Syntactic Errors in Descriptive Paragraphs by Native Indonesian-Speaking Students of English

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Abstract

Syntax was very necessary to develop by the students in learning a language. This study aimed to identify the kinds and manners of syntactic errors about the English phrases in the students' descriptive paragraphs. The English phrases dealt with categories and functions. The categories included noun phrase, verb phrase, adjective phrase, adverb phrase, and prepositional phrase, and the functions included subject, predicate, object, complement, and adjunct. The research findings indicated that the native Indonesian-speaking students of English at Faculty of Letters UMI Makassar made 16 kinds of syntactic errors, such as

identifier, be auxiliary, do auxiliary, word form, word class, and passive form. The findings also indicated that they made 18 manners of syntactic errors, such as misuse of verb form, omission of identifier, misuse of singular noun, omission of be, misuse of word order, misuse of identifier, and misuse of prepositional phrase as a subject. It was concluded that the phrases were the main problems in learning English because there were different strings of words from their Indonesian native language. The implications were that the syntactic structure became the parts of discussion in the teaching and learning process.

Keywords: Syntactic errors, Phrases, Descriptive paragraphs

1. Introduction

Syntax is one of the structural linguistics in which the students need to develop in learning English. It is one of the important subjects for making them capable to speak and write accurately. Its areas cover the English phrases and clauses. Generally, the English phrases consist of five types: noun phrase (NP), verb phrase (VP), adjective phrase (Adj P), adverb phrase (Adv P), and prepositional phrase (Prep P). Then, the English clauses include independent and dependent clauses.

The scope of syntax also covers the analyses. Those analyses might be done by using bracketed, immediate constituent, and tree diagram ways. Each of these has a definite use to make the students understand for identifying and classifying the syntactic categories with their functions. Thus, syntax needs knowledge and skills.

It is important to know that the entry behaviors of syntax are grammar and morphology. The students' problems to achieve the performance of this subject will be found if they do not have basic competence of the given behaviors. Then, for the purpose of getting a good command of the English clauses, it is necessary for them to be familiar with the English phrases as the basic competence because the construction of clauses must be filled by the definite categories of phrases.

The students' competence of English syntax can assist them to write essays. The problems to organize ideas in writing or even in speaking can be overcome because this sort of competence functions as a guide to put the words in correct positions. Therefore, syntactic errors that are found in the students' paragraphs can be made use of the developments of instructional materials from the views of related subjects.

In this study, the material objects include all phrases that are used in the students' descriptive paragraphs. The results of their paragraphs are examined whether or not they contain syntactic errors about the constructions of phrases. The given English phrases consist of NP, VP, Adj P, Adv P, and Prep P. Finally, the syntactic evidence of the findings is expected to indicate how the given phrase types are constructed in their descriptive paragraphs, so that planning and development for any instruction can be done for the progress in their language learning.

1.1 The Phrase Constructions and Syntactic Errors

Jackson (1985) categorizes five types of phrases in English. They are noun phrase, verb phrase, adjective phrase, adverb phrase, and prepositional phrase. The English noun phrase (NP) is potentially constructed by a pre-modifier, a head, and a post-modifier. The clause 'The people will meet the manager in fifteen minutes' can be identified its categories and functions. The people and the manager are NPs. The first NP functions as a subject (The people) and the second one functions as an object (the manager). The head of NP is a noun, and this head-noun makes an NP distinctive from the other phrases in English. Definite article 'the' in an NP (The people, the manager) is classified as identifier (id). It is one of the pre-modifiers of an NP.

The predicate of the above clause is a VP, consisting of mod+v (modal+verb), that is 'will meet'. The word 'will' is one of the modal auxiliaries, and the word 'meet' is a lexical verb (simple form). It is understood that only this type is used to fill the predicate function. The last function of this clause is adjunct (A). It is constructed by prep+NP, that is 'in a few minutes' (A: Prep P); in (prep) fifteen minutes (NP); fifteen (quant) minutes (H). The full word of 'quant' is a quantifier that is a kind of determiner to indicate a numeral item, such as three, fifteen, third, many, much, and a few, and that of 'H' is a head.

Herndon (1976) states that the workings of the determiner class of function words are described in some details under the form class which they appear. The most commonly used members of this category are *the, a, an*, and *some*. Such words have been defined as those having little or no lexical meaning. They are categorized as function words.

It is also denoted by Jackson (1985) that a specific order of pre-modification in a noun phrase is as follows: identifier-numeral/quantifier-adjective-noun modifier, as for example: 'these five charming country cottages'. The example of this NP can be analyzed as 'these five charming country cottages' (NP); these (id) five (num/quant) charming (adj) country (noun-M) cottages' (H).

If the order of pre-modifiers in a noun phrase, for instance, is not done such as the rule instructed by Jackson above, the constructions of an NP contain syntactic errors. The kinds of syntactic errors in descriptive paragraphs are investigated in this study. Besides, the ways of phrase constructions are further investigated in order to give solutions. It is known that demonstrative adjective (e.g. these) is put before a quantifier (e.g. five), but a syntactic error cannot be protected if the students do not know this rule (e.g. *five these* charming country cottages).

The following examples also demonstrate the syntactic errors for phrases that might be used by the students in writing or even in speaking: *many* work, *much* activity, *many *problem*, *the building *high*, *the second *persons*, *the five *book*, *an* university, *can *to* do, *is *buy*, etc. They still cannot differentiate between the use of: 'many' and 'much' as the quantifiers, ordinal and cardinal numbers, 'an' and 'a' articles as identifiers, to infinitive and bare infinitive, verb forms, etc. Therefore, the first semester students are expected to give evidence about the syntactic errors to the lecturers for the development of instructional materials.

The English sentences consist of syntactic constituents, let us say, the phrases. For example, in a sentence (an independent clause) 'The people who are standing there will meet the manager in fifteen minutes' contain two types of clauses, i.e.: (1) The people will meet the manager in fifteen minutes   (independent clause), and (2) who are standing there (dependent clause). The syntactic structure of this sentence is SPOA (Subject, Predicate, Object, and Adjunct). The clauses can be further analyzed by using brackets as follows: The people who are standing there (S: NP) will meet (P: VP) the manager (O: NP) in fifteen minutes (A: Prep P).

It is interesting to discuss further that the example above demonstrates the functions and categories of the English phrases. To recall that the NP category has been used twice to fill

the S and O functions. The VP is only used to fill the P function, and the Prep P is used to fill the A function. And then, dependent clause (specifically the relative clause) is used as a post modifier of an NP, that is: 'The people who are standing there'. The noun 'people' is classified as a head (H).

Jackson (1985) states that the S function is normally filled by an NP; the V (P) function is always filled by a VP; the object function may be filled by either an NP or a Prep P; the C function may be filled by either an NP or an Adj P; and the A function is filled by an Adv P, a Prep P, or an NP. The A is normally an optional element in a clause structure, so it may be freely added to any clause.

Like an NP, the English adjective phrase (Adj P) has a specific order of words; that is intens adv+adj (H)+Post-M, as for example in a phrase 'very diligent to work in the office'. Using brackets to analyze this phrase runs as follows: very diligent to work in the office (Adj P); very (intens adv) diligent (H) to work in the office' (Post-M); to work (inf Cl) in the office' (Prep P); at (prep) home (NP). The head of an Adj P must be an adjective. And, it is the minimal construction of an Adj P that consists of one adjective as a head. Then, the constituent 'very' in the given phrase represents the other identifying adverbs in English. The constituents 'to work in the office' consist of two post modifiers (Post-M), namely 'to work' and 'in the office'.

An adverb is one of the word classes. It has three important functions in English. Similarly, it is remarked by De Boer (1982) that adverbs are words that modify the other words in sentences (usually adjectives, verbs, or other adverbs). There are some characteristics that are of importance to classify adverbs. The two of them are the classification as adverbs of manner (angrily, eagerly), adverbs of time (lately, immediately), adverbs of place (near, there), and adverbs of degree (very, too) and that as having mobility as modifiers, i.e.: their positions may be at the beginning of sentences, at the end of sentences, and between nouns and verbs.

The English adverb phrase (Adv P) has the same specific order of words as an Adj P does, that is intens adv+adv (H)+Post-M. The head of an Adv P must be an adverb. And, it is the minimal construction of an Adv P that consists of one adverb as a head. The sentence 'The people in that country worked very hard two years ago' contains an Adv P, i.e.: is 'very hard'. Using brackets to analyze this phrase runs as follows: very hard (Adv P); very (intens adv) hard (adv (H)) two years ago (NP); two (quant) years N-Mod ago (H).

Unlike the other English phrases, the prepositional phrase (Prep P) does not have a head, but it has its own construction. Thus, a Prep P is constructed with 'prep+NP (id+H)'. This pattern can be exemplified as follows: 'near the old building', 'before the library', 'in your room', at the end, for the first meeting, etc. A syntactic analysis of the phrase 'near the old building' can be done by using brackets as follows: near the old building (Prep P); near (prep) the old building (NP); the (id) old (adj) building (H).

The prepositional phrase may function as a post modifier of an NP. As for example in an NP 'a high building in my town', it contains a post modifier, namely 'in my town' (Prep P). The

phrase 'in my town' functions to modify an NP 'a high building'. Besides, this Prep P may also function as an adjunct (A) of a VP. As for example in a clause 'John has worked in my town', it contains an adjunct, namely 'in my town' (Prep P). The phrase 'in my town' is used to modify a VP 'has worked'. Thus, it functions as an adjunct in a clause.

1.2 Language, Syntax and Paragraph Writing

The students who take English as their major are expected to be able to get along in writing paragraphs, compositions, and/or essays, in understanding spoken and written discourses, and in communicating their thoughts, messages, feelings, etc. This is true of the case to set up their thoughts in language production because they cannot focus on content and also on form at the same time. If their attention focuses on the content, they will show limited performance on the language form and use. The problems of language form and use are concerned with the problems of syntax. Thus, the syntactic errors should be minimized in the students' writing and speaking.

It is quite often found that people are generally unaware of its structure or organization, but without structure or pattern, written or spoken communication would be impossible. Clearly, language is patterned or rule-governed behavior. The knowledge of linguistic structure is referred to as *competence*, whereas the realization of this knowledge in actual event is called *performance* (Titone and Danesi, 1985). The matters of competence and performance are obviously crucial in learning a language. In this study, the students' competence of phrases is examined through syntactic view whether or not the errors are performed in their descriptive paragraphs.

The linguists have agreed that a language should be viewed as a system, i.e. a set of elements. Each has a function of contributing to the workings of the whole. Among communicative occurrences, the concerns of pragmatics are dealt with by exploring the attitudes of producers (intentionality) and receivers (acceptability) and the communicative settings (situationality) (De Beaugrande, 1981). Therefore, pragmatics is a branch of linguistics that discusses the copes of language structure as a means of communication among the interlocutors.

English is the first foreign language which is very seldom used for communication in any time, although two parties of communication understand English. Other foreign languages are only used by a particular group of people. The Indonesian language is a very important language as a *lingua franca*. English and Indonesian are two different languages and they certainly have different systems or rules. The main differences are for examples, found in phrase patterns as the syntactic rules, especially in noun phrases (NP) and verb phrases (VP).

It is clear that language is patterned or rule-governed behavior. Language as pattern is, in fact, easily recognized as soon as linguistic rules are violated. To know a language implies that one has internalized the set of rules that specify word and sentence formation, phonetic combination, etc. (Titone and Danesi, 1985).

Bell (1987) points out that the linguist sees a language as form, namely sounds or letters and their combinations into larger units, such as words, sentences, and so forth. This is the problem of syntax in a language form. To Harrison (1987), syntax is the one dealing with the

way in which words are put together to express ideas sensibly.

In this connection, we say that syntax is one of the fundamental subjects in English department. By understanding the English syntactic structure, the students can make the English clauses accurately. They can identify and correct the grammatical errors in English. The students consider that syntax is not easy, but it is enjoyable to learn. It is very essential to master for the sake of communicating thoughts and feelings to other people in accurate way. Por and Spivak (2000: 3) state that various modes, aspects, and the future tense are expressed analytically rather than morphologically.

Syntax is the sentence patterns of language. Knowing a language also means having ability to combine morphemes and words together to express a particular meaning. That part of linguistic knowledge which is concerning the structure of sentences is called syntax (Fromkin and Rodman, 1983).

In syntactic evidence, the sixth semester (level 3) students have got greater accurate performance than their inaccuracy (54.97% > 36.34%). Anyhow, there are still a number of non-productive features of syntactic evidence, i.e.: future tense, perfective aspect, simple past, past perfect, and present perfect voices, and interrogative of indicative and purpose of subjunctive moods. The implication of the above statements suggests that those students be trained seriously to acquire morphological categories and a few of syntactic categories with their related features, so that they will be able to use these categories with their features in their interactive utterances (Basri, 2005). Then, another case is stated as a problem by Al-Badawi (2012) that Saudi students of English as a foreign language at King Khalid University commit certain phonetic, morphological and syntactic errors when using English in different environments.

The research results presented by Zawahreh (2012) show a number of errors of each type: function words, morphology, syntax, tenses, words-order and lexical. Errors of syntax are sequence of tense, errors in using progressives, omission of verb to be, omission of the main verb, omission of to, addition of to and passive voice. Similarly, Liu and Xu (2013) remark that some students in their writing make some syntactic errors, like errors in tense and voice and agreement errors quite frequently yet unconsciously. It will be helpful for the teachers if they design some essay revising exercises for the students in order to increase their awareness of such errors and urge them to become more careful when producing English sentences.

The English verb phrase (VP) is generally constructed by auxiliary and lexical verb. In a syntactic category, the VP minimally consists of one word as a head, that is a lexical or a non-lexical verb, as for examples in these clauses: (1) 'All workers <u>understand</u> the situation'; (2) 'They <u>are</u> in the office now'. The underlining words are called the VPs, even though each consists of only one word or constituent. The VP 'understand' is a lexical verb and the VP 'are' is a non-lexical verb. The constituent 'are' does not have any meaning, but it has a grammatical function. The entity of 'are' functions to make a statement because there is no statement (clause) in English without a verb. Accordingly, Fromkin and Rodman (1983) state that when you know a language, you do not only know what the constituents in the sentences are, but you also know how those constituents function in that language.

Related to the existence of verb in a clause, it is significant to note what Hudson (2001) states that the verb is the most important word-class of all. Verbs are important because: (1) The root of a sentence is normally a finite verb; (2) Verbs have more complex valencies than any other word classes and provide more 'syntactic glue' that holds the sentence together; and (3) Verbs have a richer system than any other class.

In theoretical and descriptive study in sentence or clause types, mood is especially used for the verbs to make reference to syntactic and semantic contrasts signaled by alternative paradigms of verb, e.g. indicative, subjunctive, and imperative moods. Semantically, it is concerned with the speaker's attitudes towards the factual content of his utterance, e.g. uncertainty, definiteness, vagueness, and possibility (Crystal, 1987).

Then, the English writing skills are very complex. With reference to these complex areas, greater efforts are obviously required to highlight the development of the teaching and learning processes. Evidently, the teaching of writing skills meets problems to adhere to these areas to be acquired at once. Instead, the purpose of teaching that limits itself to specific areas will involve the discovery of some others. For instances, the teaching of paragraph organization may also involve the ability to use vocabulary, grammar, syntax, etc. These aspects are essential to serve the writing of paragraphs and any piece of writing. Therefore, the learning of a language involves acquiring the ability to compose correct sentences and understanding of which sentences, or parts of sentences are appropriate in a particular context.

2. Materials and Methods

The variables observed in this research consisted of the kinds and the manners of syntactic errors about phrases that had been made in the students' descriptive paragraphs. Thus, the research issues had been oriented to the learning products. The English phrases dealt with the categories (NP, VP, Adj P, Adv P, and Prep P) and the functions (SPOCA). The features of phrase categories were used as the indicators to investigate the kinds and the manners of syntactic errors in the phrase constructions. The indicators of variables included all modifiers of phrases that were possibly used in any phrase construction. It was necessary to recall that the students' descriptive paragraphs contained clauses and clauses were built by the use of phrases because each phrase had its own function in clause construction.

The population of this research consisted of the first semester students of the English department of Faculty of Letters, UMI Makassar. Those students took English as their major subject. This research used a purposive sampling technique that determined 14 pieces of the students' work. Their work contained descriptive paragraphs in which their ideas were constructed and developed from words to phrases, and then to clauses. Then, the criteria for sampling were clear and original. The work was clear when it was not difficult to understand the ideas and the phrase constructions. The work was original because the ideas and the phrase constructions were made by the students themselves.

The test had been used as a research instrument for assessing the students' proficiency to write descriptive paragraphs. The students were instructed to write paragraphs by choosing

one of the topics: Economy, Law, Environment, and Agriculture. The allocation of time used for doing the test was 60 minutes.

The sources of data had been gathered from the students of the English department. The categories of data were qualitative (phrases in descriptive paragraphs) and quantitative (after grouping and calculating the syntactic errors). The qualitative data were cross-sectional because the substances of the five types of English phrases had been gathered immediately in a certain period of time. A number of data consisted of 54 items but some items had sub-items. Those items were considerably taken as the accurate data to be processed and interpreted in the findings.

The procedures of data analysis were conducted as follows:

2.1 Pre-Analysis

The raw data were examined in order to determine the categories of phrases. Those data were put as tables for making the parsing clear.

2.2 The Analysis

The given categories were classified in order to determine the kinds of syntactic errors about phrases and the manners of syntactic errors about phrases that had been made in their descriptive paragraphs. The classifications of syntactic errors were further described briefly in a specified column of the table. Classifications had been done for the purpose of exploring the ways of syntactic errors discovered in the phrase constructions. Finally, the phrase categories and errors with their descriptions were grouped, calculated, and computed in percentage rates.

2.3 Post-Analysis

The kinds and manners of syntactic errors about phrases constructed in the students' descriptive paragraphs were tabulated. The contents of tables were exposed for the sake of the providing the statements. The empirical provisions were organized and interpreted for coining the research statements for the instructional contributions.

3. Results and Discussion

The research findings refer to research questions and objectives of the study. The discussions are also provided for the findings with the coherent links about the focuses on the research variables and their indicators.

3.1 The Kinds of Syntactic Errors

The kinds of syntactic errors about phrases in the students' descriptive paragraphs have been grouped and calculated in Table 1 as follows:

Table 1. The Kinds of Syntactic Errors

No	Features	Quantity	Per cent (%)
1	Adj P id	1	1.52
2	Adv P prep	2	3.03
3	Adv P word form	1	1.52
4	NP Adj word class	1	1.52
5	NP Id	8	12.12
6	NP Id+singular	5	7.57
7	NP plural	1	1.52
8	NP prep	1	1.52
9	NP quant+singular	5	7.57
10	NP word order	5	7.57
11	Prep P S function	2	3.03
12	VP aux 'be'	14	21.21
13	VP aux 'do'	1	1.52
14	VP N word class	2	3.03
15	VP passive	5	7.57
16	VP V form	12	18.18
	Total	66	100

Table 1 above indicates the kinds of syntactic errors made in descriptive paragraphs by native Indonesian-speaking students of English at the Faculty of Letters UMI Makassar. There are 16 kinds of these errors.   Based on the kinds of errors, it can be seen that VP aux 'be' (VP) is the greatest one, that is 21.21%. For examples, the students write 'That place *called Balitsereal; … there *is *green house, garden, and a field …; and Balitsereal *always visited by the students … . Then, the greater syntactic errors is V form (VP), that is 18.18%. The examples of this kind of error are as follows: Jakarta as a metropolitan city in Indonesia *have the worst …; … and it *cause many problems there; … you *must waiting for a long time; and **…** and farmer *must always to keep … . And, the great percentage of syntactic errors is found in identifier (Id) of NP (12.12%). The examples of errors written by the students are Indonesian country is *law country, …; *These environment must be kept clean …; and Farmers buy *his farming purpose … .

The fewer syntactic errors that the students have made in their descriptive paragraphs are Id+singular (NP), quant+singular (NP), word order (NP), and passive (VP). The percentage rate of each of these kinds is 7.57%.   The examples of Id+singular (NP) are In the world there are *many a good place, …; … in Barandasi *one of village in Maros; and Agriculture is *one of activity form … . The examples of quant+singular (NP) are … we can look *much rice field …; … *many farmer, sailor, …; and *In country of Indonesia, there are *many law … . The examples of word order (NP) are … there are *field corn …; *Function law *is has controlled media; and … there *are water in *the field rice … ; and those of passive (VP) are … because the drainages *are stop from rubbish; Law *can bought; and Law *can be buy.

The above table also contains the fewest syntactic errors that the students have made in their descriptive paragraphs, for examples, prep (Adv P), word form (Adv P), plural (NP), S function (Prep P), and aux 'do' (VP). The examples are as follows: … many people *in here … (prep (Adv P)); If law happened *with good without difference … (word form (Adv P)); … many too from *others religion, like …(plural (NP)); *In Indonesia has two types of

seasons function (Prep P)); and They *<u>not seem</u> quite … (aux 'do' (VP)).

3.2 The Manners of Syntactic Errors

The manners of syntactic errors about phrases made in the students' descriptive paragraphs have been grouped and calculated in Table 2 as follows:

Table 2. The Manners of Syntactic Errors

No	Features	Quantity	Per cent (%)
1	misuse of Id	5	7.35
2	misuse of adj word class	1	1.47
3	misuse of be	7	10.30
4	misuse of do	1	1.47
5	misuse of sing N	8	11.76
6	misuse of N word class	2	2.94
7	misuse of passive form	1	1.47
8	misuse of plural for adj	1	1.47
9	misuse of prep	2	2.94
10	misuse of Prep P as a subject	2	2.94
11	misuse of quant	1	1.47
12	misuse of V form	13	19.12
13	misuse of word form	1	1.47
14	misuse of word order	5	7.35
15	omission of be	7	10.30
16	omission of do as aux	1	1.47
17	omission of Id	9	13.24
18	omission of prep	1	1.47
	Total	68	100

The four greatest errors in terms of syntactic errors about the English phrases made in the students' descriptive paragraphs are presented in the above table; they are misuse of V form (19.12%), omission of Id (13.24%), misuse of sing N (11.76%), and omission of be (10.30%). The manners of these syntactic errors are exemplified below.

The examples of syntactic errors about misuse of V form are … and farmer *<u>must always to keep</u> … (… and farmer <u>must always keep</u> …); and … you *<u>must waiting</u> for a long time (… you <u>must wait</u> for a long time). The students use 'to infinitive form'   after modal auxiliary, present participle of the verb after modal auxiliary, and present form of the verb after primary auxiliary in the passive form.   The correct uses of verbs are given in brackets.

The examples of syntactic errors about omission of Id are (1) Indonesian country is *<u>law country</u>, …; (2) Because, environment is *<u>place</u> …; and (3) Agriculture is *<u>one of activity form</u> … . In example 1, there is the omission of identifier, that is 'a' which should be put before 'law country'; therefore, the sentence should be 'The Indonesian country is a law country, … '. In the second example, the same manner of error occurs, because the omission of identifier occurs, but the phrase should be 'a place'. The third example shows the omission of 'the' as an identifier. The sentence should run as 'Agriculture is one of the activity forms …' .

The other examples of syntactic errors are about misuse of sing N (11.76%). Those errors are

In the world there are *many a good place, …; … there are *trees and many other; and … in Barandasi *one of village in Maros. The given errors are corrected as follows: In the world there are many good places, … there are trees and many others ; and … Barandasi is one of the villages in Maros. The problems of errors here are about the clash between the use of quantifier and singular noun: [quant+sing N]. The quantifier 'many' should be followed by a plural noun, for instances: many places and many others. The example 'one of the villages' has a pattern with [one of the+plural N].

And then, the syntactic errors about omission of be are exemplified by these: (1) … that problem *is can't finished; (2) Price of basic commodities *more expensive …; and (3) That place *called Balitsereal. The given syntactic errors are corrected as (1) … that problem can't be finished; (2) Price of basic commodities is more expensive …; and (3) That place is called Balitsereal.

Table 2 above also includes the fewest errors, such as misuse of adj word class, misuse of do, misuse of passive form, misuse of plural for adj, and misuse of quant.   The percentage rate for each is 1.47%. An example of each manner of syntactic errors is as follows: *Law in Indonesian is very good but … (misuse of adj word class); … *the result the river *so dirty and *didn't healthy (misuse of do); So, the government *must be finished the crises (misuse of passive form); … many too from *others religion, like … (misuse of plural for adj); and   … we can look *much rice field …   (misuse of quant). Each of the given errors are corrected as Law in Indonesia is very good but …; … the result of the river is so dirty and isn't healthy; So, the government must finish the crises; … many too from the other religions, like …; and   … we can look many rice fields … .

4. Conclusion

The native Indonesian-speaking students of English at the Faculty of Letters UMI Makassar make 16 kinds of syntactic errors about the English phrases in their descriptive paragraphs. Based on these syntactic errors, the greatest percentage is the auxiliary 'be' (21.21%); the greater one is the verb form (18.18%); and the great one is identifier of NP (12.12%). These three kinds of syntactic errors are principally introduced to the students in learning a language. They also make 18 manners of syntactic errors about the English phrases in their descriptive paragraphs. Based on these syntactic errors, there are four greatest errors about the English phrases; they are misuse of verb form (19.12%), omission of identifier (13.24%), misuse of singular noun (11.76%), and omission of 'be' (10.30%). These four manners of syntactic errors are principally introduced to the students in learning a language. Therefore, these kinds and manners of errors should be minimized and given emphasis in teaching English, so that the students can develop their competence of syntactic matters. The implication is that all kinds and manners of syntactic errors become the parts for discussions in the teaching and learning process.

Acknowledgements

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