

THE ROLE OF SUBJECT COMPLEMENTS IN ENGLISH SENTENCE STRUCTURE FOR EFL LEARNERS

Thessalonica Roida Exaudy Sipahutar¹, Wardah Munawwaroh², Nania Gabriella Turnip³,
Melda Veby Ristella Munthe⁴

HKBP Nommensen University^{1,2,3,4}

thessaakunj1ace@gmail.com¹, wardahmnwwrh@gmail.com², gabriellanania2@gmail.com³,
meldavebyristellamunthe@gmail.com⁴

Abstract

Subject complements, an essential element in English grammar, serve to clarify or identify the subject of a sentence through connecting words. Although formal curricula do not always explicitly teach this concept, understanding it is crucial for constructing grammatical and meaningful sentences. The purpose of this article is to provide a theoretical explanation of the concept of subject complement, including their categories, their functions in sentences. And the differences between them and complement objects. It also discusses common learning errors and their impact on EFL learning. A literature review of various academic grammar references forms the basis of the discussion. The results indicate that subject complements play a crucial role in establishing correct sentence structure and helping learners understand the overall meaning of sentences.

Keywords: *Subject Complement, English Grammar, Sentence Structure, Complement Function, EFL Learning, Linking Verb.*

Abstrak

Pelengkap subjek, sebuah elemen penting dalam tata bahasa Inggris, berfungsi untuk memperjelas atau mengidentifikasi subjek kalimat melalui kata penghubung. Meskipun kurikulum formal tidak selalu mengajarkan konsep ini secara eksplisit, memahaminya sangat penting untuk membangun kalimat yang gramatis dan bermakna. Tujuan artikel ini adalah untuk memberikan penjelasan teoretis tentang konsep pelengkap subjek, termasuk kategorinya, fungsinya dalam kalimat, dan perbedaan antara keduanya dengan objek pelengkap. Artikel ini juga membahas kesalahan belajar umum dan dampaknya terhadap pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Asing (EFL). Tinjauan pustaka dari berbagai referensi tata bahasa akademis menjadi dasar pembahasan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pelengkap subjek memainkan peran penting dalam membangun struktur kalimat yang benar dan membantu pelajar memahami makna kalimat secara keseluruhan.

Kata Kunci: Pelengkap Subjek, Tata Bahasa Inggris, Struktur Kalimat, Fungsi Pelengkap, Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Asing (EFL), Kata Kerja Penghubung.

A. INTRODUCTION

Understanding sentence structure is crucial for learning English. Subject complements, a crucial element in English sentences, provide clear meaning and complete grammatical structures. Unfortunately, many English students, especially those studying English as a foreign language (EFL), still have difficulty distinguishing subject complements from other

elements, such as objects or adverbs.

This problem is often caused by a lack of understanding of linking verbs, which function as connectors between subjects and their complements. Furthermore, because language learning curricula do not devote sufficient attention to this element, students are unaware of the function and form of subject complements. This misunderstanding is frequently caused by a poor comprehension of linking verbs, which serve as a link between the subject and its complement. Furthermore, students may overlook this crucial grammatical function in their writing and speaking assignments because subject complements may not receive enough attention in the curricula of different educational institutions.

Enhancing knowledge of subject complements, their types, and their usage in English sentence construction is the aim of this study. It is intended that by fully comprehending these ideas, EFL students will be able to create stronger sentences and steer clear of typical sentence structure mistakes. This could therefore improve students' writing and verbal communication skills, enabling them to communicate concepts more effectively and clearly in both academic and real word settings.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

This journal was written using a literature review method, which involves collecting and analyzing data from various written sources, such as reference books, scientific journals, grammar articles, internet, and English language learning materials. The primary focus is a descriptive study to provide a theoretical overview and explanation of the complementary subject concepts understanding, so no primary or experiment data was collected.

The sources selected for the literature review were chosen based on their relevance, credibility, and usefulness in explaining the concept of subject complements in English grammar. By using a range of academic references and grammar-focused materials, the study ensures a well-rounded and comprehensive perspective.

This approach enables a thorough theoretical material of subject complements, including their forms, purposes, and importance in EFL classrooms. Furthermore, this study methodology allows for the comparison of various expert viewpoints and the identification of recurrent trends in the presentation and instruction of subject complements in various educational contexts. The results are then combined to offer insightful information that could guide curriculum creation and instructional tactics for EFL classes.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A subject complement is an element in a sentence used to supplement information about the subject. This element usually appears after a conjunction and serves to explain, identify, or describe the subject. If it is missing, the information in the sentence often feels incomplete or confusing. For example, according to Aazar (2003), the phrase "a doctor" explains who "my brother" is in the sentence "My brother is a doctor." A subject complement is a descriptive part of a predicate that does not indicate action but connects the subject with its complement.

A subject complement differs from an object. A subject complement indicates the condition or identity of the subject itself, such as feelings, status, occupation, or circumstances. However, in the sentence "She is tired," the word "tired" indicates the condition of the subject "she," and in the sentence "They are engineers," the word "they" indicates the identity of the subject "they." Some verbs commonly used in sentences with subject complements are:

Subject complements can be nouns (predicate nouns), adjectives (predicate adjectives), and pronouns. When a noun or noun phrase follows a linking verb and provides additional information about the subject, a predicate noun is used. When an adjective follows a linking verb and modifies the subject, the predicate adjective is used. However, the predicate pronoun appears when the pronoun is used as a complement, whether formal or casual. To use each form correctly in a sentence, it is crucial to understand the structure and patterns of each form.

Subject complements and object complements are different, although both function as complements. Subject complements describe the subject and appear after linking verbs such as be, seem, or become. Object complements describe the object and appear after action verbs such as make, consider, or choose. For example, in the sentence "She is a teacher," the word "a teacher" describes the object "she," while in the sentence "They elected their president," the word "president" functions as the object complement and describes the object "their." The difference between the two is greatly influenced by the position of the complement and the type of verb used.

English learners, especially EFL learners, often struggle to understand this distinction. One of the most common mistakes is not being able to distinguish subject complements from object complements, as well as choosing the wrong verb or complement form. Many students are also limited in their use of subject complement variations because they don't understand that subject complements can be nouns, adjectives, pronouns, or noun phrases. Translating directly from their native language into English without considering sentence structure and function often leads to this error.

Understanding subject complements is crucial in EFL learning because it helps students construct grammatically correct sentences. Unfortunately, neither teachers nor textbooks often emphasize this concept. Therefore, to help students understand and apply subject complements effectively in written communication, an inductive approach is recommended; this is done by providing sentence transformation exercises and various example sentences before instilling the pattern.

D. CONCLUSION

Subject complements is a component of English Grammar that is necessary for creating sentences that are accurate and understandable. By adding details that either identify or describe the subject, a subject complements completes its meaning. Linking verbs like to be (is, are, was, were), seem, become, appear, and others are usually followed by these complements. Subject complements, which serve to reaffirm or elucidate the subject's identity or situation, might be nouns, pronouns, or adjective.

Subject complements are crucial to English structure, especially those involving linking verbs. Unlike object, complement elements provide additional identity or description for the subject. Nouns, adjectives, and noun phrases are three main types. It's crucial for EFL learners to learn the role and position of subject complements. Proper teaching and the use of contextual examples can help students understand the concept and apply it more easily when making sentences.

Therefore, knowing subject complements helps students, especially EFL learners to become more confident and proficient communicators in addition to improving their grammatical accuracy. Since English is still widely used, being able to form grammatically correct sentences is crucial for both academic achievement and intercultural communication. To better assess how various teaching philosophies affect students comprehension and application of subject material, empirical classroom-based research should be in the future studies. Subject complements can be included into English language learning programs more successfully with sustained focus and appropriate instructional design.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Grammarly. (2023). Understanding Subject Complements in Grammar.

<https://www.grammarly.com/blog/grammar/subject-complement/>

Cambridge Dictionary. (n.d.). Subject complements.

<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/grammar/british-grammar/subjectcomplements>

Grammar Monster. (n.d.). Subject Complement: Explanation and Examples.

https://www.grammar-monster.com/glossary/subject_complement.htm

Betti, M. A., & Al-Bdeary, A. N. (2021). Complement and complementation. International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science (IJRISS), 5(7), 663–668.

<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/353182219>

Ahmed, N., & Eljack, N. (2020). The role of functional grammar in enhancing the communicative ability of EFL learners from teachers' perspective. International Journal of English Language and Linguistics Research, 8(6), 15–26.

<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/347959698>

Sugiharto, S. (2021). Why we should teach grammar: Insights for EFL classroom teachers. Indonesian Journal of English Language Teaching (IJELET), 16(2), 147–157.

<https://ejournal.atmajaya.ac.id/index.php/ijelt/article/view/1404>