

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter shows about the theory that writer used in analyzing the data. Ther writer divided this chapter into two parts, first is theoretical framework that contains two theories from Janet Holmes and Andrew Radford, and the last part is related studies which contain previous studies as comparison.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The writer uses two theories in this research in order to analyze the pattern that is used by basketball commentator while giving comment on basketball match. First, the writer uses sociolinguistic theory about register especially play-by-play description by janet Holmes and then theory about syntax by Andrew Radford to analyze the syntactic pattern that consists of syntac reduction, syntactic inversion, and heavy noun modification used by NBA commentator.

2.1.1 Play-by-Play Description (Holmes, 1992)

Register theory that is used by the writer while analyzing the data is theory from Janet Holmes (1992). Holmes (1992) stated that register is a language variation tends to be associated with particular group of people or specific situations. Moreover, he also stated that register is the language of groups of people with common interests or jobs, or the language is used in situations associated with such groups. Halliday (1964) stated that the term 'register' was

first used by the linguist Thomas Bertram Reid in 1956, and brought into general currency in the 1960s by a group of linguists who wanted to distinguish between variations in language according to the "user" (defined by variables such as social background, geography, sex and age), and variations according to "use", "in the sense that each speaker has a range of varieties and choices between them at different times".

Holmes believes that when people describe a sport event, the language used is different from the language used in other context, such as the language used in news programme, talk show, and sermon. The differences can be clearly seen through the vocabulary and grammar. Registers are described for their typical lexical and grammatical characteristics: their linguistic features (Bieber & Conrad 2009). That distinctive vocabulary and grammar is usually known as play-by-play description. Play by play description is usually characterised by telegraphic grammar (Holmes, 1992). What is meant by telegraphic grammar of the sport commentaries is the features like syntactic reduction and syntactic inversion. In colour commentary, by contrast, where there is more time, nouns tend to be heavily modified (Holmes, 1992)

a. Syantactic Reduction

According to Holmes, while the sport commentaries are describing the action, they often omit the subject noun and pronoun (1992). However, syntactic reduction usually does not cause the loss of meaning and the reference of the speech is not ambiguous since the addressee can see it in the picture shown, for example "(it is a) great penetration". "It is a" is being

eliminated to make the sentence short, but listener will easily catch the meaning.

b. Syntactic inversion

Another form that is commonly used by sport commentators is syntactic inversion or inversion of word order. Sport commentators use this kind of language variety in order to emphasize the action which is done by the subject, for example is the sentence “here comes Kobe”, the subject of the sentence is located at the back because the announcer want to inform the action “come” instead of “Kobe”.

C. Heavy noun modification

Last for of pattern that usually used by sports commentator is heavy noun modification. People rather than action are the focus of interest at certain points during the sport announcers spiel. When this is the case, the subject nouns which are the focus of interest are often heavily modified both after the noun and before the noun. For example “Kobe Bryan, 30 years old, scoring 30 point for this game”.

2.1.2 Syntax (Andrew Radford, 2004)

Commentators, comment the match by having certain words order in constructing the sentences. This arrangement deals with syntactical rule of sentences. This study concerns the description which is made by commentators based on Radford’s (2005) theory about the grammatical structure. Since play-by-

play description is characterised by syntactic reduction and inversion, this study also involves theory about the two processes.

2.1.2.1 Grammatical Structure

Radford (2005) argued the grammatical structure of phrases or sentences can be represented through labelled tree diagram (an equivalent way with the traditional system labelled bracketing). Notationally, a single labelled node in a tree diagram labels each category. The following capital-letter abbreviations are the convention to inform what category the words belong to:

N = noun	V = verb
A = adjective	ADV = adverb
P = preposition	D/DET = determiner
Q = quantifier	T = Tense-marker (e.g. auxiliary/infinitival to)
C/COMP = complementiser	PRN = pronoun

(Radford, 2005, p. 57)

2.1.2.2 Syntactic Reduction

To point syntactic reduction as a term which characterises play-by-play description, proposed by Holmes (1992), Radford (2005) used the term **null constituent**. According to Radford (2005, p. 106), null constituent refers to constituent “which have grammatical and semantic features but lack phonetic features (and so are ‘silent’ or ‘inaudible’).

2.1.2.2.1 Null Subjects

Radford (2005) argued that sentences undergo omission of its counterpart (in this case is the subject) can be considered as having a null subject. English is

characterised as “a non-null-subject language” in which subjects of finite verbs are generally overt (Radford, 2005, p. 17). Based on Radford, there are three types of null subject which are possible to occur in English, namely imperative null subjects, truncated null subjects and non-finite null subjects. Referring to the convention, *PRO* is applied to refer to English non-finite clause’ null subjects whereas *pro* (called ‘little *pro*’) is designed for null subjects in a finite clause, such as in a null-subject language of Italian.

In English **imperative null subjects**, second-person expression is intrinsically the silent counterpart. For the example, pronoun *you* is intrinsically as the subject of imperative sentence *Don’t lose your nerve!* from expression *Don’t you dare lose your nerve!* can be omitted in the speech. In other words, pronoun *you* as the silent counterpart of the imperative null subjects in this sentence can be considered as having a null spellout “when it is the subject of an imperative sentence” (Radford, 2005, p. 109).

Truncated null subjects in English are undergone by sentences whose one or more beginning words are truncated (i.e. omitted). This kind of null subjects occur in certain types of style such as informal styles of spoken English and diary styles of written English. A substantial consideration toward the restriction of truncation in this case is that it is only word(s) which are located in the beginning of the sentences, allowed to be truncated. The words *are* and *you* in the sentence *Are you doing anything tonight?* can be truncated without affecting the meaning of the sentence. When those two words are in the sentence *What are you doing tonight?*, the truncation cannot be done in respect to the ungrammatical result of

sentence **What doing tonight?*. In the later example, the word *are* and *you* cannot be truncated since they are preceded by the word *what* which means that they are positioned in the middle of the sentence instead of in the initial position (compared to the first example). This example puts clearer distinction between truncation (which occur in non-null-subject language like English) and null-subject language (like Italian) in which “truncation occurs only sentence-initially (at the beginning of a sentence), but finite null (little *pro*) subjects . . . can occur in any subject position in a sentence” (Radford, 2005, p. 28). It is proposed further that “however, not all sentence-initial subjects can be truncated (e.g. we can’t truncate *He* in a sentence like *He is tired*, giving **Is tired*): the precise nature of the constraints on truncation is unclear” (Radford, 2005, p. 107).

Non-finite null subjects, as the third type of English null subjects, can be “found in non-finite clauses which don’t have an overt subject” (Radford, 2005, p. 107). This type of English null subject can be observed through sentences (a) *We would like [you to stay]* and (b) *We would like [to stay]*. Sentence (a) contains an overt subject *you* whereas sentence (b) seems to be subjectless. The subjectless infinitive clauses (as in (b)) are argued to contain a null subject (in this case is a null pronoun). The structure of both sentences can be drawn as follows:

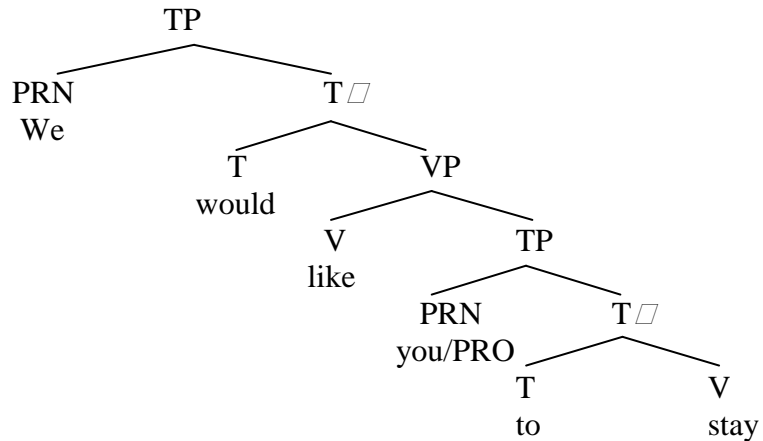


Figure 1: Non-finite null subjects sentence

$T\bar{}$ (T-bar) as appears in the structure refers to intermediate tense projection. It deals with EPP (Extended Projection Principle), a principle of Universal Grammar, in which “a finite tense constituent T must be extended into a TP projection containing a subject” (Radford, 2005, p. 73). It is explained further that having a subject for a finite auxiliary is required by EPP to form the maximal projection. Concerning the above structure, modal auxiliary *would* can be said as having two projections: by merging *would* with *like you/PRO to stay* (as its complement) forming intermediate projection and by merging the resulting *would like you/PRO to stay* ($T\bar{}$) with *we* as the subject forming maximal projection (or ‘complete TP’) of *would*. It means that the phrase has modal auxiliary *would* as the head.

Given the structure, it can be considered that both sentences ((a) and (b)) share parallel structure except the existence of pronoun *you* as the subject of (a) and a null pronoun PRO as the subject of (b). It can be interpreted that subject *we* in sentence (b) has a role as antecedent or **controller** of PRO so that bears a meaning of “We would like *ourselves* to stay” (Radford, 2005, p. 108).

2.1.2.2.2 Null Auxiliaries

Another functional category which may undergo reduction is auxiliaries. According to Radford (2005), this kind of reduction includes ellipsis, cliticisation, and null-auxiliary structure as found in African American English (AAE). In drawing the structure of the phrase, null-auxiliary is put in strikethrough which marks the unspelled-out phonetic features of the auxiliary.

Ellipsis in null auxiliaries appears in the form of abbreviation of sentence's component (words). One form of ellipsis is **gapping** which refers to:

a grammatical operation by which the head of a phrase is given a null spellout – and so has its phonetic features deleted – when the same item occurs elsewhere within the sentence, and is so called because it leaves an apparent 'gap' in the phrase where the head would otherwise have been. (Radford, 2005, p. 112)

Gapping can be observed through the example *He could have helped her, or [she have helped him]*. First consideration is that both clauses are finite since both contain nominative subject (*he/ she*). *He* clause contains *could* as the finite modal auxiliary whereas *she* clause seems to contain no finite auxiliary constituent. *Have* in *she* phrase is an infinitive form since the finite form should be *has* as it is required by a third-person subject *she*. *She* phrase, in this case, can be observed as undergone gapping in accordance with the loss of its phonetic features ~~*could*~~ as the silent counterpart of *could*. The clause has structure as follows:

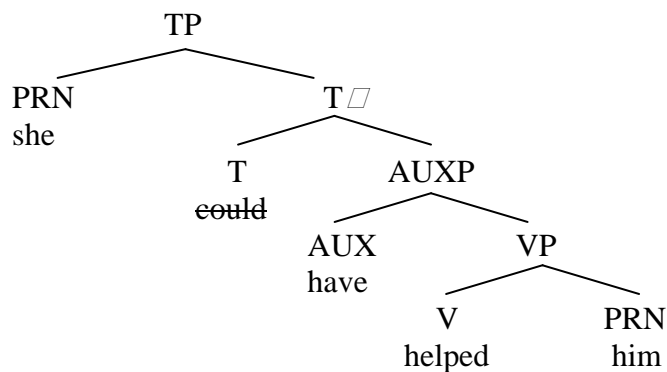


Figure 2: Null auxiliary clause (gapping)

The above structure suggests further that *have* as perfect auxiliary “is in the infinitive form: this is because ~~could~~ (being a null copy of *could*) has the same grammatical properties as *could*, and so (like *could*) requires a complement headed by a word (like *have*) in the infinitive form” (Radford, 2005, p. 112).

The second variant of null auxiliaries is **cliticisation** which refers to “a process by which one word attaches itself in a leech-like fashion to another” (Radford, 2005, p. 112). The auxiliary *have* is the focus of discussion. It can be observed through structure as in *You’ve done your duty*.

Considering the last mentioning variant of null auxiliaries, Radford (2005) assigned example of sentence *He just feel like he gettin’ cripple up from arthritis* found in AAE as having null-auxiliary structure. Furthermore, it is explained that specific forms of the auxiliary *be* in African - American English (AAE) is having null variant. It can be considered that the example clause has a null variant of the progressive auxiliary *is*. Another example is drawn through the phrase *He gonna be there* whose skeletal form is as of [_{TP}He [_{T̄}is] gonna be there] (Radford, 2005, p. 115).

2.1.2.2.3 Null T in Auxiliariless Finite Clauses

Radford (2005, p. 115) put a hypothesis that “all finite clauses are TPs headed by an (overt or null) T constituent”. For the example, a clause like *He enjoys syntax* is considered as finite clause which has no auxiliary but it contains a finite verb. It suggests that there is no silent counterpart like *could* or *is* as a specific auxiliary. It means that the clause above does not contain any auxiliary at all and the head T in the clause contains nothing. However, in accordance with the hypothesis which is mentioned earlier, a lexical item should occupy the head T position of TP. It is argued that “tensed verbs agree with their subjects in person and number, let us suppose that the tense affix . . . also carries person and number properties” (Radford, 2005, p. 117). Sentence *He enjoys syntax* has the features third-person, singular-number, present-tense which are abbreviated into [3SgPr]. The question of how the –s inflection may appear in the main verb *enjoys* can be answered by concerning that:

the relevant syntactic structure is then sent to the semantic component to be assigned a semantic interpretation, and to the PF [Phonetic Form] component to be assigned a phonetic form. In the PF component, a number of morphological and phonological operations apply. One of these morphological operations is traditionally referred to as **Affix Hopping**, and can be characterised informally as follows:

(32) **Affix Hopping**

In the PF component, an unattached tense affix is lowered onto the closest head c-commanded by the affix (provided that the lower head is a verb, since tense affixes require a verbal host to attach to). (Radford, 2005, p. 117-118)

The verb *enjoy* (as the head V of VP) is the closest head c-commanded by T in the sentence *He enjoys syntax*. Radford (2005, p. 91) proposed that c-command (constituent-command) “provides us with a useful way of determining the relative

position of two different constituents within the same tree (in particular, whether one is lower in the tree than the other or not).” The Affix Hopping operation, then, works through morphological operation in the sentence by lowering the unattached affix in T onto the verb *enjoy*. The operation can be observed through the structure below (the tense affix is abbreviated into *Tns*):

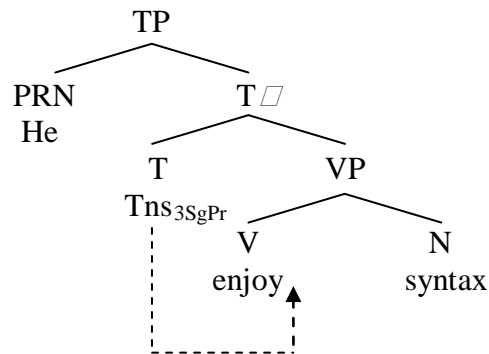


Figure 3: Affix hopping

The structure suggests that the tense affix is lowered to the end of the verb *enjoy* “since inflections in English are suffixes” (Radford, 2005, p. 118). Furthermore, the verb *enjoy* is a regular verb and it is spelled out in the form *enjoys*. In other words, the morphological operation of Affix Hopping in the PF component is lowering the abstract tense affix as the head of TP (which is *Tns_{3SgPr}*) onto the main verb.

2.1.2.3 Syntactic Inversion

Radford (2005) proposed that inversion refers to a movement of word(s) into pre-subject position in the phrase. The main focus is located in the movement of component(s) that a sentence contains. Thus, sentences which undergo inversion have expressions which are reversed.

2.2 Review of Related Studies

There are some studies that using play-by-play description as object studies. One of them is undergraduate thesis from Fahmi Na'fiah Rosmia. She focuses on syntactic pattern and intonation that is using by football commentator in English Premier League (EPL). The syntactic pattern that researched by Fahmi are syntactic reduction, syntactic inversion, and complete form. The study also analysis intonation pattern which consists of rising intonation and falling intonation.

The study about play-by-play description in sport commentary also found in study that researched by Dawid Książarczyk "*Sport Announcers Talk: A Linguistic Analysis of Basketball Broadcast.*" (2007). The study focusses on syntactic characteristics of the utterances namely simplifications, inversions, result expressions, heavy modifiers, tense usage and routines, as well as on the markers of recent/remote history, general knowledge, emotional attitude of the speaker, and juxtaposed/ intertextual elements and also the difference between the broadcast in radio and television in term of characteristics. There are three decades of basketball broadcasts analyzed in the term of the basic similarities and differences: 1979, 1992 and 2006.

The last study that connected to play-by-play description is undergraduate thesis that has been done by Mario Christian Noertjahyanto (2001). His thesis entitled *The Grammatical Structure of the Register of Football Commentators*. In his research, he analyzed the grammatical structure and also the function of certain grammatical structure used by commentator of a match of Italian Serie A

League. The grammatical structure he observed is in the term of syntactic reduction, syntactic inversion, and heavy noun modification.