

THE POSSIBILITY OF GENERALIZING TYPES OF BASIC SENTENCES IN BAHASA INDONESIA IN RELATION WITH THE LEARNING OF BASIC SENTENCE STRUCTURE IN ENGLISH

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Abstract

Learning English is not an easy task for our students. It might because English itself is not practiced as second language, but more to target language. Then it is only learned in certain situation like in school. That it is not easy is also probably because Bahasa Indonesia has different pattern of composing predicate. There are five types of basic sentences or simple sentences in Bahasa Indonesia based on their predicates in “Tata Bahasa Baku Bahasa Indonesia”. The first type is sentence which is predicated by verb (*ibu mengajar bahasa Inggris*). The second type is predicated by adjective (*ayahnya sakit*). The third type is predicated by noun (*dia guru saya*). Further, the fourth one is predicated by number (*rumahnya dua buah*). The last one is predicated by preposition (*dia ke pasar*).

When making English sentences, it is common to find that students tends to translate purely from Bahasa Indonesia pattern. Example, **his father sick*, **his house two*, and **I school*. These sentences are reflection of those former types of basic sentences in Bahasa Indonesia. It is what we call language interference and it is unavoidable. Instead of blocking this interference, it is better to find a similarity between two languages. English has one type of predicate. This predicate is always verb, while in Bahasa Indonesia it can be in the form of noun, adjective, number, and preposition. It is impossible to adjust English to Indonesian rules. However, it is probably possible to modify Indonesian rule to English rule for the sake of making students easier to learn English. This paper proposes that all predicates in Bahasa Indonesia can be simplified into verb. Example, *ayahnya sakit* (*ayahnya sedang sakit*), *dia guru saya* (*dia adalah guru saya*), *rumahnya dua buah* (*rumahnya berjumlah dua buah*), *dia ke pasar* (*dia pergi ke pasar*).

By simplifying the five types of predicates in Bahasa Indonesia into one type of predicate, it is expected that interference from Bahasa Indonesia does not digress the English sentences made by students from the exact regulation.

Keywords: Bahasa Indonesia, predicate, types of basic sentences

1. INTRODUCTION

In academic writing, making sentences requires students to apply the knowledge of spelling, punctuation, and sentence structure. Correct spelling shows the exact word meant by students. Good use of punctuation shows mood, intended stress and clarity of the sentence. Well-developed sentence structure shows the complete thought meant by the students. All the three components are interrelated to help their sentences easily understood.

However, for EFL students the last component seems to be difficult to be applied. Linguists initially state this problem. As Fromkin, Rodman, and Hyams (2011) agree the kind of errors that second language learners make often involves the transfer of grammatical rules from their first language (p.363). It means EFL students tend to use their grammatical knowledge from their first language in learning second language. It is said that the first language (L1) has an important influence on second language (L2) acquisition (Nunan, 2002, p.87). In the context of language learning, it generates an event, which is called contrastive analysis. If it happens respectively in making sentences, we can be sure there will be

interference between L1 and L2. In this case, L1 is Bahasa Indonesia and L2 is English.

These sentences below (1a-1h) are taken separately from my students' paragraphs in their first writing course. The sentences were about personal information. The asterisk symbols preceding the sentences indicate that they are ungrammatical.

1.
 - a. *I also getting job with my brother after go home from the school
 - b. *I also hobby painting and browsing internet
 - c. *I now live in Cendana 3C Banjarmasin
 - d. *I am now studying in STKIP-PGRI Banjarmasin
 - e. *I've been married two years ago
 - f. *I am practice basketball twice a week
 - g. *I am sit together with my friend for wait teacher
 - h. *After teacher enter class, I'm ready commence studied

All sentences seem to reflect the different view between Bahasa Indonesia and English in forming their predicates. In Bahasa Indonesia, basic sentence structure can be predicated by verbs (*ayahku mengajar di SMP*), predicated by nouns (*ayahku seorang guru*), predicated by adjectives (*ayahku pemarah*), even predicated by numbers (*rumahnya dua buah*). Meanwhile, in English, basic sentence structure is only predicated by verbs (I study everyday, I am a student). This is the reason why English sentences made by Indonesian learners tend to go wrong.

During my teaching years in writing class, I discover that this influence can be minimized by giving a general rule for predicates. Generally, Bahasa Indonesia and English have the same arrangement of subject-predicate order. This view can be used as an initial basis for helping Indonesian student in learning English, particularly in making English sentences.

2. THE CONCEPT OF SENTENCE

To start the discussion, it is important to have the same view of sentence structurally. Due to this reason, the early discussion is related with sentence structure and subject predicate order.

In Bahasa Indonesia, sentence is defined as follows:

- a. *Kalimat umumnya berwujud rentetan kata yang disusun sesuai dengan kaidah yang berlaku, paling tidak mempunyai unsur subjek dan predikat, tetapi telah dibubuhi intonasi atau tanda baca. Kalimat juga mengungkapkan pikiran yang utuh.* (Alwi, Dardjowidjojo, Lapoliwa and Moeliono, 2003, pp. 35, 39, 311).

It is said that sentence is generally group of words that put together based on applied rule. At least it consists of subject and predicate, which is completed by intonation and punctuation. It also expresses a complete thought.

- b. *"Kalimat ialah satuan gramatik yang dibatasi oleh adanya jeda panjang yang disertai nada akhir turun atau naik."* (Ramlan, 1987, p.27).

The sentence is grammatical unit that is ended by long pauses with raising or falling intonation.

From these ideas, it can be interpreted that a sentence is a unit or group of words (phrases) consisting of subject and predicate, and it contains a complete thought. Complete thought means it can stand alone which is represented by the final intonation patterns when it is spoken and the use of punctuation (full stop, question mark, or exclamation mark) when it is written.

In English, sentence definition goes along with those from Bahasa Indonesia. It can be seen from the two definitions below.

- a. A sentence is a group of words that contains a subject and a verb and expresses a complete thought. It begins with capital letter and ends with a period, an exclamation point, or a question mark (Hogue, 2008, pp.10-11).
- b. Sentences have a hierarchical organization; that is, the words are grouped into natural units which is called constituents, corresponding to the subject and predicate of the sentence (Fromkin, Rodman, and Hyams, 2011, p.84).

Both two definitions agree that every sentence in English must have a subject and a predicate, which are in Bahasa Indonesia must have, too. The order is that subject comes before predicate, so does the order in Bahasa Indonesia. It explains why the sentences 1a-1h seem to have the order of subject and predicate.

However, to combine words into "natural unit" of subject and predicate in Bahasa Indonesia is quite challenging. The "natural unit" in English sentence can be expressed precisely by using phrase structure

rule(Fromkin, Rodman, and Hyams, 2011, p.91). That is $S \rightarrow NP + VP$ which means that a sentence consists of the combination of noun phrase and verb phrase. So, “natural unit” must be in the form of noun phrase in the subject and verb phrase in the predicate. Later on, noun phrases and verb phrases can be developed from parts of speech.

2.

NP	VP
a. I (pronoun)	Study (verb)
b. She (pronoun)	is diligent (tobe+adjective)
c. The girl (art+noun)	is my sister (tobe+NP)
d. My sister (possessive adjective+noun)	studies diligently (verb+adv)
e. The students in Indonesia (NP+Prepositional phrase)	wear uniform (verb+noun)

From above example, it can be inferred first, that a phrase can be a single word (2a and 2b); second, that pronoun can replace either a noun or noun phrase (2a and 2b); third that a phrase may consist of another phrase (2c and 2d). Seeing this, NPVP rule is not only to generalize but also to enable the user to produce numerous potential sentences.

On the contrary, the phrase structure rule to express sentence in Bahasa Indonesia appears more than one and it is rooted as parts of mental grammar, which means that this grammar enables the speaker to understand and to produce sentences as well as to distinguish between accepted sentences or unaccepted sentences even if the speaker do not study about the grammar.

Following is an excerpt of the basic sentence types in Bahasa Indonesia, which is taken from two books commonly read by college students of Bahasa Indonesia.

3. BASIC SENTENCE TYPES IN BAHASA INDONESIA BASED ON THEIR PREDICATE

Alwi, Dardjowidjojo, Lapoliwa and Moeliono (2003) give outlines of basic sentences based on their predicate. The outlines are predicate from verb phrase, predicate from adjective phrase, predicate from noun phrase, predicate from number, and predicate from prepositional phrase (pp.338-352).

Not too different from Alwi, Samsuri (1994) mentions that there are several kinds of basic sentences based on phrase it constitutes in predicate. The phrases are noun phrase (NP), verb phrase (VP), adjective phrase (AdjP), number phrase (NumP), and prepositional phrase (PP) (pp. 237-247).

According to the outlines, it can be derived that there are five phrase structure rules to express a sentence in Bahasa Indonesia.

- $S \rightarrow NP + VP$
- $S \rightarrow NP + NP$
- $S \rightarrow NP + AdjP$
- $S \rightarrow NP + NumP$
- $S \rightarrow NP + PP$

The example of the sentences can be seen here.

3.

Phrase Structure Rules in Bahasa Indonesia	Example
a. $S \rightarrow NP + VP$	<i>Ular itu menghilang di rumputan</i> <i>ular itu</i> = NP <i>menghilang di rumputan</i> = VP
b. $S \rightarrow NP + NP$	<i>Ayahnya seorang guru</i> <i>ayahnya</i> = NP <i>seorang guru</i> = NP
c. $S \rightarrow NP + AdjP$	<i>Rumahnya sangat besar</i> <i>rumahnya</i> = NP <i>sangat besar</i> = AP
d. $S \rightarrow NP + NumP$	<i>Kaki kucing itu tiga saja</i> <i>kaki kucing itu</i> = NP <i>tiga saja</i> = NumP
e. $S \rightarrow NP + PP$	<i>Anak itu dari desa sebelah</i> <i>anak itu</i> = NP <i>dari desa sebelah</i> = PP

As it is said earlier, it is possible that students of Bahasa Indonesia have applied these rules long before they study grammar at school. That is why it is said that these rules are parts of their mental grammar. If they are asked to express sentence 3a-3e into English, the result is possibly like 4a-4e.

4.

	The accepted sentences	The predicted sentences from students
a.	The snake disappeared in the grass	Snake in the grass disappears
b.	The teacher is his father	*His father a teacher
c.	His house is very big	His house is very big
d.	The cat's legs are only three	*Three feet of the cat alone
e.	The boy is from nearby village	*The boy from the village next door

The predicted sentences from students as seen in sentence 4a-4e are not generalization of students' result. Some of students of course can make better grammatical sentences. But here, we are talking about few "false learners" who usually reflect all their native language into English and usually use instant tool to help them to translate. This is the main target of this discussion.

4. THE POSSIBILITY OF GENERALIZING BASIC SENTENCE TYPES IN BAHASA INDONESIA

In connection with the basic sentence patterns of a language, including English, Lyons (1979) talks about kernel-sentence with the notion as follows. The kernel-sentences of a language are intended to create a subdivision of what would be traditionally described as simple sentences. A kernel sentence is a sentence that is not derived from any other sentence by means of transformational rule. Moreover, it is perhaps reasonable to assume that the kernel-sentences of the language will also be affirmative (not negative), active (not passive) and indicative (not imperative). (pp. 467-468).

The notion suggests that a basic sentence is a sentence which is not resulted from sentence transformation. Then, we can assume that four basic sentences in Bahasa Indonesia, except NPVP, are the result of sentence transformation considering that transformation rules do appear in Indonesian grammar. Let us see the possibility below.

	Basic sentence types in Bahasa Indonesia	Revised sentences
5.	$S \rightarrow NP + NP$	<p>a. <i>Ayahnya seorang guru</i> <i>Ayahnya bekerja sebagai seorang guru</i></p> <p>b. <i>Buku itu cetakan Bandung</i> <i>Bandung mencetak buku itu</i></p> <p>c. <i>Orang itu pencurinya</i> <i>Orang itu adalah pencurinya</i></p>
6.	$S \rightarrow NP + AdjP$	<p>a. <i>Rumahnya sangat besar</i> <i>Rumahnya berukuran sangat besar</i></p> <p>b. <i>Ayahnya sakit</i> <i>Ayahnya sedang menderita sakit</i></p> <p>c. <i>Pernyataan orang itu benar</i> <i>Orang itu menyatakan sesuatu yang benar</i></p>
7.	$S \rightarrow NP + NumP$	<p>a. <i>Kaki kucing itu tiga saja</i> <i>kucing itu mempunyai tiga kaki saja</i></p> <p>b. <i>Uangnya hanya sedikit</i> <i>Ia mempunyai hanya sedikit uang</i></p> <p>c. <i>Isterinya dua orang</i> <i>Ia mempunyai dua orang isteri</i></p>
8.	$S \rightarrow NP + PP$	<p>a. <i>Anak itu dari desa sebelah</i> <i>Anak itu datang dari desa sebelah</i></p> <p>b. <i>Gelang itu untuk Rita</i> <i>Saya memberikan gelang itu untuk Rita.</i></p> <p>c. <i>Ayah di dalam kamar</i> <i>Ayah berada di dalam kamar</i></p>

There are two actions done to sentence 5 to sentences 8 in order to generalize the four patterns in one pattern, $S \rightarrow NP + VP$. We can consider that the action is an instrument to prove that there is another sentence existed. The most important is that this sentence has the same meaning with the previous one and has the pattern of $S \rightarrow NP + VP$.

The first action is by inserting verb between NPs and the other phrases. This action is applied to sentence 5a, 5c, 6a, 6b, 8a, and 8c. In sentence 5a, 'adalah' is stated as verb (Alwi, Dardjowidjojo, Lapoliwa and Moeliono, 2003, p.349). The sentences are indicative sentence. Indicative sentence is related to mood which one of the functions is to describe speaker's commitment to truth or fact. Mood is implied in the use of verb. The insertion of appropriate verbs to these sentences does not change the meaning. It

indicates that sentence 5a, 5c, 6a, 6b, 8a, and 8c are not basic types of sentences. Then, the revised sentences for each sentence show that the type is managed to change into $S \rightarrow NP + VP$.

The second action is by changing the voice of the sentence into because they are actually a product of passive transformation. As result, these sentences can be also simplified into $S \rightarrow NP + VP$.

More can be discussed in sentence transformation. Take for example, deep structure, surface structure, and phrase structure trees, as well as transformation types. However, considering that the practical need of this discussion is only to encourage English teacher to diminish the ungrammatical sentences caused by the reflection of Bahasa Indonesia, thus, it is enough and realistic to present simply the difference and the suggested modification like it is done in subtitle 4.

active sentence. This action is applied to sentence 5b, 6c, 7a, 7b, 7c, and 8b. It is very clear that all sentences mentioned are not basic sentences

Conclusion

In making English sentences, Indonesian students reflect on basic sentence types occurred in Bahasa Indonesia. While English has only one pattern, $S \rightarrow NP + VP$, Bahasa Indonesia has five basic patterns. This difference becomes a reason why most sentences made by Indonesian students tend to go wrong. Thus, by assuming transformation process takes place in those patterns, we can adopt that actually basic sentence type in Bahasa Indonesia can be simplified into $S \rightarrow NP + VP$, just like English pattern. This view is expected to minimize the number of ungrammatical sentences made by Indonesian students.

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