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***Libyan EFL Undergraduate Students' Inability in
Distinguishing Dependent Clause Structures***

*A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Master Degree in Applied Linguistics.*

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Dedication

I dedicate this research to

My beloved parents and teachers, who taught me to think, understand and express.

My family, my husband and my daughter (Salma, Sireen, Mais) who encourage me to be the best figure.

My lovely sisters and brothers.

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I am sincerely grateful to all the **university staff members** who accepted to be participants in the sample.

I am deeply indebted to my parents, my husband, and my brothers for support and encouragement.

Declaration

I hereby declare that Libyan EFL Undergraduate Students' Inability in Distinguishing Dependent Clause Structures is my own work. No part of this thesis has been previously published or submitted for another award or qualification in other institutions or universities.

Abstract

This study aimed at investigating the difficulties encountered by 4th-year students at the department of English/ Faculty of Education in Ajelat in distinguishing and using the three main types of dependent clauses. Moreover, this study examines the extent to which the students' errors can be attributed to the teachers' lack of knowledge about the dependent clauses. To collect the required data a quantitative method was used, and a test was distributed to (100) 4th-year students at the Faculty of Education in Ajelat and (10) of their teachers. The participants were selected through a purposive sampling strategy. The obtained data were analyzed by using Microsoft Excel. The findings of the test showed that 4th-year students encountered difficulties in distinguishing and using the three types of dependent clauses, whereas most of their teachers were able to distinguish them. Moreover, from the results of the last question of the test which is about noun clause with its function in the sentences, most of the teachers and students faced the same problems in finding out the noun clauses and their functions; therefore, one of the reasons that make students not able to distinguish the types of dependent clauses are the teachers. In light of the results of the test, some conclusions were drawn and several suggestions and remedial work are presented for the students to overcome the problems they encountered in distinguishing and using the three types of dependent clauses.

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Chapter I: Introduction

This introductory chapter highlights the main elements of the study. It starts with a brief background about the study, then it proceeds to state the research problem and the research questions. It covers the purpose, significance, objectives, methodology, layout, and limitations of the study.

1.1. Background of the study

Language is a tool of human daily social interactions and communications. It is used by everyone as a part of individuals' creating, sharing, and exchanging knowledge, information, ideas, opinions, and facts. Due to the fact that English is an international language and the important role that English plays globally, people all over the world are willing to learn it. Any language needs to be practiced by many people in many ways such as using the four skills of the language, and they cannot be split up from language components. Writing is an important skill for EFL learners. Therefore, it is essential for the learners who face difficulties in making incorrect sentences to improve their writing skills. In her study about "The Importance of Writing", Klimova, B. (2013:2) mentioned a number of researchers focused on the benefits and the importance of writing. According to her, Walsh, K. (2010) argues that writing is important because it is used extensively in higher education and in different workplaces. If students do not know how to express themselves in writing, they will not be able to communicate well with professors, employers, peers, etc. Much of professional communication is done in writing; proposals, memos, reports, applications, preliminary, interviews, e-mails, and more. Those are part of the daily life of a college student or successful graduates.

Writing is essential. It brings about a lot of advantages, according to Chappell, V. (2011), it helps to; express one's personality, foster communication, develop thinking skills, make logical and persuasive arguments, provide and receive feedback, and prepare for school and employment.

In order to learn a certain aspect of English language, people must have a good background and knowledge about the language itself. Therefore, it is vitally important for foreign learners of the English language to master it, to know the grammatical functions of the language and how they are formed. In general, a complex sentence is constructed of two kinds of clauses; an independent clause and a dependent clause. Sekali (2012; 2) argued that a complex sentence is defined as a multiple clause sentence, i.e. complex sentences are composed of at least two verbs or (predicates) linked with a hierarchical complementing structure (subordination) or conjoined in a non-embedded structure (coordination).

Because of the complex syntactic structure of the dependent clauses, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners have always been encountering problems in distinguishing the different types of dependent clauses. Mart (2013) stated that students often find it difficult to write complex English sentences because they are often confused about clauses and their specificities. In complex sentences, in terms of independent and dependent clauses, the former is similar to a simple sentence, which can stand alone, and the latter refers to a simple sentence with conjunction embedded therein. They find difficulties in distinguishing noun clauses from adjective clauses and adverb clauses. Thus, the present study examines 4th year Libyan EFL university students in Ajelat faculty of education ability in distinguishing the different types of dependent clauses. The students of the English department study for four years. In each year, they study English grammar with different lessons and English grammatical rules. Each instructor has his/ her own curriculum and he/ she distributes it to the students. The researcher chose 4th-year students because the students at this stage should have good knowledge about the different types of English dependent clauses. All 4th-year students are taught English in the same way. That is to ensure that the students have fully understood the lesson, the instructors introduce the topic and explain the lesson items one by one as mentioned in the textbooks. Moreover, all the students share the same mother tongue.

1.2. Research Problem

Some English Language learners encounter difficulties in mastering the main types of dependent clauses. From previous studies, the researcher notices that EFL learners either avoid using the three main types of dependent clauses or replace them with

other structures like noun phrases. This in turn affects the quality of writing and causes a lot of ambiguity and misunderstanding. Therefore, it is important to examine the difficulties encountered by Libyan EFL 4th year university students at the faculty of education in Ajelat/ English department. Furthermore, since the teachers play an important role in enhancing learners' levels, it is essential to investigate whether Libyan EFL university teachers face the same difficulties or not.

1.3. Aims of the study

This study aims at shedding lights on the significance of the different types of dependent clauses, which in turn raises the instructors' awareness about the importance of developing students' knowledge of forming and using dependent clauses. Thus, this study is intended to suggest some points which can be considered as remedies to the difficulties the students may face in distinguishing the main types of dependent clauses.

1.4. Research questions

1. What are the difficulties that Libyan EFL university students encounter in distinguishing the different types of dependent clauses?
2. Do Libyan EFL university teachers face the same difficulties in distinguishing the different types of dependent clauses?

1.5. Significance of the study

After identifying, analyzing, and classifying students' errors in distinguishing different types of dependent clauses, the results of the study provide empirical support to the literature of EFL teachers' professional development programs and activities. Practically, Libyan EFL university students can benefit from the finding of this research through improving their knowledge about English clauses that would help the researcher propose some relevant suggestions such as practicing more exercises, watching videos that will help students to be more motivated in learning these types of clauses.

1.6. Methodology of the Study

A descriptive study employs a quantitative research approach to achieve the aims of the study and to find out answers to the research questions. One test consists of three

questions was used to collect the required data from both instructors and students. The participants of this study were 100 Libyan EFL university students and 10 EFL university instructors in Ajelat faculty of education. The collected data were analyzed using Microsoft Excel. For more details see chapter three.

1.7. Layout of the Study

This study consists of five chapters of which this chapter is the introductory chapter. This chapter highlights the main elements of the study. It starts with a background and then proceeds to state the study problem and questions. Next, it covers the purpose, the significance, and the limitations of the study.

Chapter two is the literature review. Chapter three deals with the methodology of the study, it discusses the empirical part of the study. Chapter four is concerned with the obtained answers of the test and analyzes the students' and teachers' errors. The last chapter provides a detailed discussion of the results and concludes the research by giving a brief conclusion and providing some recommendations in order to overcome the students' errors and misuse of English dependent clauses.

Chapter II: Literature Review

2.0. Introduction

English is the most commonly used language around the world. Thus, it has become an international language. Learning a language means mastering the skills and components of that language. In English, there are four skills to be mastered and this also cannot be split up from language components. In language learning, getting the main message in every single sentence is very important for the educators in understanding the true meaning of a given text by the teacher. Consequently, educators or students must automatically identify all kinds of sentences they will probably face.

This chapter aims to review literature related to the thesis. It is divided into five parts: definitions of key concepts, types of dependent clauses, errors committed by EFL learners in using dependent clauses, the importance of developing students' knowledge, and common factors causing students' difficulties in recognizing dependent clauses.

2.1. Definitions of Key Concepts

- **Sentence:** "a sentence is defined as a set of words that is complete in itself, typically containing a subject and predicate, conveying a statement, question, exclamation, or command and consisting of a main clause and sometimes one or more subordinate clauses." Yule, G. (2006). In the English language, there are four types of sentences: simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences. Students often encounter difficulties in writing complex sentences because they contain more than one clause.
- **Complex Sentence:** "complex sentences contain two or more clauses. One of these is a main clause, which is finite and can stand on its own. The other clause or clauses are subordinate to this or in some way dependent on it." (Parrott, M. 2000: 384).
- **Clause:** "a clause is a group of words containing a subject and a predicate and functioning as a member of a complex or a compound sentence (Wulandari, 2018).

- **Dependent clause:** "a group of words that has both a subject and a verb but (unlike the independent clauses) cannot stand alone as a sentence. Nordquist (2018). The dependent clause implies that there is more to come and is incomplete. It is also defined as a clause which embeds an independent clause in a complex sentence (Koutsoudas, 1966: 269). Therefore, based on the grammatical function the dependent clauses serve, dependent clauses are classified into noun clauses, adjective clauses, and adverb clauses.

2.2. Types of Dependent clauses

Concerning dependent clauses, they commonly fall into three categories, namely noun clause, adjective clauses, and adverbial clause. The ability to make use of those kinds of clauses is beneficial to English students in order that they can recognize or identify well.

2.2.1. Noun clause

A dependent clause that acts and functions as a noun in a sentence and fills a noun phrase position is called a noun clause or a nominal clause. According to Wren and Martin (2000:190), a noun clause is a subordinate clause which does the work of a noun, and so qualifies some noun or pronoun in the main clause. Wren and Martin (2000:196) detail divided the function of noun clause to be five categories such as *subject of noun*, pronoun, and *complement of verb of incomplete verb*. Baithy (2014) conducted a study about An Analysis of Students' Error in Learning Noun Clause and she discussed the topic in broader explanation in which she had given more definitions about noun clauses adopted from some experts of grammar. The first definition of noun clause is "a noun clause consists of a subject and predicate those functions as a noun." The second one is "a noun clause is a clause used as a noun within a sentence. A noun clause can serve as a subject, or an object, or a predicate noun." Moreover, nominal clauses may function as a subject, subjective complement, adjectival complement, direct object, object of a preposition, appositive, or prepositional complement. Furthermore, Nesfield (1957:129) noted that a noun clause is subject to all the liabilities and duties of a proper noun.

Noun clauses are, like other kinds of clauses, formed with subordinator + subject + verb (+ rest of clause). However, according to Azar (1999:240), the main problem

learners have with noun clauses is the incorrect word order. Students may use question word order in a noun clause introduced by a question word:

Incorrect: *I wanted to know why did Ann leave early?*

Correct: *I wanted to know why Ann left early.*

Parrott (2000:343) argued that noun clauses are subordinate clauses which generally follow the main clause and are linked to it by one of the following (kinds of) conjunctions: (question words such as when, what...etc), whether or if, and that. For example; *I don't know **whether** I want to go out.* He mentioned some researchers who had done studies about conjunctions that are linked to noun clauses; these researchers were mentioned as followings: Smally and Ruetten (1982: 177) denoted that these conjunctions depend on whether the clause is a statement or a question. Those conjunctions can be questioning words, 'if/whether', and 'that'. Each of them has its own use. Examples:

Billy's friends didn't know that he couldn't swim.

What he did made a problem for his family.

In the second sentence the clause "what he did" functions as a noun, hence, it is a noun clause. Moreover, noun clauses can be introduced by relative pronouns; "**that, what, whatever, who, whom, whoever, whomever**".

Examples:

Whatever you learn will help you in the future.

What you said made me laugh.

Bossone presented that a noun clause usually starts with words such as, *what, where, why, who, when, that* (1977: 44). Thus, nominal clauses may begin with interrogatives: who, whom, what, which, whoever, whomever, whatever, when, where, how, and why and such clauses are called interrogative clauses because they are originally derived from interrogative questions.

He said that Ann is married.

Question: What did he say?

Noun clause **What he said.**

In this case, such clauses are called interrogative clauses. It's an affirmative sentence using a noun clause. Winter (1982:57) argued that nominal clauses are those subordinate clauses which by themselves can be replaced syntactically by the indefinite pronoun *something*. Both of them are syntactically equivalent in function as in: *I know that he was coming*. And *I know something*.

Noun clauses are usually placed at the end of the sentences when they are objects, especially when they are long and contain a lot of information. Noun clauses can be used in other positions. According to Yule, Firstly, noun clauses in the front position as a connection to information already given or when it is used to repeat or rephrase old information before presenting new information. Secondly, noun clauses in the mid position spell out details of a fact or idea. Leech and Svartvik (1975: 213) stated that finite clauses are those whose first word of the verb phrase is finite. All main clauses are finite but many subordinate clauses are finite as well as in: I said that I might go.

Thakur (1998: 88) mentioned that a finite noun clause functions as a subject, object, complement, and a complement to a preposition of another clause. The first grammatical form of the noun clauses in English grammar is the finite noun clause. Finite noun clauses contain conjugated verb phrases. Conjugated verb phrases in English show person (first, second, third), number (singular, plural), and tense (present, past). The following italicized clauses are examples of finite noun clauses:

My favorite musician is whoever sings this song.

Whatever you decide is fine with me.

His parents are fuming about how he crashed their new car.

The finite, or conjugated, verbs in the noun clauses are *sings* (first-person singular present), *decide* (second-person singular/plural present), and *crashed* (third-person singular past). The second grammatical form of the noun clauses in English grammar is the nonfinite noun clause. Nonfinite noun clauses lack conjugated verbs. Nonfinite verbs in English include base forms (verb), infinitives (to + verb), and present participles (verb-ing). The following italicized clauses are examples of the nonfinite noun clauses:

The teacher wants you to finish your homework.

My mom listened to me singing the song.

I demand that the child eat his vegetables.

The nonfinite, or unconjugated, verbs in the previous noun clauses are to *finish* (infinitive), *singing* (present participle), and *eat* (base). Notice also that the object pronouns function as the subject of the non-finite noun clause when the verb is an infinitive or present participle.

2.2.2. Adjective clauses

Relative clauses, adjective clauses, refer to the dependent clauses which modify noun phrases. A relative clause may simply be defined as a subordinate or dependent clause that provides additional information to the head noun of the main clause which precedes it. In other words, it acts as an adjective, describing the noun phrase in the main clause which is also known as a matrix or independent clause (Alroudhan, 2016). Murphy (2000:168) stated that a relative clause tells us which person or thing, or what kind of person or thing the speaker means. They enable the speaker to be more specific and add additional information about the referent.

An adjectival clause usually begins with a relative pronoun, which makes the clause subordinate (dependent). The relative pronouns that introduce adjective clauses are; that, *which*, *who*, *whom*, *when*, and *whose*.

Example:

The children ***who are on the bus*** are going to visit the museum.

Spring is the season ***when everything blooms***.

Like a single-word adjective, an adjectival clause describes a noun (in the sentence's main clause) and answers one of these questions: ***Which one? What kind?*** According to Stageberg (1971: 249, 250), relative clauses in English can be easily identified by the following characteristics:

- a) A relative clause is introduced by a relative pronoun: that, who, whom, whose, which, or 'zero'.
- b) The relative clause has a grammatical function in its own clause (subject, direct object, object of a preposition, modifier, or subjective complement), as illustrated in the following sentences:
 - The man ***who suffers from AIDS*** is half dead. (Subject)
 - The partner ***whom she selected*** was a very educated man. (Direct object)

- It was the prime minister to *whom I presented the novel*. (Object of a preposition)
- The client *whose stock he was handling* died. (Modifier)
- The play *he wants* is Romeo and Juliet. (Zero)
- The victory *that you achieved* is the first step in your practical life. (Subjective complement).

Leech (1994:33) stated that the main function of a relative clause is to modify a noun phrase. Relative clauses used for; **Identifying, Classifying, Emphasizing**.

Parrott M. (2000) stated that:

"Long before we expect or require learners to use relative clauses, we can help them to recognize and understand them by systematically drawing their attention to where and why they are used in real conversations and texts. Native English-speaking teachers often underestimate the difficulty that relative clauses can pose for comprehension..."

Suhaila (2016: 1) conducted a study titled "Problems Encountered by University Students in Using Relative clauses". She mentioned that Gass and Slinker (2001) argued that relative clauses have always been an important issue to the EFL/ESL educators because of their complex syntactic structure and therefore being a learning problem to the language learner. Students who learn English as a foreign language encounter problems in distinguishing and using relative clauses. The problems refer to the misunderstanding of using relative clauses. When a relative clause is connected to a main clause, it can be placed in a medial position (i.e., in the middle) or in a final position (i.e., at the end) of the main clause. Relative clauses typically occur in a medial position when they are modifying the subject of the main clause, as in: **The man that likes large cats has a dog**. According to Parrott (2000: 351), relative clauses usually follow whatever they qualify, so they come immediately after the main clause if they qualify the whole of the clause or the last part of it, as in:

The bus came at last, **which was an enormous relief**.

I like working with **students who appreciate what I do**.

And they are embedded in the main clause if they qualify the subject as in: People who **know several foreign languages** make better language Teachers.

2.2.3. Adverbial clauses

Adverbial clauses are a category of subordinate clauses. They are linked to main clauses and tell us something about the information in that main clause (Parrott 2000:334). An adverbial clause begins with a subordinating conjunction, which makes the clause subordinate (dependent) i.e., they are introduced by subordinators. On that basis, they are grouped into types: **time**, **cause (purpose, reason)**, **result**, **concession**, and **condition** adverb clauses. These clauses may either follow or precede a main clause.

After the fruit is harvested, it is sold at the market.

When spring arrives, the flowers bloom.

The women had no money *because she had lost her job*.

Where there is smoke, there is fire.

If I like it, I will buy it.

Adverbial clauses are typically introduced by different types of adverbial conjunctions. These conjunctions serve to establish the connection between the meaning in the main clause and the meaning in an adverbial clause (Greenbaum and Quirk, 1990; Kortmann, 1996). Like a single-word adverb, an adverbial clause describes a verb (in the sentence's main clause) and answers one of these questions; **Where? Why? How? When? to What Degree?** etc. Thus, with the use of adverbial conjunctions, the information in the main clauses is further supported by the information in the adverbial clauses.

As Parrott (2000) observed, ESL learners tend to overuse coordinate clauses while adverbial clauses are needed and more appropriate for the combination of information. However, the diversity of adverbial conjunctions in each semantic type may be confusing and somehow difficult to learners (Chang and Chang, 2009; Hinkel, 2004; Izzo, 1995; Lorenz, 1999). Some adverbial conjunctions bear inherited syntactic complexities or “poly functionality” (Kortmann, 1996: 89), as the following two examples illustrate:

It would probably last **until the evening**.

He wasn't even a suspect **until you got that note**.

(Jackson, 1991:52 and 201)

Since we moved to Florida, we've gone to the beach.

Since the weather is warm here, we moved to Florida.

(DeCapua, 2008: 293)

In the first example, the part of speech of *until* in the two sentences is different. In the first sentence, it is a preposition, whereas it is a subordinate conjunction that specifies a time frame for its main clause in the second sentence. The second example shows that a subordinate conjunction can denote different semantic meanings. That is, "Since" in the first sentence conveys a temporal relation. On the other hand, "since" in the second sentence carries its causal meaning. Due to these inherited features of subordinate conjunctions, learners may find them perplexing in both comprehension and application.

Jia-Wen Yu (2010) conducted a study to investigate how adverbial clauses are used in Taiwanese senior high school students' written production and what kinds of difficulties students encounter in employing the structure. In Taiwan, based on their linguistic complexities, adverbial clauses have been introduced to learners early in the process of language learning. Starting from a junior high school; different syntactic forms and types of adverbial clauses are introduced to learners along the way to a senior high school. In spite of its early introduction and significance in information combining, it seems that the structure hardly gains importance in EFL grammar instruction, especially as a crucial syntactic structure in writing. In addition, adverbial clauses could be challenging for learners. Some errors have been identified concerning the use of adverbial clauses in ESL and EFL students' written productions (Cowan, 2008; Hinkel, 2004; Lorenz, 1999; Parrott, 2000; Pretorius, 2006).

In an EFL context such as Taiwan, textbooks are undoubtedly one of the major resources for learners' input and teachers' instruction. With the inception of communicative language teaching, the view of teaching and learning of grammar structure has taken on a different role. It is suggested that the presentation of grammar structures in textbooks should be contextual and meaningful for learners to fully understand the form, the meaning, and the appropriate use of a linguistic form (Celce-Murica, 1991, 2002; Larsen-Freeman, 1991; Savignon, 2001, 2002). Therefore, the exploration of the introduction and presentation of adverbial clauses in textbooks is

essential to see how the concept of adverbial clauses is formed in the process of English learning (Jai-Wen Yu, 2010).

In languages in which adverbial clauses have a final subordinator, adverbial clauses tend to precede the main clauses, whereas in languages in which adverbial clauses are marked by an initial subordinator, adverbial clauses commonly occur in both sentence-initial and sentence-final position. In the latter language type, the position of an adverbial clause varies with its meaning or function; conditional clauses precede the main clause more often than temporal clauses, which in turn are more often proposed than causal, result, and purpose clauses (Diesel, 2001: 77,2). Regarding the position of adverb clauses, the clause which contains unimportant information, we can take for granted, comes first. The clause which contains the new or more important information generally comes second.

Even though they cost more than I wanted to pay, I bought the tickets.

I bought the tickets even though they cost more than I wanted to pay.

Some conjunctions normally come after the main clause only. These include *where, as if, as though, so that, in order that*. Example: He wanted to stay **where he had always lived**.

An adverbial clause consists of a subject and predicate introduced by a subordinate conjunction. Such a clause may be used in an initial position, final positions and occasionally in a mid-position with the main verb of the sentence. A comma often appears after an introductory clause (especially a long one) but is much less common before a clause in a final position. A clause in mid-position must be set off with commas.

2.3. Errors committed by EFL learners in using dependent clauses

This section deals with the universal studies about the main types of dependent clauses and the errors which are committed by EFL learners in distinguishing those clauses. The main purpose of this review is to pay special attention to the main types of dependent clauses as a universal phenomenon that exists in all human languages.

Khansir and Pakdel (2017) in an article entitled "Study of English Clauses Errors in Syntactic Structure of Iranian Students" aimed to examine the clause errors of Iranian learners of English language at Bushehr Payam Noor University in Bushehr city. In

the study, the researchers focused on the errors of noun clauses, adjective clauses, and adverb clauses. The findings showed that the errors of the students were in all the different types of English dependent clauses. The study indicated that there were some differences in the errors committed by the Iranian learners. The researchers mentioned one of the sources of errors which was the complexity of the English language writing, in general, and English clause structure, in particular. The results of this article indicated that the learners need sufficient exercises to be conducted in the classroom in order to increase their knowledge of English clauses and reduce their errors.

Abadi (2013) conducted a study, for his graduation paper, aimed to measure eleventh-year students', (of SMK N 2 Salatiga in the academic year (2012/2013), ability in identifying clauses and to find out the problems encountered by the students in identifying complex sentences. He concluded that the students had fair ability in identifying all various kinds of clauses in complex sentences.

Khudhayer (2013) hypothesized that Iraqi EFL learners face problems in using noun clauses in English. His results indicated that students face difficulties in using noun clauses, which in turn, verifies the hypothesis of the study. In the light of the results of the test, some conclusions were drawn and some suggestions and remedial works were presented so that the learners can overcome the difficulty they encounter in using the noun clauses in English.

Jia-Wen Yu (2010) conducted a study about the use of adverbial clauses in writing by Taiwanese Higher Senior; he mentioned Chang and Chang (2009) in his research. The research of Chang and Chang (2009) looked into the EFL Taiwanese students' use of two subordinators *when and while*. The study showed that the learners prefer when to while, where while was a correct or more appropriate choice. Other errors concerning the two subordinators included the wrong use of tenses and incomplete forms.

In STMK Budi Derma Medan, a study was conducted by Rahmadani (2015) to measure how far the second-year students' ability in using adjective clauses. The research was concerned with the discussion of adjective clauses achievements in English. The researcher concluded that second-year students of SMA Alwashliyah Medan were able to use adjective clauses. Moreover, she suggested that teachers should explain as much as possible about adjective clauses contextually.

Alotaibi (2016) conducted a study aimed to examine if Kuwaiti EFL learners were aware of the structure of relative clauses in English through measuring their abilities to produce correct relative clauses in English. The results of his study showed that Kuwaiti EFL learners may not be fully aware of the complex structure of relative clauses in English. In (2017) Al-Namer and Khan investigated the extent to which Arabic-speaking EFL learners comprehend English relative clauses. They also examined which relative pronouns are the easiest to comprehend and which are the most difficult; moreover, they measured the effect of the English proficiency level on this ability. The results demonstrated that Arabic-speaking EFL learners may not be fully aware of English relative clauses. Furthermore, the results revealed that the easiest relative pronoun to comprehend was the pronoun *when*, and the most difficult one is the pronoun *whom*. This study accounted for these difficulties and concludes with pedagogical implications and recommendations for further research.

Sohaila (2016) conducted a study in Sudan at the University of Science and Technology titled "Problems Encountered by University Students in Using Relative Clauses". The researcher focused on the utilization of the relative clauses, that is, the study concentrates on how to use commas in the relative clauses and how to utilize relative pronouns correctly. She found that students faced problems in using relative pronouns; they do not know how to use commas within relative clauses and they were not aware of reducing relative clauses. Sohaila (2016) mentioned many research relevant to her study. One of these studies was carried out by Theres Wikefiord (2014) who conducted a study entitled "relative pronouns, relative clauses". One of the aims of this study was to explore Swedish learners' choice and usage of relative pronouns in English. One of the hypotheses was; students had problems in using relative pronouns, that zero construction was rarely utilized. The results indicated that the constraint on relative pronouns choice in a non-restrictive clause is difficult for many learners to adhere in writing.

Sugianto (2006) studied the ability of understanding adjective clauses by third-year students. He mentioned that the students had problems in using adjective clauses and they did not know the functions of relative pronouns in adjective clauses (*whom*, *whose*, *which*, and *that*). Another study was carried out by Ozelik (2004), the study focused on the processing of relative clauses in Turkish by adult foreign language 'L2'

learners. The findings of this study demonstrated that subject relative clauses were more difficult to comprehend than object relative clauses in Turkish, contrary to the results in the literature for the same construction in other languages.

Mala (2005) focused on the comparison of the treatment of nominal relative clauses and dependent wh-interrogative clauses. Huddleston and Pullum (2003) shed lights on the problems in distinguishing nominal relative clauses from dependent wh-interrogative clauses by analyzing the former as clearly noun phrases and the latter as clauses. Nominal relative clauses (NRCs) and dependent wh-interrogative are often difficult to distinguish from each other. Huddleston and Pullum (2003) take relative clauses and dependent wh-interrogative clauses as a problem and make an effort to treat them very systematically. Mala (2005) concluded that there are more differences than similarities between nominal relative clauses and the remaining nominal clauses including dependent wh-interrogative clauses.

Eng and Heng (2005) conducted a study entitled " English Relative Clauses: What Malay Learners Know and Use" to examine and explain the learners' competence in the use of relative clauses. The L2 (second language) learners are L1 (first language) speakers of Malay who were gauged to have elementary proficiency in English by the Oxford Placement Test. A grammatical judgment task was administered to determine the participants' ability to distinguish between the grammatical and ungrammatical forms of relative clauses. Their findings showed that Malay learners were unable to clearly distinguish between the grammatical and ungrammatical relative forms. It was clear that Malay learners face a myriad of problems in the construction of relative clauses in English.

2.4. The importance of developing students' knowledge of forming and using dependent clauses

Although the syntactic role of dependent clauses is relatively less important compared to the main clauses (Hinkel, 2004), they contribute to the complexity and maturity in writing. Hinkel (2004) added that the use of dependent clauses is one of the features to achieve native-like writing. Therefore, more guidance and encouragement are needed for the use of dependent clauses for ESL and EFL learners (Parrott 2000).

Yi, Dan (2017) proposed some teaching suggestions for English teachers, which can help teachers to improve teaching proficiency and the quality of teaching. The paper entitled "Teaching Relative Clause in Secondary School English Classroom" clarified the definition of relative clauses and pointed out the main difficulties for students to master them. The researcher concluded that the mastery of relative clauses is of vital importance to learners who expect to achieve advanced language proficiency. Yi, Dan (2017) claimed that EFL/ ESL teachers are supposed to have a rich knowledge of relative clauses and should be aware of the differences among languages and understand the background information of the languages of their students, which will allow teachers to be better prepared in presenting and practicing relative clause formations in English and avoid some typical errors. Moreover, Cowan (2008:52) mentioned two new developments that are assuming to play a larger role in teaching grammar. The first is computer-assisted language learning. It can be used to improve learners' L2 grammar and their ability to edit their compositions. The second development is the application of corpus linguistic techniques to analyze L2 corpora.

Jia-Wen Yu (2010) in his study about the importance of writing to improve students' knowledge mentioned other studies that broached to language development. In communicative language teaching, English writing is defined as an interactive process between the writer and the reader whose goal is to reach communication (Olshtain, 1991). Writing is considered as an important skill for "global communication, academic survival, and professional success" (Liu, 2005: 91). Thus, to achieve complexity and message combination, the use of dependent clauses is important. Consequently, users of a language gradually start using dependent clauses for the expressions of more complex ideas.

In addition to the L1 context, some studies showed that the employment of dependent clauses was a feature of advanced writing in the L2 context. For instance, Hinkel (2003) reported that advanced ESL writers used more dependent clauses than ESL less skillful writers. Thus, the researcher thinks that dependent clauses have always been an important issue to the EFL/ESL learners because of their complex syntactic structure; thus, being a learning problem to the language learner. The complexity nature of English dependent clauses reflects their importance and the essential role they play in writing; therefore, it is essential to know the factors that make the students unable to distinguish and use the dependent clauses.

2.5. Common factors causing students difficulties in distinguishing and using the main types of dependent clauses

Wulandari (2018) conducted a study to identify the students' difficulties in using relative pronouns of adjective clauses and to find out the factors causing students' difficulties in learning adjective clauses. The findings of his study showed that the students had difficulties in using relative pronouns, i.e., they had some problems in comprehending adjective clauses. Moreover, they had problems in using unnecessary pronouns. The finding also showed that there were 3 factors causing students difficulties; motivation, teaching methods, and educational background.

According to Parott (2000) the difficulties that learners face with noun clauses were in leaving out “that”, the question-word noun clauses, over-using noun clauses in their speaking and writing, and word order. Zagood (2005) conducted a study in a contrastive analysis of the English relative clauses and their Arabic counterparts. The study aimed at investigating the problems encountered by third-year students of the department of English at AL-Merqib University in translating relative clauses from English to Arabic and vice versa. The researcher concluded his study by stating that some Libyan students face some difficulties in translating relative clauses from English to Arabic and vice versa. The study has shown that some of these difficulties are attributed to adopting literal translation procedures, and some other difficulties are attributed to other factors such as Arabic interference.

Cowan (2008) discussed some problems that ESL/EFL students have with relative clauses and adverbial subordinate clauses. Cowan argued that the differences of relative clauses in L1 (first languages) of many students from English relative clauses impact students' attempts to produce English relative clauses, for example, languages such as Farsi, Arabic, and Turkish have a single subordinator, so the grammatical function of the relative clauses is indicated by a resumptive pronoun within the clause, not by a relative pronoun as in English.

The following example is taken from Farsi: Maerdi ke diruz did im es pedar aem e. Man yesterday saw we him father my is. “The man who we saw yesterday is my father”. On the other side, the error that native speakers of Arabic made is the

production of corresponding resumptive pronouns in English relative clauses. Cowan (2008).

Examples:

- I've learned that I shouldn't do things that they hurt them.
- I learned many things at the university. The first was scientific knowledge, which I got it from the courses.

The examples above were produced by Arabic speaking university students recorded by Khalil (1985). The first example has a subject resumptive pronoun and the second example has an object resumptive pronoun. Miura (1989) revealed that Japanese high school students use '*which*' in English adverbial relative clauses of preposition+which combinations. For example;

- a. The day which we arrived was a holiday.
- b. This is the house which Shakespeare was born.
- c. June is the month which it often rains in Japan.

These errors are caused by two factors. The first one is that Japanese language does not have any relative pronouns. As a result, Japanese speakers may have trouble distinguishing relative adverbs '*when and where*' from relative pronouns. The second factor is that particle ellipsis occurs in Japanese relative clauses. Japanese has particles that indicate the grammatical functions of nouns. Chinese have the omission of relative pronouns in subordinate clauses, in which Schachter and Rutherford (1979) found a surprisingly high number of errors in the compositions of Chinese speakers enrolled in English classes at the University of Southern California. Such as,

There are many people in Hong Kong want to emigrate.

There are episodes in fiction tell the readers about the discussion.

There are many people like syntax.

Note that, in each case, the sentence begins with a non-referential *there is/are* and the error is an omitted pronoun in the subordinate relative clause modifying the noun following *be*. Thus, in the first example, we would need to add *who* after *many people in Hong Kong* to produce the correct grammatical sentence; *there are many people in Hong Kong who want to emigrate*.

Cowan (2008) in the book titled "*The Teacher's Grammar of English*" said that ESL/EFL students at the university level revealed **three kinds** of problems with adverbial subordinate clauses in an examination of compositions. These errors were made by learners whose L1 were Spanish, Portuguese, and Korean. These types of errors are related to; the main clause, subordinator choice, and verb forms in subordinator + participle structures. The first kind of problems that the students made was a faulty connection between subordinate and main clauses. Regarding the second type, students sometimes choose the wrong subordinator or even confuse subordinators with other words. For example: Even though for the unskilled immigrants, there are lots of jobs and opportunities, which can be accomplished. In this example, the writer uses the subordinator even though rather than even, creating a subordinate clause where none was intended.

The third kind of problems was students sometimes used verb forms other than present participles. In the following example, the student follows 'while' with 'should make' instead of present participle making. *The government should do their best to solve the social problems caused by illegal immigrants while they should make a strong system to prevent an increase in illegal immigrants. After to see a film, he went to see his mother.* In this example, the students have selected the infinitive form to see rather than the present participle seeing. This error appears to be an L1 transfer error in a Spanish sentence. Hence, such errors may suggest that more attention should be given to the teaching of subordinators that have more than one meaning (e.g., while) and to subordinators followed by a participle. The use of adverbial subordinators in ESL/EFL contexts is a distinctive feature between native speakers and non-native speakers of English (Lorenz, 1999).

Parrott (2000) mentioned many typical difficulties for learners in using the main types of dependent clauses. He concluded that learners sometimes fail to recognize subordinating conjunctions and/or the relationships that they express (e.g., contrast, reason, purpose), particularly, when they are listening to English. Their problems may arise partly due to the unconscious (and mistaken) expectations about the order of clauses, the position of conjunctions, and pronunciation. In the learners' speaking and writing, they sometimes choose the wrong conjunction, perhaps influenced by their first language. In the following example, the learner has used *in case* as though it

meant *if*: in case the new le carre' novel is published when you're in England, can you buy me a copy, and I'll pay you back.

2.6. Summary of the Chapter

The issue of students' inability in distinguishing dependent clause structures has examined before in the Libyan context in terms of translating one type of those clauses from Arabi to English and vice versa. Moreover, this study has examined the difficulties that students faced in distinguishing different types of dependent clauses, and it investigated if these difficulties were attributed to the teachers' lack of knowledge or not. However, no local previous studies found in the Libyan literature regarding neither students' inability in distinguishing nor the attribution of the difficulties to the teachers' lack of knowledge. Thus, this study can be considered as an endeavor to investigate Libyan EFL university students' and teachers' ability in recognizing the three main types of dependent clauses. In the following chapter the research methodology will be presented.

Chapter III: Research Methodology

3.1. Research Design

Developing students' abilities of recognizing and forming dependent clauses play a crucial role in enhancing their knowledge and comprehension through improving the process of teaching and learning. Therefore, exploring teachers' teaching methods and techniques, and practices of professional development activities help students understand and to be more motivated to extend their knowledge. Meanwhile, there is not much previous research conducted in the Libyan context for investigating the difficulties that faced students' in recognizing dependent clause structures, the main aim of this study is to explore the problems and common factors behind students' inability. Moreover, the research aims to examine if the students' errors were attributed to the teachers' lack of knowledge or not.

Dealing with the nature of the inquiry of this study, to bring out the best about the required information, and to get into a comprehensive answer for the research questions, a quantitative approach for gathering data was employed. A quantitative approach aims to "quantify or find out the extent of the variation in a phenomena, situation, problem or issue" (McBurney and White, 2007). Kothari (2004) states in his book that there are two basic approaches in research, they are quantitative and qualitative approach. About a quantitative approach, he explained that it is used for the phenomena which can be delivered and explained in quantity. According to the argument, it can be said that in using quantitative approach, a researcher will collect, analyze and explain numerical data.

Based on the objective of this study, the researcher would like to find the quantity of errors that the participants made in their answers as well as to describe the errors which appear in the data collected. Dealing with chapter one and the literature review discussions and arguments helped in forming the design of this study which is presented in this chapter. This chapter introduces the research design chosen as a methodological framework and explains the rationale behind the research strategy and

approach used. It also provides information about the selected sample of the study as well as the rationale and the purpose behind the data collection tools.

3.2. Research Population

Research population refers to "the theoretically specific aggregation of the elements in a study" (Babbe, 2007:520). It is also stated by the same author that the research population indicates "the group (usually of people) about whom we want to draw conclusions" (121). Therefore, the term population refers to the elements or units that share the same characteristics. This study aims to investigate the difficulties that encounter EFL students in recognizing the dependent clauses. The targeted population included male and female students and teachers of the English department in Al-Zawia University particularly the Faculty of Education in Ajelat. The reasons behind selecting this category of participants to be the focus of the research is that all the participants share similar linguistic, cultural and, educational background. They were all Libyans who share the same mother tongue "Arabic", and who have been taught English grammar rules for many years. The students' English level is considered to be advanced at this stage.

3.3. Data collection

Richards et al. (1992: 377) defined tests as any procedures for measuring ability, knowledge, or performance. A widely-used data collection tool employed in testing the comprehension of certain expressions by the participants in the target language is the multiple-choice test (Nichol, 2007). Moreover, many scholars have used this particular test to evaluate learners' comprehension of certain phenomena in the target language, since it yields reliable results (Iravani and Ghasemi, 2012, Altakhaineh and Rahrouh, 2015; and Zibin, 2016). Therefore, to investigate the students' and the teachers' comprehension of English dependent clauses, a test is utilized for collecting the required data. Halova and Kobilarov (2010) argued about the advantages and disadvantages of the test method for checking and evaluating the knowledge and the skills of students. They said that tests are one of the newest and most suitable methods for checking and evaluating; they provide a broader scope and higher objectivity; they allow the typical mistakes and difficulties of the students to be discovered. Moreover, tests present the opportunity for self-study and self-evaluation and allow the students' programs and methods of teaching to be improved and much more. Therefore, test can

be an effective instrument for measuring the abilities of students in recognizing the dependent clause structures.

Employing a good constructed and valid instrument for collecting an effective high-quality data is not an easy task. The choice of research instruments was considered after having a deep background about the literature of dependent clauses. The test was modified by the researcher. The researcher used many books, papers and the data from the internet related to the research to support the theoretical framework. The researcher has taken the examples about different types of dependent clauses and she changed them into questions of the test.

3.3.1. Test Design

Tests are of many types and may take many forms. This study employed objective tests. Objective tests are popular because they are easy to prepare and take, quick to mark and provide a quantifiable and concrete result. The objective tests are divided into eight main types and the researcher have used only three of these types which are simple recall test, best answer test and classification test.

The present test was designed to check 4th-year students' ability at Zawia University, Faculty of Education in Ajelat/ Department of English in distinguishing the dependent clause structures in English and to determine the area of difficulty they may face. Furthermore, to check the extent to which the students' errors can be attributed to their teachers. The teachers of the same faculty were asked to answer the same test. This study employed a test because tests help in understanding the students' difficulties in distinguishing those types and their functions. Moreover, they also help in deciding on the extent to which students' lack of knowledge influences their understanding of the different types of dependent clauses.

The test paper consists of three questions (See Appendix A for the form of the test). In the first question a simple recall test is utilized which helped the researcher measuring the students' ability in distinguishing the types of the three English dependent clauses. It consisted of 9 sentences about dependent clauses. The participants' task is to name the type of the clause and to write it in front of each sentence. In the second question a best answer test is used to examine the participants' knowledge of the correct formation and combination of the dependent clauses. Therefore, the participants have to choose the correct combination of each sentence by using the mark true. This question consisted of 8 sentences and each sentence includes two items to choose the

correct one. In the third question the classification test is used. In this question the students had to underline the noun clauses in the given sentences and they had to show the functions of these noun clauses in the sentences. This question consisted of 9 sentences of noun clauses in different positions.

3.4. The Pilot Study

For the betterment of the quality and the reliability of the instrument employed for collecting the required data, a pilot study was conducted with ten participants before using it in collecting the actual data. The stage of piloting was useful and interesting. The pilot study indicated the appropriateness and the effectiveness of the test. That is, the participants were asked to give detailed comments about the appropriateness of the test. They were asked about the length, clarity, and ambiguity of the items of the test. Most of the participants provided positive feedback in this regard.

One of the methods of enhancing the quality of research and producing a valuable and worthy one can be achieved through constructing and developing an appropriate, valuable and accurate measurement instrument. Therefore, it's important to consider the validity and reliability of the data collection tools (instruments) when conducting a study.

Validity is a frequently used term; it is the "touchstone of all types of educational research" (Cohen et.al, 2007:134). It refers to the extent to which an empirical measure adequately reflects the real meaning of the concept under consideration" (Babbie, 2007:160). It refers to the extent to which a test measures what it was intended to measure. Neuman (2006) argued that the more the operational definitions (measurement instrument's items) reflect and fit the conceptual definitions of the topic under investigation, the greater the measurement validity.

To guarantee the validity and reliability of the test, the following steps were followed:

1. The questions of the test were discussed and rechecked by the supervisor for the final evaluation.
2. The test was reviewed by some Libyan EFL university teachers. They were asked to investigate whether the elements of the test cover the different types of English clauses. Thus, the test was judged for the extent to which its items cover the full range of the issue under investigation. This kind of validity is known as content validity. In this kind, "the instrument must show that it fairly

comprehensively covers the domain or items that it purports to cover" (Kumar, 2009:167)

3. The pilot study indicated the quality and precision of the instrument and its design. When the researcher tended to design the test, she consulted the supervisor.

Reliability refers to the quality of the measurement instrument which suggests that repeated tests of the same phenomenon yield the same results each time. That is, it refers to the degree of consistency of a measure. Kumar (2009:168) argued that "if a research tool is consistent and stable, hence predictable and accurate, it is said to be reliable". Although it is difficult to develop a perfect reliable measurement instrument, there are some steps that can be followed to increase the reliability of a measurement: (1) clearly conceptualize constructs; (2) use a precise level of measurement; (3) use multiple indicators; (4) use pilot tests (Neuman, 2006:190). In the current study, the test items were rechecked for their clarity by two university EFL teachers. The method adopted for data collection helps in building up a more reliable picture about the required data.

3.5. The Sample of Study

Sample "is the process of selecting a few (a sample) from a bigger group (the sampling population) to become the basis for estimating or predicting the prevalence of unknown piece of information, situation or outcome regarding the bigger group" (Kumar, 2009,177). Therefore, a sample is a subgroup of the whole population. Cohen et al. (2007) argued that the process of determining an appropriate sample design and size depends on the nature of the inquiry, the purpose of the study, the nature of the population, and the style of the research. In this research, the used sampling design was a purposive sample. The main objective of a purposive sample is to produce a sample that can be logically assumed to be representative of the population. (Lavrakas, P. 2008). This sampling strategy was employed to help the researcher to select subjects to gather information. The flexibility of purposive sampling allowed the researcher to save time and money while she was collecting data.

The current study involved 100 English language undergraduate 4th-year students and 10 Libyan EFL university teachers who were teaching English in the Faculty of

Education in Ajelat. Their years of experience range from two years up to ten years. Seven of them have an MA degree, two of them were teacher assistance and one of them have Ph.D. All the participants' first language was Arabic. The participants were chosen because they had the required criteria which met the objectives of the study. Accordingly, purposive technique serves the inquiry of this research by studying deeply the extent to which EFL university students' errors were attributed to the Libyan EFL university teachers. This sampling method makes the information more valid immediately because no one is left out from the sampling process. The process of collecting data was carried out in December 2014/2015.

3.6. Data Collection procedure

After obtaining permission from the dean of the Faculty of Education, the data is collected through a written test given to the students and their teachers. Its length was about two pages. The test is about distinguishing the three types of dependent clauses. The test consists of three questions; mentioning the type of the underlined dependent clause, choosing the correct combination of the dependent clause, and the last question, looking for the noun clause, underlining it, and categorizing its syntactic function in the sentence. The copies of their papers were collected at the same time, they handed them to the researcher of the study.

The test papers were distributed to '100' 4th year university students and 10 instructors of the English department at the Faculty of Education in Ajelat. This was in December – the academic year 2014-2015. In this stage, the researcher encountered some difficulties with the students, in which they refused to do the test at the beginning, and after many attempts by the researcher, they accepted to do it.

3.7. Ethical Issues

Ethical issues in conducting research are related to three parties: the participants or subjects, the researcher and the funding organization. These can influence the way the research is conducted and the way the research results will be presented because of different interests, points of view, objectives and motivation in being a part of the research activity of each party. Accordingly, it is significant not to lead the research to be influenced by any parties' own interest or not to cause harm to any parties (McBurney and White, 2007).

To meet the appropriate ethical standards, the following steps were taken into consideration:

- Before starting collecting data, permission was taken from the head of English Department in Faculty of Education in Ajelat the data was collected from. Then the participants were asked for their permission to have their work analyzed and participate in doing a test.
- The second ethical concern was informed consent. The teachers were partially told about this research. The teachers had freedom to decide whether they were willing to participate in this study or not.
- The third issue was confidentiality and anonymity. The participants' information would be kept secret.
- The fourth ethical concern is correct reporting. The researcher would not change or make up any parts of the research findings.

3.8. Summary of the Chapter

This chapter has discussed the research design of the present study including population, methods of data collection, the pilot study, the sample of the study, data collection procedures and ethical considerations. In the following chapter, the results or the findings of the study will be presented.

Chapter IV: Results

4.0. Introduction

This research used a quantitative method and a test was utilized to examine whether 4th-year students at the Faculty of Education in Ajelat can distinguish the main types of dependent clauses. Moreover, the same test was employed to investigate whether the teachers of the same faculty face the same difficulties in recognizing English dependent clauses. The errors committed by the participants were collected and analyzed by the researcher using Microsoft Excel. The analysis of the students' and the teachers' errors has been presented in a tabular form which showed the correct and the incorrect answers and their percentages.

4.1. Students' responses to question (a)

The first question was employed to investigate the students' abilities in distinguishing the different types of dependent clauses; therefore, they were asked to choose the type of each clause. (See the Appendix A). Students' answers regarding this question are presented in table (1) below.

Table 1: Students' responses to question (A)

N	Items	Correct		Incorrect	
		Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
1	I know the boy who did it	10	5.29%	90	12.65%
2	What he said is true	32	16.93%	68	9.56%
3	I asked the boy how old he was	6	3.17%	94	13.22%
4	The girl whom you saw last night is my sister	18	9.52%	82	11.53%
5	I will assist you as soon as I can	39	20.63%	61	8.57%
6	He couldn't come to school because he was ill	24	12.69%	76	10.68%
7	He works hard in order that he may succeed	16	8.46%	84	11.81%
8	No one knows what caused the accident	19	10.05%	81	11.39%

9	That's the man whose wife is an actress	25	13.22%	75	10.54%
	Total	189		711	

The items *I know the boy who did it, the girl whom you saw last night is my sister, and that is the man whose wife is an actress* are adjective clauses. In these examples, the majority of the students committed errors in figuring out that they were adjective clauses. That is 12.65% of the students answered the first item wrongly. 11.53% of them provided wrong answers for the second one, and only 13.22% of them answered the third one correctly. This in turn indicates that the students face difficulties in distinguishing adjective clauses.

Regarding the three noun clause items, *what he said is true, I asked the boy how old he was, and no one knows what caused the accident*, 16.93% of the students answered the first one correctly, only 3.17 % of them provided correct sentences for the second one, and the third one was answered correctly by 10.05% of the students. This in turn reflects the students' inability in distinguishing noun clauses.

Dealing with the adverb clauses, *I will assist you as soon as I can, He could not come to school because he was ill, and he works hard in order that he may succeed*, 8.57% of the students could not figure out that the first sentence is an adverbial clause. 10.68% answered the second sentence wrongly, and 11.81% of them were unable to recognize the type of the third dependent clause.

Investigating the percentages of the first question deeply reveals that most students faced difficulties in distinguishing the different types of dependent clauses, in which they were confused between noun clauses, adjective clauses and adverb clauses.

4.2. Students' responses to question (b)

The second question was intended to measure the students' understanding of the different combinations of dependent clauses. The students were provided with two separated sentences followed by two possible combinations for linking them. The students were asked to choose the correct combination to make a correct sentence. (See the Appendix A) Table (2) presents the answers of the second question which are statistically analyzed as follows:

Table 2: students' responses to question (b)*

N	Items	Correct		Incorrect	
		Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
1	What he said is true	45	12.16%	55	13.06%
2	This is what we expected	36	9.72%	64	15.20%
3	The house which is under construction belongs to me	39	10.54%	61	14.48%
4	He came to my house when I was not at home	58	15.67%	42	9.97%
5	The girl whom you saw last night is my sister	43	11.62%	57	13.53%
6	The book which I lent you belongs to my brother	53	14.32%	47	11.16%
7	No one knows how you solved the problem	45	12.16%	55	13.06%
8	He jumped out of the bed when the bell rang	51	13.78%	49	11.63%
	Total	370		421	

*- The table presents the items in their correct form

Tracking the results of table 2 indicates that:

The items *what he said is true, this is what we expected, no one knows how you solved the problem* are noun clauses. In these examples, the majority of the students had no problems in choosing the correct combination of noun clauses. That is 12.16% of students answered the first and the third one correctly. 15.20% provided wrong answers for the second one.

Regarding the three adjective clause items, *the house which is under construction belongs to me, the girl whom you saw last night is my sister, the book which I lent you belongs to my brother*. 14.48% of the students answered the first one incorrectly, 11.62% provided correct sentences for the second one, and the third one was answered correctly by 14.32% of the students.

Dealing with the adverbial clauses, *he came to my house when I was not at home*, and *he jumped out of bed when the bell rang*, only 9.97% of the students could not choose the correct combination of the first one. 13.78% of the students could choose the combination of the second sentence correctly. The result indicates that the students answered question B better than question A, and they faced some difficulties in answering this question.

4.3. Students' responses to question (c)

The third question was intended to measure the students' abilities in identifying noun clauses and the functions of them; therefore, they were asked to find out and underline the noun clauses in the sentences and in what position they were. (See Appendix A). The following table introduces the students' answers of question C.

Table 3: students' responses to question (c)

N	Items	Correct		Incorrect	
		Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
1	When he will come is uncertain	40	32%	60	8.88%
2	I know that he is honest	12	9.6%	88	13.03%
3	He hoped that it was true	09	7.2%	91	13.48%
4	There's no meaning in what you say	28	22.4%	72	10.66%
5	Life is what we make it	15	12%	85	12.59%
6	It is true that the boy is honest	05	4%	95	14.07%
7	He said that he wasn't feeling well	02	1.6%	98	14.51%
8	That you should say so surprises me	14	11.2%	86	12.74%
	Total	125		675	

In the items *when he will come (subject)*, *that he is honest (object)*, *that it was true (object)*, *what you say (object of a preposition)*, *what we make it (complement)*, *that the boy is honest (appositive)*, *that he was not feeling well (object)*, *that you should say so (subject)* the results showed that the majority of the students could not find out noun clauses and they encountered problems in knowing the functions of these clauses. That is 32% of the students answered the first item correctly. 13.03% of the

students provided wrong answers for the second one, and 13.48% of their answers for the third item were incorrect. In the fourth item, only 22.4% of the students answered correctly. 12.59% answered wrongly in the fifth one, and 14.07% were unable to find out the noun clause and its function in the sixth item. 14.51% of the students answered the seventh one incorrectly. In the last item, 12.74% of the students provided wrong answers.

4.4. Teachers' responses to question (a)

Table (4) presents the teachers' answers of the same questions given to the students. Investigating the table deeply indicates that, the majority of the teachers' answers were correct in contrast with the students' answers.

Table 4: teachers' responses to question (a)

N	Items	Correct		Incorrect	
		Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
1	I know the boy who did it	7	70%	3	30%
2	What he said is true	10	100%	00	00
3	I asked the boy how old he was	5	50%	5	50%
4	The girl whom you saw last night is my sister	5	50%	5	50%
5	I will assist you as soon as I can	10	100%	00	00
6	He couldn't come to school because he was ill	5	50%	5	50%
7	He works hard in order that he may succeed	7	70%	3	30%
8	No one knows what caused the accident	5	50%	5	50%
19	That's the man whose wife is an actress	5	50%	5	50%
	Total	59		31	

Regarding the first item in the first question, "*I know the boy who did it*" 70% of the teachers answered correctly, whereas 3 teachers, 30%, were confused and could not distinguish between adjective and noun clauses. According to the second item of the first question in the test "*What he said is true*" all of the teachers' answers were correct, 100%. This means that teachers were able to distinguish noun clauses in this item. The third item was "*I asked the boy how old he was*", 50%, half of the teachers' answers were correct and half of them gave incorrect answers 50%. In this item, 3

teachers were unable to distinguish between noun and adverbial clauses, while two of them left the question unanswered.

The results of the fourth item, "*The girl whom you saw last night is my sister*", were similar to the previous item, in which 50% of the teachers answered correctly and 50% of them gave incorrect answers.

"*I will assist you as soon as I can*" was the fifth item. All of the teachers' answers were correct, 100%. This means that the teachers were able to distinguish adverb clauses in this item. Dealing with the sixth item, "*He couldn't come to school because he was ill*", 50% of the teachers answered correctly and 50% of them gave incorrect answers. The teachers who answered incorrectly were unable to distinguish adverb clauses from adjective clauses. The results of item 7, "*He works hard in order that he may succeed*" showed that 70% of the teachers answered correctly, while 30% of them gave incorrect answers. In this item, the teachers couldn't differentiate adverb clauses from adjective clauses.

According to item 8, "*No one knows what caused the accident*" 50% of the teachers gave correct answers and half 50% of them answered incorrectly. This means that three of the teachers were confused between adverb clauses and noun clauses, and two of them were confused between adjective and noun clauses. The ninth item "*That's the man whose wife is an actress*" was similar to the previous item, in which (50%) half of the teachers gave correct answers and 50% of them answered incorrectly.

4.5. Teachers' responses to question (b)

Investigating the data in the following table indicates that;

Table 5: teachers' responses to question (b)

N	Items	Correct		Incorrect	
		Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
1	What he said is true	10	100%	00	00
2	This is what we expected	8	80%	2	20%
3	The house which is under construction belongs to me	9	90%	1	10%

4	He came to my house when I was not at home	9	90%	1	10%
5	The girl whom you saw last night is my sister	9	90%	1	10%
6	The book which I lent you belongs to my brother	9	90%	1	10%
7	No one knows how you solved the problem	6	60%	4	40%
8	He jumped out of the bed when the bell rang	9	90%	1	10%
	Total				

The correct combination of the two sentences *"he said this. It is true"* is *"What he said is true"*. The results showed that all the teachers answered correctly 100%. This means that all of the teachers were able to choose the correct combination of the clause, in which it is a noun clause.

In the second item *"This is the thing. We expected it"* the correct combination of the two sentences is *"That is what we expected"*. The results indicated that more than half, 80%, of the teacher's answers were correct, whereas 20% of them were incorrect. This means that the majority of the teachers had no problems in choosing the noun clauses, while few of them had problems in distinguishing noun clauses from other types of clauses.

Regarding the third item *"The house is under construction. It belongs to me"*, the correct combination of these sentences is *"The house which is under construction belongs to me"*, and the results showed that 90% of the teachers could choose the correct answer, whereas 10% of them answered incorrectly. It indicates that one of the teachers had a problem in choosing the correct answer.

The results of the fourth, fifth, and sixth items were similar to the third one, in which 90% of the teachers' answers were correct, whereas 10% of them gave incorrect combinations of the sentences. In the fourth item *"He came to my house. I was not at home"* the correct combination of the two sentences is *"He came to my house when I was at home"*, in the fifth item *"The girl is my sister. You saw her last night"* the correct combination of these sentences is *"The girl whom you saw last night is my sister"*, and in the sixth item *"I lent you the book. It belongs to my brother"* the correct combination of these sentences is *"The book which I lent you belongs to my brother"*.

Dealing with the seventh item, "You have solved the problem. No one knows the method", 60% of the teachers could figure out that "No one knows how you solved the problem" is the correct combination of these sentences, while 40% of them answered incorrectly. In the eighth item "He jumped out of bed. The bell rang then" 90% of the teachers gave a correct combination which is "He jumped out of the bed when the bell rang" and only 10% of them answered incorrectly.

The results of this question indicates that few numbers of Libyan EFL university teachers faced difficulties in forming and giving a correct combination of the sentences. This means that they were aware and had good knowledge of different types of dependent clauses

4.6. Teachers' responses to question (c)

The results of the third question which asked the teachers to figure out noun clauses and identify their functions are dealt with in the following table;

Table 6: teachers' responses to question (c)

	Items	Correct		Incorrect	
		Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
1	When he will come is uncertain	3	30%	7	70%
2	I know that he is honest	3	30%	7	70%
3	He hoped that it was true	3	30%	7	70%
4	There's no meaning in what you say	3	30%	7	70%
5	Life is what we make it	3	30%	7	70%
6	It is true that the boy is honest	3	30%	7	70%
7	He said that he wasn't feeling well	3	30%	7	70%
8	That you should say so surprises me	3	30%	7	70%
	Total	24		56	

This question consists of 8 items, which is, "*when he will come (subject), that he is honest (object), that it was true (object), what you say (object of a preposition), what*

we make it (complement), that the boy is honest (appositive), that he was not feeling well (object), that you should say so (subject)” only 3, (30%) of the teachers could find out noun clauses and their positions, whereas the majority of them had problems with noun clauses in which they could not find out them and their positions. However, 7 teachers left the question without answers (70%).

Based on the results of the test, most teachers were categorized as failed in finding out noun clauses and their positions in the complex sentences.

4.7. Students' versus teachers' responses

To investigate the difference between the students' and the teachers' answers of the first question, the percentages of the correct answers for each item for both of them are presented as following;

4.7.1. Students' versus Teachers' responses to question (a)

The table below presents the teachers' and the students' answers of the question (a). Investigating the table deeply indicates that most of the teachers answered the question correctly in contrast with students.

Table 7 students' vs. teachers' answers (a)

	Items	Students' correct answers	Teachers' correct answers
1	I know the boy who did it	5.29%	70%
2	What he said is true	16.93%	100%
3	I asked the boy how old he was	3.17%	50%
4	The girl whom you saw last night is my sister	9.52%	50%
5	I will assist you as soon as I can	20.63%	100%
6	He couldn't come to school because he was ill	12.69%	50%
7	He works hard in order that he may succeed	8.46%	70%
8	No one knows what caused the accident	10.05%	50%
19	That's the man whose wife is an actress	13.22%	50%
	Total		

Tracking the percentages of the answers of the students and the teachers for the items of the first question showed the variance between the students' and teachers' answers. That is, the percentages for the correct answers of the students for all the items of question one was less than %50, that is, the lowest one of their answers was 3.17% and the highest one was 20,63%. Whereas the percentages of the teachers' correct answers were %50 and above, that is, the lowest one was 50% and the highest percentage was 100%. This in turn indicates that Libyan EFL university teachers at Ajelat faculty of education faced less difficulties and they were able to distinguish the different types of English dependent clauses, whereas students faced more difficulties in distinguishing noun clause, adjective clause, adverb clause and they were not aware of the types of dependent clauses.

4.7.2. Students' versus Teachers' answers of question (b)

Dealing with the second question which intended to measure the participants' understanding of the combination of dependent clauses, the variance between the students' and teachers' answers can be shown in the following table;

Table 8 students' vs. teachers' answers (b)

	Items	Students' correct answers	Teachers' correct answers
1	What he said is true	12.16%	100%
2	This is what we expected	9.72%	80%
3	The house which is under construction belongs to me	10.54%	90%
4	He came to my house when I was not at home	15.67%	90%
5	The girl whom you saw last night is my sister	11.62%	90%
6	The book which I lent you belongs to my brother	14.32%	90%
7	No one knows how you solved the problem	12.16%	60%
8	He jumped out of the bed when the bell rang	13.78%	90%

The percentages in the table above indicated that the students faced difficulties in choosing the correct combinations of the different types of dependent clauses, in which the lowest percentage of the correct answers was 9.72% and the highest one was 15.67% whereas the majority of the teachers were able to figure out the correct formations of the same clauses and the highest percentage of their correct answers was 100% while the lowest one was 60%.

This means that the students were not aware of the rules of forming and combining two sentences which containing different types of dependent clauses, whereas the teachers were had a good knowledge of the rules of different types of dependent clauses.

4.7.3. Students' versus Teachers' responses of question (c)

The third question asked the participants to underline the noun clauses in each item and mention their functions. The difference between the students' and teachers' answers can be illustrated through the following table;

Table 9: students' vs. teachers' answers (c)

	Item	Students' correct answers	Teachers' correct answers
1	When he will come is uncertain	32%	30%
2	I know that he is honest	9.6%	30%
3	He hoped that it was true	7.2%	30%
4	There's no meaning in what you say	22.4%	30%
5	Life is what we make it	12%	30%
6	It is true that the boy is honest	4%	30%
7	He said that he wasn't feeling well	1.6%	30%
8	That you should say so surprises me	11.2%	30%
	Total		

The previous table indicated that the vast majority of both the students and the teachers encountered some difficulties in figuring out noun clauses and their syntactic functions. The percentages indicated that the highest percentage of the teachers' correct answers of all items were 30%, whereas the students' highest percentage of the correct answers was 32% and the lowest one was 1.6%. This means that both students and teachers had less comprehension of noun clauses and they did not understand the function of these clauses, that is the students' misunderstanding might be attributed to their teachers.

4.8. Summary of Research Findings

From the above data analysis, the researcher had found out that most students faced difficulties in distinguishing and using the different types of dependent clauses. They were confused in distinguishing adverb clauses, adjective clauses, and noun clauses. Moreover, most of them had encountered difficulties in choosing the correct combination of the sentences. Also, they were unable to identify noun clauses and discover their functions. However, most teachers were able to distinguish the types of dependent clauses, but they had encountered certain problems in understanding noun clauses and their positions.

Chapter V: Discussion and Conclusion

5.0. Introduction

This chapter provides the discussion of the research findings with regard to the research question and previous studies, conclusion, discusses some ways of facilitating using dependent clauses, some suggestions for further studies, recommendations, and limitations of the study.

5.1. Discussion

This thesis considered the syntactic errors committed by 4th-year students of the English department /Faculty of Education in Ajelat in English. The researcher has attempted to classify the errors of noun clauses, adjective clauses, and adverbial clauses. Moreover, some EFL university teachers at the faculty were asked to answer the same test to investigate whether the students' errors can be mainly attributed to their teachers' misunderstanding of English dependent clauses. In chapter four, the data obtained from the test were presented; thus, the findings of the test will be discussed and connected to the findings of the previous studies and the research questions. This study attempts to find answers for the following research questions:

1. What are the difficulties that Libyan EFL university students encounter in distinguishing the different types of dependent clauses?
2. Do Libyan EFL university instructors face the same difficulties in distinguishing the different types of dependent clauses?

Reflecting on the research questions, the previous studies, and the findings of this study, the following issues can be introduced.

5.1.1. Students' inability in distinguishing the different types of English clauses

The first question consists of 9 items; three of them are noun clauses, three adjective clauses, and three adverb clauses. This question asks the students to figure out the type of the underlined dependent clause of each sentence. Tracking the students' answers of the first question shows that it is difficult for the students to recognize adjective clauses from noun clauses and adverb clauses.

The results indicated that Libyan EFL university students face some difficulties in distinguishing the types of English dependent clauses. This can be attributed to many factors; one of them is related to the students' weak comprehension, understanding, and lack of knowledge of the rules of using those clauses. Comprehension plays an important role in understanding dependent clauses. Wulandari (2018) mentioned comprehension as one of the problems that caused students' difficulties. He found that tenth grade students in SMA Dharma Wanita 4 Taman faced difficulties in the comprehension of adjective clauses.

The findings of this research are similar to the findings of Khansir & Pakdel (2017) who conducted a study titled " Study of English Clauses Errors in Syntactic Structure of Iranian Students". They found that the Iranian EFL students have not got a good knowledge of certain dependent clause structures in the English language. This can be related to the students' weak educational background and the lack of students' practices in their classrooms.

The second question in the test consists of eight items, each item contains two separated sentences and followed by two possible choices to link those sentences. The question asks the students to choose the correct combination. Tracking the students' answers of the second question shows that it is difficult for some students to choose the correct combination of some sentences. Those sentences consist of three noun clauses, three adjective clauses, and two adverb clauses.

The results indicated that the majority of Libyan EFL university students could answer question (B) with some difficulties. This indicates that most students had a good knowledge of the way of combining sentences but they did not have a good knowledge of the types of dependent clauses. Pratiwi, A., Hidayah, J. and Edy, S. (2020) conducted a study in Nigeria and their study aimed to describe tertiary students' difficulties in combining English clauses to generate complex sentences. The results of their study revealed that many students had difficulties in combining adjective clauses and independent clauses to generate complex English sentences, and the same results for other dependent clauses (noun clauses and adverb clauses). Thus, the findings of this research for the second question were similar to their findings.

Alotaibi (2016) measured the ability of Kuwaiti EFL learners to produce English relative clause structures; Alotaibi used a sentence combination task in order to

measure the participants' ability to produce correct relative clauses, whereas the researcher of this study investigates the inability of 4th year EFL students to distinguish the different types of dependent clauses. The researcher of this study used multiple-choice questions of the correct combination, and the students were asked to mention the type of the dependent clauses of the underlined sentences and to find out noun clauses and their functions. The findings of the current study agree with the findings of Alotaibi. His findings showed that Kuwaiti EFL learners may not be fully aware of the formation rules of relative clauses in English. The findings of this research showed that 4th-year students are not able to distinguish and use dependent clauses, but they may be more aware of how to choose the correct combination of a group of sentences which had dependent clauses.

Regarding the third question in the test, it consists of eight items. This question asks the students to underline the noun clauses and mention their positions (functions). Tracking the students' answers of the third question shows that it is difficult for the students to find out noun clauses and their functions. The results of the students' answers of question (c) indicated that 4th-year Libyan EFL students faced difficulties in finding out noun clauses and their functions. The findings of this research are in line with the findings of Khudhayer (2013) who conducted a study titled " The Performance of Iraqi EFL University Students in Using Noun Clauses in English: Error Analysis". He found that Iraqi EFL university students faced difficulty in using noun clauses in English, and he said that the source of errors results from the native influence of the mother language on the performance of the learners in using the foreign language. The researcher of this study assumes that one of the reasons behind the students' errors might be the complexity of English as a target language. The complexity of noun clauses is what attracts the attention of the researcher to conduct this research. It is necessary to provide more examples of the complex structure of noun clauses for students at the university level to improve their understanding and comprehension of the English language.

Haryanti, S. and Setyandary, A. (2018) conducted a study entitled "Students' Difficulties in Mastering Clauses". In Indonesia. Their results indicated that students had difficulties in comprehending clauses. They argued that the difficulties faced by students were in determining the function of noun clause in a sentence, especially when the noun clause functioned as indirect object. The researcher of this study thinks

that one of the reasons behind the students' errors might be the complexity of English as a target language. The complexity of noun clauses is what attracts the attention of the researcher to conduct this research. It is necessary to provide more examples of the complex structure of noun clauses for students at the university level to improve their understanding and comprehension of the English language.

Wulandari (2018) in his study about students' difficulties in using relative pronouns of adjective clauses mentioned the lack of students' knowledge, teaching method, and students' motivation as factors that cause students' difficulties in learning adjective clauses. Therefore, Libyan EFL 4th-year university students' difficulties in distinguishing and using dependent clauses might be attributed to their lack of knowledge about dependent clauses. That is, they have no experience or enough knowledge about dependent clauses.

Motivation and desire play a crucial role in learning. That is if the learners are highly motivated to learn, they will do their best to learn. Moreover, the teaching method is considered a key factor of students' success or failure. The methods that the teachers use might be traditional and uninteresting; thus, students may lose interest and feel bored during classes. Based on the results, students need more explanations, more examples, more practices, and more interesting methods to illustrate the complex nature of different types of English dependent clauses.

It can be concluded that Libyan EFL 4th-year university students at Ajelat faculty of education faced problems in forming dependent clauses with the correct type, they were confused between noun clauses, adjective clauses, and adverb clauses. They failed in finding out noun clauses and their functions in the complex sentences. English language teachers should be familiar with the rules of using clause structures in order to teach them to the students in the classroom.

5.1.2. Libyan EFL Teachers' abilities in distinguishing English dependent clauses

To investigate whether the students' inability in distinguishing dependent clauses can be attributed to the teachers' misunderstanding of those dependent clauses, ten Libyan EFL university teachers were asked to answer the same test that was answered by the students.

Tracking the teachers' answers to the first question reveals that; 50% of them were able to distinguish adjective clauses in two sentences, *The girl whom you saw last night is my sister and that's the man whose wife is an actor*, respectively. Yet 70% of them answered *I know the boy who did it* correctly. Dealing with teachers' ability in distinguishing noun clauses, 100% of the teachers answered *what he said is true* as a noun clause. However, 50% of them answered *I asked the boy how old he was* and *no one knows what caused the accident* as noun clauses. The sentences *I will assist you as soon as I can*, *he couldn't come to school because he was ill*, and *he works hard in order that he may succeed* are adverbial clauses. 100% of the teachers were able to distinguish the first one, 70% of them could figure out the second, and only 50% of them were able to distinguish the last one.

There is not much previous research conducted for examining EFL teachers of the English language by using the same test of their students. Most of the previous studies used interviews, questionnaires, or observations. Walundari (2018) used an interview with the teachers to get information about the factors that caused students difficulty in learning grammar, especially adjective clauses (see 5.1.2). Safitri (2011) conducted a study titled "Teaching Adjective Clause to the First Year Students of SMUN 1 Kampar". The researcher of this thesis used one teacher as a sample and the techniques of collecting the data were observation and interview. He used observation to know how to teach adjective clauses and interview to know what are the factors that influence the teaching adjective clauses. The researcher concluded that the teacher succeeded in teaching adjective clauses. He mentioned that there were internal and external factors that could influence students in English grammar learning, such as attitude, motivation, parents, teachers, friends, and environments.

The second question consisted of eight items and the teachers were asked to choose the correct answers to make a correct combination. For example, *what he said is true*, *this is what we expected*, *no one knows how you solved the problem*, the majority of teachers could choose the correct combination and had not got any difficulties. That is 100% of the teachers answered the first one correctly. In the second item, only 20% of the teachers were unable to choose the correct combination. 60% of the teachers provided correct answers in the third one.

The sentences "*the house which is under construction belongs to me, the girl whom you saw last night is my sister, and the book which I lent you belongs to my brother*" are adjective clauses and 90% of the teachers were able to choose the correct combination of these sentences. The sentences "*he came to my house when I was not at home* and *he jumped out of bed when the bell rang*" are adverb clauses and 90% of the teachers answered them correctly. This, in turn, indicates that the few numbers of teachers faced certain difficulties in choosing the correct combination of the sentences consisting of the different types of dependent clauses. This means that the teachers had been aware and had good knowledge about dependent clauses. Therefore, they should improve their job to help students learning English grammar more easily and motivating them to write sentences containing different clauses. Therefore, this research was in line with Yi, Yong research, in which he states that the job of the teachers 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). The teacher needs to make writing English sentences containing subordinate clauses as students' habit. 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.

The last question consists of eight sentences and the teachers are required to find out the noun clauses and their positions. Only 30% of the teachers were able to figure out noun clauses and their positions. 70% of the teachers left the questions without answers. This in turn indicates that Libyan EFL university teachers faced some difficulties in identifying noun clauses and their functions. The researcher results indicate that Libyan EFL teachers need to use some techniques such as teaching different types of dependent clauses through writing and through action, that is, teaching these types by using a song and then the teacher asks students to find the different types of dependent clauses in that song. Moreover, the teachers must give the students some examples to help them understand more about these types of clauses. Since the teacher is one of the sources of language learning which plays an important role in the teaching-learning process, he or she should engage himself with the students to create an enjoyable and suitable teaching to students' need. In fact, some teachers are well-prepared in using aids, they do not often provide learning resources and suitable media for teaching. They give much lecture than conducting a

dialogue in classroom. Students in this case have little opportunity to talk and do not know what the lesson is about. This kind of teachers misbehave influence the teaching-learning process. Kearney et al (2004) suggests that teachers misbehave because they are unable to relate to students, uncaring, preoccupied with other work, uninformed about the course content, fearful initiating personal relationship with students, outdated, selfish and self-centered and not committed to the teaching profession.

The researcher is in line with the Kearney et al (2004) in which, the teacher should master the material and should have a sufficient knowledge of the subject areas in which they teach and should use opportunity methods to support the teaching process to be more effective. Teachers must have a good competence of the subject matter. As teachers to be of English as a foreign language, they should improve the way of teaching to reduce the errors which are always made by the students. The researcher assumes that the teachers' and students' errors of identifying noun clauses with their functions may be attributed to the teachers' misunderstanding of those clauses. Therefore, the results indicated that the teachers' understanding of the noun clauses was one of the reasons behind the student's errors. Alfiyani, L. M. (2013). An "Analysis of Grammatical Errors in Writing Among the Second Semester Students of English Department of Yogyakarta State University in the Academic Year 2011-2012" conducted a study in Yogyakarta and he assumed that teachers' understanding of what learning is will determine his or her understanding of what teaching is.

5.1.3. Students' errors vs. instructors' errors

Comparing the students' errors with the teachers' errors reveal that Libyan EFL students at the faculty of education in Ajelat faced a lot of difficulties in distinguishing the different types of English dependent clauses and their correct formations and combinations. Moreover, they were not able to figure out noun clauses and their functions. However, Libyan EFL instructors faced less difficulties in distinguishing the different types of English dependent clauses and their combinations. Yet, they faced some difficulties in figuring out the functions of noun clauses. Therefore, students' inabilities in distinguishing the different types of English clauses cannot be mainly attributed to the teachers' knowledge of those clauses. However, the students' difficulties in understanding English clauses and their

combinations and functions might be attributed to their lack of knowledge about English grammar, misunderstanding, and weak comprehension of English clauses. These difficulties might be attributed to the misuse of the teachers of different techniques and methods in teaching English grammar to improve students' ability such as using presentation, practicing, production, motivating strategies. Moreover, the teachers should create a suitable classroom environment that helps students understand and master the three types.

The findings of this research were similar to the findings of Baithy, N. who conducted a study in (2014) entitled "An Analysis of Students' Error in Learning Noun Clause" in which the results of his research indicated that teaching noun clauses material was not successfully done by the teacher. Meanwhile the students might not pay attention to the material given by the teacher. He argued that students made errors because of misleading explanation from the teacher, faulty presentation of a structure or word in a textbook or even because of improperly contextualize pattern.

The researcher's study was also in line with Maros, M., Hua, T. and Salehuddin, K. (2007) who conducted study entitled "Interference in Learning English: Grammatical Errors in English Essay Writing Among Rural Malay Secondary School Students in Malaysia" in which they argued that the difficulty that faced students in learning English grammar might be attributed to the environment in which language acquisition occurs. They mentioned that in the case of the Malay students, most of them tend to use the Malay language when interacting with their family members and friends in their home environment as well as in school. Therefore, the researcher of this study thinks that the students' errors might be attributed to the mother tongue influence and to their environment.

5.2. Conclusion

Based on the results of the data, the researcher concluded three main points. Firstly, most students were unable to distinguish and use dependent clauses, whereas most teachers were able to distinguish them. This means that teachers were aware of these types of clauses and they understand how to use them. Secondly, Libyan EFL university students and teachers weren't aware of identifying and understanding noun clauses in different functions. Finally, the findings of the current study revealed that

Libyan EFL 4th- year university students' inability in distinguishing the different types of English dependent clauses cannot be mainly attributed to the teachers' misunderstanding and using of the dependent clauses. Therefore, the researcher found that teachers generally need more training in grammar in order to teach it effectively.

5.2.1. Some ways of Facilitating using dependent clauses

Teaching is a complex process and teachers are the backbone of the educational system. Teachers teach and deal with groups of students with different personalities, levels, and abilities. Therefore, teachers' teaching methods can help students understand and have good knowledge about dependent clauses.

Safitri (2011) in his study about "Teaching Adjective Clauses to the First Year Students of SMUN Kampar" mentioned teaching methods and teachers as the most important factors to improve students' ability and to provide students with knowledge and capability to use English actively. Kalayo (2007:42) argued that there are three main stages of teaching (a) presentation, (b) practice, (c) production.

Safitri (2011) argued that a teacher who wants to be successful in teaching must know properly how to present the lesson to the students. Also, a teacher should master a great number of materials to be taught before teaching in the classroom. In teaching and learning, there are many factors that influence the teaching; one of these factors is teaching facilities. The teaching facility is one of the supports to get successful attainment in education. For example, language laboratory and media are very important to get the students' attention and to provide the learners with real exercises in the learning process. Thus, teachers can use a variety of techniques to teach dependent clauses; such as employing teachers' creative ideas and using different teaching methods and activities

The other effective solution that facilitates using dependent clauses is comparing the dependent clauses in English with the dependent clauses in the students' mother tongue language. This reduces the number of errors caused by negative language transfer. Cuartas Alvarez, L. F. (2014) conducted a study about "The Selective Use of The Mother Tongue to Enhance Students' English Learning Processes..... Beyond

the Same Assumptions” in which his findings showed that the mother tongue plays an important role in students English learning processes by fostering students’ affective, motivational, cognitive and attitudinal aspects. He assumed that the mother tongue serves as the foothold for further advances in learning English when used selectively.

Teachers can correct the errors in their writing in classrooms or have individual discussions with students. Thus, students get positive and correct feedback so that would enhance students’ understanding of the different types of dependent clauses. Moreover, in the 21st-century, students are fond of technology. Thus, it would be helpful for teachers to introduce some good online language games about dependent clauses and other grammatical features. In this way, students learn while they have some fun. For example, showing them you tube videos about types of dependent clauses. This in turn motivates the student to pursue learning.

Cowan (2008:566) suggested that the effective way of teaching adverb clauses is through classroom activities that emphasize the different subordinators which express a particular relationship; time, reason, purpose, and so on. Thus, students should be provided with tasks that induce students to make sentences with as many subordinators as possible for each category. This fosters comprehensive learning of different subordinators. Rather than relying solely on the types of exercises in textbooks, the teacher should devise relevant and realistic tasks that involve speaking and writing.

5.2.2 Recommendations

There are some recommendations that should be incorporated in the conclusion of this study:

1. This study utilized a quantitative approach only; thus, more studies can be conducted utilizing different approaches and methods of data collection.
2. Various Professional development models and programs must be conducted periodically, so that will help English language teachers to meet their linguistic needs and improve their teaching methods and skills.
3. More emphasis should be given to the topic under investigation at all levels of education. Moreover, remedial strategies to simplify the process of learning must be adopted

4. EFL students should be more motivated to extend their knowledge in English grammar. They shouldn't restrict their study in academic curricula only; they must expose to and practice more exercises that will help them to be more familiar with these types of clauses.

5.2.3. Suggestions for Further Research

Based on the research findings, the following suggestions are recommended:

1. This study focuses mainly on the students' inability to distinguish the main types of dependent clauses; therefore, more studies must be conducted to investigate the issues raised from the results; such as the reasons behind the difficulties that encounter the students in learning these types of dependent clauses.
2. This study investigates only the state of 4th year Libyan EFL university students in Ajelat faculty of education; thus, other studies to investigate this phenomenon for the other grades and other faculties must be conducted.
3. Other studies to investigate the performance of the students in using dependent clauses in the classroom should be carried out.
4. Further research can be conducted regarding the same topic for secondary school students.

5.3. Limitations of the study

- This study investigates the students' inability in distinguishing the different types of dependent clauses in the faculty of education in Ajelat only. Therefore, the results represent this group only, yet it might not represent other Libyan EFL students in other faculties.
- The participants of the study were only 4th-year students. More studies can be conducted for the students of the other levels and grades.
- This study investigates only the students' inability to distinguishing the different types of dependent clauses; therefore, other studies can be conducted for investigating the issue from other perspectives.
- This study utilized a quantitative approach only; thus, more studies can be conducted utilizing different approaches and methods of data collection.

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Appendix A

Name.....

Class.....

Date.....

A. What is the type of underlined clause? [adjective clause or adverb clause or noun clause]

1. I know the boy who did it.
2. What he said is true
3. I asked the boy how old he was.
4. The girl whom you saw last night is my sister.
5. I will assist you as soon as I can.
6. He could not come to school because he was ill.
7. He works hard in order that he may succeed.
8. No one knows what caused the accident.
9. That's the man whose wife is an actress.

B. Choose the correct combination of the following groups of sentences by using the tick mark ().

Examples:

- The boy was my brother. He won the prize.
The boy {who} won the prize was my brother.
The boy {when} won the prize was my brother.
- I shall finish my sums. Then I shall go out to play.
I shall go out to play {when} I finish my sums.
I shall finish my sums {which} I shall go out to play.
- The earth is a planet. We know it.
We know {that} the earth is a planet.
We know {whom} the earth is a planet.

1. He said this. It is true.
It is true that he said.
What he said is true.
2. This is the thing. We expected it.
This is what we expected.
This is the thing what we expected it.

3. The house is under construction. It belongs to me.
The house is under construction that it belongs to me.
The house which is under construction belongs to me.
4. He came to my house. I was not at home.
He came to my house when I was not at home.
He came to my house where I was not at home.
5. The girl is my sister. you saw her last night.
The girl is my sister who you saw her last night.
The girl whom you saw last night is my sister.
6. I lent you the book. It belongs to my brother.
The book which I lent you belongs to my brother.
I lent you the book whom it belongs to my brother.
7. You have solved the problem. No one knows the method.
No one knows how you solved the problem.
No one knows the method where you have solved the problem.
8. He jumped out of bed. The bell rang then.
He jumped out of bed when the bell rang.
The bell rang that he jumped out of bed.

C. Identifying the noun clauses in the following sentences and their functions. (Subject, object, object to a preposition, complement) underline the noun clauses.

Example:

- Why he left the place is a mystery. (In the subject position)
1. When he will come is uncertain.
 2. I know that he is honest.
 3. He hoped that it was true.
 4. There is no meaning in what you say.
 5. Life is what we make it.
 6. It is true that the boy is honest.
 7. He said that he was not feeling well.
 8. That you should say so surprises me.