

Re-Examination of Verb-Predicated Sentence Structure: A Household Syntax Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Keywords:

Syntax
Sentence System
Transitivity

Sentence, as a system, consists of several parts in the form of words that are interrelated with each other to form a unity, thereby creating a sentence system. However, there is no clear concept determining a sentence formulation as a system. This research aims to formulate the system formula in verb-predicated sentences with the analogy of the household system. This descriptive qualitative research discusses the theory of formulation. The result is the concept of a sentence system formula. From the results of the theoretical study and discussion, it can be explained that in verb-predicated sentences, the system formula can be analogous to a household consisting of a mother, biological children, and adopted children. These three parts form a single unit that constitutes a family system. The mother is a part of the household that controls both biological and adopted children. In the sentence, the predicate acts as the mother, while the subject and object are analogous to biological children, and adverbs and complements are analogous to adopted children. The predicate controls the existence of the subject and object because the predicate creates both. The decisive syntactic role of the subject and object is the predicate. The predicate does not make adverbs and complements, but their existence is parallel to the subject and object. Adverbs and complements bind themselves to the predicate through the syntactic roles they carry. Syntactic functions can be positioned as subject and object, while adverbs and complements are not syntactic functions, but both are parallel to syntactic functions.

INTRODUCTION

Language is a system. When people speak, they are essentially speaking sentences. A sentence consists of a series of words. Words and sentences are the units of language that are most easily understood by the community. A sentence is a collection of words that are generally spoken in one breath. Thus, it is very natural that a sentence can be considered as a whole system. A system consists of sub-systems, in which several parts are interrelated with each other to form a unity. In this discussion, the lingual unit is called a sentence.

In the discussion of syntax, lingual constructions are concretely described in the form of phrase construction, clause construction, and compound sentence construction (Verhaar, 1996). Phrase construction concretely consists of two or more words, but theoretically, in language analysis, it can consist of one word. A clause is a language unit that has one predicate in a sentence, while compound sentences have two or more predicates in one sentence (Roni, 2022).

Sentences consist of a collection of words forming a unified system. How is the system? How is the formula that the sentence can be proven as a system? How is the relationship between those parts of the system? These inquiries will be the primary focus of discussion in this research.

Based on the researcher's view, there are two major classifications in predicate-centered sentence analysis. They are (1) sentences with verbs as predicates and (2) sentences with non-verbs as predicates. In the first group, the sentence core is the predicate which is filled with verbs. The analysis is closely related to transitive-intransitive verbs, verb

valency, and grammatical case. In the second group, the content of the predicates is nouns and adjectives. The content of the predicate expresses one of the characters, personalities, characteristics, or duties of the constituent in the subject (Roni, 2013-2014). Some refer to it as an equalizing predicate (Verhaar, 1996). In other words, the content of the subject is equated (read: equal to) with the content of the predicate. Thus, the predicate has one of the characters, personalities, characteristics, or duties of the subject filler. The data in this study are sentences in the first type of analysis group, specifically sentences whose predicates are filled by verbs.

The constituents that construct sentences consist of subject, predicate, object, and other constituents, which are called *hogo* and *fukago* (Tsusaka, 2016). *Hogo* refers to the subject, predicate, and object. *Fukago* refers to adverbs. The counterpart of the predicate is *hogo*, which relates only to the subject and object (Teramura, 1982). *Hogo* can be divided into three parts. First, *hissu hogo*, in which constituents that are absent feel incomplete, i.e., subject and object. Second, constituents that readily become *hissu hogo*, are called *jun hissu hogo*, i.e., complements. Third, without the constituents, the sentence would be complete, are called *fukuji hissu hogo*, i.e. adverbs. However, none of these addresses the relationship between the constituents.

In Indonesian linguistics, the syntactic functions that are often discussed are subject (S), predicate (P), object (O), and adverb (Adv). Adverbs are usually referred to as modifiers. In addition to these four constituents, there is also a constituent called complement (Kom) (Verhaar, 1996) (Roni & Slamet Setiawan, 2017).

(1) Saya tadi malam makan ramen dengan sumpit bersama teman.

S Adv P O Adv Adv

'I ate ramen with chopsticks last night with friends.'

(2) Saya pergi ke Surabaya

S P Kom

'I go to Surabaya.'

The predicate in (1) is filled by the verb *makan* (eat). *Makan* (eat) is a transitive verb that requires something to be eaten, namely *ramen* in the object, and the person *saya* (I) in the subject. Meanwhile, *tadi malam* (last night), *dengan sumpit* (with chopsticks), and *bersama teman* (with friends) are constituents; if they are not present, it will be no problem. All three constructions are adverbs. This means that the sentence construction *saya makan ramen* (I ate ramen) already feels complete and does not require the three constructions. In (2), the predicate is filled by the word *pergi* (go), which is an intransitive verb and does not require an object. However, the construction *ke Surabaya* (to Surabaya) feels necessary to show its existence where to go. *Ke Surabaya* (to Surabaya) is not an object, but it is needed for the completeness of the sentence. This construction is called a complement. The relationship between the four constructions, which are predicate, subject, object, adverb, and complement, becomes urgent to be given a scientific explanation.

This research will re-examine syntactic processes in relation to the theory about system. The term sociosyntax discussed in this article is a combination of sociology and syntax.

Syntax in this case is the object of research studied, as well as the research limitation that only focuses on the case of syntax. Meanwhile, sociology - in this case is the theory of the nuclear family system - is an assessment tool for syntax, namely as an analogy to explain that a sentence is a system. This research aims to describe the system formula that exists in sentences with predicates in the form of verbs.

Suppose language research can be divided into research at the levels of universal linguistics, typological linguistics, and specific linguistics. In that case, this research falls under the category of research on the concept of language typology. Research on the Language of Typology with a sociosyntactic perspective is new and urgently needed. This is because it can be applied in detail to *specific languages*, such as Indonesian, Javanese, and English, among others. In addition, it can also be applied at the universal linguistic level to achieve the same type from a sociolinguistic and syntactic perspective. The description systems in sociology that will be expanded in this discussion use a simple perspective on the world of households or families. A household consists of a father, a mother, and their children (Purnamasari et al., 2022). It will illustrate the relationships between father and mother, father and child, mother and child, one child and another, and so on. This relationship will serve as the basis for an analogy in examining sentence construction. In other words, as seen in the title of this research, the result will show how the household of the sentence can be explained with this point of view.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research is of a descriptive qualitative type. It primarily focuses on theoretical studies and the formulation of the study's results. Data are collected from various sources that facilitate the development of new concepts. The data collection and analysis techniques employed are based on Sudaryanto's theory (2015).

In the short term, the results of the theoretical study in this research are expected to be applied to various *specific languages* in detail, identifying the unique features of each language.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

System and Household System

A system is a collection of elements that are interrelated into a unified unit. A household or nuclear family consists of a father, mother, and child [9]. A father and mother will form a unified unit that gives birth to children. The mention of the mother as the one who gave birth to the child is a mention of formality. But without the seed of the father, a mother cannot give birth to children. To simplify the discussion, the mention of 'father' and 'mother' in this article will be represented by the mother.

Furthermore, children can still be differentiated into biological children, children born to a certain wife or husband, adopted children, and so on. For analogy purposes, this discussion will use two terms: biological children and adopted children. Biological children are children born to the mother in the family. Meanwhile, adopted children refer to children who are not born to the mother in the family, but are taken in and adopted as children for the sake of completeness in the family.

Thus, there are three concepts used in this analogy: mother, biological children, and adopted children. The relationship is described as shown below.

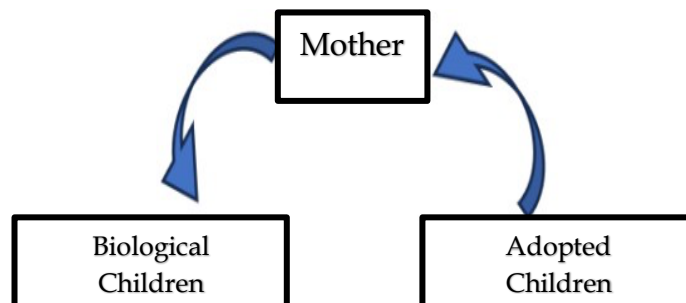


Figure 1. Relationship between mother, biological children, and adopted children.

The direction of the arrows is a crucial aspect of building this analogy. The arrow from mother to biological children states that a mother's (and father's) character will be passed on to the biological children and eventually attach to them. Conversely, the direction of the arrow from the adopted children to the mother indicates that the character of the adopted children is not derived from the adoptive mother, but rather the adopted children adapt and eventually attach themselves to the family of the adoptive mother.

Linguistics Construction and Syntactic Function

Concrete topics in the field of syntax are phrases, clauses, and compound sentences (Verhaar, 1996). Observed from the perspective of word collection, a phrase construction is defined as a linguistic construction consisting of two or more words. One of them becomes the main constituent and the other becomes the subordinate constituent. Clause and compound sentence constructions are usually associated with the presence of subjects, objects, predicates, complements and adverbs. Sentences in which there is only one predicate are defined as simple clauses or sentences. Meanwhile, sentences in which there are two or more parts that can be identified as predicates are referred to as compound sentences. To limit the discussion in this research, the main focus will be on a sentence consisting of one predicate or a simple sentence.

Syntactic functions regularly talk about the fragments of the sentence called the predicate, subject, object, adverb, and complement. Some consider adverbs and complements to be the same, but in this discussion, they are treated as distinct. The discussion in this article is limited to the relationship between these five parts of the sentence.

There are at least two major views on syntactic functions. The first function can be considered as syntactic functions are predicates, subjects, and objects only. Adverbs and complements are not included. Second functions, which can be considered as syntactic functions, are all five parts, namely predicates, subjects, objects, adverbs, and complements. The researcher believes that the parts of a sentence that are referred to as syntactic functions include predicates, subjects, and objects. Meanwhile, adverbs and complements are parts of the sentence that are parallel to the syntactic function.

The central element in the relationship between mother and children is the mother. The mother controls the relationships within the family. In a simple sentence, the element at the centre of the sentence is the predicate. Corresponding to the mother, the predicate controls the relationship with the subject, object, adverb, and complement. The two significant observations mentioned in the previous paragraph can be analogized to the question of whether there is a blood relationship between a mother and her children, specifically biological and adopted children. The first observation says that syntactic functions are limited to predicate, subject, and object because, corresponding to the relationship between a mother and her biological children, there is a blood relationship between them. The second view states that syntactic functions are predicate, subject, object, adverb, and complement because in this observation, the adopted children are equated with biological children. Regardless of the blood relationship between them. From the description above, it is implied that the relationship between the predicate and the subject, object, adverb, and complement can be described as follows.

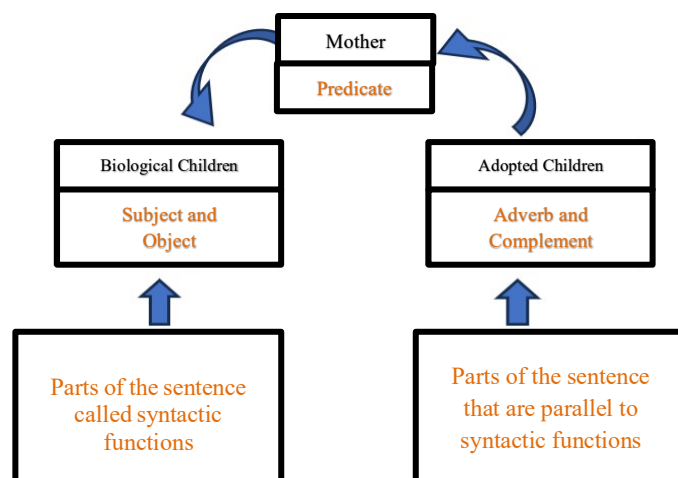


Figure 2. Relationship of the predicate with the subject, object, adverb, and complement.

As seen in Figure 2, the mother or the parent of the sentence is the predicate. The subject and object have a close relationship with the predicate. In a simple sentence, the subject and object are born by the predicate, like biological children. The predicate controls the character of the subject and object. This is different from adverbs and complements, which instead must tie themselves to the predicate rather than becoming a part of the sentence. Subjects and objects are parts of the sentence called syntactic functions; adverbs and complements are parts of the sentence that are parallel to syntactic functions.

Relationship between Syntactic Category and Empty Spaces of Syntactic Functions

Syntactic category refers to a term often referred to as word type. There are categories of verbs, adjectives, nouns, adverbs, prepositions, postpositions, and so on. Meanwhile, syntactic functions are empty spaces or slots in the form of predicates, subjects, objects, adverbs, and complements. These spaces exist in sentences that syntactic categories must fill. For example, the subject and object are spaces that must be filled by nouns or other

categories that must be nounced first. Likewise, predicates are empty spaces that verbs, adjectives, nouns, and other parts of speech must fill. Each language has different rules. For example, in English, it must be filled by a verb. In Indonesian and Japanese, it can be filled with verbs, adjectives, nouns, and other categories with certain rules.

As explained in the previous subsection, sentence studies can be divided into two major groups: sentences whose predicates are filled by verbs and those filled by non-verbs. These two groups are discussed differently. In the first group, sentences whose predicates are filled with verbs are the focus of the problem being discussed in this research. While the second group, sentences whose predicates are filled with non-verbs, are usually addressed in terms of predicate equivalents. In the discussion of predicate equivalents, one of the discussions is related to the presence of the copula, as done by Roni et al. (2025) on the existence of copulas in Japanese (Roni et al., 2025).

The discussion in this research is limited to the predicate space which is only filled by verbs. The type of verb that fills the predicate determines the semantic role of the subject and object. The noun category generally fills the roles of subjects and objects. (This would be an interesting debate in *specific linguistics*, but is not discussed in this research.) The existence of objects and even subjects depends on the semantic type of the verb, especially concerning the ditransitivity of the verb, and to the valency of the verb. The following sub-discussion is limited to verb transitivity.

Transitive Verbs with the Existence of Subjects and Objects

Transitive verbs are often translated as verbs that are always followed by an object in the sentence, while intransitive verbs are not followed by an object (Fiktorius, 2019) (Sofyan, 2018). Thus, the existence of the subject is ensured in the sentence. Consider the following examples in Indonesian and Japanese.

(3) Ridwan tidur.
S P
'Ridwan sleeps.'

(4) Tanaka ga neru
S P
'Tanaka sleeps.'

In (3) and (4), the Indonesian predicate is filled by the verb *tidur* (sleep) and the Japanese is filled by *neru* (sleep). Both verbs require a subject that plays the role of an agent. The subject in Indonesian is filled with the noun *Ridwan* and the Japanese is filled with the noun *Tanaka*. The difference is that in Indonesian, the agent role has no markings on the noun 'Ridwan', while in Japanese, it has positional markings, denoted by 'ga'. This marking also occurs in the patient object. In Indonesian, the noun *matematika* (mathematics) is unmarked as an object (5), while in Japanese, the noun *suugaku* (mathematics) has the positional mark denoted by *o* (6). Roni and Slamet (2017) have discussed the differences between these markings in Indonesian, English, and Japanese.

- (5) Ridwan mengajar matematika.
 S P O
 'Ridwan teaches mathematics.'
- (6) Tanaka ga suugaku o oshieru.
 S O P
 'Tanaka teaches mathematics.'
- (7) Ridwan mengajari adiknya matematika.
 S P O1 O2
 'Ridwan teaches his younger brother mathematics.'
- (8) Tanaka ga otouto ni suugaku o oshieru.
 S O1 O2 P
 'Tanaka teaches his younger brother mathematics.'

The predicate in Indonesian (5) is filled by the verb *mengajar* (teach), and Japanese (6) is filled by the verb *oshieru* (teach). Both are transitive verbs that require an agent role (the person who teaches) and a patient role (the thing being taught).

Transitive verbs can be divided into two types: those that require only one object, commonly referred to as monotransitive, and those that require two objects, called ditransitive. In Indonesian, as shown in (5), the verb *mengajar* (teach) is a monotransitive verb. Besides *mengajar* (teach), there is the verb *mengajari* (to teach), which is a ditransitive verb (7). Unlike Indonesian, in Japanese, the verb *oshieru* (teach) can act as both a monotransitive and a ditransitive verb (8). The verbs *mengajari* and *oshieru* (which is ditransitive) require one more object with a benefactive role, such as *adiknya* (his younger brother) and *otouti* (his younger brother). In Indonesian, the benefactive object is unmarked, whereas in Japanese, it is *marked*, specifically by the position "ni".

The syntactic roles of agent, patient, and benefactive, shown in examples (3)-(8), are created by the semantic meaning of the predicate-filling verb. These roles attached to the subject and object nouns are not presented by themselves but are present because of the inheritance or acceptance of the semantic meaning of the verb in the predicate. The above description can be summarised in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Relationship between verb-predicates and syntactic roles, manifestations, and functions

Verb Predicate	:	Sleep	Teach	To Teach	Neru	Oshieru (mono-transitive)	Oshieru (ditransitive)
(1)		(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Requires a role	:	agent	agent, patient	agent, patient, benefactive	agent	agent, patient	agent, patient, benefactive

Role embodiment	:	<i>Unmark:</i> ∅	<i>Unmark:</i> ∅	<i>Unmark:</i> ∅	<i>mark:</i> positional ga	<i>mark:</i> positional ga, o	<i>mark:</i> positional ga, o, ni
Syntactic function	:	subject	subject, object	subject, object (1), object (2)	subject	subject, object	subject, object (1), object (2)

Relationships between Predicates with Adverbs and Complements

Adverbs in Indonesian are known as adverbial spaces. Unlike the subject and object, whose presence in the sentence is born by the verb predicate, adverbs are not present because they are born by the verb predicate, but they are equal to the subject and object. In example (9), there are two adverbial spaces, namely *di lantai* (on the floor) which expresses place (adv 2), and *tadi malam* (last night), which expresses time (adv 2). The adverbial phrase *on the floor* can be understood as the noun *floor* with the preposition *di*, while the adverbial phrase *last night* has no preposition.

- (9) Ridwan tidur di lantai tadi malam.
 S P Adv 1 Adv 2
 'Ridwan slept on the floor last night.'

The complement space is more closely related to the predicate, like the subject and object, even though it is not born by a verb predicate. Complements generally appear on predicates that are filled with intransitive verbs such as *pergi* (go), *datang* (come), *tersandung* (tripped over), and so on. Consider sentence (10) with the predicate verb *tersandung* (tripped over) which is an intransitive verb. In predicates filled by intransitive verbs, there is no need for an object. However, in the intransitive verb *tersandung*, the noun *batu* (a rock) seems to be needed like a subject or object for the completeness of the sentence.

- (10) Tanaka tersandung batu.
 S P Kom
 'Tanaka tripped over a rock.'

Notes for Future Research

Based on the discussion in this research, several suggestions for future research are provided. First, *specific linguistic* research is essential in this field to identify the speciality of each language. Second, the existence of transitive-intransitive verbs in each language also needs to be researched, as it will determine the presence of a subject and an object. Third, the character possessed by the verb in the predicate also needs to be examined because it determines the syntactic role of the subject and object. Fourth, the role markers in each language are different. There is an *unmarked* that means zero; and there is also a *mark*. If it is *marked*, the sentence will be an adposition or an internal word change. Fifth, this discussion is limited to the relationship between predicates and subjects, objects, adverbials, and complements (Kom). One space can contain a phrase. How the words are

related in the construction of the phrase has not been discussed. Whether the order is different or the same in one language, whether there is a connector like *no* in Japanese, or *-nya* in Indonesian, or *of* in English. Some of these could be the subjects of future research.

CONCLUSION

A sentence is a string of words that come together to form a sentence system. In sentences with verb predicates, the system formula can be analogous to a household consisting of a mother, biological children, and adopted children. The mother is the part of the household that controls both biological and adopted children. In the sentence, the predicate acts as the mother, while the subject and object are analogous to biological children, and adverbs and complements are analogous to adopted children. The predicate controls the existence of the subject and object because the predicate creates both. Adverbs and complements are not born by the predicate but their existence is parallel to the subject and object. Syntactic functions can be situated as subject and object, while adverbs and complements are not syntactic functions but both are parallel to syntactic functions. The predicate determines the syntactic role of the subject and object but not with adverbs and complements. The syntactic role of adverbs and complements is precisely to bind themselves to the predicate as the mother of the sentence.

The verb that fills the predicate has a semantic meaning. This semantic meaning is conveyed to the subject and object nouns through syntactic roles. Syntactic roles are also found in adverbial fillers and complements. The syntactic roles vary from language to language; some are *marked*, while others are *unmarked*. Here, comprehensive research is needed on each *specific linguistics*.

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