

**PROBLEM ENCOUNTERED BY THE STUDENTS IN  
DETERMINING DEEP AND SURFACE STRUCTURE  
(Case Study at English Department in IAIN Cot Kala Langsa)**

**THESIS**

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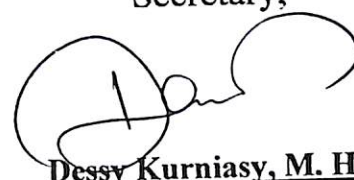
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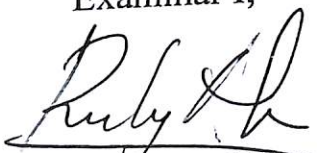
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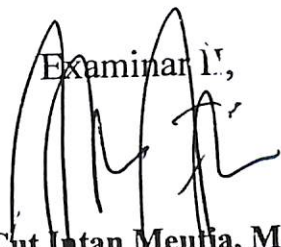
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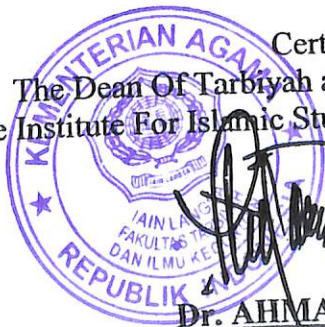
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Langsa, 6<sup>th</sup> February 2016

The writer

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## ABSTRACT

Syntax is the linguistics study which learns about the sentences. Here, the students must know about the structure of sentences and explain about the words classification. The deep structure is the output of the base rule and the input to the semantic component, while surface structure is the sentence which is spoken or written. By doing this research, we will know about students' problem in determining deep and surface structure in the sentences. The research is quantitative descriptive research. The technique in collecting data in here is test and questionnaire. For this research, all of English department students in the seventh semester will be population. It was done because they have studied about syntax in previous semester. Finally, the writer found that most of all students cannot determine deep and surface structure toward some sentences. They only can determine deep structure toward simple sentence in present tense eventough they still made some mistakes. Almost all of English department students who have studied deep structure have many difficulties in determining deep and surface structure, one of them is because they cannot memorize the words categorizations in deep structure. Because of that, we should be more aware and serious in studying syntax, especially in determining deep and surface structure toward some sentences because it is important for us to know the categorization of words in order to know the meaning of the sentence. It avoid us to misunderstand the meaning of sentences which sometimes have more than one meaning.

Keyword: syntax, deep structure, surface structure



# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### A. Background of the study

Studying English is not only study about 4 (four) skills, but also we must know about the linguistic of that language. Learning linguistics means that we learn about a language deeply. We study about the meaning and structure of the sentence. One of the linguistics branches is syntax. Syntax is the linguistics study which learns about the sentences. Here, the students must know about the structure of sentences and explain about the words classification in it.

In the standard theory, the syntactic component generated a deep structure and the surface structure for every sentence. The deep structure is the output of the base rules and the input to the semantic component, while surface structure is what is in your mind or you write and say.<sup>1</sup> In another word, deep structure is a structure which is in the mind of the speaker and had a complete meaning, while surface structure is the sentence which is spoken or written. In deep structure, the true meaning of what we want to say is kept on people's mind, for instance when someone wanted to convey his/her idea to other people, she/he need to express it in a sentence so that it can be understood by other people. That is the reason why the

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<sup>1</sup>Trevor A. Harley, *The Psychology of Language: From Data to Theory*, (New York: Psychology Press, 2014), 42

students need to learn deep and surface structure to minimize the misunderstanding in conveying what they goal.

In English department at IAIN Cot Kala Langsa, students are obligated to take syntax lesson in accomplishing their study. Syntax is taken in the fifth semester of their study. In this case, the English department students must learn about the sentence structure and parse it in a sentence. They need to really understand about how to compose a good sentence with a complete meaning. It is very important for them because they will be an English teacher for the next. In the future, they will teach students how to make a good sentence. Here, their knowledge about syntax will help them. By studying syntax, they will know about the classification of word and the structure of a sentence. They will not be able to teach English to students if they do not know about the English sentence structure well. It is hard to imagine how sentences of the complexity typical in technical writing could be understood without utilizing syntactic restriction to select the correct analysis.<sup>2</sup> Because of that, syntax becomes very important for English department students and they have to master this lesson so that they will become a good English teacher.

Syntax is the arrangements of words to show their relationship to one another in a sentence. Syntax rules govern proper sentence structure. Every sentence exists on two level, deep and surface structure. Deep structure is the underlying meaning of the sentence and surface structure is

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<sup>2</sup> Ralph Grishman, *Computational Linguistics*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 11

the actual spoken sentence. A single deep structure idea can be expressed in many different surface structures, for example:

Deep Structure: Boy kisses the girl

Surface structure: The boy kissed the girl. the boy was kissing the girl. The girl was kissed by the boy.

The deep structure gives the semantic component of a sentence, while the surface structure gives the proper phonological information to express that thought.<sup>3</sup> In syntax lesson, the students are supposed to be able in making difference between both of them and able to determining deep and surface structure towards some sentences.

But in real condition, the writer found that many students faced some difficulties in understanding this lesson. For them, this is so complicated to analyze the sentence based on its structure. Based on the writer's experience, syntax is very difficult because we have to parse a sentence by doing deep and surface structure. There are many classifications of words which students must know. It is hard to determining the deep and surface structure if we do not understand about the classifications of the word. Based on the students' syntax score, they got high and medium score but we could not rely on that result because it might be gotten by cheating during examination. As the writer's experience and observation, the students could not really understand about syntax particularly in determining deep and surface structure.

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<sup>3</sup>Trevor A. Harley, *The Psychology of Language: From Data to Theory*, (New York: Psychology Press, 2014), 51

Based on the explanation above, the writer wanted to make a research entitle “**Problem Encountered by the Students in Determining Deep and Surface Structure**”.

#### **B. Statement of the Problem**

To identify the problem of the study, the writer has some questions, which are:

1. How is students’ ability in determining deep and surface structure toward some sentences?
2. What are their problems in determining deep and surface structure in the sentences?

#### **C. Objectives of the Study**

In this case, the writer has some purposes in doing this research, they are:

1. To know the ability of students in determining deep and surface structure toward some sentences.
2. To know students’ problem in determining deep and surface structure in the sentences.

#### **D. Significance of the Study**

Absolutely this research has certain purpose that can be useful, either from the reader or the teacher.

### 1. Theoretically

This research will be very useful for the reader because by reading this thesis they will know all about deep and surface structure in syntax. The short and clear information in this thesis about syntax, especially deep and surface structure will make students easy to understand. Beside the explanation of syntax, the writer also attaches some facts about why syntax is difficult to understand and how to solve their problem in determining deep and surface structure. The reader also can get some information about students' ability in syntax and their difficulties in determining deep and surface structure from the result of this research. They will know how important syntax is.

### 2. Practically

The information about students' ability and their difficulties in determining deep and surface structure will be very useful for teachers who teach syntax. By knowing the students' difficulties in determining deep and surface structure will make the teacher become more aware and finding new way to make students easy to understand about syntax and easy to analyze sentence by determining its deep and surface structure.

## E. Terminology

### 1. Deep Structure

In the book of *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax*, Chomsky abandoned notion of kernel sentences and identified the underlying constituents of sentences as deep structure. The deep structure was versatile insofar as it accounted for meaning and provided the basis for transformations that turned deep structure into surface structure, which represented what we actually hear or read.<sup>4</sup>

Ruth stated that sentence which is identical and the same underlying abstract representation is called deep structure. If you want to analyze the relation of sentences, the first you have to know about the deep structure of them, since deep structure is the input of transformation rules. We cannot apply transformation rules if you do not have deep structure. Transformation rules are sets of rules which will change or move constituents in the structures derive from the phrase structure rules.<sup>5</sup>

### 2. Surface Structure

In transformational grammar, surface structure is the outward form of a sentence. In contrast to deep structure (an abstract representation of a sentence), surface structure corresponds to the

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<sup>4</sup>Robert D. Van Valin JR, *An Introduction to Syntax*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 176

<sup>5</sup>Frank Bisard et al, *Grammar, Meaning and Pragmatics* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins B.V, 2009), 120

version of a sentence that can be spoken and heard. In transformational grammar, deep structures are generated by phrase-structure rules, and surface structures are derived from deep structures by a series of transformations.<sup>6</sup>

Surface structure is underlying constituent of sentence which we say or we write. It is defined as an abstract level of structural organization in which all elements determining structural interpretation are represented.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Noam Chomski, *Language and Mind* (London: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 141

<sup>7</sup>Frank Bisard et al, *Grammar, Meaning and Pragmatics*, 153