**Chapter 2**

# An Error Analysis in Students’ Personal Recount

This chapter elaborates theoretical foundation regarding this research, “An Error Analysis in Students’ Personal Recount.” As mentioned before, this research is aimed to find a sentence pattern error in students’ personal recount. Thus, in details, this chapter gives some explanation about the definition of the variables related to this research, such as: definition of syntax, sentence pattern, and definition of error analysis.



## Definition of Syntax

Grammatical knowledge is one of the aspects considered as the standard evaluation in the analysis of students making error in writing personal recount in English. According to Purpura (2004), grammatical knowledge has two related and un-separated elements, which are: grammatical form and grammatical meaning.

According to Matthews (1981) in Kreyer (2010), says that syntax is traditionally refers to branch of grammar dealing with the way in which words, with or without appropriate inflections, are arranged to show connections of meaning within the sentence. From what Matthews said, it can be concluded that syntax is a study of how the words are put together correctly to form sentences. He added that the term of syntax is from the Ancient Greek *syntaxis*, a verbal noun which literally means “arrangement” or “setting out together”. Meanwhile, Chomsky (1971) states syntax is the study of the principles and processes by which sentences are constructed in particular languages.

Baker (1989) says that syntactic investigation of a given language has as its goal the constraction of a grammar that can be viewed as a device of some sort for producing the sentences of the language under analysis. By the syntax of a language, means the body of rules that the speakers of the language follow when they combine word into sentences. Thus, when we investigate English syntax, we will be trying to determine the rules that dictate how English speakers combine words to make sentences.

According to Finegan and friends (1992) say that syntax is concerned with the arrangement of words in the hierarchical structure of sentences. If a sentence has more than one constituent structure analysis, it is ambiguous. In addition, Oxford dictionary (1997) explains that syntax, in the term of linguistic, is the way that words and phrases are put together to form sentences in a language; the rules of grammar.

Based on the definitions stated above, it can be said that syntax, which is the branch of grammar, is a set of rules how to form an appropriate or correct sentence to be meaningful and can be understood. Without it, a sentence is messed and barely to be understood.

### Syntactic Units

Syntactic unit (also called constituent) is a term in grammatical analysis for a linguistic unit which is a functional component of a larger construction. Syntactic units are explained in details as follow:

* + - * 1. Sentences

According to Roberts (1971), sentence is a group of words expressing a complete thought or a group of words that begins with a capital letter and ends with a period. Sometimes a group of words looks like a sentence but it is actually not. So the words should be carefully arranged to make sure that they became a complete sentence and they become a complete thought.

* + - * 1. Clauses

Pei and Gaynor (1980) states that a clause is a subdivision of a sentence containing a subject (argument) and predicate. It is possible to have a word that implies or refers to a predicate rather than one explicitly stated.

Clause is a group of related word containing subject and verb. There are two basic kinds of clauses, those are independent clause, a clause which could stand by itself to form a complete sentence, and dependent clause, a clause which could not stand by itself to form a complete sentence.

* + - * 1. Phrases

Phrase is a group of related words that does not include a subject and verb. There are several different kinds of phrases like, noun phrase, verb phrase, etc. According to Pei and Gaynor (1980), phrases get their grammatical characteristics according to what word occupies the head position; thus, all phrases have heads.

Understanding how they are constructed and how they function within a sentence can bolster a writer's confidence in writing sentences that are sound in structure and various in form.

* + - * 1. Words

Words are thought of as the smallest meaningful unit of [speech](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Speech" \o "Speech) that can stand by themselves. Crystal (1997) states a word is a unit which is a constituent at the [phrase](http://www-01.sil.org/linguistics/glossaryoflinguisticterms/WhatIsAPhrase.htm) level and above.

### Syntactic Categories

According to Blickford and Daly (1996):

A syntactic category is a set of words and/or phrases in a language which share a significant number of common characteristics. The classification is based on similar structure and sameness of distribution (the structural relationships between these elements and other items in a larger grammatical structure), and not on meaning. In generative grammar, a syntactic category is symbolized by a node label in a constituent structure tree.

Here are syntactic categories in details:

Noun

Brooks, Pinson and Wilson (2013) describe noun as an object/a thing, a person and a place and divide it into some categories, which are:

* Common nouns : nouns which name any category of person, place, or thing.
* Proper nouns: nouns which mention specific name of person, place, or thing.
* Compound nouns : two or more nouns that function as a single unit. Compound nouns consist of:

Individual words : *drug* *store*

Hyphenated words : *lucky*-*boy*

Combined words : *baseball*

* Collective noun : nouns which name groups of things or people.

Example: *population*, *audience*, *information*, *etc*.

Among those categories, nouns can be divided into some other varieties, they are:

* Plural nouns : noun that consist of more than one countable noun.
* Countable nouns : nouns that can use plural (additional -es/-s) as they can be counted.
* Uncountable nouns : nouns that cannot be counted one by one, neither an ‘-es/-s’ is put or not, such as: *money*, *sugar*, *homework*, *etc*.

Pronoun

Pronouns take place of nouns (Walston, 2005). These are kinds of pronouns:



Example:

* ***She*** *reads a book*. (**She** as subject).
* *I met* ***him*** *at school*. (**Him** as object).
* ***My*** *car is broken*. (**My** as possessive adjective).
* *The book is* ***hers***. (**Hers** as possessive pronoun).

Verb

According to Walston (2005), verbs denote an action or a state of being. There are two types of verbs: transitive and intransitive.

* Transitive verbs : Verbs that need to be followed by object.

Examples : “*Moses struck* ***the rock***.”

* Intransitive verbs : Verbs that are not followed by direct object.

Example : “*I will be* ***late***.” (Late is an adverb).

Among those two kinds of verbs, there are also the other kinds of verbs, they are:

* Regular verbs : Verbs that do not have a big change to make in the next pattern (verb 2, verb 3).

Example : *direct* – *directed* – *directed*.

* Irregular verbs : Verbs that have a big change to make in the next pattern (verb2, verb3).

Example : *sing* – *sang* – *sung*.

Adjective

Crystal (1997), states that an adjective is a word that belongs to a class whose members modify nouns. An adjective specifies the properties or attributes of a noun [referent](http://www-01.sil.org/linguistics/glossaryoflinguisticterms/WhatIsAReferent.htm).

* Traditionally: State (modifying), quality, atributes.
* Distributionally:
* Follows *very*
* Modifies noun (and follows determiner)
* Can take an object
* Takes derivational affixes like –*ish*
* Example: *They are very* ***annoying***.

Adverb

Crystal (1997), says that adverbial, or 'adverb', narrowly defined, is a part of speech whose members modify verbs for such categories as time, manner, place, or direction.

* Traditionally: Modifier of anything other than a noun.
* Distributionally:
* Takes –ly suffix
* Cannot appear when adjectives often appear (e.g. between determiner and noun).
* Can appear between Subject and Auxiliary.
* Example: *She****slowly****shut the door*.

Preposition

According to Crystal (1997), a preposition is an adposition that occurs before its complement.

* Traditionally: Location, space, directios.
* Distributionally:
* Take no morphology
* Can take an object
* Can be modified by *right*
* Example: Will is *right* **beside** me. (doesn’t work for of and with).

Conjunction

Crystal (1997) says that conjunction is a word that syntactically links words or larger [constituents](http://www-01.sil.org/linguistics/glossaryoflinguisticterms/WhatIsAConstituent.htm), and expresses a semantic relationship between them. There are two kinds of conjunction, those are:

* Coordinating conjunction : *and, or, but*.
* Subordinating conjunction : *because, when, unless*.

Interjection

Interjections are uncommon in formal academic writing, except in direct quotations. In brief, the interjection is an odd word because it often stands alone. Interjections express emotion or surprise. Often, they are followed by exclamation marks. Examples: *Ouch*! *Hello*! *Hurray*! *Oh no*! *Ha*!

### Syntactic Function

Crystal (1997) states that a syntactic function is the grammatical relationship of one [constituent](http://www-01.sil.org/linguistics/glossaryoflinguisticterms/WhatIsAConstituent.htm) to another within a syntactic construction.

1. Subject

Subject is the “doer” of the action in the sentences. It is typically a noun or noun phrase. The subject is a word with all modifiers the name of person, place, thing or about concept something said. According to Warriner (1977), the subject of a sentence is ”the part about something is being said.”

1. Verb (Predicate)

A predicate is the portion of a [clause](http://www-01.sil.org/linguistics/glossaryoflinguisticterms/WhatIsAClause.htm), excluding the [subject](http://www-01.sil.org/linguistics/glossaryoflinguisticterms/WhatIsASubject.htm), that expresses something about the subject. It is the state or the action of what the subject do or does. It is always a verb or verb phrase.

1. Object

There two kinds of object and it is typically a noun phrase:

* Direct Object : the sufferer or the result of the action.
* Indirect Object : the beneficiary of the action.

1. Complement

Complement is a description or qualification of the subject. It occurs with verbs of being as be, become, ect. (non-action verbs).

1. Adverb

Adverb shows the time, place, manner, etc., in the sentences. It is typically an adverb or adverb phrase.

## Sentence Pattern

According to Beare (2015), sentence patterns can be understood as the way [sentences](http://esl.about.com/od/writinglessonplans/a/Sentences-Worksheets.htm) are usually structured. It is important to learn the most common sentence patterns in English, as most of the sentences you will hear, write, and speak will follow these basic patterns.

### Subject + Verb (S + V)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **S** | **V** |
| * They * He * I | laugh.  works.  swam. |

### Subject + Verb + Object (S + V + O)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **S** | **V** | **O** |
| * We * She * John | play  writes  drove | the music.  a letter.  a car. |

### Subject + Verb + Complement (S + V + C)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **S** | **V** | **C** |
| * We * She * Tita | became  looks  is | a friend.  pale.  a student. |

### Subject + Verb + Indirect Object + Direct Object (S + V + IO + DO)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **S** | **V** | **IO** | **DO** |
| * He * She * Ami | gives  taught  buy | me  us  Erid | a book.  English.  a drink. |

### Subject + Verb + Object + Complement (S + V + O + C)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **S** | **V** | **O** | **C** |
| * I * We * She | left  elected  named | the door  him  it | open.  leader.  Lucky. |

## Error Analysis

In linguistics, there is a difference between mistake and error. According to Saville – Troike (2006), mistakes can still be corrected while errors cannot since they are not noticed by the doers. Besides, Savilee – Troike (2006) added that errors apparently reflect gaps in the learners’ language while the learners do not know what the accurate ones are. Even though the errors are not noticed by the doers, still, error analysis is important to know the progress in learning a second language. Corder (1967) perceives that error analysis is important either for the learners or the teacher themselves. He convinces that the error made by language learners make it easier to establish the parts that need improvement in teaching.

Corder (1981), in addition, states that there are several categories of error systems which have been developed by error analysis researchers, they are:

* + - 1. Pre-systematic

Errors happen before the learner has realized about any system for classifying items that have been learned. In this stage, the learner cannot either correct or explain the errors.

* + - 1. Systematic

Errors happen after the learner has considered a system, yet, errors constantly take place. In this stage, the learner can explain, but cannot correct the errors.

* + - 1. Post-systematic

Errors happen when the learner becomes consistent in recognizing the system. In this stage, the learner can correct and explain the errors.

Based on the three categories above, it can be concluded that errors are considered as an integral part of language process. Errors help the learners improve their competence of language learning and acquisition.