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# ADJECTIVE CLAUSES

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## ABSTRACT

This study explores the strategic role and structural framework of adjective clauses within the English grammatical system. As a dependent element, an adjective clause functions to provide specific descriptions and clarify the meaning of nouns or pronouns within a sentence. Structurally, the formation of these clauses involves the use of relative markers—either relative pronouns or relative adverbs—followed by a subject and predicate structure. The focus of this study encompasses two primary classifications: restrictive clauses, which are essential to the integrity of meaning, and non-restrictive clauses, which serve to provide supplementary information. Employing a qualitative descriptive approach, this study involves students as research subjects selected through purposive sampling. Data collection was conducted comprehensively through written documentation, interviews, and observations to map the usage patterns of these clauses. The results of the analysis provide a clear representation of students' competence and accuracy in implementing adjective clauses. These findings reinforce the argument that mastery of this grammatical aspect is a crucial instrument in producing effective, accurate, and communicative academic writing.

## INTRODUCTION

Laypeople and specialists commonly hold contrasting views regarding the notion of “grammar.” For non-experts, grammar is often associated with tedious drills on seemingly unimportant rules. In contrast, scholars in second language acquisition generally acknowledge

that grammar is indispensable, as it represents the linguistic patterns through which educated speakers of English express themselves (Saengboon, Kosin, & Toomaneejinda, 2022).

In communication, the ability to construct complete and effective sentences is an essential prerequisite. A sentence can be defined as the largest linguistic unit that conveys a complete idea. Following Leech's perspective, a sentence is composed of smaller units, such as phrases, words, and most crucially, the clause which holds a central role in shaping sentence structure. Structurally, every clause or sentence must contain at least one subject and one finite verb. Amidst this structure, the adjective holds a fundamental role as a lexical category that functions to modify nouns or pronouns, thereby adding specification or detail. Therefore, understanding the role of adjectives remains crucial in the analysis of clause and sentence construction (Ramadhan & Rejeki, 2019).

Adjective clause is important because most of written text like English magazines, newspaper, textbooks, and others frequently use adjective clause. And also, adjective clause is one part of English grammar that learned (Nabila, 2021). An adjective clause is a dependent clause that modifies a noun by describing, identifying, or providing additional information about it (Asiyah, 2018). One important function of adjective clauses is to use relative pronouns such as "who," "which," "when," and "where" The existence of adjectives in the formation of clauses and sentences is essential because, in linguistics, adjectives are a class of words that modify nouns or pronouns, often by specifying or explaining them further (Yuliani, Maghfiroh, Asiyah, Mustikawati, & Indriastuti, 2022).

## METHOD

This research utilizes a qualitative descriptive approach as its methodology, given its primary goal is to thoroughly examine and interpret the structural complexity or usage patterns of adjective clauses based on authentic linguistic samples. This method is deemed appropriate because it allows the investigator to gain deep insights into the participants' production challenges and analyze the grammatical phenomenon within actual language performance contexts.

The subjects of this study were selected through purposive sampling, consisting of students who generated English written texts, chosen specifically due to their demonstrable relevance to difficulties or variations in constructing adjective clauses. The research corpus was gathered from multiple sources, including the students' written assignments, interviews conducted with both the students and their instructors, and pertinent academic documentation.

Data collection employed several interconnected techniques: documentation (to collect written works), semi-structured interviews (to probe understanding and rationale), and

observation (to note classroom interactions or writing behavior). The data analysis proceeded through the established procedures for qualitative description, involving the sequence of data gathering, data condensation (reduction), data visualization (display), and final conclusion generation (verification). By employing these stages systematically, the researcher was able to establish recurring patterns of usage or error, interpret their underlying meaning, and formulate findings concerning students' mastery and accuracy in using adjective clauses in writing.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### RESULT

To present the findings more systematically, the following table summarizes the analysis results, encompassing the types, relative markers, and functional characteristics of adjective clauses identified in the students' writing.

**Table 1. Distribution and Characteristics of Adjective Clauses**

| NO | nal Aspect lyzed | Type /Category | Relative Marker | Function in Sentence | Descriptiion of Finding |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | ɛtype of adjective ɜclause | Restrictive clause | who, which, that | Identifying / defining noun | This type of adjective clause is used to limit and specify the meaning of a noun. The omission of this clause significantly changed the meaning of the sentence. |
| 2 | ɛtype of adjective ɜclause | Non-restrictive clause | who, which, where | Providing additional information | This clause function to give supplementary information and can be omitted without affecting the core meaning of the sentence. |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | clause marker | Relative Pronoun | who, whom, whose, which, that | Linking clause to noun | Relative pronouns are consistently used to introduce adjective clauses and connect them to the nouns they modify. |
| 4 | clause marker | Relative Adverb | where, when, why | Indicating place, time, reason | Relative adverbs are used appropriately to express contextual information related to place, time, and reason. |
| 5 | grammatical tion | Dependent clause | _ | Modifying noun/pronoun | All identified adjective clauses functioned as dependent clauses and could not stand alone as independent sentences. |
| 6 | grammatical racy | Usage convention | Exclusion of "that" | Non-restrictive clause rule | The findings indicate that the relative marker " that" is not used in non-restrictive adjective clauses in accordance with grammatical conventions. |

Based on a comprehensive analysis of the collected data, the findings indicate that adjective clauses produced by the students consistently function as dependent elements that provide specific descriptions for nouns or pronouns. Structurally, all identified adjective clauses are initiated by relative markers, including relative pronouns such as *who, whom, whose, which,* and *that*, as well as relative adverbs like *where, when,* and *why*. The data

confirms that these clauses cannot stand alone as independent sentences and must be attached to the specific noun they modify to ensure complete meaning.

Furthermore, the research categorizes these clauses into two primary functional groups: restrictive and non-restrictive. The results show that restrictive clauses are frequently utilized to define a subject specifically, where their removal would significantly alter the core message of the sentence. In contrast, non-restrictive clauses were found to provide supplementary details that do not affect the fundamental meaning if omitted. Observations also revealed a consistent adherence to grammatical standards, particularly the avoidance of the marker "that" when introducing non-essential information. Overall, this systematic analysis provides a clear representation of the students' proficiency and accuracy in applying these grammatical structures within an academic writing context.

## DISCUSSION

1. Defenition of adjective clauses

   Adjectives are fundamental lexical categories that qualify nouns and pronouns, primarily adopting two syntactic roles: attributive (preceding the noun) and predicative (following the noun, often mediated by a linking verb). Structurally, the clause serves as a vital unit, categorized as either independent (a complete thought) or dependent (requiring another clause for full meaning). Crucially, dependent clauses can manifest as adjective clauses (relative clauses). For successful sentence cohesion, these dependent clauses rely on connectors or relative markers to link them to the main clause (Jama, 2023). An adjective clause is a dependent clause that functions to modify or provide detailed description for a noun or pronoun within a sentence. Its primary role is to add specificity, thereby clarifying the meaning of the noun. Adjective clauses are typically initiated by relative pronouns such as *who, whom, whose, which, that,* or relative adverbs like *where, when, why*. Haryanti and Setyandari assert that this type of subordinate clause acts grammatically as an adjective, offering further elaboration on a noun. Supporting the broader classification of dependent clauses, Davidson notes that a noun clause functions as a noun or pronoun, while an adverb clause contains an adverbial element (Nabila, 2021). Clauses play an important role in the formation of sentences in any language including English and Indonesian.3 In English, a clause is the smallest unit capable of expressing a complete thought. A clause is defined as a grammatical structure containing a subject and a predicate. An adjective clause consists of two words: an adjective and a clause.

   An adjective is a group of words that describes a noun or pronoun, while a clause is a group of words that forms part of a sentence and has its own subject and predicate.

Therefore, based on these two words, an adjective clause can be defined as a clause that functions as an adjective (Marpaung, 2020).

2. Type of adjective clauses

Adjective clauses can be grouped into two main categories, namely (Nainggolan, Simanjuntak, Siadari, & Sitompul, 2023) :

a. An adjective clause that is necessary, limiting, or restrictive

According to Farmers an essential adjective clause contains information that is highly necessary for the overall meaning of a sentence. If this clause is omitted, the meaning of the sentence will change significantly (Nadirah, Tahir, & Asrifan, 2019). In addition, restrictive adjective clauses function to identify or define the noun phrase which they modify.

Example:"Neil Armstrong is the first man who stepped foot on the moon," where the adjective clause is the segment "who stepped his feet on the moon." Should this segment be omitted, the reference to the noun becomes less specific, consequently shifting the meaning of the entire sentence.

Conceptually, this demonstrates that a restrictive adjective clause is not merely supplementary information; instead, it plays a vital role in establishing the identity of the subject or object being mentioned. Put differently, this clause type functions as a linguistic mechanism that narrows the meaning, ensuring that the reader or listener clearly comprehends the specific entity being referred to. Thus, the application of essential adjective clauses is extremely significant in sentence construction, especially within academic writing and scientific texts where accuracy of reference and descriptive precision are required.

b. A non-restrictive/appositive/non-definitive adjective clause

A non-restrictive clause (also known as a nonessential or supplementary relative clause) serves to provide additional, non-crucial information about the noun phrase it modifies. The core meaning of the sentence remains intact even when this clause is omitted, as its function is purely supplementary For instance, in the sentence (Nainggolan et al., 2023): "Hana, who just graduated from high school, is an accomplished figure skater," the embedded clause *who just graduated from high school* elaborates on the subject, Hana, but does not define or restrict her identity. The essential message that Hana is an accomplished figure skater is retained if the clause is removed. Since the deletion of this modifying element does not alter the fundamental meaning of

the sentence, the clause is considered dispensable. It is a grammatical convention that the relative pronoun "that" cannot be used to introduce a nonessential adjective clause.

3. Structure of adjective clauses

The basic structure of an adjective clause involves using a relative connector (which can be either a relative pronoun or a relative adverb) followed by a subject and a predicate (verb). This relative marker serves to link the dependent clause to the noun it is describing. Essentially, an adjective clause is a dependent element; it cannot function as a standalone, complete sentence. Instead, it must always be attached to the noun it modifies.

Common pronouns used as relative markers include *who*, *whom*, *whose*, *which*, and *that*. Meanwhile, frequently used relative adverbs consist of *where*, *when*, and *why*. The key to forming the complete structural unit of this clause is that the relative marker must be followed by both a subject and a verb (Putri, Islamiah, Andini, & Marini, 2022).

## CONCLUSION

Based on the in depth analysis of the role and structure of adjective clauses, this research confirms that the mastery of this grammatical unit is highly crucial for English language proficiency, especially within the context of formal writing. The adjective clause functions as a dependent clause whose primary role is to modify and provide detailed descriptions for a noun or pronoun in a sentence, thereby clarifying its meaning. This dependent clause must always be attached to the noun it modifies and cannot function as a standalone complete sentence. Structurally, adjective clauses are consistently formed: they begin with a relative marker either a relative pronoun (*who, whom, whose, which, that*) or a relative adverb (*where, when, why*) followed by a subject and a verb (predicate).

The findings also highlight two main categories of adjective clauses: restrictive (essential) clauses and non-restrictive (non-essential) clauses. Restrictive clauses are vital for specifically identifying or defining the noun ; consequently, their omission would significantly alter the sentence's meaning. Conversely, non-restrictive clauses merely provide non-crucial supplementary information , leaving the sentence's core message intact if they are removed. It is a grammatical convention that the relative pronoun *that* cannot be used to introduce a non essential clause. The accurate application of these two types is essential, especially in academic and scientific texts where accuracy of reference and descriptive precision are required.

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach to investigate the usage patterns of adjective clauses, based on authentic linguistic samples from student subjects selected via *purposive sampling*. Data was systematically gathered and analyzed through documentation, interviews, and observation. The research, therefore, concludes that an accurate understanding

and the ability to appropriately apply both types of adjective clauses are necessary for students , underscoring the significance of mastering this complex grammatical structure in written academic output.

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