CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

In English education, learning syntax is introduced early, particularly at the junior high school level, where students begin constructing basic sentences. According to Syamsu (2021), at the junior high school level, vocabulary and various types of simple sentences are taught to students. However, many students face barriers in learning English syntax due to several factors, such as differences between the structure of their mother tongue and English, and anxiety about making mistakes. These barriers in learning English syntax need to be known and overcome because syntax is an important aspect to learn in learning English.

Syntax is the study of how words and phrases are organized to become meaningful sentences. Learning English syntax allows a person to be able to make proper and effective English sentences, so that when communicating in English, the sentences spoken can be easily understood. Surayya et al. (2024) stated that syntax plays a crucial role in communication, enabling the effective conveyance of messages and the creation of meaning within a constructed context, thereby facilitating mutual understanding between the speaker and the listener. Syntax also plays a role in the writing process (especially in English) to produce well-structured sentences, so that readers will easily understand the message in the writing.

Seeing the importance of English syntax, it is important to study more deeply to find out what barriers students face in learning syntax. Knowing these barriers can help to find appropriate learning strategies to overcome the barriers faced by students in learning English syntax.

Several previous researchers have conducted research related to the barriers faced by students in learning English syntax. Ismahani et al. (2024) concluded in their research that English language learners face difficulties in learning English syntax, specifically in constructing sentences due to the differences between the structure of English and their first language, and struggle to distinguish tenses. In addition, Gayo and Widodo (2018) analyzed syntax and morpheme errors in

students' writing and their causes. The errors they found, including syntax errors, were caused by interlingual factors (first language influence) and intralingual factors (overgeneralization, ignorance of the rule restriction, incomplete application of rules, and false concept hypothesis). Although this study focused on analyzing errors and their causes rather than directly discussing learning English syntax barriers, these causes can still be understood as barriers faced by students in learning English syntax, because these factors hinder students, especially in understanding English syntax, so that students have difficulty and produce writing that contains syntactic errors.

Several previous studies, namely the first study conducted by Ismahani et al. (2024), examined the difficulties in learning English syntax faced by English learners (high school students, university students, and teachers) based on the perceptions of English learners rather than based on an analysis of syntax errors. The second study conducted by Gayo and Widodo (2018) focused on the analysis of morpheme and syntax errors in junior high school students' writing and the analysis of the causes of these errors, not specifically examining syntax and not specifically examining the barriers faced by students in learning English syntax. Thus, researchers have not found any previous studies that specifically examine the barriers faced by junior high school students in learning English syntax through analysis of students' writing errors. To address this gap, this study explored the barriers faced by students in learning English syntax in one of the junior high schools in Tasikmalaya by analyzing syntax errors found in students' writing.

B. Formulation of the Problem

The question in this research is "What are the barriers faced by junior high school students in learning English syntax?"

C. Operational Definitions

The researcher provides three operational definitions so that there are no errors in understanding this research.

1. Language Learning — Language learning is the process of someone learning a language after someone has mastered their mother tongue (first language). In this research, language learning refers to learning or acquiring English syntax, which focuses on how students learn to construct meaningful sentences.

2. Syntax — Syntax is the study of how words and phrases are organized to become meaningful sentences. In this study, the syntax studied is related to the use of tenses that the researcher finds in students' notes. This study includes various tenses without restricting the analysis to specific ones.

3. Barriers — Barriers refer to difficulties that can interfere with students in achieving their goals in learning or mastering English syntax. Barriers in learning English syntax in this study are based on Interlanguage Theory Perspectives, such as language transfer and overgeneralization. The researcher will investigate these barriers by analyzing syntax errors made by students in their assignment books or notes. The analysis is based on error analysis,

including omission, misordering, selection, and addition.

D. Aims of the Study

This research aims to explore the barriers faced by junior high school students in learning English syntax at one of the junior high schools in Tasikmalaya and to provide insight to teachers regarding the barriers faced by students in learning English syntax.

E. Significances of the Study

1. Theoretical Significance

This research will contribute to the development of theories about English language learning, especially in learning English syntax by finding out about barriers in learning English syntax, and this research can add to the existing literature regarding syntax learning at the junior high school level, which rarely receives attention.

2. Practical Significance

This study examines the barriers faced by students in learning English syntax. It is hoped that it can help teachers to be able to find out what the barriers faced by students in learning English syntax, so that teachers can find various appropriate strategies to deal with these barriers.

3. Empirical Significance

This research will contribute to adding empirical data regarding the barriers faced by students in learning English syntax, especially at the junior high school level.