

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Background of the Study

English as a second language has been conducted in many studies in order to succeed in learning process. Teaching strategies have been modified so well with the purpose of improving the students' quality in acquiring the four skills of language learning: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Nevertheless, the issues of target language learning never remain the satisfactory of learners' competency. The learners still find it difficulties in expressing their ideas in learning English and even produce errors. When writing or speaking the target language (TL), target language learners tend to depend on their first language (L1) structures. If the structures of the L1 and TL are the same, problems will be overcome. Yet, if the structures of the two languages are distinctly different, then one could expect a relatively high frequency of errors to occur in TL, thus indicating an interference of L1 on L2 (Dechert, 1983 and Ellis, 1997).

Weinrich (in Chaer dan Agustina 1995:159) stated that language contact is an event of using two languages interchangeably done by a speaker. Later, transmission or language element transfer from one

language to another language covers all levels. Consequently, borrowing and influencing to language elements from one language to another language cannot be ignored. Suwito (1985:39-40) stated that if two or more languages were used interchangeably by a speaker, language contact would appear. Surprisingly, interference will appear both in oral and written form. Taken into consideration, bilingualism or even multilingualism normally will cause interference and integration. Alwasilah (1985:131) defined interference based on Hartman and Stonk formulae that interference is an error caused by a tendency of using certain.

Ackrapong 2005, find out that the Thai students produce incorrect sentences when they are expressing their ideas in English. The Thai student writes “I closed (opened) the radio” instead of “I turned off (on) the radio”. This error occurs as the students transfer the properties of their first language in the second language. The meaning of “close or open” in Thai language is equivalent to the word “turn off (on)”. In addition, in Thai language, the proper noun “*hair*” and “*furniture*” are countable while in English they are not (Nattama, 2002). Thus, the students often make mistakes when they are expressing these words in English. For instance, the Thai students tend to write “she has black hairs” instead of “she has black hair”, and to write “The room was full of furnitures” instead of “The room was full of furniture” (Nattama, 2002). Still in the context of Thai language, the influence of Thai (L1) in English (L2) is also

found by Wannakarn (2001) when the students use phrase in English such as “Chicken fried” instead of the correct one “fried chicken”. The students literally transfer the structure of the L1 in L2. The students produce error as well when they are writing English sentence such as “I want to buy car” instead of “I want to buy a car”. The absence of article ‘a’ in the sentence is due to the non-existent of article (definite or indefinite article) in Thai language (wannakarn, 2001).

The transferring of L1 structure in L2, when the learners are expressing their ideas, is one of their strategies as an individual process in learning (Dulay, 1982). This strategy can be clearly seen when Chinese students in Hongkong Baptist University write in English and produce errors. The Chinese students tend to write “His father took bath” instead of the correct one “His father took a bath”. This grammatical incorrectness occurs as the absence of article (definite and indefinite) in Chinese language (Hung, 2000). Thus, in every time the students modify noun, the students tend to produce grammatical errors. Another case of the influence Chinese language in to English by Baptist University students is the use of verb and adjective. In Chinese, both verb and adjective can be used as predicator in creating sentence. The students tend to transfer this rule when they are writing in English, therefore produce grammatical errors. For example, the students tend to write “Kavin afraid to say” instead of the correct one “Kavin is afraid to say” (Hung, 2000).

According to Newmark hypothesis (1966), performers who are asked to produce before they are “ready” will fall back on first language rules (L1), that is, they will use syntactic rules of their first language while speaking or writing the second language (L2). When the L1 and L2 rules are different, the resulting error is referred to “interference” (Khrashen, 1982). Ellis (1997) refers interference as ‘transfer’, which he says is ‘the influence that the learner’s L1 exerts over the acquisition of an L2’. He argues that transfer is governed by learner’s perception about what is transferable and by their stage of development in L2 learning. In learning a target language, learners construct their own interim rules (Selinker, 1971, Seligar, 1988 and Ellis, 1997) with the use of their L1 knowledge.

Thep-ackrapong (2005) discusses grammar errors in written English influenced by Chinese sentence structures, especially regarding subject-verb agreement and passive voice. Subject-verb agreement is difficult for Chinese students due to lack of obvious sentence boundaries. The Chinese language can go from one sentence to another. The subject of a sentence can be omitted if the addresser and addressee are known. The verb or adjective is in the middle of a sentence. Hence, Chinese essential characteristics may hinder students from developing a good English sentence. As a result, Chinese students often write English sentences without their subjects such as ‘*In Hatyai ^ have many cars*’ and ‘*Pahurad was crowed and ^bad temperature and it smelled bad*’. Passive voice in English is characterized by its syntactic structure, by the verb ‘*be*’ and

'past participle' such as *'The room is cleaned everyday'*. However, passive voice in Chinese can be interpreted by its contextual clues such as *'Pad Thai, put egg and lunch box.'* As a result, Chinese students produce this error in their English sentences such as *'She was continuously taken the photos'*.

On the other hand, Hamjah (2012) discuss about Error analysis in Mother tongue (BIMA LANGUAGE) interference in writing skill. In this Syntactical level consist of tense and To Be. The students made error in tense form is "Yesterday, I go to Rudy's home". The sentence is past tense form, but the students create it present tense. The students made error because the students apply of their mother tongue. As everybody knows, in Bima language there are not tense. As follow Bima language is "awina nahu ra laoku aka uma la Rudy". "awina" in Bima language is represent of past tense. As the results, the students bring that habit into target language. So, the sentence should be change "Yesterday, I went to Rudy's home" because that sentence is past tense.

Then, to Pudiyo's research (2012:6) discuss about the structural of Indonesian language can be influenced in practice by Indonesian students; it's like the following sentence: Dia sangat mencintai adiknya. With such grammatical pattern as the example, an Indonesian learning English could capably express the idea just like in Indonesian pattern as the following: She very loves her brother. Definitely, this utterance is not grammatically acceptable in English. The correct grammatical rule is the

word very cannot be used to explain adverb such very loves. Very in English is used to modify an adjective. Therefore, the morpheme very is linked directly before an adjective, for instance: very busy, very beautiful, very angry, very important, very much, very little, very handsome, etc. In short, the word very cannot stand alone. On the contrary, the word, which can be used to modify an English verb, is very much.

Jiwan Bi (1994) states that in foreign language teaching, in Chinese-English translation and in cross-cultural communication the differences of Chinese and English sentence structures often became a big obstacle. Jingni Quan (2007) point out that someone once did a research on English learners in China about the interference from Chinese to foreign language learning. The result showed that the same sentence style of Chinese and English could enhance the understanding of the English sentence, while the different sentence styles of them would influence the learners with lower English level to the speed of understanding. Only after the learners had mastered the English sentences skillfully, could their speed of understanding be improved (Quan, 2007).

First language learners influences the structures of the target language and is a significant factor in accounting for foreign accents. So called interference, interference is a language produced by foreign learners/students which is influenced, and even distorted by mother tongue of the learners/students (Hanna,2009;54). While, Odlin (1997;27) argued that transfer or interference is the influence resulting from similarities and

difference between the target language and any other language that has been previously (and perhaps imperfectly) acquired.

In teaching learning process at the STBA ITMI some Chinese students tend to have difficulty with English structures because they are deeply influenced by Chinese structures. However, they are very different from each other. A particular structure which does not exist in the native language can therefore pose a difficulty for the second language learners to produce or sometimes try to substitute those structures with similar ones in their mother tongue.

In addition, some students often write 'He sick very serious' instead of writing 'His sickness is very serious' which can be traced to the Chinese language as '*ta de bing hen yanjung*' (*ta* means 'he/she', *bing* means 'sick', *hen* means 'very', and *yanjung* means 'serious'). This case happens due to the different forms for adjectives/nouns between Chinese and English. In English, normally adjectives use endings such as *-y*, *-ous* and nouns normally use endings such as *-ence*, *-tion*. In Chinese, there is only one form for both adjectives and nouns. This difference lead to the syntactic interference of Chinese (L1) when the students write in English (L2).

Another case that may happen as the result of the L1 syntactic interference is when the students want to write English sentences which contain article *'the, a, an'*. In English, uncountable nouns are not preceded by indefinite article, but countable nouns must. In Chinese, articles (definite and indefinite) do not exist. Therefore, the students tend to write 'I have book' instead of writing 'I have **a** book' (*wo you shu*), 'moon very bright (*ywe-lyang hen*)' instead of '**the** moon is very bright', 'give I book (*gei wo shu*)' instead of 'give **me the** book'. The latter example contains double errors namely the first is the incorrect use of '**I**' as the object instead of '**me**'. It happens due to the sameness of pronoun between subject and object in Chinese, while in English they are different. The second is that the sentence 'give I book' is incorrect due to the absence of article '**a**' or '**the**' – 'Give me the book' or 'Give me a book' (correct English syntactic formation)

Syntactic interference is the grammatical incorrectness occurs in TL as the influence of the L1 structure. In this study, the syntactic interference means the ungrammatical sentences made by STBA ITMI students in written English text as the result of the interference of their Chinese language (L1), The L1 syntactic interference concerns errors in grammar points as found in many studies

The interference of L1 in TL is found in STBA ITMI, STBA ITMI has 90 percent Chinese students according to the data of the university. The researcher is one of the English teachers in this University and found out some preliminary data about the L1 interference. This happens when Chinese students tend to write “have three pen” instead of the correct one “There are three pens”. The grammatical error is produced by the Chinese students as the result of the interference of their L1. In Chinese, there is no impersonal “there” Chinese, and there is no different form between singular and plural noun (Claudia, 2004). Another example is when the students speak a sentence contained a grammatical error such as sentence “A best friend is someone who always **remember** you even you’re far away with **she/he**”. Ross, Sheng Ma (2006) state that in Chinese the 3rd person singular does not affect the verb form. Therefore, the incorrect verb “remember” in the sentence above is affected by transfer of Chinese (L1) structure. The pronoun “she/he” is incorrect as the students transfer the structure of Chinese language (L1). In Chinese, the form of pronoun as a subject and an object is the same (e.g He as subject *ta* and as object *ta*) (Ching and Rimmington, 2004).

Another case happen in writing class analyzed by the researcher, In English, verb, noun, adjective, and adverb commonly has its own form. For example, adjective can be created through a process of affixation e.g. enjoy (verb), enjoyable (adjective), enjoyably (adverb), enjoyment (noun) (Longman, 1998). It means that, it is grammatically incorrect in English to

write such as “*I enjoyable the music* instead of *I enjoy the music*” or “*she danced enjoy*” instead of “*she danced enjoyably*” and so forth. This concept and rules make the EFL learners obliged to recognize and understand the different forms of each of them. Unlike in some other language which is in another way around. Chinese language, for example, mostly recognizes the same form of verb, adjective, noun, and even adverb. This situation, of course, will contribute to their unawareness of specialization of each form when they are learning English. For example, the word *sick (adj)* and *sickness (noun)* have the same form in Chinese which is “*bing*” such as the sentence “*His sickness is very serious*” in Chinese will be written as “*Ta de bing hen yanjung*” and the sentence “*He is very sick*” in Chinese will be written as “*ta hen bing*”. Therefore, this situation will possibly encourage the Chinese learners to transfer their native grammar when learning English and then grammatical English error will be produced. The following data is found to support the theory above.

Student I: In a friendship, understand each other is really needed

The sentence above shows that the word “**understand**” is grammatically incorrect based on English rules. The correct one should be “*understanding (noun)*”. This happen as the interference of Chinese grammar, as the student’s native, in learning English. In Chinese, *understand (verb)* and *understanding (noun or adj)* will be written as, “*Míngbái*”.

Another interference of Chinese language in written English on parts of speech especially in the form of verb, adjective, noun and adverb can be seen through the following data sentences below:

Student I: We also can buy flower for her to show how beauty is she.

Student II: We rent swim dress and then we swim together

Student III: Every time the family have dinner, the father call the maid to call Juliet.

The word “*beauty*” and “*swim*” are grammatically incorrect. They are supposed to be “*beautiful (adj)*” and “*swimming (adj)*”. This case happened as the students transfer the rules or grammar form of noun and adjective which remain the same in Chinese language.

In English, a verb preceded by preposition must be added by *-ing*, while in Chinese it is not necessary, the verb doesn't change at all. Therefore, Chinese student may be interfered when they are writing in English. The data below prove it as follows:

Student IV: He just think about what he feel without think about my feeling.

Student V: After that, the tourist guide asked us to gather at the hotel's lobby after eat.

The verb “*think*” is grammatically incorrect in English. It happens since the subject transfers the Chinese system when she is writing in English in which in Chinese the verb doesn’t change though it is post positioned by preposition. This case can also be seen in the data above that the verb “*eat*” should be added by *-ing* since it is preceded the preposition “*after*”.

This study focused on investigating the interference of Chinese language (L1) in written English texts (TL). On the other hand, the interference may affect the speaking or pronunciation, reading and so on. Yet, the researcher, on this occasion, merely focused on the interference which occurring in written English texts. The main reason is that the interference can be more obviously seen in written English texts. In addition, in learning English (TL) the learners must have more time to think the structures and words before they began to write. The question is why does the interference still exists? Another reason is due to the authenticity and easiness in analyzing the texts written by students.

In conclusion, the present study particularly investigated the Chinese language (L1) interference in written English (TL) by the STBA ITMI students. The researcher specifies to investigated the syntactic interference on written English texts. The syntactic interference means the interference of Chinese language rules, structure or grammar in English writing. Obviously, the syntactic interference occurs when the learners use

the L1 structures or rules in TL. The syntactic interference may occur in the use of noun, adjective, correlative conjunction, impersonal there, preposition, auxiliary, verb-tense, pronoun and so forth. The researcher will be chosen STBA ITMI to conduct the study since 90 % of the students are Chinese and the University uses English as language of delivery in teaching and communicating among students or lectures. In addition, the researcher is teaching there which could be beneficial to the collection of the data, determination of the subjects and the application of the findings later on.

1.2 The Focus of the Study

This study focused on the investigation of syntactic interference of Chinese students in written narrative English texts.

1.3 The Problems of the Study

In relation to the background of the study the problems are formulated as the following:

1. What types of Chinese syntactic interference aspects occurred in the students' written English texts?
2. How are Chinese syntactic interferences realized in written English texts?
3. Why did the syntactic interferences of Chinese occur in the students' English written texts in the way they did?

1.4 The Objective of the Study

This study expected to language learner interference in learning foreign language or second language. Therefore, the objectives can be written as follows:

1. To analyze the Chinese syntactic interference aspects in the students' written of English texts.
2. To analyze the realization of the Chinese syntactic interferences in the students' written of English texts.
3. To explain the Chinese syntactic interferences in the way they do.

1.5 The Significance of the Study

Theoretically, the findings of the study are expected to offer both theoretical and practical significant of language learning. In addition, the finding can be resources for further studies.

Practically, the findings of the present study are useful for the following person:

- Teachers

The findings are expected to be useful for English teachers as the reference in their teaching. With this knowledge, they could zoom out the students' difficulties in learning English. In addition, the results of this investigation, syntactic interference of Chinese language in written English, will be very helpful for teachers in improving the teaching strategies to enhance students' English skill.

- Students

The Chinese students will be more aware of the errors produced by the interference of their native Language (L1) in English. This awareness will give more possibilities for the students to do self-correction.

- Other researchers

The findings of the present study are expected to give more reference to other researchers in investigating the interference of Chinese language and also other languages in English proficiency such as speaking and writing.

- Schools or institutions

Schools or institutions play the important role in improving the students' English proficiency. Therefore, the findings could be used as the reference in deciding the further policy of more effective teaching and learning process.