

**Singular-Plural Nouns Mastery of Seventh Grade Students of SMP Negeri I
Gondangrejo-Karanganyar in the Academic Year 2006/2007 (A Descriptive
Study)**

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Language is used by people for communication and social interaction. One will be able to communicate with others when he has known the language that is used. One of the most important language in the world is English. The importance of English can be seen from its function as the key factor in some aspects such as bussiness, industry, politics, economics, and education. Therefore, people should learn English in order to learn the aspects.

Learning a language is learning to communicate. The word 'communicate' refers to understanding and sharing information, thought, and feeling and also to develop science, technology and culture using the language. The ability to communicate has the same meaning with the ability to understand and/or produce oral and written texts. Then, it is realized in four skills, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In other words, it is expected that in the end of the study, the students have the competence which is called "discourse competence."

In Indonesia, English is as a foreign language. Even so the goverment gives a great concern in teaching-learning process. It has been introduced in

elementary schools. Furthermore, English is learnt and taught as a compulsory subject from junior high school until university.

Teaching English at the lower level influences the success of the teaching at the upper level. The current curriculum for junior high school emphasizes linguistic competence as the goal in teaching-learning English. According to curriculum 2004, the aim of the teaching-learning English in junior high school is preparing the graduates to go in senior high school where linguistic competence is needed. Learning English in junior high school is learning how to use language in context seriously. The target is to develop the students' ability to use English both in spoken and written forms that is grammatically acceptable and comprehensible.

The issue that still exists says that using language communicatively does not need correct grammar. However, people are not aware that ungrammatical sentences may cause miscommunication. Even though it does not cause a serious effect in informal communication, it will be different when the communication happens in formal forum or in academic.

On the other case, when the students produce ungrammatical sentences and it is ignored by the teacher, they will make their own conclusion that what they say is grammatical and correct. They will repeat their mistakes and finally it will crystallize in their mind if there is no correction in grammar. Therefore, the correction is used to know the ability of students in creating a grammatical sentence that is acceptable and comprehensible. A grammatical sentence is crucial to gain an effective speaking and writing.

Curriculum 2004, a curriculum based-competence, is designed based on communicative language teaching. Martin Bygate, Alan Tonkyn, and Eddie Williams give their explanation about the relation between communicative competence and teaching grammar. They say that the communicative language teaching movement, which aimed to replicate in the classroom important contextual and purposive features of real communication, tended also to play down the value of grammar teaching. Communicative success, it was suggested, did not necessarily require accurate grammar. In communicative language testing, grammatical accuracy was but one of several criteria set up for the assessment of effective speaking and writing (1994:4).

To gain grammatical accuracy, students need to master linguistic competence. Depdiknas (2004) defines linguistic competence as a competency in using grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, intonation, etc. Meanwhile, grammar, according to Jeremy Harmer (1997) is the way in which words change themselves and group together to make sentences. The grammar of a language is what happens to words when they become plural or negative, or words order is used when we make questions or join two clauses to make one sentence.

Grammar is one of linguistic competence components. Linguistic competence is one of the important aspects of discourse competence that should be achieved by the junior high school students. The fact shows that students usually face difficulties in learning grammar. They need to learn by heart many rules because grammar means language rules. In addition, a big effort should be

made to understand the applications of the rules in creating text. Thus, the students can understand texts well and also produce a grammatical sentence.

One of the difficulties in learning English grammar is singular-plural nouns. A noun is the most important part of speech. Marchella Franks (1972) says that noun is one of the most important parts of speech. Its arrangement with the verb helps to form the sentence core, which is essential to every complete sentence. In addition, it may function as the head in many structure of modification.

English nouns are classified into countable nouns and uncountable nouns. Countable noun have singular and plural form, while uncountable nouns have only singular form. English noun plurality is different from Indonesian. Indonesian says *anak-anak*, *banyak anak*, *ikan-ikan*, *beberapa ikan*, *para siswa*, *domba-domba*, *sepasang sepatu* atau *sebotol minuman dingin*.

Meanwhile, the plurality in English nouns is more complicated. There are regular and irregular plural. The examples of regular plural nouns are book-books, marble-marbles, room-rooms, pencil-pencils, etc., while many rules have to be noticed by the students in irregular plural nouns like in man-men, lady-ladies, ox-oxen, child-children, etc. In addition, the words *fish*, *deer*, or *sheep* have the same form either singular or plural. *Scissors* and *spectacles* are always plural in form.

The sentence surrounding influences the changing of nouns. Determiner as the marker of nouns will determine whether singular or plural nouns that is

appropriate to follow for example a *book*, those *books*, one *deer*, several *deer*, *shoe*, a pair of *shoes*, some *coffee*, much *sugar* and something alike.

The writer assumes that Indonesian students face difficulties when they are pointed out with singular-plural nouns. The difficulties that may occur are in plural inflectional form and in determining whether singular or plural nouns that is suitable with the determiner.

Concerning with those facts, singular-plural nouns mastery among the seventh grade students of SMP Negeri 1 Gondangrejo is chosen to be discussed in this study.

B. Identification of the problem

There are some problems which can be identified. The problems are as follows:

1. How well the students know about singular-plural nouns
2. Whether the students know the difference between singular nouns and plural nouns
3. How well the student master plural inflectional forms
4. Whether the students know about determiner
5. Whether the students understand the agreement between nouns and determiner
6. What difficulties that may be faced by the students when they learn singular-plural nouns in sentences

C. Limitation of the Problem

It is nearly impossible for the writer to study all of the problems that may occur, so that, the limitation is needed to make this study not too broad. The problems are in two dimensions, namely, in the plural inflectional form and in applying singular or plural nouns related to determiner. The most difficult problem faced by the students will be also analyzed in this study. The source of the data is the seventh grade students of SMP Negeri 1 Gondangrejo in the academic year 2006/2007.

D. Formulation of the Problem

The problems are formulated as follows:

1. How far do the students master singular-plural nouns?
2. Which noun is the most difficult for the students in learning singular-plural nouns?

E. Benefit of the Study

It is expected that the result of this study can give contribution to the English teaching especially in teaching English grammar. To the researcher and the readers, it will give a description about the grammatical mastery especially in singular-plural nouns among the students of junior high school. Hopefully, the readers can utilize this study to improve their grammatical knowledge. If it is possible, this study may be useful for further research.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL REVIEW OF THE STUDY

A. Noun

1. Concept of Noun

It is necessary to discuss nouns before discussing singular-plural nouns in details. Emery, Kierzek, and Lindblom (1980:1) state that a noun is a word that names something, such as a person, a place, a thing, a quality, or an idea. Similarly, Harris (1992:15) says that a noun is a word that names a person, place, thing, or idea.

Swan (1988) states that noun is a word like *oil*, *memory*, *arm*, which can be used with an article. He says that nouns are usually the names of people or things. Personal names (e.g. *George*), and place names (e.g. *Birmingham*) are called *proper nouns*, or *proper names*; they are usually without articles.

Meanwhile, Oxford Advance Learner's Dictionary (Hornby, 1995:792) defines noun as a word used to identify any of a class of things, people, places or ideas or a particular one of those.

Guth (1972:383) has almost similar opinion with them. He explains noun more detail. He states articles as the signal of nouns and pluralism. He says,

“Noun is a class of words that name or classify people, animals, things, ideas. They occur typically as subjects of clauses or as objects of verbs and prepositions. Their appearance is often signaled by noun markers like the **articles** (*a, an, the*). Many nouns add *-s* to the plain form to form the plural: *dogs, cars, houses, colleges*.”

From the definitions above, it can be known that a noun is a word that names something, such as a person, a place, a thing, a quality, an idea, or a particular one of those. Their appearance is signaled by articles, while the adding *-s* signals pluralism.

2. Function of Nouns

Thomson and Martinet (1988:24) define the functions of nouns as (a) The subject of a verb, (b) The complement of the verb *be, become, seem*, (c) The object of a verb, (d) The object of a preposition, and (e) A noun can also be in the possessive case

Frank (1972:9) defines the functions of nouns based on function in central core and function in modification structure.

- a. Functions in central core include Subject of verb, Complement of verb, Subject complement (predicate noun), and Objective complement.
- b. Function in modification structures include Object of preposition, Noun in apposition (appositive), Noun in direct address (vocative), and Noun adjunct.

From the classification above, it can be known there are many functions of nouns in sentences. The further explanations are as follows:

- a. Subject of verb

Example: (1) **Tom** arrived

(2) **The books** have been read by Alice.

(3) **The girl** is resting.

b. Subject complement (predicate noun)

Example: (4) **Soekarno** was **the first president** of Indonesia.

c. Object of preposition

Example: (5) The student sat at **his desk**.

(6) I spoke to **Tom**. I live with **love**.

d. Objective complement

Example: (7) The country elected Washington **president**.

e. Complement of verb

Example: (8) We need **some money**. (direct object)

(9) I saw **Tom**. (direct object)

(10) Please give that man **some money**. (indirect object)

f. Noun in apposition (appositive)

Example: (11) Mr. Johnson, **my lawyer**, is very intelligent.

g. Noun in direct address (vocative)

Example: (12) **John**, please come here.

h. Noun adjunct

Example: (13) She is going to the **grocery** store.

(14) These are **student** activities.

i. Noun in possessive case

Example: (15) **Tom's** books

3. Classification of Nouns

Oxford Advance Learner's Dictionary (Hornby, 1995) states that the two biggest groups of nouns are countable and uncountable nouns. A countable noun has a singular form and a plural form. When it is singular, it has a determiner in front of it.

Hornby explanations are in harmony with Leech, Cruickshank, and Ivanic (2001:110). They say that in English, nouns can be divided into countable and uncountable nouns. Most common nouns are countable: i.e. they have both singular and plural form: e.g. hand ~ hands. Other common nouns are uncountable: i.e. they have singular, but no plural: e.g. bread ~ ~~bread~~.

Dealing with Hornby's opinion, Dokme et al (2003:116) explain that one apple (singular), two apples (plural), a cat (singular), three cats (plural), a pencil (singular), five pencils (plural). A **noun** is the name of a person, place or thing. There are **countable** nouns and **uncountable** nouns.

From this idea, it can be concluded that a noun can be classified into two big groups, namely countable nouns and uncountable nouns. Countable nouns have singular and plural forms while uncountable nouns only have singular form.

This study will work with singular-plural nouns mastery of students. In order to make the meaning of singular-plural nouns clear, it is necessary to explain countable and uncountable nouns. Aik and Hui (1999:141-142) says as follows,

“**Countable nouns** (also known as **count nouns**) are nouns which have a singular form as well as a plural form, eg *cat* and *cats*, *bush* and *bushes*, *man* and *men*:

- A *man* found a *cat* under that *bush*. (singular nouns)

- Some **men** found ten **cats** under those **bushes**. (plural nouns)”

Meanwhile, they explain uncountable nouns as follows:

“**Uncountable nouns** (also known as **noncount nouns**) are nouns which have only one form and take a singular verb, eg *rice, advice, information, news, furniture*. It is wrong to write: *rices, advices, informations, new* or *furnitures*.

- *John gave me many **advices** on how to grow **rices**.* (WRONG)
- *John gave me much **advice** on how to grow **rice**.* (CORRECT)
- *The **news are** good.* (WRONG)
- *The **news is** good.* (CORRECT)”

From the definitions above, it can be known that countable nouns have two forms, singular and plural, uncountable nouns then have only one form, singular. Furthermore, Swan proposes countable noun as a thing that can be divided and counted. It has two form namely singular and plural nouns. Uncountable noun, then, is defined as thing that can be divided, but cannot be counted and has only one form, singular. His further explanations are as follows,

“Countable nouns are words like *car, bridge, house, idea*. We can count them (one cat, two houses, three ideas), so they can have plurals. The indefinite article *a/an* really means one, so we can use it with singular countable nouns (*a house, an idea*), but not with plural.

We live in **a small house**.

I've got **an idea**.

I'm afraid of **spiders**. (Not: *... a spiders.)

She was wearing **blue trousers**. (Not: *... a blue trousers.)”

(Swan, 1988:65-66)

Meanwhile, Swan explains uncountable nouns as follows:

“Uncountable nouns are words like *water, rice, energy, luck*. These are things that we can divide (*a drop of water, a bowl of rice, a piece of luck*), but not count. You can not say *one water, two waters*, etc. these words do not have plurals. The indefinite article *a/an* cannot be used with uncountable words.

It's **nice weather**. (Not:... *a nice weather.)

Water is made of hydrogen and oxygen. (Not: *A water ...)”

(Swan, 1988:67)

Similarly, Hornby states that most countable nouns (or count nouns) are words for separate things which can be counted, like **apples**, **books** or **teacher**. Uncountable nouns (also called uncount nouns or MASS nouns) are usually words for things which are thought of as a quantity or mass, like **water** or **time**, not as separate items.

Moreover, Azar (1989:204) says,

“A count noun: (1) may be preceded by **a/an** in the singular; (2) takes a final **-s/-es** in the plural. In contrast, a noncount noun: (1) is not immediately preceded by **a/an**; (2) has no plural form; does not take a final **-s/-es**.

Example:

Count noun

I bought a chair. Sam bought three chairs.

Noncount noun

We bought some furniture.”

It can be concluded that nouns can be classified into two big groups namely countable and uncountable nouns. Countable nouns mean things that can be counted and have singular and plural form, while uncountable nouns mean things that can be divided but cannot be counted. They only have singular form.

Thomson and Martinet (1988:28) state that uncountable nouns are always singular and are not used with *a/an*.

Example: I want some *information*. I don't want *advice* or *help*.

I got some *experience* from this occasion.

The following are the typical of nouns that are commonly used as uncountable nouns. This list serves only as a sample.

1. Names of substances: bread, cream gold, paper, tea, beer, dust, ice, water, gin, jam, soap, wine, coffee, glass, oil, stone, wood, etc.

2. Abstract nouns: advice, experience, horror, pity, beauty, fear, information, relief, help, knowledge, death, work, etc.
3. Other uncountable noun in English: baggage, damage, luggage, shopping, camping, furniture, parking, weather, etc.

The words above are uncountable nouns that are always singular. In order to say uncountable nouns in certain number, 'unit nouns' like cup, box or bowl often come before the words. It will be discussed more detail in determiner.

B. Singular-Plural Nouns

Emery, Kierzek, and Lindlom (1980:1) give their further explanation about nouns. They state,

“Most nouns have to show whether the noun is naming one thing (singular number) or more than one thing (plural number, which adds –s or –es to the singular) e.g. one apple, two apples; a lunch, several lunches. Nouns often follow one of the article the, a, or an. Sometimes adjectives come between articles and the nouns that follow them. Example: A good boy”

Harris (1992:16) explains singular-plural nouns by stating that a singular noun refers to one person, place, or thing and is the form you would look up in the dictionary. A plural noun is the form that refers to more than one person, place, or thing.

Another definition is stated by Swan. He states,

“Plural is a grammatical form used to refer to more than one person, thing, etc. *we; buses; children; are; many; these.*

(1988: xxiii)

...

Singular is a grammatical form used to refer to one person, thing, etc, or to an 'uncountable' quantity or mass. *me, bus, water, is, much, this.*

(1988: xxv)

...

Furthermore, he adds that the important point: singular countable nouns must always have an article (or another determiner like my, this). We can say a cat, the cat, this cat, my cat, but not cat.”

(1988: 67)

From the definition stated by Swan, it can be interpreted that plural noun is a grammatical form that refers to more than one person, thing, etc. while singular noun refers to one person, thing, etc., especially for singular countable nouns, it must have an article.

Dokme, et al (2003:116) differentiates singular and plural as follows:

Singular Countable Nouns

Plural Countable Nouns

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>a. Singular countable nouns refer to one thing, one person, etc. (not more than one).</p> <p>b. Singular countable nouns cannot be used alone. They take a determiner (a, the, etc.)</p> <p>Example:
a chair, a student, one book, an armchair, the teacher</p> <p>c. Singular countable nouns take singular verbs.</p> <p>Example:</p> | <p>a. Plural countable nouns refer to more than one thing, one person, etc.</p> <p>b. They can be used with determiners and numerals.</p> <p>Example:
Two brothers, these men, some pictures, the computer, a few classes.</p> <p>c. Plural countable nouns take plural verbs.</p> <p>Example:</p> |
|--|--|

- | | |
|---|--|
| (1) The policeman is looking at his watch. | (1) The two brothers are going to school. |
| (2) The car needs new tires. | (2) Some children don't like milk. |

Referring to the definitions above, it is clear that singular nouns refer to one person, place, or thing. Singular nouns always have article or another determiner and take singular verbs. Also, plural nouns refer to more than one thing or person. They can be used with determiner and numerals. Plural verbs are applied.

C. Plural Inflectional Form

Leech, Cruickshank and Ivanic (2001:245) give explanations about plural inflectional form. He classifies it into regular plural and irregular plural. They say that we form the regular plural of English nouns by adding *-s* or *-es*, i.e. day → days, box → boxes. Irregular plurals, then, is defined as exceptions to this general rule.

Moreover, Huddleston (1997:228) say,

“The singular form is the lexical stem, and the plural is formed from it by a variety of morphological processes. Regular nouns form the plural by adding one of the following suffixes: (i) /z/ or /z/, as in *churches, garages, roses*; (ii) /s/, as in *hats, mints, ropes*; (iii) /z/, as in *kings, queens, relatives*-the choice among (i)-(iii) is determined phonologically by person singular present tense form. Some irregular nouns (e.g. **sheep**) exhibit syncretism between singular and plural; others are formed by processes of relatively low productivity: man men, child children, crisis crises.”

In line with what they said, Thomson and Martinet (1986:2) give explanations about plurals as follows:

“The plural of a noun is usually made by adding **s** to the singular:

day, days dog, dogs house, houses

s is pronounced /s/ after a **p**, **k**, or **f** sound. Otherwise it is pronounced /z/. When **s** is placed after **ce**, **ge**, **se**, or **ze** an extra syllable (/iz/) is added to the spoken word.”

Grammarians have different ideas in classifying plurals on the basis of the interpretation that plurals are classified into regular and irregular plurals. However, which plurals are regular and which ones are irregular, grammarians have their own classifications.

In this study the writer has chosen to work with what Dokme et al (2003) propose. They propose classifications of plurals into regular and irregular plurals in line with the material of junior high school.

1. Regular plural

- a. Most of the time we add **-s** to nouns to make them plural. The adding **-s** is pronounced /z/ after a voiced consonant /b/, /d/, /g/, /v/, / / . /m/, /n/, / / , /l/ and /r/. Otherwise, a voiceless consonant /p/, /t/, /k/, /f/, or / / is pronounced /s/.

Example: (1) My **books** are on the table

(2) The **students** don't wear **uniforms** in my school.

(3) They are **doctors**.

(4) Those **computers** are brand view.

- b. If a noun ends in a **vowel + y**, we add **-s** to make it plural. The spelling **y** is pronounced as a vowel sound, so that the adding **-s** is pronounced /z/.

Example: (5) Autumn **days** in Istanbul are often rainy.

(6) I always lose my **keys**.

(7) The **boys** are having a contest.

- c. If a noun ends in a **consonant + y**, we drop **-y** and adds **-ies** to make it plural.

The adding **-ies** is pronounced /z/ after a vowel sound.

Example: (8) The **dictionaries** are on the desk,

(9) Cairo and Athens are large **cities**.

- d. If a noun ends in **-s, -ss, -ch, -sh, or -x**, we add **-es** to make it plural. The adding **-es** is caused the sound /s/, /z/, / /, / /, / /, and / /. The pronunciation is / z/.

Example: (10) The **buses** are always late.

(11) All the **classes** are full.

(12) Those **boxes** are heavy.

- e. If a noun ends in **-f** or **-fe**, we drop the final **-f** or **-fe** and add **-ves** to make it plural. There are twelve nouns included in this categories, namely calf, half, knife, leaf, life, loaf, self, sheaf, shelf, thief, wife, and wolf. The spelling of **f** or **fe** change into **-ves** in plurals. A voiceless fricative /f/ switches to a voiced fricative /v/ and the pronunciation is /z/.

Example: (13) There aren't many books on the **shelves** in the library.

(14) These **knives** are very dull.

(15) The police caught three **thieves** last night

- f. If a noun ends in **-o**, we add **-s** or **-es** to make it plural. In this case, the adding **-s** or **-es** is pronounced /z/ caused by the vowel sound.

Example: (16) Kevin wants **potatoes**.

(17) Most children like **zoos**.

(18) Asma likes taking **photos**.

2. Irregular plural

- a. Changing the vowel

Thomson and Martinet (1988:26) say that a few nouns form their plural by a vowel change: foot-feet, louse-lice, mouse-mice, woman-women, goose-geese, man-men, etc.

Example: (19) There is a **man** on the roof.

(20) There are three **men** on the roof.

(21) I see a **mouse** under the table.

(22) I see some **mice** under the table.

Leech et al (2001:245) say that the plurals of *child* and *ox* are formed by adding -(r)en. They are children, oxen.

Example: (23) Marty has only one **child**.

(24) Mr. and Mrs. Marwan have two **children**.

b. Have no change in plural

Thomson and Martinet (1988:26) say that names of certain creatures do not change in the plural. *fish* is normally unchanged. *fishes* exists but is uncommon. The others nouns that are unchanged in plural are deer, sheep, salmon, etc. (Thomson and Martinet, 1988:26).

Example: (25) There is a big orange **fish** in my aquarium.

(26) Linda has seven **fish** in her aquarium.

(27) A black **sheep** is walking on the grass.

(28) Some **sheep** are walking on the grass.

c. Compound nouns

Normally the last word is made plural, e.g. boy-friends or travel agents

Example: Sina has one **boy-friend**.

Alice has two **boy-friends**.

C. Noun Determiner

Dealing with the definition that singular cannot be used alone, but they take determiners. Meanwhile, plural nouns can be used with either determiner or numerals. Thus, noun determiner is needed to be explained in this study. As an indicator, determiners are used to indicate the mastery of singular-plural nouns of the students. Swan (1988:67) says,

“The use of article is complicated. First of all, it makes a difference what kind of noun we are using. Articles are not used in the same way with singular countable nouns (like cat, bridge), with plural countable nouns (like cats, bridges), and with uncountable nouns (like water, rice). Article is the member of determiners. Have the same way with article determiners also can be used with countable nouns only, with uncountable nouns only or both.”

Since article, one kinds of determiner, determine whether singular or plural following it. The term determiner needs to be discussed in this study.

1. Concept of Noun Determiner

Beside the definition about noun and singular-plural nouns above, determiner has already been mentioned. Determiner is the marker of the existing of noun. It has an important rule in determining whether singular or plural nouns that should be applied. Harris (1992:238) states that noun determiners are words that signal that a noun is about to follow. They stand next to their nouns or can be separated by adjectives. Some noun determiners can also function as nouns.

Moreover, Leech et al (2001:123) state,

“A noun usually has to have a *determiner* in front of it: *the drum, our children*. The most common *determiners* in English are the definite article and the indefinite article. Determiners also precede other words which precede a noun, e.g. adjectives and numbers: *the big drum, our three children*.”

Swan defines determiner as one of a group of words that are normally used at the beginning of noun phrase. Determiners include *a/an, the, my, this, each, either, several, more both, all*. Meanwhile, Azar (1989:210) say that an expression of quantity (e.g. one, several, many, much) may precede a noun. Notice below: some expressions of quantity are used only with count nouns; some only with noncount nouns; some with either count or noncount nouns.

It can be concluded that determiners are usually used before nouns. It used to determine whether singular or plural nouns that follows.

2. Classification of Noun Determiner

Swan (1988:65) says that articles are members of a group of words called *determiners* used before nouns. Other determiners are the possessives (my, your, etc); the demonstratives (this, that, these, those); some, any.

Moreover, Harris (1992:238) classifies five types of noun determiner.

- a. Articles
 - definite: the
 - indefinite: a, an
- b. Demonstratives: this, that, these, those
- c. Possessives: my, our, your, his, her, its, their
- d. Cardinal numbers: one, two, three, and so on
- e. Miscellaneous: all, another, each, every, much, and so on

Dokme et al (2003:124) have almost the same idea with Harris. They classify determiners into five categories.

- a. Articles: a, an, the
- b. Numerals: one, two, three, four
- c. Possessives: my, your, his, her, its, our, your, their, John's
- d. Demonstratives: this, that, these, those
- e. Quantifiers: much, many, a lot of, lots of, plenty of, a great deal of, a number of, a few, a little, few, little, some, any, several, etc.

This study does not explain all determiners. The determiners explained are the words that are in line with junior high school materials and focuses only with the determiners that can differentiate singular from plural nouns that follows.

a. a/an

The form *a* is used before a word beginning with a consonant sound:

a man **a** hat **a** university **a** European

The form *an* is used before words beginning with a vowel (**a, e, i, o, u**) or words beginning with a mute h:

an apple **an** island **an** uncle

an egg **an** union **an** hour

A/an can only be used with singular countable nouns and the meaning is one.

Example: (1) I have **a cat**.

(2) I eat **an egg**

Often *a* also comes before 'part noun' like **piece, slice**, 'unit nouns' like **cup, box, glass**, and 'nouns of kind' like **kind, type**.

Example: (3) I would like to drink **a glass of ice tea**.

(4) I need **a slice of bread**, please!

A/an means the same as one when it contrasts with two, three, etc. Leech et al (2001:3) *a* also comes before 'part nouns' like **piece**, 'unit nouns' like **cup, box**, and 'nouns of kind' like **kind, type** e.g. a piece of cake, a cup of tea, a type of cup, etc. Meanwhile, *two, three, etc.* are followed by plural countable nouns.

Example: (5) I stayed in Bandung for **a week**.

(6) I have lived here for **three years**.

(7) I'd like **two cups of tea** and a glass of milk, please!

(8) Would you mind giving me **two slices of bread**, please?

A/an is used when we are talking about people or things for the first time or in general.

Example: (9) I'm reading **a book** now.

(10) She doesn't have **a car**.

b. this/these, that/those

This and *these* are called 'near' because they indicate something near to the speaker. *That* and *those* refer to something less near to the speaker.

Example: (11) **That man** is my father.

(12) **This room** is mine.

(13) I like **these nuts**.

(14) **These trees** in the corner are oak trees.

From the examples above *this* and *that* are followed by singular form, while *these* and *those* are followed by plural one.

c. Some/any

Some and *any* are used with uncountable and plural countable nouns. They have the same sort of meaning as the indefinite article *a/an*. *some* is generally used in affirmative sentences or in questions where we expect the answer to be yes; *any* is in both countable and uncountable nouns and mainly in questions and negative sentences.

Example: (15) I need **some medicine**. (Uncountable noun)

(16) Do you want **some milk**? (Uncountable nouns/ positive answer)

(17) Have you got **any books**? (Plural noun/question)

(18) She doesn't have **any pencils**. (Plural noun/negative)

d. many, much

Many is used with plural countable nouns and primarily in questions and negative sentences. *Much* is used with uncountable nouns and primarily in questions and negative sentences.

Example: (15) Ardi has **many novels**.

(16) Are there **many students** in the class?

(17) I don't know **many people** here.

(18) My father drank **much coffee** today.

(19) I don't have **much time**.

(20) Do they have **much money**?

The table below shows which determiners go with the different types of NOUN either singular or plural.

Determiner	Countable Nouns		Uncountable Nouns
	Singular	Plural	

one	one apple	-	-
a/an	an apple	-	a plate of rice
two, three, ...	-	two apples	two plates of rice
this/that	this apple	-	-
	that apple	-	-
these/those	-	these apples	-
	-	those apples	-
some	-	some apples	some rice
any	-	any apples	any rice
many	-	many apples	-
much	-	-	much rice

D. Singular-Plural Noun Mastery

Grammatical competence either spoken or written communication is still emphasized in the 2004 Competence Based Curriculum. It is accordance with Ur who says that there is no doubt that knowledge –implicit or explicit- of grammatical rules is essential of a language (1994:4). Since singular-plural noun is a part of grammar, consequently singular-plural nouns mastery belongs to grammatical competence.

Grammatical competence may refer to what Chomsky calls linguistic competence. According to Chomsky as quoted by Lyons in Brown (1996:11), linguistic competence is the knowledge of particular languages, by virtue of which

knowledge those who have it are able to produce and understand utterances in those languages.

Dealing with grammar defined as the way in which words change themselves and group together to make sentences; consequently, English learners need to learn how a word change its form and how words are combined into sentences in order to make grammatical sentences. Concerning with singular-plural noun, it also deals with the grammar. The implication for language learners is that the learners should master what happens to words when they become plural and what word order is used when they make questions and join two clauses to make one sentence in order to express his or her idea or others correctly in language that is acceptable to a native speaker.

According to Anderson et al. (1975:236), the concept of mastery implies that there is some identifiable and circumscribed body of skills or knowledge that an instructional program attempts to foster in all students, that there is some agreement about the levels of performance that indicates mastery of the skills or content areas, and that there is some means of determining whether mastery levels are attained. Moreover, Mastery means great knowledge that someone has in particular subject. (Longman Dictionary of English Language Culture, 2000:859)

Based on the definition of mastery above, this study concerns with the meaning of singular-plural nouns mastery as having a good knowledge of the correct forms of plurals and comprehension in applying singular and plural nouns in order to make grammatical sentences. Furthermore, the percentage levels

proposed by Purwanto are applied in this study to determine the students' mastery.

E. Rationale

Based on the theoretical review, it cannot be denied that communicative competence as the major aim of the 2004 Competence Based Curriculum needs grammatical competence. The students will have the ability to understanding and producing a good discourse if they have competence supporting. One of them is grammatical competence. Therefore, they are able to produce grammatically acceptable and comprehensible discourse.

The writer thinks that singular-plural nouns mastery as part of the basic grammar is important. The knowledge of this will support to grasp four language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. One who masters singular-plural nouns has a chance to be able to make grammatical and acceptable sentences. Last but not least the communication happens will be more effective.

By using a descriptive research in this study, the writer tries to describe the factual condition of the students' singular-plural nouns mastery.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

A. The Aim of the Study

Related to the title and the problem statements stated previously, this study is intended to make an analysis on the singular-plural nouns mastery of the seventh year students of SMP N I Gondangrejo. It is expected to aim at: (1) Finding the student's mastery in the case of singular-plural nouns, (2) Finding the students' difficulty in learning singular-plural nouns.

B. Place and Time of the Study

The research was carried out at SMP N I Gondangrejo in the academic year 2006/2007 on April 21st, 2007.

C. Methodology of the Study

Based on the purposes, the method used in this study is descriptive method. According to Nazir (1989), a descriptive method is a method to study the status of people, an object, a set of conditions, a system of thought or a class of events at present. The purpose is to make a description of the facts, the characteristics and the relationship of the phenomena being researched systematically, factually, and accurately.

This idea is supported by Nawawi and Martini (1996:73) who states that a descriptive method is a procedure to solve the problem of the study by describing the condition of the object of the research based on the facts arising at that time. This method concerns with fact finding in the true condition.

From the explanation above, it can be concluded that descriptive method is a procedure to solve the research problem by describing the recent condition of the object based on the real facts systematically, factually, and accurately.

D. The Subject of the Study

1. Population

Population is any group of individuals who have at least one similar characteristic (Hadi, 1994:220). The population in this study is the seventh grade students of SMP N I Gondangrejo in the academic year 2006/2007. The total number of the population is 245 that are divided into 6 classes.

2. Sample

Hadi in Narbuko and Achmadi (2005:107) states that a sample is a part of individuality searched out of a whole population. In order to have more objective sample, it is necessary to change the word individual into subject or object. A good sample is representative. It means that the sample describes the condition of population as closely as possible even though it is not the exact population. In this study, the number of the sample used is 40 out of students of the population.

3. Sampling

Hadi (1994:222) states that sampling is the way or technique to get a sample. In this study, simple random technique is used. It means each subject or unit has an equal chance of being selected as a sample member. By using this technique, the writer tries to avoid subjectivity and hopes to obtain the data objectively. Firstly, two out of six classes are picked out randomly. The classes chosen are 7A and 7E. For each class, 20 students are taken as the sample randomly by using lottery technique. The steps are as follows:

1. Listing the codes of students.
2. Writing down each student in a small piece of rolled paper.
3. Putting all of rolled papers into container.
4. Shaking the container well.
5. Taking 20 rolled papers randomly.
6. Repeating the step twice for another class.

E. Technique of Data Collecting

According to Amirin (1986:94) there are several techniques of collecting data. They are test, questionnaire, interview, observation, and document.

In order to collect the data, the test is used. Cronbach in Syakur (1999:5) states that a test is systematic procedure for obtaining one's behavior and describing it with the aid of numerical device or categories system. Meanwhile, Ur says that a test may be defined as an activity whose main purpose is to convey (usually to the tester) how well the testee knows or can do something (1996:33).

There are two kinds of test, namely objective test and subjective test. The objective test is used in the form of multiple choice type with four options. This kind of type is used because it can be scored rapidly and objectively.

A written test is used in this study to measure singular-plural nouns mastery among the students and to find difficulties that the students have in learning it.

1. Validity of the Instrument

A good instrument or measuring device must fulfill the requirement, namely validity and reliability. Information or data can be considered having validity if it suits the conditions. If the results of the instrument are valid, suit the fact, the instrument used is valid as well (Arikunto, 2002:57). In other words, validity concerns with how well a test measures what is supposed to measure. There are many types of validity. They are content validity, construct validity, concurrent validity and predictive validity.

Validity of the instrument always depends on the situation and the purposes of using the instrument. A test may be valid for a certain situation, but it will be not valid for another one. The purpose of using a test also determines the validity. Since the aim of this study is to find out the students' singular-plural mastery, content validity is applied.

According to Walizer and Wiener (1991:115), the main focus of content validity is in the items or verbal measures used to reflect a conceptual definition. Content validity cannot be stated in form of number. Purwanto (2004:138) says that a test has content validity if its content or its scope agrees with the content of the curriculum having been thought. The content of the test

has to represent a sample of instructional achievements based on curriculum instruction. Since content validity is applied in this study, the instrument made has to be in line with the curriculum.

In this study, to fulfill the content validity of the test, the items are taken from some books used by the junior high school students in learning English.

The second requirement is reliability. The test is called reliable if the test can be trusted and also has consistent or stable score even though the test is given many times (Arikunto, 1995:58). In this case, the writer does not do the try out to find the reliability.

2. Construction of the Test

The test designed for this study consists of materials of singular-plural nouns in line with the syllabus of English Language Teaching of the seventh grade students of SMP and MTs. It covers singular form and plural form. Singular form consists of uncountable nouns and singular countable noun, while plural form consists of regular and irregular plural. The total items are 50 items.

Table 3.1. The Construction of Singular-plural Mastery Test

Indicator		Items Number	Total
Singular	Uncountable	3, 8, 12, 15, 17, 19, 23, 28,	12
	Nouns	36, 39, 40, 41	

	Countable Nouns	2, 4, 10, 11, 13, 21, 25, 27, 29, 30, 31, 37, 45, 47	14
Plural	Regular Plural	1, 5, 7, 9, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 32, 33, 34, 35, 43	14
	Irregular Plural	6, 14, 26, 38, 42, 44, 46, 48, 49, 50	10

F. Technique of Data Analysis

In this study, the data is the students' answers on the test. In scoring the result of the test, the writer uses the formula as follows:

$$S = R$$

Where:

S : the raw score

R : the sum of correct answer

(Arikunto, 2002:172)

After the data have been collected, they are ready to be analyzed. In data analyzing, the writer uses a percentage correction technique by using the formula as follows:

$$NP = \frac{R}{SM} \times 100$$

(Purwanto, 2004:102)

Where:

NP : the percentage of the students' correct answer

R : the raw score of the students

SM : the maximum scores of the test

From the percentage of the data, the students' mastery of singular-plural nouns can be found. The mastery is shown by the percentage of correct answers that are achieved by the students on the test.

The next step is categorizing the students' mastery on singular-plural nouns into some category system as Purwanto (2004:103) classifies, as follows:

Table 3.2. Purwanto's Percentage Level Category

Percentage	Category
86-100%	Very good
76-85%	Good
66-75%	Fair
55-68%	Bad
0-54%	Very bad

CHAPTER IV

THE RESULT OF THE STUDY

A. Data Description

An objective test is applied to collect the data in this study. Thereafter, the data are cross tabulated to form a general picture of singular-plural nouns mastery of the seventh grade students of SMP Negeri 1 Gondangrejo-Karanganyar in the academic year 2006/2007.

The test consists of 50 items answered by 40 students of the sample. The number of the students' correct answers is 833 out of 2000 maximum scores consisting of singular uncountable nouns (214), singular countable nouns (231), regular plural nouns (268), and irregular plural nouns (120). The result of the test shows that the highest score achieved by the student is 39 and the lowest score is 9, so that, the range score is 30 and the average score is 20.8 (833/40).

In order to describe clearly the score achieved by the students, they are presented in form of frequency distribution at table 4.2 while table 4.1 presents the data of students' singular-plural nouns mastery used to determine the frequency distribution.

Table 4.1 The Data of Students Singular-Plural Nouns Mastery Test

Classification	Number
The highest score	39
The lowest score	9
Score range	30
Class number ($1 + 3.3 \log n$)	$1 + 3.3 \log 40 = 4,29$ (6 or 7)
The length of the interval (the highest score / class number)	$\frac{39}{7} = 5.57$ (5 or 6)

As stated above, the length of the interval can be 5 or 6. Further, the frequency distribution at table 4.2 is presented with interval 5 and its polygon is presented at figure 4.1

Table 4.2 Frequency Distribution of the Students' Scores on Singular-Plural Nouns Mastery Test

Score	Frequency
6 - 10	2
11 - 15	8
16 - 20	9
21 - 25	12
26 - 30	6
31 - 34	2
36 - 40	1

Table 4.2 and figure 4.1 below shows that 2 students are in the lowest scores and the highest score is 39 obtained by one student only. The scores of 12 students are between 20 and 25. The polygons show that most of the students have the scores between 0 into 25.



Figure: 4.1 Frequency Polygons for the Distribution Scores on Singular-Plural Nouns Mastery Test

B. Data Analysis

The first step in treating the data is scoring the result of the test. Below is the formula used that is proposed by Arikunto.

$$S = R$$

Where:

S : the raw score

R : the sum of correct answer (right)

From the formula above, the number of correct answers achieved by the students represents the intended score. Every correct answer is scored 1 and incorrect answer is scored 0, including the items that are not answered. (See appendix 1)

After the data are collected, they are ready to be analyzed. The data analysis begins with computing the percentage of the students' correct answers using a formula suggested by Purwanto as below:

$$NP = \frac{R}{SM} \times 100$$

Where:

NP : the percentage of the student's correct answers

R : the raw score of the students

SM : the maximum score of the students

100 : the constant number

From the percentage of the students' correct answers, the level of students' mastery of singular-plural nouns can be found. Purwanto suggests five levels in his percentage level.

- a. Very good, if 86 - 100% of the answers are correct
- b. Good, if 76 - 85 % of the answers are correct

- c. Fair, if 60 - 75 % of the answers are correct
- d. Bad, if 55 - 59 % of the answers are correct
- e. Poor, if 0 - 54% of the answers are correct

The levels above represent the present students' mastery of singular-plural nouns.

In this study, the number of the test items is 50 and the number of the students joining the test is 40. The result of the computation of the data is as follows:

$$\begin{aligned}
 NP &= \frac{R}{SM} \times 100 \\
 &= \frac{833}{2000} \times 100 \\
 &= 41.65 \%
 \end{aligned}$$

According to Purwanto's percentage levels, it belongs to the "poor" level. By using the similar formula as stated above, the analysis is, then put into four categories, namely singular uncountable nouns, singular countable nouns, regular plural nouns and irregular plural nouns that will be presented more detail.

The computations are as follows:

- a. Singular uncountable nouns

$$\begin{aligned}
 NP &= \frac{R}{SM} \times 100 \\
 &= \frac{214}{280} \times 100 \\
 &= 44.38 \%
 \end{aligned}$$

- b. Singular countable nouns

$$\begin{aligned} \text{NP} &= \frac{\text{R}}{\text{SM}} \times 100 \\ &= \frac{231}{560} \times 100 \\ &= 41.25 \% \end{aligned}$$

c. Regular plural nouns

$$\begin{aligned} \text{NP} &= \frac{\text{R}}{\text{SM}} \times 100 \\ &= \frac{269}{560} \times 100 \\ &= 47.86 \% \end{aligned}$$

d. Irregular plural nouns

$$\begin{aligned} \text{NP} &= \frac{\text{R}}{\text{SM}} \times 100 \\ &= \frac{120}{400} \times 100 \\ &= 30 \% \end{aligned}$$

For all the categories, the students' mastery belongs to "poor" level. Having known the students' mastery of singular-plural nouns, this study will present in details the number of the students who belongs to each level. The diagrams below are the number of the students that belongs to each level of singular-plural nouns mastery. (See also appendix 3).

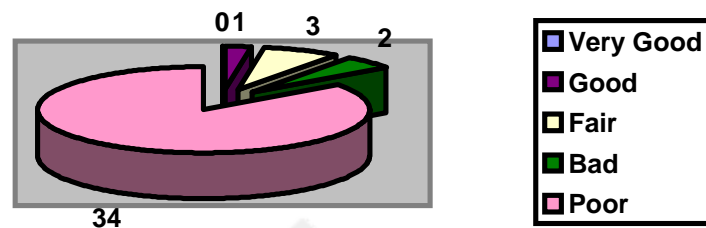


Diagram 4.1 The Number of Students on Each Level of Singular-Plural Nouns Mastery

The percentage of singular-plural nouns mastery is 41.65%. The highest score obtained by the students is 39 and the lowest score is 9. According to the diagram above, there is no student with very good score in singular-plural nouns. One student gets good score, while 3 students get fair score, 2 students get bad score and most students get poor score in singular-plural nouns.

As described at table 4.3 about the percentage level obtained by the students of each category, the diagrams below describe the number of students of each category.

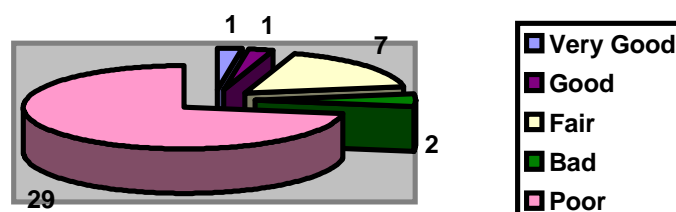


Diagram 4.2 The Number of Students on Each Level of Singular Uncountable Nouns Mastery

The students' mastery of singular uncountable nouns belongs to "poor" level with 44.38% and then the diagram above shows that 1 student gets very good score in singular uncountable nouns, 1 students gets good score, and 7 students get fair score. The students who get bad score are 2 and other 29 students get poor score in singular uncountable nouns. The highest score obtained by the students is 11 out of 12 items and the lowest score is 1.

The next diagram presents the number of students on each level in case of singular countable nouns mastery. Out of 14 items, the highest score is 14 and the lowest score is 0. There are 3 students in the level of very good, 3 students in the level of fair and 4 students in the level of bad. Most of the 28 students are in the level of poor. While based on the percentage level before, their mastery on singular countable nouns is 41.25% which belongs to "poor" level. Here is the diagram.

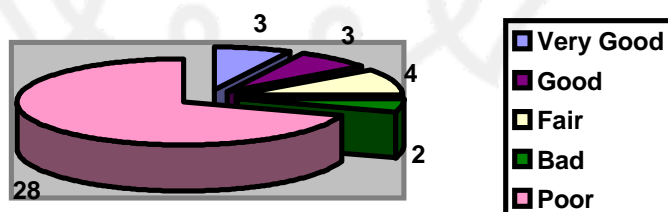


Diagram 4.3 The Number of Students on Each Level of Singular Countable Nouns Mastery

The diagrams show that most students get poor score in singular uncountable and countable nouns mastery. The next diagrams below present the students' mastery of plural nouns, particularly the number of students on each level.

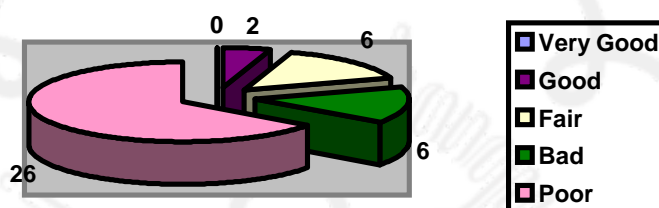


Diagram 4.4 The Number of Students on Each Level of Regular Plural Nouns Mastery

The highest score obtained by the students in regular plural nouns is 12 and the lowest score is 3 out of 14 items. Most of the 26 students get poor score. While, 2 students get good score, 6 students get fair score and 6 students get bad score. Based on the percentage level, regular plural nouns mastery belongs to “poor” level with 47.85%.

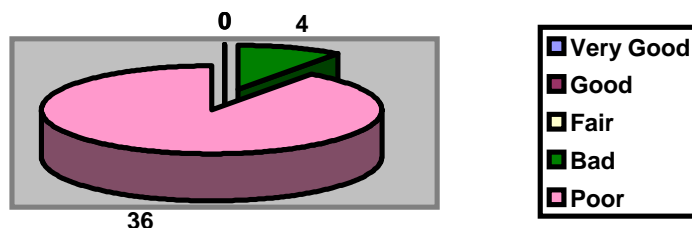


Diagram 4.5 The Number of Students on Each Level of Irregular Plural Nouns Mastery

As computed before, the students' percentage level of irregular plural nouns mastery is 30% which belongs to "poor" level. The highest score obtained by the students is 6 and the lowest score is 0. There are 4 students with bad score and 36 students with poor score. There is no student who gets very good score, good score, or fair score.

From the first diagram, it is known that most of the students of the sample have "poor" level in singular-plural nouns mastery. Further, five diagrams above explain that most students of the sample belong to "poor" level of all categories of singular-plural nouns.

As stated in the problem statements, this study does not only try to find the mastery of singular-plural nouns of the students but also to find the most difficult problem faced by the students in learning singular-plural nouns. The highest percentage is in understanding regular plural nouns (47.86%). Meanwhile, Irregular plural nouns have the lowest percentage in singular-plural nouns mastery with 30% and the students' mastery is in the level of "bad" and "poor". It can be

concluded that regular plural nouns are identified as the easiest nouns to be learnt by the students; on the contrary, irregular plural nouns are identified as the most difficult nouns to be learnt by the students in singular-plural nouns.

As stated in chapter II, noun determiners are also used as the indicator of singular-plural nouns mastery. The difficulties of the students are, then, sought by analyzing the students' incorrect answers of each item. It is done to make sure whether singular nouns, pluralization or noun determiners actually make it difficult in them to learn singular-plural nouns.

The analysis is classified into determiners followed by singular uncountable nouns (e.g. some, any, much), determiners followed by singular countable nouns (e.g. a/an, one, this/that), determiners followed by regular and irregular plural nouns (e.g. number, these, those, some, many). See appendix 4

The finding shows that the students face difficulty in understanding which noun determiners are followed by singular nouns and which ones are followed by plural nouns. Noun determiners *a/an* and *one* are actually followed by singular countable nouns, but the data show that the students choose plural nouns. For lack of understanding on singular uncountable nouns, the students pluralize the nouns to agree with noun determiners (some, any, much); whereas, singular uncountable nouns are always in singular form.

The students' difficulties are also in understanding noun determiners followed by plural nouns. Due to lack of understanding that noun determiners e.g. plural nouns follow number, these/those, some, and many, the students choose singular nouns; whereas the determiners have to be followed by plural form. Further, they also lack of understanding on pluralization. For regular plural nouns,

the students are confused to add –s or –es into the nouns. Above irregular plural nouns, they lack memorizing. Most of the students do the same in pluralizing irregular plural nouns by adding –s or –es; whereas, irregular plural nouns are pluralized with certain rules. For more detailed report, the following is the table shows the result of the computation of the students' incorrect answers related to noun determiners. See also appendix 4.

Table 4.5 The Students' Incorrect Answers Related to Noun Determiners

Noun Determiners Followed by Singular Nouns			Noun Determiners Followed by Plural Nouns					
UN(Det:	CN		RP	IP	number	these, those	some	many
some, any, much	Det: a/an, one	Det: this/that						
262	216	101	195	243	54	22	28	41
Total: 579			Total: 583					

Note:

UN : uncountable nouns

CN : countable nouns

RP : regular plural

IP : irregular plural

Det : determiner

The table above shows that the students find it more difficult to use noun determiners followed by plural nouns than singular nouns. The students' incorrect answers for noun determiners followed by singular nouns amounted to 579 among which incorrect uncountable nouns (262) and countable nouns (216). 101 are identified as their difficulties to adjust noun determiners with countable nouns. While the students' incorrect answers for determiners followed by plural nouns amounted to 583, among which incorrect regular plural (195) and irregular plural (243). 145 are identified as their difficulty to adjust noun determiners with plural nouns.

By using the previous computation of percentage levels, it is known that irregular plural nouns have the lowest percentage. It means that the students face difficulty in irregular plural nouns more than the other categories in learning singular plural nouns. Further, the computation of the students' incorrect answers shows that the result of the computation is same. Irregular plural nouns are identified as the greatest number of students' incorrect answers.

Finally, it can be concluded that based on the result of analysis of students' correct and incorrect answers, irregular plural nouns are the most difficult problem faced by the students in learning singular-plural nouns.

C. Data Interpretation

Based on the result of the study on the 40 students as the sample, there is no student with the level of "very good". One student is "good" in

singular-plural nouns mastery. He gets 78% of the total item. While, 2 students get “fair”, 3 students get “bad”, and 34 students get “poor” in singular plural nouns mastery.

The singular-plural nouns mastery of the seventh grade students of SMP Negeri 1 Gondangrejo-Karanganyar in academic year 2006/2007 is “poor”. The students have 833 correct answers out of 2000 total answers. It indicates that the students are able to answer 41.65% out of the total correct answers. According to the percentage levels as proposed by Purwanto, it belongs to “poor” levels.

Here are further discussions concerning the mastery of singular-plural nouns which are classified into four categories. Their mastery is calculated by Purwanto’s formula and also categorized by using his percentage level:

1. Singular Uncountable Nouns

The total number of items is 12. The students have 214 correct answers out of 480 total numbers. The computation shows that they are able to answer 44.58% of the total correct answers. According to Purwanto’s percentage levels, it can be categorized as “poor” level. Meanwhile, the number of the students on each level shows that the mastery of one student is “very good”, one student is “good”, 7 students are “fair”, and 2 students are “bad”. Most of the 29 students are “poor” in singular uncountable nouns mastery. It can be concluded that in general, the students’ mastery of singular uncountable nouns is “poor”.

2. Singular Countable Nouns

It is found out that the students' mastery of singular countable nouns is "poor". The finding shows that out of 560 total answers, the students have 231 correct answers on singular countable nouns. It means that they have ability to answer 41.25 % of the total correct answers. According to Purwanto's percentage levels, it can be categorized as "poor" level. Based on the number of students on each level, it can be interpreted that most of the 28 students are "poor" in singular countable nouns. There are 3 students in the level of "very good", 3 students in the level of "fair" and 4 students in the level of "bad".

3. Regular Plural Nouns

The number of students on each level in regular plural nouns mastery is 26 students belong to "poor" level, 2 students belong to "good" level, 6 students belong to "fair" level, and 6 students belong to "bad" level. The finding also shows that out of 560 total answers, they have 268 correct answers. The students are able to answer 47.85% of the total correct answers. It can be concluded that by using Purwanto's percentage levels, the students' mastery of regular plural nouns belongs to "poor" level. Therefore, the students' mastery of regular plural nouns is "poor".

4. Irregular Plural Nouns

Irregular plural nouns are identified as the lowest percentage level achieved by the students (30%). Based on Purwanto's percentage level, it belongs to "poor" level. It means that the students' mastery of irregular plural nouns is "poor". The finding shows that out of 10 items with 400 total answers, the students have 120 correct answers. By using the computation of

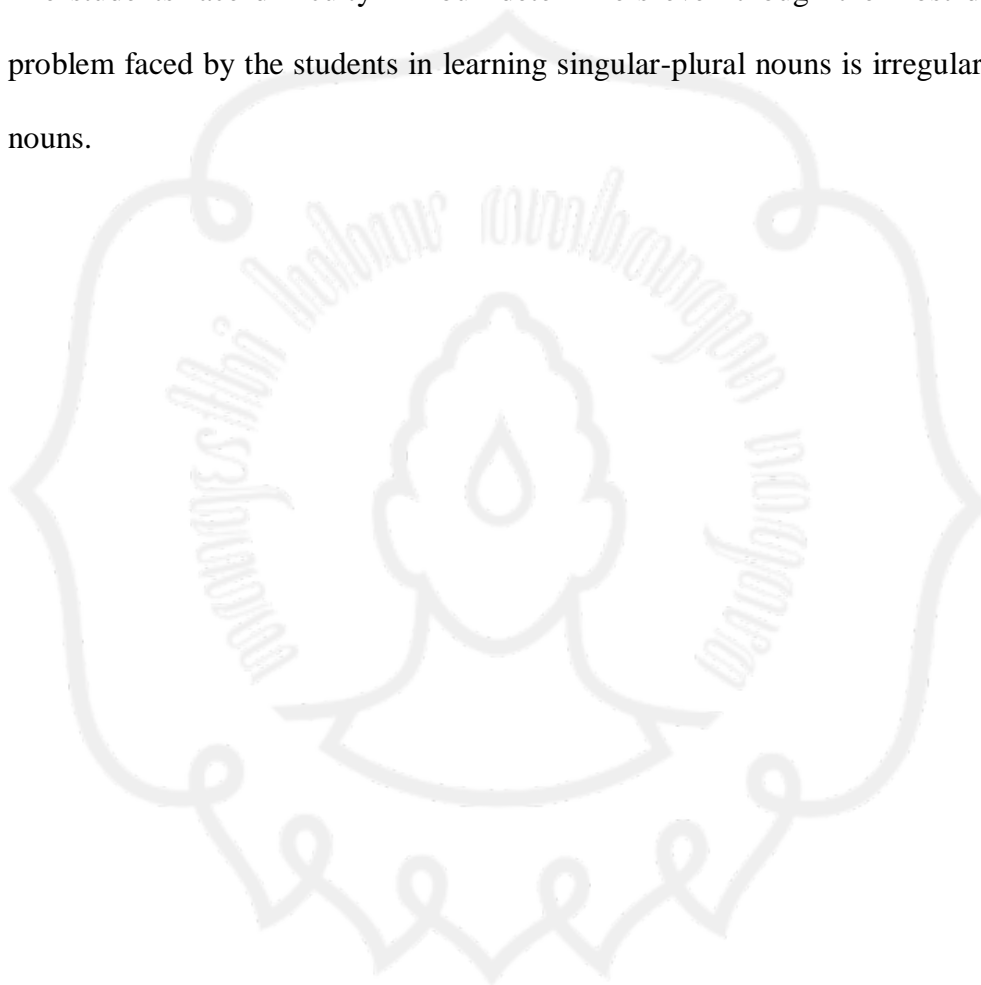
the number of students on each level, it can be known that the students' mastery of irregular plural nouns belongs to two levels, namely "bad" and "poor" level. There are 4 students in the level of "bad" and 36 students are in the level of "poor".

The interpretations above show that the highest percentage is the ability to understand regular plural nouns with 47.86%, while the lowest percentage is the ability to understand irregular plural nouns with 30%. It seems that the students face difficulty in irregular plural nouns. It is, then, cross-checked by computing students' incorrect answers related to noun determiners.

The result of the computation shows that the students' incorrect answers for noun determiners followed by singular nouns amounted to 579 among which uncountable nouns (262) and countable nouns (216). There are 101 incorrect answers caused by their lack of understanding on noun determiners followed by countable nouns. Meanwhile, the students' incorrect answers for noun determiners followed by plural nouns amounted to 583 among which regular plural nouns (195) and irregular plural nouns (243). 145 incorrect answers are caused by their lack of understanding on noun determiners followed by plural.

The computation shows that actually the students face difficulty in noun determiners, but they face more in pluralization, especially in irregular plural nouns. Based on the result of analysis of both students' correct and incorrect answers, irregular plural nouns are the most difficult nouns faced by the students in learning singular-plural nouns.

The quality of singular-plural nouns mastery has been measured and the students' difficulty has been found. The results as interpreted above indicate that in general, the singular-plural nouns mastery of the seventh grade students of SMP Negeri I Gondangrejo-Karanganyar in academic year 2006/2007 is "poor". The students face difficulty in noun determiners even though the most difficult problem faced by the students in learning singular-plural nouns is irregular plural nouns.



CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION, IMPLICATION AND SUGGESTION

A. Conclusion

Based on the data analysis, about singular-plural nouns mastery, it can be concluded that in general the singular-plural nouns mastery of the seventh grade students of SMP Negeri I Gondangrejo-Karanganyar in academic year 2006/2007 is “poor”. It is shown by the students’ percentage of singular-plural nouns, that is, 41.65% out of the total correct answers (833 out of 2000 total answers). Based on the percentage levels proposed by Purwanto, it belongs to “poor” level.

Furthermore, based on the percentage levels proposed by Purwanto, the students are also “poor” in all categories like in singular uncountable nouns (44.58%), singular countable nouns (41.25%), regular plural nouns (47.85%) and also irregular plural nouns (30%). It can be concluded that the student’s mastery in four categories of singular-plural nouns, namely in singular uncountable nouns, singular countable nouns, regular plural nouns, and irregular plural nouns are “poor”.

In order to make the conclusion more comprehensible, the following table shows the level of the students' mastery of singular-plural nouns in general and the level of the students' mastery of singular-plural nouns in specification as singular uncountable nouns, singular countable nouns, regular plural nouns and irregular plural nouns.

Table 4.3 The level of the Students' Mastery of Singular-Plural Nouns

Category	IN	R	SM	Percentage	Level
Singular uncountable nouns	12	214	480	44,58 %	Poor
Singular countable nouns	14	231	560	41,25 %	Poor
Regular plural nouns	14	268	560	47,86 %	Poor
Irregular plural nouns	10	120	400	30 %	Poor
Singular-plural nouns	50	833	2000	41.65 %	Poor

Notes:

IN : item number

R : correct answers (right)

SM : maximum score

The result of the data shows that among the singular uncountable noun, singular countable nouns, regular plural nouns, and irregular plural nouns, the most difficult problem faced by the students in learning singular-plural nouns is irregular plural nouns. The students also face difficulties in using noun

determiners even though the most difficult problem is in pluralization, especially in irregular one.

B. Implication

The conclusion above shows that the students' mastery of singular-plural nouns is "poor". It implies that the students have not had a good understanding on a noun as singular uncountable noun, which is always in form of singular, or a noun as singular countable noun, which can be singular and plural.

In addition, the students lack understanding of pluralization, which is usually added by -s or -es. This rule of pluralization is called regular plural; on the other hand, irregular plural nouns are formed by adding -en or changing the vowel or with other rules that need to be learnt by heart.

From the result of the test, it is known that the students' comprehension of noun determiners is low; therefore, they are confused in determining whether singular or plural nouns those agree with determiner in a sentence. As discussed before, this study concerns with the grammar as what happens to words when they become plural or words order is used when we make questions or join two clauses to make one sentence. Due to their "poor" level in changing a word into plural form and in adjusting singular-plural nouns with noun determiners, it implies that the students' grammar mastery is low. It is more or less influences the development of four language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading and writing.

As everybody knows, a good comprehension of singular-plural nouns is not only one of requirements to be successful in learning English; however the students' language competences can face some problems if their mastery of singular-plural nouns is in "poor" level.

C. Suggestion

Based on the result of the study, the suggestion can be stated as follows:

1. To the students

The students have to be aware with their level of singular-plural nouns mastery, so that they have a motivation to learn more. They should spend more time to improve their mastery. Above all singular-plural nouns is part of the basic competence in grammatical competence and they are still in intermediate level in learning English.

2. To the teacher

The teacher should choose the effective method to teach it to the students. She should give the students some extra activities to improve their mastery of singular-plural nouns. By using any materials in the classroom or in their environment the students can learn more so that the teacher can be the motivator or the facilitator. Last but not least, she should also raise the students' motivation of having good language competences.

3. To the readers and other researcher

It is expected that it will be able to support the development of language teaching and learning process. To the readers in general, hopefully, the result of the study can be useful and can improve their knowledge about singular-plural nouns. To the other researchers who want to study the same research, this study is expected can be a reference, so that, they can do their research better.

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