

English Language Error Analysis of Thai Students

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Abstract

The purpose of the present study was to examine in a writing of Thai students of English major who study university at Jember and to explore the sources of the errors. This study focused mainly on sentences because the researcher found that the errors in Thai students' written construction may lead to miscommunication. 20 pieces of writing, written by the Thai students 2013-2018 academic years only English major were collected and analyzed. The result showed that the most frequently committed the errors were omission of article, past tense inflection (-ed), preposition, the next is misformation, addition, and misordering. The interlingual interference was found to be the major sources of the errors are sentence structure difference, and having lack knowledge of the target language. It is suggested that learn more the English structure and taught to Thai EFL students. This finding also implies that explicit feedback on students' writing errors is genuinely needed.

Keywords: error, error analysis, writing

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

According to the Kankorn (2016, p.101) "Writing in English has been perceived as the most difficult skill among the four skills of English. Even a native

speaker fails to write a good piece of writing. It is consequently, a very hard task for EFL learners, and it is unavoidable to find errors made by this group of learners since they have a limited chance to write in English". The following sentences written by EFL learners illustrate the difficulties they have encountered.

- I never had journey alone.
- I look below to see more beautiful.
- I'm walking alone.
- We rode on horseback.
- Now journey time.
- Foods to eat.
- I went to Mountain Bromo.

The sentence above, it showed a lot of misuses of English grammatical rules it causes incorrect sentences. Some sentences cannot convey what the writers would like to express. The errors in each sentence reduce the effectiveness of the learners' written sentences.

There are two sources of errors in writing made by the EFL. (1) interlingual errors: error caused by a native language disorder. The error is from the application of elements of their native language in the target appearance of oral or written language. When dealing with a new language, they tend to consciously or unconsciously describe the relationship between what they already know or do not know. (2) Intralingual errors: this error occurs because of the ineffective nature of learning such as faulty application of rules and unawareness of the restrictions of rules. Because of that error, it is not relevant to the native language disorder but is led by the target of they own language. Mistakes usually occur when they have acquired inadequate knowledge.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

That errors made by learners are very significant as they are the indicators of how learners acquire the language. The errors made by learners are beneficial to the teachers, learners, as well as the researchers. For teachers, errors are evidence of learners' progress of the language learning. Teachers can refer to it in order to help improve learners' writing skill. For learners, errors can be served as resources for their language learning. Lastly, errors provide evidence to researchers on how learners learn and acquire the language.

The researcher would like to analyze errors in English sentences written by Thai EFL students. The study chose to focus on sentences because they are the small comprehensible units of language forms that students can produce for their effective written communication. These findings may result in a more appropriate lesson plan and more effective teaching materials and teaching methods which can contribute to Thai EFL students' writing improvement. More importantly, it is hoped that the findings arisen from this study will help both teachers and students in other writing classes to achieve a standard of producing pieces of writing.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Error Analysis

In language analysis, there are three types of approaches that can be done. The first is contrastive analysis, error analysis, and the third, discourse analysis. However, in this study, researchers used error analysis to analyze the errors.

Error analysis is a process to observe, analyze, and classify the learners' errors. According to the James (1998, p.80), error analysis is the process of determining the incidence, nature, cause and consequences of unsuccessful language. The error analysis, the researcher expects to know more why the students make some errors. While James (1998, p.4) states that in the 1950 and 1960 the favored paradigm for studying a foreign language learning its teaching was Contrastive Analysis (CA). The differences between the two were thought to account for the majority of second

language errors. It means that learning is a process of forming habits and errors because it must result from the first language habits that interfere with students learning new linguistic behavior. According to the Brown (2000, p.218), the fact that learners make errors, and the errors can be observed, analyzed, and classified to reveal something of the system operating within the learner, led to a surge of study of learners' errors is called error analysis. Then he says that errors arise from several possible general sources: interlingual errors of interference from the native language, interlingual errors within the target language, sociolinguistic context of communication, psycholinguistic and no doubt countless affective variables.

Based on the Dulay et al (1982, p.141), determining the processes that underline errors entails at least two steps: (1) describing the error categories in terms of precise, theoretically motivated, observable characteristics. (2) Formulating causal inferences about the learning process from the descriptive error data and any other data that might be brought to bear on the issue. Error analysis is important to describe the kinds of errors made by the EFL learners to know the causes of the error and how the learners can learn from their errors. According to Dulay et al (1982, p.138), state that error analysis stands for two major purposes. They are: 1. Provides data from which interference about the nature of language learning process can be made and 2. Indicates to teacher and curriculum developers, which part of the target language that the students have the most difficulty in producing correctly and which error types detract most from learner's ability to communicate effectively.

2.2 Classification of Errors

Errors found in EFL learners' pieces of writing are analyzed and categorized into various categories. According to their features by Dulay (1982), errors are categorized into six different categories: omission of grammatical morphemes, double marking of semantic features, use of irregular rules, use of wrong word forms, alternating use of two or more forms, and misordering.

Another expert James (1998), proposes five categories of errors which include grammatical errors (adjectives, adverbs, articles, nouns, possession, pronouns, prepositions and verbs), substance errors (capitalization, punctuation and spelling), lexical errors (word formation and word selection), syntactic errors (coordination/ subordination, sentence structure and ordering), and semantic errors (ambiguous communication and miscommunication).

2.3 Sources of Errors

According to Pimpisa (2015), the native language interference was identified as the only source of errors committed by language learners. Later, two major sources of errors have been recognised: 1.1 Interlingual errors: as the errors caused by the interference of the native language. These errors are the results of the learners' application of the native language elements in their spoken or written performances of the target language. When encountered with new language, people tend to consciously or unconsciously draw a connection between what they already know and what they do not. 1.2. *Intralingual errors*: These errors are referred to the errors that occur because of the ineffective traits of learning such as faulty application of rules and unawareness of the restrictions of rules. The intralingual errors, therefore, are irrelevant to the native language interference, but led by the target language itself. In the language learning process, these errors normally occur when the learners have acquired insufficient knowledge.

3. Method

3.1 Research Questions

The present study aimed at finding the answers to the following questions.

1. What types of errors are frequently found in English sentences written by Thai EFL students?

3.2 Participants

The participants of the study were Thai students who University in Jember 2013-2018 academic year only English major. All of them have learned English as a foreign language.

3.3 Instruments

To obtain the information regarding errors frequently made by the participants, 20 pieces of their written work were collected to seek for sources of errors.

3.4 Data Collection

The following three stages were performed to collect data of the present study.

Step 1: Data collection. The data were collected the data from the Thai students written.

Step 2: Data reduction. This data reduction phase, the researcher focused on the grammatical error carried out by Thai students in writing. Data reduction is the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, looking the themes and patterns and discarding unnecessary. The data is in the form of written test that has been collected.

Step 3: Data Display. The data display phase is done in the form of a short description using narrative text, it can also be in the form of graphs, matrices, and charts. The phase of this data display, the researcher displays data on what things Thai students make mistakes in writing in descriptive text.

Step 4: Conclusion. The final step is conclusions. In this study, the data is to describe the mistakes of Thai students in writing in the data display. From the data display, it is analyzed further to get conclusions.

4. Results and Discussion

Table1. The types of Writing Topics

The Topic	The number of students
1. my interesting experience	17
2. my bad experience	3
Total	20

Table2. The types of Students Writing Error

The types of grammatical errors	The number of errors
Addition	4
Misordering	1
Omission	110
Misformation	4
Total	119

4.1 The Contributing Factors of Students' Errors

Based on the data, there were two factors found in their writing errors. Those were:

1. Sentence structure difference.
2. Having lack knowledge of the target language.

4.2 The Types of Errors in Writing

Based on the data analysis in this research, it was known that the type of errors are frequently found in English sentences made by Thai students which occur in their writing are grammatical errors were omission, addition, misordering, and misformation.

4.2.1 Omission errors

Omission errors in this study, the students were four omission errors. The first are the omission of article, to be, past tense inflection (-ed), preposition and other morphemes.

4.2.1.1 Omission of article

The following sentences are the example; ‘I never had journey alone’. That sentence is incorrect because they show the omission errors. It supported by Dulay (1982, p.154). That example, the students omit the article ‘a’ noun ‘journey’. The correct sentence is ‘I never had a journey alone’.

4.2.1.2 Omission errors of past tense inflection

The following sentences are the example of past tense inflection errors ‘I look below to see more beautiful’. That sentence, the students miss the –ed (Omission past tense inflection) in the sentence look. The correct sentence is ‘I looked below to see more beautiful’. The following sentence is the example of Omission of preposition; ‘I went to apologize my teacher at her house’. That sentence is incorrect because the students omitted the ‘to’ after verb apologize. For the correct sentence is ‘I went to apologize to my teacher at her house’.

4.2.1.3 Omission of To be

The following sentence is the example ‘I’m walking alone so I felt scared suddenly I cried then walked again’. The sentence is incorrect because the student omitted the verb to be ‘was/were’. Before noun ‘walking’, the students should be adding the verb to be ‘was’. For the correct sentence is ‘I’m was walking alone so I felt scared suddenly I cried then walked again’. The students made the Omission errors that happened because the item that not appears in a well-formed utterance.

4.2.2 Addition

The addition errors in this research, the students made the addition of regularization. The addition errors, that happened because Thai students add the

wrong structure. It supported by Dulay (1982, p.156). The Addition errors, they were 3 types of errors those are double markings, regularization, simple addition. But in writing test, the Thai students do not make errors double markings.

4.2.2.1 Addition of Regularization

The following sentence is example of addition of regularization; “we rode on horseback”. That sentence is not correct because the student’s misconception to rules of forms. The correct sentence is “we ride on horseback”.

4.2.2.2 Addition of Simple Addition

The following sentence is example; “Now journey time and it was an interesting experience”. The correct sentence is “Now journey times and it was an interesting experience”. That error happened because the student use of item which should not appear in a well-formed utterance.

4.2.3 Misformation

The misformation errors in this study the students also made it. The learner supplies something although it is incorrect. That happened because the students supply some word although is incorrect. It supported by Dulay (1982, p.158). Misformation was 3 types of errors; the omission of regularization errors, archi-forms and alternative forms. But in this test of Thai students do not make the errors of alternative errors.

4.2.3.1 Misformation of Regularization

The following sentence is example; “foods to eat”. That sentence is incorrect. For the correct sentence is “food to eat”. The regularization errors are happened because the students use of the wrong structure. It also caused by a regular marker that is used in place of an irregular one.

4.2.3.2 Misformation Errors of Archi-Forms

For the example; “After saying that her was a supper Mother who only raised one child”. That sentence the learner used “her” replace subject “she”. The correct sentence is “After saying that she was a supper Mother who only raised one child”.

Those errors happened because the students omitted use of the wrong form of the structure.

4.2.4 Misordering

The misordering that occur because Thai students make incorrect placement of morphemes. It supported by Dulay (1982, p.162). The following sentence is example of Misordering errors; “I went to Mountain Bromo”. The sentence is incorrect. For the correct sentence is “I went to Bromo Mountain”. That sentence incorrect because the students misplaced.

4. 3 The Factor of Writing Errors

There are two factors which cause Thai students’ writing errors. Those are sentence structure difference and having lack knowledge of the target language.

4. 3. 1 Difference Sentence structure

In Thailand, there are different sentence structure between Thai language and English. It makes the Thai students made errors in writing as follows:

a. Misordering

It happens because in Thai language the adjective position is after a noun while in English the adjective is put before a noun. For example;

- book red (Thai language)
- red book (English)

b. Misformation of Regularization

It happens because in Thai language there is no different form between plural and singular while in English, the plural form is mostly followed by “s”.

For example:

Thai language

English

Singular: bag	bag
Plural: bag	bags

c. Misformation of Archi-Form

It happens because in Thai language there is no different form between subject and object while subject and object in English has different form.

For example:

Thai language	English
Subject: I	I
Object: I	Me

d. Omission of To be

It happens because in Thai language there is no to be for expressing nominal sentence while in English to be must be used for expressing nominal sentence.

For example:

Thai language	English
Nominal sentence: I beautiful	I am beautiful

e. Omission Past Tense Inflection

It happens because in Thai language there is no change on the form of verb in past tense. In Thai language, past event is indicated based on the adverb of time while in English the form must be changed in past event.

For example:

Thai language	English
Past: I make a cake yesterday	I made a cake yesterday

4. 3. 2 Having lack knowledge of the target language

Having lack knowledge of the target language makes the students have errors in their writing such as addition of regularization. It happens because they do not

know the past form of certain verbs. For example; “we **tooked** her to the hospital”. The word “**tooked**” should be “**took**”.

Based on the discussion above, the result of the data can be summarized the Thai students made the errors of grammatical rules in the types of Omission, Addition, Misordering, and the last Misformation. The other types in this research, the researcher also found it but the researcher ignored. That problem happened because the student’s loss or miss grammatical rules. The high score the errors are Omission, the next is Addition, Misformation and the last is Misordering. From the many errors it can be said, the problems happened by Thai students in writing because the structure of their first language different with foreign language. So that Thai students faced difficulties in applying in the rules of English.

4. Conclusion

Based on the data analysis and the discussion on chapter IV, it can be concluded that the first is Thai students who studying at Universities in Jember 2012 until 2018 academic years made the errors in their writing text. Including, the students is facing a problem in their writing. The writing text of Thai students showed problem of grammatical errors which types omission, addition, misformation, and misordering. The second is factors which errors omission, addition, misformation, and misordering happened because Thai students do not understand about the structure of English language.

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