Students' Difficulties In Mastering Clauses

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Info Articles	Abstract
	This study aims to know the students' mastery on clauses of the fifth semester students of English Education Study Program, Teacher Training and Education Faculty, Widya Dharma University of Klaten in academic year 2016/2017 and the difficulties faced in comprehending clauses. The method of collecting data is the test. The method of analyzing data is statistics in the form of mean score. The results are the students' mastery on clauses of the fifth semester students of English Education Study Program, Teacher Training and Education Faculty, Widya Dharma University of Klaten in academic year 2016/2017 is good; and the difficulties faced in comprehending clauses are identifying the functions of noun clause, determining the introductory conjunction, making adjective clause appropriately, selecting the appropriate verb, and determining the tense.

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INTRODUCTION

Based on the writers' experience, many students of English as a foreign language make sentences which are not structural and acceptable because they lack knowledge of structure. According to Edge, if you grew up in English, you may never have studied the structure of the language. If you want to be an English language teacher, however you need to do so now (1998:32). It is in contrast with Ma's opinion that having linguistic competence in a language does not automatically make one a good teacher (2012:282). Harmer states that the structure of a language is what happens to words when they become plural negative, or what word order is used when we make questions or join two clauses to make one sentence (2003:1). In this case the writers tend to observe clauses. Students of English Education Study Program, especially semester V get material on kinds of clauses. Learning consists of two mutual activities that cannot be separated. The two activities are teaching and learning. The essence of learning according to constructivism is that the success of learning depends on self-effort. Lecturer services are not neessarily meaningful, because the environment is just an opportunity. Learning is not collecting facts, but forming meaning and impression, its construction is a continuous process. The learning process occurs when a person's scheme is in a state of feeling a gap (disequilibrium) that stimulates further thinking. Teo *et al* state that the pedagogical theory of constructivism asserts that productive learning occurs when students create meaning on their own by connecting previous knowledge and experience with newly formed knowledge and experience (2016:20). Therefore, it is necessary approach that gives stimulus to learning motivation. The approach is one aspect to achieve successful teaching and learning, in this case particularly in the lecture.

Every student basically has tremendous potential to be developed. Therefore, a lecturer is expected to dig and develop the potential of each student. One way that can be taken is to manage the learning that can provide opportunities for students to engage and express all the potential they have. Similarly, students should always try to master every material that is discussed in learning in various ways, techniques, and strategies. However, based on several years of teaching experience, especially in the material of kinds of clauses, writers know that most students are less successful to master the material. They master the material some time after the discussion of the material, in the midterm exam most of them also still can do the test items given. However, when the material is tested in the final term exam only a few can do.

The clause is divided into two based on whether it can stand alone as a sentence, namely the main/independent clause and the subordinate/dependent clause. The independent clause can stand alone as a sentence, whereas the dependent clause cannot stand alone as a sentence because it must be attached to the independent clause. Dependent clauses are divided into three types, namely adjective clauses, adverb clauses, and noun clauses. Thus to make the correct English sentence, the student must master the clause. In studying the kinds of clauses, students often experience difficulties that ultimately result in unsatisfactory achievement. Therefore, the writers want to know the mastery on clause of the fifth semester students of English education study program and try to help overcome the difficulties they face in mastering clauses, especially the dependent clauses by conducting a research in component structure. It may be done by giving some tests. Salem states that classroom grammar tests and quizzes (henceforth 'tests') help consolidate recently presented structures, keep students attentive and aware of the language points covered, and provide evaluative information regarding learners' progress in forming and using grammatical structures (2012:147).

In this study writers have reasons for choosing the title mentioned above. The reasons can be described as follows:

1. As observers of the structure of the English language, writers argue that the structure of English is more complicated than the structure of the Indonesian language. In English the verbs may change according to the time the activities are

performed. To make a sentence in English sometimes two clauses are required, ie independent clause and dependent clause.

2. Based on writers' experience and observation, the students' mastery on clause did not last long. It is stated by Tomlinson and Masuhara that of course, our predictions could be wrong and we would be delighted if systematic post-use evaluations of courses demonstated both their short-term and long-term effectiveness (2012:248). They tend not to use introductory conjunctions and verbs in combining dependent clauses into independent clauses in scientific papers.

3. By using the appropriate model of learning, approaches, methods, techniques, and strategies the students can master the clause material well and the mastery lasts for a relatively long time.

Based on the above condition, the writers formulate the problem as the following:

1. How is the mastery on clauses of the fifth semester students of English Education Study Program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, University of Widya Dharma Klaten in academic year 2016/2017?

2. What difficulties are faced by students in mastering clauses?

The results of this study are expected to be useful as follows:

1. For observers in English structure who want to know more about the kinds of clauses in English.

2. For the readers in understanding the kinds of clauses in English, especially the dependent clauses. The dependent clauses always start with introductory conjunctions like: that, who, who, who, who, what, where, when, why, how. The predicate in the dependent clause must be complete either in active or passive form, for example: ... which he talks about; Whereever it is placed, ...; etc.

3. For the world of education as a contribution to the enrichment of research results.

4. For students as motivation to study harder and more careful. This is supported by Mercer who stated that a language learning mindset reflects the extent to which a person believes that language learning ability is dependent on some immutable, innate talent or is the result of controllable factors such as effort and conscious hard work (2012:22).

Clause is component of a (complex) sentence, with its own subject and predicate, especially one doing the work of a noun (Hornby, 1987:152). Clause is a full predication that contains a subject and a predicate with a finite verb (Frank, 1972:222).

Clauses consist of two, independent and dependent. According to Frank, the independent clause is a full predication that may stand alone as a sentence; the dependent clause has a special introductory word that makes the predication "depend" on an independent clause (1972:222). In Complex sentences we can find main clauses and subordinate clauses. According to Greenbaum and Quirk, a complex sentence is like a simple sentence in that it consists of only one main clause, but unlike a simple sentence it has one or more subordinate clauses functioning as an element of the sentence (1990:203). Subordinate clauses consist: Adjective clause, Adverb clause, and Noun clause.

1. Adjective Clause

Adjective clause also called relative clause is one kind of complex sentences where the subordinate clause functions as adjective, a word which is used to modify a noun. Adjective clause begins with relative pronouns like: **who, whom whose, which, that. Whom, which** (object) and **that** (object) can be deleted, especially in restrictive clauses.

- The man (whom/that) you met yesterday ….
→ The man you met yesterday ….
- The novel (which/that) I bought last Sunday ….
→ The novel I bought last Sunday ….

Adjective clauses can also begin with *where, when, why, after,* or *before* but mind that adverb clauses and also noun clauses (especially with *where, when* or *why*) can also begin with those subordinate conjunction.

- I don't know <u>where she lives</u>. (Noun clause)
I don't know the house <u>where she lives</u>. (Adjective clause)
Her grandmother lives <u>where she lives</u>. (Adverb clause)
- Do you know <u>why she is absent</u>?
Do you know the reason <u>why she is absent</u>?
- She became sick <u>after she had long vacation</u>.
She became sick the day <u>after she had long vacation</u>.
- This is the year <u>when she gets married.</u>
Do you know <u>when she gets married?</u>

There are two kinds of adjective clauses; each has a different way of writing (Frank, 1972:281). They are:

a. Defining or restrictive relative clause → Explaining a common noun
b. Non defining or non restrictive clause. → Explaining a proper or specified noun. It
  should be written between two comas or dashes for it functions as appositives.

- The old man <u>who lives next door</u> is a good doctor.
Mr. Probo**,** <u>who lives next door</u>**,** is a good doctor.
- The woman <u>whose husband is a doctor</u> is very pretty.
Mrs. Anita, <u>whose husband is a doctor</u>, is very pretty.

Case of Relative Pronouns

Relative Pronoun	Function	Examples
Who	Subject	The man who is standing there is our new employer.
		I don't know the man who is standing there.
Whom	Object	The man <u>whom you met yesterday</u> is my father.
		Do you know the man <u>whom you met yesterday</u>?
Whose	Possessive	The man whose car is parked there is a doctor.
		The woman whose husband is a doctor is very beautiful.
Which	Non human being	The wristwatch which we bought yesterday has stopped running.
		She has returned the dictionary which I lent her last Monday.
That		Replacing *who, whom* and *which* in restrictive clauses only.
	→	Relative pronoun can be omitted only in restrictive clauses

Relative Pronouns Patterning like *some of which*
This pattern is used when the adjective clause modifies only a part or some part of the noun, e.g.:
- The new students were required to take a special orientation program. Some of them came from other countries.

→ The new students, ***some of whom*** came from other countries, were required to take a special orientation program.

→ The new students, ***some of them*** coming from other countries, were required to take a special orientation program. (Absolute Construction)

- The nightclub has put on many shows. The most spectacular of the show is the present one.

→ The nightclub has put on many shows, ***the most spectacular of which*** is the present one.

- They decided to see the movie at the Bijou. The title of the movie intrigued them.

→ They decided to see the movie, ***the title of which (whose title)*** intrigued them.

2. Adverb(ial) Clause

Kinds of adverb clauses (Frank, 1972:235)

a. Adverb clause of time → ***when, while, since, before, after, until, as soon as, as long as, by the time, now that, once***

- I can see you when I finish my work.
- She was reading a book while the dinner was cooking.
- I haven't seen him since he returned to the country.
- The will leave before you get there.

Abridgment: (Frank, 1972:239)

- When/While young, I looked at things differently.
- When a boy, I looked at things differently.
- She always sings when doing her work.
- Experience, when dearly bought, is seldom thrown away.

b. Adverb clause of place → **where/wherever**

Adverbial clauses of place are introduced mainly by *where* or *wherever. Where* is specific and *wherever* nonspecific. The clause may indicate position or direction (Greenbaum and Quirk, 1990:315).

- We live where the road crosses river.
- Wherever possible, the illustrations are taken from literature.

c. Adverb clause of cause → ***because, since, as, now that, whereas (legal), inasmuch as (formal), as long as, on account of the fact that, owing to the fact that, in view of the fact that, because of the fact that, due to the fact that:***

- He could not come because/since/as he was ill.
- Now that he has passed his examination, he can get his degree.
- Whereas they disobeyed the law, they will be punished.
- Inasmuch as no one was hurt, because of his negligence, the judge gave him a light sentence.
- On account of the fact that the country was at war, all the young men were drafted.

Abridgement: - *It is an unpardonable insult, since intentional.*

d. Adverb clause of condition → ***if, unless, on condition that, provided that, providing that, in the event that, in case that, whether … or not.***

- If I have much time, I shall go to your house.
- We won't have the party, unless the leader of the team comes.
- We will have the picnic provided that it doesn't rain.
- In the event that it rains, the picnic will be postponed.

Abridgement:

- Were I in your position, I would take advantage of that offer.
- Had I known you were coming, I would have met you at the station.
- Please come early if possible.
- This appliance will not work unless properly attached.

3. Noun Clause

Before knowing what noun clauses are, we should know the meaning of each word which constitutes the term. Traditionally Noun is defined as a word which refers to a noun or thing but structurally Noun is a class of word which functions/fills the slot of Subject (S), Object of Verbs (OV), Object of Prepositions (OP), Subjective Complement (SC) and Appositive (App.). Meanwhile, Clause is a construction of words which forms predication (subject-predicate construction).

Noun Clauses can be defined as nouns in the form of clauses or clauses which function as S, OV, OP, SC or App. e.g.

- I don't know it. (proNoun) (*What is it?)*
- I don't know her house. (noun phrase)
- I don't know where she lives. (noun clause

How to differentiate it from adjective clause and adverb clause

To differentiate noun clauses from other clauses (adjective clauses and adverb

clauses) is quite easy. We just know the function of the clause. If the clause is used as S, OV,OP, SC or App., it is a noun clause but if the function of the clause is as a modifier of the noun, the clause is an adjective clause and if the function is as a modifier of a verb or a sentence, the clause is an adverb clause.

The easiest way to differentiate them is:

- Replace the clause by the word 'it'. .If so, the clause is a noun clause.
- If not, translate the clause into Indonesian. If the translation uses the word 'yang', it is an adjective clause
- If not, the clause must be an adverb clause

How to make noun clauses

Noun clauses can be made from all types of sentences. They are:

a. Statement or Affirmative sentences. (positive or negative)

b. Questions or Interrogative sentences consisting :

- Yes/no questions

- Wh-word questions.

c. Command/Request or Imperative Sentences (The common mistake is

that the sentences are added by exclamation mark (!).

d. Exclamation or Exclamatory Sentences.

- What a beautiful girl you are! (or *are you? Which is correct?)*

Making Noun clauses from Statements

To make a noun clause from an affirmative sentence is done by adding **'that'**

in the beginning of the clause.

E.g. He is very handsome. It is well-known to us.

→ That he is very handsome is well-known to us. (S)

Making noun clauses from yes/no questions

Noun clauses can be made from yes-no question by adding the conjunction

'whether' (or not). The word 'if' is also used informally.

E.g. He asked me, "Is your father at home?"

→ He asked me whether my father was at home (or not)

(He asked me if my father was at home.

Making noun clauses from Wh-word questions

Noun clauses can be made from wh-word questions by inverting the

auxiliaries with the subjects. Mind that noun clauses are not questions So the order of the auxiliaries and subject is just the same as that of affirmative sentences.

E.g. The man says, "where is she?'

→ The man says where she is.

→ The man said where she was.

→ Do you know where she is?

<u>Making noun clauses from requests</u>

Noun clauses which are formed from request or command have the

pattern: S + Verbs of urgency + that + S + **Inf. without to**

The verbs of urgency are: *advise, beg, command, demand, desire, insist, propose, recommend, request, require, suggest, urge.*

E.g. The teacher commanded him, "Be on time".

→ The teacher commanded him to be on time. (not a noun clause)

→ The teacher commanded <u>that he be on time</u>.

(The teacher commanded that he SHOULD be on time)

→ The teacher urged that **he not be late**

(The teacher urged **that he SHOULD not be late)**

Adjective such as *advisable, desirable, essential, good, better, best imperative, important, necessary, urgent, vital* can also be followed by a noun clause which has the same patterns as that of verbs of urgency.

E.g. - It is important that he <u>bring</u> a dictionary.

- It is important that he should <u>bring</u> a dictionary.

Noun Clauses after "Wish" (Subjunctive)

Noun clause can also become an object of the verb "wish". This pattern is usually called subjunctive. There are two kinds of subjunctive They are present subjunctive and past subjunctive.

a. Present Subjunctive

Present subjunctive is a pattern of a sentence which is used to express every thing which is contrary to fact of present time. The verb of the noun clause must be in past (V2).

E.g. - Fact : I <u>don't have</u> any money now

Subj. : I wish I <u>had</u> much money now.

b. Past subjunctive.

Past subjunctive is used to express something which is contrary to fact in the past. The tense of the noun clause must be Had + V3 (past perfect) regardless to the tense of the main clause.

Fact : I was absent yesterday.

Subj. : I wish I <u>hadn't been absent</u> yesterday.

According to Greenbaum dan Quirk (1990:304-305), on the basis of their potential functions, we distinguish four major categories of subordinate clauses: nominal, adverbial, relative and comparative. Nominal clauses may function as subject, object, complement, appositive, and prepositional complement. adverbial clauses function mainly as adjuncts or disjuncts. The functions of relative clauses generally are as restrictive or nonrestrictive modifiers of noun phrases and are therefore functionally parallel to attributive adjectives. Comparative clauses resemble adjectives and adverbs in their modifying function.

 METHOD

The data collection in the study is intended to obtain relevant, accurate and reliable materials. To obtain the intended data, writers need techniques, procedures, instruments, and activities. To conduct a good research, writers should use organized procedures. A systematic and planned procedure in the research is data collection and analysis. gathering. The research method referred to here is the way that must be taken in order to develop and solve problems to achieve the truth scientifically.

This is a descriptive study. The way used in this study is to describe the mastery on clauses of the fifth semester students of English education study program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education,

University of Widya Dharma Klaten in academic year 2016/2017. In the description the writers present the students' mastery on subordinate clauses and the difficulties faced.

Seliger and Shohamy state *in qualitative research where qualitative data have been collected by procedures such as unstructured observation, open interviews, examining records, diaries, and other document, the data are usually in the form of words in oral or written modes* (1989:204).

In this study, writers use a test method to collect data about clause mastery and difficulty faced in mastering clauses. Arikunto (2013: 51) states that the test is a tool or procedure used to know or measure something in an atmosphere, in the manner and the rules that have been determined. Based on the form, the test used in this study is a written test and based on the composition of the test used is essay test. Data analysis method used is statistical method in the form of average value with the following formula:

$$S = \frac{R}{N}$$

S: Sudents' mastery

R: The total value

N: Number of students

After getting the average value, the writers give the categories based on the table below (Arikunto, 2012:281).

Table 1. Category of Students' Mastery

MARK (100)	GRADE	CATEGORY
80 – 100	A	Very good
66 – 79	B	Good
56 – 65	C	Fair
40 – 55	D	Poor
30 – 39	E	Fail

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The result of the test on clause mastery of semester V students of English Education Study Program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, university of Widya Dharma Klaten in academic year 2016/2017 can be seen in the following table.

Table 2. The Students' Result of the test

CODE	MARK	GRADE	CATEGORY
A	60	C	Fair
B	56.25	C	Fair
C	68.75	B	Good
D	68.75	B	Good
E	68.75	B	Good
F	76.25	B	Good
G	80	A	Very Good
H	53.75	D	Poor
I	82.50	A	Very Good
J	71.25	B	Good
K	62.50	C	Fair
L	72.50	B	Good
M	62.50	C	Fair
N	68.75	B	Good
O	75	B	Good

P	65	C	Fair
Q	65	C	Fair
R	61.25	C	Fair
S	71.25	B	Good
T	61.25	C	Fair
U	65	C	Fair
V	61.25	C	Fair
W	56.25	C	Fair
X	66.25	B	Good
Y	51.25	D	Poor
TOTAL	1.651.25		

The average value can be counted as follows:

S: $\underline{1.651.25}$ = 66.05
 25

From table 2 above, the writers know that there are 2 students who get very good category, 10 students who get good category, 11 students who get fair category, and 2 students who get poor category.

The main score is 66.05, which is categorized into good category. As the result, the writers can state the clause mastery of the fifth semester students of of English Education Study Program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, university of Widya Dharma Klaten in academic year 2016/2017 is good.

In comprehending clauses, the students have difficulties. It is in line with what Martinez *et al* state that students from non-English speaking academic backgrounds face a number of challenges when attending courses in countries in which the main language of instruction is English. Even when those students' proficiency is assessed as being high (by tests like TOEFL, and IELTS, for example) (2013:313).The difficulties faced by the students are that they cannot determine the function of noun clause in a sentence exactly, especially when the noun clause functions as an indirect object. It can be seen in the sententence *The teacher will give whoever can answer the question the fastest a present.* The noun clause *whoever can answer the question the fastest* functions as indirect object, whereas *a present* is a noun phrase functioning as direct object. Most of the students identified *whoever can answer the question the fastest a present* as direct object/object of verb. It seems that the students did not consider the meaning of the sentence, but they just paid attention to the introductory conjuction which begins subordinate clause 'whoever'. Assessor D1 in Yi states that the job of the teacher is to teach effective, engaging, socially valuable communication with meaning: not to produce an assembly line of perfect grammar that means nothing much (2013:76). Introductory conjunction 'where'makes the students confused to determine whether it begins adjective clause, adverb clause or noun clause. It is tested in the sentences *I know where she lives* and *I know the house where she lives;* 'where' in the first sentence introduces noun clause while in the second sentence introduces adjective clause. *Where she lives* in the first sentence can stand alone after the verb 'know', which can be substituted by noun phrase 'her house' or 'her adress', while in the second sentence it modifies the noun 'house'. Therfore, the lecturer needs to make writing English sentences containing subordinate clauses as students' habit. It is in line with the statement given by Szanajda and Chang that ultimately, engaging students in writing in English is a crucial endeavor for teachers at any level, and this may be especially true at the university level. At this stage, students are very close to starting the careers and to moving into fields in which , in many cases, they will need to communicate effectively in English, since it is the *lingua franca* of science, business, and a variety of other growing (2015:271). It is also stated by Greenia (1992:33) in Ruiz-Funes that in fact, reseach has shown that: grammar study (alone) does not improve the clarity or craftsmanship of student writing, nor does focussing on grammar correction in writing samples (2016:184).

The other difficulties are that the students could not make adjective clause correctly. They could not choose the appropriate introductory conjunction, especially 'whose' such as in the sentence *The*

president appointed a special committee **who** *the committee was to report him periodically* (D.IV.5). The item tested is to join the two pairs of sentences to make one sentence, namely "The president appointed a special committee. The chairman of the committee was to report him periodically." The newly formed sentence should be *The president appointed a special committee* **whose** *chairman was to report him periodically.* The students did not use the verb in making clauses, such as in the sentence *The answer was that we must more careful* (F.III.7). *The answer was that we have to more careful* (T.III.7). They thought that modal auxiliary can be as a verb. The correct sentence is *The answer was that we should be more careful.* Silalahi states that although the verb word category is equally owned in English and Indonesian, but we cannot find the equivalences between verbs in English and Indonesian. The fact that each lanuage has its unique characteristic which differs from one another (2016:46). Furthermore, Silalahi states that verb is a part of difficult languages to learn and to operate in almost any language. Learning the language is basically related to learn how to use the verb form of the language because the pattern or structure of verbs in each language is different. Verb patterns are different on two things: how linguistic material compiled and the type of information it carries (2016:42).

The most difficulty faced by the students in constructing clauses is tense. The students often did not pay attention to the tense because in Indonesian language there is no tense which causes the change of verb. It can be seen in data *I wonder why he looks so worried that time* (C.II.5). The item tested is "I wonder (*mengapa ia nampak cemas pada waktu itu*). *Pada waktu itu* refers to the past time in Indonesian language. Therefore, the students should transfer that subordinate clause into *why he/she looked so worried at that time.*

CONCLUSION

After analyzing the data, the writers can conclude that although the students' mastery on clauses of the fifth semester students of English Education Study Program, Teacher Training and Education Faculty, Widya Dharma University of Klaten in academic year 2016/2017 is good, they still need to study it more and more because clause mastery is very much needed in writing any composition; and the difficulties faced in comprehending clauses are the students cannot identify the functions of noun clause exactly, they determine the introductory conjunction incorrectly, they are confused in joining two sentences to be one by applying adjective clause, they cannot select the appropriate verb, and they cannot determine the exact time of the activity, especially on the verb form.

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