

STUDENTS' SYNTACTIC COMPETENCE IN FOCUS TRANSFORMATION SENTENCE

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received: 20 Aug 2019
Accepted: 11 Nov 2020
Published: 16 Dec 2020

Keyword:

syntactic competence,
focus transformation,
Junior High School
students

ABSTRACT

This research aims to describe students' syntactic competence in arranging focus transformation sentences. The researchers employed a qualitative approach to the single case study. The data obtained were acceptable sentences from spoken Indonesian language. Meanwhile, the data analysis applied an interactive model. The research result identifies that the Junior High School students, particularly the eighth-graders, has had syntactic competence in arranging focus transformation sentence by practicing the rules of intonation, movement, passive structure, and possessive pronoun.

INTRODUCTION

Syntactic competence is a crucial competence required by students to be capable of communicating properly. Competence term has been primarily recognized since Chomsky presented it in his book, *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* (1965:4). Competence is the speakers' knowledge of practicing the language in real life. In other words, it is often called as performance.

In addition, competence can be assessed through performance. Competence in terms of Deep Structure (DS) is acknowledged through Surface Structure (SS) reflected in performance. Syntactic competence is prone to experience various transformations embedded in Structural Transformation (ST). One of the Structural Transformations is focus transformation sentence.

The syntactic competence of the eighth grade of Junior High School Students, especially the focus transformation sentence is a vital aspect to be examined since the students' syntactic competence is continuously developing. The syntactic development of the eighth graders of Junior High School is caused by the syntactic awareness shaped

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through interaction in learning and cognitive development in a concrete operation phase. In this stage, the students have been capable of abstract and logical thinking. The competence, furthermore, is embodied through the students' ability in practicing focus transformation.

Sunaryo (2008) suggests that focus is one of the methods to deliver a message effectively and efficiently. Focusing is a fundamental issue for message clarity. It indicates that focus transformation is the students' method to deliver the important message in a communication.

Focus transformation emphasizes the critical part. In some sentence cases, focus transformation is often identified with topicalization. Nevertheless, the focus and topic are two distinctive points. Research of Shohibussirri (2014) on focus in the Indonesian language demonstrated that focus is not merely a topic issue since the topic is relatively correlated with the subject. On the other hand, focus emphasizes the important part. The subject is not only the way to emphasize the sentence; in fact, other parts of speech may be used to emphasize the sentence.

In addition, research by Wilburg (2012) proves that focus is a complex interaction between strings of words with emphasizing/focus marker. The part of speech emphasized is based on the function in a sentence, such as on Noun Phrase (NP), Verb Phrase (VP), Adjective Phrase (AP), Numeral Phrase (NumP), and Preposition Phrase (PP).

Furthermore, Samsuri (1985:422) states that focus is the concern centralization on one of the elements or part of speech. Focus elements consist of (1) intonation, (2) movement, (3) passive structure, and (4) possessive pronoun.

METHOD

This research was conducted by employing a qualitative approach. There were three considerations in selecting the qualitative approach. First, the research data was taken from the factual setting, namely sentences uttered during students' activity in the school. Second, the research data was qualitative, which was spoken in the Indonesian language. Third, this research data was not statistically analyzed. Moreover, the research was a single case study. This research was located in SMPN 1 Palu. The researchers did not intend to compare the research result with other locations. The students, as the research object were only the students who spoke the Indonesian language as their mother tongue.

Like the previous statement, the data research was spoken in the Indonesian language. The data source was the eighth-grade students of SMPN 1 Palu. The data was collected from observation, recording, and interviews. The data was then analyzed by an interactive model, including data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion. The data analysis approach was the transformation theory.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Finding

Based on the data analysis, the syntactic competence of spoken Indonesian language of the eighth-grade students in SMPN 1 Palu embodied in focus transformation sentence was formed from four rules, namely: (1) intonation, (2) movement, (3) passive structure, and (4) possessive pronoun *-nya*. The finding of syntactic competence of spoken Indonesian language of the eighth-grade students in SMPN 1 Palu expressed in focus transformation sentence is elaborated as follows.

(1) Intonation

The syntactic competence of spoken Indonesian language of the eighth-grade students of SMPN 1 Palu with intonation focus transformation (FT) was demonstrated by the intonation use on the part of speech emphasized, for instance using a louder voice, softer voice, or slower rhythm. Intonation focus transformation can only be evaluated in spoken language.

(2) Movement

Based on the data analysis, the syntactic competence of the spoken Indonesian language of the eighth-grade students in SMPN 1 Palu was identified through the pattern of singularly transformation sentence by moving the part focused. The syntactic competence of the spoken Indonesian language of the eighth-grade students in SMPN 1 Palu with Singularly Focus Transformation (SFT) is described in the sentence (1) and (2) below.

(1) *Dalam keadaan panik saya sudah tidak bisa berpikir lagi.*

(In a panic situation, I cannot think any more)

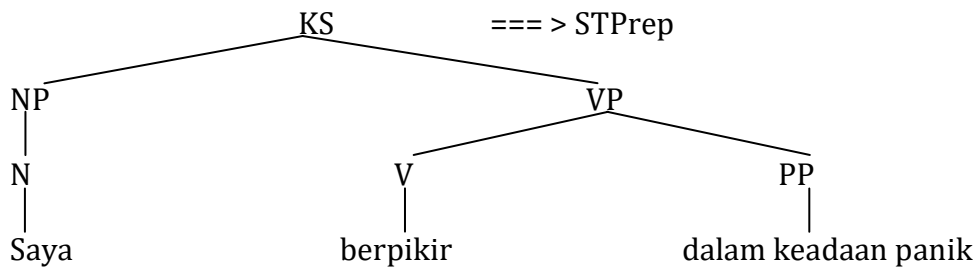
(2) *Enak sekali cumi-cumi.*

(So delicious squid)

Sentence (1) is a singular transformation with a movement focus pattern. Sentence (1) comprises of 1 Deep Structure (DS) with Kernel Sentence (KS) pattern 2 (NP+VP), namely *Saya berpikir dalam keadaan panik*. This kernel sentence experiences the singular transformation of the preposition, singular transformation of the auxiliary, singular transformation of negation, the singular transformation of the particle, and two singular transformations of focus movement. The analysis result of DS and ST in a sentence (1) is explained below.

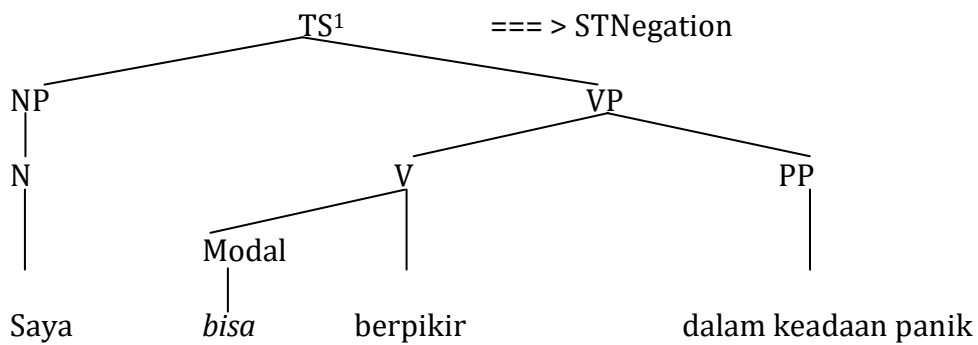
KS	Saya berpikir dalam keadaan panik.
DS (KS2)	NP + VP + PP
TS	Saya <i>bisa</i> berpikir dalam keadaan panik.
(Transformation Sentence) ¹	
ST ¹ (STPrep)	NP + bisa + VP + PP
TS ²	Saya <i>tidak</i> bisa berpikir dalam keadaan panik.
ST ² (STNegation)	NP + tidak + bisa + VP + PP
TS ³	Saya <i>sudah</i> tidak bisa berpikir dalam keadaan panik.
ST ³ (STAux)	NP + sudah + tidak + bisa + VP + PP
TS ⁴	Saya sudah tidak bisa berpikir <i>lagi</i> dalam keadaan panik.
ST ⁴ (TTPart)	NP + sudah + tidak + bisa + VP + lagi + PP
TS ⁵	Dalam keadaan panik saya sudah tidak bisa berpikir lagi.
ST ⁵	PP + NP + sudah + tidak + bisa + VP + lagi
(SFTmovement)	

The following tree diagram illustrates the transformation process of a sentence (1).
KS= Saya berpikir dalam keadaan panik.

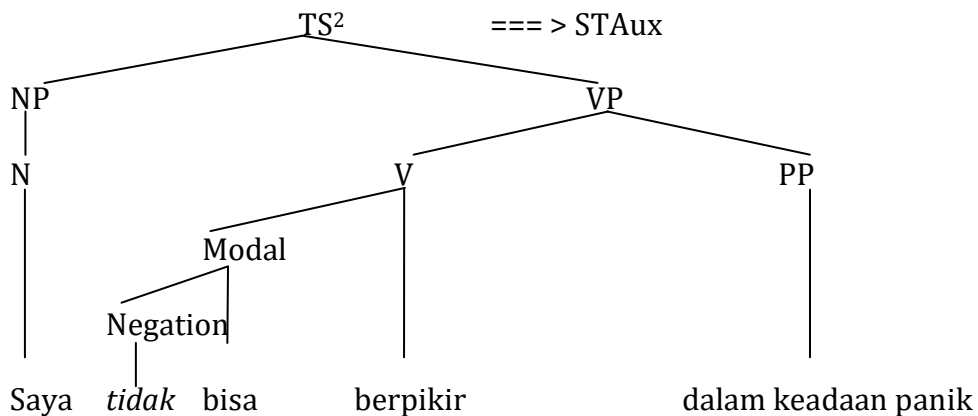


The kernel sentence of pattern 2 has singularly transformed prepositions. The preposition employed was the word *bisa* attached to V to describe VP.

TS¹ = *Saya bisa berpikir dalam keadaan panik*.

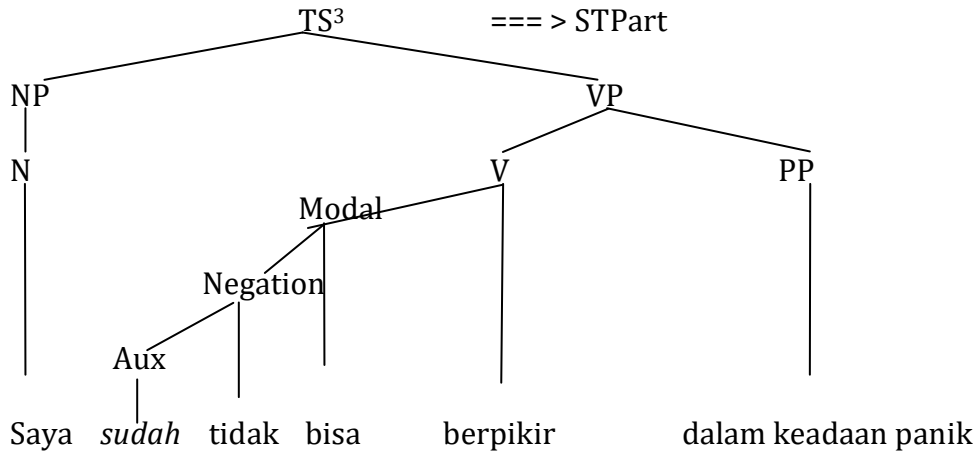


TS¹ has singular transformation negation. The negation '*tidak*' is attached on V to describe VP.



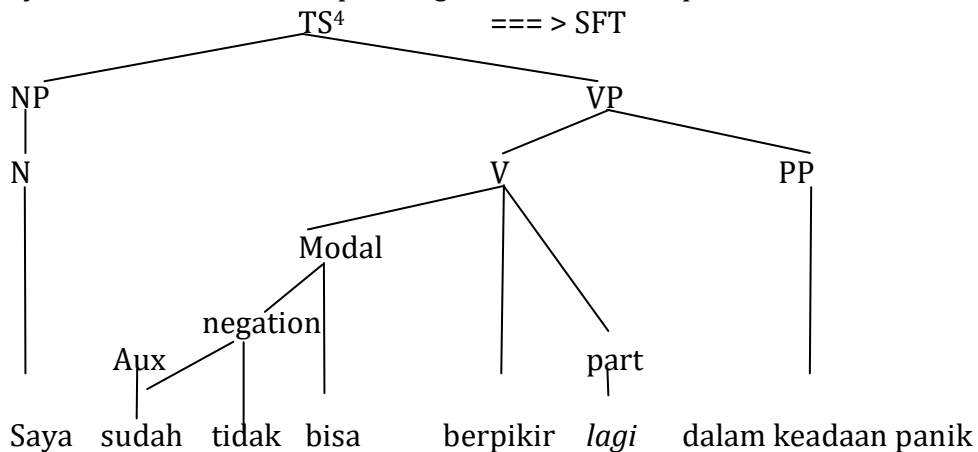
The TS² has singularly transformation auxiliary. The auxiliary '*sudah*' is put before the negation to describe VP

TS³ = Saya *sudah* tidak bisa berpikir dalam keadaan panik



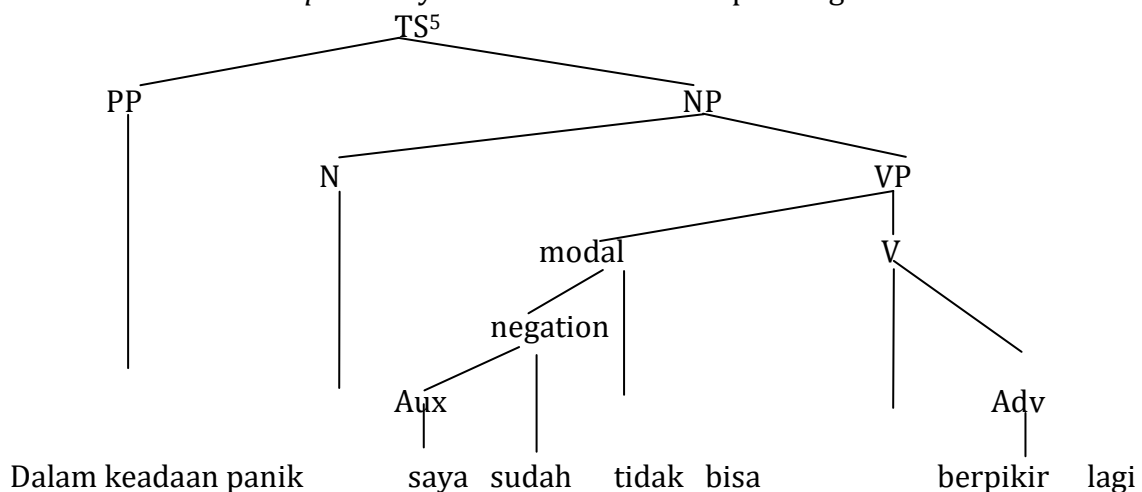
The Transformation Sentence 3 has Singularity Transformation Particle (STPart). The particle '*lagi*' is attached on V to describe VP

TS⁴ = Saya sudah tidak bisa berpikir *lagi* dalam keadaan panik.



The Transformation Sentence (TS⁴) has Singularity Focus Transformation. Singular Focus Transformation (SFT) applied is movement. PP is moved to the beginning of the sentence.

TS⁵ = *Dalam keadaan panik* saya sudah tidak bisa berpikir lagi.

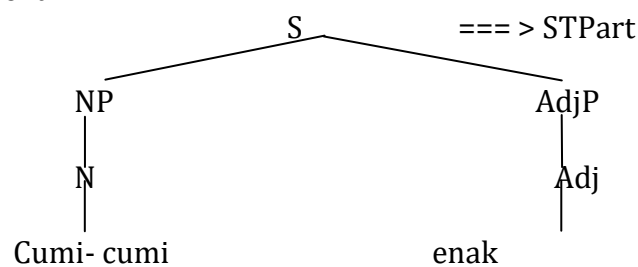


From the above tree diagram, it can be identified that sentence (1) applied one pattern of DS, which is NP+VP+PP. NP consists of one N, which is *saya*. VP comprises of one V, namely *berpikir*. Meanwhile, PP is *dalam keadaan panik*. Nevertheless, the kernel sentence pattern NP+VP has five ST changes, which is STPrep into *Saya bisa berpikir dalam keadaan panik*. Meanwhile, the STNeg is *Saya tidak bisa berpikir dalam keadaan panik*. In addition, STAux is *Saya sudah tidak bisa berpikir dalam keadaan panik*. On the other hand, STAux is *Saya sudah bisa berpikir lagi dalam keadaan panik*. Furthermore, the STMovement is *Dalam keadaan panik saya sudah tidak bisa berpikir lagi*. The focus on PP *dalam keadaan panik* implies that this part is the most important. It means that in a panic situation, students cannot think anymore.

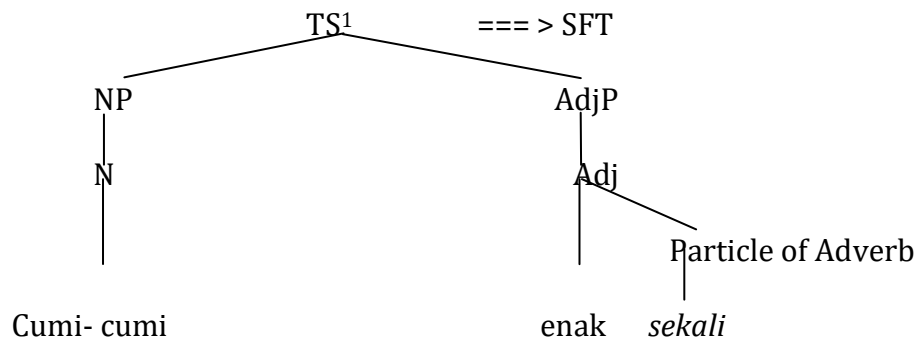
On the other hand, Sentence (2) is a singular transformation movement focusing pattern. Sentence (2) covers 1 DS with NP+AdjP pattern, namely *cumi-cumi enak*. This kernel sentence has Singularity Transformation of Particle and Singularity Focus Transformation. The analysis result of KS and ST in a sentence (2) is illustrated as follows.

KS	Cumi-cumi enak.
DS (KS3)	NP + AdjP
TS ¹	Cumi-cumi enak sekali.
ST ¹ (STPart)	NP + AdjP + part
TS ²	Enak sekali cumi-cumi.
ST ² (STF)	AdjP + part + NP

The transformation process of sentence (2) is elaborated in the following tree diagram.
KS= Cumi-cumi enak .

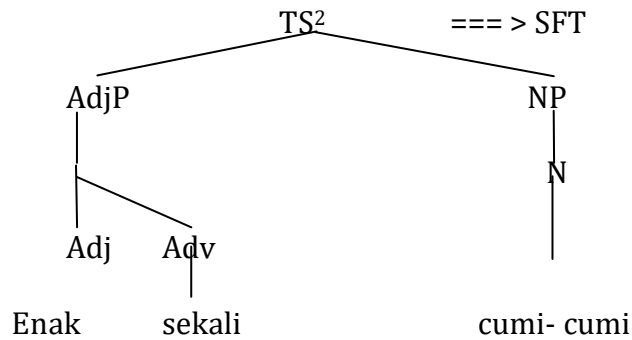


TS¹ = Cumi-cumi enak *sekali*.



The Transformation Sentence (TS¹) has Singularity Focus Transformation (SFT). The rule of SFT applied is the part of speech movement. AdjP is moved to the beginning of the sentence.

TS²= Enak sekali cumi-cumi



From the above tree diagram, it is illustrated that sentence (3) derives from 1 DS, namely NP+AdjP. NP derives from one N, which is *cumi-cumi*. Meanwhile, AdjP derives from Adj, namely *enak*. Furthermore, the kernel sentence with pattern 3 has two changes in syntactical transformation, which is STPart, *cumi-cumi enak sekali*, and SFT *enak sekali cumi-cumi*. The part of sentence focused is AdjP *enak sekali*. Something which is *enak sekali* (very delicious) is *cumi-cumi*.

(3) Passive Structure Marker

Based on the data analysis, syntactic competence of spoken Indonesian language of the eighth-grade students of SMPN 1 Palu was embodied in the Singularity Focus Transformation with passive structure marker. The syntactic competence of spoken Indonesian language of the eighth-grade students of SMPN 1 Palu with passive Singularity Focus Transformation, is described in a sentence (3) and (4) as follows.

(3) *Saya pernah diincar pengamen liar.*

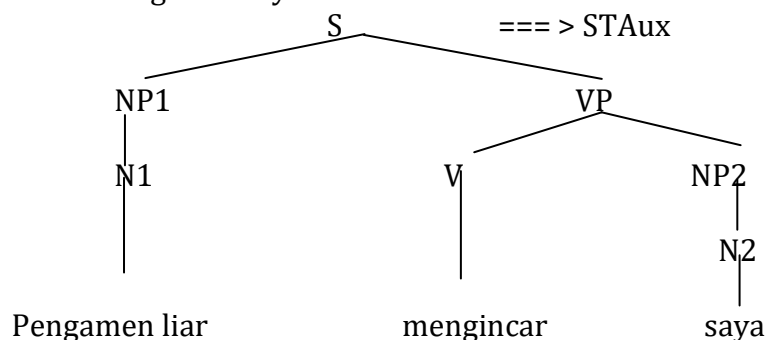
(4) *Kami diberi bimbingan oleh Bapak Hartadi di rumahnya.*

Sentence (3) is a singular transformation that focuses on passive structure. The sentence (3) derives from 1 DS with KS2 pattern, which is *Pengamen liar mengincar saya*. This kernel sentence has a singular transformation of auxiliary and singular focus passive transformation. The analysis result of DS and ST in a sentence (3) is elaborated as follows.

KS	Pengamen liar mengincar saya.
DS (KS2)	NP1 + VP + NP2
TS ¹	Pengamen liar pernah mengincar saya.
ST ¹ (STAux)	NP1 + pernah + VP + NP2
TS ²	Saya pernah diincar pengamen liar.
ST ¹ (SFT)	NP2 + pernah + VP + NP1

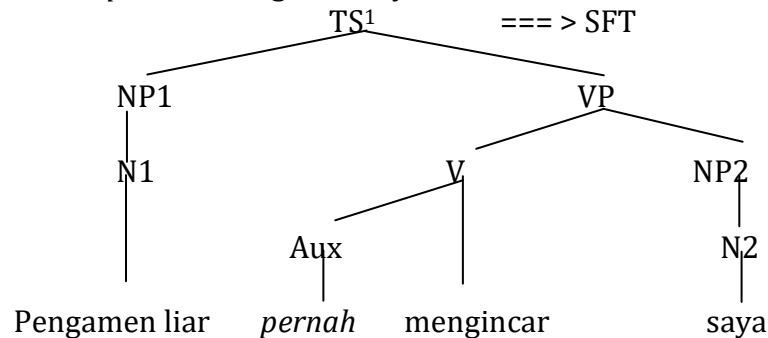
The transformation process of a sentence (3) is illustrated in the following tree diagram.

KS= Pengamen liar mengincar saya



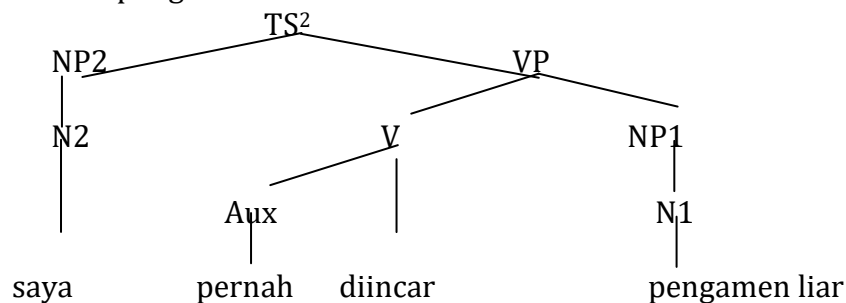
The kernel sentence with pattern 2 has singular transformation of auxiliary. The auxiliary used is 'pernah' which is attached on V to describe VP.

TS¹ = Pengamen liar pernah mengincar saya.



The transformation sentence 1 (TS¹) has Singularity Focus Transformation. The rule of Singularity Focus Transformation is employed as a passive structure. The passive structure in TS¹ employed two methods which changed prefixed Verb (*me(N)-*) into prefixed Verb (*di-*) and move NP2 into the beginning of the sentence, and moving NP1 into the last of the sentence.

TS² = Saya pernah diincar pengamen liar.



The tree diagram identifies that the sentence (3) derives from 1 DS pattern, namely NP1+VP+NP2. NP1 consists of N, which is *pengamen liar*. Meanwhile, VP consists of V, *mengincar*. In addition, NP2 comprises of one N, namely *saya*. Moreover, the structure in sentence (3) with KS2 pattern has two changes of ST, which is singular transformation auxiliary into *Pengamen liar pernah mengincar saya* and Singularity Focus Transformation *Saya pernah diincar pengamen liar*. The focus of this sentence is NP2, which is *saya*. NP2 moves to the beginning of the sentence and change active VP into passive VP.

Nevertheless, sentence (4) is a singular transformation with a passive focus structure. The sentence (4) derives from 1 DS with KS2 pattern, which is *Bapak Hartadi memberi kami bimbingan di rumah (bapak Hartadi)*. This kernel sentence has a transformation of singular possessive pronoun transformation and singular passive focus transformation. The analysis result of DS and ST of a sentence (4) is elaborated as follows.

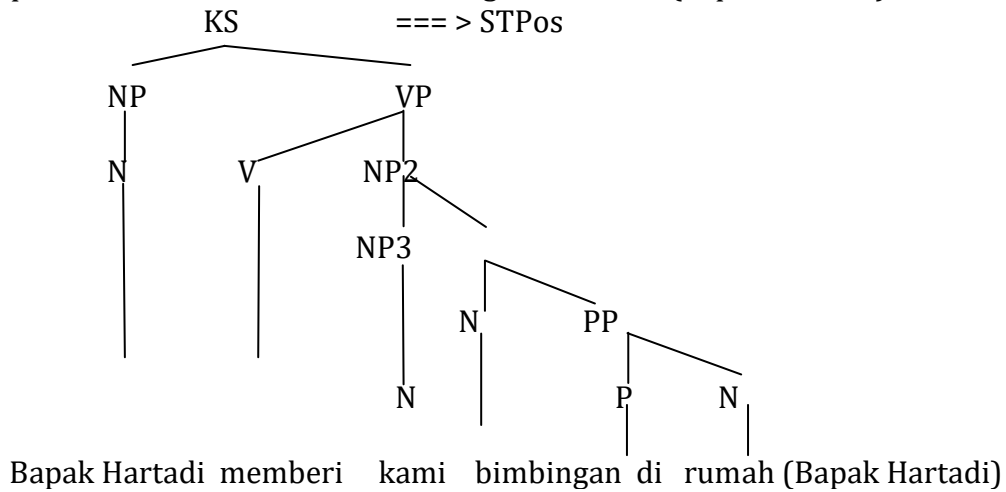
KS	Bapak Hartadi memberi kami bimbingan di rumah (bapak Hartadi).
DS (KS2)	NP1 + VP + NP2 + NP3 + PP
TS ¹	Bapak Hartadi memberi kami bimbingan di rumahnya.
ST ¹ (STPos)	NP + VP + NP2 + NP3 + PP
TS ²	Kami diberi bimbingan oleh Bapak Hartadi di rumahnya.

ST² (SFT)

NP2 + VP + NP3 + NP1 + PP

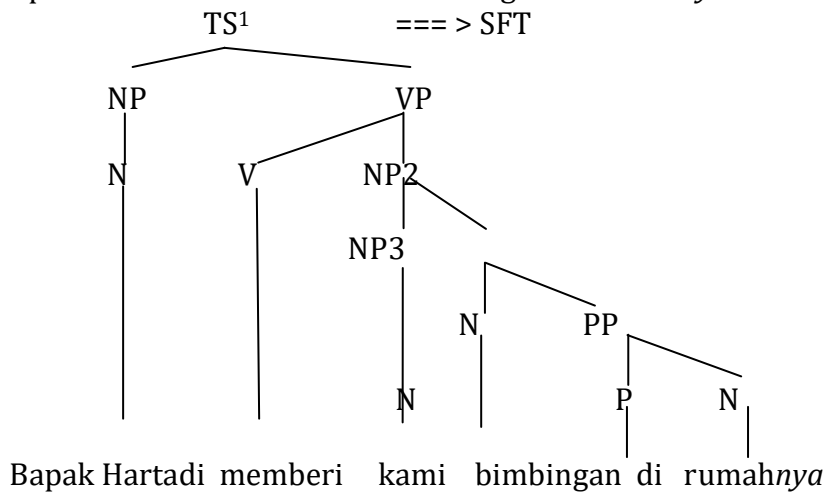
The transformation process of a sentence (4) is explained in this tree diagram.

KS= Bapak Hartadi memberi kami bimbingan di rumah (bapak Hartadi).



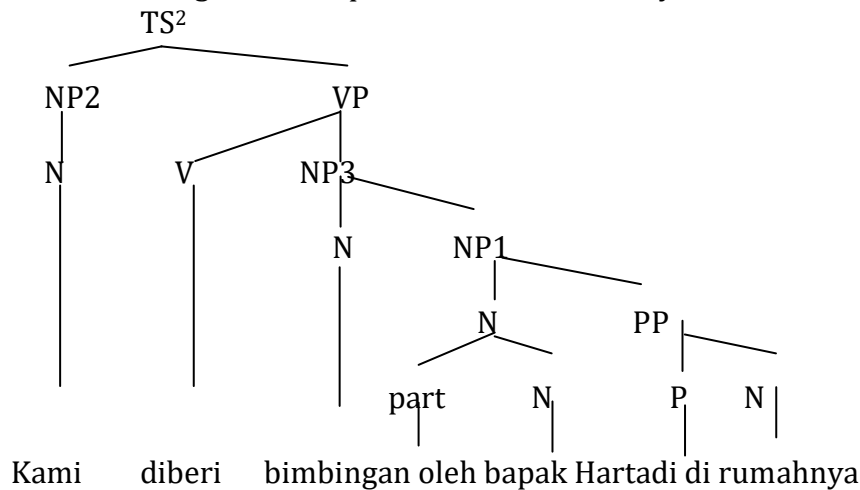
The kernel sentence with pattern 2 has singular transformation of a possessive pronoun in PP. *Bapak Hartadi* parts are replaced with possessive pronoun *-nya*.

TS¹ = Bapak Hartadi memberi kami bimbingan di rumahnya.



The transformation sentence (TS¹) has Singularity Focus Transformation. The focus rule applied is a passive structure. The passive structure of TS¹ employed two methods, namely changing prefixed V (*me(N)-*) into prefixed V (*di-*) and moving NP2 into the beginning of the sentence as well as moving NP1 into the last of the sentence.

TS2= Kami diberi bimbingan oleh bapak Hartadi di rumahnya.



From the above tree diagram, it is demonstrated that the sentence (3) derives from 1 DS pattern, which is NP1+VP+NP2+NP3+PP. NP1 derives from N, namely *Bapak Hartadi*. In addition, VP derives from V, *memberi*. Meanwhile, NP2 consists of one N, namely, *kami*. NP3 derives from 1 N, *bimbingan*. Moreover, PP is *di rumah pak Hartadi*. The kernel sentence structure with KS pattern NP+VP has two changes of ST, which is STPos of *Bapak Hartadi memberi kami bimbingan di rumahnya* and Singulary Focus Transformation of *Kami diberi bimbingan oleh Bapak Hartadi di rumahnya*. The focus in a sentence (4) is the NP2, *kami*. NP2 is moved to the beginning of the sentence. It causes the change of active VP into passive VP.

(4) Possessive Pronoun Clitics -nya

Based on the data analysis, the syntactic competence of the spoken Indonesian language of the eighth-grade students of SMPN 1 Palu was represented in Singulary Focus Transformation with clitics focus marker *-nya*. The syntactic competence of the spoken Indonesian language of the eighth-grade students of SMPN 1 Palu with Singulary Focus Transformation is described in a sentence (5) and (6) as follows.

(5) *Nur anaknya pak Lutfi.*

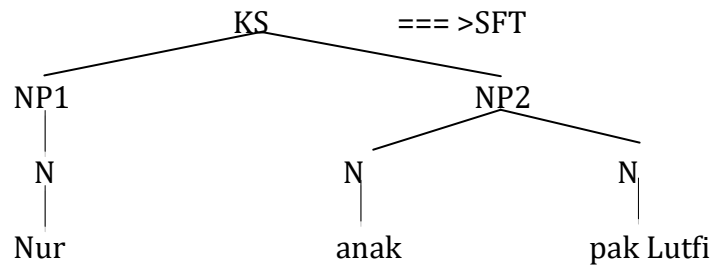
(6) *Jus alpukatnya empat puluh ribu.*

The above sentences are singular transformation with a focus marker of *-nya*. Furthermore, sentence (5) derives from 1 DS with KS1 pattern, namely *Nur anak pak Lutfi*. This kernel sentence has Singulary Focus Transformation with the focus marker of *-nya*. The analysis result of DS and ST in a sentence (5) is outlined as follows.

KS	Nur anak pak Lutfi.
DS (KS1)	NP1 + NP2
TS ¹	Nur, anaknya pak Lutfi.
ST ¹ (SFT)	NP1 + Foc + NP2

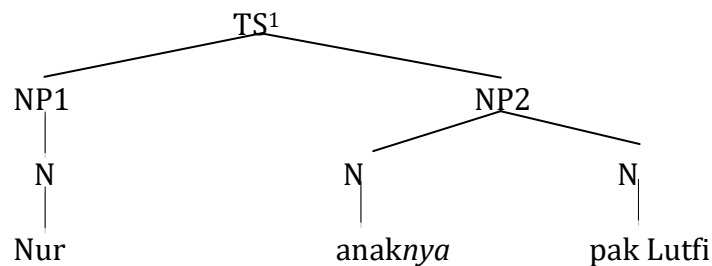
The transformation process of a sentence (5) is explained in the following tree diagram.

KS= Nur anak pak Lutfi.



The kernel sentence with pattern 1 has Singularity Focus Transformation. The rule of Singularity Focus Transformation applied is the usage of possessive pronoun clitics *-nya* on N to describe NP2.

TS¹ = Nur, *anaknya* pak Lutfi.



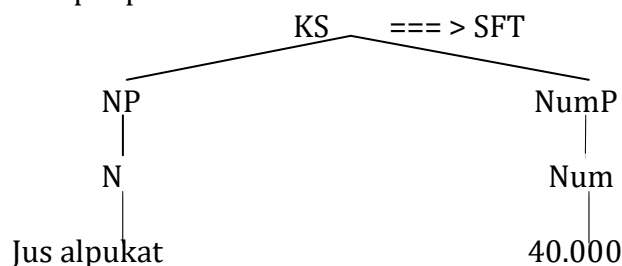
The above tree diagram indicates that sentence (5) derives from 1 DS pattern, which is NP1+NP2. NP1 derives from N, *Nur*. Meanwhile, NP2 derives from two N, namely *anak* and *pak Lutfi*. The structure in the kernel sentence of pattern 1 has one change of ST, which is Singularity Focus Transformation with the possessive pronoun clitics *-nya* into *Nur, anaknya pak Lutfi*. The focus in sentence (5) is N, *anaknya* which is attached on NP2, *anaknya pak Lutfi*.

On the other hand, sentence (6) is a singular focus transformation with a focus marker of clitics *-nya*. The sentence (6) derives from 1 DS with KS4 pattern, which is *Jus alpukatnya empat puluh ribu*. This kernel sentence has singularity focus transformation with focus marker of clitics *-nya*. The analysis result of DS and ST in a sentence (6) is described as follows.

KS	Jus alpukat empat puluh ribu.
DS (KS4)	NP + NumP
TS ¹	Jus alpukatnya empat puluh ribu.
ST ¹ (SFT)	NP + <i>nya</i> + NumP

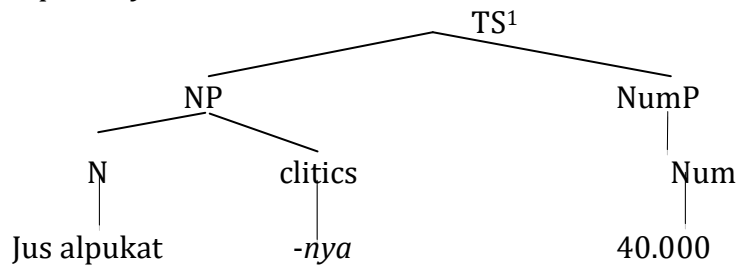
The transformation process of a sentence (6) is explained below.

KS= Jus alpukat empat puluh ribu.



The kernel sentence pattern 1 has Singularity Focus Transformation. The rule applied is the usage of the possessive pronoun clitics *-nya* on N to describe NP.

TS¹= Jus alpukatnya 40.000.



The above tree diagram identifies that sentence (6) derives from 1 DS pattern, namely NP+NumP. NP¹ derives from N, *jus alpukat*, while NumP derives from Num, which is *40.000*. This kernel sentence of pattern 1 has one change of ST, which is Singularly Focus Transformation, with the focus marker of *-nya* into *Jus alpukatnya 40.000*.

Discussion

Syntactic competence discussion of the eighth grade of Junior High School students in the focus transformation sentence is presented based on the focus transformation rule applied. The student's composed focus transformation sentences based on the four rules.

First, the intonation rule. The focus transformation in spoken language was indicated by loud, soft, and slow intonation. This intonation showed the focused part.

Second, the movement rule. Focus transformation with movement rule was applied by the students to show the focused part. The moving parts were PP and AdjP. In the PP movement rule, the kernel sentence was transformed first. The kernel sentence pattern is NP+VP+PP. This pattern has five transformations, namely singular transformation of a preposition, singular transformation of negation, singular transformation of auxiliary, singular transformation of the particle, and singular focus transformation.

In addition, the movement rule could also occur in kernel sentences with NP+AdjP pattern. AdjP was moved to the beginning of the sentence. The kernel sentence has two transformations, namely the singular transformation of particle and singular focus transformation. The focus transformation sentence with the movement rule is also referred to as inversion (Sumadi, 2013:161).

The syntactic competence of the eighth-grade students of Junior High School in the focus transformation sentences expressed in the movement rule was a competence that had been possessed by students since grade 7. It is proven by Lestari's research (2017), whose results identified that sentence inversion is the basic competence contained in grade 7 textbooks. It implies that the students already have syntactic competence to arrange inversion sentences in declarative, imperative, interrogative, and interactive sentences.

Third, the passive structure rule. The syntactic competence of the eighth-grade students of Junior High School in the focus transformation of passive structure rule was indicated by the students' competence in constructing sentences by changing the VP containing V (*me (N) -*) to V (*di-*). In the passive structure rule, there was also an inversion transformation, namely NP₂ is at the beginning of the sentence. It was the result of VP transformation.

Samsuri (1985:437) argues that the change in VP *meN-* into *di-* is not a passive transformation. The reason is (1) the use of prefix *di-* is not a matter of passive structure, but focusing O, (2) not all S can be changed into passive, (3) not all transitive

verb *meN-* can be passive; (4) not all prefixed verbs *di-* are derived from the passive structure, and (5) in conversation, *di-* cannot be replaced by *meN-*.

Research on the usage of the passive sentence by the eighth-grade students of Junior High School has been conducted by La Ino (2016). The study results indicate that the competence of understanding passive sentences of the eighth-grade students of Junior High School is not complete. This research proves that passivization, as part of focusing, is not a passive transformation. The passive structure in the focus transformation contains two transformational rules, namely the rules of movement and change of active V to passive V.

Fourth, the clitics *-nya* rule. Based on the research findings, the focus transformation sentences produced by the eighth-grade students of Junior High School derived from kernel sentences NP1+NP2 and NP+NumP. The phrase which was added by clitics *-nya* is N in NP. It indicates that NP was the sentence focus.

In the basic structure pattern of NP1+NP2, the kernel sentence only has one transformation, which is applying the focus transformation rule. N on NP2, i.e., *anak* is being focused by using clitics *-nya*. The research findings indicate that the possessive pronoun of clitics *-nya* is always attached to N to describe NP. It, nonetheless, is confirmed by Sunaryo's research (2008), which proves that clitics *-nya* can be used as a focusing (S). In the Indonesian language, the S function is always filled by NP.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion, the syntactic competence of the eighth-grade students of Junior High School in composing sentences of focus transformation is indicated by the use of four focus transformation rules. Those four rules are intonation, movement, passive structure, and the possessive pronoun clitics *-nya*.

The syntactic competence of the eighth-grade students of Junior High School in composing sentences of focus transformation is also identified by the use of five singularly transformational rules. It proves that the eighth-grade students of Junior High School have syntactic competence in composing singular transformation sentences. The singular transformation rule which has been mastered by the students in composing sentences of focus transformation is the singular transformation of negation, singular transformation of auxiliary, singular transformation of particles, and singular transformation of the possessive pronoun.

These research findings are expected to contribute implications in language learning so that the teachers are capable of providing the opportunity for students to convey the focused message part in communication, both spoken and written. The teachers can utilize this research results as teaching material about syntactic competence in a singular transformation. Through the focus transformation rule, the teachers are capable of identifying sentence formation aspects that have and have not been mastered by the students. These identification results could be a reference in preparing and delivering language learning materials.

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