



Reducing Adjective Clauses into Participial Phrases: How Good Are the Students?

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Abstract

Regarding that the ability to master clause and phrase construction affects the effectiveness and quality of the writing and reading, yet the studies about clause reduction are counted less in amount, it needs to be further examined. The objectives of this study are to find out the ability of English department students in reducing adjective clauses into participial phrases. The population of this research were 162 the second-year English Department Students of Universitas Negeri Padang. The sample was 30 students chosen by using the cluster sampling technique. A quantitative approach and descriptive method were used to analyze and describe the data which was gained from the test instrument. In general, the results show that averagely the students have such a fair level of mastery of the reduction of adjective clauses with average score 63.9. Indeed, specifically, they have good ability in changing the adjective clause to present, past or appositive and fair ability in correcting the errors. In addition, regarding Arikunto's standardized category, it was found that 33.3% of students have good ability, and a couple of 20% of students were categorized excellent and fair. In addition, 16.7% of students were classified poor while 10% of them were noted fail.

Keywords:

Students' Ability, Adjective Clause Reduction, and Participial Phrase.

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INTRODUCTION

The mastery of clause and phrase construction is something essential needed to be acquired by language learners due to its contribution to producing good reading and writing. According to Hinkel (2013) understanding the elements of clause and phrase construction enables students to construct various sentences consisting of different clauses and phrases. It enables students to not only construct sentences but also combine and manipulate those sentences. Consequently, the ability to master clause and phrase construction affects the effectiveness and quality of the writing which makes a piece of writing successful. This is indispensable, particularly when taking IELTS writing test because without using complex sentence variety, test takers will possibly never achieve a good score. Besides, the mastery of

constructing clauses and phrases is equally important in reading. Dalil, Z. & Harrizi, M., (2013:13) state that comprehending the concept of clauses phrases is very important to build the context and the meaning of what is read. One way it contributes to reading and meaning conveyance is that the way it brings words together and it helps readers better understand what they read.

Regarding the importance of mastering clause and phrase construction, students need to understand the elements of phrase construction which consists of a noun, verb, and adjective phrase (Hinkel, E., 2013:8). Concerning the importance of understanding the adjective phrase, Werner, P., K., and Nelson, J., P., (2007:186) mention that adjective phrase or participial phrase can be formed from the reduction of the adjective clauses. It functions as an adjective that describes, identifies, and gives more information about a noun. (Azar, B., S., 2006; Barry, A., K., 2002; and Immel, C., and Sacks, F., 2008). In addition, an adjective clause usually comes proximately after the word that it modifies, and it works combining clauses without repeating the things or the subject (Parrott, M., 2000:407).

To form adjective phrases, adjective clauses are possibly reduced by leaving out the relative pronoun and the verb be to make the clause more concise (Parrott, M., 2000:334). It is dealing with selecting, omitting, and adding procedures. However, it is not possible to omit all types of relative pronouns. According to Azar, B., S., (2006:290) only adjective clauses having relative pronouns who, which, and that can be reduced. Specifically, there are four ways in which an adjective clause can be reduced. First, an 'ing' form and 'ed' used instead of a relative pronoun and an active verb either in present or past. The second way in which adjective clause can be reduced is that the subject pronoun is omitted as well as the 'be' form of verbs. The next way to reduce an adjective clause is if there is no 'be' form of a verb in the adjective clause, it is sometimes possible to omit the subject pronoun and change the verb to its 'ing' form. The last thing that can be done to construct the reduced form of adjective clause is if the adjective clause requires commas, the adjective phrase also requires commas, the subject pronoun, and the 'be' form. By following the steps, it results on the reduced forms of adjective clauses that are called participial phrases.

Some previous studies have addressed the issues and mastery in using adjective clauses. While Syarif A. (2011) and Wulandari (2018) studied students' errors and difficulties in using adjective clauses and relative pronouns, Rahmadani, P., (2015) and Rahim, et al (2018) examined the students' ability in constructing sentences by using adjective clause. Lately, Haryani, E., and Fattimah, S., (2020) also studied the ability of English department students in constructing adjective clause in writing hortatory exposition essay. Nevertheless, the studies only focused on the students' errors, ability, and difficulties in using adjective clauses, and they are not focused on the reduction forms of adjective clauses.

In fact, early Vonanda, V. (2012) carried out a study that was purposed to examine the English students' ability in transforming complete active and passive voices in adjective clauses into reduction forms. This study likely focused on two aspects; active and passive sentences. Otherwise, Harahap, M.A. (2015) carried out a study about students' ability in identifying adjective phrases in descriptive text. Suhartini, A. (2009) and Laela, Z. F. (2016) also studied students' mastery in using

both adjective clause and adjective phrases. Yet, the studies are not focused on the construction of reduced forms. In addition, Kurniasari, et al (2019) investigated the students' difficulties in writing adjective phrases. However, the study carried out by Kurniasari, et al (2019) was qualitative research.

Considering that the focused studies about the construction of clause reduction are still less in amount, it is needed to be further examined using different method, instrument, and participants. By figuring out the students' ability, it is expected to give contributions theoretically and practically to the stake's holders of English language teaching and the students to be used for learning reflection or new understanding in English language teaching. Also, the findings can be used to engage teachers to improve the students' mastery. For those reasons, this present study focused on the reduction forms, which examines students' ability to reduce adjective clauses into participial phrases.

METHOD

This study is purposed to figure out the students' ability in reducing adjective clauses into participial phrases by analyzing and describing numerical data based on students' tests scores using tables description and percentage. Therefore, quantitative approach and descriptive method were used to analyze and describe the data. Taking place at Universitas Negeri Padang, the population of this research were 162 the second year students of English Department with total samples 30 students, taken by using cluster sampling technique.

As for the data collection and analysis, they were collected through a grammar test on Google forms. It was validated with the result *strongly eligible* through experts' judgments. With coefficient reliability 0.913, the test was reliable after being tried out to 38 students outside the population using KR 20 approach. The test consisted of two types of testing grammar formats which were paraphrasing and error correction with 15 items each. After collecting the data, they were analyzed by firstly calculating individuals' scores and the mean using Gay's formula and categorizing the scores based on the Arikunto's standardized category (2010:245). Each of those five categories is provided with different score range. If the students get score below 39 points, they are categorized as fail. When the scores they get are in the range of 40-55, they are placed in the poor level. Then, they are regarded having fair level once they get scores above 55 but no more than 66. When they get 13 points from fair level or less, they are considered as good. The last category, excellent, is meant for the students who get the scores above 80. Moreover, partial test analysis was also done to figure out students' ability based on the test types that it measures specific category.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Finding

As the data from the test were scored and calculated to figure out students' ability in reducing adjective clauses into participial phrases, the researcher presents the individual's and the mean score that has been calculated in the form of table as follows.

Table 1. Students' scores

No.	Score	Frequency
1	100	1
2	90	2
3	83.3	1
4	80	2
5	76.7	2
6	73.3	5
7	70	2
8	66.7	1
9	63.3	2
10	60	1
11	56.7	3
12	53.3	1
13	50	1
14	43.3	2
15	40	1
16	36.7	1
17	30	1
18	13.3	1
Total	1917	30
Mean	63.9	

Based on the Table 1., it was found that the mean score was 63.9. Regarding Arikunto standardized category, the score shows that averagely their ability is categorized as “fair”. This calculation was done by using Gay’s formula as follows.

$$\begin{aligned} \bar{X} &= \sum X / n \\ \bar{X} &= 1917 / 30 \\ \bar{X} &= \mathbf{63.9} \end{aligned}$$

Note:

\bar{X} : Average

$\sum X$: All the scores

n : The number of the students

Also, regarding that there was only one student got the perfect score, 100 points, it can be claimed that it was the highest score got by the student in this test that

means there was only one student who was able to answer the whole questions correctly. Moreover, it was identified that the lowest score got by students was 13.3. Continually, as the mean was calculated, the scores are made into percentages and categorized based on the Arikunto's standardized category as presented on the next following table.

Table 2. Data Percentage of Students' Ability in Reducing Adjective Clauses into Participial Phrases

No.	Score Range	Category	f	P(%)
1	80-100	Excellent	6	20
2	66-79	Good	10	33.3
3	56-65	Fair	6	20
4	40-55	Poor	5	16.7
5	0-39	Fail	3	10

The data on the table show that there were 20 % students who were categorized as excellent that got scores more than 80 which means 6 out of 30 students have an excellent ability in reducing adjective clauses into participial phrases. In addition, about 33.333 % students dominantly were classified into a good level with the score range from 66 to 79. At the fair level, it was acknowledged that 20 % students got scores in the range of 56-65. It is followed by 16.667 % students at the poor level who got scores between 40-55. Lastly, there were about 10 % students verified fail that they got scores less than 39.

Concerning that the test is consisted of two different parts; paraphrasing and error correction, the researcher intends to show the distinctive result analysis of their ability separately in each part as well. Based on the partial test result analysis, the students got higher scores in paraphrasing and remarkably they got lower scores in correcting the errors. Possessing score 66, it can be inferred that the students have such a good mastery in changing the adjective clauses to present or past participle and appositives in the first part of the test. However, based on the result analysis at the second section, their ability in identifying and correcting errors in adjective clauses and participial phrases was considered as fair. To make it clear, the partial result analysis is given below in the form of table.

Table 3. The Partial Test Result Analysis

No.	Part of the Test	Average Scores	Category
1	Paraphrasing	66	Good
2	Correcting errors	62	Fair

In paraphrasing, most students were able to change the clauses to appositives. From 4 questions, 86.7% students answered the appositive questions correctly. For example, the answer of student S4 to the question number 7; “Kuala Lumpur, which is the capital city of Malaysia, is a major trade in Southeast Asia.” was *Kuala Lumpur, the capital of the city of Malaysia, is a major trade in Southeast Asia*. Based on the answer, it was indicated that the student S4 was able to change the clause *which is the capital city of Malaysia* to appositive *the capital city of Malaysia* by leaving out the relative pronoun and verb *be*.

In addition, about 73.3 % students were able to change the adjective clause in the past of participle. As it was seen on the question 12; “Be sure to follow the instructions that are given at the top of the page”, the answer of the student S5 was *Be sure to follow the instructions given at the top of the page*. Based on the answer, the student S5 successfully changed the clause; *that are given at the top of the page* to past form of participle; *given at the top of the page*.

As for the ability to change the adjective clauses in present of participle, from 8 items, there were about 52% of students who were considered successful. For example, in solving the question number 6; “The fence which surrounds our house is made of wood, student S1 gave the correct answer; *The fence surrounding our house is made of wood*. It was indicated that the student recognized the active sentence and comprehended the rules to change the adjective clause in the present of participle. As for the example of 48% wrong answers, the student S10 answer was *The fence surrounds our house is made of wood*. It is incorrect because the student did not change the verb into a present participle, so the sentence ends up with double verbs.

In correcting the errors found whether in the adjective clause or participial phrase, it was found the average score for this section was 62, which means averagely the students have a fair ability in correcting the errors. For example, from the question number 20 “I have some good advice for anyone which he wants to learn a second language”, it was found that 53.3% of students were able to identify and correct the error in the question 20 while 46.7% students were unsuccessful. It can be seen on these following answers. The student S2 answer was *I have some good advice for anyone who wants to learn a second language* and the answer of S20 was *I have some good advice for anyone which wants to learn a second language*. The answer of student S2 was correct because she was able to correct the double subjects and use appropriate relative pronoun in the sentence. However, the second one was incorrect. Even the student S20 was able to identify and correct the double subjects in the sentence, she misused the relative pronoun *which* that refers to wrong subject.

In addition, to correct the errors, the students can construct the correction whether in adjective clauses or in the participial phrases. In fact, from 14 questions that need to be corrected by students, there is tendency of the students to correct the errors in the form of the adjective clause instead of the participial phrase. For example, in answering question number 21; *A myth is a story expresses traditional beliefs*, 53.3% out of 70% students giving the correct answers tended to keep the adjective clause in the sentence instead of participial phrase. For example, the answer of student S7 was *A myth is a story that expresses traditional beliefs*. To correct the error, the student added the relative pronoun “that” to fix the doubles verbs in the

sentence without reducing the clause into present participle. While 16.6% answers were in the form of the present participle as it can be seen on the S19 student's answer; *A myth is a story expressing traditional beliefs.*

In brief, regarding the students have such a good mastery in changing the adjective clauses into participial phrases at paraphrasing section, yet their ability in identifying and correcting errors in adjective clauses and participial phrases was considered as fair, it was indicated that the second part of the test is likely more complex than the first one. It also means that the students' ability in changing adjective clauses to participial phrases is quite better than their mastery in identifying and correcting the errors in adjective clauses.

Discussion

Concerning that the average score was under 65, averagely students' ability in reducing adjective clauses into participial phrases was categorized as "fair". This finding is indicated in line with the previous studies. Vonanda, V. (2012) pointed out that English students' ability in transforming complete active and passive voices in adjective clauses into reduction forms was categorized averaged. In the other way, both results showing the same findings that the students have such a fair or averaged level of ability in reducing adjective clauses into participial phrases.

In contrast, compared to Suhartini, A. (2009), the mastery levels of adjective clauses and adjective phrases of the third-year students faculty of letters Gunadarma University shows different result. It was discovered that the students' mastery in using both adjective clauses and adjective phrases was categorized failing or unsatisfactory with the score less than 60%. Otherwise, Laela, Z. F. (2016) figured out that the ability of the fourth semester English Education Program of Purworejo Muhammadiyah University students in the academic year of 2015/2016 in using participial phrases were poor with an average score 54.6. Both studies show distinctive results compared to this study. While the first claimed that students have unsatisfactory level of mastery in using both adjective clauses and adjective phrases, the second found out that learners are poor at using and understanding participial phrases.

Continually, discussing that students' ability in identifying and correcting errors in adjective clauses and participial phrases was considered as fair in this study with the score 62, it is likely correlated with the study conducted by Harahap, M.A. (2015) about students' ability in identifying adjective phrases in descriptive text. Even the participants are not in the same level of education, the findings are likely in the same line. With the score 56.06, the ability of the tenth grade students at SMAN 3 Padangsidempuan was adequate. In identifying adjective phrase without errors in descriptive text, high school students' ability was classified as fair. Indeed, with some errors provided, the English department students have fair ability in identifying and correcting the errors in the adjective clause or participial phrases.

CONCLUSION

This current study is conducted to find out the students' ability in reducing adjective clauses into participial phrases. Perceiving the Arikunto's standardized category, it was found that 33.3% students have good ability. Moreover, a couple of

20% students have excellent and fair ability. In addition, there 16.7% students were classified poor and 10% students noted fail. Viewing the mean score, the results show that averagely the students have such a fair level of mastery of the reduction of adjective clauses with average score 63.9.

However, regarding that the test is consisted of two different parts; paraphrasing and error correction measuring different spots of ability, the results show that students have such a good mastery in changing the adjective clauses to present or past participle and appositives in the first part of the test. Indeed, their ability in identifying and correcting errors in adjective clauses and participial phrases was considered as fair. It also means that the students' ability in changing adjective clauses to participial phrases is quite better than their mastery in identifying and correcting the errors.

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