INTRALINGUAL AND INTERLINGUAL INTERFERENCE: THE SOURCES OF THAI-LEARNERS' ERRORS IN WRITING SELF-INTRODUCTION

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Abstract-- Even though the study of language errors continued to grow in EFL learners' area, none of those studies addressed the source of language errors of Thai learners in writing. As a descriptive qualitative study, this research attempted to analyze the common types of grammatical errors and sources of errors made by Thai learners in writing self-introduction. The procedure of error analysis was adapted from Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005). The learners' self-introductions were collected through a writing prompt or blueprint as the instrument. The data were identified, analyzed based on Azar (1989), and the sources of error were classified by Brown (2007). The result showed there were 826 errors found in the learners' writing. The errors were caused by two main sources of error which are interlingual transfer and intralingual transfer. To conclude, grammar was found as a problem for Thai learners as EFL learners. So, the researcher suggests the teachers implement a suitable strategy to improve the students' writing and make a treatment called grammar clinic. Therefore, the result of this study can be used as a reference to conduct similar studies with different subjects or levels of the improvement of EFL learners' writing competence.

Keywords: *grammatical error; sources of error; writing; self-introduction text.*

INTRODUCTION

Thailand was rated 53rd out of 88 countries in the global school ranking according to the English First English Proficiency Index (EF EPI) 2017. They are categorized as having low proficiency in English by having 49.7 scores in English. In 2018, the rank was raised to 47th place. However, the score has dropped to 48.54 which is classified as low proficiency. In East Asia, except for Myanmar and Cambodia, Thailand has the worst English proficiency.

Based on the unstructured interview with the English teacher and classroom observation in the eleventh-grade students of Eakkapapsasanawich Islamic School Thailand, it was found that the students have difficulties in English, especially in writing. As stated by Levine (1993), this phenomenon might occur because both EFL and ESL students who consider writing difficult do not know what and how to write. While, According to Richard and Renandya (2002:303), the difficulty in writing emerges not only in creating and organizing the ideas, but also from the translation of those concepts into readable writing, particularly for second language or foreign language learners. EFL and ESL students must also pay attention to macro skills like planning and organizing, as well as micro skills like spelling, punctuation, and word selections (Brown, 2001). Othman (2015), as cited in Kanyakorn, S, Jiraporn, L. and Rattaneekorn, P. (2017) state that among the four skills of English, writing has been recognized as the most challenging skill. As a productive skill, it is not only important to have a good vocabulary while writing a paragraph, but it is also important to be grammatically correct.

To support, there are several previous studies analyzed students' errors according to the certain grammatical point. For instance, the study of Dulay, Burt, and Krasshan (1982) conveys that the effect of the students' mother tongue's grammar and linguistic systems on written production of the target language caused errors. Similarly, the study of Sermsook, Liamnimitr, and Pochakorn (2017) shows that as the students have relied on their first language, they have a limited knowledge of English. This can have an impact on errors that could lead to a

miscommunication in writing. Also, studies conducted by Saputra (2017) and Fatma (2018) reveal that the interference of the students' mother tongue and a lack of practice in utilizing accurate grammar in their writing were the causes of the errors made by the students. It can be summed up that writing is not just translating an idea into English, for it takes a long time to produce and arrange thoughts, compose a paragraph, and translate ideas into readable writing by properly using grammatical rules.

Based on the previous studies, several weaknesses were indicated. In the study of Muhammed and Abdalhusain (2015) and Sermsook, Liamnimitr, and Pochakorn (2017), the researchers used several references in classifying and analyzing grammatical errors so that the categories overlapped since they had similar content. Meanwhile, in Fatma's study (2018) she used Surface strategy taxonomy by Dulay et al in classifying and analyzing the students' grammatical errors. However, the researcher found Dulay's classification is considered too complicated for research used in this area. Also, the majority of studies in students' grammatical error put their concern only on the certain grammatical pattern as in the study of Saputra (2017) and Fatma (2018), they identified the students' error on the use of simple past tense in descriptive writing and the use of past tense in recount text. There is still a lack of studies on the students' errors deal with different types of texts in the high school area.

As stated before, a similar problem was also faced by the eleventh-grade students at Eakkapapsasanawich Islamic School particularly, the students at 5/1 class or eleventh-grade students where the researcher has done her internship for five months. To confirm the problem of the students in this class, the researcher did an unstructured interview with the English teacher. She said that even though the students were considered to have low English proficiency, especially in writing skills even though they have been learning English for about 9 years. Besides, the researcher had a chance to observe the class during the learning process about the self-introduction. The material about self-introduction has been taught when students were in the tenth grade. Ideally, they are already exposed to self-introduction expressions, sentences, or structures. However, after randomly selecting several samples of their self-introduction writing, the researcher discovered errors in the students' writing, particularly in grammar.

To identify students' difficulties, it's critical to understand the sources of errors. Interlingual transfer, intralingual transfer, the environment of learning, and communication strategies are some of the sources of errors (Brown, 2007). James (1998) presented a similar theory for the sources of errors in second language learning to Brown's theory, but he uses different terminology in classification. He divides error sources into four categories: mother tongue influence, target language cause, communication strategy-based errors, and induced errors. Furthermore, Norrish (1987, cited in Bennui, P., 2008) divides the causes of second language acquisition errors into three categories: carelessness, first language interference, and translation. However, since Brown's theory corresponds to the research context, this study used it to discover errors in students' writing of self-introduction.

Based on the aforementioned issue, the researcher intended to conduct this study in order to fill gaps in previous research by analyzing the students' grammatical errors and the sources of error in writing self-introductions written by Thai students in the eleventh grade at Eakkapapsasanawich Islamic School. Despite the fact that this field of study continues to rise in interest among EFL students, none of the research found in the literature addressed the linguistic errors that Thai high school students faced when composing texts, particularly in the context of English grammar.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research is a qualitative research design. More specifically, the approach used in conducting this research was descriptive research. By reviewing those references, the descriptive qualitative method is an ideal method as it is fundamentally interpretive (Creswell, 2012). So,

from this data, the researcher interpreted and described the meaning of information, and drew on personal reflection and previous research.

This study was conducted at Eakkapapsasanawich Islamic School, Krabi, Thailand, on October 2018. The subject or the participant of this research was a class of eleventh graders (forty-three students) of the academic year 2018/2019. The data were obtained from the writing task about a self-introduction written by forty-three (43) students.

The researcher identified students' writing by underlying the errors and classifying them based on Azar's grammatical errors classification to find the most common errors after they submitted all of the written self-introductions. The researcher used Ellis and Barkhuizen's error analysis approach to discover and analyze the students' mistakes (2005:57). The steps in the error analysis technique are as follows: (1) identifying the different types of errors; (2) determining the sources of errors; and (3) drawing a conclusion. The following are the explanations:

1. Analyzing the Types of Errors

   To analyze the learners' grammatical errors in this study, some step was undertaken. Which are:
   - Identifying the Errors
   - Classifying the Types of Errors
   - Calculating the Errors

   In calculating errors, the researcher applied the following formula:

   $$P = \frac{N1}{\Sigma N} \times 100\%$$

   P: percentage of each error
   N1: a total of the given error
   ΣN: a total of the whole errors
   - Making the Table of the Result Analysis

2. Investigating the Source of Errors

   In this stage, the researcher analyzed the possible causes of error based on sources of errors proposed by Brown (2007), which are interlingual transfer and intralingual transfer.

3. Drawing the Conclusion

   In this step, the researcher described and interpreted the data descriptively and drew a valid conclusion of the result of the errors in the form of a brief explanation.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Thai Students' Types and Frequency of Grammatical Errors

The result showed that there were 826 errors found in the students' writing of self-introduction. The researcher found out various types of errors made by the students and it was found 14 errors according to Azar (1989). The types of error such as *verb tense* (148 errors or 17.91%), *punctuation* (144 errors or 17.43%), *add a word* (109 errors or 13.19%), *capitalization* (89 errors or 10.77%), *spelling* (85 errors or 10.29%), *incomplete sentence* (70 errors or 8.47%), *singular-plural* (46 errors or 5.57%), *word order* (38 errors or 4.60%), *omit a word* (32 errors or 3.87%), *word form* (25 errors or 3.03%%), *word choice* (21 errors or 2.54%), *article* (12 errors or 1.50%), *run-on sentence* (5 errors or 0.60%), and *meaning not clear* (2 errors or 0.24 %).

Sources of Thai students' Errors

The researcher analyzed the possible cause of the students' grammatical errors after examining and classifying the types of errors in their writing based on Azar (1989). In this stage, the researcher analyzed the possible causes of error based on sources of error proposed by Brown (2007), which are found only two sources, namely interlingual and intralingual transfer.

Based on the finding of the students' errors, there were fourteen types of errors with a total of 826 errors. The types of error were distinguished based on the cause of each error. Table 1 below showed the sources, total, and the percentage of the sources of error as follows:

Table 1 The Percentage of students' sources of errors

No	Sources of Errors	Total	Percentage
1.	Interlingual transfer		
	a. Punctuation		
	b. Capitalization		
	c. Spelling		
	d. Singular-Plural	462	55.93%
	e. Word Order		
	f. Omit a Word		
	g. Word Choice		
	h. Run-on Sentence		
	i. Meaning Not Clear		
2.	Intralingual Transfer		
	a. Verb Tense		
	b. Add a Word	364	44.07%
	c. Incomplete Sentence		
	d. Word Form		
	e. Article		
	TOTAL	826	100%

Interlingual transfer has the highest number of sources of error with a percentage of 55.93% (Table 3.2). However, the intralingual transfer has a lower number with a percentage of 44.07%. Because the percentage of errors caused by interlingual transfer is substantially larger than the percentage of errors caused by intralingual transfer, it appears that Thai students' errors were largely caused by their L1, which is Thai language (Siam). While a small percentage of errors are due to students' inability to apply grammar rules in the target language. The further explanation as explained below:

Interlingual Transfer

As stated by Brown (2007), the transfer of knowledge between languages in utilizing the target language, native language interference or the mother tongue have an impact. This source includes the following categories of errors:

Punctuation

In this study, punctuation was found as the second-highest errors, it occurred 144 times of error. Ager (1998) explains that the rules of using punctuation in Thai are not the same as in English. The rules which are not the same with English such us, the use of question mark, semicolons, comma, and full stop. They use a full stop for the abbreviation purposes only, not for "to stop" or end sentences. For example, "ก.ท.ม." (K.Th.M.) is the abbreviation for Bangkok. For instance, the student did not put the comma to separate words, *"Currently I studying in Eakkapapsasanawich Islamic School.",* they also did not use full stop or period to end the sentences, *"I was born on Tuesday 16 October 2001"*. It is obvious from the following examples that the students still interfered by their mother tongue in using punctuation in their writing.

Capitalization

This error occurred since the students still interfered by their first language. In Thai language or Thai, there are no rules in capitalizing letters, so the type or the model of writing in Thai is different from English. This is in line with Ager (1998), he states that the capitalization rules between Thailand and English are different because there are no rules for the use of capitalization in Thailand. For example, the students did not write "krabi" and "december" in

capital letters, and even though, the words are categorized as a word that needs to be capitalized in English. While, the writing form in Thailand is ธันวาคม or "thanwaokhomn" of the word December, and กระบี่ or "krabii" of the word "Krabi". Therefore, the researcher assumed that the students are still influenced by the capitalization writing rules in Thailand so that they make errors in their writing.

Spelling

As Ager (1998) states in his writing, Thai people tend to write a foreign word by replacing it with the pronunciation of their first language. For example, they do not familiar with the letter "L" and more likely will replace it with the letter "w". The other examples are, they often used "s" and "c" in the same form, and even they are very difficult in writing consonants. For instance, they often write "a" with "ei", "i" with "ee", "e" with "i". According to the examples, it can be explained that the student wrote *"foverite"* instead of *"favorite"*, or *"dokter"* instead of *"doctor"* and wrote "characteristid" and "chy" instead of "characteristic" and "chy".

Singular-plural

In this study, singular-plural occurred 46 times of error. The errors could be influenced by the students' mother language since the Thai language does not have a singular-plural pattern in their language. The students used singular nouns in the word "*year*" instead of using the plural noun "*years*". They also did not put suffix-*s* in the word "brother" even though it can be seen that the student has two brothers so that the correct one is "*two brothers*". As explained before that Thai does not have a singular-plural pattern in their language so that it could affect the students' writing which the students did not put the suffix –s at the plural noun.

Word Order

The errors occurred by the students since they were still used Thai language structure in their writing. They tend to transfer their sentences directly into English and they did not follow the English rule; therefore, the sentences became not grammatical. Actually, the structure of the Thai language is quite the same as Bahasa Indonesia. For example, in Thai, they write "*Chan chop si faa lae khiaw"* which means "*saya suka warna biru dan hijau"*. Both structures of Thai and Bahasa Indonesia are the same, the structure is started with subject-verb-noun-adjective. While in English it must be "*I like blue and green color"*. The two examples above are considered incorrect word order for the indirect object (the second example is treated incorrectly by the researcher). The correct structure of the sentence must be started with the subject, verb/adjective, and object.

Omit a word

Omit a word found as the ninth highest errors, it occurred 32 times since students still interfered with the writing structure in their first language. As the researcher experience in teaching Thai students, she found that the students usually wrote an English sentence or text by directly translating their L1 without seeing and writing it with the structure of English. Although they already know the general rules of writing English, they still tend to think that writing English is just translating their language into English so they don't have to pay attention to the rules of writing English. Consequently, their writing is still influenced by their language. For example, the student wrote "*I'm old 15 years old*" since they translate their language directly into English "ฉันอายุ 15 ปี" or *"Chan xayu 15 pi"* which means *"saya berumur 15 tahun"* the correct writing is *"I'm 15 years old."*.

Word choice

In this study, word choice occurred 21 times. The researcher found that most students still interfered by their L1 in choosing the appropriate in their writing. It is caused by the students' lack of vocabulary and their inability to employ proper English diction. Furthermore, the students were confused as to which word or part of speech to employ. So that they translated their sentences from Thai into English directly. The student wrote, "*like"* instead of *"favorite"* since in Thai, both of words "*like"* and *"favorite"* have the same meaning "ชอบ" or "*chxb"* in Thai.

So, it can be concluded that errors in word choice are caused by interlingual transfer.

Run-on sentence

The eleventh type of error found was a run-on sentence. The errors occurred 5 times or 0.60%. In a run-on sentence, it needed the appropriate punctuation to break the sentence. However, as stated in the previous type, in punctuation types, Ager (1998) explains that the rules of using punctuation in Thai are not the same as in English. The rules which are not the same with English such us, the use of question marks, semicolon, comma, and full stop. In Thai, there no punctuation rule for question mark (?), semicolon, a comma, and they use a full stop for abbreviation purposes only, not for "to stop" or end sentences. So, it can be seen that the students still interfered by their mother tongue or L1 in using punctuation in their writing.

Meaning not clear

In this study, the errors occurred because the students had no idea what to write and simply wrote what they thought without paying attention to the sentence form. It happened because of a negative transfer from the students' naïve language. However, this made the meaning of what students wrote not clear and it became an error in writing. So, the researcher assumed that these errors were caused by interlingual transfer because the students were still influenced by their mother tongue by using an inappropriate word when they were writing sentences or text.

Intralingual Transfer

The causes of intralingual transfer, according to Brown (2007), meant that the students had not mastered the rules and had developed new rules, but the new rules were incorrect. He claimed that the students' experience learning a new system of second or foreign language learning influences the majority of intralingual transfer errors. It means that when they apply a new grammar rule to compose a sentence, their prior knowledge may exhibit new errors. In this study, the errors that were included in this type are:

Verb tense

Verb tense dominates the total errors because students got difficulties in applying the grammatical rules of English. In terms of self-introduction which is belongs to descriptive text, the tenses that the students must be used are present tense, past tense, and present continuous tense, however some students still confused in using the appropriate tenses in their writing. It happened since the students have not mastered the rules of English yet. For example, the students wrote, *"Currently I study in grade 11 at Eakkapapsasanwich Islamic School".* It is considered wrong since it must be used present continuous tense since it indicates a fact that happen currently/continuously in the present time, the student wrote "*I study*" instead of "*I am studying",* however, the correct sentence is "*Currently, I am studying in grade 11 at Eakkapapsasanwich Islamic School."*. In this study, it is found that the students still confuse in applying the appropriate tense in a sentence.

Add a word

Adding a word became the three highest error which is occurred 109 timessince some students did not write the preposition, the article, and the appropriate word to complete the word. Ager (1998) explains that as same as in English rule, Thai has the preposition and article rule in their language. So, the researcher assumed that the students still faced difficulties and confused in applying the appropriate and suitable words in their writing since the students had not clearly understood the structure of the sentence. In this study, the students did not put the appropriate noun, preposition, and article to complete their sentence, so that the sentence is treated as an incomplete sentence and categorized as errors. This factor is categorized as *ignorance of rule restriction* since the learners do not apply the appropriate rules in a certain context of structure.

Incomplete sentence

Incomplete sentences reached 8.47% or 70 times of errors. These errors categorized as incomplete sentence error since the sentence must be completed in order to convey the meaning of the sentence clearly . The errors could occur because the students did not know how to write

the proper words to express their intention, so they tried to write everything in their heads based on their version, and their sentences became grammatical errors. It is believed that the students' errors happened as a consequence of their failure to observe the limitations of existing structures.

Word Form

The source of this error happened since the students confused in choosing the proper word or part of speech in their writing. This is referred to as overgeneralization and it was occurred when a learner employs a certain structure and pattern of the target language (Richards, 1974). Thai students commonly too-overgeneralize words in English. The student used the wrong form of the word "weight". The student must be used the word "weigh" as a verb instead of the word "weigth" as a noun, the correct sentence is "*I weigh 45 kilograms*". As mentioned before that the errors made by the students occurred since they were confused when it came to deciding which term or part of speech to utilize in their writing.

Article

This errors occurred since some students were still confused in using the article *a*, and *an*. Ager (1998) mentions that the Thai language also has article rules as same as in English. However, the use of an article is a little different. They use article "ใด" in their sentence which means as same as "a" and "a". The errors occurred because the students still do not know or they have a lack of knowledge about the rules of English, especially in using the article. The error in the article caused by overgeneralization in which it happened when a learner uses a particular structure of the target language.

As the discussion for this study, verb tense was found as the most common types of errors made by the students. In this study, the students still got difficulties and confused in using the past tense, present tense, and present continuous tense. For example, in the sentences *"Currently I study in grade 11 at Eakkapapsasanwich Islamic School."*, and *"My major was science-math."*, it is found that the students still confuse in applying the appropriate tense in a sentence. The students seemed confused in using present tense and continuous tense and also in using past tense and present tense. According to Richard (1974), this factor is categorized as *overgeneralization* in which it happens when the students still use a particular structure of the target language that is over-generalized.

Comparing the result of current studies and previous studies, it is concluded that errors occurred from verb tense can be caused by two factors; interlingual and intralingual transfer. As in studies of Khan and Khan (2016) and Al-Shujairi and Tan (2017), it was found that verb tense errors were caused by different language systems between L1 and the target language. While, in this study and the studies of Khanom (2014), Krismiati's (2015), Febrianty and Sundari (2016), and Saputra's (2017), it was found that errors in verb tense were caused since students over-generalized the use of tenses in their writing.

As the second-highest error, punctuation committed 155 total errors in the students' writing. For example, the sentences "*Name is Banthitha Somboon", "I was born on Monday 5th November 2001",* and *"I was born on Tuesday 16 October 2001".* The possible causes of this error are the students still interfered with their L1 or mother tongue system. As stated by Ager (1998), the rules of punctuation between Thai and English are different. In Thailand, there are no rules of a question mark, semicolon, comma, and full stop as same as in English.

The result of this study is different from Saputra's (2017), Krismiati's (2018) studies. Uniquely, almost the finding of those studies showed that punctuation is considered as a lower error. This has happened since the rules of punctuation between the Indonesian language and English is quite the same so that the Indonesian students just committed a little error of punctuation in their writing. Meanwhile, in this study, the punctuation rules between Thai and English are totally different. This could be one of the difficulties that students faced was the differences in structure between their native language and the target language. This is in line with what Ramelan (1992: 5) states that most of the learning problems are caused by different elements found between the

two languages. As a result, they made errors and still wrote the sentence in the structure of the Thai language.

As many as 109 errors or 13.19% add a word errors were found in the students' writing. Ager (1998) explains that as same as in English rule, Thai has the preposition and article rule in their language. It was found that the students still faced difficulties and confused in applying the appropriate and suitable words in their writing since the students had not clearly understood the structure of the sentence. The same result found in Alfia's (2015) and Krismiati's (2018) studies in which adding a word is included as the three most common errors committed by the students. They assumed that the students simply write their ideas whereas it is not needed in their sentence without paying attention to the structure rules of the target language. This is in line with Dulay's (1982) statement, he states that the students should not omit and add items that are not necessarily needed in the sentence.

Besides, the findings of Zheng and Park's research (2013) assumed that errors occurred because the students still got difficulties in translating their mother tongue language into the target language. While in this present study the errors happened since the students were still confused and had not clearly understood the structure of the target language. However, besides the three most common errors that have been explained above, the researcher also found another type of error made by the students in writing self-introduction which are capitalization, spelling, incomplete sentence, singular-plural, word order, omit a word, word form, word choice, article, run-on sentence, and meaning not clear.

After analyzing the students' types of errors, the researcher distinguished the types of errors to know the sources of errors made by the students. It was found that Thai students made grammatical errors due to the two main sources which are interlingual transfer and intralingual transfer. The total number of interlingual transfer was 462 errors, whereas for intralingual transfer was 364 errors. So, it can be concluded that interlingual transfer is the major cause of the students' errors followed by intralingual transfer.

As stated by Brown (2007), in interlingual transfer, the students were still interfered with and influenced by their native language or mother tongue in using the target language. In this study, it was found 462 errors included this source of error. The types of error which caused this source such as *punctuation, capitalization, spelling, singular plural, word order, omit a word, word choice, run-on sentence, and meaning not clear.* A similar result was found in the research of Nonkukhetkhong (2013), the errors were caused by the interlingual transfer. This source of errors happened since the rules of the Thai language system is different from English. Consequently, the students might transfer norms of Thai rules into English writings when they attempted to present more complicated ideas or opinions in their written essays.

However, the findings of this study is different from Prompsupa & Brudhiprabha (2017) and Bootchuy' (2008) studies. The finding of their study showed that the majority of errors made by the Thai university students were caused by intralingual transfer followed by interlingual transfer. The factors could be possibly attributed to the differences between the two findings. First, the samples of the present study were taken from high school students whose proficiency level is low while the samples of two other studies were taken from the English major students who have higher proficiency levels. Second, Prompsupa & Brudhiprabha (2017) and Bootchuy (2008) studies did not provide enough explanation about the mechanism of students in translating their writing from their first language while in this study, the grammatical errors were classified and more explanation was provided concerning each type of errors.

CONCLUSION

The finding of the analysis shows that the students made a total of 826 errors which are classified into fourteen types' errors namely *singular-plural, word form, word choice, verb tense, add a word, omit a word, word order, an incomplete sentence, spelling, punctuation,*

capitalization, article, meaning not clear, and *a run-on sentence. Verb tense, punctuation,* and *add word* found as the three most common types of errors made by the students. There are two possible sources of errors that make the students still commit errors in their writing of self-introduction which are interlingual and intralingual transfer. The dominant factor that significantly contributes to the learners' error is an interlingual transfer which means the students are interfered with or influenced by the Thai language as their mother tongue or native language in making the sentences in English. While the intralingual transfer means the errors made by the students occurred since the students have limited knowledge about grammatical rules in English

By knowing the result of this study, the teachers should pay more attention to the students' difficulties, especially in grammar by providing an appropriate strategy or treatment that more focusing on grammar to minimize or solve the grammatical errors made by the students. Besides, the researcher also suggests a treatment called "grammar clinic" in which the teacher makes the last 15 minutes as grammar class where the students can ask anything about their problem in writing especially in the grammar aspect.

However, this study has a weakness in explaining the sources of errors made by the students since the researcher is not a native speaker of Thailand. So, it is hoped that future researchers study in-depth the sources of the students' errors. In regards to the suggestions, future researchers are expected to investigate the suggestion provided in this study whether these suggestions can improve students' writing skills or not. All in all, the result of this study can be used as guidance or reference to conduct similar studies in different contexts with different levels of students.

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