



## An Analysis of Students' Mistakes in Reducing Adjective Clause in Thesis Backgrounds

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### Abstract

*Grammar plays a crucial role in research writing, as clear and well-structured sentences are essential for effectively conveying meaning to readers. The objective of this study is to find out the mistakes which the students commonly make in reducing adjective clause in thesis background. The population of this research were English Department of UNP students' thesis with 50 theses in total. The sample were 50 theses chosen by using total sampling. This research used descriptive research. According to the data found, it can be seen that the most mistake in writing adjective clause reduction made by students is reduction of adjective clause with verb in passive voice with 17 mistakes, followed by reduction of clause with verb in active voice with 3 mistakes made and no mistakes made in reduction of clause with verb in perfect tense because the researcher found no adjective clause reduction with verb in perfect tense made by students. In addition, the percentage of mistakes made by students in reducing adjective clause was 12.12% of 165 reduced adjective clauses found.*

### Keywords:

Research writing,  
Grammar, Complex  
sentence, Clause,  
Clause reduction.

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## INTRODUCTION

In writing Research writing, the writer needs to deliver the meaning clearly to the reader by having sufficient grammar mastery. Grammar holds a vital role in writing, especially research writing such as journal or theses, which can make writer's sentences well-structured so that the writer's meaning can be delivered to the reader without any ambiguous meaning or misunderstood meaning.

Nunan (1999) stated that grammar is a description of the structure of a language and the way in which linguistic units are combined to produce sentence in a language. Someone is considered successful in writing a text by writing sentences clearly and well-structured without significant mistakes in delivering their writing's meaning to the reader because well-structured sentence is the sign of a good grammatical competence.

A writer can shorten their writing to make it more effective and efficient. Shortening or reducing clauses can also avoid the researcher from repeating words in their writing. Mani and Maybury (1999) presented a process of reducing sentence by

reversing the original sentence with a set of revising rules to improve the performance of summarization.

A research conducted by Hidayat (2016) studied about students' errors in writing introduction of thesis. Another study conducted by Noviani and Oktavia (2022) focused on figuring out difficulties in reducing adjective clause into participial phrase and its causes faced by second-year students of English Department. The other study done by Noviani and Oktavia (2022) examined the ability of the students in reducing adjective clause into participial phrase. Haryani, E., & Fatimah, S. (2020) did a research about students of English Language and Literature Department's ability in constructing adjective clause in essay.

Those studies above focused on students' errors, students' difficulties and its causes in reducing adjective clauses, and students' ability in reducing adjective clause. So it is needed to hold a research about students' mistake in reducing adjective clause in order to give contribution to the lecturer or teacher as a reference. The finding of this research can be used by teacher to improve grammatical mastery of the students, especially in reducing adjective clause. According to those reasons, this study focused on mistakes made by students in reducing adjective clause in thesis background.

## **METHOD**

This research used descriptive research. This type of research is a method which aim to describe or give an overview of the data of the research which will be analyses through samples. Descriptive research is a type of a study that intends to answer a question depending on a continued phenomenon in the present (Duck, 1993). Another expert, Gay (2009) stated that descriptive research requires a collection of data for answering questions concerning the current status of the subject in the analysis defining the characteristics of a particular sample of individual or a phenomenon.

Sugiyono (2016) stated that population is a group of individuals who have particular features and qualities as an object or subject. The population of this research was taken from theses of undergraduate students of English Department of UNP who graduate in March 2022 which were 50 theses. The researcher decided to take all of the total population as the sample for this research which were 50 theses in total.

The instrument of this research was documentation. Document analysis can be used in qualitative or quantitative research which depends on what source of information the researcher used (Lee, 2000). Documentation is a stable source of information because it can be checked many times and remains unchanged by any possible reason. The documentations of this research were taken from students' thesis background in English Department of UNP's library. For analysing the document to get the data, the researcher used indicator from Werner & Nelson (2007),. In order to collect the data, several steps were done. First, the researcher went and observed for the available samples in the library of English Department of Universitas Negeri Padang. Then, the researcher collected a number of samples needed for the research. After that, the researcher started to do the research and analyzed the samples to get the data.

The researcher did a non-statistical analysis in analyzing the data. The steps that the researcher did were

- 1) Finding out the data from the background of the study of the graduated students' theses.
- 2) Analyzing the data found in the background of the study of students' theses.
- 3) Counting each kind of errors to find the percentage of the errors made by using the following formula,

$$\text{Error percentage } R = \frac{\text{The number of error } (X)}{\text{The total number of error } (Y)} \times 100\%$$

- 4) Explaining why the data found is incorrect and explaining the correct form.
- 5) Making a conclusion of the research
- 6) Giving recommendation.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The researcher used table of indicator as a guide to analyse the clause reductions written by students. The table of indicator and the rubric the researcher used is from Werner & Nelson (2007) that writing clause reduction is divided into three parts which are verbs in active voice, passive voice, and perfect voice.

For reducing adjective clause with verb in active voice, the writer should omit the pronoun and change the verb into its –ing form (e.g. "The man *who wear* black hat is our next opponent" changed into "The man *wearing* black hat is our next opponent"). Next, for reducing adjective clause with verb in passive voice the writer should omit the pronoun and the to be and keep the verb in participial form (e.g. "The Taj Mahal, *which was built by* Shah Jahan, is made of marble" changed into "The Taj Mahal, *built by* Shah Jahan, is made of marble". Last, to reduce adjective clause with verb in perfect tense, the writer must omit the pronoun and change the modal into its –ing form (e.g. "My brothers, who have finished their exams, are playing at the park" changed into "My brothers, having finished their exams, are playing at the park").

### *Research Finding*

After analysing the samples, the researcher found that there were 165 clause reduction made by students in thesis background; 20 clause reduction with verb in active voice, 145 clause reduction with verb in passive voice and no clause reduction with verb in perfect tense found.

#### *Adjective clause reduction*

After analysing students' thesis and clause reduction, the researcher used the table of indicator from Werner and Nelson (2007) to classified the mistake made by students and explain what the students should write in order to reduce the clause correctly. The researcher found that the total number of mistakes made by students in reducing adjective clause in thesis background was 20 mistakes; 3 mistakes made in reducing adjective clause with verb in active voice, 17 mistakes made in reducing adjective clause with verb in passive voice and no mistakes made in reducing

adjective clause with verb in perfect tense. In addition, as the most mistake made by students, the most mistake made in reducing adjective clause with verb in passive voice is not omitting the pronoun but only omit the to be. Example of the data found can be explain as follows,

1. "It is also supported by Elyas and Grigri (2014) who conducting a study on obstacles to use English in teaching at Saudi Arabian public schools."

This sentence is classified as active voice and is incorrect because the student had changed the word into -ing form but not omit the pronoun. The correct form must be,

"The right form should be "It is also supported by Elyas and Grigri (2014) *conducting a study* on obstacles ..."

2. "The last study is a journal discovered by Ebi Yeibo investigates the stylistic value of figuration as semantic signifiers or reinforces in poetry."

It is classified as active voice and is incorrect because the writer did not change the verb "investigates" into -ing form but only omit the pronoun.

Right form:

"The last study is a journal discovered by Ebi Yeibo *investigating* the stylistic value of figuration as semantic signifiers or reinforces in poetry."

3. "In addition, one of the skills that commonly considered difficult by students is writing."

This sentence is in passive voice and is incorrect because the student omitted only the to be of the clause but did not omit the pronoun of the clause which is "that". The correct form should be,

"In addition, one of the skills *commonly considered difficult* by students is writing."

4. "Some of the studies describe above only use test items to assess students' higher-order thinking skills."

This sentence is in passive voice and is incorrect because the writer only omitted the pronoun but did not omit the verb "describe" in passive form. The right form must be,

"Some of the studies *described* above only use test items to assess students' higher-order thinking skills."

5. "In this study, she tried to find what kinds of figurative language were used in 5 John Legend's songs and their contextual meanings."

The clause is in passive voice and is incorrect because the writer omitted only the pronoun but did not omit the to be. The right form must be,

"In this study, she tried to find what kinds of figurative language *used* in 5 John Legend's songs and their contextual meanings."

### **Discussion**

According to the data found, it can be seen that the most mistake in writing clause reduction made by students is reduction of adjective clause with verb in passive voice with 17 mistakes, followed by reduction of clause with verb in active voice with 3 mistakes made and no mistakes made in reduction of clause with verb in perfect tense. For reduction of clause with verb in perfect tense, the researcher did not find it as zero mistake instead the researcher found no clause reduction written by students who graduated on March 2022 in their thesis backgrounds.

The result of this study is strengthened by Haryani (2020) which was about figuring out the ability of students in constructing adjective clause with the result of student ability in constructing adjective clause is 87%. Another study done by Noviani and Oktavia (2022) found that students' ability in reducing adjective clause with average score was 63.9%. In addition, only 16.7% students classified as poor and only 10% students classified as fail.

### **CONCLUSION**

According to this research, the result of the research showed the number of mistakes in writing clause reduction in thesis background made by English department students of UNP who graduated on March 2022. The percentage of the mistakes made is 85% of 20 mistakes made by students. It means that the most common part in reducing adjective clause used by the students is reduction of adjective clause with verb in passive voice.

Based on the research, the researcher concluded that the students' mistakes in writing clause reduction in their thesis background are divided into two parts, reduction of clause with verb in active voice with the percentage of 15% and reduction of clause with verb in passive voice with the percentage of 85%.

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