

ASSESSING STUDENT'S ABILITY TO CONSTRUCT ENGLISH NOUN PHRASES IN WRITING SENTENCES AT SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL TAKALAR

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Abstract: *The primary goal of the study was to assess students' proficiency in three different types of noun phrase construction: simple noun phrases, rather complex noun phrases, and very complex noun phrases. Descriptive quantitative research was adopted by the writers. The writer collected the samples by using a total sampling technique that consisted of 40 students. As a result, the writers reviewed the data by using descriptive analysis to get the mean score and the precise responses for each student. Data analysis revealed that the student's capability to construct simple noun phrases was 9,55 (very good), rather complex noun phrases was 3,5 (very poor), and very complex noun phrases were 2,41 (very poor). Based on the result of the data analysis, the writers concluded that the student's ability to construct simple noun phrases was very high, but the students' ability to construct rather complex noun phrases and very complex noun phrases was very low.*

Keywords: Construction, Simple NP, Rather Complex NP, Very Complex NP

INTRODUCTION

One of the most extensively used languages in the world, English serves as the foundation for all global communication. For those looking to succeed in today's globalised society, learning English as a second language or as a foreign language has therefore become more important. But learning English as a foreign language can be challenging for Indonesian students, who typically have minimal exposure to the language. The students still have some difficulties in mastering English. In general, the students' difficulty is in arranging words into sentences grammatically. It must be the duty of the syntax course because it states some rules of how to put words into sentences (Brown & Miller, 2020). The less ability in arranging is coming from smaller units namely arranging phrases, clauses, and even identifying words.

The ability of the students to put the words into grammatical sentences is called writing skills. Writing skill is one of the productive skills that should be taught to the students. The students convey the meaning of messages efficiently if the sentences can be constructed grammatically. Thus, the students must know the structure of the sentence, so that they will be able to arrange sentences into good paragraphs. It is also relevant to what (Cheung, 2016) claims that using linguistic patterns and organising arguments are two skills that go into writing. We can therefore conclude that writing talent refers to the capacity to

make concepts understandable to readers by conveying thoughts, emotions, and sentiments through written symbols. Furthermore, (Hoffmann, 2022) the students must know the structure of a sentence that consists of several elements namely words, phrases, and clauses

Especially for phrases, there is one phrase which is very important to be known namely English noun phrases. It is a sentence component that can serve as a sentence's subject, object, and complement. Three categories of noun phrases are typically found in English, according to Cook mentioned in (Ba'dulu, 2009) namely simple noun phrases, complex noun phrases, and highly complex noun phrases. The heads of the simple noun phrases are a noun and a determiner. A determiner, an adjective acting as a modifier, and a noun serving as its head make up a pretty complicated noun phrase. A determiner, an adjective acting as a modifier, a noun acting as its head, and yet another modifier makes up the extremely complicated noun phrase that follows. Thus, the students will be able to write well by understanding how to construct the phrases grammatically (Sihabuddin, 2019).

Unfortunately, most of the students still face difficulty to write well in English text. The results of the previous study (Monica et al., 2019) showed that students in SMAN 1 Padang Gelugur's eleventh grade had a "fair" level of proficiency in using noun phrases in their writing, with a percentage of 54%. Even today, many students still find it difficult to properly write noun phrases, particularly when it comes to the head, premodifier, and post-modifier markers. She found the result by asking the students to analyse English text. Thus, in this present study, the researcher used a different method in finding out students' results in constructing noun phrases. The present researcher presented jumble words to the students, then, the students constructed the words to form English noun phrases. It is more suitable for the student at the secondary school level than they need to analyse the sentences because it is just for the intermediate level (CP & ATP - Bahasa Inggris Fase E, n.d.)

Based on the description above, the writer realizes that recognizing the elements of the sentences is very important for the students. It seems logical that mastery of the structure of noun phrases can help the students to arrange a grammatical sentence. This is why, the writers were interested in conducting this case under the title *Assessing Students' Ability to Construct English Noun Phrases in Writing Sentences*. This study's goal is to ascertain the students' ability of the eleventh English Class Students at SMAN 2 Takalar to construct those three types of noun phrases namely simple noun phrases, rather complex noun phrases, and very complex noun phrases. The result of the study is expected to be more useful for English teachers and students in constructing noun phrases as an important knowledge in the syntax field (Irawan & Sulisty, 2021)

LITERATURE REVIEW

English Phrases

The level of a phrase, according to Cook (Ba'dulu, 2009), is higher than the level of a word and lower than the level of a clause. Typically, the sentence's constituent words fall into clause-level positions. It is a construction where the constituents are words and the component is a closely related morpheme sequence that functions as a typical unit at the

clause level (Worku, 2021). Therefore, phrases are collections of words that can be inserted into the same spaces at the clause level as individual words. In the following, only noun phrases will be further discussed.

Noun Phrase

According to (Jackson, 1985), an English noun phrase (NP) can be made up of a pre-modifier, a head, and a post-modifier. For example, noun phrases (NPs) serve as the subject (some students) and the object (an English course), and complement(in my school) in the sentence "some students will join an English course in my school." Jackson asserts that there are three different ways to construct a noun phrase. The head, the pre-modifier, and the post-modifier. He further clarifies that only the head of a noun phrase is required, but the modifier is optional. The following are the parts of a noun phrase:

1. The Head

A noun serves as the head of the noun phrase the most frequently. The head may be one of several pronouns, most frequently a personal pronoun, as in he is present. Other pronouns that can serve as the head of a noun phrase are, (Murphy, 1997):

- a. Indefinite pronoun, e.g somebody in somebody called
- b. Possessive pronoun. E.g yours in yours are yello
- c. Demonstrativeve pronoun, e.g these in these boats

2. Pre- Modifier

Jackson (1982) claims that the pre-modification in a noun phrase is made up of several classes or subclasses in the following order: identifier, numeral, adjective, and noun.

Identifier (Determiner)

1. Articles

Articles can be divided into two types indefinite articles e.g. "a" and "an", and definite articles e.g. "the". The indefinite article a is used before the consonant words such as a man, a hat, or a girl, while article an is used before the vowel (a, i, u, e, o) such as an apple, an onion, an egg, an hour. Meanwhile, the definite article "the" is used in the same for the singular and plural for all genders. The article "the" is used to consider a unique object, e.g the earth, the sea, the sky. It can be also used before a noun which mentioned a second time, e.g. his car struck *a tree*, you can see the mark of *the tree*

2. Possessive

According to (Fromkin et al., 2010), the possessive, rather than the item owned, is what is meant by the word "possessive" in English. A man's thing is what he possesses, and a woman's thing is what she possesses, as in Tom's father is his father, but Mary's father is her father. In additionally, (Huddleston, 1988) classifies that there are three sets of possessive expressions: an open class of posses, the closed classes of pronouns, and determinative: my, your, their, mine, his, and her, e.g his book, her toys, their houses, our cars.

3. Demonstrative

Thompson et al., (2019) says that demonstrative can be divided into this/ these and that/ those, e.g. this book, these books, that car, those cars.

a. Numeral as modifier

There are two types of quantifiers for numbers: definite and indefinite. Examples of definite quantifiers are the ordinal numbers first, second, third, and fourth, as well as the cardinal numbers one, two, three, and four. Words like few, many, several, etc. are examples of indefinite quantifiers (Muin, 2019)

b. Adjective as modifier

A word or phrase that modifies a noun phrase is called an adjective. Here are some instances of adjectives serving as modifiers in noun phrases (Hoffmann, 2022)

1) Form of adjective: the same form for singular and plural form an old car, old cars, an old man, old men.

2) The position of adjective: adjectives come before a noun, e.g. young men, nice girls, new shoes. The adjective come after a verb, e.g. he is asleep, she is alive

3) Order of Adjective: first, when we use two adjectives together" opinion" and "fact ", opinion adjectives (beautiful, interesting,) normally go before the fact adjectives (blue, new): an interesting new film, a beautiful blue dress. Second, when two or more fact adjectives come before a noun, they normally go in the following order:

Size + age + shape + color + origin + material + purpose + noun

Examples : a small rubber ball (size + material+ noun), white leather running shoes (color + material +purpose + noun)

c. Noun as modifier

A noun modifier often appears after an adjective and before the headword. As a result, a noun can serve as both the phrase's modifier and the noun phrase's head, e.g. a country garden, the travel agency, the table leg, etc.

Post- Modifier

According to Jackson (Ba'dulu, 2009), Post-modifiers can be expressed in a noun phrase's clause, word group, phrase, or a single word. As a result, there are three types of post-modifiers for noun phrases: the single word, word group/phrasal, and clause. Adverbs and adjectives can be postmodifiers of a single word, while prepositional phrases and clauses can be postmodifiers of a phrasal sentence. Relative clauses and non-finite clauses make up postmodifiers.

a. Single Word Post-Modifier

1) Adjectives as post modifier

Indefinite pronouns are often the head of an adjective in post-modification, and therefore cannot function as pre-modifiers for adjectives. For example, something stage, somebody brave. In other words, can also come after a noun for a few set phrases such as something useful, nothing amusing, and blood royal.

2) Adverb as modifier

Adverbs can be used as post-modifiers to condense prepositional phrases, such as the morning after the bus behind, and the room above.

3) Myself-type pronoun

The self-type pronoun may be accurate as a pos-modifier in a noun phrase.

Examples; the old man himself, my mother herself, and the students themselves.

b. Relative Clause

Relative clauses include limitations on how they can be used, such as first-, second-, or third-person pronouns, singular or plural numbers, or past, present, or future tenses. Relative clauses are sometimes known as finite clauses because they are limited. For example, The book he recommended. It is NP with *the* as a determiner, *book* as head, and *which he recommended* as a modifier.

1) Non-Finite Clause

According to (Huddleston, 1988) Non-finite clauses are those that typically lack a subject and are characterized by a non-finite verb form. There are three different kinds of non-finite clauses:

- a) Infinitive clause – e.g *to answer the question*
- b) A clause in the form of present participle - e.g *that breaking down the time*
- c) A clause in the form of past participle - e.g *who given to reach the score*

2) Prepositional Phrase

Prepositional phrases are the type of post-modifier that appear in noun phrases the most commonly. For example, *the man on the boat*. In which *on the boat* is **post modifier** to the man. (Fromkin et al., 2010) explains the function, position, and form of prepositional phrases. Adverbial phrases can be adverbial, adjectival, or nominal. The position is an adjective prepositional phrase after a noun, modifying it. Adverbial phrases have three possible positions: initial (*despite her handicaps, the blind girl did well*), meet (*the blind girl, despite her handicap, did well*) or final (*the blind girl did well despite her handicaps*). From is a proposition consisting of one (*of, on, at, by, ,*), two (*because of, according to, apart from*) or three parts (*using, concerning, an account of, in regard to*).

Noun Phrase Structure Formulas

According to (Worku, 2021) a noun phrase is a nominal form that takes the place of a clause's main or supporting arguments. Simple nouns, pronouns, adjectives, stative verbs, de-verbal nouns, demonstratives, and determiners (numerals and quantifiers) are the main components of a noun phrase. Personal pronouns, nouns, demonstrative pronouns, proper names, and de-verbal nouns can be used to head noun phrases. Additionally. Cook (Ba'dulu, 2009) states that noun phrases may be simple, rather complex, and very complex. Thus, those noun phrases can be identified based on their formulas.

I. Simple Noun Phrases

A simple noun phrase quite frequently of a determiner and a noun as its head. Thus, the formula of a simple noun phrase can be written as follows:

$$N = \pm \text{Det} : \text{art/pos/num/demon} + H : n$$

Read: A straightforward noun phrase consists of a noun in the head slot, followed by a determiner that may be an article, possessive pronoun, a number, or a demonstrative. Examples: *a girl, his book, one book, these pens, etc.*

2. Rather a Complex Noun Phrase

A rather complex noun phrase consists of a determiner, a modifier, and a noun as its head. Thus, the formula of rather complex noun phrase can be formulated as follows:

$$N = \pm \text{Det} : \text{art/pos/num/demon} \pm \text{Mod: adj/n} + \text{H} : \text{n}$$

Read: An optional determiner slot is filled by an article, possessive pronoun, a number, or a demonstrative, and is followed by an optional modifier slot, which is filled by an adjective on a noun, and a head slot, which is filled by a noun. Examples: *a clever student, the young man, his good character, this table leg, and act.*

3. Very Complex Noun Phrase

Very complex noun phrases consist of a determiner, a modifier, a noun as its head, and followed by another modifier. Thus, the formula for rather complex noun phrases can be written as follows:

$$N = \pm \text{Det} : \text{art/pos/num/demon} \pm \text{Mod: adj/n} + \text{H} : \text{n} \pm \text{Mod: RA/CL}$$

Read: A very complex noun phrase has a head slot with a noun, an optional determiner slot with an article, possessive pronoun, a number, or a demonstrative, followed by an optional modifier slot with an adjective on the noun, and a second modifier slot with a relater axis phrase (RA) or a clause (CL).

Examples: *good students in the class, a new house in the area, the old man who came yesterday, and acting.*

METHOD

This study used a descriptive quantitative research design to describe the information on students' ability to construct English noun phrases. 40 students from SMA Negeri 2 Takalar in the eleventh language class were chosen as the samples using the total sampling technique. The data was gathered using written tests in which the students had to construct simple, rather complex and very complex noun phrase. The data were then analysed using descriptive analysis, which involved computing the mean score for the class as well as calculating each student's score (Gay et al., 2012). The following formula was used to calculate the percentage:

$$P = (F/N) \times 100\%$$

P = Percentage of the Student's Answer

F = Frequency of the Student's correct Answer

N = Total Number of the Items

The following formula was then used to calculate the students' mean score for their ability in creating English noun phrases:

$$M = \sum X / N$$

M = Mean Score
 $\sum x$ = Sum of the Scores
 N = Sum of the Students

The ability was divided into the following categories.

9,6 to 10 is classified as excellent
 8,6 to 9,5 is classified as very good
 7,6 to 9,5 is classified as good
 6,6 to 7,5 is classified as fairly good
 5,6 to 6,5 is classified as fair
 3,6 to 5,5 is classified as poor
 0,0 to 3,5 is classified as very poor

(Departemen Pendidikan Dan Kebudayaan, 1989)

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Result of Findings

This section covers the study's findings, which demonstrate how well the students were able to create three different forms of English noun phrases—simple, rather complex, and very complex noun phrases.

1. The Students' Ability to Construct Simple Noun Phrases.

The following table shows the result of the data analysis of the student's writing test after constructing simple noun phrase:

Table 1. The Student's Score in Constructing Simple Noun Phrase

Classification	Score	Frequency	Percentage
Excellent	9.6 to 10	17	42.5
Very Good	8.6 to 9.5	21	52.5
Good	7.6 to 8.5	1	2.5
Fairy Good	6.6 to 7.5	1	2.5
Fair	5.6 to 6.5		
Poor	3.6 to 5.5		
Very Poor	0 to 3.5		
Total		40	100

(Departemen Pendidikan Dan Kebudayaan, 1989)

Table 1 above indicates that 17(42,5 %) of the students got excellent scores, most of the students got very good scores 21 (52.5%), 1(2,5%) of them got score good, and 1 (2,5%) of them got fairly good. It meant that the students had a high ability to construct simple noun phrases.

2. The Students' Ability to Construct Rather Complex Noun Phrases.

The following table shows the result of the data analysis of the student's writing test after constructing rather complex noun phrase:

Table 2. The Student's Score in Constructing Rather Complex Noun Phrase

Classification	Score	Frequency	Percentage
Excellent	9.6 to 10	-	-
Very Good	8.6 to 9.5	-	-
Good	7.6 to 8.5	-	-
Fairy Good	6.6 to 7.5	2	5
Fair	5.6 to 6.5	6	15
Poor	3.6 to 5.5	12	30
Very Poor	0 to 3.5	20	50
Total		40	100

Table 2, indicates that 20 (50 %) of the students got a poor score, 12(30%)of them got a very poor score, 6 (15%) of them got a fair score, and 2 (5%) of them got fairly good. It meant that the students were very low to construct rather complex noun phrases.

3. The Students' Ability to Construct Very Complex Noun Phrases.

The following table shows the result of the data analysis of the student's writing test after constructing very complex noun phrase:

Table 3. The Student's Score in Constructing Very Complex Noun Phrase

Classification	Score	Frequency	Percentage
Excellent	9.6 to 10	-	-
Very Good	8.6 to 9.5	-	-
Good	7.6 to 8.5	-	-
Fairy Good	6.6 to 7.5	-	-
Fair	5.6 to 6.5	-	-
Poor	3.6 to 5.5	2	5
Very Poor	0 to 3.5	38	95
Total		40	100

Table 3 above indicates that 38 (95%) of the students got very poor scores, and 2 (5%) of them got poor scores. It wa considered that the students had a very low ability to construct very complex noun phrases.

The following table shows clearly the students' classification in constructing simple noun phrases, rather complex noun phrases, and very complex noun phrases.

Table 4. Classification of the noun phrase

Items	Noun Phrases	Mean Score	Classification
1	Simple Noun Phrase	9.55	Very good
2	Rather a complex Noun phrase	3.5	Very poor
3	Very complex noun phrases	2.41	Very poor

Based on the table 4 above, we may determine that the student's ability in constructing simple noun phrases was classified as very good (9.55), but their ability in constructing

rather complex and very complex noun phrases was classified as very poor (3,5) and (2,41). Related to the table above, the writer presents the diagram as follows:

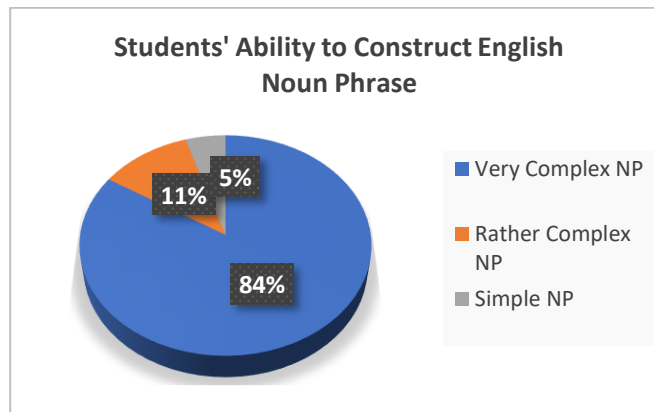


Figure 1. Students' ability to construct English Noun phrases

Based on Figure 1, we might infer that 84 % of the students were not able to construct very complex noun phrases, 11 % of the students were able to construct rather complex noun phrases, and only 5 % of the students were not able to construct simple noun phrases.

Discussion

1. The student's ability to Construct Simple Noun Phrase

The student's ability to construct simple noun phrases was categorized as very good. This is proved by the test given in which the mean score of the students in constructing simple noun phrases was 9.55, which is classified as very good. Most of the students understood how to use a determiner which functions as a modifier in simple noun phrases. According to (Wahyuni & Dewi, 2020) the students have correctly written noun phrases in their heads. The students were easier to identify which one of the components functions as a determiner and a head. In addition, (Monica et al., 2019) The student's understanding of the functions played by each component of a noun phrase was strong, particularly for those noun phrases that contained two components: a determiner and a noun functioning as its head. Thus, the ability to recognize the determiner elements will help the students to construct the simple noun phrase (Breban, 2011)

2. The Students' Ability to Construct Rather Complex Noun Phrases

The results showed that the student's capacity to create rather complicated noun phrases was extremely lacking. The students' low ability at this point was concerned with the lack of understanding in the use of the adjective, present participle, and past participle that functioned as adjectives and also a noun as a modifier in rather complex noun phrases (Sihabuddin, 2019). According to (Monica et al., 2019) the student's understanding of how pre-modifiers and post-modifiers work in sentences was quite inadequate. The students were still difficult to identify adjective functions as modifiers, and prepositional phrases function as post-modifiers. In addition, (Wahyuni & Dewi, 2020) defined that the students got low levels in writing adjectives as pre-modifiers. The students did not know the order or adjective as

modifiers in noun phrases such as size, shape, and material come before a noun such as a *small rubber ball*, based on the finding most of the students wrote *rubber small ball*. (Muin, 2019)

3. The Students' Ability to Construct Very Complex Noun Phrases

The findings showed that the student's ability to construct very complex noun phrases was very low. The data analysis showed that the students' score was 2.41, which was classified as very poor. The poor ability of the students indicated that the students lack understanding of the use and the position of pre-modifier slots filled by a determiner, adjective modifier, and also post-modifier slots filled by prepositional phrases and clauses. According to (Wahyuni & Dewi, 2020) the students still had difficulty analysing adjectives and adverbs that functioned as the pre-modifier as well as post-modifier including prepositional phrase and clause in a noun phrase. In addition, (Monica et al., 2019) stated the students lacked of understanding the use of clauses as postmodifiers. It was also relevant to the result of this study that showed that the students were low in mastering the use and position of the pre-modifier, which is filled by the determiner; the adjective modifier, which is filled by the present participle and past participle; and the post-modifier slot, which is filled by prepositional phrases and clauses.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The correct data of the student's ability to construct simple noun phrases was 9.56. rather complex noun phrase was 3.5, and very complex noun phrase was 2.41. It meant that the students' ability was classified as very good to construct simple noun phrases but their ability to construct rather complex noun phrases and very complex noun phrases was very poor. Almost all of the students did not know the kind of words, whether it was a noun, an adjective, or a verb. They did not also know that prepositional phrases and clauses the modifier in very complex noun phrases.

Based on the findings, the writer presents some suggestions: the teacher must facilitate more material and exercise for the students in constructing English noun phrases, the teacher needs to find a good method to teach the students English noun phrases, and the students should know the elements and patterns of NP. According to (Sihabuddin, 2019) one method that the teacher can use in teaching noun phrases is a constructive method. In addition, (Sulistiani & Agung, 2019) defines that using labelled brackets helps teachers and students to identify the components of noun phrases. Thus, and last but not least, the next researcher will better conduct the study to find out the student's difficulties in constructing English noun phrases, and what kind of method can be used to improve the student's ability in constructing English noun phrases.

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