



## **SYNTAX ERRORS ON THE ESSAY WRITINGS OF EXTROVERT AND INTROVERT EFL LEARNERS**

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### **Abstract**

The main purpose of this study was to investigate syntactic errors on extrovert and introvert EFL learners' essay writing. The data were collected by classification technique from 20 essay writings of EFL learners (10 extroversions and 10 introversions) in *Universitas Negeri Medan*, Indonesia. The data were analyzed by using X-Bar Theory. The findings of this study indicated that there was a difference between extrovert and introvert in the number of syntax errors. In addition, the extrovert students made 10 types of errors with quantity of 108 while the introvert students only made 8 types of errors with quantity of 60.

**Keywords:** Writing, Syntax, Extrovert and Introvert.

### **A. INTRODUCTION**

Basically, essay writing is one of the productive skills that should be mastered in using a language. Furthermore, essay writing is a language skill, which is a set of sentences formed in logical syntactic structure or the combination (Chomsky, 1957). In addition, Finch (2000) argued that languages like English deal with word order, however some other languages do form the words per se. Meanwhile, Chomsky's (1965) Universal Grammar (UG) stated that all languages share common basic features.

Moreover, "syntax is a term used for the study of rules governing the way words and combined to form sentences" (Finch, 2000: 77). Similarly, Bell (1991: 207) states "syntax is the knowledge of manipulating sentence elements in the chain and choice of the system within the proposition semantic aspect". He defines syntactic knowledge as a "matter of knowing what elements exist in a language and how they may be legitimately combined".

On the other hand, according to Brown (2001) that writing is a thinking process. It means there are processes of figuring out the meaning and putting the meaning into language. Similarly, Deporter and Heracki (2002) claimed writing is a brain activity that needs memory, accuracy, and skill to combine the words in proper language rule. On doing these activities, it is possible that extrovert and introvert EFL learners have different outcomes because extroverts act more quickly but less correctly in compound cognitive tasks such as writing, while introverts are slower but more precise (Eysenck and Eysenck, 1985). Since extrovert learners act faster than introvert, they may produce more errors in constructing the language in their writings. Therefore, this study focused



on the correlation between personality traits (extrovert and introvert) and writing skill of the EFL learners.

Extroversion and Introversion (E&I) are two extremes of the same personality dimension. This paper reviews the literature on Extroversion/Introversion as affective variables and examines the effect of these affective variables on students' writing from a text analysis perspective.

Carl Jung was the first one who introduced the extroversion/introversion concept to psychology. The extrovert is characteristically the active person who is most content when surrounded by people. The introvert, on the other hand, is normally a contemplative person who enjoys solitude and the inner life of ideas and the imagination. According to Brown (2000), extroversion is the extent to which a person has a deep-seated need to receive ego enhancement, self-esteem, and a sense of wholeness from other people as opposed to receiving that affirmation within oneself. Celce-Murcia (2001) quoted from Oxford that extroverts gain their greatest energy from the external world. They want interaction with people and have many friendships, some deep and some not. She also notes that introverts derive their energy from the internal world, seeking solitude and tending to have just a few friendships, which are often very deep.

Several studies have been carried out to investigate if E/I personality dimension plays any role in the process of language learning. Sharp (2004) claimed that there is some clear evidence that extroverts learn foreign languages better because of their willingness to interact with others and because of their reduced inhibitions. As he quoted from Ehrman and Oxford (1995), extroverts are more likely to prefer interactive role-plays and group work. Introverted personalities may not have so many friends, and have a preference for working in pairs or smaller groups. They may prefer individual activity, perhaps with one clear purpose. Working in groups may well be less successful, because of a reluctance to participate in speaking activities.

However, like so much of the work in these areas, the results of empirical research are inconclusive. Many researches tapped into the effects of extroversion/introversion character type on the performance of learners on their writings. Some of these studies investigated the effect of this character type on general writing proficiency of the learners and also on writing strategies the learner used in different types of writings. Some other studies probed into more detailed aspects of students' writings and investigated the effect of students' character type on their produced texts from a different perspective (Nowson, 2006 and Argamon, Dhawle, Koppel, & Pennebaker, 2005).

According to Chomsky (1995) stated that X-Bar Theory is to describe the structure of phrases, clauses and sentences whatever the order of language may have adopted SVO, VSO, or OVS". Furthermore, X-bar theory or X-Bar syntax is the arrangement of principles that explain how any particular constituent phrase can be structured internally (the way it is ultimately constructed will base on the head choice (Koopman, Sportiche, & Stabler, 2013). Every phrase has complements in its construction, which acts as the construction head. Consequently, X is the construction head XP. The construction head is X, the classification instantly above it is X-Bar and the classification above X-Bar is X-Double Bar. Hence, the general tree for X-Bar Theory that is called as Cross-Categorial Generalization as shown in figure 1.

Figure 1 embodies is the general rules of English X-Bar theory which is part of X-bar syntax. Notice that the labels Specifier, Adjunct, Head and Complement are functional notions, and that of these four only the Head is always obligatory. Koopman, Sportiche, & Stabler (2013) and Aarts (2001) asserted that head determines fundamental

properties of the complex. Specifier is determiner of the phrase, which appears only if the meaning of phrase requires it. Complement appears only if the head of the phrase requires their presence. Adjunct is usually modifier for verb.

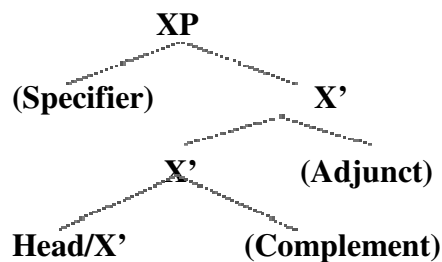


Figure 1. Cross-Categorial Generalization

The main purpose of this study was to investigate to what extent the extrovert and introvert EFL learners made the syntax errors when they wrote essay writing. Furthermore, the research questions that need to be answered in this study are formulated as below: (1) What are the kinds of syntactic errors, which extrovert EFL learners made in essay writing? (2) What are the kinds of syntactic errors, which introvert EFL learners made in essay writing?

**B. RESEARCH METHOD**

This study was conducted with 10 extrovert and 10 introvert EFL learners from English Education Study Program *Universitas Negeri Medan*, Indonesia. The ranges of their ages were between 18 and 22. Hence, the total numbers of the participants were 20 tertiary students. This research used *Eysenck Personality Questionnaires*: Eysenck’s personality questionnaire for extroversion/ introversion personality type that comprised 24 Yes/No questions. The original test contained more questions, but some of them were deleted due to the fact that they would not be appropriate in our culture. Also the questions were translated into Persian in order to avoid any possible misunderstanding. So the Persian re-standardized form of the adult EPQ (Eysenck Personality Questionnaire) was used to measure the degree of extraversion in the study. This measure is in internationally reliable instrument, which has been translated and validated in Iran (Kiany, 1997; Nikjoo, 1982).

**Table 1 Classification of Syntax Errors**

No	Break Down of Sentence	Phrases
1	Subject	Noun Phrase (NP)
2	Predicate	Verb Phrase (VP)
3	Object	Noun Phrase (NP) or Prepositional Phrase (PP)
4	Complement	Noun Phrase (NP) or Adjective Phrase (Adj P)
5	Adjunct	Adverb Phrase (Adv P), Prepositional Phrase (PP) or Noun Phrase (NP)

*Compositions test:* The students were also asked to write a composition on the topic of "how does your friend look alike?" and the produced texts were used as data sources for text analysis procedure. The procedure are (1) *Step one:* The selected homogenous

students were asked to fill up the *Eysenck Personality Questionnaires* in 15 minutes. (2) *Step two*: select 10 of the most extrovert learners and 10 of the most introvert learners to do the composition test. (3) *Step three*: The 10 essays from extrovert students and 10 essays from introverts were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively to find out the errors. The syntax errors were analyzed by using X-Bar theory. The classification of the errors is shown on table 1.

### C. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

#### 1 Syntax Errors in Extrovert EFL Learners' Writings

The kinds of syntactic errors about phrases in the extrovert group's essay writing particularly in descriptive text have been grouped and analyzed. From the five (5) phrases namely noun phrase (NP), verb phrase (VP), adjective phrase (Adj P), adverbial phrase (Adv P) and prepositional phrase (Prep P), the errors were classified to know clearly the kinds of syntax errors. Furthermore, These findings were the result of the analysis from 10 essay writings of the extrovert EFL learners that had been selected. Therefore, the data are clearly presented on the table below.

**Table 2 The kinds of syntax errors in extrovert EFL learners' essay writings**

No	Name of phrase	Kinds of Errors	Quantity
1	Noun Phrase (NP)	NP id	8
		NP Plural	4
		NP prep	3
		NP quant+singular	4
		NP word order	6
2	Verb Phrase (VP)	VP aux "be"	36
		VP aux "do"	1
		VP passive	1
		VP V form	42
3	Adjective Phrase (Adj P)	Adj P id	3
4	Adverb Phrase (Adv P)	-	-
5	Prep Phrase	-	-
Total Errors		10	108

Table 2 indicates the kinds of syntactic errors made in essay writing. There were 10 kinds of errors from three phrases that extrovert group made. In Noun Phrase (NP), there were five (5) kinds of errors indicated namely identifier, plural, preposition, quantifier plus singular, and word order and the quantity of syntactic errors were eight (8), four (4), three (3), four (4), and six (6) respectively. Then, in Verb Phrase (VP) there were four (4) kinds of syntactic errors found. From VP errors, auxiliary "be" errors reached 36 errors, V form got 42 errors and auxiliary "do" and passive only had one (1) error each. Lastly, Adjective Phrase (Adj P) had only one (3) mistakes found in extroverts EFL learners' essay writing. The error was on Adjective Phrase Identifier. However, there was no error on Adverb Phrase (Adv P) and Prepositional Phrase (Prep P). Hence, the total number of the errors were 108 errors.

Based on Table 2, VP form is the greatest one, which reached 42 errors. For example, the extroverts EFL learners wrote **"he \*have, to \*said, want \*go, her father**

**always \*to accompany, she \*wearing glasses, her eyes \*shows**” for “she has, to say, want to go, she is studying, she can make, her father always accompanies, she wears glasses, her eyes show”.

The subject “he” is singular and should be followed by singular form of VP. The singular form of “have” is “has”. And then, “to” is followed by infinitive. The infinitive verb of “said” is “say”. If the word “want” is followed by verb, the verb should be “to infinitive”. So after word “want” there is “to” before the verb “go”. “To accompany” is not a “predicate” and that clause needs a predicate. Since the subject is “her father” (singular), the predicate should be in singular form and the singular form of “accompany” is “accompanies”. Furthermore, the word “wearing” is a gerund from verb+ing and it cannot be a predicate. This clause needs a VP as a predicate. Then, the subject of this clause is “she” (singular). So, the VP should be in singular form. The singular VP form of “wearing” is “wears”. The word “eyes” is plural. So, the VP form of this should be in plural form. The plural VP of “shows” is without “s” that is only the word “show”. Therefore, these examples illustrate that extrovert did not care about the VP form. Hence, most of the problems were in the plural and singular form of VP.

The second position of the syntactic error made in essay writing by the extrovert group is VP auxiliary “be” which got 36 errors. For example, the extrovert group wrote **“we are best friend is the” and “her boy friend name Jo”** for “she cries, we are best friend which is the, her boy friend’s name is Jo”.

There are two auxiliaries and this is error form in English clause or phrase of verb. Therefore, the auxiliary “is” should be dropped out or before the auxiliary “is” should be put “which/who/etc. so, the function of it is as relative clause. The third example is there is no auxiliary. So, the suitable VP auxiliary “be’ for this clause is “is” since the subject of this clause is singular that is “her boy friend’s name (it)”.

The next commonly syntactic errors in extrovert group’s essay writings were NP identifier, which were eight (8) errors. This number is very low compared to the two kinds of errors explained previously. The examples of this NP identifier were **“very kind person and last and first daughter”** for “a very kind person and the last and the first daughter”. The first example is there is no identifier of article “a” but this phrase needs it. The second example also the extrovert EFL learners forgot or probably did not care about the article “the” as the identifier in this phrase but this article is very important in this clause.

Moreover, the other syntactic errors that extrovert group made in essay writing was NP word order, which reached six (6) errors. For example, the learners wrote, **“long hair and black, his color skin** for “ long and black hair, his skin’s color”.

These three examples are the representatives of the syntactic errors made by extrovert group. The first example has a head of NP is “hair” and the word “black” and “long” are the adjectives of the noun so that the function of both are as modifier for the noun. Hence, the position of the word “black” and “long” should be before the head that is “hair”. The second example, the head of the NP is “color”. Therefore, the position of the word “color” should be after the word “skin”.

The fewer syntactic errors that the extrovert group made in their essays are NP plural, which only reached four (4) errors, NP quantifier+singular which got only four (4) errors, NP preposition and Adj P identifier, which each got three (3) errors. For example in NP plural, the extrovert learners wrote, **“many experience”** for “many experiences”. The word “many” should be followed by plural noun. The plural form of “experience” is “experiences”. Example in NP quantifier+singular, the learners wrote, **“one of the train”** for “one of the trains”. The word “one” is quantifier and there is preposition “of”. So, after the preposition “of” the noun should be plural. The plural

form of “train” is “trains”. Example in NP preposition, the learners wrote, **“influence in me”** for “influence to me”. And the example in Adj P identifier, the students wrote, **“a very lazy”** for “very lazy”. The head is “lazy” and it is an Adjective. The word adjective does not need modifier of “a”. So, the article “a” should be dropped out from this phrase.

The above table also contains the fewest syntactic errors that the extrovert EFL learners made in their essays. They are NP Adj word class, NP identifier+singular, VP auxiliary “do” and VP passive. Each kind of errors had only one (1) error.

## 2 Syntax Errors in Introvert EFL Learners' Essay Writings

The kinds of syntactic errors in the introvert EFL learners' essay writing have been grouped in the table below.

**Table 3** *The kinds of syntax errors in introvert EFL learners' essay writings*

No	Name of phrase	Kinds of Errors	Quantity
1	Noun Phrase (NP)	NP id	2
		NP Plural	2
		NP quant+singular	7
		NP word order	4
2	Verb Phrase (VP)	VP aux “be”	21
		VP aux “do”	1
		VP V form	19
3	Adjective Phrase (Adj P)	-	-
4	Adverb Phrase (Adv P)	-	-
5	Prep Phrase	Prep P S/C function	3
Total Errors		8	60

There were eight (8) kinds of errors from three phrases that introverts group made. In Noun Phrase (NP), there were four (4) kinds of errors indicated namely identifier, plural, quantifier plus singular, and word order and the quantity of syntactic errors were one (1), two (2), two (2), seven (7) and four (4) respectively. Then, in Verb Phrase (VP) there were three (3) kinds of syntactic errors found. From VP errors, auxiliary “be” errors reached 21 errors, V form got 19 errors and auxiliary “do” only had one (1) error. Lastly, Prepositional Phrase (Prep P) there were only three (3) mistakes found in introverts EFL learners' essay writing. From the Table 3, there was no error on Adjective Phrase (Adj P) and Prepositional Adverb Phrase (Adv P). Hence, the total number of the errors were 60 errors.

Based on Table 3, there are eight (8) kinds of these errors. Based on the kinds of errors, VP form and VP aux “be” is the greatest because both reached 21 and 19 errors. For example in VP form, the introvert EFL learners wrote, **“she show” and “had to really explained”** for “she shows” and “had to really explain”.

The subject “she” is singular and should be followed by singular form of verb. The singular form of “show” is “shows”. Then, the word “had to” should be followed by infinitive form of verb. The infinitive form of “explained” is ‘explain”.

The example for VP auxiliary “be”, the introvert group wrote, **“her style like me, Lia and I was, and she is always give”** for “her style is like me, Lianad I were and she always gives”. These examples represent the kind of errors in VP auxiliary “be”.

Actually, the first example needs auxiliary “is” as the predicate but the introvert group did not put it. The second example, the NP as subject is plural and should be followed by plural form of auxiliary “be” that is “were” to replace the auxiliary “was”.

The next position of the syntactic errors made by the introvert group is NP quantifier+singular, which got seven (7) errors. For example, the introvert learners wrote, **“one of the student”** (see: INT-2 line 11) for “each my best friend, many kinds of hobbies and one of the students”. The phrase “one of” should be followed by the plural noun. The plural form of “student” is “students”.

Moreover, the other syntactic error that introvert group made in essay writing was NP word order, which reached four (4) errors. For example, the learners wrote, **“an easy going personality and friendly, State Medan University and black long hair”** for “an easy going and friendly personality, Medan State University and long black hair”. These three examples are the representatives of the syntactic errors made by introvert group.

The first example has a head of NP is “personality” and the phrase “easy going” and “friendly” are the adjectives of the noun so that the function of both are as specifier of the noun. So, the position of the phrase “easy going” and “friendly” should be before the head that is “personality”. The second example, the head of the NP is “University”. Therefore, the position of the word “Medan” and State should be before the word “university”. And then, “state” is the head of “medan”. Thus, the position of “Medan” should be before “state”. Next, in the third example the head is “hair” and “long” and “black” are the specifier. So, the position of the “hair” should be after the word “long” and “black”. And then, the rule in English syntax of NP, the quality-gradable should be before color. The word “long” is quality-gradable and “black” is color.

The fewer syntactic errors that the introvert students made in their essay writing are Prep P subject/complement function, which reached three (3) errors, NP plural and NP identifier which each of both got two (2) errors. For example, the introvert students wrote in Prep P subject/complement function **“were senior high school”** for “were in senior high school”. The learners did not put the preposition “in” but it should be put. The example in NP plural is **“two person”** for “two persons”. The word “two” is quantifier for plural and should be followed by plural form of noun. The plural form of “person” is “persons”. And then, the example in NP identifier is “a long hair” for “long hair”. The word “hair” is uncountable noun and considered as singular. Uncountable noun does not need an article “a”.

The above table also contains the fewest syntactic errors that introvert EFL learners made in essay writing. The errors were in NP adjective word class, which only reached one (1) error and in VP auxiliary “do”, which also got only one (1) error. For example, the learners wrote **“they really too”** for “they really do too”. This example needs an auxiliary “do” because it needs predicate in a clause and the suitable auxiliary is “do” since the subject is plural that is “they”. And then, the example in NP adjective word class is **“Happy, sad, discuss and hang out”**. These words are not in the same class. “Happy” and “sad” are adjective but “discuss” and “hang out” are verbs. So, this phrase is error.

#### D. DISCUSSION

On analyzing the syntactic errors on introvert EFL learners’ essay writings, the X-Bar theory was applied to classify the errors. The findings of this recent research tend to support the previous psychologist Eysenck and Eysenck (1985) who stated that introversion acts slower but more precisely in terms of linguistic forms such as syntax. In addition, the findings of this study actually are not extremely different with the

syntactic errors made by extrovert in terms of the phrases because the extrovert EFL learners made errors in Noun Phrase, Verb Phrase and Adjective Phrase, whereas introvert EFL learners made errors in Noun Phrase, Verb Phrase and Prepositional Phrase. Therefore, there were two similar kinds of the errors made by extrovert and introvert EFL learners.

However, in terms of Noun Phrase, the extrovert EFL learners made more variance errors than introvert EFL learners because extrovert made errors on Noun Phrase Prepositional and Noun Phrase id+singular while the introvert EFL learners did not make them. Furthermore, in terms of the Verb Phrase, the extrovert EFL learners made one more variance that introvert did. The extrovert EFL learners made errors on Verb Phrase Passive while it was not appeared in introvert EFL learners' essay writing. Therefore, the findings of this research exactly support the findings of the previous researchers such as Callahan (2000) and Ellis (2008) who reported that there was a positive affect on the relation of personality with the composition task in which introvert EFL learners were more accurate than extrovert EFL learners in terms of linguistics features.

The variance of the errors made by the introvert EFL learners were only slight different with the findings of previous researchers such as Mardijono (2003) and BasriD, Muhammad &Ampa (2013). However, each finding still has the differences because the way on analyzing the data was different. This recent study had one different with Mardijono's findings in his research. In this current study, the Prepositional Phrase was found as one of the errors but it was not appeared in Mardijono's analysis. However, Mardijono found Transformation Categories in his research but it was not appeared in introvert EFL learners' errors. Thus, there was a difference on the way of analyzing the data.

Moreover, there were three (7) kinds of syntactic errors, which were not found in introvert EFL learners' syntactic errors but appeared on the findings of BasriD, Muhammad &Ampa (2013) namely Adj P id, Adv P Prep, Adv P word form and NP id+singular, NP prep, VP N word class and VP passive. In linear, the variance of the syntactic errors' examples in the findings of introvert EFL learners' syntactic errors is less than the variance of syntactic errors' examples in Basri D, Muhammad &Ampa's research findings. Hence, Basri D, Muhammad &Ampa's research findings were more than these recent research findings in terms of the syntactic errors' type then in terms of the variance of syntactic errors' examples, their findings were more than these recent research findings on the introvert EFL learners' syntactic errors.

## **E. CONCLUSION**

The findings show that extrovert EFL learners made larger errors than introvert EFL learners since the number of the syntactic errors of extrovert EFL learners was twice of the syntactic errors' number made by introvert EFL learners. Even though there was a significant difference between extroversion and introversion in writing task, both of them still have an equal chance to improve their ability in learning foreign language particularly in writing skill but extrovert EFL learners must be given extra attention on syntax because they tended to be more careless and less correction in constructing the phrases in writing task.



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