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RESEARCH REPORT

**AN ANALYSIS OF THE ERRORS IN SPOKEN ENGLISH
OF FOURTH YEAR STUDENTS MAJORING IN
ENGLISH BUSINESS COMMUNICATION AT
SELECTED PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES**

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Research Title : An Analysis of the Errors in Spoken English of
Fourth Year Students Majoring in English Business
Communication at Selected Private Universities

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Abstract

The study was conducted for the following objectives:

1. To analyze students' errors in spoken English.
2. To provide explanations to students' errors in spoken English.
3. To provide evidence that analyzing students' errors is crucial to the understanding of students' language learning process.
4. To contribute more insights into the growing field of English teaching research in Thailand.

The subjects included 142 fourth-year students majoring in English Business Communication at four selected private universities namely Sripatum University, Bangkok University, Assumption University and University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce. They were asked to make an oral presentation on a given topic and while doing this, their errors were jotted down and later identified, categorized, described and explained.

Statistical treatment in the analysis involved simple enumeration, frequency distribution and Chi-square to determine if there is a significant difference in the errors students make in their oral presentations. The study found that there is a significant difference in the errors the students make at the .05 level. The bulk of the errors were in grammar, specifically in verbs. The errors were mostly attributed to the

differences between the student's native language and the target language. Other causes of errors were students' overgeneralizations, idiosyncracies, non-mastery and incomplete learning of the grammatical concepts in the target language.

The findings in this study confirm the interlanguage concept. It is implied that in language teaching situations, communication should be the foremost goal. Minor differences or mistakes, or even inappropriate expressions, can be tolerated provided information is transferred and communication is not impeded.

Some of the recommendations given are that 1) more research on interlanguage should be undertaken to specify completely its features and components, in both oral and written language use and 2) instructional materials for teaching English as a second or foreign language to Thai learners must be created and developed incorporating the learning, relearning, practice drilling or even over learning of the target language in which Thai learners make errors.

Keywords: native language, target language, interlanguage

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The field of English as a second or foreign language in the last two decades has seen a trend away from audiolingualism and toward making language teaching more humanistic and less mechanistic. Foreign language teachers have begun to respond to this attitudinal change by examining the learning styles of their students and by stressing the use of language for communication. These new directions in language teaching are gradually changing the focus of foreign language learning objectives, instructional materials, and pedagogical strategies. Instead of drilling on sentence patterns, many of today's students are encouraged to communicate in the target language about things that matter to them. Teachers are urged to engage their students in communication activities and to focus more on developing students' fluency than on grammatical accuracy. That is, teachers should not pay much attention to the grammaticality or ungrammaticality of students' utterances as long as students are able to convey or communicate their intended message or meaning. However, in more than usual instances, students' errors in speaking pose barriers to the understanding of intended meanings resulting in miscommunications. Errors in communication, therefore, can not be ignored. A careful study of a large corpus of errors committed by speakers of a source language (Thai) while attempting to express themselves in the target language (English) would provide factual empirical data (rather than theoretical speculation) on which to base teaching materials.

In Thailand, English is not widely spoken. English as a major foreign language is not taught during the elementary school years but it is taught starting from middle school through high school up to the college years as a required subject. Teachers and lecturers are specially trained but they are not proficient in English.

Language teaching in Thailand had long emphasized the acquisition of linguistic competence. The Grammar – Translation method is employed, which focuses on the mastery of the language system through Thai explanations of the grammar system of English. This method continues to be practiced despite the demands to speak English in business, science and technology, academic pursuits, political affairs, and the ever-increasing frequency to communicate with foreigners.

Although Thais have spent a long period of time studying English, most have not attained good proficiency. Another factor for their lesser proficiency in English is that Thai students unconsciously transfer the rule systems and accents of their mother tongue to English. Thus, problems of intelligibility and acceptability of Thai English may emerge. This is attributed to the lack of exposure of Thai students to the English language. The communicative approach and its goal of attaining communicative competence or the concern with developing the ability to use the language to perform acts of communication is known in Thailand through teacher training programs by a few applied linguists and language theorists. This approach has already been introduced but it is not widely implemented in classroom situations. The need to reorient English teaching towards such approach arises. In Thailand the communicative approach is essential since it requires actual use of communicative techniques.

Early studies in language learning/acquisition was based on the Chomskyan approach distinguishing linguistic competence from linguistic performance. This approach concerned primarily with “an ideal speaker-listener,” in a completely homogeneous speech community, who knows the language perfectly (Chomsky 1965). Linguistic competence refers to the mastery of the abstract systems of rules by which a person is able to understand and produce any and all of the well-formed sentences of his language. Linguistic performance is the actual use of the language.

Chomsky’s restricted view of competence has been rejected by a number of language theorists, among them Hymes (1974), Halliday (1981), Allwright (1976), Widdowson (1978), Munby (1978), Yorio (1980), Canale and Swain (1980), Canale (1983), and Faerch et al. (1984). According to Hymes (1981), there are “rules of use without which the rules of grammar would be useless.” It is also pointed out that knowledge of linguistic competence is only a part of the language user’s total communicative abilities. Chomsky’s view is inadequate to account for language in use. Thus, the concept of “communicative competence” was evolved by Hymes (1981). Since then, communicative competence has become a major topic of interest in the language learning profession, and a major goal of many language teaching programs. The ultimate goal of language teaching is to acquire communicative competence, not just linguistic competence.

One point of this research, therefore, is that the foreign language learner should acquire and manifest communicative competence, not just grammatical competence. This is because the goal of communication is success in the transmission of the message. Communication becomes effective only when one is able to put across the message by utilizing resources other than words such as setting, participants, strategies and paralinguistic features in oral interactions. The communicative competence of a foreign language learner must manifest the interlocutor’s awareness

of who is speaking to whom, what, where and when—in general the context of situation. In actual communication situations, even if the learner has a faulty construction provided the message is conveyed appropriately, then he already has developed communicative competence.

Canale and Swain (1980), and later elaborated by Canale (1983), stress that communicative competence is an essential part of communication. It refers both to knowledge, what one knows, consciously or unconsciously, about the language as well as the skill in how well one can use this knowledge in actual communication. Canale and Swain proposed that a theoretical framework for communicative competence minimally includes four areas of knowledge and skill: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence.

Grammatical competence refers to the mastery of the language code; sociolinguistic competence involves being able to know who is speaking to whom, what, when, where and how; discourse competence relates to the mastery of how to combine grammatical forms and meanings to achieve a unified spoken or written context in different genres or types of text; and strategic competence is composed of the mastery of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies to compensate for communication breakdown and to enhance communication effectiveness.

In actual second language communication, foreign language learners oftentimes commit errors. Traditionally, these were considered indicators of failures in the mastery of the foreign language. But in recent theories on error analysis, these represent stages through which the learner moves from zero competence to native speaker competence in the target language (Tucker and Sarofim 1979). Selinker (1972) considers errors as part of a developing interlanguage and Corder (1967) view errors as part of the learner's learning strategies. In the new view, errors are allowable

as long as they do not interfere with the flow of information in the communication process.

Systematic analyses of errors can provide useful insights into the processes of language acquisition. Because errors are signals that actual learning is taking place, they can indicate students' progress and success in language learning. Studying students' errors also has immediate practical applications for a foreign language teacher. Errors provide feedback; they tell something about the effectiveness of his/her teaching materials and techniques and show him what parts of the syllabus have been inadequately learned or taught and need further attention. They enable him to decide whether he must devote more time to the item he has been working on. This is the day-to-day value of errors. However, in terms of broader planning and with a new group of learners they provide the information for designing a remedial syllabus or a program of reteaching. Therefore, the rationale for this study emanates from the awareness and recognition of the value of errors in understanding the second or foreign language acquisition process.

Research Objectives

1. To analyze students' errors in spoken English.
2. To provide explanations to students' errors in spoken English.
3. To provide evidence that analyzing students' errors is crucial to the understanding of students' language learning process.
4. To contribute more insights into the growing field of English teaching research in Thailand.

Research Questions

1. What errors in stress and pronunciation do the students make in their oral presentations?

2. What errors in grammar do students make in their oral presentations?
3. What errors in vocabulary do students make in their oral presentations?
4. Which of these errors can be categorized as global errors?
5. Which of these errors can be categorized as local errors?
6. What are the most and least frequently occurring errors in spoken English made by students?
7. What are the causes of each type of errors in spoken English made by students?

Assumptions

1. The differences between the students' native language and the target language are sources of errors for foreign language learners.
2. There is no significant difference among the students in the errors they make in spoken English.

Scope of the Study

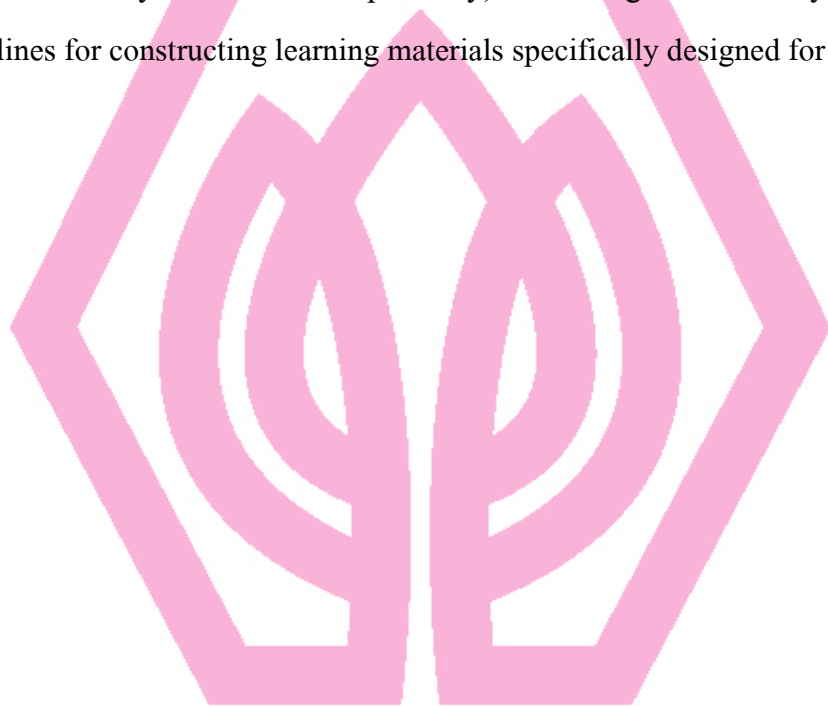
This study involved only fourth year students majoring in English Business Communication at four selected private universities namely Sripatum University, Bangkok University, Assumption University, University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce and focused only on the errors the students made in their oral presentations. The errors were identified, categorized, described and explained. However, the offshoot of the research which is a syllabus based on this study is not included. It will be a separate project.

Definition of Terms

1. contrastive analysis – analysis of the similarities and differences between two languages
2. error analysis – analysis of the errors in the target language made by a second language learner
3. oral presentation – any speaking activity on a given topic done by a student in front of the class.
4. stress and pronunciation error – any form that is a deviation from the standard stress and pronunciation form in English
5. grammar errors – any form that is a deviation from the standard grammatical form in English
6. vocabulary error – any form that is a deviation from the standard word usage in English
7. source language/native language - first language of learners (In this study, Thai is the first language of learners)
8. target language – the foreign or second language being learned by students. (In this study English is the target language.)
9. error – any linguistic form that is a deviation from the standard form of English
10. global error – error that causes a listener or reader to misunderstand a message or to consider an utterance incomprehensible (Hendrickson , 1979)
11. local error – error that does not significantly hinder communication or understanding of an utterance or message (Hendrickson , 1979)

Significance of the Study

The study will provide teachers as well as curriculum planners with the insights on the causes and sources of errors made by the learners. These causes and errors will form as a basis for determining the learning content which can be integrated into the course syllabus. Most importantly, the findings of this study will be used as guidelines for constructing learning materials specifically designed for Thai students.



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Chapter 2

Review of Related Literature

In the early seventies a rather heated debate took place as to whether contrastive analysis (CA) or error analysis (EA) or perhaps some combination of both of them should provide information for constructing the materials used in language teaching. CA advocates claimed that a systematic comparison of the source language and the target language at all levels of structure would predict areas of difficulty in the target language for speakers of the source language. Furthermore, they maintained that the best teaching materials would emphasize those features of the target language that differ markedly from corresponding features of the source language.

Since the mid-seventies, however, both CA and EA have been partly absorbed and superseded because of the development and evaluation of interlanguage analysis (IA). IA is concerned with describing and understanding the total system that the second foreign language learner uses in attempting to communicate in the target language.

In “The Significance of Learners’ Errors” (1967) Corder argues that first and second language learning share basically the same processes and that whatever differences exist are explainable in terms of motivation. He cautions that random errors must be carefully distinguished from errors which are systematic in nature and reflect a learners’ transitional competence. By paying attention to the learners’ errors, Corder feels we will come to better understand his needs and stop assuming we know what he should learn and when he should learn it. He claims that errors can be significant in three ways: (1) they tell the teacher how far the learner has come and what he still has to come and what he still must learn; (2) they give the

researcher evidence of how language is learned (3) they are a device the learner uses to test out his hypotheses concerning the language he is learning.

Errors, according to Day, *et. al.*, (1984) indicate “the use of a linguistic item or discourse structure in a way which, according to fluent users of the language, indicates faulty or incomplete learning.” What errors to identify have been extensively studied.

Cook’s (1969) study on Czech students of English found the English subsystems and their functions which posed problems, e.g., go – goes, book – books, man – mans, I give – He give. In lexis, words and phrases were often confused as a consequence of formal similarity as in some and any. He attributed errors not only to L1 interference but also to the inherent nuances of the target language.

Richards (1971) proposed an alternative way of studying errors the non-contrastive way. He said that interference from the mother tongue was clearly a major source of difficulty in L2 learning, but many errors are derived from the strategies employed by the learner in language acquisition, and from the mutual interlanguage interference. He concluded that in L2 learning, errors were traceable to both interlingual and intralingual factors, and distinguished between interlingual errors and intralingual errors. The latter were categorized into: 1) over-generalization, 2) ignorance of rule restrictions, 3) incomplete application of rules, and 4) false concepts hypothesized.

Corder (1973) suggested three basic categories of errors: 1) pre-systematic (when a learner is trying to come to grips with a new point, 2) systematic (when he has formed an inaccurate hypothesis about the target language), and 3) post-systematic (temporary forgetting of a point that had previously been understood.).

Taylor (1975) studied errors made by elementary and intermediate school children. He found that their errors were not qualitatively different. The conclusion was that increased proficiency in a second language is inversely

proportional to a student's reliance on the structure of his native language when speaking a second language. Thus, the increased knowledge of the target language leads to more use of overgeneralization strategies and to less use of transfer strategy.

Khampang (1974) conducted a study on the difficulties of learning English prepositions by L2 learners. Subjects included Thais, Japanese, Spanish, Koreans, Italians, Chinese, Arabs and Portuguese. Results showed that prepositions posed equal difficulties for all nationalities irrespective of their first language. It was found that the subjects had memorized the prepositional system from their previous learning experience and retrieved the same knowledge to be applied to other new situations.

In Scott and Tucker's (1974) study, Arab subjects made the following preposition errors: 1) omission, or leaving out of a necessary word, 2) substitution, or wrong use of word or the use of two or more words instead of only one.

Guntermann (1978) classified substitution errors, errors in agreement, and omissions as highest in frequencies in the corpus of errors in Spanish grammar made by English Speaking learners in El Salvador.

From the written compositions of Filipino freshman college students, Halili (1978) found that Filipino learners of English used formation rules as a result of their systematic application of cognitive strategies and hypothesis testing. The students' errors were manifestations of their interim grammar which did not correspond to the grammar of the target language.

The study of Romeo (1980) attempted to delineate a systematic description and analysis of errors of Filipino elementary pupils. Data were taken from the subjects' written compositions. Findings revealed that the pupils committed errors in the morphological, syntactical and lexical levels. The psycholinguistic analysis of errors showed instances of overgeneralization, false concepts hypothesized, incomplete

application of rules, ignorance of rule restrictions, native language transfer, and incomplete mastery of the target language, in that order.

Valera (1982) found the following errors in the written composition of young adult Filipino language learners using Richards' non-contrastive classification: over – generalization, ignorance of rule restriction, incomplete application of rules, false hypothesis and transfer. She also found that self-ratings of learners regarding their proficiency in English did not significantly differ from judges' ratings. Finally, she concluded that learning/learner variables affected to a greater/lesser degree the language learning process.

Scarcela (1979) identified five categories of errors in the use of verbal routines by adult Spanish-speaking subjects learning English as L2. These categories of errors were: 1) paraphrases, 2) partially acquired routines, 3) substitution, 4) word-for-word translation, and 5) ambiguous (those whose nature could not be exactly described). Paraphrastic errors were highest in frequency of occurrence (44%), followed by partially acquired expressions (25%), substitution (10%), translation (9%), and ambiguous expressions (10%).

Hendrickson (1979) identified and examined deviants of English in terms of the degree to which they impaired communication. He classified errors into two types: global and local. A global error was a linguistic error that led a native speaker to misinterpret a message or to consider a message incomprehensible within the context of the error. A local error was a linguistic error that made a native speaker understand the meaning of a sentence with little or no difficulty within a given context. Global error consisted of the substitution of contextually inappropriate words and misuse as well as omissions of prepositions. These errors were detrimental to the understanding of the intended meaning of the sentence. There were, however, substitutions of lexical items and misuse of prepositions that did not totally impair

communication. The implication is that not all deviants of the same category cause communication breakdown.

Ervin (1979) expressed that possible differences between what a native speaker perceived in the learner utterances and what the learner intended to convey might cause pragmatic errors. The learner might, in some occasions, use language which he believed to be very deferential but a native speaker would interpret it as not. On the contrary, the learner might intend not to show much deference to a specific addressee but his approximation of the language required in the context would lead him to produce the error of sounding much more deferential to native speakers than he intended.

In a study of West German students, Delisle (1982) found that incorrect choice of words was the greatest handicap to communication. Chun, et. al., (1982) found discourse errors, factual errors, word choice errors, syntactic errors and omission errors by non-native speakers of English among subjects studying at the University of Hawaii.

Lott (1983) categorized errors as transfer of structure errors, interlingual/intralingual errors and overextension of analogy errors. He asserted that it was often difficult to use categories of errors in analyzing actual errors. There was the problem of judging the cause of errors with some precision. An elaborated classification system may only compound interpretation. There were also difficulties in categorizing errors that arise from conflicting interpretations of key concepts.

Bryant (1984) identified two types of errors usually committed by the Japanese language learners of English. These were the interlingual and intralingual errors. The former arises from the unconscious attempt to the transfer to English certain native Japanese structures. The latter were often the result of misinterpretations of syntactic overgeneralization of English grammatical rules. Most

errors committed were the latter type but the former type of errors did the most to hinder comprehension and clear communication.

Errors and Communication

Olsson (1973) asserted that erroneous forms could be understood because meaning could be arrived at by other elements in the linguistic structure. He pointed out that deviant utterances were possible for interpretation depending on the retention and comprehensibility of meaning. In the same manner, Albrechtsen, et. al, (1980) contended that deviance from the target language was not necessarily difficult to understand. He further maintained that “provided effective communication takes place, formal or grammatical correctness is of little account.”

Nemser (1971) performed an investigation on the tolerance level of deviant utterances. Erroneous sentences committed by Swedish students were submitted to German students. Wrong choice of words was found to block communication to a higher degree than grammatical errors. Nonetheless, the context where the error occurred could help in the interpretation of the content.

Olsson (1973) found evidence that semantic errors obstruct communication more than any other kinds of errors. The study also found that native speakers paid attention to what was said by considering more the possibilities for communication than the standards for correctness. This implies that a change of attitude from stressing correctness to considering communication possibilities would be a practical step toward a more realistic non-native language goal.

Plitzer (1973) conducted a tolerability study to test the effect of mistakes of Swedish students learning German to German students. She observed that mistakes in vocabulary led to misunderstanding more than the other kinds of errors. Some errors did not block comprehension although the listener noticed them.

Etherton (1979) concurred that errors which blocked the meaning of the message should be given prompt attention. Burt (1975) said that errors violating a higher level rule or which operate at the sentence or discourse level (global errors) cause greater irritation than do mistakes affecting single, recurrent elements in a sentence (local errors). Among the global errors cited were “missing, wrong, or misplaced sentences.” He listed word order as another major impediment to comprehension, a finding also of Albrechtsen, Henriksen and Faerch (1980).

Albrechtsen, Henriksen and Faerch (1980) pointed out that the number of wrong content words to total number of words did not seriously affect communication. Interlocutors evaluated personality and content independently of the evaluation of language and comprehension. Piazza (1980) speculated that the likelihood of an error being committed by a native speaker could affect degree of acceptability.

Tomiyana (1980) proved that linguistic inaccuracy did not necessarily cause communication breakdown. His subjects’ successful interpretation of erroneous sentences depended upon the type of error and the grammatical item. The study suggested that well-formedness was not really significant to communication.

Galloway (1980) found that native speaker reactions to video-taped interviews with learners of Spanish were not greatly disturbed by pronunciation although this factor accounted for 26% of the total number of errors. Errors then did not seriously impede overall communication. Native speakers appeared less concerned with grammatical accuracy than were non-native teachers. The former concentrated on the message but the latter listened for correctness of delivery.

Chastain (1981) reported that many native speakers were generally able to comprehend a message despite errors. Ninety percent of the native speakers of Spanish in his study were able to understand all but six of the 35 error-laden sentences

in writing. Some linguistic errors were more serious than others from a communicative point of view.

Ludwig (1982) linked comprehensibility and irritation. While an error type may cause irritation, it may not interfere with comprehensibility in equal measure. Also, while comprehensibility can be rated fairly objectively, irritation cannot. He claimed that there was little in published research on the issue of personality or cultural variables that affect error judgment.

Bryant (1984) found that interlingual errors (the unconscious attempt to transfer to English certain native Japanese structures) hindered the most in comprehension and communication.

Richards (1971) suggested that in looking at a language sample, one may often be unable to say whether a particular error was attributable to a strategy of communication or a strategy of assimilation. Hosenfeld (1970) said that the question of difference between CS and LS was from the investigator's viewpoint and admitted that some LS may also be useful to the student in a communicative setting.

Communication Strategies (CS)

Most research on the nature of communication strategy has focused on identifying and categorizing types of communication strategy used by learners in their interlanguage systems.

Richards (1971) believed that L2 learners' deficiencies may be the result of: 1) strategies of learning such as over-generalization and analogy by means of which the learner tests out his hypotheses about the structure of the language, 2) strategies of assimilation, in which the learner makes his learning task easier, and 3) strategies of communication, whereby the learner adapts what he knows into an efficient communication model producing an optimal utility grammar.

There had been minor attempts to define and classify communication strategy but the first systematic one was done by Varadi (1980). He observed three types of CS: 1) message abandonment (learner does not say anything rather than make a mistake), 2) formal replacement (learner resorts to word coinage or description) and 3) message adjustment (learner resorts to generalization).

Tarone (1976) modified Varadi's typology and identified 5 basic CS: 1) paraphrase (rewording of message in an alternate construction by approximation, word coinage and circumlocution), 2) conscious transfer (literal translation or language switch), 3) appeal for assistance, 4) mime (nonverbal strategies), and 5) avoidance (topic avoidance and message abandonment).

Faerch and Kasper (1984) divided CS into achievement strategies (attempts to solve the communication problem) and functional reduction strategies (attempts to reduce the communicative task) and relating these to psycholinguistic models.

Tarone (1980) modified what he proposed in 1979 to make it clear that there were actually two major types of strategies: language learning strategies and strategies of language use (which include CS). He defined CS as "mutual attempts of two interlocutors to agree on a meaning in situations where the requisite meaning structures do not seem to be shared." A learning strategy (LS) does not need any desire to communicate a meaning; its primary purpose is to learn.

Brown (1980) stated that CS constituted a major source of learner error. CS meant the conscious employment of verbal or nonverbal mechanisms for communicating an idea when precise linguistic forms were for some reason not readily available to the learner. These included avoidance, prefabricated patterns, cognitive and personality styles, appeal to authority, and language switch.

Faerch and Kasper (1984) maintained that communication strategies were made use of by learners in order to bridge the gap between communicative needs

and limited communicate resources. The term covered problem solving devices that learners resorted to in order to solve what they experienced as problems in speech production and reception. They made a distinction between production strategies and reception strategies. In the former, the strategies included were reduction strategies and achievement strategies while in the latter, the strategies included interactional repairs.

Fakhri (1984) defined CS as “an alternative device” used by the subject to fill in his knowledge of the target language. Modifying Tarone’s definition of CS, Fakhri added that the use of strategies was also motivated by discourse requirements.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this research is based on the interlanguage phenomenon drawn from current psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic theories on the learning of a foreign language, and also from relevant theories and approaches in foreign language teaching.

Interlanguage

Language use is a creative activity. A language learner who does not have full command of the target language creates a language system for himself, and what he has created and continually creating is a language in terms of its structural properties and of how it can be used. In recent years, researchers and teachers of EFL/ESL have come to understand more and more that foreign learners are consciously testing hypotheses about the target language. In the attempt to speak a foreign language, a learner creates a language system which differs from his first language (L1) and the target language (L2). A language learner, then, possesses something that can be properly called language at any point during the course of his acquisition of the target language.

Various terms have been introduced to refer to the language system created by foreign language learners. The best known is “interlanguage” as introduced by Selinker (1972). “Interlanguage” is the language system a foreign language learner creates in an attempt to convey meaning. It results from the combination of rules of both native and target language.

Other terms have also been used to refer to interlanguage. These include “interim grammar” (Cook 1969), “transitional competence” (Corder 1967), “intralingual and developmental errors” (Richards 1971), “idiosyncratic dialect” (Corder 1974), “communicative interference” (Hymes 1974), and “approximative system” (Nemser 1971). Faerch, *et. al.* (1984) define interlanguage as a variety of language which exists in a contact situation between a learner’s L1 (the language he knows and masters) and an L2 (the language he is actually exposed to).

It can be said that interlanguage is first a language system different from L1 and L2 with a structure of rules which provides order to the linguistic chaos that confronts the learner (Brown 1980). Selinker (1972) maintained that interlanguage must be dealt with as a system because it is a highly structured behavior. It has the structural properties that language has (Corder 1973).

Unlike other natural languages, interlanguage is “interim” because each point during the process of learning L2, represents the non-native speaker’s hypotheses about the structure of the L2 language. Such hypotheses constitute a kind of “interim grammar” which the learner constructs, tests, preserves or abandons. According to Cook (1969), one’s first language is learned in much the same way by a series of evolving hypotheses.

It is “approximative” by its stress on the changing, dynamic characteristics of a learner’s language, on the notion of approximation to some goal, and on the notion of movement and change (Nemser 1971). It is “transitional” as shown in the changes of linguistic behavior from one stage to another in the learning

process; these changes being caused by the learner's dynamic application of language rules, strategies and hypotheses (Corder 1967). It is "idiosyncratic" in that the learner's language is unique to an individual, and the rules of this language are peculiar to the language of this particular foreign language speaker alone. The speaker can be said to be the only native speaker of the language, though it may share some properties with the language of other people who have the same language background (Corder 1974).

On the other hand, while interlanguage differs from any other language system, it is also describable in the same way and by means of the same theoretical models as any other language (Corder 1973). It shares many characteristics with natural languages. If interlanguage is not a linguistic system, then it will be beyond the grasp of linguistic science and analytic procedures (Adjemian 1976).

Certain psycholinguistic processes have been theorized to underlie interlanguage behavior and which are also central to second language learning. These include language transfer, transfer of training, strategies of second language learning, strategies of second language communication, and, finally, overgeneralization of target language linguistic rules (Selinker 1972).

Language transfer refers to the transfer of the structural patterns of one's native language to a foreign language. Transfer of training refers to the influence of previous training on new utterances. Strategies of second language learning are an individual's learning strategies, i.e., a speaker may tend to avoid the use of articles or may tend to use the "ing" form in most situations. Strategies of communication are the processes which the learner utilizes to express intended meaning, e.g., lexical simplification and non-verbal communication (Selinker 1972).

Selinker also uses the term "fossilization" to account for the regular reappearance in interlanguage of linguistic material thought to be eradicated. Entire

interlanguage competence can be fossilized not only in individual learners but also in whole groups resulting in a new dialect.

Interlanguage is, furthermore, a “reduced” language system using as it is a simplified grammatical code compared with that of L1 and L2. This reduced nature may be due to non-native speakers tending to “overindulge” in that given fewer rules, they may tend to overuse certain forms, making a language form do more work than the native speakers make it do, resulting in semantic loss (Corder 1974).

As a result, interlanguage is functionally restricted. Although it can be used for a range of communicative purposes, the communicative functions which the speaker can perform with that reduced code are restricted. He cannot use his interlanguage for all communication needs which he has as a native speaker of his first language.

This research adopts Corder’s (1974) schematic representation of interlanguage as can be seen in Figure 1

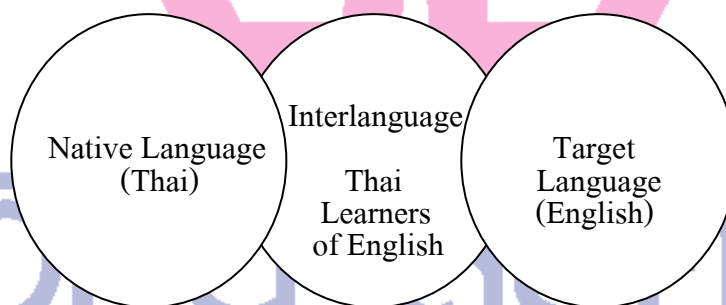


Figure 1: A Schematic Representation of Interlanguage (Corder, 1974)

In *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* (1965), Chomsky posited that linguistic theory is concerned primarily with “an ideal speaker-listener, in a completely homogeneous speech community, who knows the language perfectly.” The perfect knowledge referred to is the mastery of the abstract system of rules which enables a

person to understand and produce any and all of the well-formed sentences of his language, i.e., his linguistic competence.

However a number of language theorists have rejected Chomsky's restricted view of competence and replaced it with the concept of "communicative competence." They asserted that the restriction of competence to perfect knowledge in a homogeneous speech community failed to take into account the influences of sociocultural factors in language use. According to Hymes (1981), there are "rules of use without which the rules of grammar would be useless."

The concept of communicative competence has evolved in due time. Allwright (1976) treated linguistic competence as overlapping systems that together shape an individual learner's communicative activity. The part-whole relationship demonstrates that some parts of linguistic competence are irrelevant to communicative competence. Figure 2 shows the diagram relating communicative competence and linguistic competence.

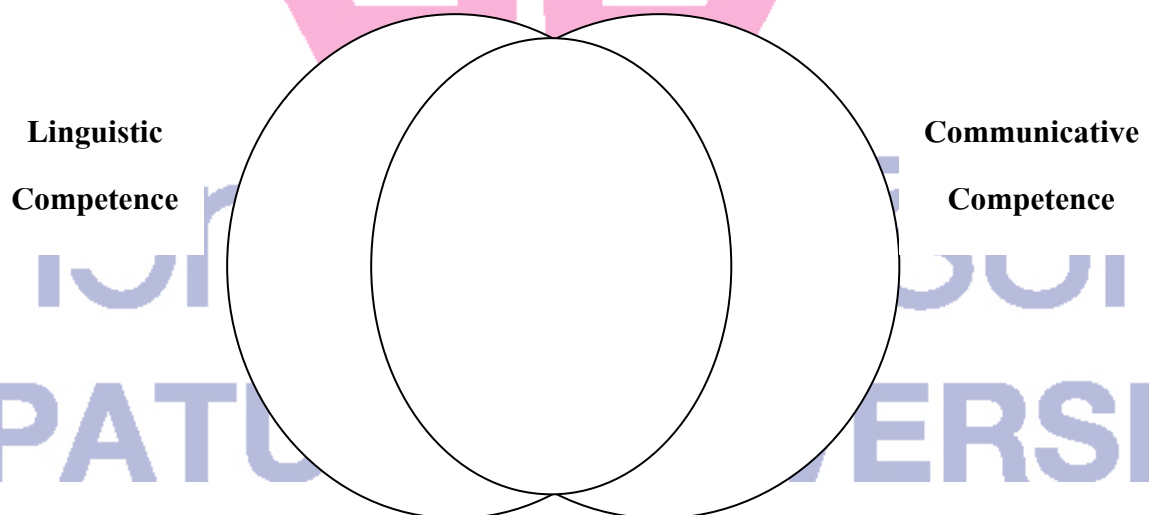


Figure 2. The Allwright Diagram of the Relationship Between Communicative Competence and Linguistic Competence.

Communicative competence is viewed by Hymes (1981) as the interaction of grammatical, psycholinguistic, sociocultural and probabilistic systems of competence.

Communicative competence considers social rules, contextual appropriateness, volitive and effective factors aside from the structural elements of language. Appropriateness and effectiveness are not concerns of linguistic grammar, but they are related to sociolinguistic correctness, that is, the ability of speakers to say the right situation in order to get what they want (Yorio 1980). The notion of English as an international and intranational language (EIIL) and the interlanguage of L2 learning are concepts which are in line with the communicative use of language adapted to the needs and purposes of the L2 learner.

Canale and Swain (1980), later elaborated by Canale (1983), stressed that communicative competence is an essential part of communication. They proposed that a theoretical framework for communicative competence minimally includes four areas of knowledge and skill: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence.

Grammatical Competence

This refers to the mastery of the language code. Included under this component are features and rules of the target language such as vocabulary, word formation, sentence formation, pronunciation, spelling and linguistic semantics. Such competence focuses directly on the knowledge and skill needed to understand and express accurately the literal meaning of utterances.

Grammatical competence has been earlier associated with linguistic competence. Although an L2 learner cannot be communicatively competent without being linguistically competent, it does not mean that learners will first have to master all rules of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation before they can proceed to other competencies. It does not help at all if communicative competence is presented as an

alternative to grammar; the two interplay with each other as one and the same phenomenon.

The following constitutes the areas of grammatical competence as selectively drawn from Munby (1978) and Canale (1983):

1. Phonology

- discriminating and articulating lexical items in connected speech (sounds),
- discriminating and articulating word stress in connected speech (stress),
- understanding and producing intonation patterns in connected speech (intonation),

2. Vocabulary

- common vocabulary related to topics,
- basic meaning of content vocabulary items in context,
- meaning of idioms in context,
- meaning of synonyms and antonyms,
- deducing the meaning and use of unfamiliar lexical items.

3. Syntactical construction

3.1 Morphological

- understanding and using tenses
- understanding and using nouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs, etc.

3.2 Syntactical

- 3.2.1 understanding and expressing relations within the sentences, especially

- agreement of subject and predicate,
- elements of sentence structure (word order)
- modification structure (tag, WH-questions)
- negation

- modal auxiliaries
- intra-sentential connectors
- complex embedding
- focus and theme

3.2.2 form of given structure in context

3.2.3 literal meaning of a sentence having a given structure in context.

A learner's communicative competence may be measured from the production errors he commits. The more errors he makes, the lesser his communicative competence is. In other words, there is an increase relationship between errors and communicative competence.

In the old approach of teaching a foreign language, errors indicate non-mastery of the grammar, vocabulary, or the rules of the linguistic system in general. The new approach, however, views errors differently; errors represent the stages of a learner as he progresses from zero competence to native-like competence (Tucker and Sarofim (1979) and are part of a developing interlanguage (Selinker 1972) and as part of a learner's learning strategies (Corder 1967). Errors are also allowable as long as they do not interfere in the flow of information transfer (Beardsmore 1979).

Due to time and other constraints this research considered only the grammatical part of communicative competence.

Chapter 3

Research Methodology

Design

This study was designed to describe the interlanguage of the subjects by analyzing the errors they make in their oral presentations.

Subjects

The chosen subjects for this study were fourth-year students majoring in English Business Communication or Business English at four selected private universities. Altogether there were 142 students; 45 from Sripatum University, 32 from Bangkok University, 30 from Assumption University and 35 from the University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce.

Instrumentation and Data Collection

In this study, the linguistic data came from one oral presentation on the topic “An Unforgettable Experience” by the subjects. They were assigned the topic one week before oral presentation day. Each of the subjects was told to make an oral presentation on the topic in class. While each one was making the oral presentation, the researcher or her assistant, jotted down the errors each student made. The oral presentations were recorded first, in case there was a future need to look at or listen to the context in which the error occurred. However, the tape-recorded presentations were not transcribed due to time constraints. Fortunately, there was not any need to resort to the transcribed presentations.

Before the actual data collection a pilot test was conducted by asking the respective classroom teacher of each group in each university to record errors while students did an oral self-introduction in their classes. It was found that it was possible to do so. Therefore, after this, the researcher proceeded with the next step: the collection of the data.

Research Instrument

To prove or disprove the assumption that there was a difference among the students in the errors they make in spoken English, Chi-square was used.

Chapter 4

Findings

In this chapter the results and findings are presented.

Question No. 1. What errors in stress and pronunciation do the students make in their oral presentations?

A. Stress Errors

In the following words the students put the stress on the wrong syllable as can be seen.

áppreciate

facúltý

dévelop

embássy

minístry

dístribute

ábsorb

necéssary

accesóry

hówever

photográphy

indústý

cómmittee

recógnize

acádemic

élémentary

strátégic

ánalysis

challénge

éffect

damáged

develópment

celébration

económy

manágement

ámbitíon

óbtained

agricúlture

temperátüre

satisfáction

áerobics

immígrant

ambassador	cooperation
secretary	copy
responsibility	abdominal
systematic	military
determine	

B. Pronunciation Errors / Difficulties

1. The /s/ sound preceding a /k/ sound is silent as in: ask; task
2. The vowel /a/ is added to the /s/ if it occurs in initial position as in school, schedule, stumbled, stapler
3. The sound of /x/ in final or mid position becomes /k/ as in: next, relax, excuse, fax
4. The sound of /sh/ in final position becomes /ts/ or sometimes /ch/ as in accomplish, finish
5. In words with consonant clusters, the second consonant is not sounded as in: program, degree, grow, class, plant, practice, graduation, classify, driver, crocodile, climb, Christmas
6. the /l/ sound in final position is sometimes pronounced /n/ as in: central, initial, liberal
7. the /v/ sound in initial and mid position is pronounced with a /w/ sound as in: beverage, vinegar, versatile; civil, heaven
8. The /ch/ in initial position, supposed to be pronounced as /k/ is pronounced as /ch/ as in characteristics; chemical; charisma
9. The short /i/ sound is pronounced with the long /ai/ sound as in: determine; invitation; inspiration; considered
10. The voiced /th/ is made voiceless as in although; though
11. The /r/ sound sometimes becomes /l/ especially when both sounds appear in the same word as in: liberal, river, parallel

Question No. 2. What errors in grammar do students make in their oral presentations?

The first observation that is obvious in the grammar of the subjects is the semi-awkward construction of the utterances. The different structural units that are supposed to combine in order to express a thought are sometimes broken or separate. This broken interrupted speech can be generally attributed to the following: 1) incomplete, incorrect or inadequate forms of the structural units (approximately, the parts of speech) themselves, 2) wrong word order between structural units, and 3) repetitions and self-corrections.

Nouns

The nouns, whether placed in the noun phrase or verb phrase, are not preceded by the articles a, an, and the in the contexts where these articles are needed. Examples are: weather was very hot; I went to clinic; I'm university student; I have very serious problem; because I have appointment with doctor; I have class after this.

Right use of the articles is rare. There are even cases of using the articles where they are not needed as in: I like fruits especially the mango; I had to go to the another building.

One other problem with nouns is in the incorrect use of pluralization. Sometimes, pluralization occurs where it should not and vice-versa. Examples of the former are: one people; that books; I had wonderful times. There is only one children in my family. The latter include the following examples: I saw many student laughing; We put all the gift on the table.

Pronouns

One problem with pronouns is the use of subject pronouns instead of the possessive pronouns and vice versa as in the following cases: She name was given by a monk; Work was finished late by he. Him and I went together to the party.

One very glaring error the subjects made was using the construction the noun + of + possessive pronoun instead of possessive pronoun + noun as in the house of him; the plans of them. Possessive pronouns (like mine, hers, yours, theirs) are rarely used. If students need to use the concept of possession, they express it in the following ways: This is her plan; the plan belongs to her instead of the plan is hers.

The construction Possessive Pronoun + Gerund + is problematic to the subjects. Instead, they say I am swimming is very good for my health for My swimming is very good for my health.

Another difficulty or problem on pronouns is the construction such as I met many students two of whom are from my hometown. Instead, the subjects chose to say I met many students. Two of them are from my hometown.

Still another error on pronouns is substituting an object pronoun for a relative pronoun as in the following examples: The man I talked to him was drunk; The bag I bought it is quite expensive. The teacher she taught us was very kind.

Finally, the subjects have difficulty using the pronouns one, ones that, these to substitute objects (nouns). They prefer to repeat the nouns to which the pronouns refer to as in the following example: I decided to buy another bag in the context "I found a bag I liked. But it was very expensive. I decided to buy another bag. Its' cheaper". instead of saying "I decided to buy another cheaper one"

Adjectives

Errors in adjectives involved the use of comparatives and superlatives as in the following examples: My sister is more prettier than me; I chose to buy the more cheaper bag; the most big person in; manier people.

Another error is the incorrect use of many, much, few, little with countable or uncountable nouns as in many money; little people; many salt; few grades.

Some errors occurred in the adjectives being omitted resulting in incomplete sentences or utterances. I have ah very ah....stomachache is one such example. This can be attributed to limited vocabulary.

Surprisingly however, if a few students do supply an adjective for nouns in their sentences they place the adjective after the noun as in lady beautiful; animal fierce; food good; skin healthy

Verbs

The most glaring error on verbs is the absence of verb to be in the students' utterances. Examples are: We very happy; He handsome and tall; My grandfather more kind to me than my father; We late so teacher got angry us.

Some students confuse the verb to have with there is/are. Examples are: My family have five people; My class has many students; In my backyard have many trees; my room there have many dolls.

The simple present form does not pose any problem to the students except with the third person singular where the English verb undergoes form alterations. The result is lack of agreement between the subject and the verb. The following are some examples: The man buy the ticket; He/She don't have; the doctor look my condition; Thailand have long history.

Regarding verb tense, the students find using the past tense form to denote past action difficult as in the following examples: Last night I have a dream; Yesterday we finish class early so we go drinking; Yesterday I must to come to school; When I young my mother buy me bicycle.

In most cases when the students want to indicate simple past action in their verbs, they resort to using the construction used to + verb as in the following examples: I used to go this school many years ago; I used to go abroad last year; When I was high school student we used to learn Taekwondo; Last semester my teacher used to give many quiz.

There are some cases when the past tense is used properly, that is, they use it whenever they want to refer to an action that happened in the past. However, they often have lapses reverting to the present and vice-versa resulting in tense inconsistencies. Examples are: They bought ticket and enter the dressing room; Some friend brought a present and they have cake on the table; He went swimming after that he is screaming.

The past perfect tense is rarely used. If they need to talk about past perfect action they resort to using the phrases first, next, later, then, before.

For example, First I enter the room. Next I sign the registration book, instead of After I had entered the room, I signed the registration book.

The students find very difficult to change the tense of verbs in conditional sentences particularly the unreal conditions as in: If I know you are come I will prepare some food for you; If I have much money I buy it for you; If I shouted he will kill me.

Similarly, they make errors in changing the tense of verbs in changing direct to indirect speech, if they attempt at all. Most of the time, they use direct speech to avoid making mistakes. One error they commit with indirect speech is the construction. I want to know + wh question. They fail to invert the order of the

subject and verb as in the following examples: I want to know what is your name; I wonder what are you going to do; I want to know when will you give me my things. Still another error related to this is the failure to use if with yes/no questions as in these examples: I want to know are you coming with me? I want to know will my father pick up me from the airport? I wonder do you know me?

Surprisingly, they use the simple past tense form of verbs in sentences with verb of the senses rendering the sentences ungrammatical as in the following sentences: I heard someone knocked on my door; I saw a man climbed my fence; I feel a hand opened my bag on my back.

Another area very problematic to students is the correct use of V.ing or gerund or infinitive + to as in these examples: I enjoyed to swim in the sea; You can see the show by to buy the ticket first; I apologize to him for late;

Still another error they make is in the auxiliaries. They add to to the auxiliaries such as in: must to do; will to remember; can to operate.

Adverbs

A common error among the students is using the adjective good instead of the adverb well as in the following examples: He works very good; The driver did not drive good so I feel not good; My mother cook food good and I love it; My team played good so we won.

Adverbs of manner were not frequently used by the students. When they needed to use them they resorted in using constructions with adjectives rather than adverbs. Examples are: I walked on the beach with my friends. We were happy instead of I walked on the beach with my friends happily; We entered the dark room. We were slow and nervous, instead of We entered the dark room slowly and nervously.

Similarly, they avoided using the construction (so + adverb + that.....). Instead they chose to use choppy sentences as in I woke up. It was late. I did not have time for breakfast; for I woke up so late that I did not have time for breakfast. and The man hit me. It was very strong. I fell down for The man hit me so strongly that I fell down.

For adverbs of time one error is using while instead of when and vice-versa as in: While I was young, I was very naughty; Someone knocked on my door when I was taking a bath; The telephone rang when I was eating.

Prepositions

The subjects' oral speech reveals both incorrect use and omission of prepositions. One very simple but frequently committed error is the use of at, in, on in the following examples: I was born on December; We plan the meeting in Monday; I saw them at Bangkok; I had to take care my sick father; We arrived school late so we did not find them.

Phrasal verbs pose a lot of difficulty to the Thai learners. When the same verb has several accompanying prepositions depending on the context such as: put on; put out; put into; put off; put up; put up with, Thai learners are bewildered. It is perhaps this difficulty that may have caused the subjects to omit the prepositions in certain instances. Another error related to phrasal verbs which students make is wrong order of object and preposition as in: pick-up me; turned on the lights; put through me.

In an effort to provide a preposition, some of the students supply or add a preposition when these are not needed. The following serve as examples: So many friends help to me; I could not find out my telephone; They are going to home, I spent in some time.

The prepositions for and since to indicate present perfect tense is also problematic for a few students. Examples are: I have waited my friend since a long time; We have been dancing since a few hours; I haven't seen my friend since a long time.

Conjunctions

It is noticeable that the students do not use a lot of conjunctions in their English oral presentations. In speech, conjunctions connect two or more separate and yet related ideas. Therefore, their absence creates a lack of transition, hence, the abruptness in the introduction of another idea or thought. Most of the students' sentences were simple in structure and if they formed compound sentences joined by conjunctions they frequently used the following: so; but; even though; because; although; therefore.

Errors in the use of conjunctions were mainly redundancies as in the following: 1) using but and although in the same sentence like Although I told him not to come to see me, but he still come. 2) using because and so in the same sentence as in Because the traffic was very bad, so I came late. 3) using so and therefore as in I had stomachache so therefore I went to see doctor.

There were cases when even though was only even as in Even _____ I liked it, I didn't buy it or substituted if for though as in Even if I went to the party but I did not see him.

Question No. 3. What errors in vocabulary do the students make in their oral presentations.

The use of a wrong word or group of words is a problem of substitution. In the utterances, the wrong word choices were mostly nouns, verbs and adjectives.

A. Errors in noun choices were the following:

1. school clothes for uniform
2. belief for religion
3. personal policeman for bodyguard
4. bus money keeper for bus conductor
5. fight for contest or competition
6. cleaner for maid
7. menu for recipe
8. watchman for watchmaker
9. person to arrange date for boys and girls for matchmaker
10. person I don't know him for stranger
11. teachers' area for cubicle
12. cooker for cook
13. house designer for architect
14. dish materials for ingredients

B. Errors in adjective choices were the following:

1. no feeling for numb
2. can't get out the sound for soundproof
3. salable for available
4. excited for nervous
5. funny for enjoyable
6. no enjoyed for bored
7. very afraid movie for thriller
8. not cooked for raw
9. ready for eating for ripe
10. not poison for edible
11. still not good for eat for green (fruit)

12. full of water for flooded

Of these errors Nos. 4 & 5 were common among the students

C. Errors in verb choices include the following

1. to take care the baby for to babysit
2. walked with no direction for wandered
3. owned by me for belonged to me
4. took a little of the food for tasted the food
5. went around and give something for distributed

Question No. 4 Which of these errors can be categorized as global errors?

The errors categorized as global errors using Hendrickson's (1979) typology, that is, errors that cause a listener to misunderstand a message or to consider an utterance incomprehensible are those errors in using conjunctions resulting in a lack of logic in the ideas expressed. One example is:

Although I did not win the first prize but I am not very happy. Another example is: My favorite subject is English because I like it.

Question No. 5. Which of these errors can be categorized as local errors?

Likewise, using Henrickson's (1979) typology of local errors, that is, errors that do not significantly hinder communication or understanding of an utterance or message, all the errors, except that of research question number 4 above, are categorized as local errors. They are errors in stress and pronunciation; errors in grammar; and errors in vocabulary. Errors in vocabulary did not hinder communication because the students used simple describing words leading to the meaning of the words they intended to use. For example, when one student could not say the words "matchmaker", she used the phrase "person to arrange date for boys and girls" Another example is when one student said "I shouted and shouted very loud but

the room can not get out the sound. Nobody hears me. Here, any teacher of English as a foreign language would clearly guess that the student was trying to say that the room was soundproof.

Question No. 6 What are the most and least frequently occurring errors in spoken English made by students?

The following table shows the frequency count of errors made by the students of all the four groups.

Table 1 Table of Frequency of Errors

Errors	Number of Errors			
	SPU	BU	AU	UTCC
Stress	42	28	25	50
Pronunciation	47	21	15	45
Grammar				
Nouns	55	36	21	63
Pronouns	41	18	10	46
Adjectives	40	16	11	37
Verbs	119	91	63	123
Adverbs	12	8	5	15
Prepositions	93	60	31	82
Conjunctions	38	15	8	54
Vocabulary				
Noun choices	11	1	0	2
Adj. choice	15	3	2	5
Verb choices	3	0	0	2
Total	516	297	191	524

This table shows that the most frequently occurring errors in spoken English made by the students in their presentations were errors in grammar, specifically, verbs. Students' making many and frequent errors in grammar especially in verbs can be attributed to the fact that in the learners' native language (Thai) tense of verbs is non-existent. Time of action in the Thai language is denoted by time phrases such as today; yesterday; tomorrow. Action verbs in Thai are not inflected for tense. In this case, it can be generalized that the source or cause of the errors is the difference between the native language and the target language or what Richards (1971) calls interlanguage interference.

The least frequently occurring errors in spoken English made by the students in their presentations were errors in vocabulary. This is so because their vocabulary is limited to simple words and they avoid using high sounding or difficult vocabulary.

Question No. 7. What are the causes of each type of the errors in spoken English made by the students?

A. Errors in Stress

In the English language system, there are no rules to follow regarding putting stress on which syllable of the word. For example, all three-syllabled words must be stressed on the second syllable. If there was such a rule on all three-syllabled words, they would not make mistakes. However, no such rule or any other rule exists; therefore they have nothing to base or depend on except their own knowledge acquired in their readings or exposure to the foreign language and contact with speakers of the foreign language. Moreover, there are inconsistencies in the way words are stressed, that is, one word which changes its form according to the parts of speech (noun, verb, adjective, etc), changes the syllable to be stressed as well. For example, in the word academy (noun) – the stress is on the second syllable. When changed to the adjective

form academic, the stress is on the first syllable. The noun necessity is stressed on the second syllable, but the stress falls on the first syllable when it is in its adjective form necessary. With these two examples, learners may deduce a pattern. However, this pattern can not be applied to all as in the word secretary (noun) and secretarial (adjective) in which stress falls on the first and third syllable respectively. The inconsistencies in the stress system of the language if there is one at all, bewilder learners. Therefore, errors in stress in the foreign language may be attributed to faulty or incomplete learning as proposed by Day et. al. (1984).

B. Errors in Pronunciation

1. The /s/ sound preceding a /k/ sound.

This sound is not found in the learners' native language so it is an interference error.

2. The vowel /a/ is added to the /s/ if it occurs in initial position.

The sound of /s/ alone in initial position is not found in the native language of the learners. The sound /s/ is always with a vowel; therefore, this error is caused by interference from the native language of learners.

3. The sound of /x/ in final position is not found in the learners' native language, so this is an interference from the native language.

4. The sound of /sh/ in final position is not found in the learners' native language, so this is another interference from the native language.

5. In words with consonant clusters, the second consonant is not sounded. There are consonant clusters in the learners' native language. However, when the second consonant is not sounded, the meaning of the word is still understood. This is, therefore, a

case of idiosyncrasy on the part of the learner. It can also be concluded that the cause of the error is incomplete learning of the sound involved.

6. The /l/ sound in final position is sometimes pronounced /n/. This is a case of language transfer.
7. The /v/ sound in initial and mid-position is pronounced with a /w/ sound. Voiced /v/ is not present in the learners' native tongue, so this is a case of incomplete learning.
8. The /ch/ in initial position supposed to be pronounced /k/ is pronounced /ch/. This is a case of ignorance of the rule or incomplete learning.
9. The /i/ sound is pronounced with a long /ai/ sound. This is a case of wrong transfer of learning. Learners know that the words inspire; mine; invite have the long /ai/ sound so although the word changes its form and should have a different sound they still retain the same sound of the /ai/.
10. The voiced /th/ is made voiceless. This is a case of wrong transfer and incomplete learning. It is wrong transfer of the voiceless /th/ in words they have learned like think thought, therapy, theory and incomplete learning of the fact that /th/ is voiced when used with other words like although. However, it is bewildering to know that learners can pronounce the voiced /th/ in thus, then, there, etc.

C. Errors in Grammar

The grammatical system of the target language L2 (English) is very different from that of the learners native language (Thai) on L1. Here are some examples:

1. There are no articles to precede any nouns in L1. Persons are preceded by number like one man, two boy, but most objects (Nouns) are used with counters like (ton mai nueng ton; rot song khan; baan nueng lang, etc.
2. The nouns in L1 are not inflected for number. They do not have additions of /s/ to the singular, nor changes to y and adding es to pluralize them.

Learners, therefore, tend not to transfer this learning to the target language. If some learners do pluralize they tend to use counters like in their first language or inflect the English noun when inflection is not needed as in one children; many student. This is therefore an overgeneralization and wrong transfer.

3. Pronouns in the learners' native language have the same form in functions of subject and object of the verb unlike in the target language where subject pronoun forms are different from object pronoun forms. Besides, English pronouns have different forms for number and person Pronouns showing possession have different forms depending on the position in the sentence, whether it is before a noun as in the book or after a verb as in the book is hers.

The target language construction (possessive pronoun + gerund + verb) as in her dancing; his smoking does not exist in the native language of learners so this is an interference error.

In the construction (Subject + adjective clause) as in The man whom I talked to is present in the learners' native language. However, when learners use this construction they add the object pronoun. This is a case of overgeneralization. The pronoun system in the target language is too complicated and too different from the learners' native language. It can be deduced that mistakes made are a result of non-mastery of the rules of the target language as well as the differences between the learners' target language and native language.

4. Errors in the use of adjectives like positioning the adjective after the noun is clearly a case of language transfer. Changing the form of the English adjective to denote comparative or superlative degree is non-existent in the native language so learners' mistakes are due to non-mastery of the TL rules.

Some errors where adjectives were omitted resulting in incomplete sentences are attributable to learners' limited vocabulary as well as their using the strategy of avoidance for fear of making errors.

5. For verbs the following errors can be attributed to language transfer or interference from the first language 1) The absence of the verb to be in the students' utterances 2) Indicating simple past tense of the verb by using used to + V₁ and 3) using the words first, next, later, then, before to indicate past perfect tense.

Verbs in the learners' native language are not inflected for number and tense. Errors in tense and number are due to interference from the learners' native language.

The error in using the phrase used to + V₁ to denote simple past tense is clearly a literal translation from first language to second or

target language . However, using phrases like yesterday; last year; five months ago with the used to + V₁ phrase is ungrammatical in the target language. So, this error is caused by transferring habits in the first language to the target language.

Forms for ways of denoting conditional tense in the target language are very different from those of the learners' native language so errors in this aspect are attributable to the differences between the two languages.

The errors in using the past tense form after the verbs hear and see as in: I saw him drank the water; I heard the man knocked on the door are caused by making overgeneralizations of the past tense in the target language.

Errors in adding to to the English auxiliaries are cases of overgeneralizations of the English have to; ought to.

Errors in changing the tense of the verb from direct to indirect speech are due to interference from the mother tongue.

6. For adverbs, the common error of using the adjective good instead of the adverb well is attributable to language transfer. In the learners' native language, adjectives are used to modify verbs. The adverbs of time while and when are also present in the learners' native language. However, errors are caused by the learners' inability to master the concept of while to indicate progressive action and when to indicate specific time.

Choosing to use choppy sentences instead of the construction (so + adverb + that) is attributed to learners' idiosyncracies and using the strategy of avoidance.

7. With regard to prepositions, in the learners' native language, the prepositions on and in that are used with time phrases do not exist. The preposition at used with phrases to denote place, does not exist either. However, the prepositions on, in used with phrases to denote position like on the table, in the room etc. exist in the native language. Phrasal verbs are not existent as well so they are very difficult to be mastered by the non-English speaker. It can be concluded, therefore that the errors are caused by interferences from their native language.
8. Finally, in both the learners' native language and the target language, conjunctions exist. The only difference is in the way they are used. For the learners' using although and but; so and therefore; because and so in the same sentence is attributed to either emphasizing the concept of contrast, effect, etc. or inadequate mastery of the rules of the concept.

D. Errors in Vocabulary

The errors in vocabulary were clearly caused by the learners' limited vocabulary. However, most of the errors were due to the learners' substitution of words for other words, translating literally from the native language to the target language and incomplete learning of lexical items.

Assumptions

1. The differences between the students' native language and the target language are sources of errors for foreign language learners.

This assumption was confirmed as found in the majority of error types caused by the differences between the two languages.

2. There is no significant difference among the students in the errors they make in spoken English.

This assumption is rejected. There is a significant difference in the errors students make at the .05 level as shown in the following tables.

Table 2 Test Equality of proportion of errors between universities

Errors	Number of Errors										Chi – Square Test	P - Value
	SPU		BU		AU		UTCC					
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
Stress	42	28.97	28	19.31	25	17.24	50	34.48	145	100.0	11.497	.009
Pronunciation	47	36.72	21	16.41	15	11.72	45	35.16	128	100.0	24.528 ^a	.000
Grammar	398	32.87	244	20.15	149	12.30	420	34.68	1211	100.0	164.858 ^a	.000
Vocabulary	29	65.91	4	9.09	2	4.55	9	20.45	44	100.0	40.422 ^a	.000
Total	516	33.77	297	19.44	191	12.50	524	34.29	1528	100.0	214.204 ^a	.000

Table 2 shows that of all the errors, UTCC students made the most number of errors equivalent to 34.29%, followed by SPU students which is 33.77%. AU students made the least number equal to 12.50%. The result of the Hypothesis Testing Equality of proportion of errors between universities employing Chi-square test is $X^2 = 214.204$, P-value = .000 (less than .05). Therefore, there is a significant difference in the errors at the .05 level.

Table 3 Test Equality of proportion of Grammar errors between universities

Grammar Errors	Number of Errors										Chi – Square Test	P - Value
	SPU		BU		AU		UTCC					
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
Nouns	55	31.43	36	20.57	21	12.00	63	36.00	175	100.0	24.566	.000
Pronouns	41	35.65	18	15.65	10	8.70	46	40.00	115	100.0	31.817	.000
Adjectives	40	38.46	16	15.38	11	10.58	37	35.58	104	100.0	24.692	.000
Verbs	119	30.05	91	22.98	63	15.91	123	31.06	396	100.0	23.596	.000
Adverbs	12	30.00	8	20.00	5	12.50	15	37.50	40	100.0	5.800	.122
prepositions	93	34.96	60	22.56	31	11.65	82	30.83	266	100.0	33.759	.000
conjunctions	38	33.04	15	13.04	8	6.96	54	46.96	115	100.0	46.704	.000
Total	398	32.87	244	20.15	149	12.30	420	34.68	1211	100.0	164.858	.000

Table 3 shows that UTCC students made the most grammar errors which is 34.68% and AU students made the least number which is 12.30%. The result of the Hypothesis Testing Equality of proportion of grammar errors between universities using Chi-square test is $X^2 = 164.858$, P-value = .000 (less than .05).

Therefore, there is a significant difference in the grammar errors at the .05 level.

Table 4 Test Equality of proportion of Vocabulary errors between universities

Vocabulary Errors	Number of Errors										Chi – Square Test	P - Value
	SPU		BU		AU		UTCC					
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
Noun choices	11	78.57	1	7.14	0	0.00	2	14.29	14	100.0	13.000 ^a	.002
Adj. choice	15	60.00	3	12.00	2	8.00	5	20.00	25	100.0	17.080 ^a	.001
Verb choices	3	60.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	2	40.00	5	100.0	.200 ^a	.655
Total	29	65.91	4	9.09	2	4.55	9	20.45	44	100.0	40.422 ^a	.000

Table 4 shows that SPU students made the most errors in vocabulary with 65.91% and AU students made the least number of errors which 4.55%. The result of the Hypothesis Testing Equality of proportion of vocabulary errors between universities using Chi-square test is $X^2 = 40.222$, P-value = .000 (less than .05). Therefore, there is a significant difference in the vocabulary errors at the .05 level.

Chapter 5

Summary, Conclusions Implications and Recommendations

Summary

This part presents the summary of the major findings of the study from which the conclusions, implications and recommendations are derived later.

The study was conducted for the following purposes:

1. To analyze students' errors in spoken English.
2. To provide explanations to students' errors in spoken English.
3. To provide evidence that analyzing students' errors is crucial to the understanding of students' language learning process.
4. To contribute more insights into the growing field of English teaching research in Thailand.

The conceptual framework was drawn from concepts regarding interlanguage and communicative competence. Canale and Swain's framework for communicative competence was adopted consisting of four competence areas: grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic. Only the area on grammatical competence was studied in this research.

The subjects were 142 fourth-year students majoring in English Business Communication or Business English at four selected private universities. They were made to make an oral presentation on a given topic in class. While each one was making the oral presentation, the researcher or her assistant, jotted down the errors each student made. The errors the students made were jotted down, tabulated for frequency distribution, categorized and analyzed.

It was found that students made errors in stress and pronunciation which are attributed to faulty or incomplete learning. Pronunciation errors are mostly

attributed to interference from the learners' native language which is consistent with the findings of Day, et. al (1984) study and Cook's (1969) study of Czech students, as well as incomplete learning of the sounds in the target language.

Errors in grammar are caused by overgeneralizations of the rules of target language, as found in Richard's (1971) study, wrong transfer of habits in the first language to the target language, non-mastery of the rules of the target language, learners' limited vocabulary, interference from the first language, learners' idiosyncracies, and strategies of learning, specifically, avoidance, The foregoing confirm the theories advanced by Corder (1974), and Selinker (1972) and are in line with the studies of Cook (1969), Taylor (1975), Richards (1971). Errors in vocabulary were caused by the learners' limited vocabulary, literal translations from L1 to L2. and incomplete learning of lexical items as also found in the studies of Tarone (1976), Brown (1980), Faerch and Kasper (1984).

Two assumptions were posed in the study. They are:

1. The differences between the students' native language and the target language are sources of errors for foreign language learners
2. There is no significant difference among the students in the errors they make in spoken English.

The first assumption is confirmed, but the second one is rejected, that is, there is a significant difference among the students in the errors they make in spoken English at the .05 level.

Conclusions

1. The existence of interlanguage in this study confirms the interlanguage concept as advanced by Selinker (1972)
2. The differences between the learners' native language and the target language are sources of errors for the foreign language learner. These errors represent stages through which the learner moves from zero competence to native speaker competence in the target language (Tucker and Sarofim 1979).
3. Second or foreign language learners transfer their habits of learning in their native language to the target language.
4. Errors in the target language can be systematically analyzed.

Implications and Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following implications have been derived which particularly relate to the theory and application of teaching English as a second or foreign language.

1. The subjects' interlanguage of English attests to the presence of the interlanguage phenomenon among non-native speakers of English. If interlanguage is present, then language teachers must be aware of it, learn from it, and make use of it to advantage in language teaching.
2. In foreign language teaching, the ability to communicate should be prioritized. Instructional materials and classroom methodologies and techniques should not only aim at developing the students' ability to utter grammatically correct sentences, but also, the ability to use these forms appropriately.
3. In language teaching situations, communication should be the foremost goal. Minor differences or mistakes, or even inappropriate expressions, can be tolerated provided information is transferred and communication is not impeded.

4. Teachers must recognize the human side of foreign language use. They should give the students the opportunity to use the target language as communication. Until recently the assumption in language teaching, particularly Thai teachers of English, is that one can speak the target language after the acquisition of grammatical skills. However, that point never seems to come as borne out by some studies and actual classroom observations. Target language teaching should then give the learner as much as he wants to use the language, whether correctly or incorrectly, because by constant use of the language, he will overcome his fears, inhibitions, frustrations, and embarrassments which usually occur in the initial stages of learning a target language. In the process of learning, a learner constructs, tests, preserves or abandons structures of the first language in much the same way by a series of evolving hypotheses (Cook 1969). The learner's language is approximative by its stress on the changing, dynamic characteristics of a learner's language, on the notion of movement and change (Nemser 1971). It is "transitional" as shown in the changes of linguistic behavior from one stage to another in the learning process; these changes being caused by the learner's dynamic application of language rules, strategies and hypothesis (Corder 1967).

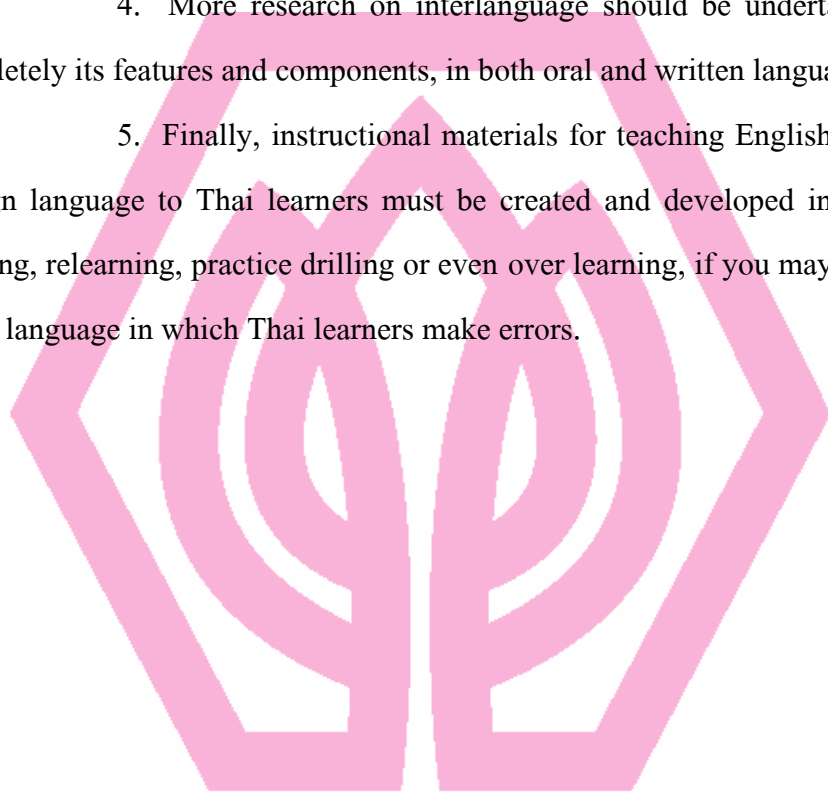
Recommendations for Future Research

1. Future research should take account of the limitations of the study. Instead of confining language analysis to a selected set of components, as in this study, only the grammatical component was considered, follow-up researches should include all of the components of communicative competence to be able to pinpoint the phenomenon of interlanguage.
2. Similarly, future research can expand the number of subjects and, the number of universities involved both private and public nationwide, to make the findings of the study more generalizable.

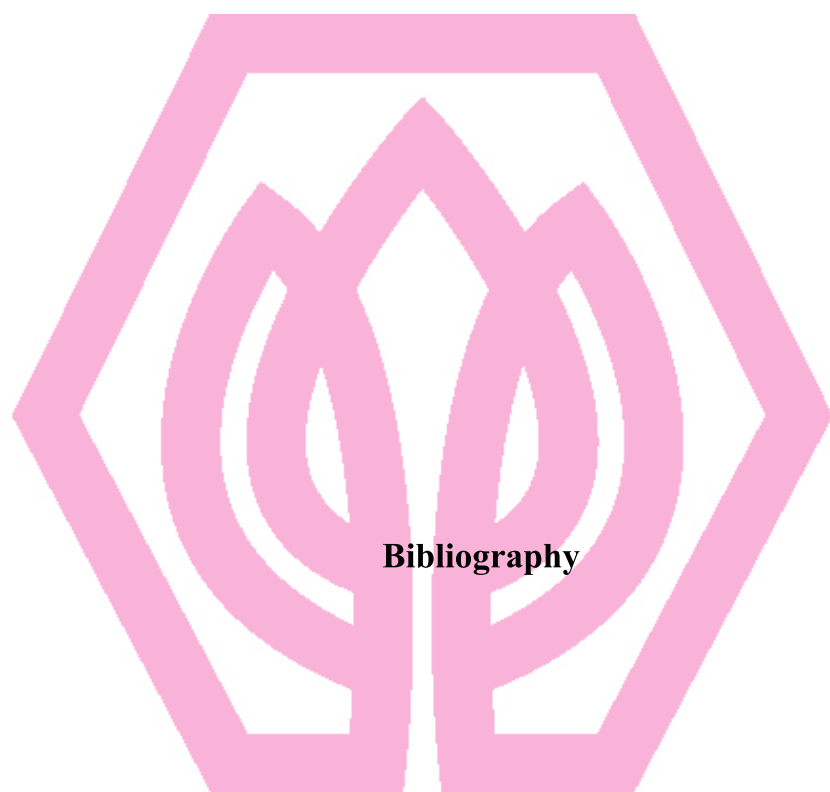
3. Another future research of similar nature should be conducted using other learners of English as a second or foreign language such as Chinese, Koreans, Japanese, Vietnamese, etc. to compare the results.

4. More research on interlanguage should be undertaken to specify completely its features and components, in both oral and written language use.

5. Finally, instructional materials for teaching English as a second or foreign language to Thai learners must be created and developed incorporating the learning, relearning, practice drilling or even over learning, if you may, of the areas of target language in which Thai learners make errors.



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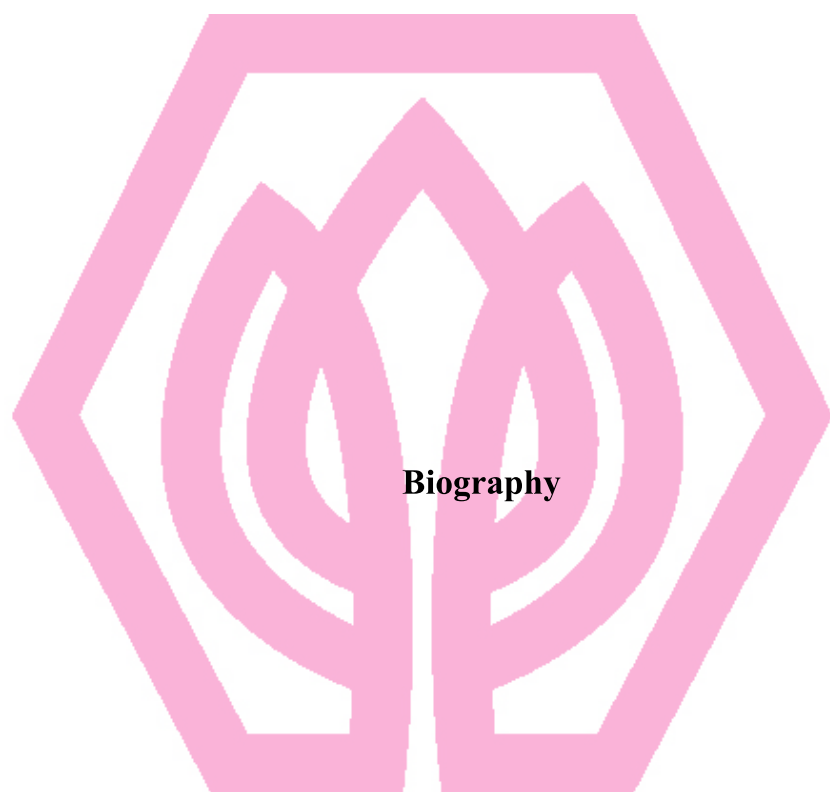
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