

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### A. Background of the Study

Language is important to make the human being and it is made for us to understand each other. It means that language is the vehicle or method for people to communicate in society; we can understand each other by language. Many people who work in language provided the definition of language. Fauziati (2011: 22-23) said that “the possession of language distinguishes humans from other animal. To understand the humanity people must understand the language that makes them human”. Human language is different from animal language, and human must understand peoples’ language meaning. Other definition of Corder (1962: 20) states that “language is an object like a tool, which we can pick up, use for some purposes, and put down again. By using language, we can ask other people to do something, exchange our ideas, and can communicate to each other about our plans in the future or experiences”. It means that language is a material to communicate between people to other people in society, that they use language like vehicle to help someone understand what they want. Moreover, David (2000: 212) says that “a language is the systematic, conventional use of sound, signs or written symbols in a human society for communication and self expression”.

English language is one subject that is compulsory in the curriculum in some countries and English is taught as the second language or foreign language. Especially in Asian countries, they focus on English as the foreign language because they use English to communicate with people from other countries. English is the international language to communicate between people who use different languages, so English language is used as the foreign language that students must learn because if they have the basics of the English language, it is

first step for them to have opportunities to study in overseas. Moreover, the workers who want to work in other countries to get high salaries must have knowledge of English to communicate with people in other countries. From Jennifer's post on internet (2014: 1) there are about 375 million English as a first language speakers and 750 million English as a second language speakers, English as official or special status in at least 70 countries. Just hearing the numbers gives you an inkling of just how important English is. The market for English as a Second Language (ESL) is booming and more individuals are studying courses such as this one that will help them improve their own accents and understand native English. English learners opt to take English to cultivate ground for communication socially with others and to become part of a global economy. We have known how important English is, thus many students learn English in school and outside school or in the special courses to improve their English language.

Writing is one skill of four skills and it is a very important skill because we use the written language in many ways such as: restaurants, offices, workplaces, educational areas, and society. Especially in educational area, learners who learn English, writing is one important skill because written language is used more in their learning such as writing the lesson, noting some important message, taking examinations, writing reports, assignments, and the important thing is thesis. Wrench, et. al (2008: 304) suggested that if we think about the human history of language as a twelve-inch ruler, written language or recorded language has only existed for the "last quarter of an inch". Furthermore, for other more than six thousand languages that are spoken around the world today, only a minority of them actually use a written alphabet. To help us go onto the language, the first looks at the basic functions of language and study into the differences between oral and written language.

Writing English is one subject in the curriculum of English Department in Champlasack University. Students start learning writing skill in the first year until the third year. The first year students learn the basic writing skill such as how to

use punctuations in writing, how to connect ideas between sentences to other sentence, which means that they learn the basic rules of writing. Second year students learn simple paragraphs. It is short and easy for students. Third year students practice essay writing, it is simple essay and they practice comparative writing in paragraphs. In the general idea, writing is an easier skill to learn because learners will be able writing every that they have known on paper. According to Reid (Phimmasenh, 2010: 4) “writing is usually easier, better, and more successful when talking, drafting, revising, and edition together in pair or in the groups that are part of the writing process”. Miles (1982: 4) shows that the writing process is easier than the speaking process because people who write something have time to think of the idea, find out the right words and have expressed it into writing.

On the other hand, students have problems with English writing because English rules are very complicated and they differ from their native language (Native grammar transfers English grammar). Sharwood (1994: 13) said that “the influence of the mother tongue on the learner’s performance in and development of a given target language”. Other Saville-Troike (2006: 19) language transfer occurs when “an L1 structure or rule is used in an L2 utterance and that use is inappropriate and considered an error”. Weigle (2002: 35) supports that due to the constraints of limited second-language knowledge. Writing in a second language may be hampered because of the need to focus on language rather than content. She also claims that “it is impossible for L2 students to write in a second language properly without linguistic knowledge regarding grammar and vocabulary”. Second language writing can be more difficult if syntactic properties of the two languages are very different, which makes L2 students rely on their first language when writing in a second language. In the Falhasiri’s work (2011) most mistakes students made on grammatical and lexical (pragmatic) errors are because students obviously get stuck when writing in the target language (TL). The cause of error, their mother tongue majorly affects the use of their second language; consequently. Thus they may combine the systems of their first languages into their L2 writing, which is called “language transfer or syntactic transfer”.

Writing is a very difficult skill for learners to learn because writing consists of the morpheme, syntax, grammar structure and how to combine the words to make the correct sentences. According to Byrne (1988: 1) writing is the act of forming letters or a combination of letters according to certain conventions to form words and the words must be arranged into sentence. It is generally agreed that writing is the most difficult skill to master for foreign language learners. Richards & Renandya (Fauziati, 2009: 45) described that this is due not only to the need to generate and organize ideas using an appropriate choice of vocabulary, sentences, and paragraph organization but also to turn such ideas into a readable text. Moreover, the learners also have more difficulties transferring ideas from the native language (e.g Lao) into the target language (e.g English). Writing is more complex in that it tests a person's ability to use a language and the ability to express ideas. As a result, a person needs to write not only coherently but correctly, which requires more time and effort (Liu and Braine, 2005: 623-624). This difficulty of writing leads students to be more susceptible to producing errors.

Writing is the more formal than spoken language, and the organization of writing is following the conception of the English grammar, so learners face problem in writing. Byrne (1988: 4-5) states that:

There are three problems why writing becomes difficult: psychological problem, linguistic problem, and cognitive problem. In psychological problem, writing is essentially a solitary activity without possibility of interaction or benefits of feedback; this makes the act of writing difficult. In linguistic problem the writer has to keep the channel of a communication open through our own effort and ensure both through our choice of sentences structure and through the way our sentences are linked together and sequenced. In cognitive problem, on the other hand, writing is learned to a process of instruction. The writer has to master the written form of the language and to learn certain structures. The writer also learns how to organize the ideas in such a way to be understood by the reader

Badge & White (Fauziati, 2010: 50) further that "the teaching learning process of writing occurs in four stages: pre-writing, composing/drafting, revising, and editing Prewriting is the phase of idea gathering". Drafting is the process of writing a rough outline of what is addressed. Revising or elaborating is the

modifications of their writing based on the feedback from their peers or teachers. The last stage is; editing which is correcting mechanical errors like spelling or punctuation.

The difficulties in the rule of the language in writing causes the students to make error. According James (1998: 77) an error arises when there was no intention to commit one; it means that learners do not intend to produce errors in their writing but are limited by the mental process. When students produce the error, then students' errors can be classified into linguistic errors. Dulay Burt and Krashen (1982: 146) stated that there are four taxonomies that are important to consider, namely the linguistic category, surface strategy taxonomy, comparative taxonomy and communicative effect taxonomy. Moreover, they refer to these types of errors "interlanguage error" caused by the interference of the learner's mother tongue. Richards (1973: 174) concludes that writing error is made by students are caused by two factors, they are interlingual and intralingual. Interlingual factor occurs when they make deviant sentences from mother tongue. Intralingual occurs when there is a lack of grammatical knowledge in the target language. He also points out that complex rule learning is typically characterized by overgeneralization, ignorance of rule restriction, incomplete application of rule and false concept hypothesized.

According to Corder (1967: 1) Error analysis is a type of linguistic analysis that focuses on the errors learners make. It consists of a comparison between the errors made. Other meaning, Saville-Troike (Fauziati, 2009: 135) error analysis (EA hereafter) is "the first approach to the study of SLA which includes an internal focus on learners' creative ability to construct language". Error could even be an important feedback for the learners themselves. By knowing their errors, they will know the problems that they face and try to analyze their weaknesses. On other hand, by analyzing student's errors, the teacher can't detect the students' difficulty in learning the target language. They can also determine the intention of certain method in teaching the language. It implies that learner's errors could give

a significant contribution in creating new approaches in the materials for teaching. Most second language learners always make the error on their writing.

Laos has used English as the foreign language. The English subject is compulsory in curriculum from secondary school until university and one subject that students must learn. The English language is so difficult for Lao students to learn because their native language and the English language are more different for examples the character of letters, pronunciation, grammar structure, grammar rule and else. Lao students have many problems on English learning because they use only mental processes to remember all the English rules. At Champasack University, in the English Department, most students have problem in vocabulary, tenses, punctuation, and grammar. The writing process is focused on grammatical rule, so it is the problem for students who learn English as foreign language. The characteristic of English letters and Lao letters are different and English structure is also different. These causes, Lao student's to inevitability produce errors in their writing. There are some examples of students' writing in the topic (my routine).

1. I always arrange the book into my bag *and* \_\_ *breakfast*
2. Then \_\_ study again, *do my homework*, and sleep again.

The examples above show that students made errors in their writing because they lack a knowledge of the English grammatical rule, and they made more errors in omission of the items in the sentence, "I always arrange the books into my bag *and breakfast* at 7:10 a.m", this sentence omits the verb that it shows that they lack the grammatical rules like the second example, "Then study again, *do my homework*, and sleep again" the learner's language generally omits subject pronoun and this clause is not correct in grammatical rule and it frequently occurs in the writing.

There are some examples that shows the learners made the errors on their writing when they present more items which are not necessary in the sentence such as;

1. I *start to wake* up at 5 o'clock
2. After that, I *have to eat*.

Two examples were taken from students' writing task; they made the error on sentences. They presented more items which must not appear in a well-formed utterance. They used many words that are not necessary in sentences "I *start to wake* up at 5 o'clock" but the correct sentence is "I wake up at 5 o'clock" and other example "After that, I *have to eat*" it is not appropriate to use "have to"; the correct is "After that, I eat". This error is called "addition error"; it occurs in the later stage of L2 acquisition, when the learners have already acquired some target language rule.

Besides that, students made the errors in other classification that are different characteristics form or they used the wrong form or structure and they use the tenses in wrong cases example above such as:

1. I'm study until 9:15
2. then I'll *clean* up my room For 10 minute
3. then I *said* 'good bye' to my mother and my father.

Some examples above show the variegated erroneous sentences in students' writing and the character of error occurring tenses such as in the first sentence "I'm study until 9:15" is the wrong form (tense) or additional unnecessary verbs "to be" because learners can't put the "verb to be" with infinitive verbs in the routine activities and in this case the learner can't recognize the present simple structure then he/she made error, so the correct sentence is "I study until 9:15". The second erroneous sentence "then I *said* 'good bye' to my mother and my father" the learner used the past tense which is not correct from to use in the routine activities and the learner always says that phrase before he/she goes to

school; then the correct sentence is “I usually say ‘good bye’ to my father and mother”. This erroneous sentence occurs when the learner does not know tenses usage, so he/she produced error. The last example, the erroneous sentence “then *I’ll clean* up my room for 10 minutes” learner use the “future tense” that is not appropriate tense to support the title because learner does activity. Moreover, he/she must use simple tense and learner use the capital letter “For”, so that it is not appropriate and the correct sentence is “I clear up my room for 10 minutes”.

Sometimes learners made errors because they transfer their native form into target language especially they use native spoken language into second language and they wrote on paragraph for example

1. After that, I take a shower and *use my uniform*
2. *Like usually* I have to help my mother.

The first erroneous sentence is “After that, I take a shower and *use my uniform*” the learner use the wrong verb (use) which is not suitable to use this verb with clothes, then the correct sentence is “After that, I take a shower and wear my uniform” the cause of error occurs on sentences because learner transfer Lao meaning into English, so that learner used wrong selection verb. The second erroneous sentence, “Like usually I have to help my mother” this sentence characterizes Lao style sentence, the learner used the Lao meaning and transferred it to English, so this sentence is incorrect. The correct sentence is “I usually have to help my mother”.

Some examples above, student made error on wrong form (I’m study until 9:15), and some errors occur with omission and additional items in sentences. Besides that, some learners made error by using tenses with wrong situation, so that those sentences are not correct, and some learners ignored the rule restriction. They use “future” and “past tense” with simple event for example “I’ll wear uniform” and “I said” it showed that students are confused about when to use tense or they make a new deviant structure in the basis on their experience of their structures in the target language (overgeneralization).



Some sentences looked like Lao style because learners transferred their native language meaning into English language (language transfer), and some sentences missed the subject because learners ignored the grammatical rule. It means that Lao grammatical structure influences to English grammatical structure. One more, they do not understand how to use the tenses with the some event in their life. Therefore, it is difficult for Lao students to use correct grammatical structures in English because most of students are influenced by their mother tongue on the acquisition of the new structure. Therefore, the students are still weak in English, especially in their writing skill; they still seem to commit errors in all aspects of language.

For those reasons, the researcher is interested in studying “comparative error analysis in English writing by first, second, and third year students of the English Department of the Faculty of Education at Champasack University”

In this study, the researcher focuses on grammatical errors in writing; especially erroneous sentences made by students in the first, second, and third year. The types of errors are based on linguistic category and surface strategy taxonomy because it is the best way to find error classification. It can give a clear description about cognitive processes, especially to find the types of error on free writing tasks (free composition). To classify the cause of the errors, the researcher will follow to Seliker (1977: 37) described of the interlanguage system that based on a cognitive mental process. There are five factors such as overgeneralization, language transfer, language training, strategies of second language learning, and strategies of second language communication. Most data is only from the learners’ production then the learners’ errors are the product of the cognitive process in the second language.

## **B. Problem Statements**

From the description above, the problems in this research are:

1. What are types of error made by students in First, Second, and Third year of the English department?

2. What is the frequency of each type of errors made by students in their First, Second, and Third year of the English Department?
3. What are the similarities and differences of types of error made by students in their First, Second, and Third year of the English Department?
4. What are the sources of error made by students in their First, Second, and Third year of the English department?

### **C. Objectives of the Study**

The goals of this research are:

1. To identify weather the types of errors are made by students in their First, Second, and Third year of the English department.
2. To know the frequencies of each types of error are made by students in their First, Second, and Third year of the English department.
3. To investigate the similarities and differences of type of errors in the writing in First, Second and Third years of the English Department.
4. To find out the sources of errors occur in students' writing in their First, Second, and Third year of the English Department.

### **D. Benefit of the Study**

This research is helpful in education areas and other researchers who are interested in error in writing, so there are two benefits, namely theoretical benefit and practical benefit.

#### **1. Theoretical Benefit**

This research is expected to become a reference related with error analysis for doing future research as relevant as Second Language Acquisition.

#### **2. Practical Benefit**

For students:

- a. The result of the research will help them to write better. Students will know the type of error that they made on writing, then they will avoid in making

error in writing and by giving valuable input about errors, they encounter and how to overcome them. This is a key to improve their writing to be better

For teachers:

- a. These results of the research will help teachers improve their teaching technique in writing and then they will know the students' weakness in writing and solve student's problems.
- b. This research will help teachers create their material in their teaching and help motivate them in their teaching by giving them exercise that will help with; cooperation between teachers and learners.

For researchers:

- a. The researcher will know the types of errors that students make in their writing and improve their teaching techniques in writing in the future.
- b. These results of research will help researcher understand the students' weakness in their writing and find the way to improve her materials on her teaching and it is useful for her teaching in the future.

For universities:

- a. The result of this research is valuable for all teachers and people who work in teaching English because they will adapt their materials and writing techniques to be more affective for students. Especially, it will improve the quality of writing teaching processes of the English Department, Champsack University.
- b. It will help to improve their University curriculum to be better and it is appropriate with international curriculums.

#### **E. Limitation of the Study**

Limitation correlates to the selection problem from a diversity of problem that have been identified. By limitation, the research is more specialized, simpler and easier in correcting the data from students by students' writing paper.

Limitation focuses on students in 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> years of English department at Champlasack University.

## **F. Research Paper Organization**

In this Thesis, the researcher organizes this research paper by dividing it into five chapters, in order to make it easy to understand this research.

Chapter I is the Introduction. In this chapter, the researcher explains the background of the study, Problem statement, Object of the study, benefit of the study, Limitation of the study and research paper organization.

Chapter II is Underlying Theory. The researcher divides this chapter into three points. The first point is preview study, there are even previous studies that studied about errors on writing and all studies are related with this research. The second point, the researcher describes some theories that are related in this research. It consists of the nature of error analysis, error description, and the procedure of error analysis, error identification, and source of errors. The nature of interlanguage, concept of interlanguage, area of interlanguage, and characteristic of interlanguage. The last point, which describes the theory framework in this research.

Chapter III is Research Method. In this chapter, the researcher describes the way to collect and analysis the data. This consists of seven points namely, types of research, Subject research, object of the study, Data and data Source, Techniques of Collecting data, Data Validity and Techniques of Analyzing data.

Chapter IV is Researcher Finding and Discussion. In this chapter, the researcher answers the research questions in the previous statement in chapter I. there are two points for discussion such as finding errors and discussion of finding. First point, she finds out the types of error in each year with explanation about types of errors then finding more the frequency of error types. After that, comparative similarities and difference of error types in each year and last finding out the source of errors. Second point, researcher discusses about current finding

compares with previous finding and comparison between current findings with theory.

Chapter V is Conclusion, pedagogical implication and Suggestion. In this chapter, the researcher summarizes about result findings in Chapter IV then the researcher explains the result to pedagogies in the second language acquisition and gives more suggestions to the learners, teachers and other researchers who are interested in error analysis.