



Syntactic Functions and Communicative Patterns in Police Traffic Advisories: A Linguistic Analysis of Public Traffic-Order Messages in Baubau City

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Received: 11 April 2026	This study examines syntactic functions in police traffic advisories concerning road safety and order in Baubau City, focusing on the relationship between syntactic structure and communicative effectiveness. The study employed a qualitative descriptive approach within a syntactic linguistic framework. Data consisted of 10 advisory sentences collected from eight traffic-safety posters issued by the Baubau City Police Traffic Unit in printed and digital formats. Data were collected through documentation and textual observation and analyzed based on syntactic functions, including subject, predicate, object, complement, and adverbial, together with structural patterns. The findings show that the predicate was the most dominant syntactic function (32.3%), followed by the object (25.8%), adverbial (19.4%), complement (12.9%), and subject (9.7%). Predicate prominence was reflected mainly in imperative constructions occurring in affirmative and negative forms. Affirmative imperatives included gunakan (use), kurangi (reduce), and hindari (avoid), while jangan gunakan (do not use) represented a prohibitive construction marked by jangan. Predicates were predominantly combined with concrete objects referring to traffic behaviors and safety measures, such as sabuk pengaman (seat belts), handphone (mobile phones), and kecepatan kendaraan (vehicle speed). Subjects were generally omitted because they were contextually recoverable as road users, while adverbials specified situational constraints. The dominant syntactic patterns were P-O and P-O-Adv, indicating a preference for concise, directive, and action-oriented messages. These findings demonstrate that syntactic organization functions not only grammatically but also strategically to enhance clarity, accessibility, and directive force in traffic-safety communication.
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1. Introduction

The use of language in police notices concerning traffic regulations in Baubau City represents a form of public communication that is not merely informative but also normative and persuasive (Glogar, 2023). Baubau City offers a significant context for examining the linguistic construction of public traffic-safety messages due to its position as an urban and transportation hub in Southeast Sulawesi. The city's dynamic mobility patterns, diverse population of road users, and extensive circulation of people and vehicles across public spaces create a communicative environment in which traffic regulations must be conveyed clearly, concisely, and persuasively. Within this context, traffic advisories issued by the Baubau City Police Traffic Unit serve not only as regulatory instruments but also as forms of institutional public discourse through which authority, behavioral expectations, and road-safety norms are communicated to diverse audiences. The linguistic organization of these advisories is therefore consequential because syntactic choices and imperative constructions can shape how regulatory intentions are encoded, interpreted, and made salient to road users. Examining these features in the local context of Baubau provides an opportunity to understand how institutional messages are linguistically structured to achieve clarity, directive force, and communicative accessibility. Accordingly, Baubau represents a meaningful research setting for investigating the interplay between syntactic structure and communicative purpose in police traffic advisories, while situating local public communication within broader linguistic scholarship on language use in institutional and regulatory contexts.

As a form of legal communication in the public sphere, such notices are designed to convey regulations, foster public awareness, and encourage compliance with traffic rules (Trosborg, 1995); (Waljinah et al., 2026). In this context, syntactic structure constitutes a strategic linguistic dimension because it determines how information, prohibitions, commands, and recommendations are constructed and interpreted by road users (Muta'allim et al, 2020); (Muta'allim et al, 2021); (Muta'allim et al, 2022); (Yudistira et al., 2022); (Haryono et al., 2023); (Yudistira & Muta'allim, 2023); (Yudistira et al., 2024); (Muhammadiyah et al., 2025); & (Muta'allim, 2025). These structures are commonly realized through imperative predicates, elliptical or implicit subjects, and context-specific objects, complements, and adverbials. The selection and organization of these syntactic elements may influence the clarity, explicitness, and communicative force of police notices (Amir et al., 2023).

The significance of examining syntax in traffic notices is particularly evident because police messages function as instruments of legal communication. Such messages do not merely transmit information but also construct behavioral norms through linguistic choices that are directive, persuasive, and normative in nature (Sutha et al., 2023). Accordingly, clarity and precision in linguistic structure are essential to achieving the intended communicative objectives. Ambiguous, incomplete, or poorly constructed syntactic structures may hinder message interpretation, whereas concise, clear, and contextually appropriate constructions may enhance comprehensibility and persuasive force. This issue is particularly important in traffic-safety communication because road users are often required to process messages rapidly within dynamic public environments. Syntactic construction, therefore, should not be viewed solely as a matter of grammatical organization but also as a component of communication strategy associated with the development of legal awareness and responsible traffic behavior (Kuswardani et al., 2021).

Although research on language use in public communication has expanded considerably, attention to syntactic functions in police notices remains relatively limited (Kallen, 2023) & (Sariono et al., 2025). Previous studies have examined syntactic functions in public service advertisements and sentence structures in official government circulars (Lestari et al., 2025). These studies demonstrate that the selection and configuration of syntactic elements contribute to message construction across various domains of public communication. However, research that specifically integrates syntactic analysis with the characteristics of legal discourse in police traffic notices remains insufficient, particularly within the local context of Baubau City. This limitation indicates a research gap at the intersection of syntax, legal communication, and traffic-safety communication. The present study addresses this gap by positioning syntactic functions not merely as structural categories but also as linguistic resources that contribute to the construction and delivery of normative messages in the public sphere.

Against this background, the study aims to : (1) identify and describe the syntactic functions employed in police notices concerning traffic regulations in Baubau City; (2) examine how the configuration of these syntactic functions contributes to meaning construction and message delivery within legal and social communication; and (3) interpret the implications of syntactic structures for the comprehensibility and communicative force of traffic notices. Accordingly, the study moves beyond the identification of syntactic categories to examine how particular structural configurations serve broader communicative purposes in police discourse.

Based on these objectives, the study addresses three research questions: (1) What forms and distributions of syntactic functions occur in police notices concerning traffic regulations in Baubau City? (2) How do these syntactic functions contribute to the construction and delivery of messages within legal and social communication? and (3) What implications do these syntactic structures have for the comprehensibility and communicative force of traffic notices?. To address these questions, the study draws upon three interrelated conceptual perspectives. First, syntactic theory is employed to analyze the relationships and functions of the constituent elements of clauses and sentences, particularly Subject (S), Predicate (P), Object (O), Complement (C), and Adverbial (A) (Ramadhani et al., 2025). This framework enables the study to identify the structural patterns through which messages are realized in police notices. Second, the perspective of legal discourse is employed to examine the characteristics of legal language, which tends to be formal, normative, directive, persuasive, and socially consequential in shaping recipients' behavior (Sulistianingsih et al., 2023). Third, the concept of public communication in the context of traffic safety is used to explain the communicative demands placed on messages that must be concise, clear, accessible, and readily processed when presented in public spaces (Sutha et al., 2023).

These three perspectives establish an analytical relationship in which syntactic functions constitute the structural foundation of message construction. Conceptually, syntactic functions—realized through S, P, O, C, and A—form clause and sentence structures; these structures determine how information, commands, prohibitions, and recommendations are packaged; and such constructions subsequently influence the clarity and communicative force of the messages. The analytical framework can therefore be represented as follows:

Syntactic Functions (S, P, O, C, A) → Clause/Sentence Structure → Meaning Construction and Normative Messaging → Comprehensibility and Communicative Force → Potential Support for Traffic-Rule Compliance.

This framework emphasizes that the effectiveness of police notices depends not only on the substantive content of the regulations being communicated but also on how those regulations are linguistically constructed. Appropriate selection and organization of syntactic functions can facilitate the explicit, concise, and comprehensible expression of normative messages. Conversely, ineffective structural configurations may generate ambiguity or weaken communicative force. Therefore, examining syntactic functions in police traffic notices in Baubau City is important for extending understanding of the relationship between linguistic structure, legal discourse construction, and public safety communication (Kuswardani et al., 2021; Amir et al., 2023). More broadly, the study contributes to applied linguistics by demonstrating how syntactic analysis can illuminate the ways in which legal messages are linguistically constructed, communicated, and directed toward the public through institutional communication.

2. Method

The study employs qualitative syntactic analysis, focusing specifically on syntactic functions and sentence patterns. This approach was selected because the study focuses on describing and analyzing syntactic functions in traffic-safety notices rather than statistically testing relationships among variables (Fadli, 2021). A qualitative descriptive design enables an in-depth examination of sentence structures and the syntactic functions realized within the texts, particularly in the context of legal discourse (Rusandi & Rusli, 2021). Within linguistic research, the analysis of syntactic functions is essential for understanding how sentence structures contribute to meaning construction within particular communicative contexts (Zakiyah & Wahyuni, 2023). In the present study, syntactic analysis is complemented by an examination of communicative patterns, understood as recurring ways in which linguistic forms are organized to accomplish particular communicative purposes in public discourse. This perspective draws on the functional view of language, which considers linguistic structures in relation to the purposes they serve in communication. In police traffic advisories, communicative patterns may be realized through recurring constructions such as prohibitions, commands, recommendations, and informational statements, each of which serves to regulate, direct, or influence public behavior. Accordingly, the study does not treat communicative patterns as an independent grammatical category but examines them as context-dependent communicative functions realized through particular syntactic constructions. This analytical distinction enables the study to examine two interconnected levels: first, the syntactic level, which identifies the grammatical functions and structural configurations of the advisory messages; and second, the communicative level, which interprets how those structures are employed to convey regulatory intentions and encourage compliance among road users.

The data consisted of traffic-safety notices issued by the Baubau City Police Traffic Unit (Satuan Lalu Lintas Polres Baubau) and displayed in poster form in public spaces across Baubau City. The posters were documented directly by the researchers as official institutional communication materials intended for road users and the wider public. The data source was therefore the publicly displayed traffic advisories produced by the Baubau City Police Traffic Unit, rather than materials reproduced or circulated by unofficial third-party accounts. These posters contain concise advisory statements, most of which employ imperative constructions and are supported by visual elements that reinforce the intended messages (Ramadhania et al., 2022). The data comprised qualitative linguistic units in the form of sentences and phrases extracted from the selected posters. In total, 10 sentences were

identified from eight different posters, providing a focused dataset consistent with the objectives of the study (Andriani, 2023).

Data were collected over a three-month period, from January to March 2026, through three systematic procedures: documentation, textual observation, and data inventory. Documentation involved collecting photographs or digital copies of traffic-safety posters disseminated through the official communication media of the Baubau City Police Traffic Unit (Satuan Lalu Lintas Polres Baubau). Textual observation involved carefully examining and transcribing the advisory statements in their entirety without altering their lexical or syntactic structures. The data-inventory stage involved compiling the identified sentences into an analytical corpus and recording relevant source information, including the publication medium and the date of publication or data acquisition. The specified collection period ensured that the dataset represented traffic-safety messages available through the official police communication channels during the designated research period and enhanced the traceability, temporal relevance, and accuracy of the collected data (Najihah et al., 2022).

Data analysis was guided by Ramlan's (2005) syntactic framework and the principles of Standard Indonesian Grammar proposed by Alwi et al. (2003). The analysis proceeded through several stages: (1) identifying sentence units; (2) classifying syntactic constituents; (3) analyzing syntactic functions; (4) mapping sentence patterns; and (5) interpreting the findings contextually in relation to the communicative objectives of the traffic-safety notices. Particular attention was given to the realization and distribution of Subject (S), Predicate (P), Object (O), Complement (C), and Adverbial (A) functions. The final interpretive stage connected the structural findings to the communicative purposes of police notices, particularly their function in conveying normative, directive, and persuasive messages related to traffic safety.

To enhance the credibility and validity of the findings, source triangulation was employed. The researchers compared traffic-safety notices obtained from physical or printed media with corresponding materials disseminated through official digital platforms. The analytical results were subsequently cross-checked against established syntactic frameworks and findings reported in previous studies (Meirita et al., 2021). This triangulation process was intended to minimize interpretive bias and ensure that the identified syntactic patterns were consistently supported by both the empirical data and the relevant theoretical framework.

3. Results and Discussion

The findings show that the predicate is the most dominant syntactic function, accounting for 32.3% of the identified syntactic functions, followed by the object (25.8%), adverbial (19.4%), complement (12.9%), and subject (9.7%). Predicate prominence is particularly reflected in imperative constructions, which occur in affirmative and negative forms. Affirmative imperatives include *gunakan* (use), *kurangi* (reduce), and *hindari* (avoid), whereas *jangan gunakan* (do not use) represents a negative or prohibitive imperative construction in which *jangan* functions as a prohibition marker. Predicates are predominantly combined with concrete objects referring to traffic-related behaviors and safety measures, such as *sabuk pengaman* (seat belts), *handphone* (mobile phones), and *kecepatan kendaraan* (vehicle speed). Subjects are generally omitted because they are contextually recoverable as road users, while adverbials specify situational constraints. The dominant syntactic patterns are P–O and P–O–Adv, demonstrating a preference for concise, directive, and action-oriented messages. These findings indicate that syntactic organization

serves not only grammatical functions but also operates as a strategic linguistic resource for enhancing clarity, accessibility, and directive force in public traffic-safety communication.

The data analyzed in this study consist of traffic-safety notices issued by the Baubau City Police Traffic Unit (Satuan Lalu Lintas Polres Baubau) in the form of public-order and community-safety posters (*Kamtibmas*). These notices were displayed in public spaces and disseminated through social media platforms. A total of 10 advisory texts from eight different posters were analyzed. The dataset represents a range of communicative purposes, including persuasion, warning, prohibition, and behavioral instruction. Therefore, the notices are characterized by brevity, lexical economy, and directness, with a strong imperative orientation. Their linguistic construction reflects an institutional communication strategy in which messages are designed to be processed rapidly by road users. Several recurrent characteristics were identified.

a. Implicit subjects

The grammatical subject is frequently omitted and contextually understood as *you* or *we*. Such ellipsis enables the messages to remain concise while maintaining their directive force.

b. Explicit imperative verbs

The notices predominantly employ direct command verbs, such as *gunakan* ("use"), *kurangi* ("reduce"), *hindari* ("avoid"), and *patuhi* ("obey"). These lexical choices establish a clear directive orientation and position the recipients as the intended actors of the prescribed behavior.

c. Contextual adverbials

Several notices incorporate contextual elements, such as *jalan licin* ("slippery road") and *saat berkendara* ("while driving"), to specify the circumstances under which the recommended or prohibited behavior applies. These elements contribute to contextual clarity and strengthen the relevance of the directive message.

d. Visual and typographic emphasis

The use of capital letters, exclamation marks, and contrasting colors functions as a multimodal reinforcement of the linguistic message. These visual features increase salience and draw recipients' attention to the central directive, warning, or prohibition. To examine the structural characteristics of these notices, each text was segmented into its principal syntactic functions: Subject (S), Predicate (P), Object (O), Complement (C), and Adverbial (A). This analysis was conducted to identify recurring syntactic patterns and to determine how the organization of these functions contributes to the construction and communicative force of traffic-safety messages. The results of the syntactic analysis are presented in the following table.

Table 1. The Results of the Syntactic Analysis

No.	Advisory Sentence	Subject	Predicate	Object	Complement	Adverbial
1	<i>Hati-Hati Jalan Licin Kurangi Kecepatan Kendaraan Anda</i>	(Anda) (You)	<i>hati-hati/ kurangi</i> be careful/ reduce	<i>kecepatan kendaraan Anda</i> your	–	<i>jalan licin</i> slippery road

	Caution! Slippery Road, Reduce Your Vehicle Speed			vehicle speed		
2	<i>Stop! Berkendara Melebihi Batas Kecepatan Stop! Driving Beyond the Speed Limit</i>	(Anda) (You)	<i>stop/ berkendara stop/drive</i>	–	<i>melebihi batas kecepatan exceeding the speed limit</i>	–
3	<i>Makin Ngebut Makin Dekat Dengan Maut The Faster You Drive, the Closer You Are to Death</i>	(Anda) (You)	<i>makin ngebut drive faster</i>	–	<i>makin dekat dengan maut closer to death</i>	–
4	<i>Ayo!! Tertib Berlalu Lintas Come On!! Obey Traffic Rules</i>	(Anda) (You)	<i>ayo tertib come on, obey</i>	–	<i>berlalu lintas traffic regulations</i>	–
5	<i>Bukan Karena Ada Polisi Tapi Untuk Keselamatan Diri Kita, Orang Lain dan Keluarga Not Because There Are Police Officers, but for the Safety of Ourselves, Others, and Our Families</i>	(Kita) (We)	<i>untuk keselamatan for the safety</i>	<i>diri kita, orang lain, keluarga ourselves, others, and our families</i>	–	<i>bukan karena ada polisi not because there are police officers</i>
6	<i>Selalu Gunakan Sabuk Pengaman Saat Berkendara Always Wear a Seat Belt When Driving</i>	(Anda) (You)	<i>Gunakan wear/use</i>	<i>sabuk pengaman a seat belt</i>	–	<i>saat berkendara when driving</i>
7	<i>Jangan Gunakan Handphone Saat Berkendara Do Not Use a Mobile Phone While Driving</i>	(Anda) (You)	<i>jangan gunakan do not use</i>	<i>Handphone a mobile phone</i>	–	<i>saat berkendara while driving</i>
8	<i>Hindari Penggunaan Handphone Saat Berkendara</i>	(Anda) (You)	<i>Hindari avoid</i>	<i>penggunaan handphone mobile phone use</i>	–	<i>saat berkendara while driving</i>

	Avoid Using a Mobile Phone While Driving					
9	<i>Pengemudi/ Pengendara Dibawah Umur (Dilarang Berkendara) Underage Drivers/Riders (Driving Prohibited)</i>	<i>pengemudi/ pengendara di bawah umur</i> underage drivers/ riders	<i>dilarang berkendara</i> are prohibited from driving	–	–	–
10	<i>Berboncengan Lebih Dari 1 Orang Carrying More Than One Passenger</i>	<i>(Anda) (You)</i>	<i>Berboncengan</i> ride with a passenger	–	<i>lebih dari 1 orang</i> more than one passenger	–

a. Syntactic Patterns and Characteristics Identified

The analysis revealed several recurring syntactic patterns and characteristics in the traffic-safety notices issued by the Baubau City Police Traffic Unit. These patterns demonstrate how syntactic structures are strategically organized to convey concise, explicit, and behavior-oriented messages to road users.

1) Subject (S)

The subject is predominantly elliptical or implicit, allowing recipients to be immediately positioned as the intended actors of the prescribed action. The omission of the grammatical subject contributes to the brevity of the notices while preserving their directive force. Only a limited number of notices contain explicit subjects, such as *pengemudi* (“driver”) and *pengendara di bawah umur* (“underage rider”). The explicit specification of participants appears to be used when the message targets a particular category of road user.

2) Predicate (P)

The predicate is predominantly realized through imperative verbs, including *gunakan* (“use”), *kurangi* (“reduce”), *hindari* (“avoid”), *jangan gunakan* (“do not use”), and *patuhi* (“obey”). These verbal forms directly encode the action expected from the recipients. In addition, some notices employ exhortative or attention-getting expressions, such as *ayo tertib* (“let us obey the rules”) and *hati-hati* (“be careful”). The variation between direct imperatives and exhortative expressions enables the notices to combine regulatory force with persuasive appeal.

3) Object (O)

Objects are generally concrete, contextually accessible, and directly associated with traffic behavior. Examples include *sabuk pengaman* (“seat belt”), *kecepatan kendaraan* (“vehicle speed”), and *handphone* (“mobile phone”). The use of familiar and behaviorally relevant objects reduces interpretive complexity and enables recipients to readily identify the action being regulated. Thus, the object functions not merely

as a grammatical constituent but also as an important semantic component that specifies the target of the directive.

4) Complement (C)

Complements occur in constructions that provide semantic specification, limitation, or comparison to the predicate. Examples include *Tidak boleh berboncengan Sepeda lebih dari 1 orang* ("more than one person") and *makin dekat dengan maut* ("getting closer to death"). These elements expand or qualify the meaning of the predicate and help communicate the limits, consequences, or conditions associated with particular traffic behaviors.

5) Adverbial (A)

Adverbials provide situational, temporal, or causal information that contextualizes the intended action or prohibition. Examples include *jalan licin* ("slippery road"), *saat berkendara* ("while driving"), and *bukan karena ada polisi* ("not because there is a police officer"). By specifying the circumstances surrounding the recommended or prohibited behavior, these elements enhance contextual clarity and make the normative message more readily applicable to specific situations.

b. Dominant Sentence Patterns

The syntactic analysis identified several dominant sentence patterns across the ten traffic-safety notices.

1) Predicate + Object (P + O)

Example: *Gunakan sabuk pengaman* ("Use a seat belt").

This pattern consists of an imperative predicate followed by a direct object. The implicit subject is understood contextually as the road user. Its structural simplicity enables the notice to communicate the required action immediately and unambiguously.

2) Predicate + Object + Adverbial (P + O + A)

Example: *Kurangi kecepatan kendaraan Anda saat jalan licin* ("Reduce your vehicle speed when the road is slippery").

This pattern combines an imperative predicate, an object, and an adverbial. The addition of the adverbial specifies the circumstances under which the directive becomes particularly relevant. Consequently, the structure provides both the required action and its situational context.

3) Predicate + Complement (P + C)

Example: *Berboncengan lebih dari 1 orang* ("Carrying more than one passenger").

In this construction, the complement provides additional semantic information concerning the scope or limitation of the predicate. The structure therefore enables the notice to express a specific behavioral restriction without requiring an explicit grammatical subject.

c. Single Imperative or Exclamatory Phrase

Examples: *Hati-hati!* ("Be careful!") and *Stop!* ("Stop!").

This pattern represents the most concise form of directive communication. Its brevity and emphatic character make it particularly suitable for public environments in which recipients have limited time to process written information. The construction prioritizes immediate attention and behavioral response over elaborated syntactic structure.

4. Discussion

a. The Dominant Pattern

The analysis of the ten traffic-safety notices issued by the Baubau City Police Traffic Unit indicates a clear predominance of imperative constructions with implicit subjects. This pattern reflects a communicative strategy characterized by directness, brevity, and an immediate orientation toward influencing audience behavior. By omitting the subject, the notices avoid unnecessary grammatical elaboration while allowing the intended recipient to infer their role as the actor responsible for complying with the directive. The predominance of imperative structures is also consistent with the institutional character of police communication. Unlike ordinary informational messages, traffic-safety notices are intended to influence behavior by presenting specific actions that should be performed, avoided, or immediately discontinued. The syntactic economy of structures such as P + O, P + O + A, and single imperative phrases consequently enables institutional messages to achieve a high degree of communicative efficiency.

More importantly, the findings suggest that syntactic simplicity in these notices is not merely a consequence of limited textual space but constitutes a functional communicative strategy. The combination of elliptical subjects, explicit imperative predicates, concrete objects, and contextual adverbials creates a message structure that minimizes processing demands while preserving normative force. In this respect, syntactic organization contributes to the accessibility and communicative salience of police traffic-safety messages.

However, syntactic effectiveness should not automatically be equated with actual behavioral compliance. The present findings demonstrate how syntactic structures facilitate the construction of clear and directive messages, but establishing their direct effect on road users' compliance would require additional empirical evidence, such as audience-response data, behavioral observation, or experimental comprehension testing. This distinction is important because it positions the present study within the domain of linguistic and communicative analysis while avoiding an unsupported causal claim about behavioral outcomes.

b. Syntactic Features and Their Communicative Functions

1. Elliptical Subjects as a Persuasive Strategy

Most of the traffic-safety notices do not explicitly state the subject using forms such as *Anda* ("you") or *Saudara* ("you"). For example, in "*Kurangi kecepatan kendaraan Anda*" ("Reduce your vehicle speed"), the addressee is grammatically encoded through the possessive form *Anda*, while the actor responsible for carrying out the directive is implicitly understood. This subject ellipsis allows the message to address recipients without repeatedly specifying an explicit subject. As a result, the notices acquire a more general and inclusive orientation, potentially applying to any road user who encounters them. From a linguistic perspective, such elliptical constructions represent an economical strategy frequently associated with directive, regulatory, and public-warning discourse because they foreground the required action rather than the identity of the addressee.

2. Predominance of Imperative Predicates

The predicates in the analyzed notices are predominantly realized through directive verbs, including *gunakan* ("use"), *kurangi* ("reduce"), *hindari* ("avoid"), *patuhi* ("obey"), *stop* ("stop"), and *jangan gunakan* ("do not use"). This predominance reflects the primary communicative purpose of the notices: directing, restricting, or modifying the behavior of road users in accordance with traffic regulations. The imperative construction places the required action at the forefront of the message, thereby strengthening its directive force. Some notices also employ standalone exclamatory expressions such as "*Hati-hati!*" ("Be careful!"). Although structurally minimal, such expressions function pragmatically as immediate attention signals, encouraging recipients to adopt a heightened state of awareness.

3. Concrete Objects for Message Specification

The objects used in the notices tend to be concrete, specific, and readily identifiable, including *sabuk pengaman* ("seat belt"), *handphone* ("mobile phone"), and *kecepatan kendaraan* ("vehicle speed"). The use of concrete objects enables recipients to identify immediately what behavior is being regulated without requiring extensive interpretation. For example, "*Gunakan sabuk pengaman*" ("Use a seat belt") directly establishes the relationship between the prescribed action and its target. This structural explicitness is consistent with the principle of clarity in public communication, in which messages intended for broad audiences should minimize ambiguity and reduce unnecessary interpretive demands.

4. The Role of Complements and Adverbials in Reinforcing Meaning

Although not present in every construction, complements such as *lebih dari 1 orang* ("more than one person") and *makin dekat dengan maut* ("getting closer to death") function to extend, qualify, or intensify the meaning of the predicate. These elements provide semantic specification that enables recipients to understand the scope or potential consequences of the regulated behavior.

Adverbials, meanwhile, provide situational, temporal, or causal contexts, as illustrated by expressions such as *jalan licin* ("slippery road"), *saat berkendara* ("while driving"), and *bukan karena ada polisi* ("not because there is a police officer"). Their presence contextualizes the directive by indicating when, where, or under what circumstances the prescribed behavior is particularly relevant. Consequently, complements and adverbials contribute a contextual dimension to the notices, connecting abstract traffic regulations with concrete situations encountered by road users.

5. Simple and Direct Sentence Patterns

The syntactic structures of the traffic-safety notices tend to be short, simple, and structurally economical, with P + O and P + O + A emerging as recurrent patterns. Such direct constructions are particularly appropriate for public traffic communication because road users generally have limited time and attention to process written messages. Concise syntactic structures can therefore facilitate rapid identification of the required action and its contextual conditions.

For example:

Gunakan sabuk pengaman saat berkendara.

P + O + A

("Use a seat belt while driving.")

Jangan gunakan handphone saat berkendara.

P + O + A

("Do not use a mobile phone while driving.")

The two constructions illustrate how a simple syntactic configuration can simultaneously encode the prescribed action, its target, and the relevant behavioral context. The imperative predicate establishes the directive, the object specifies the behavior or entity being regulated, and the adverbial provides the situational frame. This structural economy allows the notices to maintain normative force while remaining accessible to a heterogeneous public audience.

Taken together, these findings indicate that the syntactic organization of police traffic-safety notices is closely aligned with their institutional communicative purpose. The combination of elliptical subjects, imperative predicates, concrete objects, contextual modifiers, and concise sentence patterns produces messages that prioritize directness, clarity, and behavioral orientation. Rather than functioning merely as grammatical arrangements, these syntactic choices operate as linguistic resources through which institutional authorities construct and communicate normative expectations in public spaces.

6. Alignment with the Characteristics of Legal Discourse

The findings indicate that the linguistic characteristics of the traffic-safety notices are broadly consistent with the defining features of legal discourse described by Mulyana (2005), particularly its formal, normative, and persuasive orientation. The predominance of imperative constructions, implicit subjects, and concrete objects reinforces the normative character of the notices while simultaneously facilitating message comprehension among members of the public. Through these syntactic choices, the police notices foreground the actions expected from road users rather than elaborating the institutional authority behind the directives.

This finding also distinguishes police traffic-safety notices from other forms of public communication. Compared with Liu's (2019) analysis of public service advertisements, which highlights functions such as social norm transfer and the shaping of public attitudes, the police notices analyzed in this study tend to employ a more direct, concise, and behavior-oriented linguistic style. Their primary communicative objective is not merely to convey social messages but to encourage immediate compliance with established traffic norms.

The distribution of syntactic functions further supports this interpretation. The analysis shows that Predicates (P) constitute the largest proportion of the identified syntactic functions (32.3%), followed by Objects (O) at 25.8%, Adverbials (A) at 19.4%, Complements (C) at 12.9%, and Subjects (S) at 9.7%. This distribution is particularly noteworthy because the high proportion of predicates corresponds to the dominant imperative orientation of the notices. Predicates function as the primary carriers of directive meaning, while objects specify the target of the prescribed action. Adverbials and complements provide contextual and semantic elaboration, whereas the relatively low proportion of explicit subjects reflects the frequent use of subject ellipsis.

The predominance of predicates is therefore not simply a structural characteristic but also reflects the communicative priorities of police discourse. Since the primary purpose of these notices is to direct, prohibit, warn, or encourage specific behaviors, imperative

predicates naturally occupy a central position in the syntactic organization of the messages. The relatively smaller proportion of subjects, meanwhile, is consistent with the tendency to omit the addressee when it can be inferred from the communicative context.

Taken together, these findings demonstrate that the syntactic structure of police traffic-safety notices is closely aligned with their institutional and normative functions. The combination of directive predicates, concrete objects, contextual adverbials, semantic complements, and elliptical subjects produces a compact linguistic structure capable of communicating behavioral expectations efficiently. This pattern suggests that syntactic organization serves as an important linguistic resource in the construction of legal and public-safety messages, particularly in contexts where information must be communicated rapidly and interpreted with minimal ambiguity.

7. Distribution of Syntactic Functions in Baubau Police Traffic Notices

Proportion of syntactic functions identified in the analyzed traffic-safety notices.

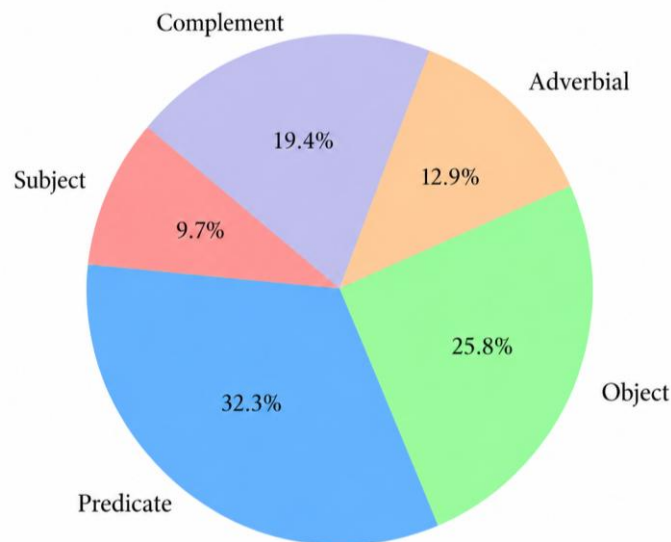


Figure 1. Proportion of Syntactic Functions in Traffic Report Across the Baubau Police Department

From the visualization in figure 1, predicates account for the largest proportion. A total of 31 syntactic functions were identified across the ten advisory texts. Predicates accounted for 10 occurrences (32.3%), followed by Objects with 8 occurrences (25.8%), Adverbials with 6 (19.4%), Complements with 4 (12.9%), and Subjects with 3 (9.7%). This distribution indicates the predominance of predicate-oriented constructions, which is consistent with the strong imperative and directive orientation of the traffic-safety notices.

6. Conclusion

Based on the analysis of ten traffic-safety notices issued by the Baubau City Police Traffic Unit, this study concludes that imperative predicates constitute the dominant syntactic function, primarily realized through directive verbs such as *gunakan* ("use"), *kurangi* ("reduce"), *hindari* ("avoid"), and *jangan gunakan* ("do not use"), followed by concrete objects referring to traffic-related entities or behaviors, while subjects are predominantly implicit and complements and adverbials are employed to elaborate meaning and provide contextual information.

The most frequently occurring sentence patterns are P + O and P + O + A, reflecting a concise, economical, and direct communicative style that prioritizes the immediate expression of required or prohibited actions. The findings further indicate that the combination of imperative predicates, implicit subjects, concrete objects, and contextual modifiers is consistent with the normative and directive characteristics of legal and public-safety discourse, enabling traffic-safety messages to be communicated with clarity and contextual relevance.

Although such syntactic structures may facilitate rapid comprehension and enhance the communicative force of police notices, the present study does not directly establish a causal relationship between syntactic structure and actual public compliance; therefore, their contribution should be understood in terms of communicative potential rather than demonstrated behavioral effects. Based on these findings, police institutions are encouraged to maintain concise, direct, and contextually appropriate sentence structures while integrating clear visual presentation to enhance message accessibility. Future research should extend the analysis to semantic, pragmatic, multimodal, and critical discourse perspectives and, where possible, incorporate audience-based or experimental approaches to examine empirically how syntactic and visual features influence message comprehension, retention, attitudes, and traffic-related behavioral intentions.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest related to this study.

Authors' Contribution

Rachmansyah Azis: Conceptualization, Methodology, Investigation, Data Curation, Formal Analysis, Writing–Original Draft, and Visualization.

Arsad: Conceptualization, Methodology, Supervision, Validation, Writing–Review & Editing, and Project Administration.

Masri: Methodology, Supervision, Validation, Writing–Review & Editing, and Project Administration.

All authors contributed to the study, reviewed the manuscript critically, and approved the final version of the manuscript.

Statement of the Use of AI

The authors did not use artificial intelligence (AI) to conduct the research, generate the research findings, or develop the core concepts and arguments of the study. AI-based tools were used only as supplementary resources for reference and to assist with improving the accuracy, clarity, grammar, and academic quality of the language. All ideas, interpretations, analyses, arguments, and conclusions presented in this manuscript were developed and verified by the authors, who retain full responsibility for the content and integrity of the research.

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