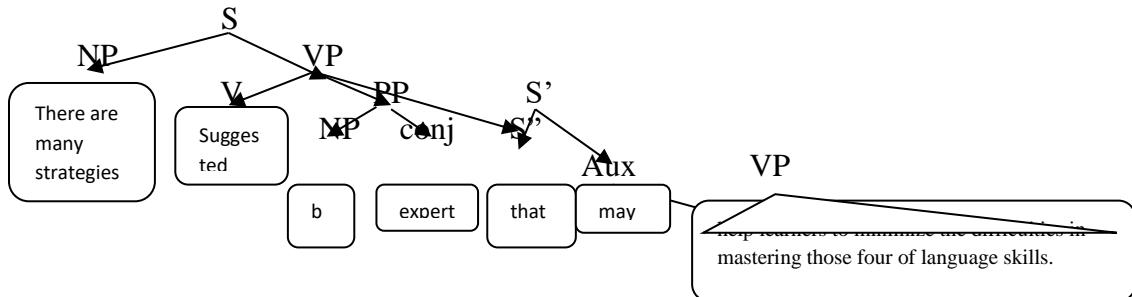
No	Name	Omission Error	Addition Error	Regularization Error	Misordering	Total Errors
1	AR	3	0	1	1	5
2	FR	0	0	1	1	2
3	HD	2	0	0	0	2
4	HY	0	0	0	2	2
5	SA	0	1	2	0	3
6	PN	2	0	0	0	2
7	DTR	3	0	0	1	4
8	MRR	3	0	0	0	3
9	FR	3	0	2	0	5
10	SJ	0	0	1	0	1
11	LAS	1	0	0	0	1
12	NL	2	0	2	0	4
13	MA	2	0	3	0	5
14	HM	2	0	0	1	3
15	SM	0	0	0	0	0
16	YY	2	0	0	0	2
17	MA	0	0	2	0	2
18	PLR	1	0	1	1	3
19	DS	2	0	0	0	2
20	MRH	1	0	3	0	4
21	TR	2	0	0	0	2
22	SR	2	0	0	0	2
23	RM	3	0	0	1	4
24	NS	0	0	1	0	1
25	RFY	0	0	0	0	0
26	NA	1	0	1	0	2
27	ASA	1	0	0	0	1
28	H	1	0	1	0	2
TOTAL		39	1	21	8	<b>69</b>

Based on the table 1.4., the researcher found that the students got 39 omission errors, 1 addition error, 21 regularization errors, and 8 misordering. Therefore, the total number of errors in relative clause is 69.

Syntactic structure is a study that discusses the components and structure of a sentence where there are several components that must be understood by students. Syntactic structure is very closely related elements in a sentence. Almost all sentences of any languages can be analyzed using syntactic rules, one of which is relative clause. Relative clause is dependent clause that functions as an adjective; that is, it modifies a noun or pronoun (Alice & Ann, 1999:209). Relative clause is usually associated with relative pronouns, such as who, whom, whose, which, that, and where. In this study, the relative pronoun was positioned as conjunction in relative clause sentences. There are 24 relative clauses in class A, 37 relative clauses in class B, 20 relative clauses in class C and 27 relative clauses in class D, so there are 108 relative clauses that represented by parsing diagram. Parsing diagram is one way of representation of syntactic structures. For

example syntactic structure in relative clause students' background of proposal class A, student A; the student wrote relative clause in paragraph 1 line 7 “*There are many strategies suggested by expert that may help learners to minimize the difficulties in mastering those four of language skills.*

Syntactic structure : Relative clause 1



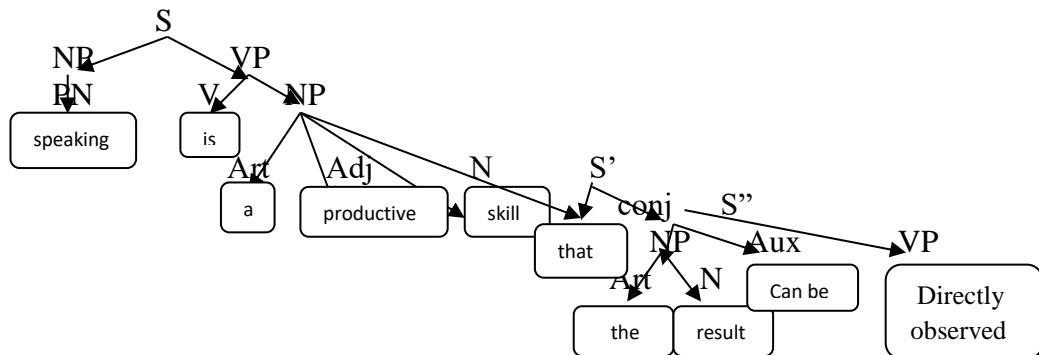
The structure of the sentence above could be:

$$\begin{aligned} S &\rightarrow NP - VP \\ VP1 &\rightarrow V - PP - S' \\ PP &\rightarrow P - NP2 \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} S' &\rightarrow Conj - SS'' \\ SS'' &\rightarrow Aux - VP2 \end{aligned}$$

The student wrote relative clause in paragraph 2 line 2 “*Speaking is a productive skill that the result can be directly observed.*”

Syntactic structure : Relative clause 2



The structure of the sentence above could be :

$$\begin{aligned} S &\rightarrow NP - VP \\ NP1 &\rightarrow PN \\ VP &\rightarrow V - NP2 \\ NP2 &\rightarrow Art - Adj - N - S' \\ S' &\rightarrow Conj - S'' \\ S'' &\rightarrow NP3 - Aux - VP \end{aligned}$$

Then, the researcher also analyzed types of error done by the students in relative clause. As stated by Dulay, Burt, and Krasen (1982), the types of error are divided into six types; error of omission, error of addition, regularization error, arch forms, the alternating use of two or more forms, misordering.

Based on the finding of the research, the researcher found the students did four types of error. They are error of omission, addition, regularization, and misordering.

The first type of errors made by students in relative clause is error of omission. This error is types of error that is the most error made by students. It almost occurs in every student's background of proposal. There are 20 students who made error of omission; they are A, C, F, G, H, I, K, L, M, N, P, R, S, T, U, V, W, Z, A', B'. For example in the student H; The student makes error of omission in paragraph 2 line 3, the student wrote: “*In other words, the first to be master for language learner in learning language especially English is vocabulary*”. It should be “*In other words, the first that to be master for language learner in*

*learning language especially English is vocabulary".* Because, "that" needed to explain noun that existed before and "the first" show the main one.

The second type of error that appeared in this research is error of addition. The student is still marking two or more items in an utterance when only one marker is required. They are sometimes made by student because is still doubt the rule of a well-formed utterance itself. There is one student who made error of addition, he is student E . He made "*Total physical response is a process which use method of the learning which involves the students actively in the classroom*". It should be "*Total physical response is a process which use method of the learning. It involves the students actively in the classroom*". Because, it is easier to understand, simple and does not complicated.

The third type of error that appeared in this research is regularization error. Regularization error is error in the use of an order in writing. This happens because the students are still confused by the rules of writing in a specific language. There are thirteen students, they are; student A, B, E, I, J, L, M, Q, R, T, X, Z, B'. For example in student A; The student makes regularization error in paragraph 1 line 7, the student wrote: "*There are many strategies suggested by expert which may help learners to minimize the difficulties in mastering those four of language skills.*" It should be "*There are many strategies suggested by expert that may help learners to minimize the difficulties in mastering those four of language skills.*" Because, "that" is used for something important and its position is always preferred. The sentence contains word "there are many strategy" which means in that case, explaining from many strategies there is the best strategy applied.

The last type of error is misordering, there are seven students had done error; they are student A, B, D, G, N, R, W. For example in student D; The student makes error of misordering in paragraph 5 line 18, the student wrote: "*there were 13 students that had got scores under the criteria Minimal Score of 70*". It should be "*there were 13 students whom had got scores under the criteria Minimal Score of 70*". Because, what is mentioned in the above sentence are people who are 13 students is objects. Then, the student makes misordering in paragraph 5 line 25, the student wrote: "*there is no students who scores were under the Criteria Minimal*". It should be "*there is no students whose scores were under the Criteria Minimal*". Because, this sentence states belongs (possessive).

To conclude, there are 108 relative clause in students' background of proposals, the result of the sentence structure analysis remain varied and different so that the diagrams formed by each of these sentences also differ and the types of students errors in relative clause in background of proposal by the sixth semester students of English Department of IAIN Bukittinggi are error in omission, addition, regularization and misordering. The most error done by students in background of proposals is the error of omission, this followed by regularization, misordering, and the last is error of addition. Based on data analysis discussed in the previous chapter, students' understanding of relative clauses is at the fair level.

## Conclusions

In conclusion, the researcher took 4 classes to analyzed syntactic structures in relative clause and error in relative clause. There are 108 relative clauses that analyzed by parsing diagram which is one of three representation of syntax. Besides that, there are four types of error done by the students in relative clause in background of proposal. From the data and analysis above, the researcher concluded that the most error done by students in relative clause in background of proposal was omission error. This was followed regularization error, misordering, and error of addition. Omissions error is the most error done by students in relative clause because many students are not careful in writing relative clause. The students made 39 omission errors, 1 addition error, 21 regularization errors and 8 misordering. The total errors who made by students of the sixth semester of the English Department of IAIN Bukittinggi is 69 errors in relative clause. Based on David P. Harris theory, 69 is fair level so that students' understanding of the relative clause is fair.

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