

A Linguistic Analysis of Verbal Phrase Construction in *Totto-Chan: The Little Girl at the Window*

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Abstract

Nominal phrases are important elements in grammar that form sentence structures. In linguistic studies, the analysis of verb phrase construction is important to understand the author's language style and convey the meaning of a text. This study aims to identify the construction of verb phrases in the novel *Totto-Chan: The Little Girl at the Window* by Tetsuko Kuroyanagi using a linguistic approach. This research uses a qualitative descriptive method. Data were collected through text analysis on sentences containing verb phrases, the data source is the novel *Totto-Chan: The Little Girl at the Window* by Tetsuko Kuroyanagi. The data were analyzed using the documentation technique, namely by reading and identifying sentences containing verb phrases in the novel. Each verb phrase found was recorded and categorized based on its type. After the data was collected, the verb phrases were classified based on their construction. The data that has been classified is then analyzed using syntactic theory to identify the construction of verb phrases and then interpreted to understand the construction of verb phrases in building the narrative of the story. Then draw conclusions based on the findings. The research found two types of main phrase construction, namely coordinative phrases 161 data, and subordinative phrases 350 data with several types of subordinative phrases, namely subordinative verbal phrases structured Adv + V as much as 198 data, subordinative verbal phrases structured V + Adv 57 data, subordinative verbal phrases structured V + N 71 data, subordinative verbal phrases structured V + A 24 data.

Keywords: Linguistic Approach: *Totto-Chan* Novel: Verb Phrase Construction

Introduction

Phrases are an important part of syntax which examines the structure and function of language units. According to (Ulfah et al., 2022; Baiq Yulia Kurnia Wahidah, 2021) a phrase is a grammatical unit consisting of two or more words and plays a role in one of the clause functions in a sentence.

In syntax, phrases play a role in structuring and organizing words into meaningful units in sentences. Understanding phrase structure helps to recognize grammatical patterns and how words work together to form more complex meanings, thus creating effective and comprehensible sentences. The study of phrases not only deepens the understanding of grammar but also enhances the understanding of the function of language in everyday communication.

The construction of verb phrases in syntactic studies is an important aspect of understanding sentence structure and conveying meaning in language. Verb phrases, which consist of verbs as the core and other additional elements, form an important part of the sentence that determines the dynamics of events, actions, and relationships between elements in a discourse. According to (Kumiarti et al., 2022) a verbal phrase is a phrase that has a verb as a core element and functions as a predicate in a sentence. Research on the construction of verb phrases in the novel *Totto-Chan: The Little Girl at the Window* by Tetsuko Kuroyanagi is a relevant and important topic in linguistic studies. This work is not only famous as one of the novels that have a strong influence in the realm of education but is also rich in linguistic elements that can be analyzed in depth through a linguistic approach.

This study aims to identify and describe the use of verb phrase construction, namely coordinative verbal phrases, and subordinative verbal phrases contained in the novel, and add theoretical insights in the study of syntax and literary linguistics. According to (Den Dikken, 2017; Matos, 2019 and Jiménez, 2017) (Coordinative verbal phrases can connect clauses that have no dependence on each other, while subordinative verbal phrases depend on the main clause, which reflects the hierarchical relationship in syntax. The same thing is stated (Claire Blanche-Benveniste, 2007) that Coordinative and subordinative verbal phrases have different syntactic roles; coordinative phrases combine independent clauses, while

subordinative phrases introduce clauses that depend on other clauses, creating a hierarchy in the sentence structure.

Verb phrases, as one of the syntactic constructions, play an important role in revealing the meaning, function, and dynamics of the language used by the author. Understanding the patterns of verb phrases in this novel can enrich the study of syntax and provide deeper insight into the author's language style. This study is important because it helps explain how verb phrases are constructed in a literary work and how this linguistic element contributes to the overall narrative.

In linguistic studies of literary works, the construction of verb phrases is still often overlooked, even though verb phrases are an important element in shaping meaning and function in sentences. Some studies on syntactic linguistic analysis of literary works (Anderson, R., & Smith, 2022; (Park, H., & Lee, 2023) emphasize more on the study of sentence structure in general, analyzing broader morphosyntactic elements. However, focused studies on verb phrases in novels - especially translated novels - are still minimal, especially in works of fiction that are rich in narrative descriptions such as *Totto-Chan*. Research (Martine Sekali, 2011) analyzed the role of the English coordinators "AND," "BUT," and "FOR" in describing the interaction between coordinatives and subordinatives. The aim was to explore how these three coordinators not only connect syntactically equivalent clauses or phrases, but also create more complex and hierarchical shades of meaning. This research (Jiménez, 2017) aims to further differentiate between coordinative and co-subordinative clauses, and explain the features of coordination and subordination found in each. (Merle, 2020) focuses on temporal subordination and its associated syntactic characteristics aiming to provide an in-depth understanding of the syntactic aspects of temporal subordination without linking it to the use of infinitives.

Nirmala Devi J, 2022 focused on oral communication strategies in Mannan Chinnandi narratives, emphasizing the importance of verbal phrases in conveying cultural context and emotions. Research (Vries, 2005) discusses the coordinative syntactic structure, specifically the role of coordinators at the beginning of sentences, double coordination, and asymmetry between related conjunctions that describe structural relationships. Research (Kamila & Utomo, 2023; Aisyiah Syiam Octavianti et al., 2022) examined and identified coordinating verb phrases and subordinate verb phrases.

Research on the syntactic construction of syntactic verbal phrases has been widely conducted, but most of the research is still focused on the study of linguistic elements such as sentence structure in general or semantic aspects in narrative. A limitation of previous studies is the lack of in-depth exploration of verb phrase construction, especially in the context of literary works translated from Japanese to Indonesian. Meanwhile, verb phrases play a crucial role in building structure and meaning in literary texts, especially in describing actions. The novel *Totto-Chan: The Little Girl at the Window* by Tetsuko Kuroyanagi, which is famous for its strong and descriptive narrative style, has not received enough attention in linguistic studies, especially at the level of syntactic analysis related to verb phrases. A study that focuses on the construction of verb phrases in this novel can fill the gap in existing research, especially in understanding how authors use variations of verb structures.

Research Methodology

This research uses a qualitative descriptive method. The data were collected through text analysis on sentences containing verb phrases, with the data source being the novel *Totto-Chan: The Little Girl at the Window* by Tetsuko Kuroyanagi. The data were analyzed using the documentation technique, namely by reading and identifying sentences containing verb phrases in the novel. Each verb phrase found was recorded and categorized based on its type. After the data was collected, the verb phrases were classified based on their construction. The data that has been classified is then analysed using syntactic theory to identify the construction of verb phrases and then interpreted to understand the construction of verb phrases in building story narratives. Then draw conclusions based on the findings.

Findings and Discussion,

Findings

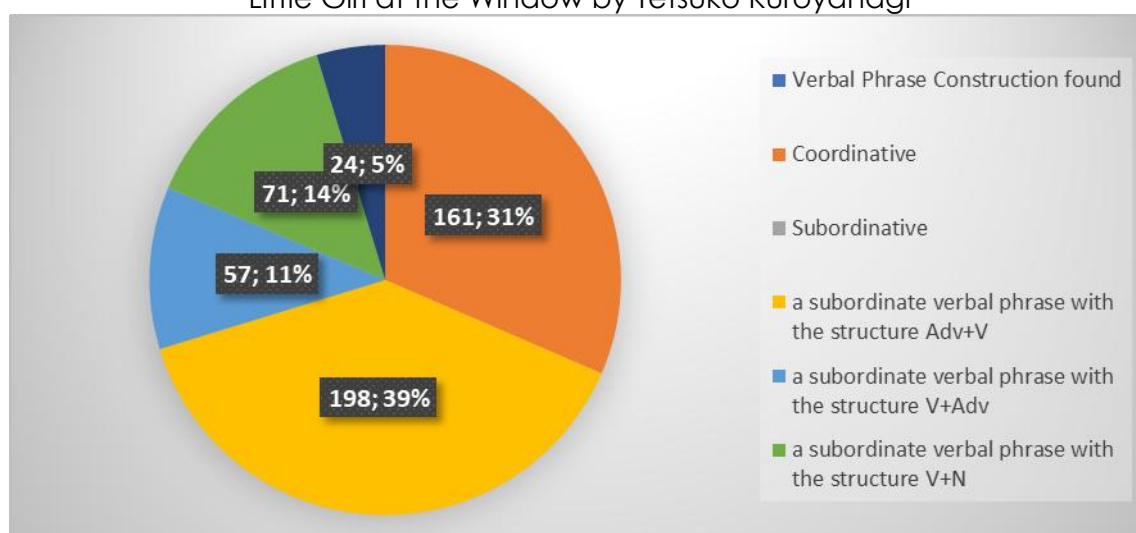
Based on data analysis, two main types of phrase construction were found, namely coordinative phrases and subordinative phrases, with a total of 511 data. Coordinative phrase construction is found as much as 161 data, subordinative phrase construction is more dominant with a total of 350 data with several types of subordinative phrases, namely subordinative verbal phrases with Adv+V structure as much as 198 data, subordinative verbal phrases with V+Adv structure as much as 57

data, subordinative verbal phrases with V+N structure as much as 71 data, subordinative verbal phrases with V+A structure as much as 24 data. Take a look at the following diagram table:

Table 1: Phrase Construction in the Novel *Totto-Chan: The Little Girl at the Window* by Tetsuko Kuroyanagi

No	Verbal Phrase Construction found	Quantity
1	Coordinative	161 Data
2	Subordinative	350
a	a subordinate verbal phrase with the structure Adv+V	198
b	a subordinate verbal phrase with the structure V+Adv	57
c	a subordinate verbal phrase with the structure V+N	71
d	a subordinate verbal phrase with the structure V+A	24
	Total	511 Data

Figure 1: The percentage of verbal phrase construction in the novel *Totto-Chan: The Little Girl at the Window* by Tetsuko Kuroyanagi



Coordinative Verbal Phrase Construction

According to Zainal Arifin dan Junaiyah (2015), Susetyo. Reni Kusmiarti (2021), Srisudarso et al. (2024) coordinative verbal phrases consist of two verb-categorized words that are relational antonym pairs, as well as two verb-categorized words from the same meaning field with the grammatical meaning of 'combining', so that between the two words the words 'and' or 'or' can be inserted. The results of the study found 161 coordinative verbal phrases. Some examples of coordinative verbal phrases are as follows:

Bending and twisting,
Sitting and reading,
Looking and asking questions,

Designed and organized,
Stunned and thinking,
Kicking and scratching,
Beaten and hurt,
Sweeping and mopping,
Opening and closing,
Ejecting and inserting

The above coordinative verbal phrases consist of relational antonym pairs and a common meaning field that can be connected by 'and' and 'or'. The phrases open and close belong to the relational antonym pair, as these two verbs are opposite to each other, with open being the opposite of close. They are relational antonyms because the action of opening is usually followed or balanced by the action of closing. Likewise, the words eject and insert these phrases are also relational antonyms. Ejecting means moving something from the inside out, while inserting is the opposite. Both actions complement each other and are necessary to express a complete course of action.

The phrase above also consists of the same meaning field category because both words are in a similar context or have a grammatical relationship that combines actions. The actions in these phrases are performed together or sequentially, the word "and unifies their meaning in one larger context. The phrases bend and twist come from the meaning field of body movements that describe changes in physical form, often performed together or in a series of movements.

The phrases sit and read, describe two activities performed simultaneously, "Sitting" is the initial action, while "reading" often follows after one sits.

The phrases see and ask come from the meaning fields related to observation and communication. After one has seen something, the action of "asking" is often the next step in the process of getting more information.

The phrases designed and organized, these two passive verbs describe processes that occur in a specific order. The action of "designing" is usually performed before something is organized, and the two actions complement each other in the management process. This coordinative relationship combines two important stages of one set of processes.

The phrase stunned and thinking, these phrases describe emotional and cognitive responses that often occur simultaneously. "Stunned" indicates shock, while 'thinking' is the act of reflection that often follows the shock.

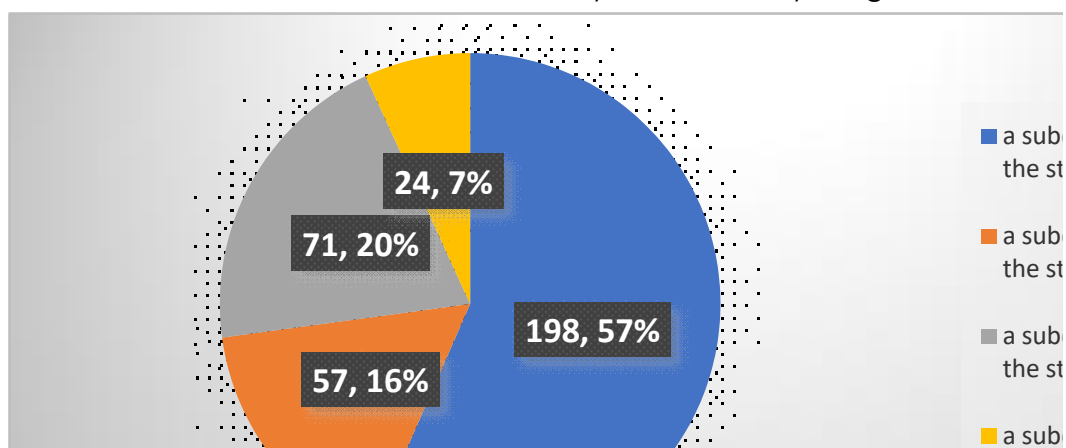
The phrases kick and claw, both verbs describing physically aggressive actions, are often used together in the context of a conflict or fight. Both come from the aggressive action meaning field.

The phrases Beaten and hurt, these two passive verbs describe the violence that a person experiences. "Beaten" refers to a physical act, while 'harmed' can more broadly include any form of suffering. Both are related in the context of the suffering experienced by the subject. Phrase sweeping and mopping, comes from the field of meaning of cleaning activities. "Sweeping" is usually done before "mopping," and the two actions complement each other in the cleaning process.

Subordinate Verbal Phrase Construction

According to Srisudarso (2024), Chaer (2015) in subordinate verb phrases there is a hierarchical relationship between the verb that is the center of the phrase and other types of words that function to provide modification or additional information where both elements have an unequal position. Subordinate verbal phrases (FVS) can be formed through various combinations. The research found 350 data of subordinative verbal phrases consisting of subordinative verbal phrases structured Adv+V 198 data (198.57%), subordinative verbal phrases structured V+Adv 57 data (57.16%), subordinative verbal phrases structured V+N 71 data (71.20%), subordinative verbal phrases structured V+A 24 data (24.7%). Take a look at the following picture:

Figure 2: Percentage of Subordinative verbal phrase constructions in Totto-Chan: The Little Girl at the Window by Tetsuko Kuroyanagi



Subordinate Verbal Phrases with Adv+V Construction

A phrase consisting of an adverb (Adv) as an explanatory or adverbial element that modifies the verb (V) at the core of the phrase. In this construction, the adverb provides additional information that clarifies or limits the meaning of the verb. Subordinate verbal phrases with Adv+V construction have many meanings depending on the context of the phrase. These meanings are the meaning of Ingkar, Frequency, quantity, time, desire, completion, necessity, certainty, restriction. Some of the Adv+V subordinative verbal phrases and the meanings found are as follows:

Table: 2 Adv+V Subordinative Verbal Phrase Construction in Totto-Chan Novel: The Girl The Little Girl at the Window by Tetsuko Kuroyanagi

No	Subordinative verbal Adv+V	Meaning
1	not seeing	denial
	does not gather	
	want to read	desire
	want to climb	
2	must walk	must
	must endeavor	
	must endure	
3	eat enough	quantity
	study a lot	
	tell a lot	
4	must be crying	certainty
5	Just observing	restrictions
	Just transmitting	
	Just laughing	
6	is sleeping	completion
	is jumping	
	Contemplating	
7	play often	frequency
	often walk	

The words not in the phrases do not see and do not gather is an adverb that expresses negation (rejection / denial), the words “see” and “gather” are the core verbs of the phrase which produce the opposite meaning expressing the refusal to see and gather. The word “want” in the phrases want to read and want to climb is an adverb that expresses desire or will, and “read” and “climb” are verbs that are the core of the phrase, describing the desired action and clarifying the meaning of the action expressing the meaning of the desire to do reading and climbing

activities. The word *must* in the phrase *must walk, must try, must hold back* is an adverb that shows obligation or necessity, while “*walk, try, hold back*” is a verb that describes an action that must be done. The adverb “*must*” modifies the verb and makes it more specific stating the obligation or necessity to *walk try, or hold back*.

Likewise, the words *are enough, a lot* in the phrases *enough to eat, a lot to learn, a lot to tell* as adverbs provide frequency or quantity information, which expresses the meaning that *telling, eating, and learning something* is done with frequency or quantity. The words in the phrases *only observe, only send, and only laugh* is an adverb that gives the meaning of limitation, and *ask, send, and laugh* are core verbs. “*Only*” adds information that no other action is done besides *asking, sending, or laughing*. The word in the phrase *sleeping is jumping, is contemplating* is an adverb that shows an ongoing action expressing the meaning of time that someone is in the process of *sleeping, jumping, or contemplating* at that time. The words *sleeping, jumping, and contemplating* are core verbs. The word *often* in the phrase *often play, often walk* is an adverb that gives frequency information about how often the action is done. The words *play and walk* are the core of the phrase. The word *often* provides further information about the intensity or frequency of the actions of *playing and walking*.

Subordinating Verbal Phrases with V + Adv Construction

A phrase consisting of a verb (V) as the core of the phrase followed by an adverb (Adv), which functions to provide additional information about the verb. In this construction, the verb acts as the center of the action, while the adverb provides information that clarifies the action. The characteristics of Subordinative verbal phrases with V + Adv Construction are verbs as the core element and Adverbs function as explanatory elements that provide further information about the action performed by the verb. The relationship between elements in this phrase is subordinative, because both are not equal; adverbs play a role in adding information to the verb. Some examples of subordinate verbal phrases V+ Adv and the meanings found are as follows:

Think hard, Work hard
Walk fast, Run fast
Talking casually
Chin-up
Walking again, lying down again

The word hard in the phrase Think hard, Work hard is an adverb that complements the verb providing intensity, serving to clarify how intense the thinking and working are which is the core of the phrase. The word fast in the phrases walking fast, running fast is an adverb that functions as a description of how to explain how fast the actions of walking and running are carried out. The word casual in the phrase casual conversation is an adverb that provides an atmosphere or method that clarifies how the conversation takes place, with a relaxed atmosphere. The word talk is the core of the phrase. The word chin in the phrase chin up is an adverb that functions as an object description. The word chin up is the core of the phrase. The word again in the phrase Walking again, lying down again gives an adverb of frequency or repetition to clarify the time or frequency of the action. The words walking and lying down are the core of the phrase.

Subordinating Verbal Phrases with the V + A Construction

Subordinate Verbal Phrase with V + A Construction is a combination of a verb (verb) that functions as the core of the phrase and an adjective (adjective) that functions as an adverb. In this construction, the adjective provides additional information about how the action in the verb is performed. This relationship between verb and adjective is called subordinative because the adjective complements or explains the meaning of the verb. Some examples of V+ A subordinative verbal phrases and the meanings found are as follows:

Think hard, Work hard, Shout hard
Walk fast, Run fast
Move agilely
Be kind
Be calm
Dance freely
Smile kindly
Play nice
Walk away

The word hard in the phrases think hard and work hard is in addition to being an adverb as well as an adjective that functions to complement the verb by providing information about the intensity, making it clear how strong or intense the action of thinking and working is which is the core of the phrase. Meanwhile, the word fast in the phrases walk fast and run fast also acts as both an adverb and an

adjective, but its function is as an adverb of manner, explaining how fast the actions of walking and running are performed. The word agile functions as an adjective for the word move agile giving information about the way the movement is done. The verb move (V) is the nucleus that describes the action of a person performing the movement. This phrase is subordinate because the adverb agile functions to explain or clarify the action of moving. The word good in the phrase Be good complements the verb by providing information about the nature or quality of the attitude. It is considered a subordinate phrase because good as an adjective further explains how the action of being good is done. Likewise, the words calm, free, friendly, good away in the phrase being calm, dancing freely, smiling friendly, playing well, walking away are adjectives that add information to the core of the phrase, namely being, dancing, smiling, playing, walking.

Subordinate Verbal Phrase with V + N Construction

A subordinate verbal phrase with V + N construction is a combination of a verb (verb) that functions as the core of the phrase and a noun (noun) that functions as an adverb. In this construction, the noun provides additional information about the way the action expressed by the verb is performed. This relationship between the verb and the noun is called subordinative because the noun serves to complete or explain the meaning of the verb. Some examples of V+ A subordinative verbal phrases and the meanings found are as follows:

My patience shakes my back
clasp hands hold the top of the stairs
play the piano make a nest
plant a seed support the chin

The words I, hand, piano, seed, back, top of the stairs, nest, chin in the above verbal phrases in addition to being adverbs are also nominal which functions to complement the verb by providing information, clarifying the verb which is the core of the phrase.

Discussion

The purpose of this study is to analyze the construction of verb phrases in the novel *Totto-Chan: The Little Girl at the Window* by Tetsuko Kuroyanagi: A Linguistic

Approach and understand the meaning of these phrases in the narrative context. The results show that there are types of verb phrase construction, namely subordinative verbal phrases and coordinative verbal phrases, which play an important role in enriching the language and conveying messages in the novel.

One of the findings is that the construction of verb phrases used by Kuroyanagi often reflects the emotions and characteristics of the characters, as seen in the phrases that describe the actions and feelings of the main character, Totto-Chan. For example, the use of the phrase, work hard, run fast shows the intensity and freedom experienced by Totto-Chan, creating a vivid picture of his passionate personality. Adverbs in the construction of verb phrases not only function as adverbs, but also provide additional depth of meaning. Some supporting research examines verbal phrases. Research (Claire Blanche-Benveniste, 2007) examines the properties of verbal constructions and their relationship to sentence analysis and explores the characteristics of verbal constructions to provide an in-depth understanding of their role and function in forming effective sentence structures. (Brad Henderson, 2020) also focuses on verbal phrases, detailing their structure and function in sentences. Verbal phrases (VPs) are groups of words centered on verb forms acting as the core filling the position of the main verb in the sentence. Research (Ningrum & Suryani, 2023) identified the syntactic typology of the Tamiang Malay language, specifically the co-referential pattern in the grammatical relation to the S, A, and P arguments in subordinative constructions only not coordinative. Furthermore, research (Erniati & Wijaya, 2023) examines verbal phrases in Teon language focusing on the study of attributive endocentric verbal phrases consisting of attributes of manner, modal/aspect, time, intensity, negator, negative manner, and adverbial. and coordinative endocentric verbal phrases. Other research that corroborates (Putri & Subiyanto, 2023) which examines the Construction of Directional Serial Verbs in the Ngaju Dayak Language of Central Kalimantan found the pattern of transitive Verba 1 (V1) + transitive Verba 2 (V2) and intransitive Verba 1 (V1) + intransitive Verba 2 (V2), Research (Asy'ari & Nugraheni, 2020) analyzes Verbal phrases in the novel Putri Sayaka by Salma Izatunnuha in terms of Syntactic Studies. The results of the study found several verb phrases, namely modified verb phrases and coordinative verb phrases. Research (Asnawi, 2018), found two types of verbal phrase structures: first, based on word class (for example,

{V + Adj}, {Adv + V}, {V + Preposition}); secondly, based on the function of the constituent elements, namely Coordinative, Modified and Appositive Verbal Phrases. Research (Nensilianti et al., n.d.) also found verb phrase construction in addition to other phrase construction

The above research results reinforce the findings that have been produced in the study of verb phrase construction in the novel *Totto-Chan: The Little Girl at the Window* by Tetsuko Kuroyanagi, which used a linguistic approach. The study not only enriches the understanding of linguistic constructions in different languages but also confirms the relevance and importance of verbal phrase analysis in understanding narratives in literary works. It shows that despite focusing on different languages, the syntactic and attributive principles in verbal phrases remain consistent, supporting the argument that linguistic analysis can be widely applied in a variety of cultural contexts and language.

Conclusions and suggestions

The research found two main types of phrase construction, namely coordinative phrases 161 data, and subordinative phrases 350 data with several types of subordinative phrases, namely subordinative verbal phrases structured Adv + V as much as 198 data, subordinative verbal phrases structured V + Adv 57 data, subordinative verbal phrases structured V + N 71 data, subordinative verbal phrases structured V + A 24 data. The results of this study make a significant contribution to the development of linguistic studies, especially in the field of syntax and verbal phrase studies.

This conclusion emphasizes the greater significance of understanding how literary language reflects culture. The study identifies two main types of phrase constructions—coordinative phrases and subordinative phrases and provides a deeper insight into linguistic structures that mirror a culture's values, mindset, and social dynamics.

The subordinative phrases identified in this research, with various structures such as Adv + V, V + Adv, V + N, and V + A, not only reflect syntactic complexity but also demonstrate how literary language is used to organize and convey relationships between elements in a narrative or text. The diversity of these phrase structures illustrates how culture influences the meaning-making process in sentences, shaping

how writers express ideas and emotions, and how audiences interpret the messages conveyed.

Therefore, the findings of this study contribute not only to the advancement of linguistic studies, particularly in the fields of syntax and verbal phrase analysis, but also to a deeper understanding of how literary language functions as a mirror of culture. This opens up broader opportunities to explore how language is not just a communication tool but also a representation of a rich and dynamic cultural identity.

The implication is that this study provides an understanding of Tetsuko Kuroyanagi's language style in the novel *Totto-Chan*. Linguistic studies of *Totto-Chan* are important because they help us understand the language structure and how its unique style impacts the reader's experience. Analyzing the language reveals how the author develops characters, especially the emotional depth of the main character, and strengthens the connection between the story and the audience. This study not only contributes to syntax analysis but also enhances our understanding of language's role in character development and emotional engagement in literature.

Through the construction of verbal phrases used, readers and researchers can better appreciate the way the author creates atmosphere, rhythm, and meaning, especially through the use of subordinative phrases. This research also has the potential to contribute to the development of the Indonesian language corpus, especially in the study of verbal phrases. By analyzing 511 phrase constructions, the results of this study can also be used as empirical data to expand the corpus on the use of verbal phrases in various text genres, including literature.

The limitation of this study is that it only examines verbal phrases from one literary novel, so the results may not fully represent other texts. Another limitation is that the approach used only includes linguistic analysis from a syntactic perspective. An interdisciplinary approach, such as pragmatic or semantic analysis, might be possible to improve the understanding of the function of verb phrases in the context of this novel.

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