CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Problems

Language is one of the methods of communication. Language has its components that construct it, and there are many languages all over the world, whether local, national, or international languages. English is one of the international languages. Many countries use it as their national language; therefore, most people in the world use it to communicate with people of other countries, which makes it one of the international languages.

English is one of the world's most widely spoken languages. Studied by millions of people around the world, it plays an important role in many fields, including communication, business, education, technology, and entertainment. It is also the official or dominant language in many countries, and most scientific and technical information is delivered in this language. In the context of globalization, English proficiency is often considered a highly valuable asset, opening doors to educational opportunities, careers, and cross-cultural interactions.

In learning English, we need to learn about linguistics. Linguistics is a scientific study of language; that is, it's studied through regular investigations, which can be empirically proved by the general theory of language structure. It has several levels, namely: phonology, morphology, semantics, pragmatics, discourse analysis, and syntax.

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Syntax is a sub-discipline of linguistics that studies the relationship between words in speech, including phrase structure, clause structure, and sentence structure in a language. Syntax refers to the set of rules that govern sentence structure in a language. It determines how words and phrases are arranged to form grammatically correct and meaningful sentences (Arifin, 2009:1). Syntax is the study of the rules governing the way words are combined to form sentences in a language. This science is centered on combining words to produce sentences in certain languages with correct grammar. Therefore, learning syntax can help students improve their understanding of the structure of English systematically, and students must have a good understanding of grammar and its units of words, phrases, and sentences to understand syntax.

Tree diagrams are a great method of understanding syntax. They are used in generative grammar as a means of displaying the internal hierarchical structure of sentences. Its advantage lies in showing the syntactic relationships between sentence units; moreover, functional relations are obviously described by this technique.

A noun phrase is a group of words that functions like a noun in a sentence and is part of syntax, the study of how words form phrases, clauses, sentences, and texts. It is a language construction consisting of a noun and other words such as adjectives, determiners, or prepositions that form a single unit that has a complete meaning. It is the basic structure in syntax and is commonly found in various sentences.

Tree diagrams on noun phrases are still used in the English Study Program Islamic University of Indragiri, especially for the third semester students. However, learning syntax using a tree diagram is not easy for some students. They found it difficult in some cases.

Based on the researcher's observation, most of the students admit that they have difficulty learning it, and they sometimes get confused in determining the tree diagrams. Not only that, students should also be able to understand tree diagrams because, learning them, they can distinguish each word in a noun phrase.

Based on the above, the researcher examined how their abilities are and whether they have high or low abilities in using the tree diagrams. *"The Students' Ability in Using Tree Diagrams at the Third Semester of English Study Program Islamic University of Indragiri"* is set as the title of this research.

B. Identification of the Problem

Based on the background of the problems described earlier, the following problems can be identified:

1. Some students have said that learning tree diagrams on noun phrases is difficult.

2. Most students are confused about how to determine tree diagrams on noun phrases.

3. Some students unsure their ability to understand tree diagrams on noun phrases.

C. Limitation of the Problems

Based on the problem identification above, the researcher has decided to limit the problem. This research has focused on finding answers to whether students have high or low abilities in learning tree diagrams on noun phrases because researcher want to differentiate with previous research and it is also one of the important components in sentences.

D. Research Question

Based on the research, the researcher set the research questions to be answered, namely, "How is the students' ability in using tree diagrams on noun phrases at the third semester of English Study Program of Islamic University of Indragiri?"

E. Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this study was to determine how the students' ability to learn tree diagrams on noun phrases at the third semester of the English Study Program of Islamic University of Indragiri.

F. Significances of the Research

Hopefully this research will provide many meanings for students, lecturers, and researcher; they are:

1. For the Students

It is hoped that through this research, the students found out how their ability in using tree diagrams on noun phrases. Then they can decide what to do for the next step in improving the ability to learn tree diagrams in other sentences, and they can also form clear and informative sentence structure.

2. For the Lecturers

This study has provided information to lecturers regarding students' ability to learn tree diagrams on noun phrases. In addition, this has helped lecturers determine which strategies and methods have helped them in teaching tree diagrams.

3. For the researcher

After conducting this research, the researcher increased his knowledge of noun phrase tree diagrams.

G. **Definition of Key Terms**

1. Ability

Ability is the capacity to perform a task or perform a job well because of one's talents, education, or other credentials. "An ability is a power, potential, or competence of someone in doing an activity," states Lelita Agustin (2019:8). It may result from learning something or be inherited. This study focuses on proficiency with tree diagrams.

2. Tree Diagram

A tree diagram is a graphic representation of a sentence or expression's hierarchical structure based on formal grammar principles. Tree diagrams are used to illustrate how certain grammar rules can be utilized to examine and interpret texts or expressions. According to Shaden Shamel Abdullah (2020:573), "Generative grammar uses tree diagrams to show the internal hierarchical structure of sentences." It has the advantage of demonstrating the syntactic linkages between sentence parts; also, this technique clearly describes functional relations. Tree diagrams for noun phrases are the main topic of this study.