

## STUDENTS' UNDERSTANDING OF NOMINAL SENTENCE AND VERBAL SENTENCE

<sup>1</sup>Yani Lubis, <sup>2</sup>Nazila Fujianti Rambe, <sup>3</sup>Ananda Tahara, <sup>4</sup>Rahmadania Purba, <sup>5</sup>Riana

Islamic University of North Sumatera

e-mail: <sup>1</sup>Yanilubis@uinsu.ac.id, <sup>2</sup>Nazilafujianti101022@gmail.com, <sup>3</sup>anandataharaaa@gmail.com,  
<sup>4</sup>Nia373010@gmail.com, <sup>5</sup>awalahir2000@gmail.com

### ABSTRACT

*This study aims to investigate students' understanding of nominal and verbal sentences. A good understanding of this sentence types is important for strong english language skill, especially in writing and speaking. This study uses a qualitative approach to analyze students' ability to distinguish and use nominal and verbal sentences. The research findings are expected to provide an overview of the students' level of understanding. The results show that students still have difficulties in distinguishing between the two types of sentences. The most common error is the writing of the sentence. This study also aims to identify areas that require improvement in the teaching of grammar. With a better understanding of nominal and verbal sentences, students can improve their proficiency in english.*

**Keywords:** *Nominal sentence, Verbal sentence, Students' understanding, English language.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

One of the main challenges for english learners is its grammar, as pointed out by Hornby (1975: 24). This hurdle is common for students worldwide. However, there's a solution: understanding the parts of speech. These building blocks, also known as word classes are fundamental to any language. By mastering them students will find english much easier to learn. They'll be able to effortlessly recognize nouns, adjectives, adverbs, and so on in sentences.

However, it has been observed that Indonesian learners often struggle with identifying parts of speech, leading to errors in distinguishing between verbs, nouns, adjectives, and adverbs. This difficulty, in turn, affects their ability to identify nominal and verbal sentences accurately. Despite being taught nominal and verbal sentences in junior high school, some students remain unfamiliar with these concepts, despite their knowledge of various tenses used in these sentences.

During a recent teacher training session, students were quizzed on their understanding of nominal and verbal sentences. Subsequently, it was discovered that the students exhibited a limited ability to distinguish between nominal and verbal sentences and encountered difficulties in identifying them.

In a complete sentence, typically comprising a subject, predicate, and object, various components come together to form the structure. The subject encompasses a group of words within the sentence, which may include nouns, pronouns, nominal groups, gerunds, infinitives, infinitive groups, clauses, and introductory "it" and "there". It represents the entity performing the action. For example, in the sentence "He is not a teacher", "He" serves as the subject. The predicate, on the other hand, elucidates the action or description pertaining to the subject. It comprises verbs, adverbs, or adjectives. In verbal sentences, the linking verb "to be" assumes the role of the predicate (verb). For example, in the sentence "He is not a teacher, "is" functions as the predicate, and in "I will not go to

Jakarta, “go” serves as the predicate. The object denotes someone or something affected by the action of the subject and typically consists of a noun or pronoun. For example, in “Mother is cooking rice,” “rice” acts as the object.

In English, sentences are categorized into two types based on their predicates: nominal and verbal sentences. A nominal sentence features a predicate composed of an adjective, noun, numeral, or another word serving as a noun (a nominal predicate). Both nominal and verbal sentences often utilize the linking verb “to be” (such as “is”, “am”, “are”, “was”, “were”) as the predicate or auxiliary verb (such as “can”, “may”, “must”, “shall”, “will”, etc.), which requires the addition of “be” in front of the auxiliary. Verbal sentences, however, differ in this aspect. In a verbal sentence, the predicate consists solely of verbs.

According to Quirk & Greenbaum (1990: 231), sentences can be classified into four primary syntactic types:

1. Declaratives: These sentences contain a subject that precedes the verb.
2. Interrogatives: These sentences are commonly used for questioning and seeking information.
3. Imperatives: Sentences of this type typically lack a grammatical subject and feature a verb in its base form.
4. Exclamatives: These sentences begin with introductory phrases like “what” or “how” and are used to express strong emotions or impressions.

A nominal sentence refers to a sentence in which the predicate comprises a noun, adjective, numeral or another word that is not a verb and adheres to grammatical rules. As stated by Cysoo (2000: 2), nominal sentences can be categorized into three types:

1. Nominal sentences with an adjective, such as “I am busy”.
2. Nominal sentences with a noun, exemplified by “I am a teacher”.
3. Nominal sentences with an adverb of place, like “He is in the office now”.

Nominal sentences can exist in the simple present tense and are typically employed to describe ongoing or habitual actions in the present or to express general truths. However, such sentences do not necessarily include adverbs of time. Nominal sentences can be

constructed in positive, negative and interrogative forms.

- a) Positive sentence pattern: subject + to be (is, am, are) + non verb
- b) Negative sentence pattern: subject + to be (is, am, are) + not + non verb
- c) Interrogative sentence pattern: to be (is, am, are) + subject + non verb + ?

The simple past tense is used to indicate a state or action that occurred in the past or something that took place before the present moment. This tense can be used in positive, negative, and interrogative forms.

- a) Positive sentence pattern: subject + to be (was, were) + non verb + complement
- b) Negative sentence pattern: subject + to be (was, were) + not + non verb + complement
- c) Interrogative sentence pattern: to be (was, were) + subject + non verb + complement + ?

The simple future tense is used to denote an activity or action that is slated to occur in the future or to make arrangements with someone. This tense can be utilized in positive, negative, and interrogative forms.

- a) Positive sentence pattern: subject + shall/ will + be + non verb + complement
- b) Negative sentence pattern: subject + shall/ will + not + be + non verb + complement
- c) Interrogative sentence pattern: shall/ will + subject + be + non verb + complement + ?

Nominal sentences may also incorporate auxiliary verbs. An auxiliary verb is a verb that aids another verb in constructing or forming a complete sentence. Auxiliary verbs are also referred to as helping verbs, special verbs, pre-verbs, special finite verbs, or syntactical operators. These verbs include “can”, “could”, “may”, “might”, “must”, “shall”, “will”, “would”, “should”, “to be” (is, am, were, were), “do” (do, did, did), “have” (have, has, had), “need”, “dare”, and “used to”, which are occasionally employed as auxiliary verbs. In a nominal sentence, “to be” (is, am, are) transforms into “be”. The structure of a nominal sentence with an auxiliary verb follows this pattern: subject + auxiliary verb + be + non verb + complement.

A verbal sentence is characterized by its predicate being composed of a verb. When a sentence commences with “to”, it signifies an infinitive or a non finite verb. An auxiliary verb, on the other hand assists

another verb in constructing or forming a complete sentence. It can be understood as the verb positioned before the subject to convey tense, various voices and mood.

In the simple present tense, verbal sentences are employed to issue commands and requests (specifically for the second person), describe habitual actions, and state general truth. They can be constructed in positive, negative, and interrogative forms.

- a) Positive sentence pattern: subject + infinitive (V1) + -s/ -es + complement
- b) Negative sentence pattern: subject + do/ does + not + infinitive (V1) + complement
- c) Interrogative sentence pattern: do/ does + subject + infinitive (V1) + complement + ?

The simple past tense is used to indicate a state or action that occurred in the past or something that took place before the present. This tense encompasses three forms.

- a) Positive sentence pattern: subject + past verb (V2) + complement
- b) Negative sentence pattern: subject + did + not + Verb (V1) + complement
- c) Interrogative sentence pattern: did + subject + verb (V1) + complement + ?

The simple future tense is used to express activities or actions that will occur in the future.

- a) Positive sentence pattern: subject + shall/ will + infinitive (V1) + complement
- b) Negative sentence pattern: subject + shall/ will + not + infinitive (V1) + complement
- c) Interrogative sentence pattern: shall/ will + subject + infinitive (V1) + complement + ?

## 2. THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

### 2.1 NOMINAL SENTENCE

The nominal sentence is a sentence that uses the nominal (noun, adjective, adverb) as a predicate. The nominal sentence can be: noun, adjective, adverb, etc. except verb. Example:

- We are clever students.
- We are the champions.
- Mr. Joko is a doctor.

And the other components of a sentence are to be, article, noun and adjective.

- a) To Be the words “is” and “am” in the example sentence are called to be. To be is not limited to “is” and “am” and is generally used for sentences whose predicates are not verbs. The function of to be is to connect the subject and predicate in a sentence where the predicate is not a verb, in its use to be depends on the form of the subject used.

- b) Article

The article can be divided into two, namely:

- 1) Indefinite article. Used to accompany a noun in a general statement or described in an indefinite way. The general statement means the noun in question is only mentioned in general terms. For example, a book is only mentioned as a book without knowing its shape or characteristics. In Indonesian, the words “a” and “an” are interpreted depending on the noun, for example, a doctor, an apple, an egg. Now that you know the meaning, consider the difference between “a” and “an”. “a” is used in front of a singular noun whose reading begins with an inanimate letter. “an” is used in front of singular nouns whose reading begins with a vowel.

- 2) The definite article is used to describe or accompany an individual or specific noun. This means that the noun in question is already known with certain characteristics. The definite article is “the”. The word “the” is not translated into Indonesian or does not need to be interpreted.

- c) Nouns.

When viewed from its form nouns can be divided into 3, namely:

- 1) Concrete nouns are nouns that are tangible or can be sensed by our five senses divided into 4 namely:
  - Personal name nouns
  - Common nouns
  - Collective nouns
  - Material nouns

2) Abstract nouns are noun that are not tangible. For example, government, love, friendship, confidence, etc.

3) Singular and plural nouns

- Singular nouns are nouns that indicate that there is only one object, especially for objects that can be counted and generally begin with “a” and “an”.
- Plural nouns are nouns that indicate more than one object. Plural nouns are never preceded by the word “a” or “an” but instead “the” is used.

d) Adjective. An adjective is a word used to show the nature of an object. Some example of adjectives

Happy	Full	Light
sad	Empty	Little
Tired	Tall	Hungry
Right	Short	Thirsty
Crazy	Good	Rich
Funny	bad	Poor
Strong	Big	Fast
Weak	Heavy	Slow

Adjective in english sentence can be used as:

- Predicate, example: I am hungry
- Attributive, as a description of the noun, example: She is a smart student.

## 2.2. VERBAL SENTENCE

Verbal sentence is a sentence that uses the verb as a predicate. It means that the sentence must contain a verb. Verbal sentence divide into two types, they are:

1) Active Verbal Sentence

In an active verbal sentence the subject sentence doing something.

- e.g.: - He studies english twice a week  
- He studied english yesterday.

2) Passive verbal sentence

In a passive verbal sentence the subject sentence is done something. In the passive sentence the object in the active verbal sentence becomes the subject of the passive verbal sentence.

- e.g.: - English is studied by him twice aweek  
- English was studied by him yesterday

## 3. RESEARCH METHODS

### Research Context

The research was conducted at the Islamic University of North Sumatera located at Jalan Williem Iskandar Ps. V, Medan Estate, Kec. Percut Sei Tuan, Deli Serdang Regency, North Sumatera on June 3, 2024. The main purpose of this research is to understand how students, understanding of nominal sentence and verbal sentence at the Islamic University of North Sumatera.

### Research Design

This research uses qualitative research methods with a phenomenological approach. This approach allows researchers to explore participants' subjective experiences in depth, including their behaviors, perceptions, motivations and actions. The purpose of qualitative research with a phenomenological approach is to understand the meaning behind these experiences. Researchers use words and language to describe participants' experiences holistically in their natural context. According to Wijaya (2018), qualitative research like this is a way to investigate social phenomena naturally and gain a deep understanding of how people experience the world around them.

### Participants

This research involved interviews with university students. Participant recruitment process:

- 1) Researchers ask student for permission to conduct research.
- 2) This permission was requested through communication to students.
- 3) After obtaining permission, the researcher asked the students for permission to be interviewed.
- 4) This permission is requested directly from the student.
- 5) Before the interview, the researcher explain the purpose of the research and provided a questionnaire containing question to students. The goal was for students to understand the flow and question that would be asked.

Conducting interviews:

Interviews were conducted at school with the help of a voice reader app. The duration of the interview was

between 15 to 30 minutes. The interview recordings were transcribed by listening repeatedly and writing them down.

### **Data Collection Process**

Researchers conducted direct interviews with student at the Islamic University of North Sumatera Medan to understand how they understand nominal sentences and verbal sentences. This interview was conducted in a structured manner with a prepare question guide, but still gave students the opportunity to provide more detailed answers. The conversations during the interviews were recorded and then transcribed by the researcher. From the results of the transcription, the researcher then selects the important parts to be analyzed and drawn conclusions.

### **Data Analysis Technique**

The researcher used thematic content analysis to make sense of the data. In this method, data is coded and categorized into specific themes. The themes are then evaluated, connected and summarized to gain a deeper understanding (Spenser, Richtie, Ormston, O'Conner & Bernard, 2014). At the end of the interview, participants were given the opportunity to clarify the information they had provided. This included ensuring the confidentiality of their identity in this research report (Baharuddin, 2020).

## **4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Based on the research that has been carried out, it produces three themes of findings, namely: (1) Factors Affecting Students' Understanding of Nominal and Verbal Sentences; (2) Effective learning strategies to help students Understand Nominal and Verbal Sentences; (3) Resources and Tools to Assist Students in Learning Nominal and Verbal Sentences.

### **Factors Affecting Students' Understanding of Nominal and Verbal Sentences**

The author's research conducted by student of UINSU Medan shows that there are several factors that affect students' understanding of nominal and verbal sentences, among others:

- a) Basic grammar skills: A solid understanding of the basic grammar, such as sentence structure, word types and word functions, is essential for understanding nominal and verbal sentences. Students who have weaknesses in basic grammar

may have difficulty in distinguishing and using this two sentences types correctly.

- b) Learning experience: Previous learning experience with related grammatical concepts, predicate, object and complement, may affect students' understanding of nominal and verbal sentences. Students who have been exposed to these concepts before may find it easier to understand and apply them.
- c) Learning strategies: The way students learn and process information can affect their understanding of nominal and verbal sentences. Some students may learn more easily through example, while others may prefer verbal explanations or written exercises. It is important for teachers to use a variety of learning strategies to meet the needs of all students.
- d) Motivation and interest: Student motivation and interest in learning grammar can affect their understanding of nominal and verbal sentences. Students who are motivated and interested in learning grammar are likely to put more effort into understanding these concepts and be more successful in doing so.
- e) Learning environment: A positive and supportive learning environment can help students understand nominal and verbal sentences. Teachers who create a safe and open learning environment where students feel comfortable to ask questions and make mistakes can help improve student understanding.

### **Effective learning Strategies to Help Students Understand Nominal and Verbal Sentences**

Based on the author's interviews with UINSU students they stated that there are several effective strategies to help students understand nominal and verbal sentences, namely:

- 1) Provide a clear and concise explanation of the concepts of nominal and verbal sentences. Be sure to distinguish between this two types of sentences clearly and provide examples that are easy to understand.
- 2) Use a variety of teaching methods to engage students and meet their learning needs. Combine lectures, discussions, written exercises and other

activities to help students understand these concepts.

- 3) Give students plenty of opportunities to practice using nominal and verbal sentences. Ask students to write their own sentences, identify sentences in the text and correct errors in sentence usage.
- 4) Use constructive feedback to help students learn from their mistakes. Give students specific and helpful feedback on their work, and help them to understand why they made mistakes and how they can correct them.
- 5) Use resources and tools that can help students learn. There are many resources available to help students learn grammar, including textbooks, websites and apps.

### **Resources and Tools to Assist Student in Learning Nominal and Verbal Sentences**

Based on the result of research with UINSU Medan students, there are several resources and tools to assist students in learning nominal and verbal sentences, among others:

- 1) Textbooks: There are many grammar textbooks that cover nominal and verbal sentences. Choose a textbook that suits students' ability level and needs.
- 2) Websites: There are many websites that offer information and exercises on nominal and verbal sentences.
- 3) Apps: There are several apps that can help students learn grammar, including nominal and verbal sentences. Some useful apps include:
  - Duolingo
  - Memorize
  - Babble
- 4) Games and activities: There are many games and activities that can help students learn grammar in a fun and engaging way. Some examples include:
  - Crossword puzzle game
  - Scrabble game
  - Sentence Scramble game

## **5. CONCLUSIONS**

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that there are several factors, holistics and diverse approaches in learning the concepts of nominal and verbal sentences can help strengthen students'

understanding and skills in the language between them:

- 1) Diverse initial understanding: Students have varying initial understanding of the concepts of nominal and verbal sentences. Some may have a good grasp, while others may need additional guidance.
- 2) Varying skill levels: the level of skill in understanding and distinguishing between nominal and verbal sentences also varies among students. Some have a good understanding and are able to apply the concept in general language comprehension, while others may still need time to assimilate the concept.
- 3) The importance of Active Learning: Learning methods that involve students' active participation in identifying, analyzing, and creating nominal and verbal sentences may be more effective than passive approaches. This can help improve understanding and mastery of concepts.
- 4) Support and Guidance: The importance of support and guidance from lecturers or tutors can be overlooked. Students may need additional explanation, concrete examples, or practical exercises to help them deepen their understanding of nominal and verbal sentences.
- 5) Applications of concepts in communication contexts: In addition to understanding the concepts theoretically, students also need to be able to apply the concepts in real communication contexts. This involves the ability to recognize and use nominal and verbal sentences in everyday speech or in writing.
- 6) Importance of feedback: Providing constructive feedback to students on their understanding of nominal and verbal sentences can help them to continuously improve their understanding and skills in this regard.

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