CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discuss about background of the research, problem of the study which include limitation of the research, formulation of the research, the objective of the research, and significances of the research.

A. Background of the Study

In the modern era, English plays a major role as a global language. As Rohmah (2005) states that people around the world recognize the essential role of English in their lives, whether for academic, business, or other purposes. As a tool of communication, English is considered one of the most widely spoken languages globally. In some countries, it functions as a native language, while in others, it serves as a second or foreign language. Its significance cannot be ignored, as English facilitates communication, access to information, pursuit of higher education, employment opportunities, and global connectivity. As noted by Ilyosovna (2020), learning English has become a global priority across different sectors of life.

In the field of education, English holds a dominant position. It serves as a gateway to global scientific, technological, and academic advancements, enabling students and educators to stay updated with developments across disciplines (Crystal, 2003). Today, much of the world's knowledge, research, and academic resources are available primarily in English, making its mastery essential for researchers, educators, translators, and policy makers alike.

In Indonesia, learning English presents a significant challenge for many students. Musthafa (2010, as cited in Radfar & Lengkanawati, 2019) observed that despite English being taught as a foreign language for decades, effective instruction remains challenging to achieve. One of the primary reasons for this is the use of inappropriate teaching methods. Al-Sobhi and Preece (2018) further point out that limited exposure to English outside the classroom, a lack of motivation, and ineffective teaching strategies contribute to students' struggles in mastering the language. Consequently, teachers are urged to implement appropriate methods and strategies, particularly for students who find English learning challenging.

Learning challenges are often apparent when students fail to maintain focus during lessons. A lack of meaningful interaction between teachers and students can exacerbate the problem. Serin (2018) emphasizes that monotonous, teacher-centered approaches may lead to disinterest and low engagement among learners. Thus, innovative, interactive, and student-centered methods are necessary to create a more motivating and effective English learning environment.

In particular, grammar presents a notable challenge for English learners. While grammar provides the structural foundation necessary for effective communication, many students struggle to master it. According to Larsen-Freeman (2003), grammar learning is not simply about memorizing rules, but about understanding grammar's role in creating meaning during communication. Students often find it difficult to transfer grammatical knowledge into real-world communication tasks, especially when grammar instruction is decontextualized. Furthermore, Ellis (2015) highlights that learners frequently fail to acquire certain

grammatical features because these features are not salient in the input and thus are not consciously noticed. As a result, even high-frequency grammatical forms, such as the third-person singular "-s," may be overlooked, leading to persistent errors and incomplete mastery.

The researcher chose grammar over other aspects of English learning because grammar is one of the most essential components in mastering the language. It provides the structural rules that govern the meaning and nuance of both spoken and written English. Without a solid understanding of grammar, constructing coherent paragraphs and clearly conveying ideas becomes difficult. As a fundamental element of language, a lack of grammatical knowledge often leads to frequent errors. Focusing on grammatical knowledge, particularly among university students in English Education programs, can significantly enhance academic writing, improve comprehension of English textbooks, and support the correct application of language rules.

To support the background of the study, a structured interview was conducted with Mrs. Novarita, M.Pd on June 17, 2025. Although she was not teaching grammar at the time of the interview, she had previously taught the subject and shared insights based on her experience. She noted that students often struggle with applying grammar—especially tenses and sentence structure—despite earning good grades. Factors such as limited practice, low confidence, and fear of making mistakes contribute to these difficulties. Her input helped validate the researcher's observations and sharpen the study's direction.

Given these issues, it is essential to examine the specific challenges encountered by students in acquiring grammatical knowledge. Therefore, this study, titled *"An Analysis of English Education Students' Challenges in Grammatical Knowledge at Baturaja University,"* aims to identify and analyze the grammatical challenges faced by students within the English Education Program. The findings are expected to provide valuable insights for improving grammar instruction and supporting more effective learning outcomes.

B. Problem of the Study

1. Limitation of the problem

This study focuses on "An Analysis of English Education Students' Challenges in Grammatical Knowledge at Baturaja University." Specifically, this study focuses on general prescriptive grammar, mainly covering sentence structure, tense usage, and overall grammatical competence. It does not explore specific grammar topics in depth.

2. Formulation of the Problem

In accordance with the aforementioned limitations, this study aims to formulate the research problem as follows: What challenges do students face in understanding and applying grammatical knowledge in the English Education Program at Baturaja University?

C. The Objectives of the Study

The objective of this study is to identify and analyze the challenges faced by students in understanding and applying grammatical knowledge within the English Education Program at Baturaja University. This includes exploring

cognitive, psychological, environmental, and instructional factors that may hinder their grammatical competence, with the aim of providing insights that can support the development of more effective teaching strategies.

D. Significance of the Study

This research is expected to be useful to:

1. Lecturer

The findings of this study are expected to assist lecturers in identifying the specific challenges students encounter in learning English, with a particular emphasis on grammatical knowledge. The widespread challenges experienced by many Indonesian students in acquiring English proficiency should not be overlooked. Accordingly, it is essential for lecturers to develop effective strategies to address and overcome students' grammatical weaknesses in order to enhance overall language competence.

2. Students

This research can help students recognize and overcome the specific grammatical challenges they face in acquiring grammatical knowledge.

3. Other Researchers

This study hopefully can be useful to other researchers, also can be a reference and provide an information to conduct research in related field.