

KINDS OF SENTENCE (A LINGUISTIC STUDY : SYNTAX AND SEMANTIC POINT OF VIEW)

Eryon¹, Sahrul²

Universitas Muhammadiyah Lampung¹, Universitas Negeri Mataram²

eryonmunir@gmail.com¹

sahrulalwalid@gmail.com²

Abstract

A sentence is a grammatically complete string of words expressing a complete thought. This concept means that there will be a subject and a predicate. This various string of words will cause different kinds of sentence. The kinds of sentence can be studied from syntactic and semantic point of view. This article discusses the kinds of sentence from syntax and semantic point of view. It tries to discuss what kind of sentence a sentence belongs to. The discussion is based on theory of syntax and theory of semantics and takes a conclusion. A sentence which has one clause and it is ended by a full stop and the speaker asserts its proposition will be a simple sentence, a statement sentence and a declarative sentence as well. Besides these, it may also belong to an analytic sentence if it is necessarily true as the result of the sense of the words in it.

Keywords: syntax; semantics; a statement sentence; a question sentence; exclamation sentence; simple sentence; compound sentence; complex sentence; compound and complex sentence; declarative sentence; interrogative sentence; imperative sentence; equative sentence; generative sentence; analytic sentence; synthetic sentence; contrastive sentence; constative sentence; and performative sentence

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Correspondence author: Eryon, Universitas Muhammadiyah Lampung, Indonesia. E-Mail: eryonmunir@gmail.com

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INTRODUCTION

Language cannot be separated from our life. In our life, at least we use one language. This language is the one that we use since we grew up. In communication, we express a lot of complete ideas or thoughts. To express a complete thought we use a sentence. For example, the utterance “Before I met you” is not a complete thought, therefore it is not a sentence. Another example, the utterance “John my brother” express a complete thought. Yet it is not a sentence because it not expressed grammatically. A sentence, then, is a grammatically complete string of words expressing a complete thought (Hurford et al, 2007, 19)

There are some kinds of sentence. If we see from the number of clause, we can say that there are four kinds of sentence, i.e. simple sentence, compound sentence, complex sentence, and complex compound sentence. This what most of

us (those who have not studied semantics) know. If we see from the sense relation, we will say that there are other kinds of sentence. For example, *Joko Widodo is the President of Indonesia* is a sentence whereas the word *Joko Widodo* and *the President of Indonesia* have the same sense relation, both refer to the same referent. It is equative sentence. Therefore, in this article, I try to discuss the kinds of sentence : a linguistic study.

METHOD

This article discusses the kinds of sentence from syntax and semantic point of view. It tries to discuss what kind of sentence a sentence belongs to. The discussion is based on theory of syntax and theory of semantics and takes a conclusion. A sentence which has one clause and it is ended by a full stop and the speaker asserts its proposition will be a simple sentence, a statement sentence and a declarative sentence as well.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Yule (2010) said that the term “linguistics” was firstly used in England in 1817, and the study of Linguistics has a long history. Linguistics is defined as the scientific study of language. Linguistics is done systematically within the framework of some general theories of language structure. The structure of sounds is studied in Phonology, The structure of words is studied in Morphology, that of sentence is studied in Syntax, and that of meaning is studied in Semantics.

Language is a tool of communication that uses signs. The study of signs is Pragmatics, and the investigation of relationship between form and function in verbal communication is discourse analysis, a branch of Pragmatics (Renkema, 2012)

In this simple article, I will divide the kinds of sentence based on different point of view: syntactic point of view, and semantic point of view.

2.1 Kinds of Sentence Based on Syntactic Point of View

Syntax means ‘sentence construction’ how words group together to make phrases and sentences (Tallerman, 2014, 1) It means learning syntax is learning how to construct phrases and sentences from words.

A sentence is a group of words that you use to communicate your ideas in writing or in speech. It is a complete, independent unit of thought and consists of two main parts: a subject and a predicate (Oshima and Houge, 2006: 181). Furthermore, they said that a sentence must have a subject and predicate, the first letter of a sentence must be capitalized and the sentence must end with a final function mark in the form of a period, a question mark, or an exclamation point.

There are two important points in concept of word, phrase, or clause within a sentence, i.e. the word classes and the function. Technically, the word classes are known as syntactic categories, and the function is known as syntactic function. Therefore, to formulate a sentence pattern we must separate between syntactic function and syntactic category. From syntactic function we will formulate such as S + P (+ O) (+ C), and from syntactic category we will formulate such as N + V + N. . Be careful not to combine them, such as S + V + N

Notice the sentence patterns of the following examples

(1) *The minister invited some bankers.*

	S	P	O
or	N	V	N
not	S	V	N

Another important point is that the first letter must be capital letter, it must have formal function marks: period, question, and exclamation. Therefore based on form of sentence, we can divide kinds of sentence into statement sentence, question sentence, and exclamation sentence.

1. A STATEMENT SENTENCE is one which ends with a period.

e.g. (2) *The building is still new, but it is being renovated.*

2. A QUESTION SENTENCE is one which ends with a question mark.

e.g. (3) *Will you help me when I have trouble or ask somebody else to help me ?*

(4) *Can he speak English ?*

3. AN EXCLAMATION SENTENCE is one which ends with an exclamation mark.

e.g. (5) *He saves the environment !*

The examples above show us that a sentence may consist of one clause (no 4 and 5), two clauses (no 2), and three clauses (no 3). Based on the number of clauses, we can divide the kinds of sentence into simple sentence, compound sentence, complex sentence, and compound complex sentence. (Oshima and Houge, 2006: 162-175)

1. A SIMPLE SENTENCE is one which consists of one independent clause which can stand alone as a sentence.

e.g (6) *I enjoy playing tennis with my friend every weekend.*

2. A COMPOUND SENTENCE is one which consists of two independent clauses connected

by a coordinate conjunction : *and, but, so, yet, for, nor*, or sentence connector such as : *however, therefore, otherwise, etc*, or by a semicolon

e.g. (7) *I want to continue my study, but I have to support my family too.*

(8) *The students study hard, therefore, they are successful.*

(9) *The sky is cloudy; the birds are flying.*

3. A COMPLEX SENTENCE is one which consists of one independent clause and one or more dependent clause connected by subordinate conjunction such as *when, which, who, that, because* etc.

e.g. (10) *When foreign students come to the United States, they sometimes suffer from culture shock.* It consists of one dependent clause and one independent clause.

(11) *When I found my dictionary which I lost in my classroom, I felt very happy.* It consists of two dependent clauses and one independent clause.

4. COMPOUND COMPLEX SENTENCE is one which consists of two or more independent clause and one more dependent clause.

e.g. (12) *Many students drive their cars to their company, but others prefer to take public transportation because free parking near campus is available* (two independent clauses and one dependent clauses)

2.2 Kinds of Sentences Based on Semantic Points of View

Before discussing about the kinds of sentences, we must talk about basic ideas in semantics. One of the basic ideas is “What is utterance, sentence, and proposition?”. Here in this article, I quote the definition of utterance, sentence and proposition from Hurford et al (2007, 16-22).

An utterance is any talk produced by the speaker, and there is silence that part of that person before and after. An utterance is used by a particular speaker or particular occasion in a piece of a language which consists of a sequence of sentence or a single phrase, or even a single word.

If a speaker says “Good morning”, it means he produces one utterance. If there are twenty students read a sentence (13) “Every student must speak English”, it means there are twenty different utterances. One may read loudly, some read it slowly, and some others read it variously. We, then, can say that an utterance is a physical event which is ephemeral and dies on the wind.

Unlike Utterance, Hurford et al (2007) define sentence is neither physical event nor physical objects. It is conceived abstractly, a string of words put together by the grammatical rules of a language. A sentence can be thought of as an ideal string of words behind various realization in utterance and inscription.

In communication, we always utter expressions in formal words, phrases, or sentences. When we utter a declarative sentence means we assert a proposition which describes some state of affair (Hurford et al 2007, 22). Every state of affair

always contains persons or things which are referred to by expressions in the sentence.

In saying (14) : "John is studying semantics", a speaker asserts a proposition which describes a state of affair where a person named John in condition of studying something that is semantics. In this case, the speaker asserts a proposition that John is studying semantics. When the speaker says (15) "Is John studying semantics?", he mentions the same proposition but merely questions the truth. We say that corresponding declarative sentence and interrogative sentence (and imperative sentence) have the same proposition content. In short, we can say that the truth of proposition can be questioned.

From the paragraphs above, we can take a conclusion that based on the speaker's attitude toward the proposition of the sentence : whether the speaker wants to assert, question, or exclaim the truth of proposition, it does not change the content of the proposition.

1. DECLARATIVE SENTENCE is one which asserts a proposition.

e.g (19) *Mary can speak French.*

(The speaker asserts a proposition that Mary can speak French)

2. INTERROGATIVE SENTENCE is one which questions the truth of a proposition,

e.g. (20) *Can Mary speak French?*

(The speaker merely questions the truth of the proposition Mary can speak French)

3. IMPERATIVE SENTENCE is one which commands or requests someone to execute the content of a proposition.

e.g. (21) *Mary, speak French !*

(The speaker commands Mary to execute the content of the proposition)

When a speaker utters a sentence, it means that he describes a state of affair in which always refers to a person or a thing, in this case he indicates or identifies which person or thing in the world is being talked about. Hurford et al (2007) said that the person or thing in the world is being talked about is called

reference and when the reference is a particular person or thing in the mind of the speaker, then it is called a referring expression.

Compare the following of the sentences

(19) a. *My sister wants to marry to an American.*

b. *My sister married to an American.*

For the first sentence, the referent 'an American' is not a particular person in the mind of the speaker in which he can not describe what the American looks like, but the second one, he can describe what the American looks like. An American in the second one, then, is a referring expression.

There is a possibility that a speaker talks about two references which refer to the same person or thing in one sentence. This sentence is called EQUATIVE SENTENCE. For example, (20) *The first President of Republik of Indonesia was Ir. Sukarno.* In this sentence, *The first President of Republik of Indonesia* and *Ir. Sukarno* refer to the same reference (person).

A sentence which is being talked about by a speaker may not refer to a particular person or thing in his mind. It is not a referring expression or it does not restrict to a certain class of individuals. For example, when a speaker says (21) *A bird can fly*, the reference *bird* does not refer to a particular bird or it does not restrict to a certain bird. This sentence is technically called GENERATIVE SENTENCE..

Other examples of generative sentences “

(22) *The whale is a mammal.*

(23) *The male of a species guards guard the eggs.*

Hurford et al (2007) says that A GENERATIVE SENTENCE is a sentence in which some statement is made about a whole unrestricted class of individuals as opposed to any particular individuals.

An expression can be in a word, a phrase, and a clause. Any expression which has sense has sense (meaning, but not any expression has reference. *Animal* is an expression. *This animal runs quickly* is an expression. *Animal* has a reference, but *run* and *quickly* have no reference.

A sentence that is uttered by a speaker may necessarily be true, may be true or may necessarily be false. Based on this condition of proposition of the sentence, necessarily true, may be true, or necessarily false we can divide the kinds of sentence into analytic sentence, synthetic sentence, and contrastive sentence.

1. AN ANALYTIC SENTENCE is one which is necessarily true as the result of the sense (meaning) of the words in it. (Hurford et al, 2007), It means the proposition of the sentence must necessarily be true.

e.g. (24) *A husband is married.*

(25) *A cat is an animal.*

(26) *A plane can fly high.*

2. SYNTHETIC SENTENCE is one which is not analytic but it may be true or false, depending on the sense of the words in it. (Hurford et al, 2007) It means the proposition of the sentence may be true or it may be false, it depends on the fact of the world.

e.g. (27) *Some chairs in this room are broken.*

(28) *John's house is big.*

3. CONTRASTIVE SENTENCE is one which is necessarily false, as the result of the words in it, depending on the sense of the words in it. Thus, a contradiction is in a way the opposite of an analytic sentence (Hurford et al, 2007). It means the proposition of the sentence must be false.

e.g. (29) *A father can breed his baby.*

(30) *A dog can live in the water.*

When a speaker utters a sentence means he is doing something. For example, when he says (31) "Mathematics is difficult" he asserts a state of affair or given a statement which can be true or false. By saying this, he does not make mathematics difficult. On the other hand, when a speaker says (32) "I promise I will come to your house tomorrow", he performs the act of promise. By saying "promise" he makes a promise. From what people are doing when he uses

language, Austin (1976) and his students Searl (1979) divided the kinds of sentence into Constantive sentence and Performative sentence.

1. CONSTANTIVE SENTENCE is one which makes an assesertion of a state of affair or the speaker only makes a statement without performing it.

e.g. (33) *It's raining*

(34) *met John in the mall yesterday.*

2. PERFORMATIVE SENTENCE is one when the speaker utters it, he also performs the act of the verb in it. This sentence requires some condition : (1) verb must be performative verb, (2) the speaker should be the first person singular, (3) the sentence must simple present tense, and (4) the speaker must be the right person.

e.g. (35) *I apologize what you have done to me* (By using verb apologize, he makes the act of apologizing)

(36) *I named you Andrew* (By using verb name, he makes the act of giving a name).

For no (36), the speaker must be the father of the baby, but if the speaker is not the father, then there is no act of performing giving a name, the sentence must not be performative sentence but constantive sentence.

CONCLUSION

Having discussed the kinds of sentence above, then I can conclude that there are some different kinds of sentence based on syntax point of view and semantics point of view.

No.	Syntax	Semantics
1.	Form of sentence 1. Statement sentence 2. Question sentence 3. Exclamation sentence	1.. Speaker's attitude toward the proposition of the sentence 1. Declarative sentence 2. Interrogative sentence 3. Imperative sentence
2.	Number of clauses 1. Simple sentence 2. Compound sentence	2. Relation between referring expression in the sentence : Equative sentence

3. Complex sentence	
4. Compound sentence	Complex
3. Restsricted and unrestricted class of referring expression : Generaative Sentence	
4. Condition of the proposition of the sentence:	
1. Analytic sentence	
2. Synthethic sentence	
3. Contrastsive sentene	
5. Wa people doing when they use language:	
1. Constantive sentence	
2. Perforamtive sentence	

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