

Volume I, Number 01, June 2015

## GRAMMATICAL ERROR ANALISYS IN THAI STUDENTS' ENGLISH WRITING AND SPEAKING AT UIN ALAUDDIN MAKASSAR

Anci Bte Syaripuddin  
State University of Makassar

**ABSTRACT:** This research aims at finding out the types of grammatical errors and the causes of errors in Thai students' English writing and speaking. The research employed descriptive qualitative method. The sample consisted of 9 Thai students. The data were collected by using observing, recording and interviewing the students which was analysed through open coding, axial coding and selective coding. The research result indicated that there are some types and causes of errors found in Thai students' English writing and speaking. There are about 85 errors in writing. Some types of error also appeared in students' speaking. There are about 39 errors in speaking. There are several causes of error found in Thai students' English writing and speaking. Interference of native language is the most influencing factors in Thai students' writing and speaking, the second is overgeneralization, the third is performance errors, and the last is students' educational and economic background.

**KEY WORDS:** Grammatical error, Thai students, English writing and speaking, types and causes.

### A. INTRODUCTION

**M**any people when using English are often influenced by their native language structure. They were not aware of those influences. The influences occur because they thought the main purpose of their communication is just to understand. In other words, they thought if communication can catch what the speakers say or write that is enough; even their English grammar is neglected.

Language interference is a nature phenomenon that occurs in bilingual or multilingual countries. According to Lekova (2010: 320), Communication between the two language systems is the reason for the interference which is a negative transfer of language habits and skills from the mother tongue or from a foreign language to another foreign language or is a change in linguistic structures and structural elements. A bilingual person, who speaks would combine the two language systems and eventually will occur to be interference. As explained above, a bilingual

person might produce an error when they used the language. Those instances of deviation from the norms of either language which occur in the speech of bilinguals as a result of their familiarity with more than one language as a result of language contact will be referred to as an interference phenomenon.

It is inevitable that all learners make mistakes and commit errors. However, that process can be impeded through realizing the errors and operating on them according to the feedbacks given. The analysis of errors thus has become a field of linguistics in that sense. The field of language teaching benefit from the findings of linguistics in many cases including error analysis. As indicated above, what a linguist look for in understanding the language learning process contribute a lot to the questions of language teachers. Many of the teachers complain that their students are unable to use the linguistic forms that they are taught. Lengo (1995) states “this situation is due to the teacher’s false impression that output should be an authentic representation of input.”

Error analysis enables teachers to find out the sources of errors and take pedagogical precautions towards them. Thus, the analysis of learner language has become an essential need to overcome some questions and propose solutions regarding different aspects.

Errors in speaking and writing are often found nowadays in the international students that given the scholarship. This work knows that some issues that have become problems in accepting new international students at UIN Alauddin Makassar. Starting from 2013 the ministry of religion affairs of Indonesia will continue giving scholarship to the students of the Muslim minority country, especially Thailand. Most of students given the scholarship are from boarding schools. The students were though more Arabic and less English.

When they come to Indonesia, the only way to communicate with the people in the campus and their new environment is using English. The students with less English background knowledge will often produce language interference especially in speaking and writing error. Based on the explanation above, the writer is inspired to analyze the Thai students’ English speaking errors.

## **1. Methodology**

This research is qualitative approach. It was qualified by examining the phenomena of the factors affecting students’ error in writing and speaking in learning second language. The subject of this research were the students of 2<sup>nd</sup> semester of

international students in UIN Alauddin Makassar academic year 2013 – 2014 which consists of 13 students. The researcher observed 9 undergraduate students. The instruments used in this research were recording, writing test and interview. In collecting the data, the researcher conducted some procedures as the followings: Firstly, the researcher observed the students as this research aims to examine the Thai students' error in English speaking and writing in UIN. The researcher is going to select speaking class for the further observation. The researcher observed the class for several times. In this case, the researcher conducted the participant observation. The researcher used field note to record all the detail phenomena about the language error in speaking during the observation. Next the researcher gave the writing exercise to the students. The researcher gave the theme or motion and asked the students to write some paragraphs related to the theme or motion given. The last, the researcher analyzed the error for both student's speaking and writing

The first step of the research was collecting the data of Thai students' speaking record. All of recording samples were transcribed into written form. The second step was identification, in which the researcher used code technique to identify the error made by students. Strauss and Corbin in Atmowardoyo (2008: 3) state that the errors identified covered: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. In this case, no statistical calculation used or in the other word, the data analysed descriptively with non-numerical analysis.

a. Open coding

By open coding, the data under analysis are carefully read to identify the research method applied. Under open coding, the researcher gave labels to any description in the data which related to focus point. The result of open coding is a number of conceptual labels which are going to be used to describe the phenomena implied in the data.

b. Axial coding

The next is axial coding; here the researcher related one conceptual label to another. Atmowardoyo (2008) states that in axial coding, one label might refer to the detail of another label or vice versa. The result of axial coding is a number of categories and under categories there were subcategories

c. Selective coding

Selective coding is the process of identifying any phenomena related to the research question. By selective coding, the researcher hopes that the incomplete

categories and subcategories were recovered. The next step was the description of errors and the explanation of the errors. This was concerned with accounting for why and how errors come about. The last step was evaluating or correcting the errors that students make.

## **2. Result**

The data was presented in two parts: Recording and interview. The data presented in following paragraph are divided into some parts namely: data presentation for grammatical errors' types and causes that found at ELT Thai students' writing, and data presentation for grammatical errors' types and causes that found at ELT Thai students' speaking.

### **a. Types and causes of Grammatical Error in Students' Writing.**

There are about 85 errors in writing. Every type was coded by the researcher. They are: Three indefinite article incorrect, three possessive case incorrect, one simple past tense incorrect, two comparative adjective/adverb incorrect, four errors in omission of the article, one error in nominalization, one error in substitution of singular and plural, six errors in omission of pronoun, six misuse of preposition, eight omission of verb, one error in the use of progressive tense, fifteen errors subject and verb agreement, twenty seven errors in word order, one error in negative transformation, two errors in question transformation, one omission of there and the researcher got three new types of error they are: one redundant of adverb, one omission of ing after preposition and one redundant of noun.

Some causes of errors were found by the researcher from the interview that held after analysing the paper written by Thai students. The researcher asked why the students wrote the errors sentences. The researcher asked the same question for every student in different days to make sure that the sentences made by the Thai students were really intentionally written.

After conducting the interview, the researcher found that the educational and economic background of the Thai students is the main factors influencing the students' errors. The students T.S4, T.S8 and T.S1 were the students who got their education in a good school, environment and teacher. Other Thai students got their education at the traditional school and they did not get a good English education.

Some grammatical errors in writing were found because the learners believe that the sentences they wrote were surely correct. The data were found from the

students T.S5, T.S6 and T.S9. They did not realize the errors they made. The examples of the sentences are:

Some of Thai language structures are same to English language structures. Some of Thai students generalize the sentences they made by using their native language structure. Some of the same structures found in this research were:

### 1) The use of many & much

The students of Thailand are confused to distinguish between much and many because in Thai language they use many words to represent many or much. There are at least six words can be used. The words are

- Ye'
- Mak
- Lai
- Ye'yE'
- Makmai
- Laklai

They use the words above depend on the syllable of the noun that follow the words. The noun that has one syllable may be followed by ye', mak and lai and the word that has two or more syllables may be followed by ye'yE, makmai and Laklai. So in the written and spoken, the students were confused how to use many and much correctly. The examples of the structure above are:

- \* *There are many religion in Thailand (T.S7)*  
*There are many religions in Thailand*
- \* *There are many different of culture and tradition (T.S7)*  
*There are many different cultures and traditions*
- \* *There are many of fresh the plant and beautiful flower (T.S7)*  
*There are many fresh plants and beautiful flowers*

After interviewing T.S7, the researcher found that student T.S7 wrote 'many religion' for more than 2 syllables word and she wrote 'many of fresh plant' for 1 syllable word after the word 'many'.

### 2) Comparison

There are some errors were found in this part. The errors came because the students did not understand the use of 'more' or '+er'. They thought that it has the same structure to their native language. The extract of this case were:

- \* *She old more than me 2 years (T.S4)*

*She is 2 years older than me*

- \* *She is beautiful more than me (T.S4)*

*She is more beautiful than me*

The use of 'kua' in Thai language is similar to 'more' in English language. 'kua' means more but it must be used after adjective or adverb. For example:

- \* *Lon sung kua Ani*

*She tall more than Ani*

### 3) Question

There were some errors found in writing question. In English structure we use 'what, when, who, whom, where, why and how' at the beginning of the sentences for giving question to others but in Thai structure they use those words in the last of the sentences. The researcher assumed that the question errors found in this research because the students' native language structure interference. The examples of this case were:

- \* *You study where? (T.S4)*

*Where do you study?*

- \* *You will go back to Egypt when? (T.S4)*

*When will you back to Egypt?*

### 4) Possessive

There are two errors were found in possessive case. The errors were found from student T.S4 and T.S7. They are:

- \* *The geographical in Thailand consist of mountain, forest, hills, lowland near the river's many beaches (T.S7)*

- \* *Before name's Thailand has one name's siam (T.S4)*

*Siam is the first name of Thailand*

The students of code T.S4 wrote 'name's Thailand instead of Thailand's name' because she thought that the sentence has the same structure to Thai language 'Nang se khongAni' that means Ani's book. The researcher assumed that the sentences were interference from their native language.

Some errors were also found from overgeneralization rules. The students did not pay attention to the use of 's' in plural noun. For example:

- \* *Now has 44 letter, Divided is high sound 11 letter, middle sound 9 letter and low sound 24 letter (T.S4)*

*Thai letter now has 44 sounds. It is divided into 11 high sound letters, 9 middle sounds letters, and 24 low sounds letters.*

- \* *Education in country there are 3 category (T.S7)*

*There are three education categories in this country*

- \* *Many teacher to teach many student (T.S1)*

*Many teachers teach many students*

The examples above show that the students T.S4 did not put 's' after 44 letter, 11 letter, 9 letter and 24 letter. The same problem also appeared in student T.S7, she did not change the word 'category' to 'categories' after the word 'many'. The sentence '*many teacher to teach many student*' should be written in '*Many teachers teach many students*'

### **b. Types and causes of Grammatical Error in Students' Speaking**

There are about 39 errors in speaking. They are: one indefinite article incorrect, one possessive case incorrect, three third person singular incorrect, one comparative adjective/adverb incorrect, one error in the use of determiner, one error in the use of number, one error in the use of pronoun, one error in the use of preposition, four omission of verb, thirteen errors in subject and verb agreement, seven errors word order, two errors negative transformation, one error question transformation.

After conducting the interview, the researcher found that there are some answers from the students. The first is because of they believe the sentences they produce were surely correct. After conducting the interview in T.S 6 and T.S 7, they are sure that the speaking they made was correct. The extract of this case are:

T.S (7) : ndapapa bahasathailand

Rr : he'etapijawabsoalnyaharuspakebahasainggris yah.

T.S (7) : iyah

T.S (8) : I want . . I want I wanna answer from tarysittinaftaryee how many religion Islam e and buddha,apa

- \* *I wanna answer from Tarysittinaftari. How many religion Islam and budha*

*I want to answer the question from Tary. How many Muslim and Buddhism in Thailand?*

The second cause of error is because the students do not know what they have spoken. When the researcher reminded them about the sentences they had spoken, they pretended that they never said the sentences.

The third cause of error is because the influence of their native language. The extract can be seen from T.S1 and T.S7:

T.S (1) : example, thai subject have any, banyak, bnyak  
T.S (1) : many, many, many, many sejarah  
Rr : history  
T.S (1) : hah??  
Rr : history  
T.S (1) : ooo yah many history, so. Terus, so soso. They show about history.

\* *Thai subject have many history*

*Thai subject has many histories*

T.S (7) : yah, thank you. Ee in the group in the group movement Islam in Thailand, there are there are so many of group.

\* *there are so many of group*

*There are many groups*

I.S : Are there many Muslims in Bangkok? Because in Bangkok ee very difficult to find halal food. Thank you

T.S (7) : yes, there are many Muslim in Bangkok. Aa About two percent Muslim in Bangkok and mayoritas majority Muslim in Bangkok in province Mimbury, Mimbury and chonbury yeah.

\* *there are many Muslim in Bangkok*

*There are many Muslims in Bangkok*

All of the extract above reveals the error of omission of *s* in plural words. The researcher asked the question to the students about the error they made. The students said that there is no adding *s* in their language if they want to say *banyak*.

## B. DISCUSSION

Politzer and Ramizer in Dulay (1982) state that there are 20 types of grammatical error found in their research but here the researcher only found 16 + 3 types of errors on her research. There are 41 errors in writing. They are: Three indefinite article incorrect, three possessive case incorrect, one simple past tense incorrect, two comparative adjective/adverb incorrect, four errors in omission of the article, one error in nominalization, one error in substitution of singular and plural, six errors in omission of pronoun, six misuse of preposition, eight omission of verb, one error in the use of progressive tense, fifteen errors subject and verb agreement, twenty seven errors in word order, one error in negative transformation, two errors in question transformation, one omission of there and the researcher got three new



types of error they are: one redundant of adverb, one omission of ing after preposition and one redundant of noun.

The result also show that the researcher had found the same error appeared in Ting (2010:53) that there are five common grammar errors made by the learner are preposition, question, articles, plural form of noun, subject-verb agreement and tense. The errors appeared in this research is almost the same with the research conducted by Ting.

Some types of error also appeared in students' speaking. There are about 39 errors in speaking. They are: one indefinite article incorrect, one possessive case incorrect, three third person singular incorrect, one comparative adjective/adverb incorrect, one error in the use of determiner, one error in the use of number, one error in the use of pronoun, one error in the use of preposition, four omission of verb, thirteen errors in subject and verb agreement, seven errors word order, two errors negative transformation, one error question transformation.

Some grammatical case in writing and speaking were found because of the learner believe that the sentences they wrote and spoke were surely correct. It proves the theory from Lightbown (2001:59) that second language learners are not always conscious of their individual learning styles, but virtually all learners have strong beliefs and opinion about how their second language should be delivered. These beliefs are usually based on previous learning experience and the right or wrong assumption.

Interference of native language rules to second language rules were also found in this research. From the findings above the researcher assumed that most of the Thai students used their native language rules in English writing and speaking. It also can be proven from the theory of Dulay (1982) and Hayashi (1985) that interference as the automatic transfer, due to habit, of the surface structure of the first language onto the surface of the target language.

Based on the findings above it is proven from the theory of Richards in Schumann (1978: 32) in his article "Error Analysis and Second language Strategies". He classifies causes of errors into

- 1) Interference that is an error resulting from the transfer of grammatical and/or stylistic elements from the source language to the target language;
- 2) Overgeneralization that is an error caused by extension of target language rules to areas where they do not apply.

- 3) Performance error, that is unsystematic error that occurs as the result of such thing as memory lapses, fatigue, confusion, or strong emotion;
- 4) Markers of transitional competence, that is an error that results from a natural and perhaps inevitable development sequence in the second language learning process (by analogy with first language acquisition);
- 5) Strategy of communication and assimilation that is an error resulting from the attempt to communicate in the target language without having completely acquired the grammatical form necessary to do so; and
- 6) Teacher-induced error that is an error resulting from pedagogical procedures contained in the text or employed by the teacher.

## REFERENCES

- Ancker, W. 2000. *Errors and Corrective Feedback* : Updated theory and classroom practice. *English Teaching Forum*. 38 (4) 20-24.
- Atmowardoyo. H. 2008. *Research Method for Language and literature Studies*. Badah Penerbit UNM. Makassar
- Alwasilah, A. C. 1985. *Sosiologi Bahasa*. Angkasa. Bandung
- Arifin, W. L. 2011. *Interference: its Role in the Target Language Mastery to Indonesian learners*. Vol 4. No 1. Yogyakarta
- Bhela, B. 1999. *Native Language Interference in Learning Second Language: exploratory case studies of native language Interference with Target Language usage*. *International Education Journal*. Vol 1. No 1
- Bloomfield, L. 1933. *Language*. Holt, Rinehart and Winston: New York
- Brown, R. 1980. *A First Language*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Burt, M & Kiparsky, C. 1982. *Language Two*. London. Oxford University Press.
- Chaer, A. 2010. *Sociolinguistic: perkenalan awal*. Pt Asdi Mahasatya. Jakarta
- Cook, V. (Ed.). 2006. *Effects of the Second Language on the First*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Corder, S.P. 1967. *The significance of a learner's errors*. In: *IRAL* 5, 4:161-170
- Corder, S.P. 1981. *Error Analysis and Interlanguage*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Crystal, D. 1987 *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge

- Cunningworth, A. 1987. *Evaluation and Selecting EFL Materials*. London: Heinemann Education Book.
- Dulay, H. B. & Krashen, S. 1982. *Language two*. New York. Oxford University Press
- Ellis, R. 2003. *Second Language Acquisition*. Oxford. Oxford University press.
- Ellis, R. 1994. *The study of Second Language Acquisition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ellis, R. 1985, *Classroom Second Language Development: a Study of Classroom Interaction and Language Acquisition*, Pergamon Press, Oxford.
- Els, T. 1984. *Applied Linguistics and the learning and Teaching of Foreign Language*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Gaffar, S. 2011. *Error analysis in the students' translation from Indonesia into English at SMA Negeri 1 Pangkajene*. Thesis of graduate program UNM.
- Gass, S. (1994). The *reliability of second-language grammaticality judgments*. In E. Tarone, S. Gass, and A. Cohen (Eds.), *Research Methodology in Second-Language Acquisition* (pp. 303–322). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates
- Gass, S.M. and Selinker, L. (Eds.). 1994. *Language transfer in language learning*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Gass, S. M. 2008. *Second Language Acquisition: An Introductory Course*. Routledge. UK
- Gay, L. R. 2006. *Educational Research: competencies for Analysis and applications*. The Lehigh Press. United States
- Hanna, Y.T. 1986. *Second Language Learning Error*. Issue 8.1. JALT Journal.
- Hayi, A. 1985. *Interferensi Grammatik abahasa Indonesia dalam Bahasa Jawa*. Pusat Pembinaan & Pengembangan Bahasa. Jakarta
- Hobson, C. B. 1999. *Morphological Development in The Interlanguage of English Learners of Xhosa*. Rhodes university. South Africa
- James A. & Leather, J. 1998. *Second language speech*. In W. Ritchie & T. Bhatia (Eds.), *Handbook of second language acquisition*. pp. 269-316. New York: Academic
- Lengo, N. (1995). *What is an error?* *English Teaching Forum*, 33(3), 20-24.
- Lekova, B. 2010. *Interference And Methods Of Its Overcoming In Foreign Language Teaching*. *Trakia Journal of Sciences*, Vol. 8, Suppl. 3, pp 320-324. Trakia University
- Ligbtown, P. 2001. *How Language are Learned*. London. Oxford University press.
- Mae, la. 2010. *Error analysis in writing production of the year student of SMA Negeri 4 Bau-Bau*. Thesis of graduate program UNM

- Martanti, P. 2011. *An Analysis of Grammatical Interference in Article of Berani Newspaper*. English letter Faculty, State Islamic University of Syarifhidayatullah. Jakarta
- Norriah, J. 1983. *Language Learners and their Errors*. London: The Macmillan Press.
- Projo, N. 2013. *An Error Analysis on Speaking English At The Third Semester Students of English Department of Muhammadiyah University of Purworejo*.
- Richards, J. C. & Rodgers, T. S. 1985. *Approaches and methods in language teaching* (2nd ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Richards. 1971. *A Non-Contrastive Approach to Error Analysis*. London: Longman Group Limited.
- Schumann, J. 1978. *The acculturation model for second language acquisition*. In R. Gingras (Ed.), *Second Language Acquisition and Foreign Language Teaching* (pp. 27–50). Arlington, VA: Center for Applied Linguistics.
- Sercombe, P. 2000. *Linguistics and Language Education*. New Castle University. United Kingdom University Press.
- Selinker, L. L, V. 1992. *Language Transfer and fossilisation: The Multiple Effect Principle*. In Grass, S.M. and Selinker(eds) 1992.197-216.
- Ting, S. H. 2010. *Grammatical Errors in Spoken English of University students in Oral Communication Course*. Vol 10(1). GEMA Online Journal Studies