

Linguistic Analysis on English Job Ads in Indonesian Newspapers

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Abstract

The present study analyses display job ads written in English found in Indonesian printed newspapers. The analysis is based on linguistic aspect especially focusing on syntax. The result reveals that the most frequently used grammatical feature is noun phrases followed by sentences. While sentences are found mostly in the beginning part of the ads, noun phrases are found in the middle or main part of the ads. There are differences in linguistic appearances and contents in the beginning, middle and end parts of the job display ads. These differences are interesting to see especially for genre-based language teaching. The study is useful for those who design ads for their companies as well as for those seeking for jobs.

Keywords: Indonesian, newspaper display job ads, linguistic analysis, syntax

1. Introduction

In Indonesia, newspapers are written in Indonesian language except Jakarta Post which is circulated mostly in the capital of Jakarta. Most Indonesian newspapers are available both online and printed. The printed newspapers are published and circulated both in Jakarta and other cities especially in the capital of each province. Those published in Jakarta are usually known as national papers because their news and issue coverage is of national scale and they are circulated and easily found in all over Indonesian area. The most famous national papers with greatest number of readers are Kompas and Republika. While, Indonesian papers which were published and circulated outside Jakarta area are usually called local papers. The most famous local papers are Pikiran Rakyat in Bandung, West Java and Jawa Post from Surabaya, East Java. Indonesian papers, like all other papers in the world, also contain advertisements which can be in a form of display, mini ads and feature.

The present research will analyse the language use and features found in the job ads written in English in Indonesian printed newspapers. The main research question has been set as a guide to carry out the research:

- What linguistic features are found in the job ads written in English in Indonesian papers?
- How are the contents expressed in the beginning, in the middle and in the end part of the job ads?

This analysis is useful for those who have a task to design a job ad as well as those who are now still seeking for employment.

Linguistic Analysis

Linguistic analysis is a scientific analysis of a language sample involving at least one of the five main branches of linguistics, which are phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics (Lapham, 2016). Hence, the analysis for the present study is focused on syntax, which is the study of structure of a language, which in this case is English as the language use in the ads under scrutiny. Some reasons for this limitation is that this analysis cannot be concentrated on phonology because the printed ads are written products. Focusing on morphology and semantics for the present analysis will be a little too narrow. While, emphasizing on pragmatics, which is the study on the social use of language for the present study will be meaningless as ads are not bounded with social classes. Linguistic analysis has been conducted by researchers on Grant Proposals: European Union Research Grants by Connor and Mauranen (2001), comparing simplified and authentic texts (Crossley, Lowerse & Maccarthy, 2007), on jokes (Ritchie, 2004) and even on the OJ Simpson trial (Cotterill, 2003). Each of the research above has its own purpose and benefits for their corresponding concerned audiences.

Connor and Mauranen (2001) conducted linguistic analysis on grant proposals and found characteristic features which are not included in most courses of academic writing, so the results of the research should benefit both genre-based teaching and the teaching of academic writing, while Crossley et al. (2007) investigates the differences between the linguistic structures of sample simplified texts and those of authentic reading texts in order to provide a better understanding of the linguistic features that comprise these text types. On the analysis of joke, the researcher found that there are verbal linguistic jokes which involve different types of ambiguities, phonetic similarities, homonyms and paronyms. These jokes generally cannot be translated into another language, as they depend on the versatility of each language.

Syntax is more than just about a sentence structure. Sentence may just consist of a subject and verb, but in both subject and verb, there are phrases and clauses. A typology of a sentence includes simple, compound, complex and compound complex. The first type, a simple sentence, consists of only one clause, but in the other three types, one sentence should have more than one clause, while a number of phrases may be unlimited. One example of syntactic analysis is on the features of English idioms by Yusifova (2013, p. 136) who found that the syntactic analyses of the idioms should not merely be carried out in the grammatical aspect; we should regard them also psychologically, paying attention to the images, domains which the idioms evoke. As in clauses, different kinds of phrases can be found in a sentence which can be noun phrase, adjective phrase and adverb phrase. The functions of each phrase can also be various. Noun phrase can function as subject, object, and compliment. Adjective and adverbial phrase function differently from noun phrases. All the findings as in the types of phrase most frequently found and their functions will be discussed further in the sections Result and Discussion, while different clauses will not be mentioned here because a clause is formed like a sentence which at least contains a subject and a verb.

Job ads in Printed Newspapers

Most newspapers in the world now are published both online and printed. Some newspapers have exactly the same contents in both versions, some may have different contents. However, both newspaper versions contain ads. In the present study, what are to be investigated are ads, especially job ads in printed newspaper in display format. There are different types of newspaper ads. Kokemuller (2016) suggests that there are three types of ads that a company usually uses to promote their products in the newspaper: display or box ads, inserts and classifieds. Display and classified ads are commonly found in ordinary newspapers, but, an insert ad may be found in some foreign newspapers. It is a full-page or postcard insert included with the distribution of a newspaper issue.

In another instance, Karthik (2016) mentions also three types of ads: classified advertisements, display advertisements and business directory. The latest, under the heading of business directory Karthik (2016) suggests that the newspapers are innovating new ways to attract advertisements and some newspapers give industrial and consumer products for advertisement. Differently from the two other writers, Antony (2016) divides the newspaper ads into classified ads, spotlight ads, business card ads, circular ads, and display ads. While circular ads is similar with insert ad as mentioned before, business card ads can be placed anywhere in the newspaper under company's order to the newspaper.

In Indonesia, there are only three types of newspaper ads which are commonly found. They are display, classified or mini ads and feature ads. Display ads usually appear in relatively large space covering from around one tenth to full page of the paper. Mini ads are written usually in around between two and five lines. Feature ads are written like an article with lots of narration added with a few pictures for illustration. Job ads are usually found in both display as well as mini ads. Unlike general ads which are written in Indonesian, many job ads are written in English although the formal language of the newspaper is written in Indonesian. This obviously tells us that the job seekers should have English skill to apply for the jobs advertised in the ads written in English. Job ads found in the classified ads in newspapers are usually very simple, compact and direct. The words are abbreviated to save the space. But job ads in display format have comprehensive contents. This type of ads is composed of beginning part, middle or main part and end part.

Previous Research Investigating or Using Job Ads

Previous research on job ad analysis research involving or using job ads have been conducted both in Indonesia and overseas. In Indonesia, many university students conducted analysis on job ads for their final projects as parts of requirement for finalizing their bachelor study. This can be seen in some university repositories which take in their final reports.

Some Indonesia scholars used job ads to investigate the profile of occupations which employers seek for their companies. Handayani (2014) examined gender based discrimination tendencies on job advertisements in Indonesia. She also examined the gender based discrimination level amongst national and multinational enterprises; and key factors which were causing gender bias on job advertisements that were published in a national newspaper. She found that Job advertisements provide a crucial function in the recruitment process, as the first information gate between employers and job seekers. Prayono (2002) investigated the requirements of jobs through his analysis on job ads in some national newspapers. He found that there were some general qualifications required by employers, such as fluently in English, both writing and speaking, and GPA at least 2.75. Special qualifications were related to technical and operational skills.

Using job ads published in Hong Kong papers and Indonesian papers, Lesmana (2005) investigated and compared how companies appreciated interpersonal communication skills both in Hong Kong and Indonesia when hiring new employees announced in the advertisements. It was found that awareness of interpersonal communication skill, in general, was fairly high in the case of Hong Kong, but not so in Indonesia. The top two professions in Hong Kong requiring this skill was public relations official (38.1%) and sale persons (32%). In the case of Indonesia, it was secretary and finance officials. Martono (2010) investigated the various forms of employment published in newspaper. The study found that jobs available were a job as office and sales staff; sex most needed in the labor market were women; more jobs required prospective workers and high school diploma graduates; field of science most needed was accounting and techniques. Most of employments were given priority to individuals who can operate the computer and master the English language.

In another country, Youngok & Rasmussen (2009) examined qualifications and skills required of professional positions involved in digital resources, services, and technologies as changing aspects in academic libraries through job ads analysis. They found that the study verified shifts in staffing needs and required qualifications with digital focus on collections, services, and technology applications in academic libraries. The results confirmed that a digital librarian is an emerging position in academic libraries. Library educational implications and further investigations to validate the results were suggested. Investigation on the effects of job advertisement characteristics on the applicant was carried out by Walker, Feild, Giles, & Bernerth (2008). The results suggested that the content of job advertisements influence the organizational attitudes of experienced job seekers more than their inexperienced counterparts.

Finally, Askehave (2014) explored the complex relationship between recruitment needs (whom to recruit) and recruitment communications (what message to communicate—and with what effect) in a Danish bank. The study revealed interesting insights into organizational recruitment tactics and provided an argument for the need to explore the relationship between recruitment needs, textual choices, gender, and career advancement. The present research is different from what the researchers above have conducted. Through the job ads advertised in the printed media, we analyse the job ads in linguistic aspect. As linguistics is broad, the emphasis of the analysis is focused on the syntax as it will be useful to help understand the contents of the ads.

2. Methodology

The present research is analysing the aspects of linguistic features of job ads written in English in Indonesian newspapers. The job ads under investigation were those which appeared in most famous and widely read papers in Indonesia both published and circulated locally and nationally. The local paper chosen was *Pikiran Rakyat* which was published in Bandung and circulated in around west Java, and it is one of the local papers with biggest number of readers. While the national newspapers chosen was *Kompas* as this newspaper has the biggest spread of all national papers. There are 50 English job ads out of 162 found in those papers which were circulated in the periods of June and July 2016. The number of job ads written in English was then counted 30.86 percent of the total job ads. This is a significantly high proportion considering that the ads appeared in newspapers using Indonesian language as a means of communication.

To begin with, those job ads were selected and separated from all the job ads collected. The English job ads were then made into clipping and given codes. For easier analysis, they were tabulated into a main large table in Microsoft Excel. They were then analysed on the basis of linguistic features found in the beginning of each ad, the middle or main part of the ad and the last part. The occurrences of the linguistic features found in each part of the ad were then counted and put into a small table to see the frequency and percentage of each occurrence. From here, we can figure out what linguistic feature is most commonly found in the job ads under investigation.

Overall, we can see that the present study was conducted using text analysis which is one of the research methods used in qualitative approach.

Job ad in the paper is one of the text types which has its own characteristics. It is not written in a narrative format, but it has a little narration in the beginning part in one or two sentences. This is especially found in display ads. In mini ads, there are individual words and compound words or phrases which represent concepts regarding job vacation or qualification and requirement related to profession. Such individual words and phrases are also found in display ad format. The present analysis will accordingly be useful as well for genre-based writing course.

3. Result and Discussion

The linguistic features, specifically the grammar, found in the present research is focused on syntactical analysis, which is based on the appearances of the sentence structure of the language used in the ads and appearances of individual phrases. A complete sentence is usually formed of at least a subject and a verb. Adverb and adjective in words or phrases can be inserted within the sentence. A phrase consists of more than two words which in job ads can stand alone, not attached to a sentence. Individual words which appear in the ads and play the roles as sub-heading such as the words *responsibilities*, *requirements*, etc. are not included in the analysis.

As can be seen from Table 1, the most frequently occurring syntactic features in the job ads is noun phrases which takes 55.81% followed by sentences which is 37.94%. They both occur most in the middle or main part of the ads. While sentences mostly occur in the beginning, the noun phrases occur most in the middle.

Table 1: Grammatical features found in English Job ads in Indonesian Newspapers

Grammatical Features	Beginning	%	Middle	%	End	%	Total	%
Noun Phrase	20	18.02	479	66.53	8	9.88	507	55.81
Sentence	83	74.77	190	26.39	73	90.12	346	37.94
Gerund			38	5.28			38	4.16
Adjective Phrase	8	07.21	13	1.81			27	2.09
Total	111	100.00	720	100.00	81	100.00	912	100.00

Gerund is a noun which is formed from verb and prefix *ing*. A gerund in a sentence can become a gerund word or gerund phrase. They both function as noun, but gerund phrase and noun phrase in the present study are differentiated because of the diverse grammatical feature. Hence, the occurrence of gerund is quite significant which is 38 or 4.16%.

Further analysis will be based on the answers to the research questions already formulated before.

Analysis on the beginning part of the job ads

The beginning part of the display job ads function as an introduction to the ads. In an essay format, it is like introductory paragraph which in the ads play the role as introducing the company while at the same time is also announcing the job vacancy. From Table 1 above, we can find that sentence dominates the grammatical features of the job ads in the beginning part of the display ads which count 74.77%, while noun phrases occur only 19.82%. This could be because the company would like to explain the purpose of advertising clearly. The sentence in the beginning part contains the introduction of the company which advertises the job vacancies as in:

Sejati Group (www.sejatigroup.com) is a diversified group of companies (www.selt.co.id, www-restocafe.com, www.sltgras.co.id, www.sejati-tech.com) which urgently seek for qualified and energetic candidates to join our winning team. (ad. 27) We are established airline company and the largest operator of Cessna Grand Caravan in Asia Pacific Region. (ad. 1) Or, the sentence only states that the company is looking for an interested applicant as in:

A prestigious Japanese company is looking for the qualified candidates, self motivated and dynamic candidates to fill the position of (ad. 28)

The position is open for local candidates (ad. 25)

From the table below, we can see that the most frequently used type of sentence is simple followed by complex and compound sentences. The compound-complex type of sentence is not used at all. However, although it is simple sentence that dominates, the type of simple sentence is often completed with compound verbs and adverbial phrase as in the example below:

Founded in 1865, Cargill is a privately held company and employs 149.000 people in 70 countries with annual revenues in excess of \$ 122 billion (ad. 9).

Table 2: Grammatical features of the Sentences found in the beginning part of display job ads

Types of sentence	Total	%
Simple	49	59
Compound	5	6
Complex	29	35
Compound complex	0	0
Total	83	100.00

The noun phrases which appear in the beginning part of the display job ads taking 18.02% inform about company names, position sought, or just announcements as in:

Susi air – company name (ad1)

General office manager – position sought (ad2)

Career opportunity – announcement (ad5)

While, the adjective phrases counting only 7.21% which appear in the beginning state about of announcement, which is actually a short form of sentence as in:

Urgently required (ad 6)

Professionals required (ad. 19)

These types of adjective phrases are also known as *past participial* which play the role grammatically as compliment in complete sentences.

Here, we can find that the grammatical features found in the display job ads are mostly in the form of sentences. They function as opening in the ads and play the role as for introducing their companies and announcing the vacancies of the jobs available in the companies. As for abridgement, the grammatical features used are in the form of noun phrases and adjective phrases.

Analysis on the middle part of the job ads

The middle part is the main part of the display job ads. It encompasses the most important contents and it usually covers the positions or jobs that the company needed and the requirements to fill up the posts.

Table 1 also shows the grammatical features of the English display job ads in Indonesian newspapers. As seen from the table, the most frequently used grammatical features in the ads is noun phrases which count more than half of the language features (66.53%) followed by sentences (26.39%).

Noun phrases that appear in the display job ads are names of positions or jobs sought, the requirements of the applicants to comply with the vacancies and responsibilities or description of jobs that the company is seeking. Here are the examples:

The positions or jobs sought are written as in:

Electrical engineer (ad 7)

Faculty of business (ad 10)

IT staff (ad. 24)

The requirements that the applicants have to fulfill are written as in:

S1/S2 degree minimum in business studies (ad 25)

Strong communication skills (ad. 34)

Gerund phrases taking 5.28% of the total describe the requirements that the applicants have to fulfill. The gerund phrases play the role as subjects in sentences as in:

Liaising with audition to ensure annual monitoring is carried out on time (ad22)

Having experience in public accounting is an advantage (ad. 27)

The responsibilities or description of jobs required are mostly written in adjective phrase forms. Here are examples:

In charge of administration duties (ad. 2)

Responsible for ensuring the stability, availability and reliability of (ad. 5)

From Table 3 below, we can see that simple sentence dominates the occurrences of complex and compound sentences counting 94.2%, 5.3% and 0.5% respectively. The compound-complex type of sentence as in the beginning part of the ad is not found here.

Many sentences in the middle part are abridged omitting the subjects in the beginning of the sentence as in:

Participate in the projects and approval process (ad. 9)

Have knowledge with taxes and reconciliation (ad. 22)

The middle part of the display job ad contains the most important information to the job applicants. The linguistic features found in part is also various especially with sentences which are put in the list of requirements.

Table 3: Grammatical features of the Sentences found in the middle part of display job ads

Types of sentence	Total	%
Simple	179	94.2
Compound	1	0.5
Complex	10	5.3
Compound complex	0	0
Total	190	100.00

Analysis on the end part of the job ads

The end part of the display ads plays the role as concluding remark. As seen from Table 1 before, the most frequently used grammatical features in the end part of display ads is sentences which count most of all of the language features (90.12%). The rest is noun clauses which count only 9.88%.

The sentences which appear in the end part of the ads describe the instructions of how to send the application. Many of them are written in 'imperative mood' as in:

Please submit your CV in English and in MS word or PDF format only (ad. 5)

Send your resume and latest CV and photo to (ad. 2)

Those sentences are written without the subject of the sentences. However, there are sentences in the end part which are written completely as in:

We offer an attractive remuneration package to the right candidate (ad. 9)

Selections will be done gradually based on professional procedures. (ad 8)

From Table 4 below, we can see that the most frequently used type of sentence is simple followed by complex and compound sentences. The compound-complex type of sentence is not used at all.

Table 4: Grammatical features of the Sentences found in the end part of display job ads

Types of sentence	Total	%
Simple	62	25
Compound	2	2.7
Complex	9	12.3
Compound complex	0	0
Total	73	100.00

Noun phrases that appear in this end part of the ads inform about the closing date and the address to send the application. In fact, the end part of the ads is not linguistically diverse and in terms of the contents, they are not various either.

4. Conclusion

Linguistic analysis in the present study is investigating the grammatical features which occur in job ads in display format from printed newspapers written in English in Indonesia. As grammar is too broad, the focus of the analysis is on the syntax which is the structure of a sentence.

A Job ad in display format is a text type which has its own characteristics. It is various in size as well as in linguistic appearance. The display job ads contain the beginning as the introductory, middle as the main content, and end as concluding part. Each has its own special characteristics.

The most grammatical feature frequently used in the present study is noun phrases followed by sentences. Both appear in the beginning and middle part, but phrases appear most in the middle part. However, looking at the linguistic occurrences in all parts of the ads, sentences have big portions in the beginning and end parts.

In the beginning part, sentence dominates the occurrences of the syntactic features. Although the type of sentence which mostly is found in the beginning part of the ad is simple, many of the sentences are equipped with noun phrases and compound verbs, so they do not look 'simple' anymore.

In the middle part, phrases are found to be the most frequently used syntactic features. Sentences are used to describe the list of requirements in the job ads. Many of them even use abridged or incomplete sentences, especially with no subjects in the beginning.

In the end part of the ads, sentence again dominates the syntactic features. Many of the sentences here use imperative mood that is meant to give instructions of how applicants deal with the ads.

Linguistic analysis covers too many aspects. The present study specifically looks at the syntactic area; however, it does not include all the syntactic aspects comprehensively. Further research is needed as in to focus on deeper analysis on noun phrases which have been found to be the most grammatical feature frequently used in the display job ads. Error analysis can also be carried out on the present study subjects under investigation as the job ads are written in English by Indonesian native speakers.

Analysis regarding what is expected by a company from their candidate workers can also be done using job ads. This can be thought-provoking as we can find the life skills, personality traits and other general skills sought after apart from English and professional skills from the analysis. This certainly will be useful for teaching academics and jobs seekers.

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