

THE RELATION AMONG SYNTACTIC UNITS, TENSES AND MEANINGS IN STUDENTS' WRITING

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Abstract

Writing is an interesting activity which can develop students' skill and help them to express themselves. For the teacher, students' writings can be data source for her linguistic research. This paper depicts the relation among syntactic units, tenses and meanings taken from the students' writing. The objectives of this research are to reveal the misconstructured syntactic units, to show what types of sentences the students often use, and to show how the message can be conveyed. The methodology of this research is descriptive qualitative research. This study is included into qualitative research. Hence, the theories of research methodology are taken from books compiled by Punch (1998), Ritche and Lewis (2003), and Sugiyono (2009). The used theories are syntax theory compiled by Frank (1972), Miller (2002) and Carnie (2007), theories of Semantics compiled by Griffiths (2006) and Hofmann (1993). The theories of general linguistics, grammar and writing are also provided to support Syntax and Semantic theories. The used theories of general linguistics are theories compiled by Traugott and Pratt (1980), Quirk (1985), O'Grady (1989), Burling (1992) and Chaer (2003). Meanwhile, the used theories of grammar are theories compiled by Deterding and Poedjosoedarmo (2001) and Azar (1989). The theory of writing is compiled by Oshima and Hogue (2007). The results of this research concern to how the message is relayed in the end. The messages written in the students' essay are not clear because of the misconstructured syntactic units and the improper tenses. In addition, the students tend to use either simple sentences or compound sentences in their writing.

Keywords: syntactic units, tenses and meanings

Introduction

Writing is indeed an interesting activity. However, there are a lot of aspects that need to be considered in order that readers can understand what the writer thinks and what the writer intends to inform. To achieve this, it is important to consider tense and structure. Writing in English means people must be aware while using tenses. Once they fail using them, the readers will misunderstand or at worst they will not be able to understand events chronologically. Another aspect which should be considered while writing is structure. This does not only refer to a sentence structure but also to a phrasal structure. Many students cannot deliver their message in their writing because most of them pay attention immensely on sentence structure not on phrasal structure.

Tense is important because it indicates the occurrence of an event in time (Deterding

and Poedjosoedarmo 2001, p. 39). However, how phrases are formed is also important. There are four kinds of phrases in English. They are noun phrase, prepositional phrase, verb phrase and adverbial phrase (O'Grady et al. 1989, pp 128-131). Another two important syntactic units are clauses and sentences. Clauses are also important because they are needed to form compound sentence, complex sentence and compound-complex sentence (Frank, 1972, pp. 22-223)

Methodology

Method is very crucial in any research because it helps the researcher to analyse the data. In this study, qualitative method is used. According to Sugiyono (2009, p. 1) qualitative research exists because there is a change in paradigm in viewing reality/symptoms. In addition, Ritche and Lewis (2003, p. 3) state that that "Qualitative gives directives in providing

depth understanding of the social world of research participants through learning their social values, their experience and perspectives.”

The definition given by Punch (1998, p. 29) is more helpful because the definition really helps the writer to analyze the data. He says that a qualitative research not only uses non-numerical and unstructured data, but also, typically, has research questions and methods.

He adds that another method used is interpretative description, allowing the writer to describe as well as interpret the signs used including dialogue and narration, camera shots, camera angles and movement, color and lighting.

The subject of this research is the writer and the object of thi research is my students’ writing. The data had been collected for about six months. The data is analysed with descriptive method.

Findings and Discussion

All data presented here are the data which are from some parts of my students’ writing. They are taken directly.

Data 1

In future I want to owner of filmmaker or production house.

Revision: In the future, I want to own/ to have a filmmaker or a production house.

The student should have paid attention on the verb want. *Want* should be followed by an infinitive to form a verb phrase.

Data 2

The title song is called “Utakata Hanabi”. I want to covered it and then recorder it. But I still confused I want to send it to Youtube or not.

Revision: The title of the song is called “*Utakata Hanabi*” I want to make a cover of it and then record it. But I am still confused whether I want to upload it on Youtube or not.

Data 3

Next week I am going to Mesir with my family. We have traveled by plane. When I was there I want to see Piramid and I want eat Mesir food.

Revision: Next week I am going to go to Egypt with my family. We will travel by plane. Once I am there I want to see Pyramid and I want eat Egyptian cuisine.

Data 4

I was not like english because I was feeling difficult english language. Now I’am must study english language because I am think studying english language very important to me. After I’ve finished my studied. I’ve want english language stay used. So, later I’ve the ability english language I’ve will used english language as the ability I’ve for my worked.

Revision: I did not like English because I thought English was difficult. Now I must study English because I think studying english is very important for me. After I’ve finished my study I want my English to be useful. So, later I can use my English competence in my workplace.

Data 5

Here I’am majored in accounting in some English language courses only one who I do not like because I was think it’s difficult english. I was used to always get a very small value of the English but now I am to getting a high score so I am can getting a high score. So, I’ve not replayed English language next semester.

Revision: Accounting is my major. In some English language courses only one which I do not like because I think it’s a difficult english. I was used to get a very low mark for English lesson but now I want to get a high score. So, I will not retake English language next semester.

Data 6

I like music and dance art is dance hip ho dance. I have in this instructure dance. I came to dance art in this campus. I will is dance art a profesional.

Revision: I like music and dance art. The dance is hip hop dance. I have an instructor in this activity. I joined in dance art in this campus. I want to be a profesional dance artist.

Data 7

I watches the tv in the evening. I has watched a sport.

Revision: I watched television in the evening and I have watched a sport.

Data 8

A couple weeks ago, I have an interesting dream in my sleep but I can’t remember what’s dream

about. I always reading a books or playing a game while drink a cup of tea.

Revision: A couple weeks ago, I had an interesting dream but I can't remember what the dream is like. I always read a book or play a game while drinking a cup of tea.

Data 9

Two weeks ago I go to Bandung Japan festival. In there was so many competition like cosplay competition, dance cover, sing cover and many more.

Revision: Two weeks ago I went to Bandung Japan festival. In there, there were so many competitions like cosplay competition, dance cover, sing cover and many.

Data 10

To make animation sometimes it's hard, but sometimes it's easy. It depends our will.

Revision: It depends on our will.

Data 11

I have eaten bread. Before, I went go to widyatamata. I bring my young brother to he's school.

Revision: I had eaten bread before I went to Widyatama. I bring my young brother to his school.

Data 12

My name is Hafiz. I am junior graphic designer and worked as a freelancer at PMHR. I love graphic design especially designing brand identity and I will be a master brand designer such as like the Italian Designer Marco Vigneli.

Revision: My name is Hafiz. I am a junior graphic designer and work as a freelancer at PMHR. I love graphic design especially designing brand identity and I will be a master brand designer like the Italian Designer Marco Vigneli.

Data 13

I am studying graphic designer. I started it since 2009. In my dream, I want to be the most designer and for realitation I am studied with earnest.

Revision: I am studying graphic designer. I have started it since 2009. In my plan, I want to be the most competent designer and for realization I study earnestly.

Data 14

In this weekend, I am going to holiday. Target is Puncak. I take a jacket because there very cold in Puncak. I have a lot of fun.

Revision: In this weekend, I will have a holiday. My destination is Puncak. I take a jacket because it is very cold in Puncak. I will have a lot of fun.

Data 15

I am lecturing the student in Universitas Widyatama since 2012. I was studying General English last year. My value for this lesson is not good because I think this lesson is complicated that hard to be understand. English very important English has helped industries. Now I am studying seriously. I hope can speak English with right grammar with good english. I will more than confident and I ready to compete.

Revision: I have become a student in Universitas Widyatama since 2012. I studied General English last year. My mark for this lesson is not good because I think this lesson is complicated and it is hard to be understood. English is very important because English has helped industries. Now I am studying seriously. I hope I can speak English properly. I will become more confident and I am ready to compete.

Data 16

I have known English from I was studying at Elementary School, Junior High School, Vocational High School until I'am studying at Widyatama University now. Before I don't know that English is important. I was feeling lazy to learn English. But now, I know if English is important because English is international language. From now, I'll study hard so that later I can speak English. I want to take English course to better understand.

Revision: I have known English since a long time. Before I don't know that English is important I was lazy to learn English. But now, I know that English is important because English is an international language. From now, I'll study hard so that later I can speak in English. I want to take English course to have better understanding.

Data 17

I was learning English language when I elementary school. I don't like English language because I feel difficult english language. Now I have to start like English language. I think studying english language very important to me. After I've finished my studied. I hope that I've learned I can use in the workplace.

Revision: I learnt English when I was in elementary school. I don't like English because I think English is difficult. Now I start liking English. I think studying English language is very important to me. After I've finished my study, I hope that what I have learned can be used in the workplace.

Data 18

I have been lecturing the student since August 2013 in Widyatama Accounting Faculty Diploma. I like English but I can't understand that lesson. I will try learning so that I can understand and will be better.

Revision: I have been the student of Widyatama in Accounting Diploma Program in Faculty of Economy since August 2013. I like English but I can't understand that lesson. I will try to learn so that I can understand and will get better.

Data 19

I going to do after my graduation from Universitas Widyatama is searching worker. I want to be great Accountant in the future.

Revision: What I am going to do after my graduation from Universitas Widyatama is searching for a work/getting a job. I want to be a great Accountant in the future.

Data 20

English is one of universal language we can get more knowledge by mastering English because so many important books written by English because that we can chat with foreign people from the other country. English makes people more confident. In Indonesia English can be learned by children eight years old.

Revision: English is one of universal languages. We can get more knowledge by mastering English because many important books are written in English. Besides that, we can chat with foreign people from the other countries. English makes people more confident. In Indonesia English can be learned by eight year old children.

Conclusions

The message delivered by the students are not clear because they do not use tenses properly. In addition, they form the phrases poorly and they often create unnecessary phrases.

Further, these students tend to use either simple sentences or compound

sentences. However, these students seem to put a lot of effort to make complex sentences even if they are wrong.

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