



## An Investigation of Students' Competence In Using Adjective Phrase in Writing Skills

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### Abstrak

*Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah mengevaluasi kompetensi siswa dalam menggunakan frase kata sifat dalam menulis bahasa Inggris. Tujuannya antara lain menilai kompetensi, mengidentifikasi tantangan/kesalahan, dan mengeksplorasi faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi mahasiswa dalam menulis adjective phrase. Penelitian ini menerapkan mixed method, menggabungkan kuesioner kuantitatif dan analisis kualitatif sampel tulisan, penelitian ini mengungkap berbagai tingkat kompetensi dan pola kesalahan. Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa mahasiswa memiliki pemahaman yang cukup baik tentang adjective phrase, attributive adjective, dan predictive adjective. Namun, berdasarkan jenis adjective phrase, sebagian besar mahasiswa menunjukkan pemahaman yang lebih baik tentang adjective phrase dibandingkan dengan attributive adjective dan predictive adjective. Hasil analisis ini memberikan wawasan dalam merinci aspek-aspek spesifik kurikulum yang mungkin perlu diperkuat atau disesuaikan untuk meningkatkan pemahaman mahasiswa. Secara keseluruhan, pemahaman mendalam terhadap hasil analisis kinerja mahasiswa dapat memberikan landasan yang kokoh bagi pengembangan strategi pembelajaran yang lebih efektif dan penyesuaian kurikulum yang lebih baik sesuai kebutuhan siswa.*

**Kata Kunci:** Menulis, Frasa Kata Sifat, Kompetensi Siswa

### Abstract

*The objective of this study is evaluating students' competence in using adjective phrases in English writing. The objectives include assessing competence, identifying challenges/errors, and exploring influencing factors. This study applied a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative questionnaires and qualitative analysis of writing samples, the research unveils varying levels of competence and error patterns. The findings show that students demonstrated a fairly good understanding of adjective phrases, attributive adjectives, and predicative adjectives. However, it was observed*

*that, based on the types of adjective phrases, most students exhibited a better understanding of adjective phrases compared to attributive and predicative adjectives. The results of this analysis provide valuable insights in detailing specific aspects of the curriculum that may need to be strengthened or adjusted to improve student understanding. Overall, an in-depth understanding of the results of the analysis of student performance can provide a solid foundation for the development of more effective learning strategies and better customization of the curriculum according to student needs.*

**Keywords:** *Writing, Adjective Phrase, Students' Competence*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Proficiency in language holds significant importance in an individual's educational journey, with writing being a fundamental skill for effective expression of thoughts and ideas by students. Writing involves the recursive creation of a written product, demanding a broad spectrum of knowledge and the capacity to generate coherent text (Rofiqoh et al., 2022; Hamka, 2021). Knowledge about writing serves as a crucial source throughout the writing process. As students advance in their academic pursuits, the ability to construct well-organized sentences and employ grammatical structures becomes increasingly vital. Among these structures, the utilization of adjective phrases plays a central role in elevating the descriptive and communicative qualities of their writing. Utami (2018) stated that an adjective phrase as a cluster of words with an adjective as its primary component. Despite the expectation of a certain level of English writing proficiency by the third semester, challenges persist in the use of adjective phrases among students (Kurniasari et al., 2019). Factors contributing to these challenges encompass teaching methods, student motivation, educational background, learning strategies, and family environment (Oktavia & Noviani, 2022). Concerns persist that some students may encounter difficulties in effectively incorporating adjective phrases into their writing, a notion supported by (Karim et al., 2018; Hamka, 2018), who acknowledge that errors are inherent and inevitable in the process of learning English.

The main objectives of this research are as follows: First, to assess the competence of third semester students in using adjective phrases in their writing. Second, to identify common challenges and errors associated with the use of adjective phrases in students' writing. Third, explore potential factors that influence students' competence in this aspect of writing. Understanding the competence of third-semester students in using adjective phrases is not only relevant for educators but also for students themselves. This research will provide valuable insights into the competence of third semester students in the English Education program at Khairun University in using adjective phrases in their writing. Additionally, it will offer valuable insights into the specific needs of students at this stage of their academic journey, which can inform more targeted teaching and learning strategies.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Writing

Writing is one of the important things from four basic skills in English learning. Writing requires the writer to take some time to reflect, test out ideas on paper, select words, go through their work, revise, reorganize, and most importantly, think about how their writing will affect the reader (Hamka, 2021). Writing is the recursive process of creating a written product, according to (Rofiqoh et al., 2022). Writing skill is one of the productive skills that should be mastered in using a language. It is because writing skill has significances in improving a communicative competence of learning the language.

There are some definitions about writing based on the some experts. Rohaningrum (2015) stated that writing is a complex process that allows writers to explore thoughts and ideas, and make them visible and concrete. Writing promotes learning and critical thinking. Writing down thoughts facilitates communication and opens them up for reflection. Concepts can be analyzed, rethought, expanded upon, reorganized, and altered. It gives a unique opportunity to explore ideas and acquire information. Writing is one of four skills of English that have to be mastered by the English learners. There are several ideas about definition of writing in general. Nurgiyantoro (2001) cited from (Dewi et al., 2018) defined a writing is the activity of expressing ideas through language media. Writing is a productive and expressive activity so that writers must have the ability to use vocabulary, grammar, and language structure. Nunan (2003) cited from (Saputra, 2014) also states that writing is the mental work of inventing ideas, thinking about how to express them, and organizing them into statements and paragraphs that will be clear to a reader. Furthermore, based on those definitions it can be stated that writing is a process that requires in-depth thought in order to produce a series of sentences that are organized in a specific order and connected in specific ways.

### 2.2 Adjective

According to the Cambridge Dictionary, an adjective is defined as “a word that describes a noun or pronoun.” The Collins Dictionary gives a more elaborate definition. According to it, “an adjective is a word such as ‘big’, ‘dead’, or ‘financial’ that describes a person or thing, or gives extra information about them. Adjectives usually come before nouns or after link verbs.”

Some definitions are given by linguist about writing. According to Marcella Frank in their book on the title “Modern English a practical reference guide” cited from Hamidah (2017), “The adjective is a modifier that has the grammatical property of comparison. Is often identified by special derivational endings or by special adverbial modifiers that precede it. It’s most usual is before the noun it modifies, but it fills other position as well.” This means that, the adjective is modifier noun or pronoun to make it more specific. because the position adjective before noun.

Based on the definitions above, it can concludes that an adjective is a term that comes before a noun that helps to define or distinguish the type of meant rather than just describing the thing being spoken. This kind of word is also known as a defining adjective.

### 2.3 Phrase

Phrases are groups of word contains with determiner, pre-modifier, head, post-modifier they do not contain subject and predicate. Dalahunty and Garvey (2000:274) cited from (Citra Julivera Nainggolan et al., 2023) states that "Traditional phrase is defined as a group of words that does not contain a verb and its subject and is used as a single part of speech". This definition entails three characteristics: (1) it specifies that only a group of words can constitute a phrase, implying that a single word cannot; (2) it distinguishes phrases from clauses; and (3) it requires that the groups of words believed to be a phrase constitute a single grammatical unit." Verspoor, and Kim Sauter (2000) cited from (Lestari, 2015) in their books *English Sentence Analysis. An Introductory Course*, state that "a phrase can consist of one word or more words. If it consists of more words, it usually has one main word that is the most important one as far as meaning is concerned."

Moreover, in light of those definitions, it's possible to say that phrase can be used as subject, object, and predicate and so on of a sentence or a clause. But phrases can also be parts of other phrases.

### 2.4 Adjective Phrase

Knapp and Watkins (2005) in (Siddique & Beg, 2022) propose that adjectives are describing words that tend to be used in two ways: before a noun attributively as a pre-modifier, and after a verb predicatively as a complement to the subject or object of a clause. An adjective phrase could occur either attributively or predicatively in a sentence (Siddique & Beg, 2022). According to Knapp and Watkins (2005:41) cited from (Andhari, 2014) "adjective phrase is a group of words introduced by a preposition that gives additional information about a noun". Example: The reason for these strict playground rules is to maintain order. Although adjective phrases usually precede the words they modify, they can occur after them as well.

From the explanation above, adjective phrase may be clarified as a group of words or phrase with an adjective as a head which functions as a pre modifier or post modifier in other phrases or as a subject of object complement in a clause or sentence.

## 3. RESEARCH METHOD

This study used a mixed method of qualitative and quantitative to investigate students' competence in using adjective phrases in writing skills. The researchers used mixed-methods for several reason. Mixed-methods is an appropriate research design to describe the research findings. Additionally, Choosing a mixed-methods approach in research allows us to get benefit from both quantitative and qualitative data, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the research topic. This method enables triangulation, enhancing the validity and reliability of the study by corroborating findings from different data sources. The participants of this study are third-year students from one of the Universities in North Maluku. This study applied purposive sampling technique to select the participants. Purposive sampling is one of the technique used to determine the participant by considering something (creswell, 2021).

The study began by collecting quantitative data through questionnaires administered to 34 students, which allowed statistical analysis to measure the overall level of competence of students. Furthermore, qualitative data were

collected through the analysis of students' writing samples to present the research findings regarding the investigation of students' competence in using adjective phrases in writing skills concerning adjective phrases, attributive adjectives, and predicative adjectives. This study deals with the writings of third-year students with high, medium and low achieving of third-year students who represent different levels of competence in using adjective phrases. The purpose of this study is to examine the third-year students' competence in understanding adjective phrases. Through a mixed-methods approach, the results obtained revealed different levels of competence and error patterns associated with the use of adjective phrases. The results of this study provide an in-depth understanding of how university students use adjective phrases in their writing skills.

**Table 1.** The classification of score level of students

NO	SCORE IN NUMBER	CLASSIFICATION
1.	81-100	VERY GOOD
2.	71-85	GOOD
3.	66-70	FAIRLY GOOD
4.	56-65	FAIRLY
5.	41-55	POOR
6.	0-40	VERY POOR

The formula use by Dian Nirmala Sari (2021).

Formula:

$$P = \frac{F_o}{N} \times 100$$

Note :

P = Percentage (%)

Fo = Total respondents who answer an item

N = Total respondents

### 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The researchers conducted the research at one of the Universities in North Maluku. The subject of this research was the students at third-year students from one of the Universities in North Maluku. The findings of the research based on results of multiple choice test. In this study, the researchers found that some third-year students have a fairly good understanding of the use of adjectival phrases, attributive adjectives, and predicative adjectives. Based on the types of adjective phrases, this study shows that most students understand the use of adjective phrases better than attributive adjectives and predicative adjectives.

Based on the results of student's work, the researchers found that there are still many students who have difficulty in the use of adjective phrases in sentences. In this study, the researcher used a multiple-choice test as a tool used in collecting data on third-year students at one of the universities in North Maluku, where students were directed to match which adjective was most suitable to be used in a hollow sentence. Based on the results of the study, the percentage of students in

answering correctly the questions about Predicative adjective phrases is the lowest of the three types of adjective phrases tested. The percentage of students in answering questions can be seen in the following chart:

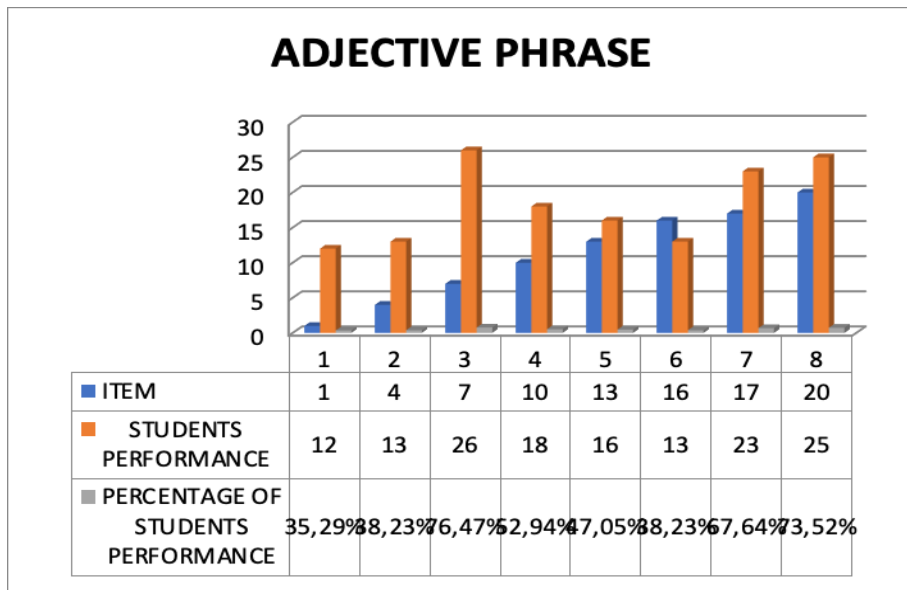


Figure 1. Adjective phrase

The research results from the chart show the evaluation of students' competence in using Adjective Phrase. There are 8 items related to the student's competence of using adjective phrase. Based on the data above, it can be concluded that there is variability in the success rate of respondents in answering some of the evaluated items. Item 7 achieved the highest success rate with 76.47%, indicating that most respondents were able to provide the correct answer for the item. Item 20 also received a positive response with a success rate of 73.52%, signaling a good understanding of the question by most respondents. Meanwhile, item 1, item 4, item 16, and item 13 showed lower success rates, ranging from 35.29% to 47.05% respectively. The existence of this variation may indicate difficulty or ambiguity in respondents' understanding of the material tested.

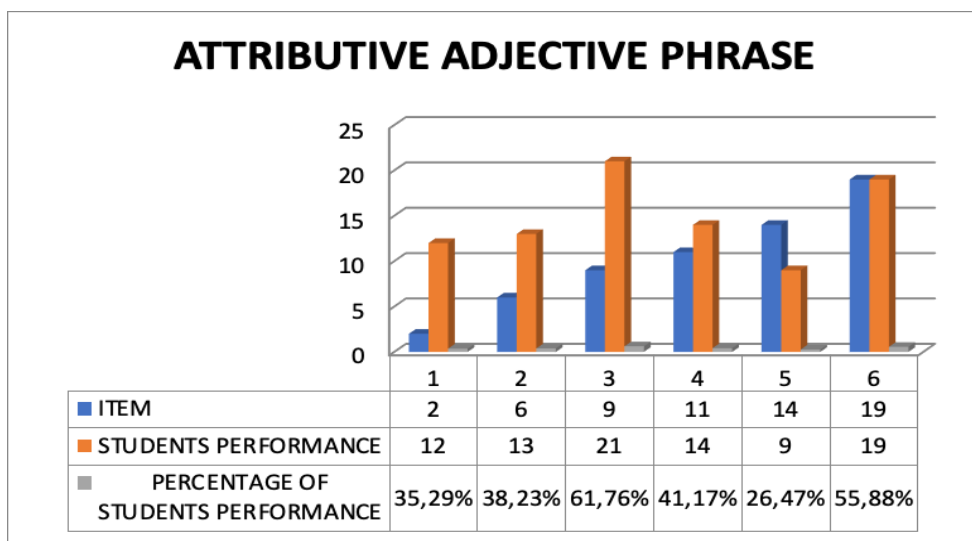


Figure 2. Attributive adjective phrase

The research results from the chart show the evaluation of students' competence in using Attributive Adjective Phrase. There are 6 items related to the

students competence of using attributive phrase. Based on the data above shows that the results of the analysis of student performance on several evaluation items show variations that reflect the level of success and student understanding of the evaluated material. Item 9 achieved the highest success rate of 61.76%, indicating that the majority of students were able to cope with the tasks or questions on that item. Meanwhile, item 14 recorded a lower success rate of only 26.47%, indicating certain challenges or difficulties in students' understanding of the question. The difference in performance levels on evaluation items creates a comprehensive picture of students' potential difficulties or strengths in coping with specific material. This analysis can form the basis for the development of more appropriate learning strategies and curriculum development that is responsive to students' needs in achieving deep understanding.

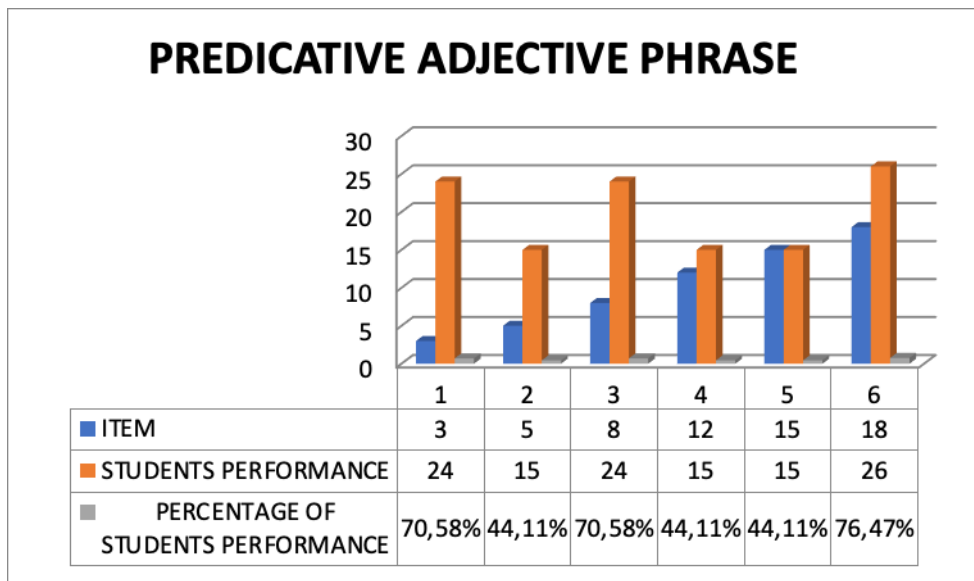


Figure 3. Predicative adjective phrase

The research results from the chart show the evaluation of students' competence in using Predicative Adjective Phrase. There are 6 assessment items related to students' ability to apply predicative phrases. The data analysis shows variations in students' understanding and success in answering the evaluated items. Item 3, Item 8, and Item 18 achieved high success rates, reaching 70.58% and 76.47% respectively, indicating a good understanding by most students of the questions or tasks on those items. On the other hand, Item 5, Item 12, and Item 15 recorded a success rate of 44.11%, indicating a lower level of understanding of the items. Nonetheless, the consistency of similar success rates across the three items indicates areas where some students may need additional support. The results of this analysis provide valuable insights in detailing specific aspects of the curriculum that may need to be strengthened or adjusted to improve student understanding. Overall, an in-depth understanding of the results of the analysis of student performance can provide a solid foundation for the development of more effective learning strategies and better customization of the curriculum according to student needs.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This research conducted at one of the Universities in North Maluku, focused on evaluating third-year students' competence in using adjective phrases,

attributive adjectives, and predicative adjectives. The findings, derived from a multiple-choice test, revealed that some third-year students demonstrated a fairly good understanding of adjectival phrases, attributive adjectives, and predicative adjectives. However, it was observed that, based on the types of adjective phrases, most students exhibited a better understanding of adjective phrases compared to attributive and predicative adjectives. The analysis of students' work further identified challenges, particularly in the use of adjective phrases in sentences, with a multiple-choice test employed as the data collection tool. The subsequent evaluation of students' competence in using adjective phrases, attributive adjectives, and predicative adjectives revealed varying success rates across different evaluation items. While certain items displayed high success rates, others exhibited lower rates, indicating potential difficulties or ambiguities in student understanding. This comprehensive analysis provides insights for the development of tailored learning strategies and curriculum adjustments to enhance student comprehension and address specific challenges. Overall, a thorough understanding of the research results serves as a valuable foundation for refining educational approaches and ensuring curriculum responsiveness to the diverse needs of students.

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