

## COMMON SYNTAX MISTAKES IN GRADUATES' ESSAYS OF SOUTH HIGHLANDERS

### *Summary*

This article discusses common syntax mistakes found in the essays written by graduates during the Lithuanian Language and Literature Exam 2014. The data was obtained from 104 essays of South Highlanders (Alytus county), and further study should show whether there are any regional differences in the use of these phenomena.

Syntax mistakes prevailing in the graduates' essays are case use mistakes (about 60 %). A common mistake which has been described since Jonas Jablonskis' times is the use of not Lithuanian (Slavic) state instrumental case instead of double declension. In modern Lithuanian, use of these structures are not sound. Perhaps they appeared not only due to the impact of the Slavic languages but also for the analogy with nouns. The most problematic verbs which were mostly accompanied by a number of non-normative state expression cases are *būti, išlikti, jaustis, laikyti, (pa)daryti, tapti (be, remain, feel, keep, do, and become)*. Hence, it is necessary to look for the causes of such use, as well as effective methods to observe norms.

Other category of relevant mistakes is use of verb forms, such as participles (about 18 %). Perhaps major syntax mistakes are made while using participles when a single character performs both major and minor roles in personal sentences.

The third group of syntax mistakes contains use of prepositions and postpositions (about 11 %). Prepositions which are used most incorrectly are *pas, prieš, virš (about, at, before, over)*. The most abundant are the cases of incorrect use of postpositions *dėka, (su) pagalba (thanks (to), (with the) help (of))*.

When writing essays, fewer mistakes are made while joining sentences or clauses (about 9 %).

KEYWORDS: syntax mistakes, cases, prepositions, postpositions, participants, verbal adverbs, participles, joining sentences.

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