

## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents the background, problem formulation, purpose and benefit of the research.

#### **1.1 Background**

Before finishing the study in Diploma III program at State Polytechnic of Sriwijaya, every student is required to write a final report, one kind of academic writings. In writing the final report the students should follow the guideline of the final report writings from State Polytechnic of Sriwijaya. The contents of final report are depended on the student's major such as research, planning, building design, and field research or case study. Furthermore the report should have cover, approval sheet, abstract, preface, table of contents, list of tables, list of pictures, list of appendices, introduction, literature review, general overview/methodology/planning/building design, references, and appendices (Politeknik Negeri Sriwijaya: 2008). Furthermore, Nayak and Singh (2015, p.278) mention three main divisions of report: preliminary material (title of report, table of contents, and abstract/synopsis), body of report (introduction, literature review, methodology, results, discussion, conclusion and recommendations), and supplementary material (references or bibliography and appendices).

In academic writing, besides focusing on the contents, it is also necessary to concern the grammar in order the readers can comprehend the discourse. Furthermore, Hinkle (2004) as cited in Baleghizadeh and Gordani (2015, p.161-162) states that it is important to pay attention to English tools; the (grammar and vocabulary) for no matter how well discourse is organized or how brilliant the writer's idea is, it would be hard to understand discourse if the language is not constructed well. Tense is one of grammatical that is used in academic writings, Evans, et al. (2011, p.30) state there are some general rules for tenses in academic writings. For example, past tense is used for reporting past activities done by the writer or others; present tense is used for introducing a chapter or a section or a table and discussing implications of works; and future tense is used for reporting

the implication some works. Furthermore, Wallwork (2011, p.220) states that past simple using the passive form is often used in most methods sections. It is required because the actions described took place in the past.

According to Evans, et al. (2011, p.29) tenses are not paid attention by some non-English language students. They only consider whether something happened in the past, is happening now or may happen in the future. For example some students of English Department at State Polytechnic of Sriwijaya also make an error in using tenses in their final report as in this sentence “The writer uses the method of interview and documentation.” Another incorrect tense is in the sentence “The writer will use the method of observation.” In this case, the sentence should be in simple past tense for the methods were used before writing the report.

From the examples above the writer concludes that error in using tenses still happen and may be more errors can be found in other final reports. Therefore, the writer is interested in analyzing whether the students concern the use of tenses or not in their final reports. The title of this research is “**The Use of Tenses in the Research Methodology Chapters of Students’ Final Reports.**” Hopefully, it can help English department students to learn well about the tenses in academic writing.

## **1.2 Problem Formulation**

The problems of this final report are:

1. What kinds of tenses did the students use in the research methodology chapter of their final reports?
2. What mistakes did the students write in the research methodology chapters of their final reports?

### **1.3 Purpose**

The purposes of the research are:

1. To know kinds of tenses the students use in writing research methodology chapter of their final reports
2. To know how the students use the tenses in writing research methodology chapter of their final reports

### **1.4 Benefit**

The result of the study is expected to give information to the readers about the students' ability in using tenses especially in writing research methodology chapter of final reports.