
COMMON GRAMMATICAL ERRORS IN CONSTRUCTING ENGLISH NOUN CLAUSES MADE BY THIRD SEMESTER STUDENTS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE STUDY PROGRAM OF STKIP NIAS SELATAN

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Abstract

This research aimed at identifying the common errors in constructing English noun clauses made by the third semester students of English Language Education Study Program of STKIP Nias Selatan. This research employed a descriptive qualitative research design. Documentation was used as the techniques to collect the data of the research. The number of the participants were 59 students. The result of data analysis shows that the students commonly made the errors on omission, addition, misformation, and misordering in constructing noun clause begun with subordinator *-that, question word, and whether/if*. The findings of this research are expected to be advantageous reference to improve errors made in constructing noun clause as dependent clause and to study grammar more.

Key Words: Errors; English Noun Clauses.

1. INTRODUCTION

As one of important English skills, writing must be mastered by the students in English learning. Writing is complicated skill because it involves a complex cognitive activity and requires many other skills, such as grammar and structure, vocabulary, etc. In addition, students are also required to have an ability in organising their own ideas into cohesive paragraph that is determined by lexically and grammatically overt intersentential relationship and coherent paragraphs is based on semantic relationship. To achieve a cohesive and coherent paragraph, the students must be able to construct the words into good sentences, and of course, it is related to the students' ability in grammar. Grammar is one of the important parts which plays an essential role in writing.

Discussing about sentence, there are four types of sentences in English: simple sentences, compound sentences, complex sentences, and compound-complex sentences.

As can be seen from those types of the sentences, students often find the difficulties in organising complex sentences. Students have problem in English sentence pattern when they combine the two clauses into one sentence. "A complex sentence consists of at least two sentences (clauses) they are a main clause and a dependent clause. The dependent clause is a subpart of the main clause and adds information to it." Altenberg and Vago (2010: 214).

Azar (2002: 239) mentioned that a clause is a group of words containing a subject and a verb. A clause may be defined in the same way as a sentence that contains a subject and a predicate with a finite verb. There are two kinds of clauses; independent which can stand alone and dependent which cannot stand alone or in other words it

depends on an independence clause. Clause is divided into three parts, namely noun clause, adverb clause, and adjective clause.

Based on the explanation above, the research was conducted to find out the common grammatical errors in constructing English noun clauses made by the third semester students of English Language Study Program of STKIP Nias Selatan. The purpose of this research was to find out the types of errors in constructing English noun clauses made by the third semester students of STKIP Nias Selatan.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research was designed in qualitative research. Bogdan and Biklen (2007: 5) state that qualitative is descriptive that data collected take the form of words of pictures rather than numbers. It is also supported by Auerbach and Silverstain (2003:3) "qualitative research is research that involves analyzing and interpreting texts and interviews in order to discover meaning patterns descriptive of a particular phenomenon". So that the data collected is presented in words rather than numbers.

The data of this research were errors in constructing English noun clauses. The source of data was students' writing papers about noun clauses. The students' writing papers were obtained from 59 students.

After the data collection, the data then were analyzed. Bogdan and Biklen (2007: 159) state that "analysis involves working with the data, organizing them, breaking them down into manageable units, coding them, synthesizing them, and searching for patterns." Therefore, the steps of analyzing the data in this research were: (1) reading whole papers of the students' writing about noun clauses, (2) underlining the errors about noun

clauses made by the students. (3) categorizing the errors, (4) searching the patterns of errors based on the types of errors, (5) counting the percentage of each type of errors made.

3. RESEARCH FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The following is the table of common grammatical errors in constructing English noun clauses made by the third semester students.

Table of Common Grammatical Errors in Constructing English Noun Clauses Made by Third Semester Students

| Noun Clause with Subordinators | Types of errors | | | | Frequency of Errors / Percentage |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|
| | Omission | Addition | Misformation | Misordering | |
| That | 27 (44%) | 9 (15%) | 21 (34%) | 4 (7%) | 61 (14%) |
| Question words | 41 (30%) | 42 (31%) | 49 (35%) | 6 (4%) | 138 (32%) |
| If or Whether | 87 (37%) | 56 (24%) | 83 (35%) | 9 (4%) | 235 (54%) |
| Total | 155 (36%) | 107 (25%) | 153 (35%) | 19 (4%) | 434 (100%) |

From the table above, it can be seen that the total number of grammatical errors made by the students in constructing English noun clauses were 434 cases of errors. The highest error occurred is on *omission* with 155 cases of errors (36%). Then it is followed by *misformation* with 153 cases of errors (35%). The next error is on *addition* with 107 cases of error (25%). The last and the lowest error is *misordering* with 19 cases (4%). Furthermore, based on the pattern of noun clauses begun with subordinator –that, a question word, and whether/if, the highest frequency of errors is the use of subordinator –*whether/if*. There are 235 errors (54%) occurred. The second position is followed by the use of subordinator –*question word* with 138 cases of error (32%). Meanwhile, the lowest frequency that occurred is the use of subordinator –*that* with 61 cases of error (14%).

a. Omission.

The highest error occurred is on omission especially in constructing English noun clauses. The students made the error in using subordinator beginning with –*that, question words, and whether/if*. Here are the examples of error in using those subordinators.

| Noun Clauses with Subordinator | Error | Correction |
|--------------------------------|--|---|
| That | Andi said to me my bag is beautiful. It is true drug is dangerous. | Andi said to me that my bag is beautiful. It is true that drug is dangerous. |
| Question words | Let's ask him he wants. I don't know she is. | Let's ask him which one he wants. I don't know who she is. |
| Whether or If | I don't care he is going to stay or leave now I don't know he need help | I don't care whether/if he is going to stay or leave now I don't know whether/if he needs help |

There are found some errors in the table above in constructing noun clauses made by third semester students. In the examples 'Andi said to me my bag is beautiful' and 'It is true drug is dangerous' mostly students omit subordinator –*that*

in constructing the noun clauses in the sentence. Furthermore, there were also the errors in the use of subordinator –*question word*. In the examples 'Let's ask him he wants?' and 'I don't know she is' mostly the students omit subordinator –*question words: which and who*. It was also found the errors in constructing noun clauses in the use of subordinator –*whether/if*. In the examples 'I don't care he is going to stay or leave now' and 'I don't know he need help' mostly the students omit subordinator –*whether/if* in constructing noun clauses in the sentence they made. Therefore, it is concluded that the students made the errors on omission especially in constructing noun clauses as dependent clause when it is combined with independent clause. They mostly omit the subordinators begun with –*that, question word, and whether/if*.

b. Addition.

The next errors made by the students in constructing English noun clauses as dependent clause were the errors on addition. The students made errors in the use of subordinator begun with –*that, question words, and whether/if*. Here are the examples of the errors in constructing English noun clauses by using those subordinators.

| Noun Clauses with Subordinator | Error | Correction |
|--------------------------------|--|--|
| That | It is apparent that smoking is can cause lung cancer. It is true that the earth does revolves around the sun. | It is apparent that smoking can cause lung cancer. It is true that the earth revolves around the sun. |
| Question words | Where did she goes is none of your business. Do you know what did he does in the classroom? | Where she went is none of your business. Do you know what he did in the classroom? |
| Whether or If | Rendy wanted to know if Santi did came last night. Tina asked me if do I wanted to go out | Rendy wanted to know if Santi came last night Tina asked me if I wanted to go out |

There are found some errors on addition in the table above that in constructing noun clauses begun with subordinator –*that, question word, and whether/if* made by the students. In the example 'it is apparent that smoking is can cause lung cancer', the students add to be –*is* before auxiliary verb –*can*. It is error when there is double helping verb. Then in the example 'it is true that the earth does revolves around the sun' there is double marker on addition of present tense –*does* and –*s*. However, it is error when there is double marker of present tense in that sentence. Furthermore, in the example 'where did she goes is none of your business', there is an error in which there is double marker of tense, the marker of present tense: the adding marker –*es*, and the marker of past tense –*did*. However, it is error when the structure of the noun clause constructed is declarative structure. It should be –*where she went is none of your business*. There is similar error on addition in the example 'do you know what did he does in the classroom?' There is

double marker of tense, the marker of past tense – *did* and the marker of present tense – *es* as addition in the end of verb. The next is there is also error on addition in the example ‘*Rendy wanted to know if Santi did came last night.*’ There is error in constructing noun clause begun with –*if*. The students add helping verb –*did* after the subject as the marker of past tense, whereas verb used is also past form. In other words, the students use two markers of past tense. The last is there is also the same error on addition in constructing noun clause begun with –*if* in the noun clause ‘*if do I wanted to go out.*’ The students add helping verb –*do* before the subject. Meanwhile the clause is structured in past form. The construction of this noun clause is error. It is concluded that the students mostly make the error in constructing noun clause by adding helping verb or the marker of present tense –*s/es* in the end of verb.

c. Misformation.

There are also many errors on misformation made by the students in constructing noun clauses. The errors on misformation done are the errors in the use of subordinator begun with –*that*, *question word*, and *whether/if*. Here are the examples of errors on misformation in constructing noun clauses begun with –*that*, *question words*, and *whether/if*.

| Noun Clauses with Subordinator | Error | Correction |
|--------------------------------|---|---|
| That | <i>It has been said that teenagers is more influenced by their peers than their parents.</i> <i>He thought that he had buyed the cake.</i> | <i>It has been said that teenagers are more influenced by their peers than their parents.</i> <i>He thought that he had bought the cake.</i> |
| Question words | <i>I don't understand why the car is not run properly.</i> <i>She does not know where she will living.</i> | <i>I don't understand why the car is not running properly.</i> <i>She does not know where she will live.</i> |
| Whether or If | <i>I would won the game if I had enough money.</i> <i>She is not quite sure if she has many money.</i> | <i>I would win the game if I had enough money..</i> <i>She is not quite sure if she has many money.</i> |

There are the errors on misformation in constructing noun clause as dependent clause begun with subordinator –*that*, *question word*, and *whether/if* as seen from the example presented in the table above. In the example ‘*it has been said that teenagers is more influenced by their peers than their parents.*’, there is an error made by students. The error is in the use of form of helping verb –*is*. The form should be –*are* as the marker of plurality due to the subject is plural. The next is the error in the example ‘*he thought that he had buyed the cake.*’. The error is in the use of form of word ‘*buyed*’. The correct form of verb –*buy* as the form of past particle is –*bought*. Furthermore, the error is also found in noun clause construction that begun with –*question word*. For example, ‘*I don't understand why the car is not run properly.*’. The error is on formation of verb ‘*run*’. The verb ‘*run*’

is not correct. The correct form is ‘*running*’. The base form of verb ‘*run*’ should be added by –*ing*. The next error is also found in the example ‘*she does not know where she will living.*’. The error is in the form of verb ‘*living*’. The use of form is not correct. The correct form is ‘*live*’. The error is also found in the use of subordinator that begun with –*whether/if*. It could be seen in the example ‘*I would won the game if I had enough money.*’. The error is in the form of verb ‘*won*’. This form is not correct. However, the correct form is ‘*win*’. The same error is also found in the example ‘*she is not quite sure if she has many money.*’. The use of determiner ‘*many*’ is error. The correct form is ‘*much*’. Therefore, it can be concluded that the students still make errors on misformation that begun with –*that*, *question word*, and *whether/if* in constructing noun clause as dependent clause.

d. Misordering.

The last is the errors on misordering. The students made the errors on misordering in constructing noun clauses begun with subordinator –*that*, *question words*, and *whether/if*. Here are the examples of errors on misordering begun with those subordinators.

| Noun Clauses with Subordinator | Error | Correction |
|--------------------------------|--|--|
| That | <i>You don't know that he now is very happy.</i> <i>The fact that my sister is girl beautiful.</i> | <i>You don't know that he is very happy now on.</i> <i>The fact that my sister is beautiful girl.</i> |
| Question words | <i>What is she doing is my own business.</i> <i>Please tell me who is she.</i> | <i>What she is doing is my own business.</i> <i>Please tell who she is.</i> |
| Whether or If | <i>I wonder whether will she go with me.</i> <i>Tina asked whether should we have waited for Sam.</i> | <i>I wonder whether she will go with me.</i> <i>Tina asked whether we should have waited for Sam.</i> |

There are found errors on misordering in constructing noun clauses as dependent clause as seen in the table above begun with subordinator –*that*, *question word*, and *whether/if*. In the example ‘*You don't know that he now is very happy.*’, there is error on misordering or misplacement. Structurally the word ‘*now*’ as adverb time should be in the end of that clause. It is the same with the example ‘*The fact that my sister is girl beautiful.*’. There is error on misordering. The word ‘*beautiful*’ should be placed before the word ‘*girl*’ structurally. The next is the error on misordering in the example ‘*what is she doing is my own business.*’. The error in this noun clause construction as dependent clause is to be or helping verb –*is* should be placed after the subject ‘*she*’ that functioning as helping verb of present continuous. It should be ‘*what she is doing is my own business.*’. The error is also found in the use of subordinator –*question word* begun with –*who* in the noun clause ‘*who is she.*’. It is the error due to this noun clause construction as dependent clause is constructed in declarative structure. Thus,

the correct is 'please tell me who she is'. The last is the error on misordering in constructing noun clause begun with *-whether/if*. It is seen in the example 'I wonder whether will she go with me'. It is incorrect in word order. The helping verb *-will* should be placed after word "she". There is also the same error made in the example 'Tina asked whether should we have waited for Sam'. The auxiliary verb or word 'should' should be placed after the subject 'we'. Thus, the correct is 'Tina asked whether we should have waited for Sam'. From those examples, it is concluded that there is error on misordering made by the students in constructing noun clause as dependent clause.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on this research finding, it is concluded that the students commonly made the grammatical errors on omission, addition, misformation, and misordering in constructing noun clause as dependent clause begun with *-that, a question word, and whether/if*. The total number of errors made by the students in constructing English noun clauses as dependent clause were 434 cases of errors. The highest error occurred is on *omission* with 155 cases of errors (36%). Then it is followed by *misformation* with 153 cases of errors (35%). The next error is on *addition* with 107 cases of error (25%). The last and the lowest error is *misordering* with 19 cases (4%). It shows that the students have to learn more the structure of noun clause as dependent clause.

Suggestion

The researcher suggests the readers who read the result of this research finding may use it as reference to do the further research about the errors. The researcher especially suggests the lecturers and students to take advantages from this research as the guidance to improve the way of teaching and learning especially the construction of noun clause as dependent clause begun with subordinator *-that, question word, and whether/if*.

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