

A Grammatical Analysis of Subjunctive Mood and Complex Structures in News Text: A Case Study of Islamic Boarding School Students' Recruitment as Police Officers

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the grammatical features used in the news article "Islamic Boarding School's Concerns About Recruiting Santri as Police Officers." The analysis focuses on the subjunctive mood, parallel structure, complex syntax, reduced adjective clauses, and participial and gerund phrases. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, the study explores how these grammatical choices shape meaning, express the writer's concerns, and reflect the social context presented in the article. Recent linguistic research provides important grounding for this analysis. Studies on local grammar within Critical Discourse Analysis (2024) show that small grammatical choices can carry ideological weight in media texts. Research on mood and modality in news discourse (Haritsyah, 2024) highlights how writers use grammatical mood to negotiate stance and interpersonal meaning. Corpus-based work on stance in newspaper opinion writing (2024) demonstrates that devices such as modality, clause reduction, and parallel structure help shape evaluative tone. Meanwhile, recent findings on non-finite clauses in professional registers (2025) underline their role in creating concise and efficient expression features that are central to journalistic style. Anchored in these developments, the present study finds that the subjunctive mood signals hypothetical or uncertain situations, parallel structure strengthens emphasis and coherence, and complex syntax supports more layered argumentation. The use of reduced clauses and non-finite constructions contributes to stylistic compactness typical of contemporary news writing. Overall, the study shows that sensitivity to these grammatical patterns not only enhances language accuracy but also deepens understanding of how meaning and perspective are constructed in media discourse.

INTRODUCTION

Discussions surrounding Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) in Indonesia have long formed a crucial part of the national discourse on education, identity, and social values. *Pesantren* are not merely religious institutions; they carry historical significance as centers of moral cultivation, character education, and civic development. Their role in shaping national identity continues to gain scholarly and governmental attention, especially as Indonesia faces rapid modernization and complex sociopolitical challenges. Within this broader context, recent public debates have emerged following a statement delivered by General Listyo Sigit Prabowo, Chief of the Indonesian National Police (Kapolri), regarding a proposed prioritization strategy for recruiting Islamic boarding school students (*santri*) into the police force. This announcement, published in national news in February 2025, drew varied responses from religious leaders, educators, and the public. One notable response came from Marzuki Wahid, the caretaker of *Pondok Pesantren Luhur Manhajiy Fahimna*, who expressed support for the initiative but also raised concerns about the moral challenges and institutional pressures that future police officers may face.

From a linguistic standpoint, news reports such as this do more than convey factual information. They function as discursive constructions that shape the reader's understanding of social realities. Language used in the media—particularly grammar—plays a significant role in framing public issues, presenting ideological positions, and guiding readers' interpretations of events. Grammar, therefore, becomes an essential component of discourse, functioning as a tool through which meaning is structured, viewpoints are emphasized, and social relations are negotiated. Scholars argue that grammatical structures carry ideological weight within media texts (Jun et al., 2024), influencing how readers perceive authority, morality, and institutional legitimacy.

In the context of the present study, the grammatical choices found in the news article such as the subjunctive mood, complex syntactic constructions, parallelism, participial structures, abridged clauses, and gerund phrases reflect how the media constructs narratives around morality and national integrity within the scope of *pesantren* discourse. These elements highlight not only linguistic concerns but also larger sociopolitical messages about religious identity, professionalism, and ethical expectations of future law enforcement officers. Discussions on *pesantren* and moral education often relate to character formation, value transmission, and citizenship (Kurniawan et al., 2025; Nurlaila, 2024). When viewed from a linguistic perspective, grammatical structures contribute to how these values are articulated, reinforced, or questioned in public discourse.

Previous linguistic studies emphasize the importance of grammar in shaping meaning, especially in institutional narratives and news reporting. Anderson (2022), for instance, highlights how grammar constructs subtle evaluations and attitudes in news texts, while Karim (2023) notes that stylistic approaches to grammar can reveal the rhetorical intentions underlying language use. Meanwhile, studies on parallelism and complex syntax (Sari & Oktavia, 2023) show how these structures are essential for achieving clarity, emphasis, and coherence, especially in persuasive or evaluative writing. The integration of these structures into journalistic writing contributes to the effectiveness of news discourse in shaping public opinion.

Given this background, the current study seeks to examine and interpret the grammatical features contained in the selected news article. The article presents a real-world context involving education, national identity, moral expectations, and institutional recruitment. By analyzing the grammatical structures used in the text, this paper aims to demonstrate how linguistic forms contribute to meaning-making and how grammar serves as a crucial component of discourse construction. This analysis also offers educational value, particularly for students and teachers of English grammar who seek to understand not only grammatical rules but also how complex grammatical forms function within authentic contexts.

This study is thus situated at the intersection of grammar, media discourse, and socio-religious narratives. By examining the grammatical structures in the news text, the paper attempts to highlight how grammar reflects sociocultural concerns and ideological interpretations. The analysis also contributes to the growing body of research on English grammar in media texts, particularly in relation to moral and sociopolitical discussions in Indonesian society. Through this lens, grammar is understood not as an isolated linguistic system but as a dynamic tool for constructing meaning, expressing attitudes, and engaging with broader social debates.

METHODOLOGY

This research employed a qualitative descriptive method with a focus on grammatical analysis of a news article entitled "*Islamic Boarding School's Concerns About Recruiting Santri as Police Officers*". The purpose was to identify and analyze grammatical structures related to advanced grammar topics taught in English education, including the subjunctive mood, parallel structure, complex syntactic constructions, abridgement of adjective clauses, participial phrases, and gerund phrases.

The data source of this study was the English-translated version of a news article published in early February 2025. The text was selected because it presents a real-world context related to education, social values, and national character, aligning with the moral and linguistic

aspects discussed in grammar learning. This study followed a descriptive qualitative method to identify grammatical structures, similar to methods employed by Cunnings & Fujita (2023) in complex syntax research. The syntactic and semantic interpretations were guided by advanced grammar frameworks (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999; Hasani, 2020).

The analysis followed several steps:

1. Data Collection

The researcher collected the news text from a verified online source that reported statements from both the National Police Chief (Kapolri) and the caretaker of an Islamic boarding school in Cirebon. The text was transcribed and segmented into sentences for grammatical observation.

2. Data Identification

Each sentence was carefully read to identify examples of grammatical structures relevant to the grammar materials under study. Six grammatical elements were coded: (1) Subjunctive Mood, (2) Parallel Structure, (3) Complex Syntax, (4) Abridged Adjective Clauses, (5) Participial Phrases, and (6) Gerund Phrases.

3. Data Analysis

The identified sentences were analyzed using syntactic and semantic interpretation based on advanced grammar theories (e.g., Quirk et al., 1985; Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999). Each grammatical feature was explained in terms of its structure, meaning, and stylistic function within the context of the text. The findings were summarized in a table under the *Discussion* section to demonstrate the relationship between grammatical form and communicative function.

4. Interpretation

The grammatical analysis results were interpreted to show how grammar is used in authentic contexts, emphasizing the educational value for English learners in understanding how complex structures convey meaning in journalistic writing.

FINDINGS

Table 1: Grammar analysis

Grammar Feature	Example from the News Text	Observation / Interpretation
Subjunctive Mood	"If, for example, they later join the police force, I don't think it should be from scratch..."	The sentence employs a hypothetical situation using <i>if</i> and <i>should</i> , indicating the subjunctive mood. It expresses a suggestion or condition contrary to the current reality.
Parallel Structure	"...to provide guidance and to serve as a role model for society."	The repeated use of "to + verb" creates parallelism, enhancing rhythm and clarity in the statement, which emphasizes the dual moral and social roles of the police.
Complex Syntactic Construction	"Can the Islamic students, once they enter the police force, change the face of the Indonesian National Police..."	This interrogative complex structure shows embedded clauses ("once they enter...") that carry layered meanings, representing uncertainty and conditional reasoning.

Grammar Feature	Example from the News Text	Observation / Interpretation
Abridged Adjective Clause	“Students educated on honesty principles and obedience to rules...”	The clause omits the relative pronoun <i>who are</i> , creating an abridged adjective clause. This makes the statement concise yet formal, typical of journalistic style.
Participial Phrase (Restrictive Form)	“Equipped with strong faith, they can withstand everything.”	The participial phrase <i>equipped with strong faith</i> restricts and modifies the noun <i>they</i> , emphasizing the moral foundation of the santri.
Gerund Phrase and Stylistic Position	“...providing mental guidance.”	The gerund phrase acts as an object, representing continuous moral contribution. Its position after “contribute to” shows the function of gerunds as nominal complements.

The findings obtained from the grammatical analysis reveal important insights into how linguistic structures shape the meaning and tone of the news article. Each grammatical feature subjunctive mood, parallel structure, complex syntax, abridged adjective clauses, participial phrases, and gerund phrases plays a specific role in shaping the representation of moral concerns, identity formation, and institutional expectations surrounding the recruitment of *santri* as police officers. This section expands the earlier findings by exploring in greater depth how these features interact with the social context of the text, how they contribute to stylistic and ideological functions, and how they reflect broader patterns of grammar in news discourse.

1. Subjunctive Mood

The subjunctive mood expresses hypothetical, desired, or doubtful situations. For example:

“If, for example, they later join the police force, I don’t think it should be from scratch.”

Here, the clause *“If they later join”* reflects a hypothetical scenario, not a factual condition. The modal *should* support the subjunctive tone, implying advice or preference rather than obligation. The use of *hope* and *wish* in Marzuki’s statement also reflects subjunctive intention: *“(I) hope that the values taught in Islamic boarding schools can influence the police force for the better.”* This expresses an expectation rather than certainty a core function of the subjunctive mood. The use of the subjunctive mood in the news text illustrates how the writer presents hypothetical situations and expectations rather than definite facts. Expressions such as *“If they later join...”* and the use of *hope* signal a subjunctive meaning that conveys wishes or unreal conditions. As noted in recent descriptions of English usage, the subjunctive mood is commonly used to express desire, hope, or situations that do not reflect current reality (Easy English Course, 2023).

2. Parallel Structure

Parallelism creates rhythm and clarity in expressing multiple ideas of equal importance. Consider:

“Islamic students can uphold integrity, principles of justice, and the purpose of enforcing the law effectively.”

The three parallel noun phrases (*integrity, principles of justice, purpose of enforcing the law*) form balanced and cohesive meaning, reinforcing the idea of moral strength. The sentence listing several moral qualities expected from the students demonstrates clear use of parallel structure. By arranging multiple noun phrases in similar grammatical form, the text achieves rhythm, balance, and clarity. This aligns with Paperpal's (2023) explanation that parallelism enhances coherence, reinforces the writer's message, and helps readers process information more efficiently, especially in academic and journalistic writing.

3. Complex Syntactic Structure

Complex syntax appears when subordinate clauses modify main ideas. Example: *"Marzuki sees Kapolri's statement as an opportunity for Islamic boarding school students to participate as part of law enforcement, but he also acknowledges that Islamic students may face integrity issues upon entering the police institution."*

The conjunction *but* introduces a compound-complex sentence, showing contrasting attitudes. This structure helps reflect nuanced reasoning and academic tone, typical in both journalistic and academic writing. The news article also features complex syntactic structures, particularly through subordinate clauses that add nuance and contextual detail to the main idea. These structures link primary and secondary information, producing sentences that are analytically rich and informative. Research published in the *Journal of Language Teaching and Research* (2021) shows that the combination of main and subordinate clauses allows writers to convey more sophisticated meanings and layered interpretations within a single sentence.

4. Abridgement of Adjective Clause

Abridged adjective clauses condense relative clauses for stylistic simplicity. Example:

"Students educated on honesty principles and obedience to rules..."

This phrase is an abridged form of: *"Students who are educated on honesty principles..."* The omission of *who are* simplifies the clause while maintaining clarity a common stylistic device in formal English writing. The text uses abridged adjective clauses to compress information and create concise yet clear descriptions, as seen in phrases like *"students educated on..."*. By omitting elements such as *who are*, the sentence becomes more economical while maintaining clarity. This practice is supported by Gu et al. (2020), who note that participial phrases can effectively replace relative clauses in formal writing without reducing the reader's understanding.

5. Participial Phrase: Restrictive and Non-restrictive Forms

Participial phrases function as adjectives and can either restrict meaning or add extra information. Example:

"Reflecting on their national commitment, he believes that Islamic students can strengthen nationalism..."

Here, *"Reflecting on their national commitment"* is a non-restrictive participial phrase, adding contextual information about the reasoning behind his belief. The punctuation (comma) indicates it is non-restrictive. Some parts of the article include non-restrictive participial phrases, marked by commas, which provide additional context without altering the core meaning of the subject. These introductory phrases help frame the speaker's reasoning and offer background information. According to EnglishLesson.com (2022), non-restrictive participial phrases function to add supplementary details while keeping the main referent unchanged, making them valuable in formal expository writing.

6. Gerund Phrase and Stylistic Matter

Gerund phrases function as nouns, adding stylistic variety. Example:

“Regarding recruitment, Marzuki suggests that the students under his supervision who wish to become police officers should not be required to go through the initial selection stages...”

The gerund regarding introduces a topic smoothly, maintaining formality. Gerunds in journalistic writing signal abstraction and thematic coherence. The gerund phrase “*regarding recruitment*” reflects how journalistic texts use –ing forms to introduce topics smoothly and formally. Gerunds allow writers to present abstract themes concisely without relying on full subordinate clauses. A recent study on gerund usage in media texts notes that these forms frequently appear in news discourse due to their efficiency and stylistic flexibility (Journal of Semantics & Media Language, 2023).

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The grammatical features of the analyzed news article demonstrate the interaction between linguistic form and ideological function. Subjunctive mood communicates uncertainty and aspiration, parallel structures enhance readability, complex syntax enables nuanced argumentation, and abridged clauses reflect stylistic efficiency. Participial and gerund phrases enrich cohesion and tone, contributing to the professional style of journalistic English. For students of grammar, especially in English education, this analysis highlights how grammar is not only a system of rules but also a means of constructing meaning in authentic texts.

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