

AN ERROR ANALYSIS OF SRINAKHARINWIROT UNIVERSITY
SECOND-YEAR ENGLISH MAJOR STUDENTS' COMPOSITIONS

A THESIS
BY
PUWARET ABDULSATA

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the
Master of Arts degree in English
at Srinakharinwirot University

March 2000

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The purpose of this thesis was to analyze errors at both sentential and word level found in the second-year English major students' compositions of Srinakharinwirot University. The study focused on examining most types of errors made by the students, determining the frequency for those errors, and giving some plausible explanations to account for the errors.

The research results revealed that there were 6 major types of errors at the sentential level found in the students' compositions. The six types of errors frequently made were relative clause (19.68%), tense (15.74%), singular and plural nouns (12.73%), punctuation (8.04%), subject-verb agreement (5.77%), and fragments and run-ons (3.43%). Participial phrase and passive voice were seldom used in the students' compositions. Especially, the past participle was not used at all. Errors at the word level were article (10.54%), preposition (9.69%), diction (8.66%), and adjective (6.56%) respectively.

The study also suggested that some typological differences between the Thai and English languages were one of the major plausible sources of errors found in the students' compositions. The students were likely to make a direct translation from Thai to English without realizing the different sentence structures and grammatical rules of the two languages while writing.

การวิเคราะห์ข้อบกพร่องในการเขียนเรียงความภาษาอังกฤษของนิสิตวิชาเอกภาษาอังกฤษชั้นปีที่ 2
มหาวิทยาลัยศรีนครินทรวิโรฒ

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ของ

ภูวเรศ อับดุลस्ता

เสนอต่อบัณฑิตวิทยาลัยมหาวิทยาลัยศรีนครินทรวิโรฒ เพื่อเป็นส่วนหนึ่งของ
การศึกษาตามหลักสูตรปริญญาศิลปศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต วิชาเอกภาษาอังกฤษ
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Chapter 1

Introduction

Background

Writing is one of the most important skills that we use as a means of communication in our daily lives. We write in notes, memorandums, meeting minutes, emails, letters, telefaxes, newspapers, magazines, and etc. As we have observed from various jobs advertised in any newspaper, we find that those who have a good command of writing skill have a better chance to get good jobs. As a result, most universities, in order to meet the demand of the job market, list writing courses as required courses for the English major students in their curriculum. At Srinakharinwirot University (henceforth SWU), English major students have to study at least three courses in writing, namely basic writing, paragraph writing, and essay writing as a fulfillment for their undergraduate program of studies.

Writing courses have been practically proposed in the curriculum with a main purpose to develop students' writing skills. However, there are still many problems in the teaching of writing. Some of the problems are that when assigned to write, students do not know what to write and how to write; they cannot express their ideas into the target language as effectively as they do in their native language. It seems like they first think in Thai and then translate into English without realizing the different structures which govern the two languages. Furthermore, they do not really know how to present their information

in well-organized written paragraphs. Besides, they still produce ungrammatically correct sentences.

These problems can be solved, if we study them properly in order to improve students' writing skill. Over the past decade, however, much attention has been given to an analysis of students' errors in their writing products with the belief that if errors in students' writing products are identified and then corrected, students will be able to write better and produce better pieces of writing.

Ubol (1981) analyzed writing errors in English compositions of the first-year and the third-year English major students at Prince of Songkhla University. The study showed that errors in punctuation of the third-year English majors were fewer than those of the first-year students. However, there were many errors regarding parts of speech such as the tense, pronoun, conjunction and adjective found in the third-year English majors. This study concluded that the third-year students produced more complex sentences than the first-year students.

Cancino, Rosansky and Schumann (cited in Schumann. 1974: 417-423) analyzed preliminary data on the second language learners in order to support or contradict the three hypotheses: the first language hypothesis (L1), the second language hypothesis (L2), and the interlanguage hypothesis. They examined these hypotheses with respect to the copula and negative utterances produced by the subjects during the first three months of the study. The study supported that the interference hypothesis was found the most significant. The hypothesis also maintained that when learners attempted to acquire a second language, they would make errors in the target language. Those errors were caused by their native language and by their prior knowledge. This study concluded that

the learners' native language and its structure would interfere with their learning the second language.

Two studies mentioned above illustrate an attempt for implications as well as solutions via an error analysis. Ubol (1981) put an effort to discover most types of errors made by the students in order to explain the facts about the nature of conducting errors. Cancino, Rosansky and Schumann (1974), however, attempted to describe influences on the nature of producing errors.

Accordingly, theories of second language acquisition have evoked studies in two general areas: an attempt to describe a learner's language proficiency and an attempt to explain influences on second language acquisition (O'Malley and Chamot 1990: 8). Product of students' errors has become a perspective of language learning related to theories of second language acquisition. It is believed that students' errors are good indications of their process of acquiring the second language. There are many problems that would cause difficulties for learners in acquiring their second language. Some of those are developmental process and language universals, for example. These linguistic phenomena are believed to be rule-governed typical of first language acquisition (Parker and Riley. 1994: 224). The error analyses of the 1960s and 1970s show that some types of errors are common in any native language. For example, the omission of is in the sentence such as that very simple is an error made by Spanish, Chinese, Japanese, and other language speakers [Huang and Hatch (1978): Itoh and Hatch (1978) cited in Odlin 1989: 19]. The omission of is might be predicted from structural facts about the use of copula forms in their native languages. However, Odlin (1989) indicates that some errors may

not result from language transfer but they may result from the transfer of training. For example:

Teacher : Am I your teacher?

Student : Yes, I am your teacher.

This error simply means that the influences arise from the way a student is taught, while some influences are from teaching. He, therefore, assures that transfer is the result of cross-linguistic influence. Some scholars have agreed that transfer plays only a minimal role in the acquisition of grammar. Thus, the term 'transfer' is still controversial to the extent of its restriction among linguists; "transfer is not simply a consequence of habit formation" and "transfer is not simply interference" (Odlin. 1989: 25-26).

Errors are inevitable in the written products of Thai students whose mother tongue is extremely different from the target language they seek after, like English. These errors are regarded as interference errors. It is believed that differences between languages would cause difficulties for learners and that similarities would facilitate their learning process (Lado. 1961: 14). Schachter and Celce-Murcia (1977: 443) define errors resulting from interference as errors which are caused by the influence of the learner's mother tongue on his/her production of the target language presumably in those areas where the languages clearly differ. In other words, the interference errors would normally occur when the target language acquired by learners is greatly different from their native language like the Thai and English languages. It is, somehow, evident that some errors in second language acquisition partly result from interference of the mother tongue. This assumption is evidently convinced by many linguists such as Odlin (1989), Corder (1983), Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982). Moreover, structural linguists firmly believe that

interference from a student's first language is the main cause of errors in his/her target language (Hendrickson. 1979: 21).

This study aims to analyze the second-year English major students' errors based on the typological differences between the two languages. Especially, the sentential concepts of the two languages will be discussed and then used to plausibly explain for errors made in their essays.

Objectives of the Study

This research study attempted to answer the following research questions:

1. What types of errors were mostly found in SWU second-year English major students' compositions?
2. What was the frequency of each type of errors found in the students' compositions?
3. What were plausible explanations to account for those errors?

Significance of the Study

The results of the study are beneficial as follows:

1. They will provide insights into the second-year English major students' learning process, specifically the writing process. According to the curriculum of bachelor's degree of art for the English majors at SWU, the students begin to study their basic writing course at the early stage of their undergraduate program. They are assigned

to study basic writing either the second semester of year one or the first semester of year two. Therefore, an error correction will be beneficial to facilitate learning at the later stage.

2. They provide some ways to understand the nature of students' writing.

Knowing the causes and influences of errors, instructors can give helpful treatment as well as some constructive comments to such erroneous written statements.

3. The study itself suggests an alternative way of teaching English composition which instructors of English can choose to practice for instruction.

Scope of the Study

The scope of the study covers the following subject matters:

1. The subjects of the study were all 55 SWU second-year English major students of the academic year 1999.

2. As the time of the study was done during the first semester of the academic year 1999, these 55 SWU students have not taken any of the required English subjects yet.

3. The data were 165 written English compositions on the three given topics:

An Unforgettable Event in My Life, My Future Plan, and My Daily Life. All the data were analyzed according to the classification of errors.

4. The classification of errors was of two levels including sentential and words errors. The classification of errors significantly relies on the typological differences of the two languages proposed by Thep-Akrapong (1997).

5. Plausible explanations on the students' errors were based on differences

between the Thai and English languages. Interlanguage study of similarities and differences between languages are accounted for in error analysis (Huebner. 1985 : 158).

Definitions of Terms

1. A T-unit is defined as an independent clause and all its dependent clause (Polio. 1997).
2. Linguistic competence refers to the learner's ability in performing and using a language both in spoken and written forms.
3. Interference refers to problems or difficulties in learning a language especially for acquiring a second language, resulting from the mother tongue (Richards. 1985).
4. Transfer refers to the process of learning where errors may occur due to cross-linguistic influences (Odlin. 1989).
5. Errors are regarded as a by-product of the learner's attempt to express his or her speech or writing with an inadequate grasp of the target language system (Corder. 1983).
6. Developmental errors refers to errors that are normal occurrences in the course of acquiring either a first or second language (Odlin. 1989).
7. Language universals consist not of particular rules of a particular language, but a set of general principles that applies to all languages (Mc Laughlin. 1987 : 82).
8. Sentential errors consist of tense, subject-verb agreement, participial phrase, relative clause, passive voice, punctuation, and run-ons or fragments.
9. Errors at the word level consist of preposition, adjective, article, and diction.

10. Diction is defined as “the choice of words employed by the writer, particularly the extent to which the words the writer uses are thought suitable and effective for different kinds of writing” (Richards, et al. 1992. 108).

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

The main purpose of the study is to analyze the second-year English major students' errors made in their compositions. The analysis of errors and the plausible explanations are significantly based on the typological differences between the Thai and English languages under the assumption that the different characteristics of the first language would cause difficulties in learning a second language. In learning a second language or foreign language, learners may easily commit errors if most of their new language characteristics differ greatly from those of their mother tongue. However, some learners may be confused by the different rules governing the two languages.

The product of students' errors has become a perspective of language learning. It is believed that students' errors are good indications of their process of acquiring the second language (Dulay, Burt and Krashen. 1982). Therefore, an error analysis is an elicitation revealing what influences are apparent in a learner's process of learning.

One of the main reasons for analyzing students' errors is to discover facts about their learning process. Thus, those facts can be good indications leading to an attempt for plausible account and explanation of such error analysis. Furthermore, the goal of error analysis is to help construct an account of second language learner's linguistic competence (Richards 1985: 63).

In this chapter, the related literature is discussed. And the previous research studies concerning errors analyses will be reviewed. Over the past decade, considerable attention has been given to the treatment as well as the explanation of student's errors in

their written products. An error analysis, since then, has been increasingly extended to account for the flaw in those of students' learning products. Many studies have yielded some crucial evidence and implications over the nature of learners' errors. Some of the research studies investigated here are concerned about both writing and speech analyses. Most of the studies cited here are selected from the two past decades up to the most recent year. The studies are as follows:

The Previous Research

Vann, Daisy and Frederick (1984) examined faculty response to the written errors of students who were non-native speakers of English in Iowa State. The samples of the study were taken from three groups of major disciplines: 1) Social Science, Education, and Humanities, 2) Biological and Agricultural Sciences, 3) Physical and Mathematical Sciences and Engineering. This study was to determine at sentence-level errors which were judged to be most serious by an academic community. Later, it was to discover what factors might influence such judgement. Types of errors investigated were spelling (2 types), articles, comma splice, tense, it deletion, preposition, subject-verb agreement, word choice, relative clause, and word order. Spelling-1 included examples (one British and one colloquial) of spelling varieties that differ from American spelling, while spelling-2 included errors, such as deletion and substitution. The study indicated that word order errors was least acceptable with 1.8 mean ranking, while spelling-1 errors was most acceptable with 3.2 mean value. The study, therefore, suggested that both age and

academic discipline of faculty members might be important factors in predicting their response to certain ESL student writing errors.

Khalil (1985) attempted to evaluate the communicative effect on native speakers of selected samples who were native Arab learners from Bethlehem University. The study focused on grammatical as well as semantic errors in written English. Two types of measures: evaluation (intelligibility and naturalness) and interpretation were used. This attempt was made to address the methodological weaknesses that had characterized the majority of such studies to date. As a result, semantic deviant utterances were judged to be less intelligible and interpretable than were grammatical deviant utterances. Khalil (1985: 345-347) concluded that context did not influence native speakers' ability to interpret the writer's intent. But there was "no association between native speakers' judgement on the two measures of intelligibility and interpretation."

Bardovi-Harlig and Bofman (1989) examined differences in syntactic complexity, and error distribution and types among ESL students. The students were from two groups: those who had passed a university placement examination and those who had not. The classification of errors was divided into three super-ordinate categories: syntactic, morphological, and lexical-idiomatic. The findings indicated that a significant difference in errors per clause between the passed and non-passed groups were for lexical errors, not for syntactic or morphological errors. Bardovi-Harling and Bofman (1989) found no significant difference in number of errors across language groups. They also found that error types seemed to be the same for passed and non-passed groups.

Kroll (1990) studied and gave accuracy scores on the basis of total number of words/total number of errors. He intended to examine differences between students'

writing in class and at home since writing in class was made under a time constraint than writing at home. Errors were categorized into 33 different types such as whole sentence or clause aberrance, verb missing, run-on sentence, parallel structure, relative clause, word order, tense-aspect, subject-verb agreement, lexical/phrase choice, word form, preposition, article, punctuation, etc. The results revealed that there were no significant differences in terms of error ratios. However, there was a high correlation of errors between in class and at home essays in terms of distribution of errors.

Kepner (1991) studied students' journals to examine higher-level propositions and surface-level errors. The informants were second-year university Spanish students. Types of feedback on journals included message-related and surface-error correction. As a result, students who received message-related feedback had significantly much higher level proposition. However, there was no difference between the groups in terms of surface-level errors.

Koyashi and Rinnert (1992) examined differences in essays written by Japanese EFL students in Japanese and then translated into English, and essays written directly in English. They investigated the relationship between these two writing processes and students' language proficiency. To compare the two kinds of writing processes with respect to accuracy, they counted three kind of errors: lexical choice, awkward form, and transitional problems. The findings showed that higher level students made more errors. The errors interfered with intended meanings in translation than in direct writing. Lower-level students, however, did not show any difference. Furthermore, they found significant differences between the direct compositions and the translations for the higher-proficiency group. These differences were on awkward phrases and transitional problems.

Errors in inflectional morphology have been analyzed in many research studies. In general, errors of this type have usually been called local since they do not interfere with comprehension. In Zalewski's (1993) ESL discourse analysis, however, focused on the inflectional categories of number and person and their discourse-pragmatic functions. Zalewski (1993) found that the grammatical categories of number and person could play an important role in establishing cognitive continuity of textual occurrences. In this case, Zalewski (1993) pointed out that the number/person errors were global rather than local because they affected text comprehension.

Yang (1994) analyzed writing errors made by the ESL students of Los Angeles Harbor College. The data were collected from the actual writing of the students. They were then analyzed to detect any errors made by the individual students. The results indicated that there were four kinds of writing errors: grammar, spelling, lexicon and punctuation. Yang (1994) also suggested that grammatical errors were the most serious, next spelling, then punctuation, and finally lexical errors.

Ali (1995) investigated errors by using Cook's case grammar and style complexity technique to determine whether there were semantic or syntactic differences between the first English texts, where the non-native speakers were trying to express their ideas in a clear and accurate manner and also the second English texts, which were translated from Arabic into English. The compositions used in the study were 42 texts by 14 first-year college students learning English as a foreign language in Qatar. During consecutive weeks, each student wrote three texts: an English composition, Arabic texts, and an English translation. The findings suggested that the most frequently made errors were spelling errors (30.45%) in the English composition, and (21.08%) in the English

translation texts. Stative and action verbs accounted for (97%) of the verb cases were either basic or experimental in the English composition and English translation texts. The results also suggested that more than half of the students of English composition and English translation texts failed within the complex to more complex grade of style complexity. But there still were semantic and syntactic similarities between the first English texts and the second English texts.

Duskova (1995) analyzed errors made by Czech adult learners of English. He intended to determine the influence of their background language on their English learning. Results showed that the interference from Czech was explicit in errors of word order as well as English sentence construction. Duskova (1995), therefore, concluded that although the characteristics presented in the examples were unacceptable in English, they could be acceptable in Czech.

✓ Moreover, an error analysis has been applied in analysis of errors resulting from the spoken form as well. Dulay and Burt (1974), for example, studied errors from the natural speech of 179 Spanish-speaking children, 5-8 years old. These children were learning English as a second language in three school districts, two of which were in northern California, and one in New York. The children's speech was collected by their teachers using the Bilingual Syntax Measure Instrument. The study was to determine whether the syntactic errors made by the children were due to native language interference or to developmental strategies. The results indicated that first language interference accounted for only (4.7%) of the children's errors. But the developmental strategies accounted for (87.1%) of the errors. Therefore, the findings suggested that "less explicit

teaching of ESL syntax to children may produce better learning” (Dulay and Burt. 1974: 131).

Burt (1975) analyzed errors produced by adult EFL learners. She intended to view errors from the listener or reader of English to see whether they understood the message intended by the EFL learners or not. The data were several thousand English sentences containing errors made by adult EFL learners from all over the world: Germany, Japan, France, Turkey, Ethiopia, Korea, Thailand, Latin America, and foreign students in the United States. Burt (1975) found that two certain types of errors made a critical difference in which the listener or reader might not understand the speaker’s intended message. Firstly, the findings revealed global errors, which Burt (1975: 61) referred to “those that affect the overall organization of the sentence.” These types of errors hindered successful communication. Secondly, local errors which Burt (1975: 62) referred to “those that affect a single element of the sentence.” These types of errors usually did not hinder communication.

The previous research studies reported here are the related merits derived from error analyses. Actually, some important insights concerning the learning process as well as the learner’s linguistic competence can be drawn from those studies. Thus, results of many relevant studies provide good guidelines not only for the present study but also for the future study. Nevertheless, most of the studies in this section focus on only the number and the frequency of errors as main parts. They do not emphasize on causes and sources of errors, nor do they concentrate on the explanation of the typological differences between languages.

This study includes the plausible source of errors in the analysis. It can be considered as a developed stage in the study of errors according to inter-language theory. That is, explanations on errors must rely on the typological differences between languages and concentrate on circumstances under which the target language is acquired. This should be reasonable to account and plausible to explain for such errors. However, “the issue of errors is much more complex and troubling than it seems in theory” (Shaughnessy. 1997: 9).

Chapter 3

Methodology

In this chapter, the informants of the study, the procedures, a guide line for T-unit analysis system, and the classification of errors are given. Finally, the randomness for ten selected samples of students' compositions, which will be presented in the appendix will be discussed.

Informants

The informants in this study were all 55 SWU second-year English major students who took the Basic Writing Course (EN 231) in the first semester of the academic year 1999. During the semester, these students were taught basic sentence patterns, i.e, simple sentence, compound sentence, complex sentence, compound-complex sentences; phrases, and clauses; fragments, run-on sentences, and comma splices, etc. Revision of tenses and modifiers were also made from time to time throughout the semester. In June-September 1999, the students were asked to write three essays on three given topics namely, An Unforgettable Event in My Life, My Future Plan, and My Daily Life during the semester. They were assigned to write at least a 150 word for each essay in class within one hour. While writing, they were not allowed to use dictionaries. Regarding their background knowledge, these students were considered high-level learners. Most of them got "A" and "B" grades in their English Foundation Courses (EN 101 and EN 102) for their first year.

Procedures

This research study was undertaken in accordance with the following steps:

1. Accumulation of Information

1.1) The data were obtained from compositions written by 55 SWU second-year English major students who were taking the Basic Writing Course (EN 231) in the first semester of the academic year 1999.

1.2) After getting all 165 compositions, the researcher assigned number 1-165 to the compositions then the ones with even numbers were chosen and analyzed for errors at sentential level and word-level.

1.3) Errors in 82 compositions were categorized according to classification of errors and then investigated for errors at the two levels.

2. Information Analysis

The data were analyzed as follows:

2.1) Each composition was divided into t-units.

2.2) The t-unit analysis system adopted from Polio's (1997) was significantly used in the data analysis.

3. A T-unit Analysis System

The two prominent linguistic approaches, which have been used to study a learner's learning process are contrastive analysis and error analysis. Contrastive analysis focuses only on the role of the first language under the assumption that the first language learning habits always interfere with the acquisition of the second ones, while error analysis identifies sources of errors. In analyzing a text, researchers first used a clause or

a sentence system as a unit for counting errors made by learners. In many studies, some researchers, such as Polio (1997), Ishikawa (1995), Casanave (1994), and Kobayashi and Rinnert (1992) have applied a t-unit system to measure errors of the samples. A t-unit analysis has widely been applied in a text analysis as it is supported by Polio's (1997) study, for example. Polio (1997) studied three different types of measures of linguistic accuracy on second language writing. The measures were a holistic scale, number of error-free units, and number of errors. There were 38 essays written by both undergraduate and graduate ESL students used for each measure. A holistic scale was firstly tested, followed by error-free units identification, and error classification respectively. The results showed that holistic measure might not be suitable for homogeneous population. Both error-free units and error counts were more reliable measures for the range of proficiency examined in the study. A t-unit system, therefore, can be used to measure the overall syntactic complexity of both speech and writing samples. In recent years, t-unit analysis has been applied in studies of second language learning to characterize the learners' syntactic maturity in their written products as Gajes (1980) supports that "it provides another lens through which relevant empirical data can be viewed. Therefore, it is a tool of which second language researchers should be aware."

A guideline for t-unit analysis is as follows:

- a.) A simple sentence was counted as one t-unit.

Example: Tom loves poetry. /

1 t-unit

- b.) A compound sentence combined by coordinating conjunctions was counted as two t-units.

Example: I went to school, / but my sister went to her office.

1 t-unit

1 t-unit

- c.) A complex sentence combined by subordinating conjunctions was counted as one t-unit.

Example: He cannot come to work because he is sick. /

1 t-unit

- d.) Tag-question was counted as one t-unit.

Example: You are very busy, aren't you? /

1 t-unit

- e.) A run-on sentence and comma splices were counted as two t-units with an error in the first t-unit.

Example: My school was in Saudi Arabia, / it was the best school there. /

1 t-unit

error-free

f.) Sentence fragments such as missing verbs or subjects were counted as one t-unit.

Example: One day after finished studying Math. /

1 t-unit

3.1) Errors found in the compositions were analyzed at sentential and word levels.

3.2) Finally, each type of errors was accounted and calculated in percentage.

3.3) The number of errors at sentential-level was calculated by the following

formula:

$$\frac{\text{Number of errors}}{\text{Total t-unit / essay}} \times 100$$

3.4) The number of errors at word-level was calculated by the following

formula:

$$\frac{\text{Number of errors}}{\text{Total word / essay}} \times 100$$

3.5) Errors were discussed for plausible explanations.

3.6) The percentage of errors at the two levels was tabulated.

The classification of errors is divided into two levels: sentential errors and errors at the word level.

Types of errors at the sentential level were classified as follows:

1. Subject – verb agreement
2. Tense

3. Singular & plural nouns
4. Punctuation
5. Participial phrase
 - 5.1 Present participle
 - 5.2 Past participle
6. Passive voice
7. Relative clause
8. Fragments and run-ons

Types of errors at the word level were classified as follows:

1. Preposition
2. Article
3. Adjective
4. Diction

The ten selected samples in the appendix were randomly chosen as follows:

1. There were 55 students, who took a participation on writing the three given topics for their compositions.
2. There were altogether 165 compositions for three topics and 55 compositions for each topic.

3. The researcher assigned number 1-55 to each topic of the compositions.

Therefore, the compositions with number 18, 36 and 54 were taken for the reference samples in the appendix.

Chapter 4

Findings

In chapter 4, the findings of the study are tabulated. The frequency of each type of errors is reported in percentage. Altogether, there are 14 tables, reporting all findings of the study. Table 1 shows all types and frequency of errors at the sentential level found in all second-year English major students' compositions. Tables 2-9 show examples of each type of errors found at the sentential level. Table 10 shows all types and frequency of errors found at the word level. Tables 11-14 show examples of each type of errors found at the word level. Under each table some plausible explanations of the particular error are given.

Table 1: Errors at the sentential level in all samples

Type of Error	Frequency of Occurrence	Frequency of Errors	Percent
1. Subject – verb Agreement	1454	84	5.77
1.1 Tense	1454	229	15.74
1.2 Singular & Plural Nouns	856	109	12.73
2. Punctuation	1454	117	8.04
3. Participial Phrase			
3.1 Present Participle	21	9	42.85
3.2 Past Participle	-	-	-
4. Passive Voice	36	29	80.55
5. Relative Clause	188	37	19.68
6. Fragments & Run-ons	1454	50	3.43

Table 1 shows that the major types and frequency of errors at the sentential level were relative clause (19.68%), tense (15.74%), singular and plural nouns (12.73%), punctuation (8.04%), subject-verb agreement (5.77%), and fragment and run-ons (3.43%).

However, participial phrase and passive voice were seldom used. Especially, the past participle was not used at all.

Table 2: The illustration of the erroneous subject-verb agreement found in the samples

Type of Error	No. of Occurrence (T-units)	No. of Errors	Percent
1. Subject-verb Agreement	1454	84	5.77
Examples of errors:			
1. <u>He</u> usually <u>talk</u> to anyone although <u>He</u> never <u>know</u> before.			
2. We had many <u>memories</u> together That <u>was</u> both bad and good things.			
3. I was standing at Park Klong market With my leather <u>shoes</u> , which <u>was</u> my favorite shoes, on the big rock			

Table 2 shows that errors in subject-verb agreement were inevitably made by the learners, even though it was not hardly found. It is plausible to explain that the learners might temporarily forget the obligatory connection between a subject and its main verb in an English sentence. Since this grammatical rule does not exist in Thai, it is sometimes easy to be neglected. In English, however, a subject and its main verb have an obligatory agreement. The learners should always realize this rule.

Table 3: The illustration of the erroneous tense found in the samples

Type of Error	No. of Occurrence (T-units)	No. of Errors	Percent
1.1 Tense	1454	229	15.77
Examples of errors:			
1. At first, when I <u>studied</u> in senior at Saipanya School, I joined in Basketball team of my Color group, and my team <u>can win</u> .			
2. I <u>went</u> to the bus stop where <u>is</u> the opposite of Robinson.			
3. He asked me that which major in faculty of humanity I <u>study</u> in. I <u>answered</u> that English major and <u>smile</u> a little for him.			
4 Time Table of me <u>had fulfilled</u> every day.			
5. I plan that when I <u>graduated</u> from this University, I am going to be a hotel manager .			

Table 3 reveals that the students made a lot of errors in tenses when writing. The frequency of errors found per t-unit in all compositions was 229 or 15.74%. According to the composition entitled An Unforgettable Event in My Life, the students were supposed to write a narrative piece of writing about one of their most impressive events in the past. Certainly, the past tense was mostly required for the compositions. However, the

examples 1, 2, 3 and 4 illustrated above indicate that the students were still confused with the use of the past and present tenses. Example 4 indicates that the student described the future event with the past tense. The students might not clearly conceptualize the actual use of the present and past tenses. From the three examples, the students first described the past event with the past tense but then used the present tense in the next clause. Such errors might occur because of their carelessness as they had to write within a limited time. If they had time to go over what they wrote, they would make some corrections because they know the rule. However, being restricted in time constraint, they cannot help expressing the language from their subconscious mind. It is plausible to explain that the students were still preoccupied by the rules of their mother tongue, which do not involve much in the use of tenses. It is evident that the role of their first language is very influential to their use of tenses in English.

Table 4: The illustration of the erroneous singular & plural nouns found in the samples

Type of Error	No. of Occurrence (T-units)	No. of Errors	Percent
1.2 Singular & Plural Nouns	856	104	12.73
Examples of errors:			
1 He said that I have <u>lovely rabbit tooth</u>			
2. It was like a fancy party and each group of <u>friend</u> should had a fancy show that they had never done.			
3. I hope <u>we</u> 'll still be a <u>good friend</u>			

From the errors in Table 4, it is plausible to explain that the students were not aware of using singular and plural nouns in English. In example 1, it should be I have lovely rabbit teeth instead of tooth while in example 2 and 3, it should be each group of friends and we will still be good friends. In English, a singular noun always comes after an article. But most plural noun adds “s” or “es” after them to indicate countable nouns. However, the Thai language does not have this grammatical rule. It can be assumed that the students could not properly differentiate the typological differences of the two languages.

Table 5: The illustration of the erroneous punctuation found in the samples

Type of Error	No. of Occurrence (T-units)	No. of Errors	Percent
2. Punctuation	1454	117	8.04
Examples of errors:			
1. I good wished for each other forever _, because			
I always have a good feeling when I miss him.			
2. I think at that time _, I knew many things			
about my friends especially the characteristic of each other.			
3. Initially, I'd planed to see with my sister, but			
she was busy _; therefore, I saw it with my mother.			

Table 5 indicates that errors in punctuation marks were significantly found with 117 occurrences or 8.04%. Unlike Thai, an English punctuation mark is very meaningful. A full stop, for example, is used to indicate a boundary of one sentence. In Thai there is no sentence boundary. From the examples above, it is plausible to explain that the students were still confused with using a punctuation mark. The confusion would probably result from the interference of Thai sentence structure, which has no use of punctuation marks as well as a sentence boundary.

Table 6: The illustration of the erroneous participial phrase found in the samples

Type of Error	No. of Occurrence (T-units)	No. of Errors	Percent
3. Participle Phrase	21	9	42.85
3.1 Present Participle			
3.2 Past Participle			
Examples of errors:			
1. When we were strolling, there was another Math teacher <u>came</u> to talk to us.			
2. I am in Faculty of Humanities <u>major</u> English.			
3. I saw a man <u>had tried</u> to got on the full boat.			

From the errors in Table 6, it was found that participial phrase was scarcely used in the students' compositions even though the percentage of errors found was high (42.85%). The study implies that the second-year English major students are not acquainted with the use of participial phrases. Accordingly, the results of the study also distribute that the long sentences found in all students' compositions were not actually complex sentences. It seemed like the students produced long sentences by combining many conjunctions and. If they knew how to use participial phrases properly, they would be able to write long sentences correctly. For example:

(a) Walking with bare feet at Pak Klong market was my worst event and I have never forgotten it because of many reasons.

(b) I hope we'll still be a good friend and have good wished for each other forever,

These two examples can be rewritten in better sentences:

(a) Walking with bare feet at Pak Klong Market was my worst experience that I will never forget it for many reasons.

(b) I hope we will still be good friends who have good wishes for each other forever,.....

In sentence (a) participial phrase is used as the subject of the sentence. In fact, it is in the form of gerund. An adjective clause or a relative clause is added to modify the noun "experience." As a result, the sentence is lengthened from a simple sentence into a complex sentence. It is noted here that the students tend to use and to lengthen the sentences as appeared in sentence (a) and (b). This tendency may probably arise from the influence of Thai sentence patterns which use "และ" equivalent to "and" to combine clauses.

Some Thai students may think that writing long sentences is good because long sentences show that they have better writing ability. In writing long sentences, the students are required to master the knowledge of how to combine those sentences correctly according to the grammatical rule rather than just writing run-on sentences.

Table 7: The illustration of the erroneous passive voice found in the samples

Type of Error	No. of Occurrence (T-units)	No. of Errors	Percent
4. Passive Voice	36	29	80.55
Examples of errors:			
1. I had been waiting for surprise day until <u>I was discouragement.</u>			
2. This event <u>was occur</u> when I was in M.3 at Benjamarachalai School.			
3. She said that <u>my class messed</u> the room, ...			

Table 7 shows that error in passive voice was found at the significance of 80.55%. This is because passive voice was used only in 36 t-units of all compositions. According to the examples, the students were still confused with the use of passive voice. Actually, the structure of passive voice in English is much complicated than that in Thai. In example 1, the passive voice requires a past participle verb like I was discouraged instead. In example 2, however, the verb occur can never appear in a passive voice because it is an intransitive verb. In example 3, it can be corrected as: she said that my student messed the room, or she said that the room was messed. Accordingly, it can be assumed that the typological differences of Thai passive voice, which is less complicated interfered with the one in English, which is much more complicated than the Thai one. Therefore, the study

suggests that instructors of English should teach active and passive voice structures to students and let them realize the different use of both active and passive voices.

Table 8: The illustration of erroneous relative clause found in the samples

Type of Error	No. of Occurrence (T-units)	No. of Errors	Percent
5. Relative Clause	188	37	19.68
Examples of errors:			
1. We painted many tables at school park <u>that</u> we liked sit there.			
2. I understood <u>what</u> thing was important for me at that time.			
3., there was one girl named "Gift" <u>that</u> I thought she was my closed friend.			

From the errors in Table 8, the relative clause seemed to be quite problematic for the second-year English major students. Data show that the relative clause was used quite frequently in most of the students' compositions; but only 37 errors (19.68%) were found. It is plausible to explain that the students were learning how to use complex sentences, which were quite complicated and rather difficult for them. Therefore, they might need more time to practice writing such type of sentences. Instructors of English should encourage students to write more complex sentences with the use of some other types such

as simple compound, and compound and complex sentences. At the same time, the instructors should distinguish the typological differences of Thai and English sentential concepts so that they would enable students to understand the complicated sentence structures in English and use them correctly.

Table 9: The illustration of erroneous fragments and run-ons found in the samples

Type of Error	No. of Occurrence (T-units)	No. of Errors	Percent
6. Fragments & Run-ons	1454	50	3.43
Examples of errors:			
1. After, I got 5 marks.			
2. Especially, if they were not Thai People.			
3. Finally, Impression in a one man whom I met in freshy Game.			
4. Finally, I did, and surprisingly she stayed calm, didn't speak even a word at the moment the world was dark, and I felt myself immediately grow as tiny as a piece of dirt because everything went wrong with her habit.			

The erroneous fragments in Table 9 illustrate that the second-year English major students did not clearly understand the sentence in English. Examples 1 and 2 indicate that the students wrote only the subordinate clauses and ended the clauses with full stops without realizing that those are not complete sentences. Example 3, is a fragment, while example 4 is a run-on sentence, which was quite normally found in their compositions. This characteristic is caused by the Thai sentential concept, which has no sentence boundary. It is plausible to explain that the students could not properly conceptualize the

sentence structure in English. In an English sentence, every element is connected to perform a subject predicate structure whereas a Thai sentence is predominantly a topic-comment structure. Therefore, it is necessary for instructors of English to differentiate the typological differences of the two languages, especially at the sentential concepts in order to make the students realize them and learn to use them correctly.

Table 10: Errors at the word level in all samples

Type of Error	Frequency of Occurrence	Frequency of Errors	Percent
1. Other Errors			
1.1 Article	1839	194	10.54
1.2 Preposition	1950	189	9.69
1.3 Adjective	670	44	6.56
1.4 Diction	1650	143	8.66

Table 10 reveals that types of errors at the word level were article (10.54%), preposition (9.69%), diction (8.66%), and adjective (6.56%).

Further details of each type of errors are presented in Tables 11-14 together with the plausible explanations under each table.

Table 11: The illustration of erroneous article found in the samples

Type of Error	No. of Total Words	No. of Errors	Percent
1.1 Article	1839	194	10.54
Examples of errors:			
1. I went to the bus stop where is <u>the</u> opposite			
of <u> </u> Robinson.			
2. We had a party at <u> </u> playground of our			
school.			
3. In my life, I don't think I will receive special			
gift from other people.			

Table 11 indicates that errors in article were found at 10.54% of errors at the word level in the students' compositions. From the errors in Table 11, the students were still confused with the use of articles. Examples 1, 2 and 3 show that the article "the" was not used with the Robinson Department Store, the playground and the article "a" was not used either in a special gift. It can be assumed that the student might not much realize about using articles in English. This is partly because there is no concept about article in the Thai language.

Table 12: The illustration of erroneous prepositions found in the samples

Type of Error	No. of Total Words	No. of Errors	Percent
1.2 Preposition	1950	189	9.69
Examples of errors:			
1. As I was waiting _ the bus, the unforgettable event happened <u>with</u> me.			
2. I answered that English major and smile a little <u>for</u> him.			
3. When I arrived _ his house, his mother was cooking for a big meal.			

Table 12 reveals that errors in preposition were found at 9.69% of all errors at the word level in the students' compositions. Actually, prepositions are used to provide information about time and place, i.e, in the morning, at night, at home, in the central of the city. However, prepositions are also used in certain expressions, which are fixed and have to be learned by heart such as phrasal verbs.

Example 2: I answered that English major and smile a little for him.

Better sentence: I answered and smiled a little at him.

In Thai: ยิ้มให้เขาเล็กน้อย can be translated as smile a little for him, but in English; we smile at someone.

Example 3: When I arrived__ his house, his mother was cooking for a big meal.

Better sentence: When I arrived at his house, his mother was cooking a big meal.

In Thai the equivalent translation of Example 3 is “เมื่อฉันไปถึงบ้านของเขา คุณแม่ของเขากำลังทำอาหารมื้อใหญ่”

In English a preposition is always required with the verb “arrive.” We use either “at,” or “in” with “arrive” depending on the size of location and precision; while in Thai a preposition is not required. From this example, it seems that the students might over use prepositions in the place where they are not needed. The student also wrote sentences with direct translation from his/her native language.

Example 1: As I was waiting_ the bus, the unforgettable event happened with me.

In Thai: ในขณะที่ฉันกำลังรอรถเมล์ (รถประจำทาง) เหตุการณ์หนึ่งที่ไม่อาจจะลืมเลือนก็เกิดขึ้นกับฉัน

“กำลังรอ” = was waiting

In English “wait for” someone or something requires the use of fixed preposition “for” while in the Thai language, it does not require the use of preposition at all. เกิดขึ้นกับฉัน in Thai the prepositon “กับ” can be equivalent to “with” but in English, something happens to someone

The researcher personally has asked several English native speakers about the use of prepositions and was informed that there is no specific rules covering all the terms of their use. The results of the study suggest that the students should be more careful about using prepositions in English. They should consult native speaker of English, their English instructors or look up for their correct use in the English dictionary. They should

not rely on their own native language, like in the examples 1 and 2 because there are hardly any prepositions, which are similar in terms of their use in the two languages.

Table 13: The illustration of erroneous adjective found in the samples

Type of Error	No. of Total Words	No. of Errors	Percent
1.3 Adjective	670	44	6.56
Examples of errors:			
1. When he achieve, I always <u>glad</u> with him.			
2. It is the best <u>value</u> thing that I have.			
3. I made a wish from one of the falling stars that If it <u>possible</u> I want to come back here again.			
4. I have more free time and the subject that I learn <u>do not difficult</u> like in the second year.			
5. I know that it quite <u>hard</u> to be real.			

Example 1: When he achieve, I always glad with him.

Better sentence: When he succeeds, I am always glad with him.

(This student had the problem of dropping verb to be when using adjective.)

Example 2: It is the best value thing that I have.

Better sentence: It is the most valuable thing that I have.

(This student had the problem of using correct form of adjective when preceded the noun being modified.)

Example 3: I made a wish from one of the falling stars that If it possible I want to come back here again.

Better sentence: I made a wish to one of the falling stars wishing that if it is possible, I will come back again.

(This error is the same as Example 1)

Example 4: I have more free time and the subject that I learn do not difficult like in the second year.

Better sentence: I have more free time and the subject that I study is not as difficult as the one in the second year.

The error arises from direct translation from the native language to English

...the subject that I learn do not difficult like in the second year

วิชาที่ฉันเรียนไม่ยากเหมือนในปีที่ 2

and insufficient practice of comparison of adjective (equal comparison).

Example 5: I know that it _ quite hard to be real.

ฉันรู้ว่ามันค่อนข้างยากที่จะเป็นจริง

Better sentence: -I know that it is quite hard to be real.

-I know that it is impossible to become true.

The students wrote the sentences with the direct translation from Thai to English without realizing the typological differences of the two languages. The most frequently found errors in adjective are that the omission of verb to be which is similar to

the error made by the Spanish, Chinese and Japanese, whose mother tongues are in the same family as Thai (like examples 1, 3 and 5). This result significantly supports the previous research launched by Huang and Hatch (1978): Itoh and Hatch (1978) (cited in Odlin 1989: 19). The omission of is or the verb to be here might be predicted from structural facts about the use of copula forms of those in Thai.

Another plausible explanation for such error is that the students might not conceptualize the form and position of adjectives in English.

Like the word “value” in Example 1, the student might not know the other form of adjective when preceded the noun being modified.

It is noted that the use of adjective is related to the equal comparison, comparative and superlative degrees (like Examples 2 and 4). Therefore, instructors of English should teach their students all uses of adjective.

Table 14: The illustration of erroneous diction found in the samples

Type of Error	No. of Total Words	No. of Errors	Percent
1.4 Diction	1650	143	8.66
Examples of errors:			
1. Going the sea with my friends make me <u>impression</u> .			
2. At my new school I saw my friends <u>intended</u> <u>to</u> classes and took courses.			
3. I saved my parents' money and <u>gave</u> them <u>pride</u> on me.			

From the errors in Table 14, the students applied words with inappropriate meanings.

Example 1: Going the sea with my friends make me Impression.

Better sentence: Going to the sea with my friends makes me happy.

(The error arises from the wrong choice of word, subject-verb agreement and the translation from the mother tongue to English.)

Example 2: At my new school I saw my friends intended to classes and took courses.

Better sentence: At my new school, I saw my friends attending classes regularly.

The word intended to was wrongly chosen. This might result from the similar sound of the words “intend” and “attend.”

Example3: I saved my parents’ money and gave them pride on me.

Better sentence: I saved my parents’ money and made them proud of me.

It is plausible to explain that some students were still confused with diction in English. The confusion here may be predicted from the fact that one English word has different meanings in different contexts.

As mentioned earlier, this study aims to analyze the students’ errors at both sentential and word levels. An analysis of errors and plausible explanations are significantly based on the typological differences between the Thai and English languages, particularly at the sentential concepts. The results of the study, however, reveal that some errors are predictable from the typological differences of the two languages, resulting from interference of the students’ first language. These errors are subject-verb agreement, which includes tenses, singular and plural nouns, punctuation, and fragment and run-ons. Furthermore, some erroneous characteristics, excluded from the classification of errors, significantly found in the study, are caused by the typological differences between the two languages.

Examples of these errors are as follows:

1. The pronoun
 - (a) I and my friends
 - (b) I and Chung
 - (c) Me and Gift

From the examples above, it can be assumed that the mistakes here are due to the typological differences between languages. In Thai, the pronoun I normally comes first while in English it always comes after any nouns, such as my friends and I, Chung and I, and Gift and I.

2. The Thai Structure

- (a) I could win with her all speeches.
- (b) I kept them very good.
- (c) As I told him have a lot of happiness.
- (d) We I guessed not.

In (a) and (b) the sentences are directly translated from Thai into English using the Thai sentence structure. It is plausible that the students first thought in Thai and then translated into English without realizing the different structures of the two languages. In (c), it is the result of topic-comment structure in Thai while in (d) it is the double subject, which is quite acceptable in Thai, but it is not in English. The sentences above can be corrected as follows:

- (a) I could win all over her words insulting me.
- (b) I kept them very well.
- (c) As I told him, he would have a lot of happiness.
- (d) I guessed that we did not.

3. The sentence boundary

Examples of errors:

Finally, I did and surprisingly she stayed calm, didn't speak even a word at that moment the world dark, and I felt myself immediately grow as tiny as a piece of dirt 'cos everything went wrong with her habit.

The sentences above are run-ons. Actually, these run-ons result from Thai sentence structures, which have no sentence boundary. The students were still confused with the different structures between the Thai and English languages.

In conclusion, the major types of errors at the sentential level frequently found in the second-year English major students' compositions were relative clause (19.68%), tenses (15.74%), singular and plural nouns (12.73%), punctuation (8.04%), subject-verb agreement (5.77%), and fragment and run-ons (3.43%). Regarding participial phrase and passive voice, errors in these types were seldom found in the students' compositions because they were scarcely used by the students at this level. Especially, the past participle was not used. Errors at the word level consisted of article (10.54%), preposition (9.69%), diction (8.66%), and adjective (6.56%).

Chapter 5

Conclusion and Discussion

Conclusion

As previously mentioned, this study aims to analyze errors found in the second-year English major students' compositions. The errors were first pinpointed and classified into types. Errors were counted and calculated for frequency. The researcher then used findings from the study to give plausible explanations to account for those errors. The plausible explanations and the classification of errors are made on the basis of typological differences between the English and Thai languages. Regarding the interlanguage study, Huebner (1985: 158) suggests that similarities and differences between languages should be accounted for in error analysis. Therefore, plausible explanations can be drawn from the major sources of errors in which the two languages are entirely different. The typological differences between the two languages are one of the most important sources, which cause errors in the students' written products. These types of errors are regarded as interference errors. Nevertheless, the researcher does not mean to commit himself to claim that all errors found in the students' compositions are the result of interference. These types of errors are apparent in the samples' compositions. From the study, it reveals that there are ten major types of errors mostly found in second-year English major students' compositions:

1. Subject-verb Agreement

The errors in subject-verb agreement were quite frequently found in the student' compositions. Though tenses used in the compositions were present tense, past tense, and future tense, there were still some mistakes concerning tenses found in their compositions, i.e, the students did not use correct verbs that agree with the subjects. Regarding erroneous tense, the students were still confused with tenses despite the fact that they have been taught about tenses and their proper uses. This error happens because Thai does not have different forms of tenses when actions are done in different time.

In Thai: เขาไปดูหนังทุกสัปดาห์

In English: He goes to the movies every week.

In Thai: เขาไปดูหนังเมื่อวานนี้

In English: He went to the movies yesterday.

2. Tense

As mentioned above, errors in tense were quite frequently found in the students' compositions. Actually, the students were supposed to narrate their past events by using the past tense. It seemed that the use of tenses was still confusing for the learners at this level. Regarding most errors in tense, it can be assumed that the typological differences between the Thai and English languages were very influential on the use of tense in English. In Thai, there is no tense to indicate the past action but the use of tense is very important in English.

3. Singular and Plural Nouns

The erroneous singular and plural nouns were frequently found in the compositions. The results indicate that the students were not familiar with using singular and plural nouns in their own language thus transfer this rule to the target language.

4. Relative Clause

The relative clause was widely used by the students and some erroneous relative clauses were found in some of these students' compositions. In some T-units, the relative clauses were used in wrong tenses and the verbs in the clauses did not agree with their subjects.

5. Punctuation

Punctuation marks were found problematic in almost every student's composition. The erroneous punctuation might be predicted from one of the characteristics of Thai sentence structure, which requires hardly any use of sentence boundary. Only a few punctuation marks are used in Thai sentences whereas there are many kinds of punctuation marks used in English sentences. Some of those are comma, collon, semi-collon, dash, and etc. These kinds of punctuation marks convey some recognized meanings and have some important roles in English sentences. A comma, for example, is normally used in English sentences to show a phrase in apposition in a sentence like:

Everyone visits the White House, the home of the president.

and to separate items in a series for example:

He went shopping and bought two shirts, black pants, and a pair of shoes.

In English, when the second phrase adds an extra in formation, we use a comma.

For example; Joseph Conrad, the famous English novelist, couldn't speak English until he was 47 (Eastwood. 1994: 14). But there is no use of this kind in Thai. This may be confusing for Thai students.

6. Fragments and Run-ons

Fragments and run-ons were found in only some of the students' compositions. The erroneous fragments show that some students did not clearly conceptualize the overall structures in English while the erroneous run-ons indicate that the learners tried to produce long sentences but they were incorrect forms. Those long sentences were connected with many coordinating conjunctions and and commas.

7. Article

The errors in article were found in all students' compositions. Most of them did not use article with nouns as required in English. For example:

(a) I saw him in __dressing room.

(b) I go to __University by bus

From example (a), and (b), the article "the" was not used with the nouns "dressing room," and "university."

8. Preposition

Prepositions were found problematic in almost all of the students' compositions. Some errors in prepositions were due to direct translation from Thai to English such as "my closed friend gave __ golden ring for me."

9. Diction

The wrong choice of word was found in some of the students' compositions.

Some erroneous dictions were inappropriately used.

For example: I will receive many experiences from travelling.

(The wrong choice of word here arises from direct translation from Thai.)

In Thai: ฉันจะได้รับประสบการณ์มากมายจากการเดินทาง

The underlined word should be replaced by the word "get."

10. Adjective

The erroneous adjectives were caused by dropping of verb to be

for example; I _ glad to, and It _ worth The omission of is or verb to be might be predicted from structural facts about the use of copula forms in Thai.

However, participial phrase and passive voice were seldom used; the past participle was not used. It can be assumed that the participial phrase and the passive voice were too complicated and quite difficult for the students at this level. From the study, the frequency of each type of errors is as follows:

The most frequently occurred errors at the sentential level were the relative clause (19.68%). Other errors were the tenses (15.74%), singular and plural nouns (12.73%), punctuation (8.04%), subject-verb agreement (5.77%), and fragments and run-ons (3.43%). Participial phrase and passive voice were scarcely used in all the students' compositions. With respect to the errors at the word level, the most frequently occurred error was the article (10.54%). Other errors were preposition (9.69%), diction (8.66%), and adjective (6.56%), respectively.

The plausible explanations to account for the types of errors so far have been discussed under the table of each type of errors. As mentioned earlier, all errors examined in the study cannot be predicted from the result of interference because there are still some hypotheses to be tested. Some of those are the language universals and the developmental process hypotheses, for example. Nevertheless, errors caused by interference are quite influential in learning the English language, which has many typological differences from those in Thai. According to the study, the explicit errors caused by interference are subject-verb agreement, including tenses and singular and plural nouns, punctuation, and fragments and run-ons. The interference errors are predictable from the typological differences between the two languages. These types of errors were significantly found in all students' compositions.

The errors in tenses were most frequently found in every student's composition. Actually, past tense was required in the composition narrating the past event but present tense was also used wrongly. Besides the verb used did not agree with the subject and the number of singular and plural nouns were wrongly used. It was found that past participle verb was used in the compositions which mostly require the use of future tense or sometimes the verb after the third person singular nouns was written with an s or es; like the one in the present tense. For example:

- (a) I rest a time for 1 years that I will graduated.
- (b) I gets up at 6.00 every morning.

With respect to errors in subject-verb agreement, which includes tenses and singular and plural nouns, it can be assumed that such errors were made because of the different grammatical rules of the two languages. In Thai, there are no tenses to indicate

the present and past events clearly nor is there an obligatory connection between a subject and a verb in a sentence or a clause.

The erroneous punctuation, and fragments and run-ons were secondly frequently found in the students' compositions. Every punctuation mark in English actually has some recognized meaning and has some important roles in English sentences. A comma for example, is normally used in English sentences. It is used to show a phrase in apposition in sentences, which add an extra information. It is also used to set apart items in a series. In Thai, there is no such use. From the errors in punctuation, it is therefore plausible to explain that the students could not clearly understand all the recognized meanings of the punctuation marks in English. This might result from the different features of the Thai and English sentences.

The errors in fragments and run-ons were also predictable from the typological differences between Thai and English languages. From the errors in fragments, it can be assumed that the students could not conceptualize all structures in English. However, the errors in run-ons can be assumed that the students tried to produce long sentences combined with many coordinating conjunctions and and commas. Those long sentences were run-ons rather than compound or complex sentences. It is plausible to explain that it might result from a Thai sentence boundary. Another plausible explanation is that a complex sentence is quite complicated for the students at this level.

In conclusion, there were ten types of errors commonly found in the second-year English major students' composition. The errors were at two levels: the sentential and word levels. The errors found at the sentential level were subject-verb agreement, tense, singular and plural nouns, relative clause, punctuation, and fragments and run-ons. The

errors found at the word level were article, preposition, diction, and adjective. However, these six types of errors can be predicted from the result of the typological differences between the Thai and English languages, thus they are interference errors. Regarding errors in relative clause, they might result from the developmental stage that the students are learning to produce long or complex sentences. The study reveals that the students were preoccupied by the different rules governing the two languages. They could not differentiate the different structures of the two languages properly nor could they use them correctly in their compositions.

Discussion

The results of the study reveal that typological differences between the first and second languages were quite influential in the second language acquisition, particularly, when the features of the two languages are extremely different in terms of sentence structures and grammatical rules. It can be assumed that some errors are the result of the typological differences between languages. Thus some errors can be predicted from the structural forms used in the first language.

This study supports the result of the previous study launched by Huang and Hatch (1978): Itoh and Hatch (1978) regarding the omission of verb to be used with an adjective. Since they have analyzed writing errors made by the Chinese and Japanese, whose mother tongues are in the same family as Thai, the omission of verb to be is the effect of structural forms used in their languages. For example:

1. If it _ possible, I'd like to work abroad.
2. It must _ certain for me.
3. I know that next term the English subjects will _ harder than this term.

The omission of verb to be in the example above can be predicted from the structural forms in the Thai language. In Thai, there is no form of verb to be used with an adjective.

Likewise, the findings from Yang (1994), who analyzed writing errors of ESL students of Los Angeles Harbor College support that grammatical errors were the most frequently found in ESL students' writing products. The next frequently made errors were spelling, punctuation and lexical errors, respectively. The above two mentioned studies confirm the result of this study in terms of grammatical mistakes, resulting from typological differences between languages. The study also suggests that instructors of English teach learners structural forms and grammatical rules of the two languages. This does not only make the learners realize the typological differences of the two languages but also make them aware of using the right rules in writing. However, the students would produce better pieces of writing if they have studied their major courses provided in the second semester of their year two.

Application

1. The English instructors should sometimes distinguish the different structures

and grammatical rules between the Thai and English languages so that students will realize the differences and keep in mind to avoid interference errors when they produce sentences in the second language.

2. The instructors should concentrate on teaching their students certain grammatical points which will avoid students from making frequently made errors. Some of these grammatical points are participial phrases, active and passive voices, and sentence combining.

Limitations of the Study

The study has the following limitations:

1. The informants of the study were only the second-year English major students who have not taken any required English courses in their major subjects.
2. Some errors could not be identified in accordance with the classification of errors such as double subjects, the Thai structure, and the sentence boundary.
3. The organization of the compositions was not investigated in the study.
4. The compositions were written on the given topics.
5. The written compositions were mainly of a certain type of writing which is narrative writing, relating each informant's past experience, present routine life and future expectation. Thus tenses required in the assigned compositions were past tense, present tense, and future tense.

Suggestions for further studies

1. In this study, the plausible explanations for the errors were significantly based on the typological differences between Thai and English. There should be a study analyzing some other different features of the two languages, especially at the sentential concepts.
2. There should be a study investigating the errors caused by the developmental process and language universals.
3. There should be a study, examining all four years of English major students' compositions.
4. A study on error analysis of students' compositions on a much wider variety of topics and different modes of writing will give more interesting findings for further writing remedy.
5. A study on the writing ability of students of other majors might also be explored during their first year of college so that the study will show how much their secondary schools have prepared and equipped their students for further study in higher education level.

The researcher believes that error analysis of students' writing products will help improve students' writing ability. Once they have learned other native students' typical mistakes and try to avoid making such mistakes in the target language, they will produce better sentences and better pieces of writing later. Their ability in writing correct sentences can also be transferred to other skills such as translation and interpretation at the more advanced stages of learning.

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APPENDIX

The Sample Data

The Samples of the ten selected individual tables and compositions

The 1st informant 22 t-units & 219 words/essay

Type of Error	No. of Error	Percent
1. Subject-Verb Agreement	-	-
1.1 Tense	10	45.45
1.2 Singular & Plural Nouns	2	9.09
2. Punctuation & Sentence Boundary	2	9.09
3. Participial Phrase		
3.1 Present Participle	-	-
3.2 Past Participle	-	-
4. Passive Voice	2	9.09
5. Relative Clause	1	4.54
6. Fragments & Run-ons	1	4.54
7. Other Errors		
7.1 Article	2	0.91
7.2 Preposition	6	2.73
7.3 Adjective	-	-
7.4 Diction	2	0.91

The 2nd informant 23 t-units & 310 words/essay

Type of Error	No. of Error	Percent
1. Subject-Verb Agreement	-	-
1.1 Tense	3	13.04
1.2 Singular & Plural Nouns	3	13.04
2. Punctuation & Sentence Boundary	7	30.43
3. Participial Phrase		
3.1 Present Participle	1	4.34
3.2 Past Participle	-	-
4. Passive Voice	1	4.34
5. Relative Clause	1	4.34
6. Fragments & Run-ons	4	17.39
7. Other Errors		
7.1 Article	3	0.96
7.2 Preposition	7	2.25
7.3 Adjective	2	0.64
7.4 Diction	2	0.64

The 3rd informant 18 t-units & 233 words/essay

Type of Error	No. of Error	Percent
1. Subject-Verb Agreement	2	11.11
1.1 Tense	12	66.66
1.2 Singular & Plural Nouns	2	11.11
2. Punctuation & Sentence Boundary	2	11.11
3. Participial Phrase		
3.1 Present Participle	1	5.55
3.2 Past Participle	-	-
4. Passive Voice	2	11.11
5. Relative Clause	1	5.55
6. Fragments & Run-ons	-	-
7. Other Errors		
7.1 Article	4	1.71
7.2 Preposition	1	0.42
7.3 Adjective	2	0.85
7.4 Diction	-	-

The 4th informant 13 t-units & 206 words/essay

Type of Error	No. of Error	Percent
1. Subject-Verb Agreement	-	-
1.1 Tense	8	61.53
1.2 Singular & Plural Nouns	2	15.38
2. Punctuation & Sentence Boundary	4	30.76
3. Participial Phrase		
3.1 Present Participle	-	-
3.2 Past Participle	-	-
4. Passive Voice	1	7.69
5. Relative Clause	2	15.38
6. Fragments & Run-ons	-	-
7. Other Errors		
7.1 Article	4	1.94
7.2 Preposition	4	1.94
7.3 Adjective	2	0.97
7.4 Diction	2	0.94

The 5th informant 18 t-units & 177 words/essay

Type of Error	No. of Error	Percent
1. Subject-Verb Agreement	3	16.66
1.1 Tense	7	38.88
1.2 Singular & Plural Nouns	1	5.55
2. Punctuation & Sentence Boundary	-	-
3. Participial Phrase		
3.1 Present Participle	-	-
3.2 Past Participle	-	-
4. Passive Voice	2	11.11
5. Relative Clause	-	-
6. Fragments & Run-ons	-	-
7. Other Errors		
7.1 Article	-	-
7.2 Preposition	3	1.69
7.3 Adjective	-	-
7.4 Diction	5	2.82

The 6th informant 13 t-units & 178 words/essay

Type of Error	No. of Error	Percent
1. Subject-Verb Agreement	2	15.38
1.1 Tense	1	7.69
1.2 Singular & Plural Nouns	4	30.76
2. Punctuation & Sentence Boundary	4	30.76
3. Participial Phrase		
3.1 Present Participle	-	-
3.2 Past Participle	-	-
4. Passive Voice	2	15.38
5. Relative Clause	1	7.69
6. Fragments & Run-ons	-	-
7. Other Errors		
7.1 Article	8	4.49
7.2 Preposition	4	2.24
7.3 Adjective	-	-
7.4 Diction	1	0.56

The 7th informant 16 t-units & 208 words/essay

Type of Error	No. of Error	Percent
1. Subject-Verb Agreement	2	12.50
1.1 Tense	6	37.50
1.2 Singular & Plural Nouns	3	18.75
2. Punctuation & Sentence Boundary	3	18.75
3. Participial Phrase		
3.1 Present Participle	-	-
3.2 Past Participle	-	-
4. Passive Voice	1	6.25
5. Relative Clause	-	-
6. Fragments & Run-ons	2	12.50
7. Other Errors		
7.1 Article	-	-
7.2 Preposition	1	0.48
7.3 Adjective	1	0.48
7.4 Diction	1	0.48

The 8th informant 11 t-units & 192 words/essay

Type of Error	No. of Error	Percent
1. Subject-Verb Agreement	1	9.09
1.1 Tense	4	3.36
1.2 Singular & Plural Nouns	1	9.09
2. Punctuation & Sentence Boundary	2	18.18
3. Participial Phrase		
3.1 Present Participle	-	-
3.2 Past Participle	-	-
4. Passive Voice	-	-
5. Relative Clause	-	-
6. Fragments & Run-ons	-	-
7. Other Errors		
7.1 Article	5	2.60
7.2 Preposition	1	0.52
7.3 Adjective	1	0.52
7.4 Diction	2	1.04

The 9th informant 12 t-units & 235 words/essay

Type of Error	No. of Error	Percent
1. Subject-Verb Agreement	-	-
1.1 Tense	9	75.00
1.2 Singular & Plural Nouns	-	-
2. Punctuation & Sentence Boundary	2	16.66
3. Participial Phrase		
3.1 Present Participle	-	-
3.2 Past Participle	-	-
4. Passive Voice	1	8.33
5. Relative Clause	-	-
6. Fragments & Run-ons	2	16.66
7. Other Errors		
7.1 Article	5	2.12
7.2 Preposition	2	0.85
7.3 Adjective	2	0.85
7.4 Diction	3	1.27

The 10th informant 25 t-units & 270 words/essay

Type of Error	No. of Error	Percent
1. Subject-Verb Agreement	-	-
1.1 Tense	6	24.00
1.2 Singular & Plural Nouns	3	12.00
2. Punctuation & Sentence Boundary	3	12.00
3. Participial Phrase		
3.1 Present Participle	-	-
3.2 Past Participle	-	-
4. Passive Voice	2	8.00
5. Relative Clause	-	-
6. Fragments & Run-ons	-	-
7. Other Errors		
7.1 Article	-	-
7.2 Preposition	4	1.48
7.3 Adjective	1	0.37
7.4 Diction	4	1.48

My Future Plan

Everyone has his own future plan. It depends on desire of each person. Although some future plan may be hard to come true, if we tried to do it, one day it will come true.

For me, my future plan is going abroad to continue my studies. It is my desire since I was young. I thought it is impossible for me, because an expense on abroad is very costly. But now I know a way to make my future plan true. First, I have to study hard for getting a Bachelor's Degree and make a good grade. It will be easy to get a good job and I'll show my quality and ability to my boss in order to get more salary. I'll save a lot of money. Second, behave myself. My parents'll relied on me that I can live alone on abroad. Third, I'm going to take an extra course. About language especially English, which it is international language and it is very necessary for me to contact with foreigners, and Japanese language. I forgot to tell you that I want to go to Japan. Because there are a lot of good and cute products, many cute guys; moreover, I like Japanese language.

Right now, I know that my language is not good but I tried to improve it as possible as I can. I wish my future plan will come true. And it will be a great success.

My Future Plan

I can't certainly tell what I will do in the future because everything possibly changes in the future in my opinion. However, I still have a dreaming plan for my future. That is I will be the owner of a small restaurant because of several reasons.

The first reason is I love cooking and I want people to eat my food with happy face. This will be the most beautiful scene in my restaurant. Second, I love freedom. If I have my own restaurant, I can do everything freely. Moreover, I can decide everything by myself. Third, I want to have my own property. I can earn money by myself and I will be very proud if I can really do that. Last, I will meet many kinds of people who will come into my restaurant, order my food and talk in many topics. I like this atmosphere very much because it seems that I am sitting in a warm big family.

Although I believe that everything can change in the future, I tried to make my future plan come true because I love making food for people and make them happy.

My Future Plan

For me, if I graduate From this university, I have several things to do. Furthermore, the things that I never did it before.

First, I will travel to many places that I never visited. I want to travel all over Bangkok, and all over this country. I think that Thailand has many good places to visit. Next, I will persuade my older brother to visit India or Tibet, After that, I will beg my parent to study in aboard. I want to study about advertisement. The country that I would like to go to study is England or Australia. If my parent are not allow, I will study in Master degree in Thailand instead, or I will do the job. I want to be a journalist. I like this career so much.

All of above are my future plans. I think that everybody has his future plans, and what his dreams come true. About me, I hope it to be true, too.

The unforgettable event in my life

The unforgettable event in my life is memory of my old love. I used to love one man. When I Studied in mattayom two. He was a nice guy, but now he is not quite good. I know a story of him that he is addicted and very naughty from my friends. Nevertheless, he is a bad guy, I know actually he has a good heart. When we had a relationship, I was so happy. I get a lot of good memories and new thoughts about love from my first boyfriend. We had many memories together that was both bad and good things. This reason which make me can not forget him. I still miss him sometimes. I don't know why I still miss him, although he used to hurt me. I also still have good wishes for him and when he achieve, I always glad with him. I think we still be a good friend each other. The last new year, he called me told me to intend my study. As I told him have a lot of happiness I hope we'll still be a good friend and have good wishes for each other forever, because I always have a good feeling when I miss him.

The unforgettable event in my life

About two or three months ago, My boyfriend “Chung” called me to visited his home. I was very very excited about it. When I arrived his house, his mother was cooking for a big meal. I and Chung watched TV together. About 5 o’clock, his mother called us to had dinner. Because it was the first time that I have to had dinner with Chung’s family, I took his father’s seat. It was wrong and I changed a new seat. While they were starting to eat, I dropped my spoon on the floor. I tried to keep it, but my clip stuck with the mother’s tablecloth. During I got my head up, everythings on the table dropped on the floor. I felt sad. Before I want my home, I said sorry to them. After that, I never saw Chung. I never forget about this story. I think I may be very excited about it and worried all the time. Next time, I will beware myself than this. I think Chung may be not call me to visit his home anymore.

The Unforgettable Event in My Life

The important event in my life that I can't forget is my graduate day at my high school. It worth for remember because it was a last day I and my friends wore school uniform and lived together as students. We had a party, "bye-bye my friends" at playground

of our school. It was like a fancy party and each group of friend should had a fancy show that they had never done. We also did a good thing for our school look better. We painted many tables at shool park that we liked sit there. They looked great when we fmished. My last day in my student life was very fun and end too fast. I didn't cry and my friends looked very happy so we could said goodbye with a smile on each face. I keep many pictures in my memory. Though I can't back to that special event again, I glad to have many special felling in my mind. I often look at my friends photo that remind I still have them when I feel lonely. And make me think about our last day at school. It was a day that I knew how much I love my school, uniform and my friends.

My daily life

In each day, each person has many things which he wants to do. Sometimes, this routine maybe monotonous and boring but he has to keep them going on

For me, I have my flat routine and sometimes I'm boring and I don't understand why I have to do this unpleasing things. But according my previous words, we have the duty to keep them going on so I have to do it as well as I can. Everyday I wake up at 5.45 AM and prepare myself for going to the university. After I'm done everything, I leave my home and wait for the bus number 93. As usual, I always sleep in the bus and I never miss to get off it when it arrive to the university's bus stop. Then, it's time to study, I have my schedules from 8.00 AM to 12.00 AM. In everyday and studying is the roufine which I have to do it the best. In fact, I'm quite bad in English languages such as grammar, writing and speaking skills, so I try and try to practice and hope it will be better soon. Next, it's time which I wait for. Yes I having a lunch, I and my friends often go to the university's canteen because most food is delicious and cheap, furthermore, We also have our regular shop. It is the fifth shop in the first canteen. They only sell hoodles but it is the most variety that I haven't ever seen before. For this reason, we preferred to be their regular customers from the first year to these days. After I'm full and happy after eating, I have to go to study in the afternoon and then I back home by the bus number 93 again. When I arrive home, I have to help my mother to sell food and do my homework at the same time. Though it is hard for me, I must do it. At 7.30 PM. We close my shop and finish at 8.30 PM. Last, I have my private time to do everything which I wants and go to bed at 01.00 AM.

What's the boring routine ll you can see that. Although sometimes, I'm boring and I'm discouraged, sometimes I'm happy and feel good about it I believe that most people has his daily life like me, so it isn't right that I have felling like this. I think can enjoy and do it better because it more depend on myself to direct it in good or bed ways.

My daily life

There are seven days in one week. Everyday is not similar. We have weekdays and weekends, and weekends are days for resting.

On Monday, I have to get up at half past six. I have breakfast at seven o'clock with Thomas Radzienda in American & British culture. At ten o'clock, I study Oral with Harley and I have lunch at noon. I continue studying German at one o'clock in the afternoon. I finish this class at three o'clock, and I go back home. On Tuesday, I can get up late because I have a Game class at two o'clock until four o'clock in the afternoon. On Wednesday, I have to get up early as same as Monday. I attend class at eight o'clock until one o'clock. In the morning, I have free time, so I sometimes go shopping with my sister before I go to the university I finish my class at four o'clock. On weekdays, after I go home, I read my books and do homework. In the evening I have to help my mother cooking. At night, I spend my time watching television and do home work. At weekends, If I have a lot of homeworks, I will do on Saturday and Sunday. Sometimes I have on appointment with my friends

My daily life at the second year in this university is a busy life because I have a lot of homeworks in American & British culture. I have to do my homeworks everyday.

My diary life

In each day, I have many things to do. Some are different while some are my regular action. How every, most are similarity because I am a student and I have to go to university everyday except on Friday to Sunday.

In each week, I have be going to university for four days: Monday to Thrusday I get up at 6 o'clock and go out home around 6.40. I always reach the univesity on time for my first class: I have class at 3 o'clock everyday. I finish class at 3 o'clock in the afternoon on every Monday and Thrusday so I often go back home immediately since I don't want to reach home too late. Moreover, I finish my class all 11 o'clock on every Tuesday. After that I always have lunch with my friends. Sometimes I go to library and then go back home because I have many homeworks to do Therefore Tuesday is my working day. For Wendesday, after I finish my class at 1 o'clock in the afternoon, I often go to eat something outside the university with my friends and go shopping. This day is for relaxing for me. On Friday to Sunday. I often stay at home and do homeworks. Sometimes I go shopping with my mother and sister while sometimes I go to exercise at the gymnasium with my brothers.

I think my diary life is rather general in others' idea Anyway, I have both relaxing time and working time in my diary life. That is good for me and for everyone in my opinion.

My daily life

Everyone actually has his own daily life both boring and exciting. Someday is quite similar with other days, but someday may be very obvious different. My daily life also has fairly different and similar. However, almost everyday, I am quite delighted and satisfied with my ordinary life, however, someday, my life is so boring and unpleasurable although I have never expected to get it.

My daily life consists of going to the university, learning few subjects both comfortable and serious subjects, and then going home. The last activity is going to bed. All those activities are merely usual and ordinary. Nevertheless during this semester. I think my daily life has become more boring with one serious subject that is the British and American culture. Since the beginning of this class, I have to go to the library almost everyday for searching my assignment. My daily life has change from doing simple homework to doing very difficult assignment. I have all the task of hard searching. Sometimes, my life feels so discouraged and very upset. However, my life still be happy when I spend a lot of time with my friends. They can lessen my stress. We always have talking non sense, eating, amusing and doing silly things all day. They make my daily more pleasant than serious with that difficult subject.

I am contented with my daily life except on sometimes that I must be serious and anxious with my frequent word "How could I do with my research?. How could I do with the Christianity on American Culture?" which is the topic of my assignment.

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