CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Research Background

Writing is an essential part of engaging in professional, social, community, and civic activities for everyone, because writing is a valuable tool for communication, learning, and self-expression. Writing English is not a simple task for all learners, mainly to non-native learners. Learners who learn English as a second language (ESL) or English as a foreign language (EFL) have to spend a lot of time and struggle to be intent in obtaining the language and learning on how to write well.

Santos explains that there are three reasons of making writing increasingly essential, which are; first, more international linguists are promoting writing as their field of concentration, second, more articles and journals are available in English for this age, and last, more international - students are pursuing their degrees in English speaking countries, like Australia, England, America, Filipina Canada, and others.² Considering those three main reasons, becoming something a must for all ESL/EFL learners to

¹S. Graham, et.al., "Teaching elementary school students to be effective writers: A practice guide" (NCEE 20124058) (Washington, DC: National Center For Education Evaluation And Regional Assistance, Institute Of Education Sciences, U.S. Department Of Education), 2012, 15. Retrieved From http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/publications_reviews.aspx#pubsearch.

²Somchai Watcharapunyawong, - Siriluck Usaha, "Thai EFL Students' Writing Errors in Different Text Types: The Interference of the First Language". *English Language Teaching*; 6 (1), 67. doi:10.5539/elt.v6n1p67

have good knowledge in writing English to enlarge global knowledge and global community to then be able to compete in this era.

English becomes a compulsory subject for Thai students from primary to tertiary levels, but commonly they think more in Thai than in English.³ In this case, English is not used as the instructional medium or communication language in other subjects in Thai educational institutions, as it is in Singapore, Malaysia, and the Philippines. This situation supports Thai students use more Thai rather than English in their English language classroom and other classroom, moreover when they are outsides the classroom area. This reality makes them difficult to develop their English both spoken and written.

On the other hand, the importance of writing in Thailand has been recognized since many universities provide writing courses as both elective and compulsory subjects for students to register. To evidently prove, according to the curricula of Thepsatri Rajabhat University, English major students have to pass four English writing courses in order to graduate, they are Paragraph Writing, Writing for Specific Purposes, Writing Strategies in English, and Creative Writing.⁴ For Thai students who live in South Thailand,

³ Somchai Watcharapunyawong, - Siriluck Usaha, "Thai EFL Students' Writing Errors in Different Text Types: The Interference of the First Language". *English Language Teaching*; 6 (1), 68. doi:10.5539/elt.v6n1p67

⁴ Somchai Watcharapunyawong, - Siriluck Usaha, "Thai EFL Students' Writing Errors in Different Text Types: The Interference of the First Language". *English Language Teaching*; 6 (1), 68. doi:10.5539/elt.v6n1p67

Patani Province. This reality was proven by researcher since being a teacher at Darawithaya School, Narathiwat.

Students of Darawithaya School tend to consider that English is difficult to be learned, especially in written. Many of them who are at Senior High School are not used to write the base English material as *introduction*, *greeting*, *members in family*, *colors*, *numerals*, *days*, *months etc*. Ideally, those materials have been mastered by EFL students since at elementary level. Beside that, most of them do not know how to apply grammar use in their text, like *the rules of plural*, *S-V agreement*, *to be, pronoun, etc*.

This weakness is caused by the fact that between English and Thai is so difference in the linguistic elements. It can be known from the grammatical structures, vocabulary items and discourse. Some sources, researcher finds that Thai does not have tenses, and articles, so Thai students often use the same V forms and neglect article when they write idea in English. Moreover, in terms of vocabulary use and the letter of the alphabet styles which are different from English may support Thai students' to be slow in mastering English, especially writing. Pairote Bennui stated that Thai students' written English shows more repetitions, and they neglect the use of conclusions in the

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⁵ Pairote Bennui, "A Study of L1 Interference in the Writing of Thai EFL Students". *Malaysian Journal Of ELT Research*, Vol. 4, 2001, 74. Retrieved from www.melta.org.

end of their writing.⁶ This wide of different aspects offers learners to unavoidably make errors in some areas of their English writing.

Most students of Darawithaya School disposed mastering their knowledge in religion subjects (Arab). Meanwhile, English becomes a foreign language which is difficult to be mastered, therefore English is rarely used in their daily conversation, both spoken and written. They use Thai and Melayu Pattani for their communication language. This reality makes them get difficulty in building their competence in English.

While attending at that school as an English teacher, researcher found some problems dealing with English, especially in writing. It is proven by students' writing works which are found some errors. Grammar and the connection of sentences and ideas are the most frequent problem that found in students' writing. Regarding Darawithaya School takes place at Thailand which is not the nationality of the researcher, it becomes something challenging and interesting to do this research. Finally, the researcher decides Darawithaya School as research place in this recent study by choosing participants of Mathyum 5 grade in academic school. This grade is equal with second grade students of Senior High School. At Darawithaya School, Mathyum 5 is devided into 5/1 and 5/2. Then, 5/2 class is selected in this

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⁶ Pairote Bennui, "A Study of L1 Interference in the Writing of Thai EFL Students". *Malaysian Journal Of ELT Research*, Vol. 4, 74. Retrieved from www.melta.org

study because the researcher was assigned in that class since being a teacher at Darawithaya school.

This study is focused only on the grammatical accuracy, however there are various other types of accuracy in writing, as lexical and semantic which both are similarly become a significant case in presenting valuable information and comprehensions dealing with the learner's knowledge on how a second language or foreign language is learned and received by students.

This focus is based on consideration that one of the most frequent errors in Thai students' English writing lies on the grammar that has been found to be a major source of writing errors. Celce-Murcia, emphasized the importance of a reasonable degree of grammatical accuracy in academic writing. She stated that high frequency of grammatical errors in nonnative speaker's academic writing (an average of 7.2 errors per 100 words) most probably makes their writings unacceptable to the University faculties. In the other sources, she also highlighted that the writing process is necessary for being a successful writer in a second or foreign language to express the ideas with reasonable coherence and accuracy.

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⁷ Pairote Bennui, "A Study of L1 Interference in the Writing of Thai EFL Students". *Malaysian Journal Of ELT Research*, Vol. 4, 74. Retrieved from www.melta.org

⁸ Sasan Baleghizadeh – Yahya Gordani, "Academic Writing and Grammatical Accuracy: The Role of Corrective Feedback". *Gist Education and Learning Research Journal*, 1692-5777. no. 6 ShahidBeheshti University, G.C. Irán, 2012, 159-176

⁹ Nantanawan Nanwita. "The Study of Grammatical Errors in Thai EFL students writing". The Faculty of Humanities, 18

This case persuades the teachers who are responsible for their competence in writing to not only care about learners' grammar use, but also how they express the idea and arrange the words, sentences, and paragraphs or discourse should be paid attention. As stated by Norrish that it is important to be able to write sentences that are acceptable and grammatically correct. 10 It means that writers should write writing which is acceptable for the readers in giving understanding meaning in each sentence. As stated by Jeremy Harmer on his book, "for writing to be truly accessible, however, it also needs to be both cohesive and coherence". 11 This statement means that a writing will be truly acceptable for readers if it has both cohesion and coherence aspect on the text itself. Therefore, other than grammatical accuracy aspect this study also concerns on those two aspects in analyzing students' writing.

Holloway states that when writers present their ideas in writing, especially in academic writing tasks, they need to ensure a text run through a sequence of sentences.¹² This point becomes one of the criterions in the evaluation of academic writing. Thus, writers' should be involved to the ideas they want to express as well as the sentences they use to express those ideas. Besides that, Brostoff also provides his idea; he states that sentences need to be connected to each other. If the ideas or sentences are only distinguished

¹⁰ Tiptida Bootchuy, "An Analysis of Errors in Academic English Writing by A Group of First- Year Thai Graduates Majoring in English". (Graduate School, Kasetsart University, 2008), 10
¹¹ Jeremy Harmer. How to Teach Writing. (Pearson Education Limited: England, 2004), 22.

¹² Supong Tangkiengsirisin, "Promoting Cohesion in EFL Expository Writing: A Study of Graduate Students in Thailand". International Journal of Arts and Sciences. 3 (16). 2010, 1

without being connected to one another, it will be difficult or impossible for the reader to understand the sequence. By having those above argumentations, this study attempts to examine the grammatical accuracy and both cohesion and coherence aspect on students' compositions participating in this research, second grade students of senior high school at Darawithaya School.

There are some previous studies relating to this current study. The first study was conducted by Somchai Watcharapunyawong & Siriluck Usaha under the title "Thai EFL Students' Writing Errors in Different Text Types: The Interference of the First Language". This study revealed that the first language interference errors of Thai students fell into 16 categories: verb tense, word choice, sentence structure, article, preposition, modal/auxiliary, singular/plural form, fragment, verb form, pronoun, run-on sentence, infinitive/gerund, transition, subject-verb agreement, parallel structure, and comparison structure. Second study was conducted by Ratanakul, under the title "Verb- Tense Errors in English Writing Made by Thai Students: A Comparative Analysis." The finding of this study was about the errors of verbs and tenses made by Thai students, they were the lack of subject-verb agreement, the omission of particle suffix "-ed," the omission of verbs "to be" and "to have," and the incorrect use of verb forms and tenses. The last study

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¹³ Supong Tangkiengsirisin, "Promoting Cohesion in EFL Expository Writing: A Study of Graduate Students in Thailand". *International Journal of Arts and Sciences*. *3* (16). 2010, 3

was conducted by Charuporn Pongsiriwet under the title "Relationships among grammatical accuracy, discourse features, and the quality of second language writing: The case of Thai EFL learners". The finding showed that no statistically significant correlation between grammatical accuracy and cohesion but a statistically significant correlation between grammatical accuracy and coherence.

Different from the previous studies, this current study analyzes the grammatical accuracy through 12 categories of grammar use provided and the aspect of coherence and cohesion of Thai students' writing which are analyzed individually. Therefore, this current study will not correlate both of them. Also this current study focuses on Thai students' English writings who take school at Islamic Boarding House where their study is not only Academic, but also Islamic lesson.

B. Research Questions

This research is interested in examining the grammatical accuracy, coherence and cohesion which participants perform in their writing.

The research question will be as follows:

- 1) How is the grammatical accuracy of Thai Students' English Writing at Darawithaya School?
- 2) How are the cohesion and coherence of Thai Students' English Writing at Darawithaya School?

C. Objectives and Significances of the Study

1. Objectives of the Study

Considering the problems of Thai students' writing mentioned above, as an Indonesian English teacher to Thai EFL students, the researcher intends to analyze the grammatical accuracy, cohesion and coherence on students' writings.

With the result above, this study has purpose to know the grammatical accuracy, cohesion and coherence performance of second grade students' writing of senior high school at Darawithaya School, Narathiwat-Thailand by examining the frequent grammatical errors and analyzing the cohesion and coherence aspect on their writing.

2. Significance of the Study

This study is especially expected to give awareness for participants as EFL students of what they have been understood and what they need to improve dealing with their English writing skill. This effort is expected to increase students' English writing as their foreign language.

Beside that, as recognized that KKN-PPL Thailand program becomes continuous program that will be held by UINSA, so the result of this study might become a crucial reference for students who will take the program to know Thai students' understanding and weakness of grammatical accuracy and the coherence and cohesion on writing English. With the result, they

(KKN students) can prepare themselves to choose the materials dealing with Thai students' need.

This study also obtains English Education Department of UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya, both lectures and students as the major which concentrate in English, moreover at educational field. As Indonesian learners, the EED students' position is same with Thai students in learning English. Both of them consume English as their foreign language. Regarding the reality, many sources indicated that errors are inevitable in second or foreign language learning process, especially in writing. So, identifying, categorizing, and analyzing students' errors need investigating to know the causes of the errors.

Then, for the lectures/teachers, this study becomes reference and homework to find out the ways to reduce students' errors and to enhance students' target language competence in writing. It then may be useful for ESL/EFL teachers in preparing ESL/EFL courses, determining instructional significances, formulating effective lessons and learning activities, developing teaching materials, and improving teaching methods and techniques. Particularly for teachers of ESL/EFL writing, the results of the study may support teachers in determining what grammatical rule and cohesion and coherence should be concerned and to be focused immediately on a writing course.

D. Scope and Limitation

Since English writing is crucial in this modern age for both ESL and EFL students, this study aims to examine Thai students' writing work based on the grammatical accuracy and the cohesion and coherence. The scope of this study is focused only on the grammar.

Besides that, as consideration of focusing on grammar accuracy, it lies on the fact that ESL/EFL learners have dedicated various types of grammatical errors in their written products. A number of studies in the field of error analysis have investigated types of errors committed by learners from a variety of first language backgrounds such as Spanish, German, Swedish, Arabic, Chinese, and Japanese in the acquisition of English as a second language or English as a foreign language. However, there is little information available concerning errors made by Thai EFL learners.

As stated in the previous discussion, the assessment of ESL/EFL writing not only concerns in grammatical accuracy but also in discourse organization. So, it is important in examining those two aspects of cohesion and coherence to ensure that the learners demonstrate successful performance on grammatical accuracy and both cohesion and coherence.

Then, this study is also narrowed into a group of Thai EFL students who are at second grade of senior high school of Islamic Foundation. Besides

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¹⁴ N. Ayuwaratana, "An Error of Analysis of Fourth Year English Majors' Research Proposal". Master of Arts An Independent Study Report in English, Khon Kaen University, 14

that, the samples of this study are taken from the students' writing materials which have been given in their class. So, the result of this study may be inapplicable for other level and other writing types.

E. Definition of Key Terms

In order to let readers easy to understand about the main idea of this research, operationally some definitions of key terms are provided

1. Writing

Writing is a person's style of writing with a pen on paper which can be recognized as their own. In this study, writing refers to the students' writing works which are made to fulfill the final assignment in their English class, that is writing a *descriptive text* about "MY FAMILY". Those student compositions are taken as data for this research after being used for the main purpose. Therefore, the data is documentation.

2. Grammatical Accuracy

Accuracy is the ability to be free from errors while using language to communicate both in oral or written text. ¹⁶ Operationally, grammatical accuracy refers to participants' skill in making free from grammar errors on their writings as the data in this study.

¹⁵ Walter, E., Cranz, D., - Glannon D. Cambridge Dictionary Learners' Dictionary. Cambridge University Press, 2008

¹⁶ Wolf-Quintero on research by N. Ayuwaratana, "An Error of Analysis of Fourth Year English Majors' Research Proposal". Master of Arts An Independent Study Report in English, Khon Kaen University, 14

3. Coherence and Cohesion

Coherence

Crystal states that coherence is the underlying connectedness of a piece of language. It is the sense that a text is connected and it makes logic and is not just a jumble of sentences. It deals with clear and well-thought argumentations, ideas or an organization of words, and each part of it connects or follows in an accepted or sensible way¹⁷. If the text is coherence, the reader will understand well what the text tells about.

Cohesion

Cohesion is the external relations between sentences of a text which strap the text together. Basically, the relations between sentences or different parts of a discourse are shown in terms of cohesive devices such as references, substitution and ellipsis, conjunction, and lexical relationships. This study is intended to measure students' writing in connecting word to word, sentence to sentence or even paragraph to paragraph to express their idea. It deals with students' way in arrange words become a text which gives understandable meaning and content.

¹⁷Charuporn Pongsiriwet, Doctoral Dissertation: "Relationships among Grammatical Accuracy, Discourse Features, and The Quality of Second Language Writing: The Case of Thai EFL Learners" (Morgantown: West Virginia University, 2001), 11.

⁸ _____ Oxford Leaners' Pocket Dictionary New Edition. Oxford University Press: 2000.