

THE USE OF RELATIVE CLAUSES AS THE POST MODIFIERS OF THE NOUN PHRASE CONSTRUCTIONS IN THE STUDENTS' THESIS BACKGROUND

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ABSTRACT

This study concerns on how the undergraduate students of the English Language Education Study Program use relative clauses as the post modifiers of the noun phrases in their thesis background and the errors found and their causes in the noun phrase constructions. Thirty undergraduate students were asked to be the subjects and the data were taken from their thesis backgrounds. The total of 226 noun phrases with relative clauses as the post modifiers were constructed with ten errors found. From the interviews conducted with fifteen subjects, the errors found were caused by (1) the different structures of English grammar point (the noun phrases with relative clauses as the post modifiers) with the Indonesian, (2) the gap time of the teaching and learning activities of the grammar concept that caused the students to forget about the structures, and (3) the pace of the students' learning which did not match with the lecturers' teaching pace. The results show that even though the awareness of the students was moderately high, they need to be reminded and encouraged to produce more complex sentences with noun phrases with relative clauses as the post modifiers to improve their thesis backgrounds.

Keywords: *undergraduate students, thesis background, thesis draft, noun phrase construction, relative clause, error*

INTRODUCTION

As the culmination of their study, the students of the undergraduate English Language Education Study Program (ELESP) are required to conduct research related to the English language and teaching field and report the results in the undergraduate thesis constructions at the end of their study. Studying in the tertiary level and being equipped with many English language skills and components, the undergraduate students are expected to be able to know what to write (the topic of the thesis) based on the appropriate significances and how to present the plan and the results in a writing composition. They need to compose and develop high quality of writing as the final assessment of the thesis which will also be publicly published as a research journal. In this case, the use of complex sentences helps the students write their thesis. Hunt (1965) stated that mature people, in this case the undergraduate students, are more capable in constructing more complex sentences for their writing composition.

In their senior year (final semester), the students begin to plan and propose their research through several stages; those are 1) choosing the topic, 2) constructing the research background, review of related literature, and the research methodologies, and 3) proposing the research plan to the thesis advisor and the head of the department. To improve the quality of their writing, complex sentences with mature syntax are necessarily used by linguistically combining the five phrases of English—adjective phrase, verb phrase, adverb phrase and prepositional phrase. Among the five phrases mentioned, the noun phrase is found to hold important roles in sentence constructions since it can take the positions of a subject, a subject complement, an object, and an object complement (Gunasa, 2014).

Noun phrase is a phrase that has a noun or pronoun as the head or root word. This root can be modified with other parts of speech (adjectives, articles or determiners, and quantifiers), phrases (prepositional phrase and

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participle phrase), and clauses (relative clause). To combine 2 or more sentences with the same root word, relative clause is the most common clause used to modify noun phrase. Relative clause is located at the end of the noun phrase as post modifiers.

From the required qualities of acquiring English language and the use of noun phrase constructions in helping the students construct more complex and mature sentences, this study is attracted to discover the students' grammar competence in constructing noun phrases with relative clause as the post modifier in writing their thesis. The data of the study is taken from the undergraduate students' draft of chapter 1 of their thesis, specifically the background of the study, before being reviewed by their thesis advisors. Thus, this research aims to discover to what extent the students are able to construct noun phrases with relative clauses as the post modifiers for their thesis background and what errors they make in constructing noun phrases for their thesis background.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Syntactic Maturity

Hunt (1965) stated that language performances of younger children are different from the mature people. In their writings, the adults will be able to present syntactic maturity which is defined as the developmental stages of how a person can grow from combining one to two sentences to longer sentences with proper hierarchical structure of a complex sentence (Hunt, 1967, as cited in Garrott, 2001). Harjanto (1991) also stated that having syntactic maturity means that a person has the ability to construct complex syntactic structures by embedding and deleting transformations to express more ideas in shorter sentences. The fact initiates that each English language learner can improve their quality of writing by learning the concept of sentence-combining approach and skills needed to produce mature and complex sentences.

In order to develop and improve the children's grammatical competence in producing mature sentences, the teachers can introduce them to sentence-combining skills (Woodley, 1982). By changing some simple sentences into subordinate clauses and attach them to another main clause, the children will be able to produce complex sentences with detailed and coherent information. As a result, the children can enhance their writing quality with mature sentences. This fact is closely related to the needs of the language component acquisition, specifically in the English grammar.

Noun Phrases

Noun phrase is a group of words which has noun or pronoun as the head or the root of the phrase (Richards, Platt, & Platt, 1992). Frank, Massey, & Wind (1972) shared his theories on how a noun phrase can be positioned as a subject, subject complement, object, and object complement as well as being used in other phrases, such as in preposition phrases. Thus, the role of noun phrase is important in sentence constructions, especially in the students' thesis writing. In constructing noun phrases, the head noun can be modified with articles, determiners, or adjectives as basic structure and other phrases and clauses as the complex ways, e.g. prepositional phrases, relative clauses, etc. The modifiers can come before and after the head noun.

In constructing noun phrases, the clause commonly used as the modifier is relative clause. Noun phrase which is constructed by combining the head noun and relative clause can be placed as a subject, direct object, indirect object, oblique, genitive, and object of comparison (Shirai & Ozeki, 2007). The effective functions of relative clauses as the post modifier of the noun phrases lead this study to emphasize the use of relative clauses and how the students have the ability to implement it for their writing compositions.

Relative Clauses

Based on Richards, Platt, & Platt (1992), relative clause, also well-known as adjective clause, is a clause that modifies a noun or noun phrase by defining or giving information of the specific noun or noun phrase modified. Depending on the functions, relative clause can be divided into two types: defining relative clause and non-defining relative clause.

Defining relative clause is a clause used to give essential information about someone or something. The information is needed to define the noun modified in order to understand which or who is being explained. In this type of relative clause, there are 7 relative pronouns used; those are (1) *who*, used to connect the relative clause that describes people or human occupying the subject of the clause, (2) *whom*, used to connect the relative clause that describes people or human occupying the object of the clause, (3) *whose*, used to connect the relative clause describing the possession of the subject of the clause, (4) *which*, used to connect the relative clause describing things and animals, (5) *where*, used to connect the relative clause denoting a place and to replace preposition + which, (6) *when*, used to connect the relative clause denoting time (day, month, year, moment) and to replace preposition + which, and (7) *that*, used to connect the relative clause denoting people or things.

Non-defining relative clause is a clause used to give additional information about someone or something. However, the information is general and does not help the readers define the noun modified since the noun is already clear and well-known by the speakers, the listeners, the writers and the readers. Different from defining relative clause, non-defining relative clause uses commas to separate the relative clause from the main clause. In addition, the relative pronoun ‘that’ cannot be used in this non-defining relative clause.

In this study, relative clauses are expected to be used in the noun phrase constructions to help writers produce more complex or compound complex sentences in their writing compositions—their thesis background.

The Process of Writing a Thesis

A partial fulfillment of tertiary level students for graduation is a thesis production. Thesis is an advanced academic writing product reporting a research that has been done by the students. In writing thesis, students are required to produce complex sentences in order to explain and convince the readers about the plan or the proposal and the result of their research. Thus, before writing a thesis, the students have been equipped with writing abilities and grammar concepts in the previous semesters. These skills help them construct readable and contextual sentences about the students’ ideas and opinions, and they result in acceptable thesis to be officially published.

Neman (1989) stated that to write effectively, writers can use sentence-combining approach to combine simple sentences in one complex sentence. Similarly, Peha (2003) mentioned that one of the quality of writings is that the writers construct understandable sentences in smooth fluency. With the basic structure of the sentence, e.g. *subject-predicate*, writers construct noun phrases with the post-modifiers, such as relative clauses, to produce effective and sentences. Thus, thesis writers are expected to be able to produce sentence constructions by using more noun phrases with the relative clauses as the post modifiers. In written production, many researchers have discovered how relative clauses used as the post modifier of noun phrase constructions are commonly found. In academic writing, such as in descriptive writing and in abstract and research reports, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners have been using noun phrases for the sentence constructions (Azizah & Ramadhana, 2019; Frijuniarsi, 2018). The use of relative clauses is significant in helping the students construct more advanced written production.

Though theoretically, relative clauses used as the post modifier of noun phrase constructions are effective in helping the students write their thesis, the fact showed that the students are still lacking the knowledge of both relative clauses and noun phrase constructions (Amin, 2017; Kusumadewi, 2019; Mutiara, 2019). The findings of the previous researches showed that the non-native learners had difficulties since the constructions of the nouns are different causing most of the learners were stuck while translating their first language’s noun constructions into the target language. The students still did not understand the procedures of using relative pronouns (*who*, *whom*, *which*, *whose*) for relative clauses in the noun phrases (Kusumadewi, 2019). Compared to the native learners, the non-native learners or the EFL learners produced less complex and shorter noun phrases (Mutiara, 2019).

RESEARCH METHOD

In this research, purposive sampling was used to choose thirty undergraduate students of the English Language Education Study Program (ELESP) of a private university in Surabaya as the subjects. These subjects were the students who were in the process of writing drafts of their own theses in their final semester, either the seventh or eighth semester, or even above. The students have passed three classes of Structure (the English grammar) and three classes of Writing skills. The students were assumed to have the ability to construct more complex sentences for their thesis background. The students' abilities were varied from the higher to the lower achievers in order to get more varied noun phrase constructions. From thirty students, fifteen students were asked to be the interviewees in order to share their thoughts and causes of errors they experienced while using relative clauses as the post modifiers in constructing the noun phrases in their thesis writing.

The data was taken from the students' draft of the Background of the Study of thirty subjects being collected and analyzed. The researcher became the main instrument of the study for the data collection and analysis. The data, the noun phrase constructions with the relative clauses as the post modifiers, were listed based on its position (subject, subject complement, object, object complement, and prepositional phrase) and type (defining and non-defining). The results were presented in table of frequency of occurrence. The number of the noun phrase variations constructed became the parameters of the interviewees chosen. Fifteen subjects were chosen to be the interviewees of the online interviews to discover the causes of the errors found.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Noun phrase constructions with relative clauses as the post modifiers found

From the analysis of the background of the studies constructed by thirty subjects, the average of the complex sentences constructed was 57.3% and the compound complex sentences constructed was 5.8% out of the total sentences constructed. From the total of twenty four sentences, twenty complex sentences (83.3%) were constructed by Student 1 as the highest percentage of complex sentences. Furthermore, the least complex sentence constructed was 36.7% from Student 12 writing eleven complex sentences out of 30 total sentences. Twenty four out of thirty subjects constructed compound complex sentences with the highest percentage of 15.4% and the least percentage of 1.1% of the sentences constructed, while six subjects did not seem to construct any compound complex sentences throughout their background of the study. Besides, the 6 subjects who did not construct any compound complex sentences, Student 22 constructed the least compound complex sentences with the percentage of 1.1%. The data showed that the student did not seem to consider compound complex sentences while constructing the background of their study.

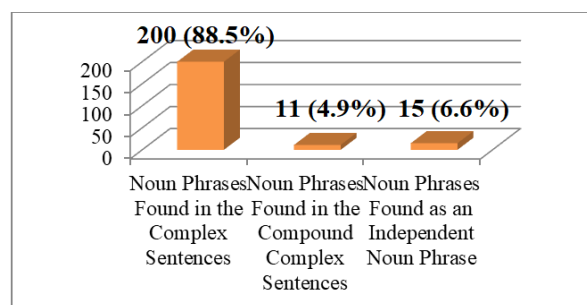


Figure 1. Noun Phrases with Relative Clauses as the Post Modifiers in the Background of the Study

From 30 backgrounds of the study, there were 226 noun phrases with relative clauses as the post modifiers found. 200 noun phrases (88.5%) out of the total noun phrases constructed were found in the complex sentences, while eleven noun phrases (4.9%) were found in the compound complex sentences and fifteen noun phrases (6.6%) were written and presented as independent noun phrases meaning that they were not attached in any

sentence. With the significant difference of the number of noun phrases found in each sentence, it can be said that the subjects preferred to use noun phrases in one or two dependent clauses rather than combining them with another independent clause in compound complex sentences. In addition, one of the subjects used all noun phrases found in her background of the study as nine single noun phrases which and left them unattached with other independent clauses.

As stated by Frank, Massey, & Wind (1972), in a sentence, a noun phrase can be positioned as a subject, subject complement, object, and object complement as well as being used in other phrases, such as in prepositional phrases. The 226 noun phrases found in the 30 backgrounds of the study were also spread among five different positions and functions as in the following Figure 2.

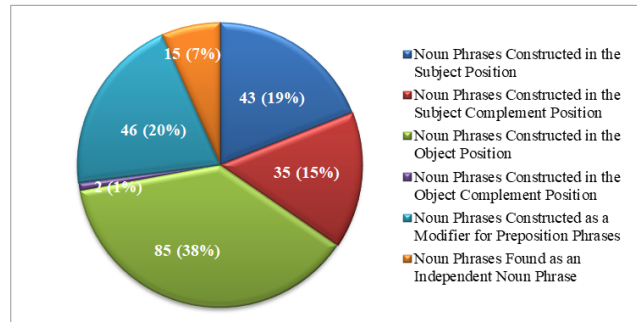


Figure 2. Noun Phrases with Relative Clauses as the Post Modifiers in Different Positions and Functions

The most frequent position that the noun phrases were found was in the object position. Eighty-five out of 226 noun phrases (38%) were used to modify noun and noun phrases written in the object position. The second most frequent position was prepositional phrase with the percentage of 20%. Then, it is followed with the positions of subject (19%) and subject complement (15%). Fifteen out of the 226 noun phrases were written and presented as independent noun phrases and in incomplete sentences. The noun phrases were found the least in the object complement position with only 1% occurrence.

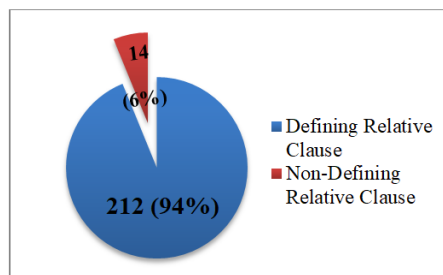


Figure 3. The Types of Relative Clauses Used in the Noun Phrases Found

212 noun phrases were found to have defining relative clauses in modifying the nouns or noun phrases in the sentences, while the other fourteen noun phrases had non-defining relative clauses as the post modifiers. The subjects tended to use general or non-specific nouns that required defining relative clauses to define and give detailed information about the nouns modified.

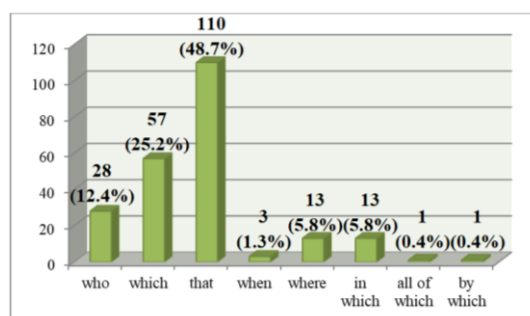


Figure 4. The Relative Pronouns Used in the Relative Clauses

From the 226 noun phrases with relative clauses as the post modifiers, 110 relative clauses (48.7%) used ‘that’ as the relative pronoun. The relative pronoun ‘which’ was found in fifty-seven (25.2%) relative clauses and it is followed with the relative pronoun ‘who’ with the percentage of 12.4%, ‘where’ with 5.8%, and ‘when’ with 1.3%. Besides, thirteen noun phrases (5.8%) were found using the relative pronoun of ‘in which’ instead of ‘where’. One noun phrase used ‘all of which’ and another one used ‘by which’. From the data analysis, it was also found that the relative pronouns of ‘whom’ and ‘whose’ were not used by all of the thirty subjects in constructing their noun phrases with relative clauses as the post modifiers.

In sum, from thirty Background of Studies, there were 226 noun phrases found in the object, subject, subject complement, object complement, and prepositional phrases in the complex and compound complex sentences constructed by the subjects. Some of the noun phrases were also written as independent noun phrases which were not attached to any independent clause. The 212 defining relative clauses and fourteen non-defining relative clauses used as the post modifiers of the noun phrases were connected to the nouns or noun phrases modified by using the relative pronouns of ‘that’, ‘which’, ‘who’, ‘where’, ‘when’, ‘in which’, ‘by which’, and ‘all of which’.

Errors found in the relative clauses used in the noun phrase constructions

From thirty participants constructing noun phrases with relative clauses as the post modifiers, there were six subjects having error constructions. Ten errors found were about the use of improper relative pronouns to connect particular nouns modified with the relative clause itself.

Table 1. Errors found in the Noun Phrase Constructions

No.	Sentence	Error	Notes
Subject 6			
1.	Writer’s block is <i>a condition</i> <u>when</u> a writer cannot write anymore in a certain time because they stuck.	The relative pronoun ‘when’	The noun phrase modified referred to a thing, not a time.
2.	There is <i>a part</i> <u>when</u> students need to express their feeling to confirm their opinion about the events.	The relative pronoun ‘when’	The noun phrase modified referred to a thing, not a time.
Subject 7			
3.	One example of the application of the LMS to be discussed in this research is <i>Schoology</i> <u>where</u> <i>the application</i> is widely used by teachers and lecturers at some schools and some universities in Indonesia included in Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya.	The relative pronoun ‘where’	The noun phrase modified referred to a thing, not a place.
		The relative pronoun was followed with another noun phrase as a subject	The relative pronoun functioned as the subject and should be followed with a verb.
4.	With some features available in schoology, one feature, <u>which</u> will be utilized in this study is that <i>the assessment feature</i> , <u>where</u> <i>this feature</i> is typically used for teachers and lecturers in class to implement the quiz.	The relative pronoun ‘which’ as a non-defining relative clause	The noun phrase modified was an unspecific term which needed defining relative clause.

No.	Sentence	Error	Notes
5.	With some features available in schoology, one feature, which will be utilized in this study is that <i>the assessment feature</i> , where <i>this feature</i> is typically used for teachers and lecturers in class to implement the quiz.	The relative pronoun 'where'	The noun phrase modified referred to a thing, not a place.
		The relative pronoun was followed with another noun phrase as a subject	The relative pronoun functioned as the subject and should be followed with a verb.
Subject 9			
6.	The character of Santiago seems to signify <i>the code of human effort</i> who <i>must pursue his quest alone</i> to maintain his self-respect.	The relative pronoun 'who'	The noun clause constructed referred to a person, not a thing.
Subject 14			
7.	As suggested by <i>Brumfit (1991)</i> which states that young learners as keen, enthusiastic and motivated learners, who can be easily stimulated.	The relative pronoun 'which'	The noun phrase modified referred to a person, not a thing.
8.	Therefore, the use of techniques that are suitable for students can reach <i>the learning goals</i> which <i>is</i> students can improve their vocabulary achievement through Team Games Tournament (TGT) technique.	The relative pronoun 'which'	The noun phrase modified referred to plural noun.
Subject 22			
9.	<i>Group work</i> is considered as structure where students are doing the same assignments and in the same corridor in <i>the classroom</i> which <i>teachers become the important roles in the classrooms</i> (McDonough, Shaw, 2013 as cited in Tamah, 2017).	The relative pronoun 'which'	The noun phrase modified was ambiguous.
Subject 23			
10.	Students, who must present some materials in speaking C course sometimes feel confused in choosing vocabularies.	The use of non-defining relative clause	The noun phrase modified was an unspecific term which needed defining relative clause.

In the construction of relative clauses as the post modifier of the noun phrases, there were ten errors found among the 226 relative clauses constructed. The errors found including the wrong choice of relative pronouns, the type of the relative clause, the placement of the relative clause in the noun phrases, and the predicate constructed following the relative pronoun.

The first error was about the incorrect choice of relative pronouns. Five errors were found the relative clauses constructed by Subjects 6, 7, 9, and 14. Subject 6 chose the relative pronoun 'when' instead of 'where' to explain about states or conditions of particular term. Subject 7 chose the relative pronoun 'where' instead of 'which' to explain about general terms or things. Instead of the relative pronoun 'who', the relative pronoun 'which' was chosen by Subject 14 to explain about a person. These five errors showed that the subjects still have difficulties in distinguishing the use of the relative pronoun where, when, which, and who. In addition, Subject 7 incorrectly constructed the phrases following the relative pronouns. Subject 7 constructed a noun phrase as the new subject after the relative pronoun. This caused the error construction since there cannot be two subjects in one dependent clause.

Furthermore, two errors in choosing the type of relative clauses were found from Subject 7 and 23. Subject 7 tried to elaborate a general term by using the relative pronoun 'which'. However, instead of a defining relative clause, a non-defining relative clause was used with a comma (,) as the separation between the relative clause and the noun modified. Similarly, Subject 23 tried to describe general people, but non-defining relative clause was used in the construction. Both subjects depended on their memory about how the relative clause was usually constructed without comprehending the basic concept of the construction. They did not realize that the use of comma influenced the different meanings of the noun phrases constructed. The distance between the semester where they took structure classes and the semester where they wrote their thesis were quite long (2 – 3 months). This caused their memory became blurry about the concept of the relative clause constructions.

Another case came from Subject 9 who constructed relative clause modifying a person. With the relative clause of "**who** *must pursue his quest alone to maintain his self-respect*", there were two possibilities of meanings

tried to be stated. The first possibility was that she tried to describe “**one code of human effort**”. With this possibility, the error made was the choice of relative pronoun. She was supposed to use ‘which’ to replace the term modified. Yet, the second possibility was that she tried to describe the person “**Santiago**” in the subject position. This led her to another error of misplacing the relative clause and constructing the incorrect noun of the subject. These two possibilities made the relative clauses ambiguous.

The error of constructing relative clauses to define particular noun was also experienced by Subject 22. In her sentence construction, there was an ambiguous meaning of the relative clause used to describe the noun. In the sentence, the relative clause “*which teachers become the important roles in the classrooms*” was used to describe the noun phrase ‘**the classroom**’ which referred to a state of condition. Therefore, the relative pronoun ‘which’ was incorrectly chosen and could be changed with the relative pronoun ‘where’ or ‘in which’. The relative clauses could be reconstructed into ‘*where teachers become the important roles in the classrooms*’ or “*which teachers become the important roles in*”. From the last two cases, it can be seen that it is important for the student to comprehend the basic function and use of relative clause in order to use them properly in presenting the ideas in the sentences. As a result, the students would understand better about the placement of the relative clauses constructed.

The last error came from Subject 14 who incorrectly constructed the relative clause. In the sentence, the noun phrase being modified, “the learning goals” ended with plural noun. However, the verb following the relative pronoun was ‘is’ which referred to a singular noun. The error in this subject-verb agreement could be solved by changing the relative pronoun ‘which’ into ‘one of which’ to emphasize ‘one of the learning goal’ being described.

The responses of the interviews conducted

There were seven questions delivered asking about the subjects’ understandings about the noun phrase constructions, relative clause constructions, the relative clause used as the post modifiers in the noun phrase constructions, the use of the noun phrases in constructing the subjects’ thesis background, and also the causes of the minimal errors produced by the subjects. Table 2 shows the list of the questions being asked to the interviewees.

Table 2. List of Interview Questions

No.	Questions
1.	What do you know about noun phrase constructions?
2.	What do you know about relative clauses?
3.	Do you often use relative clauses as a post modifier of noun phrase construction? Why or why not?
4.	In constructing the background of a thesis, noun phrases with relative clauses as the post modifiers can help the writer construct more complex sentences. Do you agree with the statement? Why or why not?
5.	How confident are you in using relative clauses as the post modifiers of noun phrase constructions in your thesis’ background?
6.	Do you think it’s hard to construct noun phrases with relative clauses as the post modifiers? Why or why not?
7.	What do you think about the teaching and learning processes of noun phrase and relative clauses you’ve had in your previous semesters?

From the answers of the interview question 1, 2 and 3, almost all of the subjects showed their understanding about noun phrase and relative clause constructions. They understand that noun phrases are phrases whose combination contains a noun as the head word or the main word of the phrase and the modifiers such as articles, adjectives, adverbs, and prepositional phrases. They clearly explained that relative clauses are the clause used to give clearer description and definitive information about particular nouns and they use the relative pronouns (that, which, when, where, who, whose, and whom). Few subjects did not really understand about relative clause because they forgot the name of the phrases. This was caused by the gap time between the time

they learned the concept in structure classes and the time they finally applied the concept when they were writing their thesis background. The subjects also understood and used relative clauses as the post modifier which helped them construct more detailed, organized, and clear noun phrases. The answers for the three questions can be seen in the table below.

Table 3. Interview Answers for Question 1, 2, and 3

No.	Subject	Answer for Question 1	Answer for Question 2	Answer for Question 3
1.	Subject 6	It is a way to explain nouns in a more detailed manner.	It is necessary and useful to elaborate things with additional information.	I do. It makes my writing more structured, organized, and easier to understand. Also, it is an easy but not messy way to express my idea.
2.	Subject 4	Phrase that use noun as the main focus.	Clauses that start with relative pronoun such as that, which, when, where, who, whose and whom.	Yes, I do. By using relative clause as a post modifier of noun phrase construction, it helps me in making my sentences more diverse and less monotonous. Usually it also helps me simplify two or more sentences into one solid yet clear sentence.
3.	Subject 9	It is a phrase that contains noun.	Words that use to explain further about the noun in a sentence.	Yes, to describe the details on things and might shorten things need to be delivered in to a sentence.
4.	Subject 7	Sentence that use the noun as the head word.	Clause that use certain words to relate from one phrase to another	Yes, I use relative clauses often when I'm writing something because it connects my sentences.
5.	Subject 22	One of the grammar rules, Explanation of 'it'	Relative clauses can be used to explain clearly.	Yes, I often use relative clauses to explain in a long sentence
6.	Subject 11	Noun that is modified with other articles, determiners, or phrases.	Clause that is used to connect similar objects or nouns.	Yes, I use relative clauses quite often.
7.	Subject 1	Noun and several other words that are combined into a phrase.	Dependent clause that is connected with relative pronouns and placed after a noun.	Yes sometimes. To explain or describe a noun, I use relative clauses.
8.	Subject 21	Noun that stands with other modifiers such as articles, adjectives, adverbs, and prepositions.	Adjective clause that describes noun.	Not really. I only use it when I want to describe general noun.
9.	Subject 23	In my opinion, noun phrase construction is two words or more have head words and modifier. E.g. : a thick book.	To be honest, I do not really understand about relative clauses.	Yes, I use relative clauses as a post modifier of noun phrase construction. Because, when I work on my background thesis, the sentences that came up on mind is like the example given above.
10.	Subject 25	Noun that is attached with other words such as article (a, an, the) and adjectives (big, dark, thin).	Relative clause or adjective clause is a clause used to give information about a noun.	Yes, I often use relative clause because it's easier than other clauses.
11.	Subject 24	A new word that comes from several words to describe the noun itself.	Sentence that cannot stand alone (same as dependent clause).	Yes sometimes, to make the sentences more understandable.
12.	Subject 27	Noun phrase is a phrase that contains objects, person/people, places with their modifiers.	Relative clauses are clauses that start with relative pronouns who, that, which, whose, when, where.	Yes, I use it to modify my sentences and to make it clearer.
13.	Subject 28	Group of words that consists of Head and Modifier.	Dependent clause. It's like adjective clause. It gives information about the noun.	I do — when it comes to written form. But if I speak I

No.	Subject	Answer for Question 1	Answer for Question 2	Answer for Question 3
				don't really use relative clause.
14.	Subject 29	Phrase that have noun as the head word of the phrase.	Relative clause is the clause that is used to explain about nouns.	Not really. I just use it sometimes, when I need it.
15.	Subject 30	Making a phrase consist of noun and its modifier.	A clause that can give more meaning.	Yes, sometimes because it can describe the noun more specific.

The fourth interview question asked the subjects about how noun phrases with relative clauses as the post modifiers could help them construct their thesis background. Thirteen subjects gave positive feedback on the use of the noun phrases. They experienced that relative clauses helped them give better explanation and more complex sentences for their thesis background. This reduced many simple sentences that they were about to produce. The other two subjects shared that they did not pay attention to the clauses they used. The tendency of choosing particular clauses depends mostly on the needs of the sentences and ideas being explained. Table 4 shows the answers of the interview.

Table 4. Interview Answers for Question 4

No.	Subject	Answer
1.	Subject 6	I do. It allows me to add supporting detail while keeping the sentence quite easy to read and understand.
2.	Subject 4	Totally agree. As I said before, according to my understanding, it helps the writer to simplify sentences into one solid yet clear sentence. It makes the paragraph less boring.
3.	Subject 9	Yes, because the sentences constructed will contain independent and dependent clauses which the form of a complex sentence is.
4.	Subject 7	I am honestly uncertain because when I constructed my thesis background, I did not think about which clauses or modifiers I used. I just simply wrote it as long as the sentences were making sense to me and I received a lot of revision afterwards.
5.	Subject 22	Yes, it can inspire me to write the next sentence.
6.	Subject 11	Yes, since the relative clause is a dependent clause that is connected to independent clause. So it becomes complex sentences.
7.	Subject 1	I agree. Complex sentence is formed with independent clause and dependent clause, and relative clause can be used as the dependent clause.
8.	Subject 21	Yes I agree because noun phrase cannot stand alone, it must be attached with other clause in a sentence and becomes complex sentence.
9.	Subject 23	Yes, I agree. Because when using noun phrases with relative clauses, it helps students to be more aware with grammar, etc.
10.	Subject 25	I agree because when the noun phrases are the same, I can combine some sentences into one complex sentence by using the relative clause.
11.	Subject 24	Yes, I agree, because using noun phrase with relative clause can give more focus to something and give extra or specific information.
12.	Subject 27	Yes, I agree because in constructing the background of thesis, we need to elaborate our statement in order to make it clear. I also use it to avoid redundancy in using simple sentences.
13.	Subject 28	Yes. It connects 2 separate sentences into 1 which will make it more simple. Also, the types of sentences will be varied.
14.	Subject 29	I'm not sure.
15.	Subject 30	Yes. To make it more understandable.

The fifth question was asking about the subjects' confidence in using relative clauses as the post modifiers in noun phrase constructions in their thesis backgrounds. Even though most subjects shared their understandings about the relative clauses and noun phrases in the previous questions, half of them did not really feel confident in using the noun phrase constructions for their thesis background. Only two out of fifteen subjects stated that they felt confident in using noun phrases with relative clauses in their thesis. Most of them were afraid of making

mistakes and were not sure whether they could make the correct ones. The answers of the interviews can be seen in the table below.

Table 5. Interview Answers for Question 5

No.	Subject	Answer
1.	Subject 6	I am confident, as I used quite a lot of it in my writing.
2.	Subject 4	8/10 - Somehow I still find some difficulties in distinguish whether I should use who, whose, or whom.
3.	Subject 9	Pretty confident. I use the noun phrases in my background of thesis.
4.	Subject 7	Quite confident. Relative clause makes my sentence somehow connected to one another and when I read it, it does make sense (though I don't know whether it was grammatically correct or not).
5.	Subject 22	Not confident enough because sometimes I get stuck in explaining.
6.	Subject 11	Quite confident. I know when I need to use relative clause and what words I connect.
7.	Subject 1	I'm confident in using the relative clauses to explain my thesis idea.
8.	Subject 21	Not really confident, because I sometimes confused.
9.	Subject 23	I'm not really confident.
10.	Subject 25	I'm confident enough because I still remember some of the rules.
11.	Subject 24	I'm not really confident when using relative clause as the post modifier.
12.	Subject 27	I'm quite confident to use it because the structure is not too complicated.
13.	Subject 28	6/10. I am not that good in grammar so every time I want to use relative clauses I will always look up on the internet to check to if the it's correct.
14.	Subject 29	Since I can't really remember how to construct the clauses, I'm not really confident in using the noun phrases.
15.	Subject 30	I'm not really confident. Sometimes I'm afraid I make the wrong sentence with noun phrase.

The sixth question asked the interviewees about the difficulties they experienced while constructing the noun phrases with relative clauses as the post modifiers. Ten subjects mentioned that they did not really find difficulties. The other five subjects felt that it was quite hard for them to use the noun phrases with relative clauses as the post modifiers since the sentence structures were quite different from the common structures they used, both in oral and written communication. One subject shared that she often found herself lost while combining some ideas into one sentence since the ideas were overlapping one another. At the end, she still could make some complex sentences by using the noun phrases with relative clauses as the post modifiers. Table 6 shows the answers of the sixth question.

Table 6. Interview Answers for Question 6

No.	Subject	Answer
1.	Subject 6	No, I don't. It is not an advanced structure, so it's quite easy to be structured.
2.	Subject 4	Not really. I think? Just as far as we know the rules and how to construct it in a right way.
3.	Subject 9	Not really actually, but sometimes I get stuck and it's easier to write simple sentences.
4.	Subject 7	Yes, because I did not remember what noun phrase is. Again, I just simply wrote my background without thinking what kind of phrases I used. I only focused on the tenses and I did a lot of grammar mistakes too (I am bad at grammar).
5.	Subject 22	Yes, it is hard to make the sentence relate because it needs more inspiration.
6.	Subject 11	Not really. As long as I know the nouns I want to connect between two or more sentences, it's not that hard to construct relative clauses. It can also be used more than 2 times in one sentence.
7.	Subject 1	Not really. Because I understand the concept, I can use relative clauses more easily.
8.	Subject 21	Yes, because sometimes I get confused about the connection between one sentence and another sentence. Sometimes I also use the wrong relative pronoun.
9.	Subject 23	I think it is not that hard, but I forgot the theory about noun phrases with relative clauses.
10.	Subject 25	No, it's quite easy to remember the relative pronouns and the rules of each of them.

No.	Subject	Answer
11.	Subject 24	It's hard if we don't know the structures of the text.
12.	Subject 27	No, because the structure is not complicated.
13.	Subject 28	No. You just have to know the rules. What makes it difficult is when you are not familiar with the rules.
14.	Subject 29	Yes, it's quite hard because most of the time I get confused and mixed with other phrase constructions.
15.	Subject 30	Yes, because I don't really understand it.

The last question was asking the subjects about how they thought and felt about the teaching and learning activities of the whole concept of noun phrases, relative clauses, and the noun phrases with relative clauses as the post modifiers. As provided in Table 7, thirteen subjects agreed that during the structure classes, they were taught well by the lecturers. The materials were explained and taught clearly and the textbook used also provided enough practices for them to train their skills. The last two subjects stated that the lecturers' explanation was too fast for them and they were afraid of asking the lecturer to slow down the teaching pace. When the lecturer asked the students to give questions, they also could not ask much since they were shy. In this case, the teachers could take initiative steps to give the student formative tests to discover the students' learning progress. Once the teachers know the students' scores and errors in the materials discussed, they could treat the students having difficulties differently. Instead of asking the students to give questions in front of the classroom, they could visit the students' seats and ask them personally about the difficulties that the students encounter. This would help the students so much that they would be motivated to learn more inside the classroom.

Table 7. Interview Answers for Question 7

No.	Subject	Answer
1.	Subject 6	They are supportive to my writing development. Structure 3 made me understand most phrases and clauses to the point I can differentiate kinds of clauses and phrases. The lecturers explained the concept well and let us do many exercises.
2.	Subject 4	My lecture did so much well in teaching these materials. He gave us a lot of examples and trials that much helpful for us to understand and remember what we have learned.
3.	Subject 9	The teacher has explained it clearly and the book (explanations and exercises) used is helpful too. But sometimes I just forget some of the concept while writing down my thesis.
4.	Subject 7	It was clear but it was just my brain that didn't work properly so I was confused at that time and easily forgot about the phrases and clauses. It's also confusing because there are many structures that I need to pay attention on while constructing the phrases. However, if I read and learn about it again, I would probably remember it again
5.	Subject 22	In the structure B, I learn not only about noun phrase and relative clauses but many grammar rules so I did not pay attention that much to relative clauses. I learn more about relative clauses and noun phrase after I finish the structure B, individually.
6.	Subject 11	I think the lecturer explained noun phrases and relative clauses well. The book used also has clear examples and many exercises for us to practice.
7.	Subject 1	I think I've been taught about noun phrase and relative clauses enough during the Structure classes. The teaching activities went well. But sometimes I make mistakes because I focus more on the topic than the structure.
8.	Subject 21	The teaching and learning processes are already good. The lecturers help the students when they don't understand. Though I don't get high scores, I still can manage to pass the standard.
9.	Subject 23	The teaching and learning processes that I had in my previous semester was understandable.
10.	Subject 25	When I was in Structure classes, sometimes it's hard for me to understand. For several times, I ask the lecturer to repeat the explanation. I also ask my friends who are smart so I can get what the lecturer means.
11.	Subject 24	I understand the concept but it's little bit hard to apply it.
12.	Subject 27	I was taught well by my lecturer and it has been becoming very useful for me in my writing.

No.	Subject	Answer
13.	Subject 28	It was not the best because I couldn't understand my lecturer. So, I had to learn it from other sources such as YouTube and Google. I realized that understanding how relative clauses and noun phrases works was not as difficult as my lecturer made it sound like. Screen reader support enabled.
14.	Subject 29	In the classroom, sometimes I can't understand what the lecturer's explaining. But I ask my friends to explain again to me so I can understand the materials.
15.	Subject 30	For me, it's a bit complex and I need more exercises about it.

From the seven questions delivered during the interviews, it can be concluded that more than 75% of the subjects used the noun phrases with relative clauses as the post modifiers with or without realizing it. Some essential reasons like developing clearer and more content sentences, shortening simple sentences into complex sentence, and giving varied and less monotonous sentence constructions support the initial idea that the noun phrases with relative clauses as the post modifiers can enhance the students' sentence maturity in their thesis background.

CONCLUSION

The data analysis result shows that more than 50% of the English Language Education Study Program (ELESP) students were able to compose complex and compound complex sentences in their thesis background with the 226 noun phrases with relative clauses as the post modifiers found. Only ten errors were found related to the choice of the relative pronouns, the misplacement of the relative clause, and the whole construction of the relative clause (including the predicate following the relative pronoun). The result of the interviews showed that most subjects were aware and confident enough with the concept of noun phrases, relative clauses, and noun phrases with relative clauses as the post modifiers. Only few of them shared their difficulties in memorizing the structures of the noun phrases with relative clauses as the post modifiers that led to simple sentences instead. The different structures of Indonesian and English sentences got them confused in the middle of their effort in trying to compose the constructions. Some others shared that they had difficulties in following the teaching pace during the teaching and learning processes and they needed to learn it from the classmates or do independent study.

In conclusion, the awareness of the use of noun phrases with relative clauses as the post modifiers in writing their thesis background is moderately high among the ELESP students. They knew the concept and tried to apply the construction to help them compose better quality of thesis background. The understandings of the concept helped them properly construct the complex sentences with minor errors. However, the ELESP students also need to be reminded and encouraged to produce more complex sentences with noun phrases with relative clauses as the post modifiers to improve their thesis background. The helps from the lecturers, especially Structure lecturers, can be given in form of (1) more portions of explanation of other relative pronouns, such as 'who', 'whom', 'whose', 'where', 'when', (2) formative tests used to monitor the students' learning progress, and (3) extra attention to the students having low scores or difficulties in constructing the noun phrases and relative clauses. Review activities are needed so that the students can make sure to shorten ineffective sentences into some clear and understandable complex sentences. As a result, the ideas being explained can be understood better by the lecturers or the head of the department.

The research could be extended with focus on the perspectives of the lecturers or the thesis advisors and the thesis examiners about the use of noun phrases with relative clauses as the post modifiers in the students' thesis background. Instead of only analyzing the thesis background, further research can analyze the other chapters of the thesis writing, such as the Findings and Discussion or the Conclusion and Suggestion chapter since the sentences of these two chapters are constructed solely by the students. Analyzing the use of other phrases as the pre and post modifiers of the noun phrase constructions could also be useful for improving the grammar competence.

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