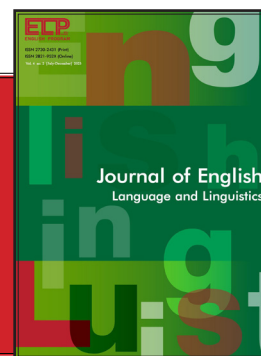


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An Analysis of Grammatical Errors in English Speaking of Thai EFL Learners

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to: 1) investigate grammatical mistakes in the spoken English of Thai EFL university students, and 2) identify and compare the frequencies of lexical errors and sentence structure errors. The participants comprised 43 first-year English for Business Communication students learning General Listening and Speaking courses. The data were gathered through recorded impromptu speeches on randomly assigned topics. The recordings were transcribed and then the data was analyzed using the surface strategy taxonomy. The findings showed that there were 158 grammatical mistakes in total, and the errors are based on four main categories consist of misformation, addition errors, omission errors and misordering. Misformation errors were most prevalent, accounting for 69.62% of all errors, with subject-verb agreement (25.32%) and verb form (17.72%) errors being particularly common. Addition errors constituted 15.82%, omission errors 13.29%, and misordering errors 1.27% of the total. The most frequent subcategories were subject-verb agreement errors (25.32%), verb form misformation (17.72%), and tense misformation (12.66%). These results indicate that Thai EFL learners have considerable difficulties in utilizing appropriate grammatical structures in spoken English, and particularly verbs and agreements. The high frequency of misformation errors points to the fact that more focused instruction on problematic structures need to be addressed in lessons in contexts that convey meaningful communication. These findings can inform the development of specific instructional strategies and curriculum designs to enhance Thai learners' spoken English proficiency.

Keywords: EFL learners, English speaking, error analysis, grammatical errors

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Introduction

Speaking mistakes are inevitable among learners of English as a foreign language (EFL). These errors are usually attributable to one or several of the following factors, such as poor practice, inadequate exposure to the target language, and transfer of native language. These challenges are remarkably notable for Thai students learning English as their second language. As a language is taught at academic settings, situations where they can have opportunities to practice the language in authentic situations are very limited. In addition, it has been accounted that the prevalence of local dialects such as the Esarn language of northern Thailand significantly influences their English pronunciation and grammar (Sasum & Weeks, 2018). As a result, students may struggle to utilize their theoretical knowledge and concepts learnt in English in speaking scenarios.

English skills are crucial for students of Thailand, mainly because of the necessity to find a job in the future. Proficiency in spoken English is important in many professions in sectors such as tourism, hotel and service industries, international business, etcetera (Tiansoodeenon et al., 2022). For instance, vacancies such as at ground staff in airports or the receptionists in hotels require good spoken English skills. Nonetheless, Thai students are likely to encounter several of the following challenges, particularly when it comes to speaking English. These are lack of vocabulary, low self-esteem/confidence, and limited practice/field experience.

These challenges are particularly evident in the context of higher education, where students are expected to demonstrate advanced communication skills. Research has shown that Thai university students, despite having studied English for many years, often struggle with spontaneous speech production and grammatical accuracy (Phuket & Othman, 2015). This difficulty is compounded by the limited opportunities for authentic language practice outside the classroom and the significant linguistic differences between Thai and English language structures.

In response to these challenges and with a view to enhancing English language education in Thailand, particular cognizance must be made of the specific types of errors made by Thai students in spoken English. This study has presented the importance of error analysis in identifying those errors done by the learners, thus assisting the learners to come up with better learning approaches (Phuket & Othman, 2015). Besides, such an approach is useful not only to determine weaknesses or help understand the process of learning and the results from it. As Saengklajaroen (2022), rightly notes, an error is not simply a deviation from the normal use of language and can be as important as identifying how it is being learned.

Understanding these error patterns is crucial for several reasons. First, it helps educators develop targeted teaching strategies that address specific areas of difficulty. Second, it provides insights into the cognitive processes involved in second language acquisition among Thai learners. Third, it can inform curriculum development and material design for English language programs in Thai universities.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the types of errors which occur in the English speaking of Thai students using the Surface Strategy Taxonomy, which was developed by Dulay et al. (1982). This taxonomy categorizes errors into four types: consisting of omissions, additions, misformations, and misorderings. This framework provides a systematic approach to analyzing and categorizing speaking errors, enabling researchers and educators to identify patterns and trends in language learning difficulties. And by pointing out and discussing these errors, educators can further create a particular approach and particular material to work with to enhance students' spoken English performance.

Literature Review

1. The Importance of Speaking

Speaking proficiency is one component of language acquisition that can be best understood in English for Foreign Language learners. For Nunan (2018), speaking refers not just to the use of words to make social interactions, but also to a set of mental and social activities. He insists that any approach of speaking instruction must encompass two major categories; fluency and accuracy. These fundamental aspects of speaking proficiency are particularly crucial in the Thai educational context, where Tiansoodeenon et al. (2022), found that the specialization in speaking skills contributes to the improvement of language proficiency and later professional performance. Their research demonstrates how both fluency and accuracy in speaking directly impact students' career readiness and professional success, though their study is constrained by its sampling of only one university.

More recently, Crystal (2020), underlines that English speaking abilities are more than ever a necessity at the international scale in the 21st century. He observes that with the increase of English in global communication, the English language proficiency has attracted more importance in academic, vocational and social fields. To some extent only, Crystal's work is derivative, and mostly addresses native English-speaking environments. Therefore, there is a critical need for more investigation into the implications of English globalization on speaking skill demands in non-English speaking environments. As part of speaking skills as pointed out by Nunan (2018) and Crystal (2020), the present study stresses on error analysis for EFL learners. While Saengklaijaroen (2022), explains how error analysis could help plan ESL speaking instruction, these findings are equally applicable to EFL contexts. Though ESL (English as a Second Language) and EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learning contexts differ in their immersion levels, both share common challenges in speaking skill development and can benefit from similar error analysis approaches.

2. Error Analysis

2.1 Significance of analyzing language learners' errors

Corder (1967), conducted the first quantitative error analysis which is still helpful to this date in describing second language acquisition. Corder made it clear that mistakes are not sloppy work, but patterns of performance, which give valuable information about the learner's emerging system. This perspective remains valid to this present day as shown in Saengklaijaroen's (2022), synthesis of research on error analysis concerning the various text

types written by Thai EFL learners. Saengklaijaroen inclusively used both error quantitative analysis and interview of which the latter offered the researcher detailed perception of the errors.

Over the past decades, approaches to language teaching and error analysis have evolved significantly with new technological and methodological advances. Richards (2021), takes a closer look at his previous works on error analysis and proceeds to state that despite these advancements in language teaching methodology, the knowledge of error analysis is still essential for language instruction. He also recommends that the current approach in the analysis of errors should be informed by corpus analysis and cognition analysis. Such an integration of fields offers new prospects for investigating, for instance, spoken language errors examining large quantities of corpora. This modern approach to error analysis, combining traditional methods with contemporary corpus linguistics and cognitive science, provides more comprehensive insights into language learners' difficulties and development patterns.

2.2 Grammatical Errors

The present study draws upon the error analysis framework developed by Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1982), who proposed the Surface Strategy Taxonomy. This taxonomy, which categorizes grammatical errors into omission, addition, misformation, and misordering, remains a fundamental framework in current research on grammatical error analysis.

Pappol et al, (2022), applied this taxonomy in the study on grammatical mistakes that Thai university students make on their written English essays. Subject-verb agreement, tense usage and article errors were some of the grammatical areas highlighted by their study shows that the work done by Dulay, Burt and Krashen has remained relevant. Pappol et al., using quantitative approach and then analyzing the error involved therein, also used qualitative study based on interviews. This methodology showed that this approach offered a broader insight into the correct specification of grammatical errors; however, there might be a tendency of their results because of the small number of participants and the fact that they investigated only one institution.

3. The Surface Strategy Taxonomy

Although the current research has used the Surface Strategy Taxonomy to document written errors, there is a lack of research concerning how these particular errors form in spoken production. Subsequent research may pay more attention to identifying and processing spoken errors in real time to be used for further understanding of oral development in EFL settings.

Table 1
Errors Based on Surface Structure Taxonomy

Error Type	Definition	Example
Omission	The absence of an item that must appear in a well-formed utterance	- "I have ^ cat." (omission of article "a") - "She ^ studying English" (omission of auxiliary verb "is")
Addition	The presence of an item that should not appear in a well-formed utterance	- "I am go to school" (addition of unnecessary auxiliary verb "am") - "He didn't went to the party" (addition of past tense marker to main verb after auxiliary)
Misformation	The use of the wrong form of the morpheme or structure	- "She goed to the store yesterday" (misformation of irregular past tense verb) - "I am interesting in this topic" (misformation of adjective form)
Misordering	The incorrect placement of a morpheme or group of morphemes in an utterance	- "What time you will come?" (misordering of auxiliary verb in question formation) - "I like very much pizza" (misordering of adverb phrase)

Note. Adapted from Haji Saad & Sawalmeh, 2014; Phetongkam, 2017; Sritong, 2015

3.1 Omission

Omission errors according to Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982), are those errors in a grammatically correct surface structure that lacked a required item. Some recent studies which are in agreement with this category are Waelateh et al. (2019) which still employ this category as a way of evaluating EFL learners' mistakes. However, they may not pay enough attention to this kind of omission in spoken language because time pressure and cognitive load may show different patterns in omission.

Examples of omission errors in speaking:

"I have ^ cat" (omission of article "a")

"She ^ studying English" (omission of auxiliary verb "is")

3.2 Addition

Addition errors are expressed as an item that should not be a part of a well-formed utterance (Dulay, Burt & Krashen, 1982), and in the study by Kampookaew (2020), identified addition errors in the writing of Thai EFL university students including the redundant use of articles and prepositions. Despite the fact that Kampookaew's study has merits the study has a couple of drawbacks, foremost of which is that the practicality of the study is constrained by its focus on written production. Addition errors studies are called for in order to analyze the ways addition errors surface in casual speech.

Examples of addition errors in speaking:

"I am go to school" (addition of unnecessary auxiliary verb "am")

“He didn't went to the party” (addition of past tense marker to main verb after auxiliary)

3.3 Misformation

Misformation errors are made when the wrong form of morpheme or structure is employed (Dulay, Burt, & Krashen, 1982) and according to Chintraradeja (2020), students still make correct verb form, tense and words selection mistakes among Thai undergraduate learners. While Chintraradeja's study provides valuable insights into written misformation errors, spoken language errors may manifest differently due to the unique demands of real-time communication. Unlike written language, where students have time to review and revise their work, spoken language requires immediate production and processing, potentially leading to different patterns of misformation errors. For example, the pressure of spontaneous speech might result in more frequent verb tense mistakes or incorrect word choices that wouldn't typically occur in written work. This distinction between written and spoken error patterns remains largely unexplored in the Thai EFL context, presenting a significant gap in our understanding of how misformation errors manifest across different language production modes.

Examples of misformation errors in speaking:

- “She goed to the store yesterday” (misformation of irregular past tense verb)
- “I am interesting in this topic” (misformation of adjective form)

3.4 Misordering

Misordering errors relate to the wrong positioning of morphemes or groups of morphemes, or segmentation of an intended message into units of meaning (Dulay, Burt & Krashen, 1982). Although the subsequent literature, which focuses particularly on misordering in the spoken English of Thai EFL learners, can be considered somewhat scarce, this category is still important in error analysis. As we have seen, there is little research done in this area, which increases our awareness of the different problems associated with word order errors in oral language.

Examples of misordering errors in speaking:

- “What time you will come?” (misordering of auxiliary verb in question formation)
- “I like very much pizza” (misordering of adverb phrase)

Corder's (1981), differentiation between errors (systematic deviations) and mistakes (occasional lapses in performance) is still useful when doing error analysis today. According to Richards (2021), this distinction clearly is necessary for designing specific intervention approaches within instruction. Nonetheless, the use of this dichotomy in spoken language analysis is problematic due to the availability of the spontaneous nature of speech.

Nunan (2018), however, notes that error analysis offers insights into learners' mistakes and that it should be done in conjunction with another approach – analysis of effective use of language. He divides it into two where both errors and achievements are considered in language learning. There is therefore a lack of studies that explain the reported mistakes together with analysis of the effective communication strategies used by learners of EFL.

Research Objectives

1. To analyze the types of lexical errors found in Thai EFL learners English speaking
2. To explore the types of sentence structure errors present in students' English speaking

Methodology

1. Population and Sample

The study was conducted at Sakon Nakhon Rajabhat University during the second semester of academic year 2022. The target population consisted of 189 undergraduate students enrolled in the English for Business Communication program. Through purposive sampling, researchers selected participants from 47 students who were enrolled in the General Listening and Speaking course (31551135). The final sample comprised 43 first-year students who met the selection criteria, which included completion of a prerequisite English pronunciation course in the previous semester and regular class attendance of at least 80%. This sample size was deemed appropriate for analyzing grammatical errors in speaking English as a foreign language at the undergraduate level.

2. Instruments and Procedures

The study employed two main research instruments: impromptu speech tasks and an error analysis tool based on Surface Structure Taxonomy. Initially, the impromptu speech assessment was designed around six topics from the General Listening and Speaking course syllabus (31551135): My Personal Experience, Describing People, Days and Dates, Giving Directions, Comparing Things, and My Hobbies. Subsequently, researchers synthesized the main components and sub-components of Surface Structure Taxonomy to create a comprehensive error classification framework. Following this development, three qualified experts evaluated the framework using the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC), resulting in an IOC value of 0.97, which indicated high content validity. Prior to the main study, a pilot study was conducted on January 13, 2023, with 10 second-year students from the English for Business Communication program. During this pilot phase, both the impromptu speech delivery and the error analysis instrument were tested, with two researchers independently analyzing the data to establish Interrater Reliability (IRR). The analysis yielded an IRR value of 0.647, demonstrating good agreement according to Landis and Koch's (1977) Kappa's consistency table. After confirming the instruments' reliability, the main study proceeded using standard Microsoft Windows recording software in a controlled environment. Finally, the transcription process followed a two-step verification approach where Thai researchers initially transcribed all audio recordings, followed by verification and correction by a native English-speaking instructor, thereby ensuring reliable data through the combination of local contextual understanding and native speaker expertise.

3. Data Collection

The data collection process took place on February 28, 2023, following a structured protocol. Each participant was given the opportunity to randomly select one of the six speaking topics. Students were allocated five minutes for preparation, during which they could organize their

thoughts but were not permitted to use any reference materials or electronic devices. Following the preparation time, participants were given five minutes to speak on their chosen topic. The researchers were present throughout the recording sessions to provide technical support and ensure adherence to the protocol. All speaking performances were recorded digitally and saved with unique identification codes to maintain participant anonymity while ensuring systematic data organization.

4. Data Analysis

The data analysis process was conducted systematically in four stages, drawing on methodologies outlined by Corder (1974), Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1982), and Gass et al. (2013). In the first stage, three qualified foreign instructors, each with a minimum of five years of English teaching experience and a master's degree in a relevant field, independently transcribed audio recordings of the participants. These transcriptions were cross-checked for accuracy, and any ambiguities in the identified grammatical mistakes were addressed through collaborative review with the researchers. In the second stage, grammatical errors were identified within the transcripts, guided by the Surface Strategy Taxonomy framework.

The researchers and instructors independently reviewed the data for errors, focusing on surface structure aspects of language, as adapted from Corder (1974), Dulay, Burt, Krashen (1982), and Gass et al. (2013). In the third stage, errors were classified into four main types: omission, addition, misformation, and misordering, each with specific sub-types, as detailed in Table 2. In the final stage, the frequency and percentage of each error type were calculated to reveal patterns and prevalence of grammatical errors. The analysis's reliability was strengthened through inter-rater agreement among the instructors, with any discrepancies resolved through consensus discussions.

Table 2

Framework of Errors based on Surface Structure Taxonomy

Main Components	Sub-components
1. Omission	1.1 Article omission 1.2 Omission of 3rd person singular –s 1.3 Auxiliary verb omission 1.4 Preposition omission 1.5 Subject omission 1.6 Verb omission 1.7 Plural -s omission
2. Addition	2.1 Unnecessary article addition 2.2 Singular noun -s addition 2.3 Unnecessary preposition addition 2.4 Unnecessary pronoun addition 2.5 Double marking 2.6 Regularization

Table 2 (Continued)

Main Components	Sub-components
3. Misformation	3.1 Verb form misformation
	3.2 Preposition misformation
	3.3 Noun form misformation
	3.4 Pronoun misformation
	3.5 Tense misformation
	3.6 Article misformation
	3.7 Subject-verb agreement errors
4. Misordering	4.1 Question word order errors
	4.2 Modifier placement errors
	4.3 Adverb placement errors
	4.4 Subject-verb order errors

Results

The subsequent section includes the results of the error analysis of speaking by Thai EFL learners. The students recorded their voice only. The audio was then transcribed by English professionals, error was indicated with * (representing error) while ^ (representing omission) in the spoken discourse. In the first section, the results have been reported distinguishing between the two levels of the surface structure taxonomy. After that, the errors will be described in relation to the Linguistic Description Frameworks.

Table 3

The Surface Structure Description of Grammatical Errors

No.	Type of Error	Total	Frequency	Rank
1	Omission	21	13.29	3
2	Addition	25	15.82	2
3	Misinformation	110	69.62	1
4	Misordering	2	1.28	4
	Total	158	100	

The findings in the study of Thai EFL learners' error in speaking English were verified by a total of 158 errors identified under four broad types of the Surface Strategy Taxonomy. Misformation errors were the largest with 110 cases, constituting 69.62% of the cases followed by subject-verb agreement errors, 25.32%. Overall, addition errors represented 15.82% of all the mistakes identified; the most typical type of addition error was double marking, which occurred in 9.49%. Overall, omission errors comprised the largest category of errors which contain 13.29% total errors with 21 instances of which most were the result of article omission comprising 5.70%. Misordering errors were least common, of which we encountered only 1.27% or two errors in total of the observed errors.

Table 4*The Surface Structure Focusing on Omission of Grammatical Errors*

Main Component	Sub-component	Total	Frequency
Omission	1. Article omission	9	5.70
	2. Omission of 3rd person singular -s	2	1.27
	3. Auxiliary verb omission	5	3.16
	4. Preposition omission	2	1.27
	5. Subject omission	1	0.63
	6. Verb omission	1	0.63
	7. Plural -s omission	1	0.63

In the study of omission errors made by Thai EFL learners the following subcategories of grammatical omissions were identified. The most frequently observed type of error was article omission which occurred in nine cases which is 5.70% of total errors; the second most frequently committed error was auxiliary verb omission which has occurred five times, 3.16 % of total errors. The third most frequent error was an omission of the third person singular -s and preposition omission, both of which occurred two times, or at 1.27%. The most severe type of grammar errors, namely subject omission, verb omission and plural -s omission, occurred least of all and each of them, were detected merely once (0.63% each).

Table 5*The Surface Structure Focusing on Addition of Grammatical Errors*

Main Component	Sub-component	Total	Frequency
Addition	1. Unnecessary article addition	2	1.27
	2. Singular noun –s addition	0	0.00
	3. Unnecessary preposition addition	3	1.90
	4. Unnecessary pronoun addition	2	1.27
	5. Double marking	15	9.49
	6. Regularization	3	1.90

The analysis of addition errors in the spoken English of Thai EFL learners revealed several noteworthy patterns. Double marking emerged as the most frequent subcategory, accounting for 15 instances (9.49% of total errors), indicating a tendency to redundantly mark grammatical features. The learners' unnecessary preposition addition and regularization errors were found three times (1.90% each), which indicates the problems in usage of correct prepositions and overuse of regular grammar rules. Unnecessary article addition and pronoun addition were fewer with 2 (1.27%) instances each.

Table 6

The Surface Structure Focusing on Misformation of Grammatical Errors

Main Component	Sub-component	Total	Frequency
Misformation	1. Verb form misformation	28	17.72
	2. Preposition misformation	8	5.06
	3. Noun form misformation	5	3.16
	4. Pronoun misformation	6	3.80
	5. Tense misformation	20	12.66
	6. Article misformation	3	1.90
	7. Subject-verb agreement errors	40	25.32

When studying the mistakes in English made by Thai students learning English as a language (EFL), the analysis found that misformation errors were the most common category at 69.62%. Among these errors were verb agreement issues leading with 40 instances (25.32%) indicating challenges in matching subjects with the verb forms. The next frequent type of error was related to verb form misformation with 28 cases (17.72%) suggesting difficulty, in using verbs in different situations. There were 20 instances (12.66%) of misformation noted in the text which underscored the difficulties in conveying temporal relationships. Additionally, observed were eight instances (5.06%) of preposition misformation and six instances (3.80%) of pronoun misformation; while noun form misformation occurred five times (3.16%) article misformation was the frequent, with three instances (1.90%).

Table 7

The Surface Structure Focusing on Misordering of Grammatical Errors

Main Component	Sub-component	Total	Frequency
Misordering	4.1 Question word order errors	1	0.63
	4.2 Modifier placement errors	1	0.63
	4.3 Adverb placement errors	0	0.00
	4.4 Subject-verb order errors	0	0.00

The analysis of misordering errors in the spoken English of Thai EFL learners revealed this category to be the least frequent among the four main error types, accounting for only 1.27% of total errors observed. Within this category, two subcategories were identified, each occurring once (0.63% of total errors): question word order errors and modifier placement errors.

Table 8

Frequency of Errors Based on Linguistic Description and Surface Strategy Taxonomy

Error Type/ Linguistic Category	Omission	Addition	Misinformation	Misordering	Total	Frequency
Verb form	2	0	28	0	30	18.99
Preposition	2	3	8	0	13	8.23
Article	9	2	3	0	14	8.86
Plurality	1	0	5	0	6	3.80

Table 8 (Continued)

Error Type/ Linguistic Category	Omission	Addition	Misinformation	Misordering	Total	Frequency
Verb form	2	0	28	0	30	18.99
Preposition	2	3	8	0	13	8.23
Article	9	2	3	0	14	8.86
Plurality	1	0	5	0	6	3.80
Tense	0	0	20	0	20	12.66
Pronoun	0	2	6	0	8	5.06
Subject- verb agreement	0	0	40	0	40	25.32
Negation	0	0	0	0	0	0.00
Question	0	0	0	1	1	0.63
Word form	7	18	0	1	26	16.45
Total	21	25	110	2	158	100

The study on mistakes in English spoken by Thai students learning English as a foreign language (EFL) highlighted some interesting trends in errors made by the learners. The common errors were related to matching subjects with verbs which accounted for about a quarter of all errors found. Next were mistakes in forms and word forms at roughly 18 percent and 16 percent, respectively. These findings suggest that learners face difficulties in these specific areas. Errors related to tense made up around 13% of the errors identified while mistakes involving articles and prepositions were responsible, for about nine percent each

Discussion

1. Frequency and Types of Errors

In the previous studies of Thai EFL learners' grammatical errors, it is evident that the misformation errors are among the most frequent. For example, Kampookaew (2020), revealed that Thai university students committed misformation errors in their academic writing very often especially in subject-verb agreement and verb forms. This is in line with current study where misformation errors were the most common errors and constituted 69.62% of total error rate, common errors being subject-verb agreement 25.32% and verb form usage 17.72%. In the same way, Takahashi (2024), noted that verb errors, especially subject-verb agreement, were the most frequent grammatical mistakes among the low proficiency Thai graduate students. Saengklaijaroen (2022), also pointed out misformation as another major problem in the various textual production of Thai EFL learners regardless of the text type. Such trends revealed in our current study are consistent with those in the previous studies indicating that Thai learners have a long-standing difficulty to use appropriate grammar in written and oral English.

Given the high frequency of these error types, the researcher inferred that Thai learners have problems in using appropriate grammatical structures in spoken English. This may be due to the difference in the language structures of Thai and English particularly in issues to do with conjugation and tense (Saengklaijaroen, 2022; Tiansoodeenon et al., 2022; Waelateh et al., 2019). For instance, Thai does not involve verb alterations of tense or agreement with the subject, something that is likely to cause confusion as and when learning English. O’Donnell (2021) also pointed out that these structural dissimilarities tend to make the Thai learners read English in a way that overextends the rules of grammar to complex constructions, therefore making mistakes.

2. Causes of Errors

There are quite a number of factors which contribute to the observed errors. Firstly, there is L1 interference which is actually involved a lot in making subject-verb agreement mistakes. According to the study done by Waelateh et al. (2019), since the Thai language does not conjugate verbs according to subject or tense, it becomes a challenge for learners to apply such rules in English. This interference is particularly evident in fluent speech where the learners have little time to carry out formal computations involving grammars. As Tipprachaban (2023) and Kampookaew (2020), suggested L1 interference is the primary cause of grammatical mistakes, especially in those areas where Thai and English grammar and structures are different. Secondly, since English is a syntactically complex language in terms of tense and aspect, a high percentage of tense misformation errors were noted (12.66% in the present study). Tiansoodeenon et al. (2022), also noticed similar problems among Thai undergraduate students especially in using such tenses as the present perfect and past perfect. This finding supports the analysis of Saengklaijaroen (2022), in which the author found that tense errors were found in all text types. O’Donnell (2021), also pointed out that the tense difficulty for Thai learners was due to L1 influence and the fact that English tenses are hard to grasp for Thai learners. Finally, restrictive patterns of language use away from the classroom might explain the difficulty of automatizing grammatical rules for spontaneous speech. This was also revealed by Pianpadungporn (2024), where Thai students fail in real time conversation as they rarely practice grammar they have learnt in real life situations. Tiansoodeenon et al. (2022) and Waelateh et al. (2019), similarly emphasize the concept of social interaction in enhancing grammatical competence. Kampookaew (2020), suggest that if there is improvement in the amount of meaningful social interaction in English, there might be a possibility of creating a connection between what has been taught and what is actually practiced in terms of usage of grammar rules.

3. Impact on Communication

Even though the experimental group made many grammatical mistakes, their influence in the general context was inconsistent. Misformation errors, especially with regard to verbs and verb tenses, inevitably create confusion as to temporal relations and actions. Nevertheless, the overall error percentage of articles (8.86%) and prepositions (8.23%) at first sight seemed not to be fatal enough to hinder the comprehension of a text seriously. This complements Nunan’s (2018) argument that though accuracy is useful, the major errors that should be targeted in the

course can hinder communication affectivity. Subsequently, supporting this argument, O'Donnell (2021), opines that residual errors including articles will not necessarily impede flow of information in spoken English. Nonetheless, tense and aspect mistakes may cause serious misunderstandings and are especially important when the message is in the academic or business sphere.

Saengklaijaroen, (2022) and Yeh & Bury (2022), highlighted that even though some grammatical errors do not necessarily impair the intelligibility of the message conveyed these were said to have defected the perceived fluency of the speaker or writer. Tiansoodeenon et al. (2022), identified that grammatical mistakes such as conditional sentences caused more severe communication difficulties than less complicated grammatical errors. This consequently implies that focusing on remediation of those mistakes which have the greatest effect on the mode of communication in EFL might be a better strategy in teaching.

4. Implications for Speaking Skill Development

The implication of this study for the teaching of EFL in Thailand is significant. Mainly due to the high rate of misformation errors, it appears that some of the most commonly used structures in spoken language require additional instruction. Other strategies which could be helpful could be those that allow learners to use these structures in meaningful learner-related activities (Nunan, 2018; Richards, 2021; Tiansoodeenon et al., 2022). O'Donnell, S. (2021), suggested that the integration of different task-based language teaching approaches would help give more realistic contexts for grammar practice.

Conclusion

The purpose of this research was to investigate the nature of grammatical mistakes in the students' spoken English with special reference to Thai EFL university students. The study showed that misformation errors were the most common and subject-verb agreement and verb form errors were identified most frequently. To answer the research objectives formulated at the earlier stage of this study, these results outline error types and frequencies in students' spoken English. That the misformation errors were most prominent with the current sample is in line with the literature by Kampookaew (2020), that documented similar configurations in Thai EFL learners' written English.

The study's findings are in agreement with other research carried out on Thai EFL learners' grammatical error, for example, those by Saengklaijaroen (2022) and Kampookaew (2020), albeit these were on written errors mostly. Such consistency indicates that comparable grammatical difficulties exist in both writing as well as speaking for Thai learners. Tiansoodeenon et al. (2022) and Waelateh et al. (2019), have also noted similar error profiles in their research works, and hence, support the present study.

The analysis of results was based on a small sample of participants from a single institution, which also imposes a limitation. However, the prompted speech tasks may not capture a

comprehensive level of errors that are witnessed in real life interaction. These are limitations that are comparable to those admitted by O'Donnell (2016) in his study.

Nevertheless, this research adds important information for understanding the certain grammatical difficulties of Thai EFL learners in spoken English. The information provided in this research can be used to design better instructional approaches, curriculum and assessment of EFL in Thailand. Nunan (2018) and Richards (2021), have stressed that knowledge of learners' errors is instrumental in determining teaching strategies in Language Acquisition.

Therefore, this research also underlines the importance of the integrated approach to grammar which implies both the direct explanation of the material and the use of the communicative activities. The finding also supports the argument by Fadhilah, Dewi, Anasy, Eviyuliwati & Syauki (2021), about the necessity of offering the students many opportunities to practice the use of the second language. These aspects can be concluded to help the EFL educators in Thailand to assist students to reduce the tendency of being stuck in the grammatical errors and to enhance the second language communicative proficiency in English.

Recommendations

1. Recommendations and Implications

Future studies could build on this research by:

The findings of this study contribute significantly to the existing literature on error analysis, particularly in EFL learning environments, and offer valuable pedagogical implications for English language teaching in Thailand. By identifying the most frequent speaking errors among Thai students, educators can develop more targeted and effective teaching strategies.

2. Pedagogical Implications

1. This research enables lecturers and teachers to design more appropriate speaking tasks, activities, and materials that address specific error patterns.
2. The findings can inform curriculum development for English language teaching courses, ensuring that common error areas receive adequate attention.
3. The study contributes to the development of more effective teaching-learning strategies and corrective measures specifically tailored to address the common mistakes Thai EFL learners make while speaking, as identified by Corder (1981) and Dulay et al., (1982).

3. Recommendations for Future Research

1. Future studies should assess the effectiveness of specific instructional interventions designed to minimize the most frequent error types identified in this research.
2. Cohort studies should be conducted to examine how error patterns change over time and across different proficiency levels.
3. Further research should explore the relationship between language accuracy and fluency in spoken English.

4. Additional investigation into feedback mechanisms and their effectiveness in reducing grammatical errors in speaking would be valuable.

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