A Functional Analysis of Inversion in English Sentences

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Abstract. *Inversion is defined as the appearance of the main verb before the subject of an utterance. Using descriptive qualitative approach, this research analyzed phenomenon of language which happens at present. The object of this research is the inversion systems in English. The sources of the data are taken from English books, papers and other resources such as TOEFL test preparation books that related to the topic. In gathering data, the researcher used two techniques namely teknik catat (noting technique) and teknik pisah (separating technique). The result of analyses showed that there are six types of inversion system in terms of forms namely; inverting the main verb to subject, inverting auxiliary verb to subject, adding the auxiliary verb preceding the subject, Inverting the adverb and the subject, Inverting the preposition and the subject, Sentence beginning with there. Meanwhile types of inverted sentence are classified into six. They are interrogative sentence, conditional sentence, statement, comparative sentence, exclamation, reporting sentence. In term of function, there are three functions of inversion namely, emphasizing the negative expression, emphasizing the time expression, and as a variation.*

Keywords. functional analysis, inversion, inversion system

Abstrak. *Inversi merupakan kemunculan verba utama sebelum subjek ujaran. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif, penelitian ini menganalisis fenomena bahasa yang terjadi saat ini terkait dengan inversi. Objek pada penelitian ini adalah sistem inversi dalam bahasa Inggris. Sumber data diambil dari buku bahasa Inggris, makalah dan sumber lain seperti buku persiapan tes TOEFL yang berhubungan dengan topik. Dalam pengumpulan data, peneliti menggunakan dua teknik yaitu teknik catat (teknik mencatat) dan teknik pisah (teknik pemisahan). Hasil analisis menunjukkan bahwa terdapat enam jenis sistem inversi ditinjau dari bentuknya yaitu; membalikkan kata kerja utama ke subjek, membalikkan kata kerja bantu ke subjek, menambahkan kata kerja bantu sebelum subjek, Membalik kata keterangan dan subjek, Membalikkan preposisi dan subjek, Kalimat dimulai dengan sana. Sedangkan jenis kalimat terbalik diklasifikasikan menjadi enam. Kalimat itu adalah kalimat tanya, kalimat bersyarat, kalimat pernyataan, kalimat pembanding, seruan, kalimat pelaporan. Dari segi fungsi, ada tiga fungsi inversi yaitu, menekankan ekspresi negatif, menekankan ekspresi waktu, dan sebagai variasi.*

Kata kunci: analisis fungsional, inversi, sistem inversi

Introduction

Every language has some of the same rules and patterns. For example, every language has a way to construct a sentence, ask a question, ot make something negative. on the other hand, almost all languages also have a uniqe was of deleviring thoughts. The same idea might might be conveyed in different way in every language. In expressing meaning, words are ordered in a particuar rules and patterens. The basic pattern of sentence begins with subject and is followed by verb as the predicate. However, sometimes this basic pattern is inverted. The sentence produced by people may begins with verb and be followed by subject. This kind of pattern is called inversion system. Every sentence which begins by verb and is followed by subject is called inversion sentence. In relation to this case, interrogative sentence is also call as inversion sentence as it begins with verb and is followed by subject. The other cases of inversion sentence are such as elliptical sentence, conditional sentence and sentence with negative expression that emphasizes on its negative expression. Inversion is a system of sentence which inverts the subject and the predicate. It may begin with verb and be followed by the subject with some exceptions or rules and purposes.

Discussing how to build a sentence cannot be separated from inversion system. According to Govindasamy and David (2002), inversion is defined as the appearance of the main verb before the subject of an utterance.it means that the element of sentence which comes first will be the second when inversion occurs. The other definition of inversion is an irregular verb placement form. An inverted sentence is one in which the subject appears after the verb. This construction causes the subject to receive more emphasis. Inversion is also called a structure in which a verb comes before its subject (Swan: 1996). This speaks the similar idea that inversion occurs when a sentence is not in regular word order where the subject begins the sentence and the verb comes after. The most frequent type of inversion in English is the subject auxiliary inversion, where an auxiliary verb changes places with its subject; this often occurs in questions, such as "'Is he reading?', where the subject 'he' is switched with the auxiliary 'is'" (Abuzer, 2017, p. 9). Inverted orders can also be observed, according to Warner (2007) with other verbs in many other contexts where particular preverbal constituents or elements precede.

As part of linguistic study, there were some previous studies conducted by researchers related to inversion analysis. The first previous study was conducted by Assaiqeli et al (2021) entitled *Inversion and word order in English: A functional perspective.* By using testing and developing the Degree of Focus Hypothesis, proposed by Huffman (1993), this study, which employed a mixed methods research design, sought to explore the communicative and semantic values of inversion; and the pragmalinguistc functions of preposing, i.e., clause-initial adjuncts, to the pragmatic process of communication. The study confirmed the Degree of Focus Hypothesis where the hypothesized notion of concentration of attention stemming from inversion was found to be applicable. The paper stressed that what triggers inversion or non-inversion is a certain communicative effect such as focus rather than a relation of formal determination where one element determines mechanically the form or appearance of another. A contribution to linguistic and educational research, the paper, therefore,

highlighted the importance of a human factor in the functioning of language and emphasized the need to break away from grammar-based teaching (traditional grammar) to discourse-based language teaching (communicative grammar) where languaging rather than language should be the focus of language teaching and learning.

The second previous study was conducted by Adnyana and Qomariana (2020). In their study, the researcher focused on Structure of English Locative Inversion. This study discussed two points of problems. The first one is locative inversion structure in sentences taken from Corpus of Contemporary American English. The other problem is the constraints of locative inversion in the English grammar. The problems are discussed based on the theory of inversion by Hewings (2005). Method used to collect the data was documentation method. The analysis was conducted using descriptive qualitative method. The result of the analysis is shown using informal method. As results, this study shows that locative inversion structure is different from canonical structures. It has a distinct feature contrasting it with canonical structure. It also has several constraints regarding subject, predicate, and salient information affecting its formation.

The third previous study related to inversion was conducted by Hanafi (2018) entitled *Syntactic Analysis of Inversion Found in Jakarta Post*. Hanafi in this study aimed to identify the kinds of inversion found in the Jakarta Post based on syntactical analysis and the contribution of the research for ELT. The objectives of this study were to find out the types of Inversion found in Jakarta Post are and what the contribution of the research for English Language Education Department Program. This research employed a qualitative research which used content analysis method which described the kind of English inversion found in The Jakarta Post (on Wednesday, July 19, 2017, it consists of twenty-four pages Vol, 35. No. 066. www.jakartapost.com). In collecting data, it based on syntactical analysis data which used the documentations including the book, journal, and other documents. As the results of the analysis, it showed that Inversion found in Jakarta Post are 11 types inversions contained 278 inversions sentences, 82 inversions adverbial before subject consist of Adverb+Noun phrase, 81 inversions used relative clause transformation contained a relative pronoun such as "who (or when or whose), which or that", 4 inversions question consist of Auxillary verb+Subject+Verb or QW+Auxillary verb+Subject+Verb, I inversion after "so" (short answers) consist of So/Neither/Nor+Auxillary verb+Subject, 4 inversions after "than" (composistion), 9 inversions with conditional clauses "if", 20 inversions using adverbial expressions place comes at the beginning of a clause, intransitive verbs are often put before their subjects, 75 inversions using reporting verbs.

The differences between this study and those previous studies are generally the objective the study. Those previous studies were focused on the types inversion in English system, while this study focused on the types, forms and the functions of inversion in English sentences. However, the data used in this study are also different from the data used by previous researchers.

This paper discusses about inversion system in English. The purposes of this paper are to describe the form, types, and functions of inversion in English sentences. The reason why the writer chooses this topic as this topic plays an important thing in producing sentences.

Methods

This research is including into descriptive qualitative research. The researcher conducted only research a phenomenon of language which happens at present without discussing the history of the language itself. The object of this research is the inversion systems in English. The sources of the data are taken from English books, papers and other resources such as TOEFLS test preparation books that related to the topic.

In gathering the data, the researchers used library method and writing technique as a continuation technique. The researchers used two techniques namely teknik catat (note-taking technique and teknik pisah (separating technique). Teknik catatis used to find the data of inversion system in English and teknik pisah (separating technique) is used to classify the inversion system into its classification, such as the forms, types and the functions of inverted sentence. The procedures of collecting data in this study were reading the text carefully, taking note to the data that are related to inversion system, and separating the data into their classification namely the types of English sentence to be inverted, the form of inverted English sentence and the function of inverting English sentence.

In analyzing data, the distributional method is implied in this study because it aim to shift linguistic analysis away from dependency on meaning, and to determine the structure of a language based on the distribution of its forms alone in this case inversion system in English sentences.The researcher describes the inversion systems in English and then classifies them into theirs classification of inversion systems. The procedures applied in analysing data were identifying the inversion systems in English, categorising inversion systems in English to their own classifications, analysing the forms of inverted sentence, the types of inverted sentence and the functions of inverted sentence, and the last the researcher draws a conclusion about inversion systems in English.

Finding and Discussion

This section describes what the researcher finds during researching standard and non Standard English varieties. The researcher finds that there are several characteristics of Standard and non-Standard English varieties, the factors forcing the speakers to use standard and non-Standard English varieties and the factors contributing standard and non-Standard English varieties.

3.1. Forms of Inverted Sentence

Based on the result of the study, the data of forms of inverted sentence are classified into six forms namely inverting the main verb to the subject, inverting the auxiliary verb to the subject, adding the auxiliary verb preceding the subject, inverting the adverb and the subject, inverting the preposition and the subject and sentence beginning with there.

3.1.1. Inverting the main verb to the subject

A predicate of sentences may have two or more verbs. One is called as auxiliary and the other one is called as ordinary. A sentence must have ordinary verb and may or may not have auxiliary verb. Inverted sentence may be in form of inverting the main or ordinary verb of the sentence to the subject. It occurs on conditional sentence type II which contain no auxiliary verb (present impossibilities). The data are as follows:

Were she a flower, I would be the beetle. (Johan, p. 22)

The sentence above is a form of inverted sentence by inverting the main verb *were* to the subject *she*. The sentence, in normal order, is actually as follows:
If she were a flower, I would be the beetle.
The form of inverted sentence above by omitting the conjunction if and replace the verb *were* preceding the subject *she*.

3.1.2. Inverting the auxiliary verb to the subject

Inverted sentence may be in form of inverting the auxiliary verb to the subject. The data are as follows:

Had it been sunny yesterday, we would have gone for a picnic. (p. 22)

The inverted sentence above is by inverting the auxiliary verb *had* preceding the subject *it*. This occurs on conditional sentence type III (past impossibilities). The sentence order is actually in form of as follows:
If it had been sunny yesterday, we would have gone for a picnic.
In inverting the sentence above, it omits the conjunction *if* and replace the auxiliary verb *had* preceding the subject it.

3.1.3. Adding the auxiliary verb preceding the subject

Inverted sentence may be by adding auxiliary verb preceding the subject. This usually happens on declarative sentence in form of elliptical construction. The data are as follows:
Not only did they go but they also stayed until the end. (Frank)
The way inverting the form of sentence above is by adding auxiliary verb *did* which precedes the subject *they*. The normal order of the sentence above is as follows:
They not only went but also stayed until the end.

3.1.4. Inverting the adverb and the subject

Inverted sentence may also be by inverting the adverb and the subject of the sentence. This occurs in a kind of sentence with absolute adverb. Absolute adverb is an adverb of sentence which the existence of which is a must. Without that absolute adverb the sentence seems no sense or incomplete. The data are as follows:

(1) In the box were several old photographs. (Frank)
(2) On the corner stood a policeman.

The way inverting the sentence above is by placing the adverb of the sentence, in the box (1) and on the corner (2), at the beginning of sentence and followed directly by the main verb. This may only happen on a sentence which the adverb cannot be omitted. The normal order of the sentence above is as follows:

Several old photographs were in the box.
The policeman stood on the corner.

3.1.5.   Inverting the preposition and the subject

Inverted sentence may also be in form of inverting the preposition (phrase) and the subject. The data are as follows:

(1)   At no time was the President aware of what was happening.
(2)   Under no circumstances can we cash cheques. (Swan, p. 288)

The way inverting the sentence above is by placing the prepositional phrase at the beginning of sentence. The phrase at no time (1) and under no circumstance (2) comes at the beginning of sentence and directly is followed by verb. The subjects, the president (1) and we (2) come after the verbs. The normal orders of the sentences above are as follows:

(1)   The president was aware of what was happening at no time.
(2)   We can cash cheques under no circumstances.

 3.1.6. Sentence beginning with there

Inverted sentence may also be in form of sentence with there as the subject. The data are as follows:

(1)   There is no basis for these complain.
(2)   There are few excuses that teachers will accept. (Frank)

The sentences above are classified as inverted sentence. This is because the form of verb either singular or plural depends on the word followed the verb. The subject of the sentence is actually the noun after the verb (to be) since the verb (to be) will be plural or singular depends on the noun comes after.

3.2.   Types of inverted sentence

Types of inverted sentence are classified into six. They are interrogative sentence, conditional sentence, statement, comparative sentence, exclamation, reporting sentence.

3.2.1.   Interrogative sentence

Interrogative sentence is also classified as inverted sentence. An interrogative sentence is a type of sentence which usually asks a question and uses a question mark. The subject of interrogative sentence typically comes after the verb or between parts of the verb. The data are as follows:

(1) Have your father and mother arrived?
(2) Where is the concert taking place? (Swan: 288)

The types of sentence above show that the verb precedes the subject. There is an inversion of verb *have* (1) and *is* (2) and the subject *father* (1) and *the concert* (2). These types of inverted sentence are called absolute inversion as the appearance of interrogative is a must-be inversion. Without inverting the verb and the subject there will be no interrogative sentence.

3.2.2. Conditional sentence

Conditional sentence is a clause constructed with *if*. Conditional sentence may also be inverted by omitting the conjunction *if*. The data are as follows:

(1) Were I superman, I would fly around the world.
(2) Had he come earlier, he could have met me.

The conjunction *if* is omitted when inversion occurs. And, the verb were (1) had (2) precedes the subject, I (1) he (2). The sentences above are actually formed as followed:

(1) If I were superman, I would fly around the world.
(2) If he had come earlier, he could have met me.

3.2.3. Statement

Statement may also appear in type of inversion. A declarative or statement sentence simply states a fact or argument, without requiring either an answer or action from the reader. The word order of declarative sentence begins with subject and followed by predicate or verb. The data are as follows:

(1) May all your wishes come true.
(2) May he rot in hell. (Swan: 288)

The type of inverted sentence above occurs when the speaker expecting a hope or a wish and it always begins with *may*. May is a kind of modal auxiliary verb. The word *may* precedes the subject your wishes (1) and he (2).

3.2.4. Comparative sentence

Comparative sentence is also classified as inversion sentence. Comparative sentence is a kind of sentence containing comparative degree. The data are as follows:
City dwellers have a higher death rate than do country people. (Swan:289)
The verb do in the sentence above exists to replace the verb have. It functions to replace have in order to no repetition the verb do comes before the subject country people.

3.2.5. Exclamation

In a rather old-fashioned literary style, inversion is sometimes found in exclamation after how and what. An exclamatory sentence, or exclamation, is simply a

more forceful version of a declarative sentence, marked at the end with an exclamation mark. The data are as follows:
    (1) How beautiful are the flowers!
    (2) What a peaceful place is Skegness! (Swan: 288)
        The subject, the flower (1) and Skegness (2), comes after the verb are (1) and is (2).

3.2.6. Reporting sentence

In story telling the subject often comes after reporting verbs like said, asked, suggested etc when these follow direct speech. The data are as follows:

    (1) 'what do you mean?' asked Henry
    (2) 'I love you', whispered Jan. (Swan: 290)

The subject of the sentences above, Henry (1) and Jan (2), comes after the reporting verb asked (1) and wishpered (2). This inversion will not occur when the subject coming after the reporting verbs is in form of pronoun. The data are as follows:
'what do you mean?' he asked.

3.3. Function of inverted sentence

In term of function, there are three functions of inversion namely, emphasizing the negative expression, emphasizing the time expression, and as a variation.

3.3.1. Emphasizing the negative expression

The first function of inverting sentence is to emphasize the negative expression of the sentence. Never, rarely, scarcely, seldom, hardly are kinds of negative words. This occurs when the speakers expect the listeners to give special attention to the negative expression mentioned. The data are as follows:

    (1) Never has the world faced so many problems.
    (2) Hardly had I arrived when trouble started. (Swan: 289)

Those two sentences above indicate that the speakers want listeners to give attention to the world hardly and never. The existence of never and hardly at the beginning sentences force the subjects, the world (1) and I (2), to be inverted to the verb has (1) and had (2). The first sentence means that the speakers emphasizes that *the world* merely never has face so many problems. The second sentence means that the subject *I* merely had hardly arrive when trouble started.

3.3.2. Emphasizing the time expression

The second function of inverting sentence is to emphasize the time expression of sentence. The data are as follows:
    (1) Only after her mother died, did she know loneliness.
    (2) Only after her death was I able to appreciate her. (Swan: 289)

The speaker emphasizes the meaning of 'only after' to the listeners on those two sentences. The main idea of those sentences is to emphasize that the subject *she* really knew loneliness after her mother died.

3.3.3. As a variation

Another function of inverting sentences is as variation of sentence. This usually happens on conditional sentences. The data are as follows:

(1)   Should I marry her, let me ask my parents first.
(2)   Had he come earlier, he could have met me.

There is no special purpose on inverting the sentences above. It is just as a variation of conditional sentence. The normal orders of those two sentences are:

(1)   If I should marry her, let me ask my parents first.
(2)   If he had come earlier, he could have met me.

Conclusion

Based on the analysis on data finding and the discussion, the researcher concluded that there are six types of inversion system in terms of forms namely; *inverting the main verb to subject, inverting auxiliary verb to subject, adding the auxiliary verb preceding the subject, Inverting the adverb and the subject, inverting the preposition and the subject, sentence beginning with there*. Meanwhile Types of inverted sentence are classified into six. They are interrogative sentence, conditional sentence, statement, comparative sentence, exclamation, reporting sentence. In term of function, there are three functions of inversion namely, emphasizing the negative expression, emphasizing the time expression, and as a variation. The result of the study is expected to provide the additional source in giving the description and information of inversion system in English sentences. Readers also will have a better understanding on how to write English sentences in inversion system. Besides, the research findings are expected to be the clues for readers to make better writings in the future.

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