Dependent or Independent? A Deep Dive into Students' Clause Identification

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to assess the capacity of Khairun University English Language Education students in their fifth semester to use independent and dependent clauses in complicated sentences. The emphasis was on distinguishing between intransitive and transitive independent sentences, as well as adverbial, adjectival, and nominal dependent clauses. A descriptive qualitative research approach was used with 33 fifth-semester students. A written test was used to collect data, with an interview serving as additional assistance. The average score for student' ability to use independent clauses was 59.64, which was classified as fair. In comparison, the average score for dependent clause usage was 60.27, which was classified as good. Overall, the students' average score for employing independent and dependent clauses was 62.12, indicating strong overall aptitude. Based on these data, Students demonstrated a stronger ability in identifying dependent clauses compared to independent clauses. Therefore, further research is needed to explore effective techniques, methods, or learning media that can enhance students' ability to identify clauses, particularly independent clauses

1. Introduction

One of the most crucial language skills to teach is grammar because before teaching a new language, teachers should have examined the forms they will be teaching, such as how verbs are formed, how some nouns become plural, and the grammatical patterns they will be teaching. Many English language rules, including tenses, prepositions, punctuation, modals, parts of speech, and sentence types, including independent and dependent clauses, are taught to students when they study grammar.

Swan (2016) asserted that grammar comprises the principles governing the combination, arrangement, and alteration of words to convey certain meanings. Futhermore, Batstone (1994) grammar is the identification of systematic regularities within language. In line with that, traditional grammar identifies eight components of speech: noun, pronoun, verb, adjective, adverb, preposition, conjunction, and interjection (Hacker & Sommers 2014; Said et al., 2021; Prihandoko et al., 2022; Rahman & Weda, 2019).

Grammar also has a strong connection with writing, especially in sentence writing. Anderson (2014) highlighted that a sentence is a collection of words that transmits meaning, communicates a statement, command, exclamation, or question. Longknife and Sullivan (2009) also stated that a sentence conveys a complete notion and includes at least one subject-verb combination. Sentences serve to convey, whether through emotions, orders, declarations, or questions. In addition, sentences sometimes a single word like what, jump and nonsense.

Cook (1969) stated there are three types of sentences: simple, compound, and complex. A simple sentence encompasses a single independent clause like my mother is a lecturer; a compound sentence consists of two or more simple sentences joined by a comma or a coordinating conjunction such as Baso wants to eat fried chicken, but he is too lazy; a complex sentence like when she reads his story, she enjoys them because it is believable includes both a primary (independent) clause and at least one subordinate (dependent) clause.

As stated before, there are three types of sentences which every sentence consists of clause. A clause is a group of words that containing a subject and a verb. According to Azar and Hagen (2011) implied complete sentences are known as independent clauses while the dependent clause is not a complete phrase. Clauses are often categorized into two

types: independent clauses and dependent clauses. An independent clause is a clause that includes a subject and a verb and does not rely on any other element to complete the sentence (Beason & Lester 2011; Prihandoko et al., 2019; Youngsun et al., 2024). As in sentences, Razka cooked Kepiting Saos Padang last night and Raisha is turning the television plays a role an independent clause. Since independent clause comprises a subject and verb that convey a full idea (Oshima & Hogue 2007; Sukmawaty et al., 2022).

In other hand, while I was asleep and after years of searching plays a role as dependent clause. The dependent clause requires additional detail to complete the notion, utilizing connecting words such as I was asleep when you came or After years of searching, I finally found you. Since independent clause comprises a subject and verb that does not convey a full idea (Oshima & Hogue 2007; Rahman, 2016).

In producing a sentence whether simple, compound, and complex, students frequently make mistakes in determining the clause of every sentences. A clause is a fundamental concept in English grammar that often poses a challenge for learners, especially non-native speakers. A deep understanding of dependent and independent clauses is essential for constructing complex and effective sentences. However, numerous studies have shown that students often struggle to differentiate between and utilize these two types of clauses.

Meanwhile, the primary objective of writing is to ensure that the reader comprehends all pertinent information from a sentence or paragraph. Sentence construction exhibits varied patterns; therefore, for complete understanding the information conveyed, one must be familiar with each sentence structure. To comprehend sentence structure, learners must grasp the appropriate word order in addition to grasping the meanings.

A deeper comprehension of independent and dependent clauses can assist students in selecting appropriate and effective terminology for their sentences. However, themes like this will consistently feature in our daily conversations, writing, and speeches. Studying this topic serves not only academic objectives but also provides assistance for effective English communication beyond academic necessities.

Therefore, the objective of this study is to assess students' comprehension of independent and dependent clauses, as well as to identify their challenges in grasping these concepts. Understanding the students' challenges in grasping grammar facilitates the educator's search for suitable teaching approaches.

2. Methodology

The research method used in this study is a descriptive qualitative method. According to Arikunto (2023) Some characteristics of descriptive qualitative research include the fact that this study was conducted in a natural context, the data was analysed inductively, and the study focused on meaning. Meanwhile, Cresswell (2017) also implied the descriptive qualitative method is used to describe everyday phenomena. In addition, descriptive qualitative research does not use quantitative methods and instead focusses on descriptive findings (Basrowi and Suwandi 2008).

This research used descriptive qualitative method because the research has to describe students' ability in using independent and dependent clause in complex sentence at 33 students of class B of the English Language Education Study Program of Khairun University.

The test applied in this study consisted of 20 multiple-choice items and an essay. Numbers 1-5 use independent and dependent clauses, numbers 6-10 use focus on independent clause, numbers 11-15 use a variety of dependent clauses, and numbers 16-20 require students to write five sentences containing independent and dependent clauses in complex sentences.

Analysis data was carried out in several steps calculating the score proposed by Gay (2006) by dividing students' correct answer with the number of items and multiply with 100. After that, the students were classified based on their grade. Then, the researchers calculated the mean score of the students proposed by (Gay 2006).

Table 1. Grade and Qualification

Qualification	Grades
Excellent	80-100
Good	60-79
Fair	50-59

Poor	0-49

3. Result and Discussions

To find out the students' ability in using clauses, the researcher provided the data were the analyzed to determine the students' ability in using independent clauses and dependent clauses in complex sentences. Data taken from about 33 students is presented as below.

3.1 Independent Clause and Dependent Clause in Complex Sentence

In the first category, the researchers developed five identification problems numbered one through five, in which students were simply asked to identify independent and dependent clauses in complex sentences. The author thought that this was the easiest form of test because student were just asked to figure out the generic sentences.

Table 2. Kinds of Questions

Number	Question
1	Andi visited his uncle last week, when his uncle was sick (Independent Clause)
2	The man, who come yesterday, is his uncle (Dependent Clause)
3	He is looking around the office right now, after having lunch (Independent Clause)
4	I don't understand what he has said. (Dependent Clause)
5	Since we all pitched in to help, it didn't take long at all (Dependent Clause).

The percentage and frequency of student' abilities to use independent and dependent clauses. This is apparent from the student' answers to each item. In item number one, 26 students were scored good (78.78%), in item number two, 21 students were scored good (63.63%), in item number three, 22 students were scored good (66.66%), in item four, 23 students were scored good (69.69%), and in item five, 23 students were scored good (69.69%). No students were scored excellent or fair.

The students obtained the most correct answers on number one, which is connected to the independent clause (transitive clause), whereas the majority of the students got the wrong answers on the dependent clause (adjective clause). It suggests that students grasp independent clauses more than dependent clauses because there are many types of dependent clauses.

3.2 Kinds of Independent Clause

In the second category of the test, students are required to employ clauses that are classified as independent clauses type. This second category of test is a complex assessment that requires students to comprehend clauses, particularly in the context of mastering dependent clauses. The students' proficiency in employing dependent clauses and a variety of other dependent clauses is also demonstrated during the examination. This kind of test is expected to find out the students' understanding in using the types of dependent clause in detail.

The frequency and percentage of students' proficiency in employing dependent clauses and specific varieties of clauses. This is evident in the responses of the students to each item. Item number 6 is characterized by 16 students receiving a score of poor (48.48%), 21 students receiving a score of good (63.63%), 17 students receiving a score of fair (51.51%), 12 students receiving a score of poor (36.36%), and 20 students receiving a score of good (60.60%). No students received a score of excellent.

The calculation showed that most of the students got the corrects answer on number ten transitive clause. Based on the interview raised by the researcher, this can be happened because the students are used to transitive verb. A verb that must take objects. When they were a senior high school, they used to ask by the teacher to memorize most of the

transitive verb. In contrary, most of the students got wrong answer on number six intransitive clause because many students did not accustomed to intransitive verb, where verbs taking no object.

Table 3. Kinds of Questions

Number	Question
6	You are looking around in your office
7	The company installed robots
8	Her brother is a famous actor
9	They come to the party by car
10	He speaks English very well

3.3 Kinds of Dependent Clause

In the third test category, students were only asked to select a wide variety of dependent clause. The percentage value and frequency of students" ability to use various dependent clauses in complex sentences. This can be seen from the students" answers in each item. In item number 11 there are 22 students got scored good (66.66%), item number 12 there are 17 students got scored fair (51.51%), item number 13 there are 16 students got scored poor (48.48%), item number 14 there are 26 students got scored good (78.78%), and item 15 there are 23 students got scored good (69.69%), and no students got a scored excellent.

Table 4. Kinds of Questions

Number	Question
1	That you are here makes me happy.
2	The car, which is red, is a sports car.
3	As soon as you get here, we can start the party.
4	Wherever you go, I will follow.
5	Unless you apologize, I won't talk to you again.

3.4 Sentence using Independent and Dependent Clause

In the fourth test category, the test is a complex test where students are asked to create a complex sentence and determine the clauses in the sentence according to their understanding. It can be seen by the students' answers in each item. The error that 60.60% of students made are sentence fragment where the students happen by treating a dependent clause or other incomplete thought as a complete sentence. Below several students' result of the test:

She didn't pass the exam and she cried

I know you well

He went to store and bought me a milk

I love read a book but I also like write a book

Most of the students made sentence fragment. A sentence fragment is a part of a sentence that is missing a crucial element, such as a subject or verb, to form a complete thought. Hacker and Sommers (2014) also stated sentence fragments happen by treating a dependent clause or other incomplete thought as a complete sentence. In this case, based on the interview, the students did not know exactly what is complex sentence. Based on their perception, complex sentence is a sentence that contain subject, verb, and compliment.

"Saya pikir, complex itu kalimat yang ada subject, kata kerja dan keterangan"

From this point of view, there was a misunderstanding in the concept of sentence. The students thought that making the complex sentences means there will be independent and dependent clause created since complex sentences consist of two or more sentences. So, instead of creating a complex sentences which consist of independent and dependent clause, they made a compound sentence which consist of two independent clause.

4. Conclusion

Based on the findings and discussion in the previous chapter it can be concluded that the fifth semester students of class B of the English Language Education Study Program of Khairun University have a fair score 59.64 in using independent clauses in complex sentences. The fifth semester students of class B of the English Language Education Study Program of Khairun University have a good score 60.27 in using dependent clauses in complex sentences. The students have higher score in using dependent clauses than in using independent clauses while in constructing the complex sentences, 60.60% of students made are sentence fragment. The assessments attempted to assess students' ability to detect clauses in difficult sentences. Multiple category assessments were designed to assess students' abilities from several perspectives. Students were given a variety of assessments and instructed to complete them to the best of their abilities.

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