

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ENGLISH COPULA AND ITS EQUIVALENCE IN INDONESIAN

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ABSTRACT

The research discusses about the kinds and structures of copula, and the similarities and differences of English copula and its equivalence in Indonesian. There are three problems which must be answered. First, the problem discusses the kinds of copula in English. Second, the problem discusses the structure of copula in English. Third, the problem discusses the similarities and differences of English copula and its equivalence in Indonesian.

*This research uses descriptive method, equivalence method and distributional method to analyze the data taken from novel Agatha Christie's *The Mysterious Mr. Quin* and *Mr. Quin yang Misterius*, Indonesian translation version by Julanda Tanti through total sampling technique.*

There are three findings of this research. They are (1) the kinds of English copulas, namely copula be and copulative verb dividing into two kinds, namely verb and linking verb; (2) the structures of English copulas dividing into three patterns, that is, (Noun+Copula+Adjective), (Noun+Copula+Adverb), and (Noun+Copula+Noun); and (3) the similarities and differences of copulas in English and its equivalence in Indonesian dividing into two kinds, that is, the similarities of English and Indonesian copulas, and the differences of English and Indonesian copulas are based on the obligation of its occurrence.

Key words: Copula, Verb, linking verb.

A. Introduction

Linguistics encompasses a number of sub-fields. An important topical division is between the study of language structure (grammar) and the study of meaning (semantics). Grammar encompasses morphology (the formation and composition of words), syntax (the rules that determine how words combine into phrases and sentences), and phonology (the study of sound systems and abstract sound units). Phonetics is a related branch of linguistics concerned with the actual properties of speech sounds (phones), non-speech sounds, and how they are produced and perceived (McMahon, 1994:9).

As the researcher studies the English copula and its equivalence in Indonesian, it means that he analyzes the structure of a sentence. Falk states that the syntactic system of a language is the set of principles that link the meaning of sentences with the form in which they are expressed. Meaning originates the mind, and syntax involves meaning as well as form, there is no way to explain how speakers of a language understand the meanings of sentences (1973:155).

Copula itself, as stated by Matthew, is regarded as a means by which a predicator which is lexically non-verbal, and grammatically uninflected for tense and other verbal categories, is assimilated to a construction in which a verb is an essential element (1987:116). In other words, a copula is a word used to link the subject of a sentence with a predicate. Therefore, in this research, the researcher analyzes the copula in English and its equivalence in Indonesian in Agatha Christie's *The Mysterious Mr. Quin* to understand more deeply about the topic.

B. Review of Related Literature

1. Syntax

The term 'syntax' is derived from the Ancient Greek *syntaxis*, a verbal noun which literally means 'arrangement' or 'setting out together'. Traditionally, it refers to the branch of grammar dealing with the ways in which words, with or without appropriate inflections, are arranged to show connections of meaning within the sentence (Matthews, 1981:1). For example,

in *it seems vital* there are connections of meaning among *it*, *seems*, and *vital* which are shown by the order of words (*it + seems + vital*, not *vital + seems + it*, or other forms) and also, in part, by inflectional agreement between the verb and pronoun (*it seems*, not *it seem*). (64/E/21).

In attempting to describe the speaker's knowledge of syntax, the simplest place to begin is with sentences and the observable aspects of their structure. Given any sentence in a language, we can note the kinds of units it contains and the basic principles of order and organization it reflects. Falk states that surface structure, which can be roughly described as those aspects of the syntax of a sentence that can be determined by investigating its written or spoken form, has constituted the basis for much of the traditional linguistic and non linguistic study of grammar (1973:143).

2. Verb

In syntax, a verb is a word (part of speech) that usually denotes an action, an occurrence, or a state of being. Opdycke states that a verb is a word or a term with which one may make an assertion in regard to action or in regard to state or condition (1963:104). In a simple way, a verb means a word that expresses action. In sentence *The officer struck the thief*, the verb *struck* denotes action and the expression itself makes an assertion in regard to action. But in *The young man was successful*, the verb *was* denotes a state or condition and the expression itself makes an assertion in regard to state or condition; there is no action indicated.

The verb is the most important part of speech. Without verbs, there can be no assertion or statement of fact and condition in a sentence; there can be only naming of action and condition. Moreover, Arrigo stated that verbs are words that usually denote an action, an occurrence, or a state of being (2004: 25).

3. Linking Verb

A linking verb is a verb of incomplete predication; it merely announces that the real predicate follows (Frank, 1972:48). The important word in the complement is usually an *adjective* (The girl is *pretty*) or a *noun* (She is a *pretty girl*). An adjective following a linking verb describes the subject of a sentence. For example in the sentence *The man looks angry*, the adjective *angry* follows *look*. It describes the subject *the man*. Here, the function of *look* is to connect the subject *the man* to a complement – in this case the adjective *angry* – which tells something about the subject; rather like saying *The man is angry*.

The more common linking verbs are *appear*, *be*, *become*, *get*, *look*, *remain*, *seem*. The verbs of perception (*feel*, *taste*, *smell*, *sound*) are also functioning as linking verbs.

The linking verbs are often subdivided by modern grammarians into *be* and all others. One of the most important differences is that, whereas the other linking verbs are followed mostly by adjectives, *be* may be followed by many types of complements:

- a. adjective : Water is *necessary*.
- b. noun : My cousin is *a student*.
- c. adverb : Mary is not *here* now.
- d. preposition phrase : The office is *on the corner*.
- e. noun clause : We are *what we eat*.
- f. infinitive phrase : We are happy *to hear about your success*.
- g. gerund phrase : *Having exercise regularly* is good for our health.

In addition to differentiating *be* from other linking verbs in the type of complements it takes, *be* is also different from all other verbs with respect to the position of adverbs used with it and with respect to its manner of forming questions and negatives. For this reason, some grammarians separate *be* from other verbs and place it in a special category all by itself (Frank, 1972:49).

In conclusion, it is just to be remembered that direct connection between subject and object, and specific relationship is almost always implied when a linking verb in any form is used.

4. Copula

A copula is a word used to link the subject of a sentence with a complement. Matthews (1987:116) regards a copula as a means by which a predicator which is lexically non-verbal, and grammatically uninflected for tense and other verbal categories, is assimilated to a construction in which a verb is an essential element.

The verb *be* in its various forms is a copula that is most commonly used, but *appear*, *become*, *seem*, are also copulative verbs, and *come*, *continue*, *feel*, *get*, *go*, *grow*, *keep*, *lie*, *look*, *prove*, *remain*, *run*, *sit*, *sound*, *stay*, *turn*, *wax* are frequently used copulatively.

A copula takes the same case after it as before it. A noun or a pronoun following a copula is variously called *predicate nominative* or *attribute complement* or *subjective complement* or *predicate noun* or *predicate pronoun*. An adjective used after a copula to describe or explain a subject is called a *predicate adjective* or *predicative adjective*.

Some examples of copulas in sentences are taken from the data:

- a. The usual goods *sound* English stock. (16/E/12)
- b. He *felt* very curious about the pair of them. (29/E/13)

In the example (a) above, the verb *sound* is not an action verb as it does not refer to an action. However, it is followed by a noun phrase *English stock* and it explains the subject *the usual goods* which means that the Englishmen are usually gentle, honest, etc. In the example (b), the verb *felt* is also not an action verb as it is followed by an adjective which explains the state of feeling of the subject.

C. Research Method

The research method applied in this study is descriptive method. Descriptive method is a way used to solve topical problem by collecting, classifying, and analyzing data (Surakhmad, 1978:132). Moreover, Azwar states that descriptive analysis aims to give a description about subject that is being researched based on the given variables from the group of researched subject and it is not intended to examine hypothesis (2001:126).

The data of the research are taken from Agatha Christie's novel *The Mysterious Mr. Quin*, English and Indonesian version by using population and total sampling. Sample is a part of population representation that will be analyzed (Hadi, 1986:76). By using sample, all of population can be represented in the analysis.

The researcher uses the equivalent method to analyze the data. Djajasudarma states that there are two methods in analyzing the data, namely equivalent method, whose determiner is the external element of language and distributional method, whose determiner is the internal element of the language itself (1993:58).

The researcher analyzes the data by 1) describing the kinds of English copulas; here distributional method with substitution technique is applied, 2) describing the structures of English copulas used in the sentences; in this phase distributional method with deletion technique is used and 3) describing the similarities and differences of English copula and its equivalence in Indonesian; to do it translation equivalent method is applied.

D. Discussion

1. Kinds of Copula

a. Be as Copula

The most common linking verb that is used in a sentence is *be* in its various forms. The example of copula within a sentence can be seen below:

Lady Cynthia *had been* quite right. (109/E/34)

In the sentence above, the copula *had been* links the subject and the complement. The sentence shows the condition of the subject (Lady Cynthia) who has been suitable as she should be.

In the sentence above, *had been* is followed by an adjective (*right*). The *be* used in the sentence above is the third type of *be* as it functions as a predicate in the past perfect tense following the auxiliary *had*.

If the copula is substituted for another copula, for example, *seem*, the sentence becomes **Lady Cynthia seemed quite right**. The sentence is grammatically correct. However, the substitution of the copula makes the meaning of the sentence change a little bit. Although the new sentence still describes the condition of the subject but it can be concluded that even the subject itself does not feel certain about his condition so far.

Another example of the use of linking verb *be* within a sentence is as follows:

He *was* at the heart of the mystery, pulling the strings, making the puppets work. (41/E/19)

In the sentence above, the linking verb *be* joins the subject *he* to the prepositional phrase *at the heart of the mystery*. The sentence above shows the position of the subject (Mr. Quin) in a certain condition. Here, the linking verb *was* is followed by a prepositional phrase (at the heart of the mystery). The *be* used in the sentence above is the second type of *be* as it functions as a predicate in the past tense.

If the linking verb *was* is substituted for another one like *appear*, the sentence becomes **He appeared at the heart of the mystery, pulling the strings, making the puppets work**. This sentence is grammatically correct and the substitution does not change the sense of the sentence. *Appear* can also mean “to be at a certain condition” or “to show up at a certain situation”.

b. Linking Verbs as Copula

As has been stated before, a linking verb is a verb of incomplete predication; it merely announces that the real predicate follows (Frank, 1972:48). When the subject of a sentence is directly linked to its object, the verb used to form that connection is a linking verb. The common linking verbs used besides *be* are *appear*, *become*, *get*, *look*, *remain*, *seem*. The verbs of perception (*feel*, *taste*, *smell*, *sound*) are linking verbs which are categorized as copula because they connect the subjects with the predicates directly.

The linking verb *appear* may exemplify the discussion intended:

There was a superficial resemblance between the men. Both *appeared tall and dark* with bronzed faces and quick eyes, but looked at more closely the resemblance vanished. (97/E/32)

In the sentence above, the linking verb *appeared* joins the subject *Both (the men)* to the complement *tall and dark* to show the appearances of the subject. If the linking verb *appeared* is substituted for the verb *were*, the sentence becomes **There was a superficial resemblance between the men. Both were tall and dark with bronzed faces and quick eyes, but looked at more closely the resemblance vanished**. Although it does not change the sense of the sentence, it shows that the appearances of the men are really alike. While in the first sentence, the linking verb *appeared* shows that the appearances between the men are not really alike.

Another common linking verb used in a sentence is *look*. The example is as follows:

‘By Jove,’ said Evesham. ‘You know, there was something almost indecently hilarious about old Derek that night. He *looked* almost drunk with happiness. And yet – I can’t quite explain what I mean – but he looked oddly defiant too.’ (61/E/20)

The verb *looked* shows the opinion of Evesham on seeing Derek who is happy. If the linking verb *looked* above is substituted for the verb *was*, the sentence becomes **‘By Jove,’ said Evesham. ‘You know, there was something almost indecently hilarious about old Derek that night. He was almost drunk with happiness. And yet – I can’t quite explain what I mean – but he looked oddly defiant too.’** This substitution does not change the sense of the sentence. It emphasizes that Derek is extremely happy.

The next common linking verb used in the sentence can be seen below:

She *seemed so very pleased* to see him. (126/E/147)

Here, the verb *seemed* expresses the condition of the subject. This linking verb means uncertainty that the subject is really happy. If the verb *seemed* is substituted for the verb *was*, the

sentence becomes **She was so very pleased to see him**. This sentence emphasizes that subject is in the happy condition.

The use of linking verb *sound* can be seen in the sentence below:

His laugh *sounded a little fatuous* to Mr. Satterthwaite. (130/E/159)

In the sentence above, the linking verb *sound* describes the perception of the expression of the subject. If the linking verb *sound* is substituted for the linking verb *was*, the sentence becomes **His laugh was a little fatuous to Mr. Satterthwaite**. It will not change the sense of the sentence except that it emphasizes the real expression of the subject.

2. The Structure of English Copula

a. Sentence Pattern Noun + Copula + Adjective

A copulative verb connects a subject with a complement which tells something about the subject. The complement in this pattern is adjective. The adjectives commonly follow the copula *be*, *seem*, *appear*, *look*, etc.

The example of the use of adjective after the copula *be* in a sentence is as follows:

Mr. Satterthwaite *was glad* that the young people had gone to bed. (2/E/11)

In the example above, the copula *was* connects the subject *Mr. Satterthwaite* with the adjective *glad*. Here, *glad* describes and shows the feeling of the subject about the situation that occurs at that time.

Below is the example of the use of adjective after the copulative verb *feel* in a sentence:

He *felt very curious* about the pair of them. (29/E/13)

The adjective *curious* in the sentence above is connected with the subject by the copulative verb *felt*. The adjective also shows the feeling of the subject about the condition of his acquaintances. Here, the adjective indicates an inherent quality as curiosity is a natural manner for everyone.

b. Sentence Pattern Noun + Copula + Adverb

The adverb may be either an adverb or a preposition phrase. The example of the use of this pattern after the copula *be* in a sentence can be seen below:

He knew instinctively when the elements of drama *were at hand*. (7/E/11)

In the sentence above, the copula *were* is followed by the adverb *at hand*. This adverb is an adverb of place regarding of the use of the word *at* as a preposition to describe the place as if the drama is put on the subject's hand.

c. Sentence Pattern Noun + Copula + Noun

In this pattern, a copula connects the subject of the sentence with a complement, which tells something about, or renames, the subject. The complement in this pattern is a noun or pronoun, and is often called the subjective complement or the predicate nominative.

The example of the use of noun following a copula *be* in a sentence can be seen below:

He *was a tall, soldierly-looking man*. (30/E/13)

The copula *was* in the sentence above is followed by a noun (*a tall, soldierly-looking man*). It joins the subject to the complement to describe the appearance of the subject physically. The noun is included into noun phrase as there are more than one adjective preceding the noun.

The example of the use of noun after the copulative verb *become* is as stated below:

She *becomes naturally and inevitably the centre of the group*. (110/E/34)

The noun phrase *the centre of the group* in the sentence above follows the copulative verb *becomes*. The copulative verb connects the subject *she* with the noun phrase *the centre of the group*. Here, the copulative verb shows the fact of the condition of the subject.

3. The Similarities and Differences of English Copula and Its Equivalence in Indonesian.

The researcher describes the similarities and differences of English copulas and its equivalence in Indonesian found in the novel. The explanation is divided into two parts; the first part is about the similarities and the second one is the differences.

a. The Similarities of English Copula and Its Equivalence in Indonesian

No	The English Copula	The Indonesian Copula
1.	The copula <i>be</i> is used in the form <i>is, am, are, was, were</i> , etc. It was Eleanor Portal. (48/E/19)	In Indonesian, there are copulas <i>adalah</i> and <i>ialah</i> as the similarities of the copula <i>be</i> in English. Itu <i>adalah</i> Eleanor Portal. (48/I/19)
2.	The copula <i>be</i> could be followed by prepositional phrase. The location of the old house <i>is</i> in the middle of town. (125/E/155)	In Indonesian, the prepositional phrases could follow the copulas <i>adalah</i> and <i>ialah</i> . Letak rumah tua itu <i>adalah</i> di tengah-tengah kota. (125/I/178)
3.	The copulative <i>verb</i> is an obligation to form a construction. He <i>looked</i> almost drunk with happiness. (60/E/20)	The copulative <i>verb</i> is also an obligation to form a construction in Indonesian. Dia <i>tampaknya</i> mabuk kepayang. (128/I/158)
4.	The copulas <i>seem, appear</i> and <i>look</i> are used in English. Everything <i>seems</i> normal and pleasant. (120/E/38)	The copulas <i>seem, appear</i> and <i>look</i> has similarities in Indonesian, such as <i>tampak</i> and <i>terlihat</i> . Segalanya terlihat wajar dan menyenangkan. (120/I/41)
5.	One of the copulas used in English is <i>feel</i> . The impulse died down and <i>felt</i> ashamed. (36/E/14)	The copula <i>rasanya</i> is used in Indonesian as the similarity of copula <i>feel</i> . Tapi kemudian bisikan hati itu lenyap dan ia <i>merasa</i> malu. (36/I/14)

b. The Differences of English Copula and Its Equivalence in Indonesian

No	The English copula	The Indonesian copula
1.	The copula <i>be</i> is obligation. He <i>was</i> a tall, soldierly-looking man. (30/E/13)	The copulas <i>ialah</i> and <i>adalah</i> are optional. Ia (<i>adalah</i>) seorang laki-laki jangkung dengan tampang tentara. (30/I/15)
2.	The form of copula is always changed based on the tense. Portal <i>looked</i> crestfallen. (67/E/22)	The form of copula is never changed. Portal <i>kelihatan</i> kecewa. (67/I/24)

E. CONCLUSION

The result of the analysis conducted shows that there are: (1) two kinds of English copulas, such as *be* as copula and *linking verb* as copula; (2) three kinds of structures of copula used in English and its equivalence in Indonesian, namely the adjective, the adverb and the noun that follows the copulas. Meanwhile, there are some adjectives, such as adjective phrase, adjective of size, adjective of opinion, possessive adjective and participial adjective. Some adverbs, such as adverb of place, adverb of time and intensifying adverb, and some nouns like noun phrase, common noun, proper noun and personal pronoun, that follows the copulas; and (3) similarities and differences of copulas. The copula *be* is an obligation in English while it is optional in Indonesian and the copulative *verb* is obligation both in English and Indonesian.

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