

# SYNTACTICAL ERROR ANALYSIS OF DESCRIPTIVE PARAGRAPH WRITING MADE BY THE SEVENTH GRADE STUDENTS AT SMP 4 GENTENG IN THE 2011/2012 ACADEMIC YEARS

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***Abstract** : The research objective was to describe the syntactical error on students descriptive paragraph writing. The research design applied was a descriptive research. The data were obtained from writing test, interview and documentation. The population of the 7th grade students of SMP 4 Genteng in the 2011/2012 were 219 students divided into 8 classes and the samples of this research were determined by using proportional random sampling, the number of respondents was 42 or 20 % of the population. The data were analyzed by using Ellis' formula and finding the percentage of each type of syntactical errors by using Ali's Formula. This research described the syntactical errors on descriptive paragraph writing that focused on the students errors in producing errors in the use of simple present tense, errors in the use of prepositions, errors in the use of articles, errors in the use of word order. The result of the research describe the misuse of simple present tense with 38.29%, the misuse of using articles with 30.85%, the misuse of prepositions with 12.76% and the misuse of word order with 18.08 %.*

***Key Words:** the syntactical errors of descriptive paragraph writing, the syntactical errors, and descriptive paragraph writing.*

## INTRODUCTION

Hendrickson (1979:3) states that language educators are now proposing that the language teacher should expect many errors in his/her students' speech and writing, and the foreign language teacher should accept these errors as a natural phenomenon integral to the process of second language learning.

Errors mean any deviation of the rule and system of language learned that may be caused by either the interference of the first language or the target language. Dulay (1981:138) clarifies errors as "those parts of conversation or composition that deviate from some selected norm of mature language performance". Identifying the errors is a difficult matter, people are still confused to determine the errors and often see error with the same definition of what is called as mistakes. Corder (1980:25) says that the problem of determining which ones are students' mistakes and which ones are students' errors is a difficult matter and it involves a much more sophisticated study. Further, he described mistakes as those dealing with the memory lapses, physical condition such as

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tiredness and physiological condition such as strong emotion. Mistakes are caused by factors, such as fatigue and inattention, which are usually called as performance errors. Mistakes are often recognized and readily corrected because the language rule used is already known but forgotten. On the other hand, errors are noted as deviation of some system of the target language the students made. Errors occur because the learners have not mastered the rules yet. As a result, errors are caused by lack of knowledge of the second language rules, which are called competence factors. Regarding the difficulties in determining errors and mistakes, this research refers to the term **errors** to any deviations from the English rule system.

Mastering writing skill is considered to be difficult for students, because they have to master at grammar, vocabulary and organization. People should know the use of the appropriate style, language and structure. In order their writing become effective and links their ideas. Writing is an essential literacy skill which is usually considered to be more difficult to master than listening, speaking or reading (Hughey et.al, 1983:32). It is not, however, one that needs to be delayed until students have perfected other language skills. Writing is a process of thought. Thus, a writer needs to know the process thoroughly. Wingersky et.al (1999:4) defines writing as a process which you discover, organize, and communicate your thoughts to a reader. Then, McWhorter (2001:9) states that writing is a process of developing and explaining ideas. It involves a series of steps the writer works through in order to produce an effective piece of writing.

Good writing might have meant mastering the basic of organization, grammar and spelling (Chaffé, 1999: 2). Written errors can be categorized as errors of mechanics and grammar (Shoebottom : 2012). Grammar mistakes rarely occur in native speakers' writing but very commonly occur in ESL students, whose mother-tongue "interferes" with the production of correct English.

Grammatical errors refer to the two component of grammar analysis. They are syntactical and morphological errors. Hornby (1978: 279) states that 'grammar is the scientific study of rules for the combination of words into sentences (that called syntax), and the forms of words (that called morphology)'. Further, Dulay et al (1982:146) state that the English language components include syntax and morphology (grammar, semantic and lexicon/ meaning and vocabulary and discourse. This research deals with syntactical errors. In simple term Syntax is the study of the rules governing the way

words is combined to form sentences in a language (Cristal in Tarry, 1995:87). According to Tarry (1995:89), syntax is the study of the relation between elements in sentence structure, and in the rules governing the arrangement of sentence in sequences. In this research, the syntactical error means the deviation of the rules of forming, arranging or combining elements of the sentence structure into sentences in sequence. The syntactical errors investigated covered some errors in these following categories: 1) simple present tense errors, 2) the misuse of using articles, 3) the misuse of using prepositions, 4) the misuse of word order.

The objective of this research were To describe the syntactical errors made by the seventh grade students at SMP 4 Genteng and to describe the most syntactical error made by the seventh grade students at SMP 4 Genteng.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This research was a descriptive research. According Arikunto (1996:243) states that a descriptive research does not test a hypothesis but only describes what is being seen, faced, observed and known. It means that descriptive research aims only to describe what we find without any necessitate exploring how it happens. Further, McMillan (1992:144) states that descriptive research describes a phenomenon and usually in the form of statistics, such as frequencies, percentages, averages, and sometimes variability. This research was intended to describe the seventh grade students' descriptive paragraph writing based on syntactical errors at one setting that is SMPN 4 Genteng. The variable of this research were the seventh grade students and the students' descriptive paragraph writing as indicated by the aspects of syntactical errors. They are; 1) simple present tense errors, 2) the misuse of using articles, 3) the misuse of using prepositions, 4) the misuse of word order.

Based on the research design above, the procedures of the research design were as follows:

1. Doing an interview with the English teacher
2. Collecting the documentation
3. Determining the research problems
4. Determining the research area by using purposive method

5. Determining the respondents of the research by using simple random sampling method
6. Constructing research instrument ( writing test)
7. Analyzing the data gained by using the following steps adapted from Ellis' theory (1994;48) :
  - a) Identifying the syntactical and morphological errors made by the students in their descriptive paragraph writing. The identification of errors will be done the underlining a number of errors made by the students in their descriptive paragraph writing. Then the identification is continued by coding the errors found by using certain codes.
  - b) Classifying the errors into the categories of syntactical and morphological errors. The classification will be done by the listing the errors found in each category. Finally, the classification of errors was administered by tabulating the data.
  - c) Finding the percentage of each type of syntactical errors by using Ali's Formula.
  - d) Consulting the percentage to the table of the classification level of syntactical errors type.
  - e) Drawing a conclusion to answer the research problems.

The operational definition of the terms of this research was divided into three, they are error, descriptive paragraph writing and students. They were 3 types of data collection in this research, writing test, interview and documentation.

The purpose of this writing test was to know the students syntactical errors in writing descriptive paragraph. syntactical errors refer to the 1) simple present tense errors, 2) the misuse of using articles, 3) the misuse of using prepositions, 4)the misuse of word order. At this time, the researcher asked each of the subjects to write a simple a descriptive paragraph which consisted of at least 10-15 sentences in the various topics. They were; My school, My home, My unforgettable holiday, My best friend, My favorite pet, My idol

In this research, semi structured interview was used, as what Arikunto (2002:202) states that it is done by bringing a guide or a set of questions that have function as the main line about the things that are going to be interviewed, it was used to get the data about the curriculum used by the English teacher, the techniques being used

by the English teacher in teaching writing, the difference between female and male students' English learning, especially writing, and the format of the writing test that has been held by the English teacher.

One of the important data that was needed in doing a research was documentation. Arikunto (1996:206) explains that documentation is a data collection method conducted by investigating documentary resources (written materials) such as transcripts, books, newspapers, magazines, meeting results, etc. In this research, the documentation was used to collect the supporting data about the names of respondents and the facility of the school.

## **RESEARCH FINDING AND DISCUSSIONS**

It is important for the writer to know the school facilities and the names of the respondents. This research was conducted at SMP 4 Genteng. The school facilities were used as documentation in this research because the school facilities influenced the students' English achievement. If the school facilities were complete, the students would motivate in learning English.

The data were gained on May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2012 based on the needed data; it was known that the total number of the eight grade students of SMP 4 Genteng in the 2011/2012 academic year is 219 students divided into 7 classes

The interview was done to get the supporting data about the writing teaching and learning process at SMP 4 Genteng. It was conducted on 24<sup>th</sup> May 2012. As the interviewee, The English teacher was invited and given some questions related to the information needed. According to the English teacher, the curriculum used to teach English at this school is curriculum 2006 that requires the teacher to teach four English skills and give opportunity for the English teacher to be more creative in teaching the lesson. She said that SMP 4 Genteng used a BSE text book that was suitable with the curriculum and provided some exercises to evaluate the students. Besides, the supplementary books were also used to support the English teaching and learning process such as those published by Intan Pariwara.

The problem which was found by the students was the students still had difficulty to develop their ideas in writing; it was because of their lack of vocabulary, prior knowledge and low ability to correlate the clues written by the writer.

The students' test was collected by using writing test in the form of subjective test. It was conducted on Thursday, May 24<sup>th</sup> 2012. The test form was descriptive paragraph writing, which were gathered from the respondents. After reading their paragraph writing, the researcher analyzed the errors from the content of the paragraph writing. The students were asked to write a descriptive paragraph which consisted of at least 10-15 sentences.

The topics were chosen by respondents varied in numbers. The topic "My Pet" was the most familiar topic chosen among the respondents. There were 16 respondents chose it to be developed into the paragraphs. Then, followed by the topic "My School" that was chosen by 10 respondents. Next, "My Idol" was chosen by 6 respondents. There were 2 topics that were chosen only by 5 respondents each. They were "My Best friend" and "My Home". One topic that was not chosen by any respondents was "My unforgettable holiday".

Related to the research problem, there are 4 types of syntactical errors in Descriptive Paragraph Writing made by the Seventh Grade Students at SMP 4 Genteng. They were tabulated based on the classification of the syntactical errors such as the simple present tense errors, The misuse of using articles (a, an, the), the misuse of using preposition (in, on, at), the misuse of word order.

According to the error classification and consider the percentage of each type of syntactical error types, it was found that the highest number of syntactical errors occurred in the descriptive paragraph writing in the research was the simple present tense errors with 38.29% in the medium classification level, the other type was the misuse of articles With 30.85% in the medium classification level. The following errors were the misuse of word order with 18.08% in the very low classification level, the misuse of prepositions with the 12.76% in the very low classification level. The recapitulation of the results of consulting the percentage of the syntactical error types to the table of the classification level can be seen in the table, and the chart below.

The eight year students in SMPN 4 Genteng in the 2012/2013 academic year are 219 students. They are divided into 7 classes namely VIIA, VIIB, VIIC, VIID, VIIE, VIIF, and VIIG. The seventh year students in SMPN 4 Genteng are taught English by one English teacher two times in a week and they are taught English based on the School Based Curriculum (KTSP) 2006.

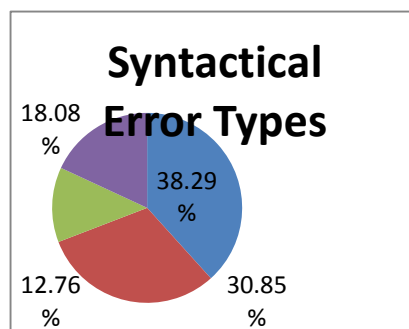


Chart 3. The Results of Consulting the Percentage to the Chart of the Classification Level

From the results of the data analysis, it could be seen that the syntactical error type predominating the other types was the misuse of simple present tense errors with 38.29% in the medium classification level; some of the misuse of using simple present tense in this research were characterized by the subject – verb agreement, agreement errors happened when a plural noun intervenes between a singular subject and its verb is that “ a singular subject takes a singular verb and a plural subject takes a plural verb” in this research, the subject verb agreement errors happened when the students used a singular subject followed by a plural verb and a plural subject followed by singular verb. In some sentences, the students also did misformation errors. Misformation error happen, when a learner added the auxiliary be (is, am, are) in the simple present tense with the main verb in their sentences.

From the interview with the English teacher of the seventh year students of SMP 4 Genteng, it was known that the use of simple present tense was the main problem faced by the students in writing a descriptive paragraph. The finding in this research was supported by the fact stated by the teacher. In short, it could be said that the students made errors most frequently in the using of to be (am, is, are) and the subject-verb agreement because the students were still confused to differentiate the use of singular subject followed by a plural verb and a plural subject followed by singular verb in the sentences. This provided a warning to the English teacher of the seventh year students of SMP 4 Genteng to pay more attention in teaching grammar. In writing a descriptive paragraph, the learners often concentrated on the development of the paragraph and ignored the grammar of the sentences. It led the occurrence of the grammatical errors, mainly the syntactical errors.

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the results of the test, it could be concluded that in writing descriptive paragraph, The types of syntactical errors made by the seventh class of SMP 4 Genteng in the 2011/2012 academic year were: the simple present tense error, the misuse of articles, the misuse of preposition, and the misuse of word order. The highest number of syntactical errors made by the seventh class of SMP 4 Genteng in the 2011/2012 academic year was the misuse of simple present tense with 38.29% among the The misuse of using articles with 30.85%, the misuse of prepositions with 12.76% and the misuse of word order with 18.08 %.

Based on the research results, some suggestions are proposed to the English teacher, the students, and the other researchers. The english teacher should give more explanation, practices, as well as feedback about syntactical especially the use of simple present tense and the others syntactical errors in descriptive text writing to the students. The researcher also suggest to the future researchers to conduct the same research in different language skill or expand this research using experimental research.

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