



The Student's Error in Forming Nominal Clause in Complex Sentence

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Abstract

This research uses descriptive qualitative method that aims at analyzing the errors in the formation of nominal clause in complex sentence conducted by students of the fourth semester of the English Language Study Program, Tadulako University. Data collection was taken through giving tests to 49 students. The test was given in the form of a written test by asking students to make nominal clause. The results showed that the most dominant type of error made by students in making nominal clauses is omission, which is to reduce parts of words such as suffix -s as plural marker on nouns or as present marker on verbs. In connection with the functions of nominal clause in sentence, the students have difficulty in making nominal clause that functions as complement and object of preposition.

Keywords: Error Analysis, Nominal Clause, Complex Sentence

Introduction

In studying the structure of language, we must be able to arrange sentences or clauses. Sentence is a collection of words that has at least one subject and one verb and has a complete idea or meaning. It is supported by Nesfield (1957) who states that a sentence is a combination of words consisting of one subject and one predicate. Furthermore Walter (2008) states that a sentence is a collection of words consisting of verbs that express thoughts in the form of statements, questions, instructions or exclamations that begin with capital letters if in the form of written language. Based on the type, sentence is divided into three types, namely simple sentences, compound sentences, and complex sentences. Each type of sentence depends on the type of clause contained in the sentence, namely dependent clause and independent clause.

1. Simple Sentences

Simple sentences are a collection of words consisting of at least one subject and one verb. According to Vespoor and Sauter (2000), simple sentences consist of one main clause, but it does not mean that simple sentences are short. Simple sentences are divided into four forms, namely: declarative, interrogative, imperative, and exclamative sentences. Here is an example of a simple sentence:

(1) *Anna goes to school at 7 o'clock every morning.*

Example (1) shows a simple sentence consisting of subject (Anna), verb (goes), adverb of place (to school), and adverb of time (at 7 o'clock) and (every morning). The meaning of example (1) is very clear and easy to understand.

2. Compound Sentences

Unlike simple sentences, compound sentences are a combination of two or more simple sentences using commas as punctuation marks and conjunctions, namely FANBOYS (**F**or, **A**nd, **N**or, **B**ut, **O**r, **Y**et, **S**o). According to Penston (2005), if clauses in a sentence are parallel and each has a subject and a predicate, then the sentence is a compound sentence. In other words, compound sentences have two verbs that are connected with conjunctions as a connector to the parallel relationship between ideas in the first sentence and the second sentence. If the ideas in the two sentences are in contrast, the conjunctions used are *but*, *yet*, *nor*. To show a causal relationship, the conjunctions used are *for*, *so*, while to indicate that the second sentence contains additional information, the conjunction used is *and*. Here is an example of compound sentences: (2) *It was raining, so she didn't go to school.*

Example (2) consists of two simple sentences that are connected with the conjunction *so* that denotes cause and effect.

3. Complex Sentences

This type of sentence is a combination of independent clause and dependent clause that connect with subordinating conjunctions. According to DeCapua (2008), sentences are said to be complex because they consist

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of main clauses and sub-clause. Different from compound sentences that are connected with coordinating conjunction, complex sentences are connected with subordinating conjunction which means the two clauses above, namely independent clause and dependent clause, are not parallel. independent clause is a sentence that can stand alone and has a complete meaning, while dependent clause is a sentence that depends on the independent clause so that it has an incomplete meaning. Here is an example of a complex sentence:

(3) *I don't know what you are talking about.*

Example (3) consists of independent clause, *I don't know*, and *what you are talking about* as dependent clause.

The difficulty of students lies in the English sentence patterns where they have to combine sentences and clauses. A clause is a collection of words consisting of subjects and verbs whose meanings or ideas are incomplete. Previously, it was said that clauses consisted of independent clause and dependent clause. Independent clause is a clause that can stand alone or can be called a sentence, while dependent clause is a clause that cannot stand alone, which consists of three kinds of clauses, namely adjectival clause, adverbial clause, and nominal clause. The following is the explanation of the three clauses.

1. Adjectival Clause

Adjectival clauses are clauses that cannot stand alone, which depend on the independent clause. The function of the adjectival clause is as an explanatory or modifier of nouns or personal pronouns (Murphy, 1998). Azar (1992) states the adjectival clause is a clause describing a noun. The clause provides additional information about the noun. The adjectival clause is also called a relative clause because the adjectival clause is preceded by relative pronouns, namely, *who*, *whom*, *which*, *whose*, and *that*. Besides being preceded by relative pronouns, it is also preceded by relative adverbs, *when*, *where*, and *why*. The following is the examples of people using relative pronoun and relative adverb:

(4) *He likes the girl who is wearing a red dress.*

(5) *I'll never forget the day when I met you.*

(6) *The hotel where I stayed during my vacation is very expensive.*

From example (4), the use of *who* refers to the noun *girl*, where the main sentence is *he likes the girl*, while the clause is *who is wearing red dress*. The word *who* is a pronoun for noun *girl*, which should be *the girl is wearing a red dress*. Likewise, the use of connectors in examples (5) and (6) refer to the previous nouns, *day* and *hotel*.

2. Adverbial Clause

Adverbial clauses are clauses which act as information on verbs, adjectives, or adverbs, but also function as information of time, place, reason, cause, condition, method, comparison, purpose, and concession. Here are the examples of adverbial clause in sentence:

(7) *When we were in Jakarta, we saw several plays.*

(8) *We saw several plays when we were in Jakarta.*

Examples (7) and (8) are the use of adverbial clauses as time information

for using connector *when*. The position of the adverbial clause can be placed at the beginning of a sentence like example (7) or after the independent clause like example (8).

3. Nominal Clause

Nominal clauses are clauses that have many functions in a sentence, which can act as subject, object, object of preposition, or complement. DeCapua (2008) states that nominal clauses follow the main clause that starts with connectors or subordinating conjunctions. Connectors in nominal clause are like other clauses, namely, WH-question, and if/whether. Each connector has a function.

a. Connector THAT

This connector is used as an opening statement. Connector *That* is a marker of nominal clause followed by verbs, adjectives, or nouns (Decapua, 2008). Connector *That* can be removed because it functions as an opening and has no meaning.

(9) *I think that he is a good teacher.*

(10) *I think he is a good teacher.*

Examples (9) and (10) show nominal clauses as objects of transitive verb *think*. In example (10) connector *that* can be removed because the nominal clause is placed after the verb. If the nominal clause acts as the subject of a sentence, connector *that* cannot be removed. It can be seen in example (11):

(11) *That the world is round is a fact.*

b. Connector WH-question

Nominal clauses also use connectors that begin with WH-, i.e. *when, where, why, how, who, who, what, which, whose*. Noun clause that uses WH-question is not in the form of an interrogative sentence. The word WH-question is used as a marker for nominal clauses that are transformed from interrogative sentences using WH-questions (DeCapua, 2008). The following is the examples of using WH-question as a nominal clause connector:

(12) *I know when he will arrive.*

(13) *What you did was wrong.*

(14) *I am concerned about when he will arrive.*

Example (12) is the use of a nominal clause as an object of verb *know* by using connector *when*. The WH-question form in example (12) shows that the word *when* used as a connector is not a question marker. In example (13), connector *what* is used as a marker for nominal clause that functions as subject and example (14) shows that nominal clause functions as object of preposition *about*.

c. Connector IF/WHETHER

This connector is used to convert the question yes/no to a nominal clause in other words to change the question form to the statement form. DeCapua (2008) states that the use of whether/if as a marker of a nominal clause is transformed from question yes/no. The difference between *if* and *whether* is only at the formal and informal levels. The connector *whether* is used in formal English while connector *if* is generally used in spoken

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language. Here are the examples of using if/whether in sentences:

(15) *Will she come? I don't know whether she will come.* (16) *Will she come? I don't know if she will come.*

In example (15), connector *whether* is used as a modifier of a question form and makes it into a statement. Example (16) is the use of connector *if* that functions like *whether*. The connectors in the sentence function as an object of the verb *know*.

Difficulties in using nominal clauses in sentences make the students difficult to write texts or paragraphs properly and correctly. This is due to the fact that most students do not understand the use and structure of clauses in sentences and their functions, especially the nominal clause which is the most difficult clause for students to understand because it has several functions in sentence. Therefore, it is necessary to do an error analysis of the language learning process. Wood (1984) states error analysis is based on the assumption that this product is able to make teachers make generalizations to the system and this assumption is correct in practice. It can be said that error analysis is a systematic error that occurs in language learners.

1. Difference between Error and Mistake

In the process of language learning, learners will make mistakes because it is impossible for a learner to produce good and correct language in the process of learning a new language. Therefore, we need to know the difference between error and mistake. Both have the same meaning in Indonesian, but have different meanings in English. A clear difference between errors and mistakes according to Corder (1981), errors lead to errors in abilities or skills that are systematic and indicate the transition steps in the development of grammar rules or the final step of the learner's knowledge. Mistake refers to misconduct that sometimes occurs and relates to several factors such as fatigue, memory loss (forgetfulness), and psychological conditions such as emotions. Furthermore, Parrot (2002) argues that error is evidence of the development of learners' abilities in foreign languages while mistakes relate to mistakes that are not systematic and do not reflect the development of learner ability.

2. Error Types

After knowing the difference between errors and mistakes, in analyzing errors, it is necessary to know about the types of errors themselves, to make it easier for researchers to identify and to explain the mistakes made by students. The importance of knowing the types of error can make it easier for teachers to determine the problems faced by students. Dulay (1982) states that analyzing errors from the perspective of Surface Strategy promises all researchers to pay attention to the cognitive process of the learner in reconstructing a new language by looking at errors based on the following types:

a. Omission

The character of this type is the loss or reduction of one item that should appear in the sentence. The missing item can be in the form of content words

or function words (Dulay, 1982). Example: (17) *I am study English now* that should be *I am studying English now*

b. Addition

This type is the addition of items that should not be necessary. Three types of addition are double markings, regularizations, and simple additions (Dulay, 1982). Example:

(18) *The woman does not needs to write the report* that should be *The woman does not need to write the report.* (double markings)

(19) *I putted the book on the table last night* that should be *I put the book on the table last night.*

(regularizations)

(20) *The train is gonna broke it* that should be *The train is gonna break it.* (simple additions)

c. Misinformation

This type is the use of an incorrect form of morpheme or structure (Dulay, 1982). Example: (21) *There are many fishes in the pond* that should be *There are many fish in the pond.*

d. Misordering

This type is the morpheme placement error in the sentence (Dulay, 1982). Example: (22) *He is all the time late* that should be *He is late all the time.*

Referring to the research conducted by Kusumadewi (2017), mistakes in teaching foreign languages especially English is a difficult case to avoid. Many aspects cause English learners to make mistakes. The results of her research showed that students make mistakes when preparing nominal clauses using WH-questions, nominal clauses with If/Whether and nominal clauses with THAT. Students have difficulty understanding nominal clauses using WH-questions and are confused about placing them into sentences correctly. In line with Kusumadewi, Haryanti and Setyandari (2018) conducted research on students' difficulties in understanding clauses. Their results state that the difficulty faced by students is that they are not able to distinguish the function of nominal clauses in sentences, especially nominal clauses that act as indirect objects. They consider indirect objects the same as direct objects. They also have difficulty in distinguishing the use of connector *where* as a marker of the adjectival clause and the nominal clause. Therefore, the researcher considers it is necessary to analyze the students' errors in forming nominal clauses in complex sentences. Based on the background of the above problems, the formulation of the problem in this study is as follows:

1. What is the most dominant type of error made by students in making a nominal clause?
2. Which function of nominal clauses is the most difficult for students to make?

Method

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The population of this research is the fourth semester students of 2017, English Education Study Program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Tadulako University. The class of 2017 students is divided into 7 parallel classes, from class A to class G. The total number of students taking the Advanced Communicative Grammar Skill course is 240. The number of students to be the sample of this study is 20% of the total number of each class, and the total sample is 49 students. The number of questions on the test is 20 questions that ask students to make sentences that contain nominal clauses.

Result

In the process of collecting data, the researchers distributed questionnaires containing questions about nominal clauses which were divided into 5 parts, namely 1) changing WH questions into nominal clauses using WH, 2) turning Yes/No questions into nominal clauses using connector IF/WHETHER, 3) converting sentences into nominal clauses using connector THAT, 4) placing nominal clauses based on their functions in sentences, 5) making sentences containing nominal clauses based on their functions in sentences. To answer the questions, the researchers made a group based on the types of error made by the students in answering the questions given and the functions of the nominal clause that was difficult for the students to arrange in sentence. The group can be seen in the following tables:

Table 1 Nominal Clause Using WH Question

No	WH Question	Nominal Clause		Type of Error	Error Rate (%)
		Students' Answer	Reconstruction		
1	Where does he work?	Do you know where does he work?	Do you know where he works?	Misinformation	14/49 (29%)
2	Why did they come late?	Tell me why did they come late	Tell me why they came late.	Misinformation	32/49 (65%)
3	What did she say?	What did she say wasn't true.	What she said wasn't true.	Misinformation	16/49 (33%)
4	How much does it cost?	I can't remember how much it cost.	I can't remember how much it costs.	Omission	24/49 (49%)

The table above shows that students tend to make misinformation in constructing nominal clauses using WH Question. This misinformation is done by equating the structure of the interrogative sentence with the nominal clause that uses the WH Question. More than 50% of students misinformed the second question, besides if they made the nominal clause appropriately, they misinformed the morpheme *come* by neglecting to change it to the past in accordance with questions that used the past tense. Students' answers tend to look like this: *Tell me why they come late* instead of *Tell me why they came late*.

Table 2 Nominal Clauses Using WHETHER / IF

No	Y/N Question	Nominal Clause		Type of Error	Error Rate (%)
		Students' Answer	Reconstruction		
1	Do you like Grammar or not?	I don't know whether do you like Grammar or not.	I don't know whether you like Grammar or not.	Misinformation	6/49 (12%)
2	Is it correct or not?	Please tell me it correct or not.	Please tell me if it is correct or not.	Omission	16/49 (33%)
3	Would she like some coffee or not?	I'll ask her whether she like some coffee or not.	I'll ask her whether she would like some coffee or not.	Omission	45/49 (92%)
4	Does Tom know the	I wonder if Tom know the answer.	I wonder if Tom knows the answer.	Omission	26/49 (53%)

Table 2 above illustrates the type of student error dominated by omission. More than 90% of students make omissions on modal *would*. They changed the tense used in question number 3 to the present simple form. Some of the students changed the morpheme *like* to *likes* indicating that they considered the problem to be in the form of a simple present. Question number 4 is also dominated by the type of omission which reached more than 50%. Students tend to neglect to change morpheme *know* into *knows*.

Table 3 Nominal Clauses Using THAT

No	Question	Nominal Clause		Type of Error	Error Rate (%)
		Students' Answer	Reconstruction		
1	Smoking can cause cancer.	Smoking can cause cancer that is a fact.	That smoking can cause cancer is a fact.	Misordering	21/49 (43%)
2	He is a good actor.	I think that is a good actor.	I think that he is a good actor.	Omission	5/49 (10%)
		I think that his a good actor.		Misinformation	5/49 (10%)
3	The world is round.	We know that world is round.	We know that the world is round.	Omission	7/49 (14%)
4	The earth revolves around the sun.	The earth revolves around the sun that is true.	That the earth revolves around the sun is true.	Misordering	24/49 (49%)

Table 3 shows that the type of students' error is misordering, that is making some mistakes in putting connector *that* in sentences which occurs in

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sentences number 1 and 4. The percentage is between 40-50% and the number of students who made mistakes is around 20 students.

Table 4 Laying Nominal Clauses Based on Function

No	Clause: <i>What the teacher said</i>	Error Rate (%)
1	Subject	36/49 (73%)
2	Object	38/49 (78%)
3	Complement	46/49 (94%)
4	Object of preposition	44/49 (90%)

Students have a high level of difficulty in arranging nominal clauses in sentences according to their functions. Table 4 shows that most of the students are not able to arrange nominal clauses in sentences based on their functions as subject, object, complement, and object of preposition. This can be seen from the percentage of mistakes made by the students that is higher than 70% and some even reach 94%.

Table 5 Making Nominal Clauses Based on Function

No	Function of Nominal Clause	Error Rate (%)
1	Subject	40/49 (82%)
2	Object	37/49 (76%)
3	Complement	43/49 (88%)
4	Object of preposition	44/49 (90%)

In line with the previous question, the students also experienced obstacles in making sentences containing nominal clause based on the functions of the clause. Table 5 shows the percentage of error made by the students is greater than 75% and some even reach 90%.

By looking at the table that illustrates the students' mistakes in constructing nominal clause, the researchers try to answer the first question: what is the most dominant type of error made by students in making a nominal clause? The dominant type of error is omission, which is to reduce parts of words such as the suffix -s as a plural marker on nouns or as present marker in verbs. The next rank is misinformation which is done by the students in forming a nominal clause by linking the arrangement of nominal clauses with interrogative sentences.

Next is answering the second question: which function of nominal clauses is the most difficult for students to make? The function of nominal clause that is most difficult for students to make is complement and object of preposition. The students assume that the nominal clause functioning as a complement has the same function as object because basically the two functions have the same position which is after verb.

After getting some mistakes made by the students in making and arranging nominal clause in sentences, the researchers tried to classify these mistakes based on the theory from Dulay. In the first subsection question, the researchers asked the students to change the interrogative sentence using

WH Question to form nominal clause using WH as a clause marker.

The students made misinformation in constructing nominal clauses derived from interrogative sentences. They assumed that those rules are alike. Most of them do inversion when constructing nominal clauses like making interrogative sentences, namely **WH Question + Auxiliary + Subject + Verb** instead of **WH Question + Subject + Verb**, for example they arranged nominal clause into *what did she say wasn't true* instead of *what she said wasn't true*. This makes the misinformation become the most dominant error in the first sub-section of this questionnaire. Besides misinformation, omission is also often made by the students. The same mistake was made repeatedly, namely by removing the marker of present or past form from the verb. An example is when changing the interrogative sentence *what did she say?* They removed the marker of past form from the sentence when it was changed to the nominal clause, which should be *what she said wasn't true* to *what she say wasn't true*. Another example is the interrogative sentence *how much does it cost?* They change it to *I can't remember how much it cost* which should be *I can't remember how much it costs*. Omission error is done by removing the present form marker in the verb *cost*.

In the second subsection question, the researchers asked the students to change the interrogative sentences that use yes/no questions to nominal clauses using whether/if as clause markers. This subsection is dominated by omission error, namely removing elements from the original sentences. The mistakes made by the students are when the researchers asked the students to change the interrogative sentence *does Tom know the answer?* to nominal clause, they made an omission on the verb *know*, it becomes *I wonder if Tom know the answer* which should be *I wonder if Tom knows the answer*. Another example is the question *would she like some coffee or not?* that was changed by removing the word *would* to be *I'll ask her whether she like some coffee or not* which should be *I'll ask her whether she would like some coffee or not*. The researchers assumed that the students are careless in understanding tense of the sentence.

From the third subsection question, the researchers asked the students to convert positive sentences into nominal clauses using connector *that*. This connector is special because it can be removed without changing the meaning and function of the clause in the sentence. Initially the researchers assumed that the students would tend to make omission on this connector but it turned out that the students made misordering on this connector, for example: *the earth revolves around the sun* was changed by them to form the nominal clause into *the earth revolves around the sun that is true* instead of *that the earth revolves around the sun is true*. Another example is *smoking can cause cancer* was changed by them into *smoking can cause cancer that is a fact* instead of *that smoking can cause cancer is a fact*. By looking at misordering done by the students, the researchers assumed that they were confused to compose nominal clauses by using connector *that* if it functions as subject, they tended to put the connector *that* before the auxiliary that functions as main verb so that the sentence looks like two simple sentences, namely *the earth revolves around the sun* (1) *that is true* (2) and *smoking can cause cancer* (1) *that is a fact* (2). When the researchers asked the students to change the sentence *he is a good actor* into a nominal clause that functions as an object, they easily changed it to

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I think that he is a good actor even though there are some students who made an omission of the sentence elements.

Finally, the researchers analyzed the students' answers in the fourth subsection. The researchers asked the students to make their own sentences by placing the nominal clause of *what the teacher said* in accordance with the functions of the clause in the sentences. Almost all of the 7 classes are not able to make sentences properly and correctly. There are 2 classes in which all of the students cannot answer that question. For the students, placing nominal clauses that function as subject and object is slightly easier than those that function as complement and object of preposition. There were 36-38 students out of 49 respondents who did not understand functions as subjects and objects while students who did not understand functions as complement and object of preposition were between 44-46 students. This shows that the ability of the students to understand the functions of nominal clause in sentences is very low. The high percentage of error made by the students in placing nominal clause in sentence based on its functions results the same percentage of error in their answers to the fifth subsection question being equal. The researchers asked the students to make their own sentences containing nominal clause based on its functions in sentence. It is increasingly clear that it is difficult for the students to make sentences that have subject, object, complement, and object of preposition as well as to make nominal clauses. Some students made sentences without nominal clause; some made sentences using adjectival clause or adverbial clause. Thus, it can be said that the percentage of student's error is high in the last two subsections because they do not understand the functions of nominal clause in sentence and they cannot distinguish functions as subject, object, complement, and object of preposition.

Conclusion

After analyzing the students' mistakes in composing nominal clause in complex sentence, the researchers conclude the most dominant type of error made by students in making a nominal clause is omission, namely reducing part of words such as suffix -s as plural marker in noun or as present form marker in verb. The next rank is misinformation, which is done by the students in forming a nominal clause by equating the arrangement of nominal clause with interrogative sentence. Furthermore, to find out the function of nominal clause that is the most difficult for the students to make, the result shows that it is difficult for the students to place nominal clause that functions as complement and object of preposition. The students assume that the nominal clause functioning as a complement in a sentence has the same function as an object because basically the two functions are positioned after the verb. Therefore, the students need to understand correctly the types of verbs that are followed by objects and followed by complement or adverb. The important thing that needs to be stressed is that the lecturer should strengthen the understanding of the word class in the first semester so that it makes easier for students to arrange sentences properly and correctly.

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