1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Background of Writing

Language is man’s greatest invention and most precious possession. Without the present of a language, trade, government, family life, friendship, religion, and the arts would be either impossible or radically different and cannot be done. The ways human beings use language, and how well, have much to do with what kind of people they are, much of what they call education in one way or another helps people extend their understanding and mastery of language. As they extend their own understanding and mastery of language, they should remember these basic principles. For instances, language has a history, it is the way it is for the same reason a mountain or a giant redwood is the way it is, the forces working on it from time immemorial have so shaped it over the centuries. Some of the most recent history of the language they can still trace. They can tell when people ancestors first became acquainted with a paved “street,” taking from the Romans both the thing, and its name. People can show that the word silly a thousand years ago meant “blessed.” But much else in the language—the words, and how they are put together in sentences—has roots going back into distant prehistory.

As it has been mentioned that language is man’s greatest intellectual accomplishment, is immeasurably ancient. We may be fairly sure that man was already making use of the complicated and highly systematized set of vocal sounds which go to make tip language when the woolly-haired rhinoceros and the mammoth roamed the earth. Archaeologists have shown that man was using tools
in those far-off prehistoric days, a fact which presupposes his ability to hand down knowledge of their construction and use to his descendants.

Language is so closely bound up with our everyday experience that we seldom stop to think of the roles it plays, it is the dress of thought and it has become commonplace to quote this in support of the view that conscious thought is behind all languages, and that language is primarily used to ‘dress up’ thoughts and send them on their way: give substance to thoughts. ‘Language’, we are often told, ‘exists for the expression of thoughts or ideas.’

There could be wide disagreement over what an idea or a thought exactly is, and therefore over the meaning of such a definition. But most of us would probably agree at any rate that the following quotation illustrates language being used ‘for the expression of thoughts or ideas’. Most of us would equally agree that this statement of quantum theory represents a genuine, very important, and perhaps even very common use of language. We are not all physicists, but we all have to express serious ‘thoughts or ideas’ on this level from time to time, giving conscious thought to the language we are using. Genuine and even commonplace as these examples are, without doubt, we may well ask: are they what language is chiefly and primarily used for, what language ‘exists for’? It may be illuminating at this point if we try to think back over a day’s events and recall just how we have in fact been using our language. Calling someone to get up; singing to oneself in the bathroom; asking if breakfast is ready; grumbling about the weather or about where that other sock has disappeared to; teasing someone; appealing for help to open a sauce bottle. It would be stretching the meaning of ‘thoughts or
ideas’ a very long way to make it cover all these language activities, yet we can be fairly confident that they bulk large in the daily use of language by any of us, whether we are company directors or school children.

We may get some confirmation that this is so by further reflecting that these uses of language seem ‘easier’, seem to come more naturally, than the examples dealing with careful ‘thoughts or ideas’ which were quoted earlier. We can surely agree that all of us find it easier to ask for more coffee or grumble about our work than to discourse on literary criticism, expectorants, and we should realize that this is not merely because some of these particular subjects are beyond our competence: it would still be true if for ‘expectorants’ we substituted the name of our favorite hobby.

It would be a big mistake to dismiss the ‘easy’ uses of language as trivial and unimportant merely because they seem so ordinary. Indeed, the more ordinary they seem, the more obvious it should be that we start from them in considering the use of English or any other language. If they seem ordinary, it is this very fact that makes the use of English seems difficult when we are writing an essay or describing some complicated electronic theory: difficult because unfamiliar and extraordinary. And again, at the risk of being repetitive and obvious, we must stress that it is not that the subject is ‘unfamiliar and extraordinary’. We may have a perfectly clear understanding of the experiment, and the essay may be on our favorite hobby. It is the use to which we are putting our language that is unfamiliar.
1.2 The Problems of Writing

The object of this research is a group of students. They are the students of SMP Negeri 3 Binjai. They are now sitting on the 3rd year group. They are about fourteen years of age. They have been taught English by their teachers in the classroom at least four semesters. In teaching the students, they use the curriculum which is published by the government of Indonesia. The teachers have given the students twelve different tenses since those two semester periods. Therefore the writer of this paper states the problem is, whether they are able to use the tenses or not, how far the students understand to use the English tenses.

1.3 The Scopes of Writing

In writing a skill writing there can be many different things to be written, therefore in writing this simple paper the writer wants to give the limit of his writing. Dealing with the title of this writing is the ability of the 2015/2016 3rd year students of SMP Negeri 3 Binjai in using the English tenses they have been studied, of course the limit of writing is just on their ability to apply the English tenses.

1.4 The Purposes of Writing

In writing this paper the writer wants to find out the students ability in using the English tenses. By applying a project as it is, the writer will be able to find out the scores of the students in using the tenses. Difficulties of using the
English tenses which are faced by the students can be seen through the interpretation of the data.

1.5 The Methods of Writing

When some wants to do a research there can be some methods to be applied, for instances library research, field research, or experiment. On this occasion, in taking this project, the writer applies the field research method with the reasons that all the data he used are taken from the students of the SMP Negeri 3 Binjai on the period 2015/2016. The students are treated as the resources of the data required. The writer write a set of questions deals with the usages of English tenses which they have been taught by their teachers since the schooling in the classroom. This set of the questions of course has already been discussed with the English teachers who are in charge to teach the students. This idea is concerning with the validity and reliability of the test performed.