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## **Comparative Study in Indonesian and English: Identifying Linguistic Units of Comparison**

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### **Abstract**

The syntax section centres on an area of linguistic comparison which has proven to be very prolific in the last 40 years (Willems, et al., 2003, p. 4). Comparative study in two languages, either from different family or from the same family is interesting in Industrial Revolution (IR) 4.0. This is because by knowing the construction pattern of two languages from different area

or nation, someone can get some benefits. He can maintain good communication to speakers of the language and he can analyze the linguistic unit of the language. This study aimed at exploring the comparison of Indonesian and English linguistic units. Those units include word class, phrase, clause, and sentence construction. The results of the study show that Indonesian and English has the same clause and sentence pattern (Subject + Verb + Object) and they have different construction in noun phrase, in Indonesian, the modifiers of the phrase follow the head while in English, the modifiers of the phrase precede the head (noun).

**Keywords:** Comparative study, linguistic unit, Indonesian, English

## **Introduction**

One of the most important issues in the realm of second language acquisition (SLA) and second language (L2) learning is the comparative study (Saud & Weda, 2019, p. 177). Saud and Weda therefore add that today researches on comparative study have become trend in linguistics and language studies. Many scholars and researchers focus their studies on comparative study, either the comparison from the same origin (Hawkins, 1986; Zanuttini, 1997; Roberts, 1993) or the language from different origin (Saud & Weda, 2019; Benmamoun, 2000; Brustad, 2000; Roberts, 2005; Hawkins, 2018).

There are some linguists who focus their studies on comparative studies in the world in a variety of unit of comparison (Ding, 2016; Los et al., 2012; and Dimmendaal, 2011). Ding (2016) focused her study on some characteristics of Southern Min (Hokkien), with special reference to lexical borrowing in the variety spoken in Southeast Asia. Ding also provides description of Hokkien, a five-level scale for language functionality is then proposed, distinguishing vernacular language, lingua franca, ethnic language, inner language, and private language. Los et al. (2012) reported their study on analytical challenges on the morphosyntax of Dutch and English. Dimmendaal (2011) focuses his study on Historical Linguistics and the Comparative Study of African Languages.

English as Indo European language and Indonesian as Austronesian language family have the same construction in clause and sentence, but they have different construction in some units, especially in noun phrase.

Examples:

Table 1. Indonesian and English Sentences

<i>Saya membaca buku.</i>	I read a book
<i>Dia minum secangkir teh.</i>	He drinks a cup of tea.
<i>Dia pergi ke Jakarta.</i>	He goes to Jakarta

Table 2. Indonesian and English Phrases

<i>Buku baru</i>	New book
<i>Sebuah buku baru</i>	A new book
<i>Seorang gadis cantik</i>	A beautiful girl.

## Review of the Literature

### a. Syntax

Syntax is the part of grammar that represents a speaker's knowledge of sentences and their structure (Fromkin, et al, 2007, p. 116). Fromkin, et al then mentions that the rules of syntax combine words into phrases and prases into sentences. Among other things, the rules specify the correct word order for a language. For example, English is a Subject-Verb-Object (SVO) language. Indonesian as Austronesian language family is also a Subject-Verb-Object (SVO).

#### 1) Sentence

A sentence is a group of words which is constructed by some constituents, subject (S), predicate (P), and object (O) or noun phrase (NP), verb phrase (VP), noun phrase (NP). Sentence has function, role, and category.

#### a) Function

In a sentence, there are some phrases and clauses which made of a group of words.

Examples:

- There are *some beautiful girls* in the classroom. (Noun phrase)
- I do not know *where Smith lives*. (Noun clause)

#### b) Role

Phrase and clause in a sentence can function as a subject, predicate, and object.

Examples:

- *Some handsome boys* sit in front row. (Noun phrase functions as subject of a sentence.)
- Jana is *a beautiful girl* in my classroom. (Noun phrase functions as an object of a sentence.)

- Nobody knows *where Sue lives*. (Clause functions as an object of a sentence).
- *Our lecturer cancelled the final exam* disappoints us. (Clause functions as a subject of a sentence.)

*hat the museum cancelled the lecture* disappoints me.

### c) Category

A family of expressions that can substitute for one another without loss of grammaticality is called syntactic category (Fromkin, et al, 2007, p. 125). Fromkin, et al adds that there are five syntactic categories. The categories are noun phrase (NP), verb phrase (VP), Adjective phrase (AdjP), prepositional phrase (PP), and adverbial phrase (AdvP). Syntactic categories include both phrasal categories such as NP, VP, AdjP, PP, and AdvP, as well as lexical categories such as noun (N), verb (V), preposition (P), adjective (Adj), and adverb (Adv).

### 2) Clause

A clause is a group of words containing a subject and a verb (Azar, 1999, p. 239). A clause is perhaps most simply defined as a "potential sentence." For example, the word *komm* "come" and the phrase *er geht weg* "he's going away" are both clauses. Both can also occur as complete sentences: *Komm!* "Come!"; *Er geht weg* "He's going away." On the other hand, each of them can also occur as part of a compound sentence: *Komm und setz ' dich!* "Come and sit down"; *Er geht weg . aber ich bleibe* "He's going away, but I'm staying." In this case they are both still clauses; but they are no longer sentences, because they are part of still larger constructions (Kufner, 1962, p. 8). Similarly, Crystal (2007, p. 49) mention that clause is a term used in some models of grammar to refer to a unit of grammatical organizations smaller than the sentence, but larger than phrases, words, or morphemes. The traditional classification is into 'main' and 'subordinate' (or 'dependent') clauses, e.g. *the man arrived after the rain started* (Crystal, 2007, p. 49).

### a) Noun Clause (NC)

The underlined words are noun clauses. These examples are obtained from Azar (1999, p. 239 – 240).

I know where Sue lives.

I listened to what he said.

I heard what he said.

I don't know where she lives.

I couldn't hear what he said.



Do you know *when they arrived*?

b) Adjective Clause (AC)

The underlined words are noun clauses. These examples are obtained from Azar (1999, p. 268).

I thanked the woman who helped me.

I thanked the woman that helped me.

The book which is on the table is mine.

The book that is on the table is mine.

The man who(m) I saw was Mr. Jones.

The man that I saw was Mr. Jones.

The man Ø I saw was Mr. Jones.

3) *Phrase*

Phrase is a term used in grammatical unit analysis which refers to a single element of structure containing more than one word, one word as a head and the other words as modifiers, and lacking the subject-predicate structure typical of clause (Crystal, 1987, p. 232). In English and any other languages, the phrase can be noun phrase (NP), verb phrase (VP), Adjective phrase (AdjP), prepositional phrase (PP), and adverbial phrase (AdvP).

In noun phrase, the head of the phrase can be a noun, number (ordinal numbers: first, second, third, etc.; cardinal numbers: one, two, ten, etc.), and adjective (rich, poor, new, red, etc.). (<https://www.wordsmile.com/pengertian-contoh-kalimat-noun-phrases>).

Examples of **prepositional phrases** functioning as **adjective phrases** with explanations:

The man in front of the house is my uncle John.

The object of this prepositional phrase is "house". The preposition "in" is telling us the relationship between the house and the "man". Man is a noun, so this is an adjective phrase ([http://www.softschools.com/examples/grammar/the\\_adjective\\_phrase\\_examples/85/](http://www.softschools.com/examples/grammar/the_adjective_phrase_examples/85/)).

More examples of **adjective phrases**:

- 1) Please clean the car in the garage. (gives relationship between car and garage)
- 2) The girl in the white shirt is my daughter. (gives relationship between girl and white shirt)
- 3) Are the glassess on the table yours? (gives relationship between glassess and table)
- 4) The car under the tree is mine. (gives relationship between car and tree)
- 5) The song after this one is my favorite song! (gives relationship between song and one)

6) I want the red pen on that table. (gives relationship between pen and table)

7) The motorcycle behind the house belongs to Smith. (gives relationship between motorcycle and Smith)

8) I think the watch above the table has stopped working. (gives relationship between watch and table)

([http://www.softschools.com/examples/grammar/the\\_adjective\\_phrase\\_examples/85/](http://www.softschools.com/examples/grammar/the_adjective_phrase_examples/85/)).

Prepositional phrases, participial phrases, and infinitive phrases can all function as an adjective phrase in sentences. A prepositional phrase includes a preposition, its object, and any modifiers of the object. A participial phrase includes a participle, plus any modifiers and complements. An infinitive phrase includes an infinitive, plus any modifiers and complements and the examples of those types of adjective phrases are revealed in the following examples (<https://www.k12reader.com/term/adjective-phrase/>).

Prepositional phrase examples:

The house **across the street** is my uncle's.

(*Across the street* is the prepositional phrase. It functions as an adjective phrase, modifying the noun *house*.)

I have a scratch **on my cheek**.

(*On my cheek* is the prepositional phrase. It functions as an adjective phrase, modifying the noun *scratch*.)

The light **over the dining room** is broken.

(*over the dining room* is the prepositional phrase. It functions as an adjective phrase, modifying the noun *pipe*.)

We rescued the lion **with the injured leg**.

(*With the injured leg* is the prepositional phrase. It functions as an adjective phrase, modifying the noun *dog*.)

**Participial Phrase Examples:**

**Walking along the garden path**, we looked the beautiful flowers and butterflies. (*Walking along the garden path* is the participial phrase. It functions as an adjective phrase, modifying the pronoun *we*.)

**Covered in mosquito bites**, the campers fled to their tents.

(*Covered in mosquito bites* is the participial phrase. It functions as an adjective phrase, modifying the noun *campers*.)

### **Infinitive Phrases:**

Mysteries are excellent books **to read on stormy nights**.

(*To read on stormy nights* is the infinitive phrase. It functions as an adjective phrase, modifying the noun *books*.)

Crab is my favorite food **to eat in Maryland**.

(*To eat in Maryland* is the infinitive phrase. It functions as an adjective phrase, modifying the noun *food*.)

Wool is the best material **to wear in cold weather**.

(*To wear in cold weather* is the infinitive phrase. It functions as an adjective phrase, modifying the noun *material*.)

### **English**

Adjective + Noun

New book

Red shirt

Noun + Noun

Sunday night

### **Indonesian**

Noun + Adjective

Buku baru

Kemeja berwarna merah

#### *b. Foreign Language (FL) Acquisition and Second Language (L2) Learning*

As one of the interesting topics in SLA and language teaching, a number of studies have been conducted to show similarities and differences of the languages in terms of their syntactic and morphological variation from the same language origin and the different language origin (Saud & Weda, 2019, p. 177).

#### *c. Comparative Study*

The idea that LI and L2 development might be similar in nature was one of the starting points for the systematic investigation of L2 acquisition in the 1970s (Clahsen, 1990, p. 137).

## Data Analysis

### a. Phrase

#### 1) Noun Phrase (NP)

Table 3. Indonesian and English Noun Phrases

Indonesian	English
rumah baru	new house
tas saya	my bag
gunung yang indah	beautiful mountain
gadis kecil	little girl
seorang siswa yang pintar	a clever student
orang kaya	a rich people

Table 3 reveals that the noun phrase construction in Indonesian is the head precedes the modifiers while noun phrase in English is the modifiers precede the head.

#### 2) Verb Phrase (VP)

Table 4. Indonesian and English Verb Phrases

Indonesian	English
Mencari	look for
telah menemukan	have found
sedang mencari	is looking for
telah bekerja	has worked
Akan belajar	will study

Table 4 shows that verb phrase construction in Indonesian and English is the same, where the linking verbs or modals precede the head (V) and particles follow the head (V).

#### 3) Adjective Phrase (AdjP)

Table 5. Indonesian and English Adjective Phrases

Indonesian	English
pasangan <b>pengantin muda</b>	<b>young married</b> couples

<b>rumah indah</b>	<b>the beautiful</b> house
kue <b>enak ini</b>	<b>this delicious</b> cake
<b>kenangan indah</b> kami	<b>our sweet</b> memories
<b>semua</b> negara <b>miskin</b>	<b>all poor</b> countries

Table 5 illustrates that adjective phrase construction in Indonesian and English is different, where in Indonesian adjective phrases, the adjective phrase follows the noun while in English, the adjective phrase precedes the noun.

#### 4) Prepositional Phrase (PP)

Table 6. Indonesian and English Prepositional Phrases

Indonesian	English
di kebun	in the garden
di rumah	at home
bersama dengan kolega saya	together with my colleagues
di taman	on the park
diantara kita	between us

Table 6 shows that prepositional phrase construction function as adjective phrase in Indonesian and English is the same, in which preposition precedes the head of the prepositional phrase.

#### 5) Adverbial Phrase (AdvP)

Table 7. Indonesian and English Adverbial Phrases

Indonesian	English
sangat lambat	extremely slowly
cukup cepat	quickly enough
terlalu banyak	too much
hanya sementara	only temporarily
sangat hati-hati	so carefully
sangat terlambat	very late

Table 7 reveals that adverbial phrase construction in Indonesian and English is the same, where the modifier precedes the head (adverb) but in some circumstances, the construction is different, example: *cukup cepat* in Indonesian and its equivalent *quickly enough* in English.

b. Clause

1) Noun Clause (NC)

Table 8. Indonesian and English Noun Clause

Indonesian	English
Saya tidak tahu berapa umurnya.	I don't know how old she is.
Mohon beritahu saya dimana Anda tinggal.	Please tell me where do you live.
Saya tidak ingat berapa harganya.	I can't remember how much it costs.
Saya tahu siapa aygn dating ke pesta itu.	I know who is coming to the party.

Table 8 shows that the noun clause construction in Indonesian and English is the same, in which the constituent order of the noun clause is SVO.

2) Adjective Clause (AC)

Table 9. Indonesian and English Adjective Clause

Indonesian	English
Saya melihat gadis yang menutup jendela itu.	I saw the girl who closed the window.
Gadis yang memakai rok merah cantik.	The girl who wears the red skirt is beautiful.
Orang yang duduk di baris paling depan berasal dari Thailand.	The man who sits in the front row is from Thailand.
Novel yang saya baca menarik.	The novel which I read was interesting.
Orang yang kami temui minggu lalu sangat bersahabat.	The man whom we met last week was friendly.

Table 9 reveals that the adjective clause construction in Indonesian and English is the same, where the adjective clause construction is SVO.

c. Sentence

Simple Sentence

Table 10. Indonesian and English Simple Sentence

Indonesian	English
Smith menunggu bus.	Smith waits the bus.
Anna membaca buku.	Anna is reading a book.
John belajar sejarah.	John studied history.
Bapak saya telah membaca surat kabat.	My father has read a newspaper.
Saya akan pergi ke London.	I will go to London.

Table 10 illustrates that the simple sentence construction in Indonesian and English is the same, where the sentence construction is SVO.

### Compound Sentence

Table 11. Indonesian and English Compound Sentences

Indonesian	English
Joe menunggu kereta api, tetapi kereta api datang terlambat.	Joe waited for the train, <b>but</b> the train was late.
Saya mencari Mary dan Samantha di stasiun bis, tetapi mereka tiba di stasiun sebelum tengah hari dan meninggalkan bis sebelum saya tiba.	I looked for Mary and Samantha at the bus station, <b>but</b> they arrived at the station before noon and left on the bus station before I arrived.
Mary dan Samantha tiba di stasiun bis sebelum tengah hari, dan mereka meninggalkan bis sebelum saya tiba.	Mary and Samantha arrived at the bus station before noon, <b>and</b> they left on the bus before I arrived.
Mary dan Samantha meninggalkan bis sebelum saya tiba, sehingga saya tidak melihat mereka di stasiun bis.	Mary and Samantha left on the bus before I arrived, <b>so</b> I did not see them at the bus station.

Note: English compound sentences are obtained from:

<https://www2.ivcc.edu/rambo/eng1001/sentences.htm>

Table 11 shows that the compound sentence construction in Indonesian and English is the same, where the sentence construction is SVO.

### Complex Sentence

Table 12. Indonesian and English Complex Sentences

Indonesian	English
<p>Karena Mary dan Samantha tiba di stasiun bis sebelum tengah hari, saya tidak melihat mereka di stasiun bis.</p> <p>Atau:</p> <p>Saya tidak melihat mereka di stasiun bis karena Mary dan Samantha tiba di stasiun bis sebelum tengah hari.</p>	<p>Because Mary and Samantha arrived at the bus station before noon, I did not see them at the station.</p> <p>Or:</p> <p>I did not see them at the station because Mary and Samantha arrived at the bus station before noon.</p>
<p>Sementara dia menunggu di stasiun kereta api, Joe menyadari bahwa kereta api terlambat.</p> <p>Atau:</p> <p>Joe menyadari bahwa kereta api terlambat sementara dia menunggu di stasiun kereta api.</p>	<p>While he waited at the train station, Joe realized that the train was late.</p> <p>Or:</p> <p>Joe realized that the train was late while he waited at the train station.</p>
<p>Setelah mereka meninggalkan bis, Mary dan Samantha menyadari bahwa Joe menunggu di stasiun kereta api.</p> <p>Atau:</p> <p>Mary dan Samantha menyadari bahwa Joe menunggu kereta api setelah mereka meninggalkan bis.</p>	<p>After they left on the bus, Mary and Samantha realized that Joe was waiting at the train station.</p> <p>Or:</p> <p>Mary and Samantha realized that Joe was waiting at the train station after they left on the bus.</p>

Note: English complex sentences are obtained from:

<https://www2.ivcc.edu/rambo/eng1001/sentences.htm>



Table 12 reveals that the complex sentence construction in Indonesian and English is the same, where the sentence construction is SVO.

## **Conclusion**

To sum up, the present study concludes that:

Firstly, Indonesian and English have the same construction in clause (noun clause and adjective clause) and sentence (simple sentence, compound sentence, and complex sentence).

Secondly, Indonesian and English have the different construction in noun phrase. Noun phrase construction in Indonesian is the head precedes the modifiers while noun phrase in English is the modifiers precede the head.

Thirdly, the verb phrase construction in Indonesian and English is the same, where the linking verbs or modals precede the head (V) and particles follow the head (V).

Fourthly, adjective phrase construction in Indonesian and English is different, where in Indonesian adjective phrases, the adjective phrase follows the noun while in English, the adjective phrase precedes the noun.

Fifthly, prepositional phrase construction function as adjective phrase in Indonesian and English is the same, in which preposition precedes the head of the prepositional phrase.

Lastly, adverbial phrase construction in Indonesian and English is the same, where the modifier precedes the head (adverb) but in some circumstances, the construction is different, example: *cukup cepat* in Indonesian and its equivalent *quickly enough* in English.

## **Pedagogical Implication of the Study**

The pedagogical implications of the study are that the linguists or researchers have potential studies on comparative study in Indonesian as Austronesian language family and English as Indo European language family, especially in identifying linguistic units of comparison.

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