

A CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS OF SENTENCE FORMATION IN ENGLISH AND LUBUKLINGGAU DIALECT

¹Sastika Seli, ²Nabilah Khairunnisa

¹PGRI Silampari University

selisastika@gmail.com

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Abstract: The research aims at explaining some differences between sentence formation in English and Lubuklinggau dialect. Lubuklinggau dialect derives from Palembang Malay language in South Sumatera and as the first and second language in Lubuklinggau. The data was taken from two movies ‘Alternative Math’ in English and ‘Meraih Cita’ in Lubuklinggau dialect. The transcription from oral language to the written form was carried out to analyze the sentence formation in both languages. The data was analyzed by identification, coding, classification, data reduction, description and conclusion drawing. The results show that there are some concerns on the grammatical rule in sentence formation such as copular usage, verb tense, declarative word order, interrogative structure, auxiliary modal use in questions, focus structure, clause embedding and sentence-final particles. Understanding the difference structure between the two languages are expected to improve pedagogical strategies in teaching English as a Foreign Language.

Keywords: *contrastive analysis, sentence formation, English syntax, grammatical function, lubuklinggau dialect*

INTRODUCTION

One of the most important instruments for human communication is language, which allows people to express their ideas, emotions, and cultural knowledge to others. It makes it possible for people to express who they are, build deep relationships, and participate actively in society. According to Nasution & Tambunan (2022), language allows people to interact, collaborate, and express who they are in society. Wiltschko (2022) emphasises how language combines thought and engagement, pointing out that grammatical patterns show communicative and propositional intent. Furthermore, communication has important social, expressive, and instrumental roles in organising group activities, sharing information, and

expressing emotions, according to Muspita and Kholia (June 2024). Every one of these components is necessary to maintain social order and communal life. Each of these processes is essential to human existence. Language is vital to human evolution and civilisation because without it, learning, the maintenance of cultural values, and the growth of social interactions would not be possible.

English is one of the numerous languages spoken throughout the world, and it has become the primary language for international trade, communication, research, and culture. According to Ye, Ji, and Chen (2021), the growth of English facilitates the globalisation of education. enhancing cultural diversity, developing talent from throughout the world, expediting institutional cooperation, and providing access to international academic resources. English has become an essential instrument for communication, teamwork, and knowledge sharing in a globalised environment, according to Jasmina Aslamova (2024). Due to its extensive use, people and countries from other continents have been able to interact through trade, research, and cultural exchange. Thus, English can improve social standing, link people, and give access to education or work. Because English is widely used, it can offer numerous advantages.

The nation of Indonesia is home to numerous languages. People in various regions speak around 700 local languages, including Javanese, Sundanese, and Balinese. Everyone learns and utilises Bahasa Indonesia, the national language, despite the fact that people speak various regional tongues. It facilitates communication among all Indonesians. A large number of Indonesians are multilingual. In addition to speaking Bahasa Indonesia, their native tongue, they occasionally speak English or another foreign language. As a result, Indonesia is a multilingual nation with a diverse range of languages and a rich cultural heritage.

The term "language interference," sometimes referred to as "negative transfer," describes how a speaker's native tongue or regional dialect affects their learning and usage of a second language. Because the rules of the first language are applied to the second, it frequently results in mistakes in vocabulary, syntax, sentence structure, and pronunciation. Grammar, vocabulary, sentence structure, and pronunciation can all be impacted by this interference. It happens because while speaking or writing in a second language, learners often follow the rules of their first language. Because Bahasa Indonesia's construction does not require a linking verb like *is*, an Indonesian learner may say, for instance, "He very clever" rather than "He is very clever." Negative transfer, also referred to as interference, is

the transfer of native language patterns. This phenomena is generally recognised among linguists. Odlin (2021) asserts that language transfer can be both beneficial (helping with learning when languages are comparable) and detrimental (leading to mistakes when structures clash). Ellis (2021) adds that interference tends to diminish as proficiency increases and is most prevalent in the early phases of learning. In conclusion, interference from mother tongues or regional dialects is a normal aspect of learning a second language; yet, learners can overcome these challenges with awareness and focused instruction.

Analysing sentence structures, especially declarative, interrogative, and negative forms that have distinct communicative functions, is one method to look at this interference. (Krifka, 2024) suggests a layered syntactic framework for declarative sentences, emphasising the hierarchical representation of aspects in syntax, including propositional content, speaker judgement, and commitment. Even simple assertions have structural complexity, as this model shows. In the meantime, Khalsiah et al. (2024) look into the structural differences between contracted (didn't he) and uncontracted (did he not) forms of negative interrogatives. Their research demonstrates how these distinctions affect formality, modality, and emphasis, making them significant from a syntactic and pragmatic standpoint. These understandings of sentence structure serve as an essential basis for contrastive analysis, especially when contrasting the various structural strategies used by different languages to express identical functions.

A subfield of linguistics called contrastive analysis examines the structural variations and parallels between two or more languages. By contrasting the learners' first language with the target language, contrastive analysis can be used to emphasise the challenges and ease of learning a second language (Auni and Manan, 2022). Finding the differences and similarities between two languages is the goal of contrastive analysis. Kostova (2022) defines contrastive linguistics as cross-linguistic research that systematically compares two or more languages—which are not necessarily related or have interacted—in order to characterise their similarities and differences for the purposes of language typology, foreign language instruction, and translation theory. As a result, contrastive analysis plays a crucial role in detecting linguistic differences since it allows for the discovery of linguistic features that may be error sources as well as more efficient learning techniques for second language learners. Dialectal variety is one of the main variables impacting English learning in Indonesia's multilingual environment. One study from IAIN Curup, for instance, discovered that the

Rejang dialect changed vowels and diphthongs in English, indicating ongoing phonological influence (Noviyenty & Putri, 2021). Similarly, Qomariana et al. (TEFLIN, 2018) found that learners' mother tongue had an impact on their writing, particularly on sentence structure and word order. Similar habits, such as leaving off auxiliary and linking verbs, are present in the Lubuklinggau dialect and can result in structural mistakes when constructing English sentences. For example, "Dia sudah makan?" is translated literally as "Has he eaten?" without any necessary context.

In order to determine how native dialectal characteristics may impede English learning, this study examines the structural distinctions between the English and Lubuklinggau dialects, particularly in declarative, interrogative, and negative sentence formation. This study uses a contrastive analysis approach to identify syntactic tendencies in the Lubuklinggau dialect, specifically the lack of linking and auxiliary verbs that may result in negative transfer. In the end, this study offers useful advice to curriculum designers and English teachers on how to create more successful teaching methods that take into account the linguistic backgrounds of their students. The objective is to increase overall conversational competency in English, decrease errors, and improve grammatical precision.

METODOLOGI

Research Design

This is a qualitative descriptive research applying contrastive analysis as a framework to investigate the sentence formation in English and Lubuklinggau dialect.

The primary data was taken from the English Movie 'Alternative Math' to analyze the English sentence formation and Lubuklinggau movie 'Meraih Cita' to analyze the sentence in Lubuklinggau dialect. The secondary data was taken from some journal articles and relevant books.

Data Collecting

Some procedures to collect the data namely, doing a transcription from spoken to written language. In this case, the spoken English and Lubuklinggau dialect were taken from the movies 'Alternative Math' dan 'Meraih Cita'. Following transcription, the data were carefully identified, categorized and coded for further analysis.

Data Analysis

The data analysis employed a qualitative content analysis approach, which involved interpreting linguistic features and communicative functions embedded in both languages. This included identifying patterns of lexical choice, syntactic structure, and sociolinguistic markers that reflect cultural and contextual meanings. The analysis was conducted inductively, allowing themes and categories to emerge from the data rather than being imposed beforehand (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). This method ensured that the findings remained grounded in the linguistic realities of the speakers while providing insights into the similarities and contrasts between English and the Lubuklinggau dialect.

RESEARCH RESULT

FINDINGS

The results show some differences of sentence structure in English and Lubuklinggau dialect.

Syntactic Features in English and Lubuklinggau Dialect

Syntactic Feature	English	Lubuklinggau Dialect
Copular Usage	Explicit ("is", "are")	Often omitted or implied
Verb Tense	Morphologically marked (e.g., "took")	Unmarked; uses aspectual particles (e.g., "lah", "belum")
Word Order (Declaratives)	Subject + Verb + Object (SVO)	Flexible, often topic-comment
Interrogative Structure	Wh-fronting + auxiliary inversion	Linear word order; no inversion
Auxiliary Use in Questions	Required (e.g., "do", "would")	Absent; modality shown by "nak" or aspect particles
Focus Structure	Lexical (e.g., "only")	Demonstrative or fronted focus (e.g., "cak itulah")
Clause Embedding	Frequently used (e.g., "what our role entails")	Rare; prefers simpler or juxtaposed clauses
Sentence-Final Particles	Rare in standard English syntax	Common to mark aspect or interrogativity ("belum")

Declarative Sentences

a. Sentence Structure and Copular Usage

The two sentences bellow were taken from English sentence and Lubuklinggau sentence in the movie.

English: “This is precisely what our role entails.”

Lubuklinggau: “*Nah , mak makan siangnyo.*” (Mom, this is your lunch)

The English sentence uses a copular construction (Subject + BE + Complement), with “is” linking the subject “This” to the predicate. It also contains a cleft-like embedded clause (“what our role entails”). In contrast, the Lubuklinggau sentence lacks an overt copula and follows a topic-comment structure, with “Nah mak” (topic) followed by “makan siangnyo” (comment), forming a looser syntactic unit. This reflects a non-configurational structure, which is more flexible in word order.

b. Past Tense vs. Aspect Particle

English: “We took a test.”

Lubuklinggau: “*Lah kenyang mak, Mel.*” (I am full, Mom)

The English sentence uses the simple past tense (“took”) to indicate a completed action, following the Subject + Verb + Object structure. Lubuklinggau lacks morphological tense markers and instead uses the aspectual particle “lah” to indicate completion. The structure follows a Subject (“mak”) + Adjective/Verb (“kenyang”) + Vocative (“Mel”), indicating a different ordering and a reliance on aspect particles rather than verb conjugation.

c. Restrictive Modifier vs. Demonstrative Construction

English : “Only her response is acceptable.”

Lubuklinggau : “*Cak itulah belajar rajin.*” (You suppose to study hard like this)

The English sentence features a subject + predicate structure with restrictive focus marked by “only,” and uses a linking verb “is” to connect the subject to an adjectival complement.

In Lubuklinggau, “Cak itulah” functions syntactically as a demonstrative-focus expression, followed by a phrase “belajar rajin” (study hard), without any overt copula. The structure places the focused element in front, serving as a syntactic topic.

2. Interrogative Sentences

a. Wh-Fronting with Auxiliary Inversion vs. Linear Modal Structure

English : “How would you like to address this?”

Lubuklinggau : “Cak mano kito nak makan?” (How will we eat?)

English uses Wh-movement with auxiliary inversion: Wh-word (How) + auxiliary (would) + subject (you) + verb (like). Lubuklinggau follows a linear word order: How (*Cak mano*) + subject (*kito*) + aux (*nak*) + verb (*makan*), without subject-auxiliary inversion. The modal “nak” marks intention syntactically, similar to a future marker.

b. Fragmented Prepositional Question vs. Declarative Word Order

English : “What for?”

Lubuklinggau : “*Kenyang dari mano?*” (I am not full (impossible!))

English presents a truncated Wh-question using a preposition at the end, which is syntactically acceptable in informal registers. The Lubuklinggau counterpart maintains declarative word order: predicate (*Kenyang*) + prepositional phrase (*dari mano?*). There is no syntactic inversion or interrogative auxiliary; the question form is expressed through direct juxtaposition.

c. Embedded Interrogative vs. Yes/No Question with Final Particle

English : “Do you realize what doesn’t function?”

Lubuklinggau : “*Mak, dem minum obat belum?*” (Mom, did you take your medicine?)

English uses a main clause with an embedded interrogative clause, marked by auxiliary “do” and relative clause structure “what doesn’t function.” In Lubuklinggau, the syntax is a simple declarative structure: Subject (*Mak*) + aux (*dem*) + verb phrase (*minum obat*) + aspectual particle (*belum?*) indicating a yes/no question. The interrogative force is syntactically carried by the final particle, not word order.

Discussion

The syntactic comparison between English and Lubuklinggau reveals significant structural divergence, particularly in areas such as word order, tense marking, interrogative formation, and the use of particles. These differences reflect underlying typological distinctions between configurational and non-configurational language structures.

1. Sentence Structure and Word Order

English conforms to a strict SVO (Subject–Verb–Object) order and relies on clearly demarcated clause boundaries. This aligns with the characteristics of a configurational language, where syntactic roles are clearly encoded through position and function words (Chomsky, 1981). For instance, English declarative sentences such as “*We took a test*” follow a linear and rule-governed structure where the verb tense and argument positions are fixed.

Conversely, Lubuklinggau displays a flexible sentence structure, often featuring topic-comment organization rather than rigid SVO order. In the example “*Nah mak makan siangnya*”, the particle “nah” and the topic “mak” precede the predicate, which suggests that Lubuklinggau may function more as a non-configurational language, in line with Mithun’s (1987) typology of Philippine-type or Austronesian languages. This flexibility supports Halliday’s (1994) Theme-Rheme concept, where the “theme” (topic) can be placed initially regardless of grammatical function.

2. Tense and Aspect Marking

English uses morphosyntactic tense marking, such as past tense inflection (e.g., *took* in “We took a test”). Tense is grammatically obligatory and overt in English verbal morphology, following traditional descriptions of tense-aspect systems in Indo-European languages (Van Hout, 2016).

In contrast, Lubuklinggau lacks overt tense morphology and relies instead on aspectual or modal particles, such as *lah* (completed aspect) and *belum* (negation of completion), as seen in “*Lah kenyang mak, Mel*”. These particles align with Ascer and Lascarides (2022) notion of discourse-pragmatic aspect, where temporal meaning is inferred from context and marked outside the verb phrase.

In Lubuklinggau dialect, there is no change toward the use of a verb as a time marker. As explained previously, for example, in English to explain the future time an auxiliary verb is used. For example, in “I will go”, ‘will’ is used to mark the future time. In Lubuklinggau dialect, there is also the future time marker e.g. ‘nak’. For example in “Nak kemano?” (where will you go?), ‘nak’ functions to explain the future time ‘will’.

This syntactic behavior is consistent with what Bybee, Perkins, and Pagliuca (1994) describe in grammaticalization theory: aspect markers often evolve from lexical or discourse particles, particularly in Southeast Asian languages.

3. Interrogative Sentence Formation

English forms interrogatives using subject–auxiliary inversion and Wh-fronting (e.g., “*How would you like to address this?*”). This syntactic inversion is a defining trait of interrogative structures in English grammar, as described in transformational grammar (Radford, 2004).

Lubuklinggau Malay, however, employs a non-inverted structure in Wh-questions, typically following the word order: *How + subject + auxiliary/modal + verb* (e.g., “*Cakmano kito nak makan?*”). This absence of subject-auxiliary inversion corresponds to what Barrie and Arif (2024) describe as Wh-in-situ constructions, in which the interrogative word remains in its base position rather than undergoing movement to the clause-initial position.

Additionally, yes/no questions in Lubuklinggau are marked by sentence-final particles like *belum*, which is syntactically unattested in standard English but common in Malay languages. This feature demonstrates typological proximity to Bahasa Indonesia and Malay,

which also employ final particles to indicate interrogative or aspectual function (Sneddon et al., 2010).

4. Clause Embedding and Complexity

English permits extensive clause embedding, as seen in “*Do you realize what doesn’t function?*”, where the interrogative clause functions as the object of the matrix verb. This reflects English's capacity for recursive syntactic structures (Haegeman, 1994).

Lubuklinggau generally favors simpler constructions with lower levels of embedding. In “*Mak Dem minum obat belum?*”, the syntax involves a flat structure with limited recursion. This is consistent with observations from Gil (2005), who argues that many regional languages in Indonesia exhibit syntactically simple but pragmatically rich clause structures.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the syntactic analysis reveals that Lubuklinggau uses aspectual particles, flexible word order, and simplified syntactic embedding, while English is a tense-marking, configuration-based language with significant structural complexity. These results are in line with research on linguistic typology and lend credence to the idea that syntactic encoding differs within closely related dialects as well as within language families.

These grammatical discrepancies have important ramifications for learning English as a foreign language and for interlanguage development, especially for Lubuklinggau speakers. In bilingual or multilingual educational situations, an understanding of these structural differences might enhance teaching tactics and inspire contrastive analytical models (Lado, 1957).

The research's findings, shortcomings, and strengths are presented in the conclusion section, along with any recommendations for additional research.

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