

# ANALYSIS OF SIMPLE SENTENCE STRUCTURE IN ENGLISH: FUNCTIONAL SYNTAX APPROACH

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## ABSTRACT

Many approaches in syntax give a deeper chance to analyze the sentence beyond its formal structure even though those approaches focus on the issues of words category, function and role in a sentence construction. The approach of functional syntax emphasizes the sentence structure on the 'role' of each function in each category of words that construct the sentence. This paper analyzes simple sentence in English especially declarative sentence to describe the constituent units and the function structure of simple sentence with active voice. The analysis employs Morley's Functional Syntax Approach to identify the function of each english active sentence element and describe the structure of a simple sentence in English. The results of analysis show that simple sentence can have a syntactic function structure of S-P-O, S-P-C, or S-P-A<sup>CIRC</sup> with a functional role structure which is principally composed of semantic roles of the filler elements of each function in the form of *participant-process-entity/ thing; participant-process-quality* or *participant-process-feature/ quality*. The semantic role of the verbs in a sentence determine the elements of filler before and after the verb given in a sentence.

**Keywords:** Functional syntax, verbs, semantic role, syntactic function.

## A. INTRODUCTION

Syntactic research objects in the form of phrases, clauses and sentences can be analyzed with various approaches as summarized by (Cook, Walter A, 1977). One of them is by applying a structural approach that analyzes sentences as series of units formed noun phrase, verb phrase, prepositional phrase and adverbs. Another approach is functional model that is the analysis of language in terms of form and meaning so that a sentence is seen as series of units that have grammatical functions such as subject, predicate, object and various

descriptions of place, time and manner. The third approach is a transformational model that describes language in grammatical form with grammatical functions which is implicit in the structural configuration. This model emphasizes the relationship between sentences and attempts to degrade related sentences from almost the same sentence structure. Lastly, case grammar analyzes sentences from core verbs and the series of case roles required by the meaning of verbs in sentences. There are many more types of approaches in syntactic analysis, but all approaches focus on three issues: category, function and role.

So many approaches make syntax itself becomes more complicated. As the starting point, syntax is a study of sentence structure (Carnie, 2006:72). Carnie adds that a sentence consists of a series of liner of words. The words in sentences are grouped into units called constituents and constituents join other larger constituencies and so on until a sentence is formed (61). This is in line with Valin's opinion that syntax relates to how sentences are composed and language users use a wide variety of possible arrangements of the elements in the sentence. Van Valin (2004) adds the constituent structure of a sentence in relation to unit units where words in a sentence are arranged in constituents in a hierarchical order. Then, from the constituent structure of a sentence a wide variety of approaches are used to analyze both structurally and functionally. In this paper, the author will discuss sentence structure with one of the above syntactic approaches namely by analyzing functional model sentence structure to analyze the structure of syntactic functions in simple English sentences.

Based on the functional approach in analyzing a simple sentence, the problem formulation in this paper is how to analyze the constituent unit of a simple sentence in English? and the second is how does a simple sentence function structure in English?. This paper aims to identify the function of each english active sentence element and describe the structure of a simple sentence in English.

## **B. LITERATURE REVIEW**

The syntactic analysis of functional models by (Cook, Walter A, 1977) describes language in terms of its function and form. The series of units in a sentence is analyzed in terms of grammatical functions such as subject, predicate, object and various adjuncts such as adjuncts of place, time and manner. According to this functional model, analysis is not only done by recognizing grammatical forms but also recognizing these forms as a functioning part in a sentence.

Kridalaksana (9) in his writing *Functional Syntax: A Synthesis* explains that function in language is not only considered as a network of elements, but rather as a network of

functions; changes to one of these require adjustments to other parts. Functionalism is also a major feature of the functional lexical theory of grammar that will be used in the analysis of sentences in this paper. (Kridalaksana, 2002:35) refers to Halliday functional syntax theory and Dik there are three levels of functional relationship of a sentence namely: semantic function: actor, target, recipient, etc. syntax functions: subjects and objects and pragmatic functions i.e. theme and 'tail', topic and focus. What is striking about functional syntax theory is the placement of predictions as the center of these three functions.

Of the many types of functional syntax theory, the analysis in this paper refers to the theory of functional syntax by David Morley (2000). Morley, (2000) in his book *Syntax in Functional Grammar* states that the structure explains the composition of a unit according to its functional elements and explains the characteristics of relationships formed from existing elements. Morley (90) adds that most systemic description of clause structures traditionally consist of four elements namely Subject (S), predicate (P), complement (C) and adjunct (A). The subject is defined as "participant in the process/entity" or inherently the subject is associated with the specifications of a unity (or object) both abstract and concrete, human or non-human. In English the subject is in control of the form of verbs that must correspond to the actor and the number of the actor so that there is a concept of subject agreement with verb. The second element, predicator supposed by Morley (95) is associated with verbal phrases and embodies a process/process of action such as *wash, climb, cook, hit*, etc.; mental processes such as *like, hear, see, think*, etc. and relational processes characterized by verbs *become, seem, appear, look (ill)*, etc.

The third element of the sentence is complement. Morley, (2000:99) simplifies the understanding of complements as complementary functions located after verbs that have a very wide scope and are divided into extensive elements and intensive elements. The extensive element relates to an element that in the case of referent is considered to be something that exists with its own traits of the subject example: *Mary rang the doctor*. In other words, this complement is the same as the 'object' in traditional grammar. Intensive complements relate to elements that refer back and refer together to the subject or intensive object that precedes it, for example: *Mary is a doctor*.

The last element in a sentence is 'adjunct' which is often associated with adverbs and preposition phrases. If extensive complements have the potential to be subject then adjunct cannot be (Halliday 1994a in Morley: 104), example: *Ken is working peacefully in the study*. Circumstantial adjunct shows circumstantial processes that specify how, why, when, and where.

Adjunct contributes to clause inputs divided into time, frequency, place, reason, manner, means and circumstance.

In addition to determining sentence structure elements as described above, in functional linguistics, the elements in the form of syntactic functions such as subject, predicate, object, complement and adjunct or description have functional roles. Morley, (2000:112)describes functional roles as semantic role types inherently associated with syntactic functions in a sentence. It divides the functional roles represented by syntactic functions into four types, namely: processes represented syntactically as verbal functions, participants / unity / objects by nominal functions, features, qualities, characteristics by the function of adjectives and circumstance by adverbial functions.

### C. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is a qualitative descriptive research that includes three stages, namely the data collection stage, the data analysis stage and the presentation stage of data analysis results (Sudaryanto, 2015). The data collection stage is carried out by direct listening method / method with a recording technique in the form of data search in the form of an active simple sentence in English from a short story (*Let them eat*) *Cake* written by Ninda Daianti which was downloaded from [www.thejakartapost.com](http://www.thejakartapost.com) on March 27, 2017. After that, the data is grouped into groups of active simple sentences that have object elements and sentences that have complementary elements.

The data analysis stage is carried out by the standard method and the basic technique of selecting elements (Sudaryanto, 2015:26) by sorting out the elements that fill the syntactic functions in the language sentence data using the approach of functional syntax theory by G. David Morley (2000). The presentation of data analysis results using formal and informal techniques. Informal techniques are used to describe the analysis of the structure of sentence functions using ordinary words while formal techniques are used to present the results of sentence structures with symbols. Symbols used in this analysis include:

- ||| = sentence boundary
- | = phrase boundary
- S = subject
- P = Predicator
- O = object    direct – O<sup>DIR</sup>  
                  Oblique – O<sup>OBL</sup>

C= Complement      Direct – C<sup>DIR</sup>  
                                  Oblique – C<sup>OBL</sup>  
                                  Attributive – C<sup>ATT</sup>  
                                  Circumstantial – C<sup>CIRC</sup>

A<sup>CIRC</sup> = circumstantial adverbialelement

#### **D. FINDINGS**

Analysis of sentences with a functional approach needs to pay attention to the functional role that is defined as a common syntactic function in which elements of a clause structure are shown and reflect the type of role that the elements are related to (Morley, 2000). From the results of data collection, some examples of simple sentences, especially English declarative sentences can be analyzed with a functional approach of the description of the structure of the syntax of the sentence and the structure of the role type as each element of a sentence.

A clause or sentence is composed of a combination of words that are functionally related and the component components have a unique status in the form of subject, predicate, object, complement and adjunct. From the data collected, it was obtained two types of simple sentences, namely sentences that have an object element (O) and sentences with complementary elements (C). Classifying a sentence type into a simple sentence is based on formal classification which is traditionally based on the number of clauses it has. Thus, a simple sentence is defined as a sentence that has only one main clause (Morley, 2000:70).

The sentences used as data in this paper are limited to declarative sentences which can also be called clauses/active sentences. Declarative sentences in English are characterized by the existence of copula and non-copula construction that can become active and passive sentences (Miller, 2013:27).

#### **E. Discussion**

The sentence data in this paper is limited to the simple sentence type with a active declarative construction which is divided into two discussions, namely the functional structure and the functional role of the object element active declarative sentence and the second is the functional structure and the functional role of the complement declarative active sentence as follows:

##### **1. Analysis on Simple Sentence with Element Functions as Object**

The following is an analysis of active simple sentence elements in English which have object elements other than subject and predicator elements, the example of the sentence is:

|| |Ray| looked at| his watch. || |                      (1)  
 S            P            O<sup>DIR</sup>

In this sentence, there are three elements that make up the active sentence construction, namely *Ray* as the filler of the subject, who is seen as the filler of the predictor and his watch as the filler of the direct object. Subject is an element that controls the form of the verb. Since the sentence is in the past tense, the form of the predicate element becomes the form of the past verb *looked at* which does not indicate whether the subject is singular or plural. This is different when the sentence is in the present form, the predictor will be filled with a verb that adapts to subject filler *Ray* so that the sentence in the present tense form becomes *Ray looks at his watch*. Given the fact its semantic role, the subject is filled with a functional role in the form of a nominal human function with the proper name *Ray*.

The second element in the sentence is the predictor (P). The predictor is associated with verbal phrases and embodies the meaning of the verb as a process. In sentence (1) above, the verb *looked at* shows the meaning of the seeing process carried out by the actor *Ray* and the verb *look* is categorized as a verb that has a semantic type of action that requires an object in the form of a noun *his watch* from the activity.

The third element in the construction of the sentence above is object(O). The term object is used to replace the complement term extensively. In the example sentence (1), the object is classified into direct object (O<sup>DIR</sup>) type because the position of the object '*his watch*' is directly controlled by the verbal element *looked at*. A direct object also has the potential to be used as a subject in passive sentence construction. The object category in sentence (1) is a noun phrase, which consists of his pronoun and the noun watch as the main word. Object functions filled by nominal syntactic function which has the role of 'thing'/object that the participant *Ray looked at*.

The same analysis of the active simple sentence structure with direct object elements can also be seen in several other sentence examples including:

|| |Lola| kissed| his lips. || |                      (1a)  
 S            P            O<sup>DIR</sup>

|| |The waitress| approached| them. || |                      (1b)  
 S                    P            O<sup>DIR</sup>

|| |She| put on| her maroon lipstick. || |                      (1c)

S P O<sup>DIR</sup>

From this description, the structure of the function of a simple sentence with object elements is S-P-O<sup>DIR</sup> which is marked by the existence of a *'participant-process-thing'* functional role structure.

The next type of simple sentence can be seen with the addition of an adjunct function which is optional. Adjunct is labelled 'A' which is one of the constituent elements of the active sentence. Morley, (2000:104) explained that adjunct shows a number of meaning functions which are usually referred to as adverbial. In Morley's further explanation, the term adjunct is then called the 'circumstantial adverbial element' which is considered to be related to the verbal element or proposition as a whole (117). This element can be seen in the following example of the active voice:

|||Ray|tapped| his fingers| every second | on the table. ||| (2)  
 S P O<sup>DIR</sup>A<sup>CIRC</sup>A<sup>CIRC</sup>

In sentence (2) above, the structure of the active sentence consists of the S function filled by the noun *Ray*, the predicate function by the verb *tapped* and the direct object function which is filled by *his fingers* and two additional elements in the form of the phrase *every second* and *on the table*. Circumstantial adverbial element which is then abbreviated as A<sup>CIRC</sup> has a syntactic function as an adverbial which explains the predicator *tapped* as an action verb that has a process role that is carried out in *every second* and *on the table* state. In other words, this A<sup>CIRC</sup> element modifies the verb in the active voice. This can be tested by asking how often does 'Ray tap his finger?' or 'Where did ray tap his finger?' so we get the answer how often Ray tapped his finger and where Ray tapped his finger. If this information is omitted, it does not change the simple sentence construction as in example (2) above.

In this active sentence with direct object element, the adverbial element modifies the verb with an adverb indicating the time and place in independent order after the object of the verb:

|||Ray| had tuned| his piano| for ten years. ||| (2a)  
 S P O<sup>DIR</sup> A<sup>CIRC</sup>

|||I |booked |the hall| for the last week of March. ||| (2b)  
 S P O<sup>DIR</sup> A<sup>CIRC</sup>

|||The waitress| put down| more napkins| on the table. ||| (2c)  
 S P O<sup>DIR</sup> A<sup>CIRC</sup>

|| |Lola| sobbed| louder. || | (2d)

S P A<sup>CIRC</sup>

|| |She| slowly| showed| her face. || | (2e)

S A<sup>CIRC</sup> P O<sup>DIR</sup>

Thus, the presence of A<sup>CIRC</sup> indicates a functional role in the form of time adverbs on actions shown by the verbal function in sentences (2a) and (2b) and the role in the form of adverb of place in sentences (2c) in the form of nominal functions and functional roles in the form of adverbial of manner in sentences (2d) and (2e) denoted by the adjectives *louder* and *slowly* which respectively describe the manner of the verbs *sobbed* and *showed*. It can be concluded that the structure of the active simple sentence objected with adverbial elements becomes S-P-O<sup>DIR</sup>-A<sup>CIRC</sup> (1)- A<sup>CIRC</sup> (2), and so on with the functional role structure '*participant-process-thing / entity-circumstance.*'

Another example of a simple sentence is a sentence that has elements in the form of an indirect object or an oblique object. In this sentence there are two object elements, namely the direct object and the indirect object as in the sentence:

|| |He| built| her| a house. || | (3)

S P O<sup>OBL</sup> O<sup>DIR</sup>

The sentence consists of *He* as the filler of the subject, *built* as the filler of the predicate, *her* as the indirect object and *a house* as the direct object. The determination of these two types of objects is actually seen from the functional role of the verb *built* by the participant *he* who takes action for another participant, namely '*her*'. This relationship shows the 'grammar relation' which is mentioned by Givón (1984) which shows the case marking with the semantic benefactive role in the sentence above. This semantic role is caused by the existence of the *her* object which is located between the verb *built* as a predicator and the direct object filled by a *house*. Therefore, the order of words in this type of sentence construction is quite important to show the relationship between elements and the active case which becomes S-P-O<sup>OBL</sup>-O<sup>DIR</sup> and the semantic role structure in the form of '*participant1-process-participant2-thing.*'

## 2. Analysis on Simple Sentence with Complementary Function Elements

In the concept of sentence function analysis, the meaning of complement is distinguished by object and adjunct. Lyons and Huddleston (1994) in (Morley, 2000) describe adjunct as an element that can be removed, is optional. Meanwhile, complements and objects



become the main unit in a sentence which describes the verb in an active sentence. The extensive elements are then considered as objects while the intensive elements refer to the complement (Morley, 2000:113). Intensive / complementary elements relate to elements that refer back or share a common reference with a previous subject or object (100). The next simple sentence structure is a simple sentence with a gerund form that fills the direct complement function in a verb type sentence that shows the meaning of mental action, for example:

|| |He| hated |waiting. || | (4)  
S P C

In the sentence construction, the elements that make up the sentence are *he* as the filler of the subject, *hated* as a predicator and *waiting* as a complement. Looking at the form of the word, the word *wait* in the word *waiting* is a finite verb form, but in its function in sentence (3) above, *wait* which is given the suffix {-ing} will become a participial form which is seen as having a function as a noun if it is located after the verb as a filler predicator. Although it is considered as a noun, gerund *waiting* cannot be said to be an object because of the influence of the semantic role type of the verb *hate* which shows mental processes and in a sentence and does not involve any action on the 'waiting' element so that it can be said that the word 'waiting' is a complement of the verb *hate*. Thus, the active singular can also have an S-P-C structure provided that P is filled with a verb with the mental process functional role of the participant: *participant-process (mental) -circumstantial*.

The next simple sentence has a structure in the form of an element that functions as a complement (C) which is classified as oblique complement as in the following example:

|| |Lola| smiled| at her. || | (5)  
S P C<sup>OBL</sup>

The sentence above has the element *she* functions as a filler for the subject, *smiled* as a predicator filler and *at her* as a complementary filler. *At her* is oblique complement because semantically it has a common reference indirectly to another nominal element, namely *her* as the pronoun 'the woman' and is characterized by the presence of the preposition 'at'. The position of *at her* as oblique complement can be tested with the question "Whom did Lola smile?" Then it can be answered with the prepositional phrase *at her* as an indirect complement and semantically shows the role of being subject to the action of a smile as a 'receiver'. Thus, the structure of the indirect complementary sentence syntactic function is S-P-C<sup>OBL</sup> with the structure of the functional role as '*participant 1-process-participant 2*'.

Furthermore, the active sentence construction can be composed of elements that fill the functions of the subject, predictor and complement / attributive complement (C<sup>ATT</sup>) as in the following data:

|| |Lola| was| energetic. || |                   (6)  
S     P   C<sup>ATT</sup>

Sentence (5) above has a sentence structure with the S-P-C<sup>ATT</sup> function filled by the ‘noun-copular-adjective’ category. Copula or relational verbs joined with complement in the form of adjective elements that refer to the attributive role of the subject filler. Thus, this complement is called an *adjectivally functioning element*. In the example above, the element *energetic* shows an element that semantically characterizes a quality, a feature of the previous element, namely *Lola*, so that the element is called attributive complement (C<sup>ATT</sup>). The sentence structure with attributive complement elements becomes S-P-C<sup>ATT</sup> with the structure of the functional role as *‘participant-process-quality’*.

In addition to the structure of the syntactic functions in the object and complementary sentence elements described earlier, the last simple sentence type has only the function of the subject, the predictor, and the adverbial function element. This is because the filler element of the verb function does not require a special argument that describes the verb. This can be seen in the sentence:

|| |They| met| at a funeral. || |                   (7)  
S     P     A<sup>CIRC</sup>

Sentence (7) has neither object nor complementary elements in the structure of its syntactic function. This is because the verb *met*, which fills the predictor function, shows the meaning of the reciprocal process, namely ‘meeting each other’ by the participant *they*, so that the complementary object is not needed and is only given the description of *at funeral* as the adverbial function element. Thus the structure of the sentence syntax function becomes S-P-A<sup>CIRC</sup>.

## E. CONCLUSION

Overall, the declarative active simple sentence structure in English can be determined through the relationship between the elements that fill the syntactic function and the relationship between the functional roles of the elements in the sentence seen from their semantic roles. The simple sentence can have a syntactic function structure of S-P-O, S-P-C, or S-P-A<sup>CIRC</sup> with a functional role structure which is principally composed of semantic roles of the filler elements of each function in the form of *participant-process-entity / thing; participant-*

*process-quality* or *participant-process-feature/quality* represented by a syntactic function that represents the role. Thus, the semantic role of verbs remains the main / central role in determining the presence of other elements before and after the function filler so that the syntactic function structure of a sentence can be found along with the role structure of each element which shows the relationship between units in a sentence functionally.

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