

# **A STUDY ON THE ABILITY OF THE SECOND YEAR STUDENTS OF THE ENGLISH STUDY PROGRAM OF UNIVERSITAS RIAU IN CHOOSING THE CORRECT PREPOSITIONAL PHRASES FOR ADVERB PHRASE**

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**Abstract:** *The objective of this descriptive research was to describe the students' ability in choosing the correct prepositional phrases for adverb phrase. The population of this research was the second year students of the English Study Program of Universitas Riau as big as 86 students of 2014/2015 academic year. Due to the population is very large, which consist of 3 classes, the cluster random sampling technique is used. The whole of number of the population is about 86 students. One of the class is taken as the sample as many as 30 students. The multiple choice test is used to collect the needed data of prepositional phrases for adverb phrase. The collected data were analyzed by calculating the scores of the students in answering the test and classified them to a certain level of ability in choosing the correct prepositional phrases for adverb phrase. The research finding show that the majority of the students passed in choosing the correct prepositional phrases for adverb phrase as big as 90%. This means that the students' were capable to comprehend the test. The suggestion is that the unsuccessful students should learn more and read about prepositional phrases for adverb phrase. In addition, the teacher should give more explanation about prepositional phrases for adverb phrase for the group of the unsuccessful students.*

**Keywords:** *ability, choosing, prepositional phrase, adverb, phrase*

**SEBUAH STUDI TERHADAP KEMAMPUAN MAHASISWA  
PROGRAM PENDIDIKAN BAHASA INGGRIS FKIP  
UNIVERSITAS RIAU SEMESTER EMPAT DALAM MEMILIH  
FRASE PREPOSISIONAL YANG BENAR UNTUK MEMBUAT  
FRASE ADVERBIA**

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**Abstrak:** Tujuan dari penelitian deskriptif ini adalah untuk mendeskripsikan kemampuan mahasiswa dalam memilih frase preposisional yang benar untuk membuat frase adverbial. Populasi penelitian ini adalah mahasiswa-mahasiswi semester empat program studi bahasa Inggris Universitas Riau sebanyak 86 mahasiswa tahun ajaran 2014/2015. Di karenakan populasi yang terlalu banyak, mahasiswa semester empat dibagi menjadi 3 kelas, jadi penelitian ini menggunakan teknik cluster random sampling. Jumlah keseluruhan dari populasi mahasiswa semester empat adalah sebanyak 86 mahasiswa. Salah satu dari ke tiga kelas tersebut menjadi sample untuk penelitian ini, yaitu sebanyak 30 mahasiswa. Test pilihan berganda digunakan untuk mengumpulkan data tentang memilih frase preposisional yang benar untuk membuat frase adverbial. Data dianalisis dengan menghitung skor masing-masing mahasiswa dalam menjawab tes dan diklasifikasi menjadi level-level tertentu dalam memilih kata penghubung. Hasil dari penelitian menunjukkan dari keseluruhan mahasiswa yang berhasil dalam memilih frase preposisional yang tepat adalah sebanyak 90%. Berarti mahasiswa telah mampu untuk memahami tes yang di berikan. Penelitian ini merekomendasikan mahasiswa yang tidak lulus untuk belajar lebih giat dan membaca buku tentang frase preposisional untuk frase adverbial. Selain itu, guru sebaiknya memberikan penjelasan lebih banyak mengenai frase preposisional yang benar untuk membuat frase adverbial untuk kelompok mahasiswa yang tidak lulus tersebut.

**Kata kunci:** kemampuan, memilih, frase preposisional, adverbial, frase

## INTRODUCTION

In traditional grammar, words in English are classified into eight headings, called part of speech. They are verb, nouns, pronouns, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions and interjections (John, et al, 1978). In order to help improve writing as well as speaking, these part of speech is important to know by the students. One of eight terms which will be focused on is preposition, especially prepositional phrases for adverb phrase. A prepositional phrase is a word or group of word which always begins with preposition and ends with an object, which can be a noun or pronoun (Hornby, 1987). An adverb in a sentence consists of several aspect. These type of adverbs are called adverbial phrase or adverbial clause (Craig, 2011). An adverb is a word that modifies a verb. Usually, an adverb tells about when, where, how, in what manner or to what extent an action is performed. Each adverb can usually be categorised in adverbs of time, place, manner, degree, condition, concession and reason.

Based on writers' observation, some students of the second year of the English Study Program of FKIP UR still face difficulties in choosing the correct prepositional phrase for adverb phrase. Some of the students can answered the questions correctly, but the others answered the questions wrongly. The writer presumed that the students' errors because of their lack of understanding and knowledge in choosing the correct prepositional phrases for adverb phrase.

Swan (1980) states that grammar can determine how words are combined, arranged and are changed to show different meanings. Grammar is the core of the language. It cannot be separated from the language. Nobody can understand or use the language without knowing the grammar. Grammar is one of the important components in learning English. (Hornby, 1991) says that good listening, speaking, reading and writing in English require a working knowledge of grammar. The students have to write and master grammar so that they have ability to speak in English correctly, because grammar is the rules in forming sentences.

Relate to previous explanation, a prepositional phrase is compromised of two parts: a preposition and an object of the preposition. Together, they form the prepositional phrase that is then inserted in a sentence to modify some noun or verb.

Preposition is word with noun to show relation in which these nouns stand to some other words in the sentence (Eckersley, 1975). Preposition is classified as a part of speech in traditional grammar. In other words, prepositions are the words that indicate location and a preposition used to show a relationship between a noun to other word or object of a sentence. Preposition often show location (under the table), direction (to the south) or time (past midnight). The word or phrase that the preposition introduces is called an object of preposition.

Object of preposition is the word or phrase standing after the preposition. It means that the object of preposition is the noun that follows the preposition. It is also the stopping point for each prepositional phrase. So, the words that completes the preposition then makes it a coherent prepositional phrase is what's called the object of preposition.

Prepositional phrases can be made up of single, double or triple words. The most important aspect of a prepositional phrase is its placement. A grammatically correct sentence conveying the desired meaning can be structured by choosing the right preposition and using it the correctly.

There are two functions of prepositional phrases: *adjective* and *adverb*. Remember that adjectives describe nouns and pronouns, and adverbs describe verbs.

1. Prepositional phrases function as adjectives

When prepositional phrases serve as an adjective, it's called an adjectival phrase. An adjective phrase is a prepositional phrase that modifies a noun or pronoun in the sentence. Adjective phrases answer the question *which one* or *what kind* (ideas, people, places and things).

a. Modifies noun

Example:

Please read the **message** from Lee.

“from Lee” is a prepositional phrase. The object of the preposition is “Lee” and the preposition is “from”. It functions as an adjective because it modifies the noun “**message**”.

b. Modifies pronoun

Example:

**One** of my friends is incredibly funny.

“of my friends” is a prepositional phrase. The object of the preposition is “my friend” and the preposition is “of”. It functions as an adjective because it modifies the pronoun “**one**”.

2. Prepositional phrases function as adverbs

When a prepositional phrase functions as an adverb, it's called an adverbial or adverb phrase. A prepositional phrase can function as an adverbial phrase by modifying a verb, an adjective, or an adverb. When a prepositional phrase functions as an adverb phrase, it is letting us know the relationship between the object of the preposition and the verb (the action or state being). As an adverb, a preposition will answer questions like *how*, *where*, or *when*.

a. Modifies verb

Example:

I **live** with my sisters.

“with my sisters” is a prepositional phrase. The object of the preposition is “my sisters” and the preposition is “with”. It functions as an adverb because it modifies the verb “**live**”.

b. Modifies adjective

Example:

Dara was **frightened** in front of the crowd.

“in front of the crowd” is a prepositional phrase. The object of the preposition is “the crowd” and the preposition is “in front of”. It functions as an adverb because it modifies the adjective “**frightened**”.

c. Modifies adverb

Example:

The boy ran **quickly** towards his mother.

“towards his mother” is a prepositional phrase. The object of preposition is “his mother” and a preposition is “towards”. It functions as an adverb because it modifies the adverb “**quickly**”.

## METHODOLOGY

The objective of this descriptive research was to describe the students' ability in choosing the correct prepositional phrases for adverb phrase. It has only one variable. According to Gay and Peter (2000), descriptive research involves collecting data in order to determine and describe the way things are: involves collecting data to test a hypothesis or answer questions concerning the current status of the object of the study. Further, it is aimed to investigating a variety of educational topics or issues.

This is conducted to know the ability of the second year students of English Study Program of FKIP UR in choosing the correct prepositional phrases for adverb phrase. The place of this study was at English Study Program FKIP in UR. The study was conducted from June to September 2016.

The population of the research was the second year students of the English Study Program of FKIP UR because they have learned about prepositional phrases in structure class. Due to the population is very large, which consist of 3 classes: class A, class B and class C, the cluster random sampling technique is used. The whole number of the population is 86 students. Class B is taken as the sample as many as 30 students. This technique was used because under a consideration that they had the same aged and thought with the same time allocation and material.

The instrument used to collect the data was multiple choice. Students were given structure test that consist of 30 questions about choosing the correct preposition to form prepositional phrase in order to complete the following sentence. The questions in this test adapted from Mr. Morton website. The test was conducted in 30 minutes. Before the writer distributes the test to the sample, the test was being tried out to the second year students of English Study Program of FKIP UR, who were not belong to the sample: it was class A. The try out was held to know the quality of the test to determine difficulty level and reliability level.

The collected data were analyzed by calculating the scores of the students in answering the test and classified them to a certain level of ability in choosing the correct prepositional phrases for adverb phrase. The item difficulties showed the level of each item. How easy or difficult a particular item is. According to Heaton (1991), the item test is rejected if the index difficulty (FV) is below 0.30, it rejected because the test was difficult to the students or over 0.70, it rejected because the test was too easy to the students. The test accepted if the degree of difficulty (FV) is between 0.30-0.70.

The difficulty level of the item was calculated by using this formula:

$$FV = \frac{R}{N}$$

Where: FV = Difficulty Level

R = the number of correct answer

N = the number of the student

Then, to find the average (Mean) score of the students' ability in choosing the correct prepositional phrases for adverb phrase, the formula is as follows:

$$M = \frac{\sum fx}{N}$$

Where: M = Mean score

$\sum fx$  = Total score of the students

N = Number of the students

Finally, the score of students' tests would be classified to determine their levels of ability in choosing the the correct prepositional phrases for adverb phrase as in the following table as suggested by Harris, (1974):

Table 1. The Level of the Ability

Score Classification	Category
80-100	Excellent
60-79	Good
50 – 59	Average
0 – 49	Poor

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

In conducting this research, the writer collected the data by giving a structure test to the students. Before giving the test, the writer conducted the tryout to the students who are not belonging to the sample; class A, in order to know the difficulty level of test item using formula from Heaton (1991). In addition, the results of students' test were classified by using Harris formula. The writer tried out 27 students of the second year students of the English Study Program of FKIP UR. The tryout test was consisted of 30 items of multiple choices.

### *Findings*

The results of the test were shown in the following table:

No	Score	Frequency	Percentage	Ability Level
1	80-100	1	3.33%	Excellent
2	60-79	20	66.67%	Good
3	50-59	6	20.00%	Average
4	0-49	3	10.00%	Poor
Total		30	100%	

The above table showed that the successful students (average good in excellent) was 90.00%. Those data inform that the students were capable to comprehend the test and have good ability in choosing the the correct prepositional phrases for adverb phrase. And the for the unsuccessful students was 10.00%. It means that the students should practice more and learned about choosing prepositional phrases for adverb phrase.

## Discussions

Based on the finding and the presentation of the data, the writer found that the ability of the second year students of the English Study Program of FKIP UR were in good level (62.11). From the test were given to the students, it was found that most of the students have good ability in choosing the correct prepositional phrases for adverb phrase.

Among the test given, it found out that the highest score that the students gets in prepositional phrases for adverb phrase are: first, *of* the average score is 88.33. Second, *around* the average score is 86.67. Third, *without* the average score is 86.67. And, *on* the average score is 80.67. They were classified into excellent level. It means that the students were capable and have good ability in choosing the correct prepositional phrases for adverb. And they could answer the test very well.

Then, the lowest score the students get in prepositional phrases are: first, *behind* the average score is 20. Second, from the average score is 33.33. Third, *in* the average score is 40. Fourth, *by* the average score is 40. Then, *with* the average level is 45.55. And, *during* the average score is 46.67. They were classified into poor level. It means that the students should practice more and learned harder about choosing the correct prepositional phrases for adverb phrase.

From all of the data, the result of this study answer the research question how is the ability of the second year students of the English Study Program of FKIP UR in choosing the correct prepositional phrases for adverb phrase.

## CONCLUSIONS

Based on the data analysis in this research, it can be concluded that the second year students' ability in choosing the correct prepositional phrases for adverb phrase

was categorized in good level and the mean score is 62.11. But, the score is not good enough, because it does not even reach half of good level (60-79). The second year students do not enough ability in choosing the correct prepositional phrases for adverb phrase. They still confuse in choosing the correct prepositional phrases for adverb phrase. So, the students need to learn more about choosing the correct prepositional phrases for adverb phrase for adverb phrase even though the mean score is 62.11.

## SUGGESTION

Concerning the above conclusion, there are some suggestions that the writer proposed related to improve the second year students' ability in choosing the correct prepositional phrases for adverb phrase. For the unsuccessful students, they should learn more, review the study and read the book that related to prepositional phrases functioning as an adverb phrase. Especially in prepositional phrases *behind, from, in, by, with* and *during*. The students should do more exercises to improve their understanding in choosing the correct prepositional phrases for adverb phrase. More over, the students should learn and know more the differentiation of using each of prepositional phrases. And they should given more attention to their teachers in learning prepositional phrases for adverb phrase.

Then, the teachers are suggested to give more explanation and ask the group of the unsuccessful students to memorize and do a lot of exercises in order to accustom them about prepositional phrases for adverb phrase. And the teacher should give motivation to the students, so they will learn about prepositional phrases for adverb phrase in interesting and enjoyable way.

Finally, the writer hopes that all findings, suggestions in this research will be valuable contribution to the readers.

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