CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Research

Writing skill, as one of the four primary language skills in English, holds a crucial role in effective communication, particularly for the learners of English as a second language. Many researches have consistently highlighted the importance of a good writing skill in communication. According to Walsh (2010) in The Importance of Writing Skill, writing is not only important because it is used in writing an assignment, texting friends or writing a personal diary. It is especially more important in higher education levels. If a student does not know how to write correctly, they will not be able to communicate properly with their lecturers, colleagues, employers or anyone. With this in mind, it can be concluded that writing skill is very important for a proper communication. Understanding the importance of writing skill and working towards improving one's writing skill is very crucial in one's growth as a language learner.

This is especially important for English as a second language learners, as they navigate the challenges of expressing themselves in a language that may differ significantly from their native tongue. The research in this subject has not only emphasized the importance of developing proficiency in writing but has also focused on uncovering the unique problems faced by English language learners in mastering this skill.

Within the world of writing, the role of grammar emerges as a critical aspect influencing the quality of written communication. While not the sole focus, grammar plays a significant supporting role in ensuring clarity and coherence in expressing communication through written form. Researchers have delved into the important relationship between grammatical structures and effective writing, recognizing the impact of syntax, sentence structure, and language conventions on overall communicative competence. According to Majokorpi (2023), weak writing skill leads to less control of grammatically correct sentences. While having a strong grammatical knowledge will lead to producing better text. As learners try to enhance their writing skills, a nuanced understanding of grammar becomes essential, providing them with the tools to construct grammatically correct and contextually appropriate sentences.

Zooming in on grammar as an important aspect of a good writing skill, one key area that demands attention is the mastery of tenses. Tenses serve as a basic element of grammatical proficiency and are particularly fitting in the context of writing. (2021) Thakur argued that the act of learning English tenses is important for discourse and communication in the use of English language, for it helps in constructing sentences and to communicate effectively. Past tense, in its various forms, is a crucial component that shapes the telling of past events in texts such as narratives and recounts. Researches underlined the significance of utilizing past tenses, especially the simple past tense, in crafting narratives and expressing ideas about completed actions. A deeper understanding of past tenses contributes not

only to grammatical accuracy but also to the overall effectiveness of written communication, enabling writers to send messages to the readers about the events that happen in the past.

Through the researcher's informal observation in the form of conversation with the third semester students of University of Batanghari, the researcher found that the students of the third semester of English Language Education Program of University of Batanghari often make errors in their use of Simple Past Tense. For example, some of the students still do not have the ability to distinguish the difference between nominal and verbal sentences. They still make errors by saying sentences like "they were liked the coffee", putting the auxiliary verb in a verbal sentence. Another example is when they overgeneralize the use of the suffix -ed on an irregular past verb such as writing "payed" instead of "paid" or saying "readed" instead of "read". According to Hubbard (1983), Overgeneralization of a grammar rule is one of the three reasons for an error. The other two being mother-tongue interference and errors encouraged by teaching materials and methods. Finding out the causes of errors can help the learners in improving their English skills. Thus, the researcher believes that finding errors and the causes of errors by a learner is a crucial part of language learning.

Based on the problems presented above, the researcher concluded that it is important for there to be a thorough research about errors in using tenses among the university students of University of Batanghari in order to find out about their level of proficieny in using tenses and to find out the causes of error that they

make in using tenses. In this case, the researcher decided to use Simple Past Tense as the focus of the research.

1.2 Identification of the Problem

Based on the background of the study above, the problem of the research has been identified as follows, the third semester students of English Language Education Program of University of Batanghari still make errors in using Simple Past Tense.

1.3 Limitation of the Research

To help the researcher in limiting the scope of the research being conducted and to keep the focus of the research, the following is stated: The study is focused only on analyzing the error of writing sentences in Simple Past Tense by the third semester students of English Language Education Program of University of Batanghari.

The decision of only analyzing errors in using Simple Past Tense is due to the vastness of tenses and grammar rules and due to the result of the researcher's informal observation of the third semester students' skills in using Simple Past Tense. Due to these reasons, the researcher decided that only focusing on error analysis of Simple Past Tense is appropriate for this research and its significances.

1.4 Formulation of the Research

Based on the problem of the study above, a few research questions are formulated and presented as follows:

1. What are the kinds of errors made by students in using Simple Past Tense at the third semester of English Language Education Program of University of Batanghari?
2. What are the causes of errors made by students in using Simple Past Tense at the third semester of English Language Education Program of University of Batanghari?

1.5 Purposes of the Research

Researches are conducted with one or several aims and purposes in mind. The purposes of this research are written as follows:

1. To find out what kinds of errors do the students make in using Simple Past Tense made at the third semester of English Language Education Program of University of Batanghari.
2. To find the causes of errors the students make in using Simple Past Tense made at the third semester of English Language Education Program of University of Batanghari.

1.6 Significance of the Research

The study is expected to have contributions as follows:

1. For Lecturers

   The result of this research is expected to provide a detailed insight of the students' ability in using Simple Past Tense in order to further improve the teaching and learning process in the classroom.

2. For Students

   This result of this research can be used to motivate and help students in identifying their shortcomings in the use of Simple Past Tense. It is to be be used for the advancement of the students' knowledge in using Simple Past Tense in their study and daily lives.

3. The Future Researchers

   This research is expected to give an insight for the future researchers who want to conduct a study with similar topics. Further and more thorough studies can be conducted by using the result of this study as a reference and base of knowledge.

1.7 Definitions of Key Terms

1. Error

   Error is a failure in making a grammatically correct sentence due to the learner's lack of grammar knowledge or incorrect knowledge of grammar rules.

2. Error Analysis

Error analysis is a type of linguistic analysis that is focused on identifying errors that are made by a language learners with the aims to find the causes of the errors and to improve the learner's knowledge.