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LINGUISTIC REASONS FOR CERTAIN COMMON MISTAKES

## CHAPTER V

### DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ENGLISH AND THAI GRAMMATICAL STRUCTURES

In Part I, common mistakes in English made by students of this university have been classified and analysed according to certain grammatical features of English. In this part, an attempt will be made to determine the linguistic reasons for such mistakes.

The majority of mistakes enumerated in Part I seem to arise from the differences between English and Thai grammatical structures. The minority of mistakes seem to arise from the differences between the English and Thai phonological systems; or false analogy with another English structure; or different restriction of the distribution of words in English and their equivalents in Thai.

This chapter deals with what seems to give rise to the majority of mistakes under study as mentioned above, viz. the differences between English and Thai grammatical structures, which may be divided into two categories as follows:

7.1. English grammatical features which do not exist in Thai. Such features, as can be seen from the mistakes concerned, are usually neglected or misused by students when writing English.

7.2. English grammatical features which are different from those in Thai. In this connection, students tend to transfer the Thai grammatical features into English. This gives rise to various mistakes (q.v.).

## 7.2. English features which do not exist in Thai.

English features which do not exist in Thai may be sub-divided into five groups: the grammatical devices used to signal certain grammatical structures of English; the distinction between countable and uncountable nouns in English; different forms of words in different word-classes; sequence of tenses; and a device used in writing English: punctuation.<sup>43</sup>

### 7.2.1. The grammatical devices used to signal certain grammatical structures of English.

The grammatical devices used to signal certain grammatical structures of English that do not exist in Thai may be one of the following: a) inflection; b) agreement in form; c) a certain type of word-order; d) the auxiliary verb 'do'; and e) articles.

#### a) Inflection.

In English, inflection is an important grammatical device used to signal grammatical categories, for example, a noun is inflected for number; a verb is inflected for preterite; a pronoun is inflected for case. In Thai, such a device does not exist. A Thai word is never inflected whether it is a noun, a verb, a pronoun or any other kind of word. The non-existence of inflection in the Thai language makes students either neglect or wrongly use it when they write English as can be seen in:

1) The use of a singular form of the noun instead of a plural form when the noun is modified by a plural modifier. (3.3.; Chapter

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<sup>43</sup> For convenience, / punctuation,  
is included here, although it does not concern grammatical structure.

III; p. 45).

ii) The use of a subjective form of personal pronoun instead of an objective form. (3.2.1.; Chapter III; p. 42).

iii) The use of a simple form of the verb instead of a past form of the verb to indicate past time. (6.2.1. (a); Chapter VI; p. 54).

iv) The faulty use of the base form of the verb instead of the present participle and the past participle when the verb is used as an adjectival. (3.5.3. and 3.6.1.; Chapter III; p. 51 and p. 52). In Hindi, many words are identical both in form and meaning and can function in the position of a verb as well as an adjectival modifying a noun, for example:

-        ३३ कहूँ    ३३    ३३३    ३३३३

(lit. He, murmur, that, she, is, idiot.)

- He murmurs that she is an idiot.

'कहूँ' here is used as a verb meaning 'to murmur'.

-        ३३३३ सुनूँ    ३३३३    ३३३३३

(lit. Sound, murmur, hear, clearly.)

- Murmuring sound can be heard clearly.

'सुनूँ' an equivalent of the English verb 'to murmur' is used here as an adjectival modifying '३३३३', an equivalent of 'sound' in English, with an identical form as the verb in the first example.

-        ३३३३ झुंझु    ३३३३    ३३३३    ३३३३

(lit. He, fry, fish, every, day.)

- He fries fish every day.

'झुंझु' as equivalent of the English verb 'to fry' is used here as a verb.

- $\text{fry}$   $\text{fish}$   $\text{fish}$   $\text{fish}$   
 (lit. He,  $\text{fish}$ ,  $\text{fish}$ ,  $\text{fish}$ ,  $\text{fish}$ .)  
 - He  $\text{fish}$  fried fish.

' $\text{fish}$ ' an equivalent of 'to fry' is used here to modify ' $\text{fish}$ ', an equivalent of the English word 'fish', without any change in its form.

v) Exalty use of the base form of the verb instead of the present participle functioning as a verbal. (3.5.1; Chapter III; p. 50).

vi) A shift from a verb to the present participle and a shift from a  $\text{gerund}$  to a verb. (3.5.2; Chapter I; p. 19).

Mistakes under (v) and (vi) occur as a result of the fact that students are not accustomed to different inflected forms of verbs in English. In that, the form of verbs are identical whether they are the first or the second verb in a sequence of verbs or a series of verbs, for example:

- $\text{I}$   $\text{see}$   $\text{him}$   $\text{read}$   $\text{book}$   $\text{in}$   $\text{his}$   $\text{room}$   
 (lit. I, see, him, read, book, in, his, room, of, him)  
 - I see him reading a book in his room.

' $\text{read}$ ', an equivalent of 'to read' in English, is used as the second verb here.

- $\text{He}$   $\text{reads}$   $\text{book}$   $\text{every}$   $\text{day}$   
 (lit. He, reads, book, every, day.)  
 - He reads a book every day.

' $\text{reads}$ ', an equivalent of 'to read' in English is used as the first verb here. From the examples, ' $\text{read}$ ' as the first verb and the second verb

does not change its form.

The fact that in Thai two verbs in a series or in a sequence of two verbs can follow each other without any change in form, for example:

- ខ្ញុំ ទៅ ទី ១០០ ម៉ែត្រ  
(lit. I, went, go, at, there)

- I went to go there.

- គាត់ ប្រាប់ វា ឱ្យ អង្គុយ ចុះ  
(lit. He, tell, her, sit, down.)

'He tells her to sit down', also accounts for mistakes concerning infinitives as in:

vii) Faulty use of an unmarked infinitive or the base form of the verb instead of a marked infinitive after certain verbs. (3.4.2. (a); Chapter III; p. 49).

viii) Faulty use of a marked infinitive instead of an unmarked infinitive after certain other verbs. (3.4.2. (b); Chapter III; p. 49).

ix) Faulty use of a marked infinitive after a modal auxiliary. (3.4.2. (c); Chapter III; p. 49).

#### b) Agreement in form

In English, certain word-classes must be in agreement when they are used together. A verb with the inflectional suffix '-s' agrees with a third person singular subject. A pronoun agrees with its antecedent in number, person and gender. In Thai, such a feature does not exist. A Thai word has only one form in all circumstances and thus never shows relation

to other words by means of agreement in form. As a result, students are not accustomed to agreement in form, and therefore, when writing English, they fail to observe rules of agreement in form, as can be seen in:

i) Lack of agreement between a verb and a third person singular subject. (3.2.1; Chapter III; p. 42).

ii) Lack of agreement between a verb and the subject which is not a third person singular subject. (3.2.2; Chapter III; p. 43).

iii) Use of a form of personal pronoun inappropriate to its antecedent. (3.1.2.; Chapter III; p. 41).

iv) Use of an incorrect form of reflexive pronoun. (3.1.3.; Chapter III; p. 41).

c) A certain type of word order: Inversion of subject and verb to signal a question.

In English when a question begins with a question word and the verb is the verb 'to be', the inversion of subject and verb is required together with a question mark at the end of the question, for example, 'Who is he?' In Thai, the inversion of subject and verb to signal a question does not exist. The non-existence of such inversion leads students to neglect it when they write English as can be seen in:

1) Mistakes concerning subject and verb inversion in an interrogative sentence. (1.3.1.(a); Chapter I; p. 15).

d) The auxiliary verb 'do'.

In an English information question, the auxiliary verb 'do' is required before the subject if the verb in the information question is not

the verb 'to be' or if the question does not contain any modal auxiliary. The auxiliary verb 'do' is also required before the function word 'not' in an English negative sentence in which the verb is not the verb 'to be' or in which there is no modal auxiliary.

In Thai, no word functioning as the auxiliary verb 'do' exists. The non-existence of it makes students neglect it when writing English as can be seen in:

i) Omission of the auxiliary verb 'do' in an information question. (5.2.2. (a); Chapter V; p. 76).

ii) Omission of the auxiliary verb 'do' in a negative sentence. (5.2.2. (b); Chapter V; p. 77).

The non-existence of the auxiliary verb 'do' in Thai may also lead to the <sup>faulty</sup> use of the auxiliary verb 'to be' with which students seem to be more familiar as can be seen in:

iii) Faulty use of the verb 'to be' instead of the auxiliary verb 'do'. (5.2.2. (c); Chapter V; p. 77).

#### e) Articles.

In English, if a noun is not an abstract noun or a plural noun, it must be preceded by an article whether 'a', 'an' or 'the'. In Thai, there is no word which is comparable to the article. The non-existence of articles in Thai results in the following mistakes:

i) Omission of the article. (2.1.1. (a); Chapter II; p. 22).

ii) Faulty choice of articles. (2.1.1. (b); Chapter II; p. 22).

iii) The insertion of the article 'the' where it should be omitted. (2.1.1. (c); Chapter II; p. 24).



7.1.2. The distinction between countable and uncountable nouns in English

In English, nouns are either countable or uncountable. The distinction between countable and uncountable nouns affects the choice of modifiers used to modify the noun.

In Thai, no such distinction exists. The non-existence of this distinction between countable and uncountable nouns in Thai leads students to make many mistakes as can be seen in:

a) Faulty choice of 'much' and 'many'. (5.1.1.(b); Chapter V; p. 62).

b) Faulty inflection of an uncountable noun for a plural number when the noun is modified by a plural modifier. (3.9.; Chapter III; p. 46).

7.1.3. Different forms of words in different word-classes.

In English, noun, verb, adjective and adverb are four distinct classes of words differentiated by special formal characteristics, apart from the position in the sentence. Words of the same derivational paradigm are distinguished as words of different word-classes, functioning differently, by such special formal characteristics of words.

In Thai, the noun, the verb, the adjective and the adverb have no formal characteristics as in English. A Thai word is principally known as a word in certain word-classes by its position in the sentence. In a few cases, the prefix 'กนฺ' [ka:n] or 'กณฺ' [kha:m] is added before a verb to distinguish it from a noun, for example, กณฺ-กณฺ, กณฺกณฺ-กณฺกณฺ, in each case, the first is a verb and the second is a noun.

The formal characteristics of words in various word-classes in English are comparatively complicated. Usually students do not observe these characteristics when using words of the same gender, as can be seen in:

- a) The use of an adjective in the noun position. (2.2.1.(b); Chapter II; p. 34).
- b) The use of an adjective in the adverb position. (2.2.1.(c); Chapter II; p. 35).
- c) The use of a noun in the position of a predicate adjective. (2.2.2.(a); Chapter II; p. 36).
- d) The use of a noun in the position of an attributive adjective. (2.2.2.(b); Chapter II; p. 36).
- e) The use of a noun in the verb position. (2.2.2.(c); Chapter II; p. 37).
- f) The use of an adverb in the position of a predicate adjective. (2.2.3.(a); Chapter II; p. 37).
- g) The use of an adverb in the position of an attributive adjective. (2.2.3.(b); Chapter II; p. 38).

#### 2.1.4. Sequence of tenses.

In English, a sequence of tenses is required in a complex sentence and among sentences in the same paragraph as has already been mentioned in 6.1.2.; Chapter VI.

In Thai, such a sequence of tenses does not exist. This is because the relation of time between actions is usually indicated by the context. In a complex sentence, an adverbial conjunction is sometimes used to indicate the time of the verb in the subordinate clause in relation to

third of the main text, for example:

- $\text{I see him before I go to school yesterday.}$   
(Lit. I see him before I go to school, yesterday.)
- I see him before I go to school yesterday.

The non-existence of tense markers in Thai leads students to make very mistakes as can be seen in:

- a) Mistakes concerning the sequence of tenses. (6.2.2; Chapter VI; p. 36).

#### 7.1.5. A device used in writing: Punctuation

A device used in writing English is 'punctuation' which includes end punctuation marks, namely, the period and the question mark; and internal punctuation marks,<sup>44</sup> namely, the comma,<sup>45</sup> the colon and the semi-colon.

Such a device does not exist in written Thai. As a result, students either neglect or misuse the punctuation marks as can be seen in:

- a) A run-on sentence without any end punctuation mark. (1.2.1.(a); Chapter I; p. 5).
- b) The omission of a period at the end of a declarative sentence. (4.3.2; Chapter IV; p. 39).

<sup>44</sup>For references, see Chapter IV, p. 34.

<sup>45</sup>'Comma' is <sup>sometimes</sup> used in Thai when the words are listed in a series for example: 'I see him before I go to school, yesterday', the use of which is optional. The use of the comma to separate parts of the sentence as in English does not exist in Thai.

c) Omission of a question mark at the end of an interrogative sentence. (4.4.; Chapter IV; p. 60).

d) Erroneous use of a period in a complex sentence. (4.3.1.; Chapter IV; p. 58).

e) Comma fault. (4.1.; Chapter IV; p. 54).

f) Semi-colon fault. (4.2.; Chapter IV; p. 57).

## 7.2. English grammatical features which are different from those in Thai.

Certain grammatical features do exist in both English and Thai but are differently distributed. In such cases, students automatically and wrongly transfer the Thai features with which they are more familiar into English.

Grammatical features in English and in Thai which are differently distributed may be subdivided into: differences between certain English and Thai constructions; differences in function and use of certain words; certain repetition of words in Thai; a certain optional word in Thai; and the passive voice.

7.2.1. Differences between certain English and Thai constructions may be one of the following: a) the modification construction; b) the comparative construction.

### a) The modification construction.

The modification construction in English and in Thai differs in the order of the adjective modifiers. In English, an adjective modifier precedes the noun it modifies but, in Thai, an adjective modifier is placed after the noun it modifies.

Students frequently transfer the Thai order of adjective modifiers in the modification construction into English as can be seen in:

1) The order of words in a noun phrase. (L.3.2.; Chapter 4; p. 16).

b) The comparative construction.

The comparative constructions in English and in Thai are different. In English, the comparative degree is formed in either of the following two ways: in some cases, the inflectional suffix '-er' is added to the positive form of an adjective; in other cases, the word 'more' has to be placed before the positive form of an adjective. In each case, the function word 'than' has to be placed after the adjective in the comparative construction, for example:

- He is taller than I.
- He is more talkative than I.

In Thai, the comparative construction is formed only by inserting the word 'มากกว่า' [*kwá*], which is equivalent to 'than' in English, after an intransitive adjectival verb for example:

- มากกว่า   เขา   สูงกว่า   ฉัน  
 (lit. He, tall, than, I)
- He is taller than I.

Students often transfer the Thai comparative construction into English when the inflectional suffix '-er' is needed and thus produce a double comparative form as in:

1) The doubling of the comparative degree. (6.3.1; Chapter V; p. 89).

In the case where the word 'more' is used before an adjective together with 'than', placed after the adjective to form the comparative construction, students only identify 'in' [kwa:] with 'than' and omit 'more' as can be seen in:

ii) The omission of the function word 'more' before certain adjectives in the comparative degree. (6.3.2; Chapter V; p. 90).

7.2.2. Differences in function and use of certain words may fall into one of the following: a) function of a question word; b) the use of the equivalent of an English adjective in Thai; c) the use of certain relative pronouns.

#### a) Function of a question word.

In an English sentence which contains an indirect question, the question word is simultaneously used to signal a question and <sup>to act</sup> as a connective joining the indirect question to the main clause of the sentence. For example:

- I want to know who he is. ("who" here is used simultaneously as a connective to join "who he is" to "I want to know" and to signal a question).

In Thai, a question word can only signal a question. It cannot function <sup>simultaneously</sup> as a question word and ~~as~~ ~~the~~ ~~same~~ ~~thing~~ as a connective.

In a sentence which contains an indirect question, a connective 'ገን' ገን, an equivalent of 'that' must be used to join the indirect question which contains a question word to the main clause. For example:

- ገን ለምን ገን ገን ለምን ገን  
(lit. I want, know, that, he is who)

- I want to know who he is.

- ገን ለምን ገን ገን ለምን ገን ገን ለምን ገን  
(lit. I, want, know, that, who, wake, glass, break)

- I want to know who broke the glass.

Students often transfer the Thai construction, namely the construction which contains both the connective and the question word, into English when writing an indirect question. This leads to the faulty use of the connective 'that' as can be seen in:

1) The insertion of the superfluous subordinating conjunction "that". (2.1.2. (b); Chapter II; p. 25).

b) The use of the equivalent of an English adjective in Thai.

In English, there is a class of words namely, adjectives which can function either as a modifier of a noun or predicatively as a complement of the verb 'to be', for example:

- A glass table. ('glass' functions<sup>as</sup> a modifier of the noun 'table').

- The table is glass. ('glass' functions predicatively as the complement of the verb 'to be').

The equivalents of such words in Thai are those words which, when functioning as an English adjective modifier, can modify a noun but

when functioning predicatively, do not require any word equivalent to the verb 'to be' placed before it. That is to say, when it functions predicatively, it functions as a verb in Thai, not as a complement as in English, for example:

-        <sup>4</sup>โต๊ะ    <sup>5</sup>นี้    สะอาด

(lit. Table, this, clean.)

- This table is clean.

'สะอาด', the equivalent of 'clean', functions here as a verb.

-        <sup>1</sup>เขา    <sup>2</sup>ชอบ    <sup>4</sup>โต๊ะ    สะอาด

(lit. He, like, table, clean.)

- He likes a clean table.

'สะอาด', the equivalent of 'clean', functions here as an adjective modifying a noun 'โต๊ะ', an equivalent of the English word 'table'.

Students often transfer the words which are identical in form with adjectives modifying nouns but which function as verbs in Thai into English adjectives when used as complements of the verb 'to be' as can be seen in:

1) The use of an adjective in the verb position. (2.2.1. (a); Chapter II; pp. 33-34).

✓ c) The use of certain relative pronouns.

In English, there are many relative pronouns; each is used in a specific circumstance, for example, 'who' is used when the antecedent is a person and is the subject of the verb in the relative clause; 'which' is used when the antecedent is a thing or an animal and is the subject of the verb in the relative clause.



In Thai, relative pronouns <sup>1</sup> [chi] and <sup>2</sup> [sy] are used interchangeably. Both can be used in all circumstances whether the antecedent is the subject or the object of the verb in the relative clause and whether the antecedent is a person, an animal or a thing.

Students often transfer each use of Thai relative pronouns to the English relative pronoun 'which', an equivalent in meaning of <sup>1</sup> and <sup>2</sup> and use 'which' not only when the antecedent is a thing or an animal and is the subject of the verb in a relative clause, but in all circumstances, as can be seen in:

i) Use of a relative pronoun which is not appropriate to its antecedent. (2.1.3.(a); Chapter II; p. 26).

### 2.2.3. Certain repetitions of words in Thai.

Under this section the discussion is divided into 2 subdivisions: a) accepted repetition of conjunction; b) accepted repetition of subject.

#### a) Accepted repetition of conjunction.

In Thai, the conjunctions <sup>1</sup> [chi] - <sup>2</sup> [sy], equivalent to "although - -but", and the conjunctions <sup>3</sup> [chi] - <sup>4</sup> [sy], equivalent to "because - -so", can occur in pairs, although the second conjunction in each pair is unnecessary and can be omitted. Such a second conjunction may be considered as a repetition of the first conjunction, and this repetition is usual in Thai.

## Examples:

- แม้ว่า ฉันไม่เห็นด้วยกับความคิดของเขา แต่ ฉันก็ต้องยอมรับ  
 (lit. Although I will not agree with his idea but I have to admit  
 that he is person clever.)

- Although I do not agree with his idea, I have to admit that he is  
 a clever person.

แต่ : an equivalent of 'but', may be omitted as:

- แม้ว่า ฉันไม่เห็นด้วยกับความคิดของเขา ฉันก็ต้องยอมรับ  
 (lit. Although I will not agree with his idea I have to admit that  
 he is person clever.)

- Although I do not agree with his idea, I have to admit that he is  
 a clever person.

- เพราะว่า เขาฉลาดมาก จึง เขาสามารถเข้าใจบทเรียนของเขา  
 (lit. Because he rather clever so he can understand lesson his  
 easily.)

- Because he is rather clever, he can understand his lesson easily.  
 "จึง", an equivalent of "so", may be omitted as:

- เพราะว่า เขาฉลาดมาก เขาสามารถเข้าใจบทเรียนของเขา  
 (lit. Because he rather clever he can understand lesson his  
 easily.)

In English, 'although- -but' and 'because- -so' cannot co-occur.

The use of 'but' and 'so' as the repetitions of 'although' and 'because'  
 respectively is grammatically wrong.

Students often transfer the Thai repetitions of conjunctions as described above into English as can be seen in:

1) Erroneous doubling of the conjunctions. (2.1.2. (a); Chapter II; p. 24).

b) Accepted repetition of subject.

In Thai, a personal pronoun can be inserted after the relative clause in a complex sentence when the subject is already modified by a relative clause, for example:

- คน ที่ รู้ เรื่อง นี้ เขา จะ เห็น ด้วย คุณ.
- (lit. Anyone who know about matter this he will agree with you.)
- Anyone who knows about this matter will agree with you.

Such repetition of subject is not accepted in English because when the subject of the main clause is modified by a relative clause, that relative clause has already functioned as a repetition of the subject.

Students often transfer the accepted repetition of subject in Thai into English as can be seen in:

1) Erroneous doubling of the subject in a complex sentence. (2.1.1. (a); Chapter I; p. 10).

Similarly, in a simple sentence, a personal pronoun with the reference to the subject is inserted after the subject; such insertion usually occurs in spoken Thai, for example:



- Since he is a clever person, he can persuade them to continue the trip.

"he", an equivalent of "he" in this case, is optional and may be omitted in the second clause.

In such circumstances in English, the subject is required and cannot be omitted. Students often transfer the optional subject in Thai into an English complex sentence as can be seen in:

- 1) A subjectless sentence fragment. (1.1.2.(d); Chapter 1, p. 9).

#### 7.2.5. The Passive voice.

In English, the passive voice is formed by the verb phrase construction consisting of a form of the verb 'to be' and the past participle of a transitive verb. The passive voice is used when the undergoer of an action or the action itself is more emphatic than the performer. In such sentences, the subject of the sentence is the undergoer of an action, for example: "English is spoken all over the world." ('English' is the subject of the sentence and is the undergoer of the action 'speaking'.)

In Thai, the passive voice is formed by placing the word 'pa' [chǎk] before the verb, for example: 'pa' [chǎk] [chǎk] [chǎk] is equivalent to 'to be beaten'. Such a construction is used in a sentence only when an unpleasant action happens to the undergoer.

There is a kind of sentence in Thai which does not use the passive voice construction as described above and which does not indicate any unpleasant action happening to the undergoer but which is equivalent

to the English sentence in the passive voice. This is the sentence in which the undergoer of the action is emphasized. Thus, the undergoer is placed as the subject of the verb which follows it immediately, for example:

"บ้านนี้สร้างมานานแล้ว"  
 (120. This house built come many year already)

(120. This house built come many year already)

- This house was built many years ago.

"บ้าน", an equivalent of 'house', is an undergoer of an action 'สร้าง' or 'building'. The verb "สร้าง" an equivalent of the verb 'to build' follows "บ้าน" without the morpheme "ถูก" placed before it.

Students often transfer this pattern into English as can be seen in:

a) Faulty use of the active voice instead of the passive voice.

(6.2.2; Chapter VI; p. 89).

The transfer of the pattern of the Thai sentence into English as mentioned above may lead to mistakes in the formation of the passive voice as can be seen in:

b) Faulty use of the base form of the verb instead of the past participle in the formation of the passive voice.<sup>48</sup> (3.6.2; Chapter III; p. 53).

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<sup>48</sup> These mistakes may be explained as resulting from the non-existence of inflection in Thai.

## CHAPTER VIII

### DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE ENGLISH AND THAI PHONOLOGICAL SYSTEMS

Since no two languages have exactly the same phonological system, there will always be sounds that do not belong to the phonological system of students' native language. Such sounds are often problems to students both in hearing them and in pronouncing them.<sup>49</sup> Students may mispronounce such foreign sounds by substituting for them similar sounds in their native language. The mispronunciation of sounds may not only affect students' speech but may also affect students' writing i.e. give rise to certain mistakes in their written work. This chapter concerns the differences in phonological systems of English and Thai only to the extent that they lead students to make mistakes in their written work, which may be dealt with under the following two headings:

8.1. Sounds which are distinguished as two different phonemes in English but not in Thai.

8.2. The sound that occurs in English but not in Thai.

It has been found convenient to handle in this chapter (under 8.3.) the similarity in pronunciation of two words in English itself which gives rise to certain mistakes in students' written work.

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<sup>49</sup> Robert Lado, *Linguistics Across Cultures* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1957), p. 11.

8.1. Sounds which are distinguished as two different phonemes in English but not in Thai.

In English, both /a/ and /æ/ are phonemes whereas only /a/ is a phoneme in Thai. Moreover, both /a/ and /æ/ in English may occur in any positions: initially, medially, or finally, but /æ/ in Thai occurs only in the initial position.

The non-occurrence of /æ/ as a distinctive sound in Thai presumably makes students substitute for it, in all positions, the phoneme /a/ which occurs in Thai in their pronunciation. Frequently, students may even drop /a/ in the final position in their pronunciation.

The substitution of /a/ for /æ/ and the dropping of /a/ may lead to the faulty recognition of certain pairs of English words in which /æ/ occurs in one word and /a/ occurs in another word, both in the final position which, in turn, leads to the faulty choice of words as can be seen in:

8.1.1. Faulty choice of 'loose' and 'lose' (5.1.2.(b) iv; Chapter V, p. 89). Students pronounce 'lose' as [ləʊs] instead of [lɔ:s] and thus, confuse it with 'loose' which is pronounced [ləʊs].

8.1.2. Faulty choice of 'price' and 'prize' (5.1.2.(b) vi; Chapter V, p. 89). Students pronounce 'price' as [praɪs] instead of [praɪz] and thus, confuse it with 'prize' which is pronounced [praɪz].

8.1.3. Faulty choice of 'besides' and 'beside' (5.1.2.(b) i; Chapter V, p. 87). Students pronounce 'besides' as [bɪsaɪd] instead of [bɪsaɪdɪz] by dropping /z/ in the final position, and thus, confuse it with



'baido' which is pronounced  $\overline{b}aido$ .

### 3.2. The word that occurs in English but not in Thai: the cluster /st/.

The cluster /st/ occurs in English but does not occur in Thai.

As a result, students, when pronouncing an English word containing the cluster /st/ in the final position, seem to drop the /t/ and keep the /s/. The dropping of /t/ makes them pronounce the word wrongly and may lead them to be unable to distinguish the word containing /st/ from the word containing /s/ in the final position when the two words are similar in pronunciation.

As a result, they usually make a faulty choice of words in writing, as can be seen in:

3.2.1. Faulty choice of 'pass' and 'past' (3.1.2.(a) i; Chapter V; p. 71). Students pronounce 'past' as  $\overline{p}ast$  instead of  $\overline{p}ast$  and thus, confuse it with 'pass' which is pronounced  $\overline{p}ass$ .

3.2.2. Faulty choice of 'less' and 'lost' (3.1.2.(a) ii; Chapter V; p. 71). Students wrongly pronounce the two words as  $\overline{l}os$ . In the case of 'less', they pronounce it as  $\overline{l}os$ , probably because of the form of the word, instead of  $\overline{l}es$ ; in the case of 'lost', they pronounce it as  $\overline{l}os$  instead of  $\overline{l}ost$ , since the cluster /st/ in the final position seems to be difficult for them to pronounce. As a result, they do not distinguish <sup>between</sup> the two words.

### 3.3. The similarity in pronunciation of two words in English itself.

For the sake of convenience and also because it concerns the phono-

logical system of English, this sub-heading is dealt with here, although it does not concern the differences between the English and Thai phonological systems as the preceding sub-headings.

The two English words 'it's' and 'its' are different in form but have the same pronunciation as  $\int its \int$ . The similarity in the pronunciation of the two words seems to make students confused and unable to distinguish them, as can be seen in:

6.3.1. Faulty choice of 'it's' and 'its' (6.2.2.(b) 23; Chapter 7; p. 87).

## CHAPTER IX

### FALSE ANALOGY WITH ANOTHER ENGLISH STRUCTURE

An important factor, besides the differences in grammatical structures and differences in phonological systems between the foreign language and the native language, that leads students of a foreign language to make mistakes is the false analogy with another structure in the foreign language itself.

This chapter will deal with the false analogies with another English structure which give rise to mistakes in students' work. False analogies may be divided into:

#### 9.1. The inflection of an infinitive.

By making an analogy of the inflected main verb and of the inflected modal auxiliaries in the preterit, students wrongly inflect the infinitive in the preterit when the infinitive is the second verb or when it follows a modal auxiliary as can be seen in:

9.2.1. Wrongly inflecting an infinitive (3.4.1.; Chapter III, pp. 46-48).

#### 9.2. The inflection of an infinitive to indicate the agreement between subject and verb.

By making an analogy with the inflected main verb in the sentence to indicate agreement in number and person between subject and verb, students wrongly inflect the infinitive after the modal auxiliaries to indicate

agreement in number and person between subject and verb, as can be seen in:

9.2.1. Wrongly inflecting the infinitive which follows the modal auxiliary. (3.4.1.(b); Chapter III; p. 47).

9.3. The inversion of subject and verb in an indirect question and an exclamatory sentence.

By making an analogy with the inversion of subject and verb in a question beginning with a question word and in which the verb is the verb 'to be' or other modal auxiliaries, students wrongly invert the subject and verb in an indirect question and an exclamatory sentence, as can be seen in:

9.3.1. Mistakes concerning the order of the subject and the verb in an indirect question. (1.3.1.(b); Chapter I; p. 15).

9.3.2. Mistakes concerning the order of the subject and the verb in an exclamatory sentence. (1.3.1.(c); Chapter I; p. 15).

9.4. The use of the preposition 'to' with 'anywhere', 'here' and 'there' by analogy with the expression 'go to school' and the like.

In English, 'anywhere', 'here', and 'there' can be placed after an intransitive verb without any preposition. Students, however insert 'to' by analogy with 'go to school' or 'come to school' as can be seen in:

9.4.1. Use of a superfluous preposition before an adverb of place (2.1.4.(a) ii; Chapter II; p. 29).

## CHAPTER X

### DIFFERENCES IN RESTRICTIONS OF THE DISTRIBUTION OF WORDS IN ENGLISH AND THEIR EQUIVALENTS IN THAI

It is generally known that a word in one language and its equivalent in another language do not cover the same area of meaning. A word in one language that has similar meaning to its equivalent in another language may have wider grammatical or contextual distribution than the relevant equivalent. As a result, the differences/<sup>in</sup> restriction of the distribution of words in one language and their equivalents in another language may present a considerable problem to students.

It has been observed that mistakes arise from the differences in restriction of the distribution of words in English and their equivalents in Thai usually when two English words, which are used in different grammatical circumstances or in different contexts, are equivalent to one Thai word which can be used in both grammatical circumstances or in both contexts. In other words, a Thai word in such cases is not restricted in grammatical distribution or in contextual distribution as its English equivalents are. Students, in writing, seem to translate such Thai words into one of the English equivalents and at the same time, transfer the distribution, whether grammatical or contextual, of the Thai word into the English word chosen. In some cases, when translating a Thai word into English, students are able to choose the right word from the pair of English equivalents, yet they still make mistakes because they transfer the pattern of the sentence that contains the Thai word into English.

This chapter deals with what seems to give rise to certain mistakes under study viz. the different restriction of the distribution of words in English and their equivalents in Thai, which may be one of the following:

10.1. The English 'has/have' and 'there is/there are' and an equivalent Thai word 'มี' /mǐ/.

While 'there is/there are' and 'has/have' are used in different grammatical circumstances: 'there is/there are' are used as the introduction of the real subject that follows;<sup>50</sup> 'has/have' are used as verbs indicating possession, the Thai equivalent 'มี' is used in both circumstances and always in the position of a verb in Thai. Students tend to translate 'มี' into 'has/have' and simultaneously transfer the grammatical distribution of 'มี' into that of 'has/have', as can be seen in:

a) Faulty use of 'has/have' instead of 'there is/there are'.

(5.2.3.(a); Chapter V; p. 78 ).

In Thai, the sentence that begins with the verb 'มี' is a simple sentence, for example:

- มีคนมาเที่ยวที่บ้าน

(lit. Have : many person. come -at house. this.)

In English, the sentence that begins with 'there is/there are', equivalent to 'มี' in this case, unless it is a simple sentence with the

<sup>50</sup> Horner G. Harris, Writer's Guide and Index to English, p. 740.

second verb in the present participle, must be a complex sentence with the relative pronoun inserted before the second verb.

Students, in such cases, correctly translate 'มี' into 'there is/there are' but they wrongly transfer the pattern of the Thai simple sentence into English, as can be seen in:

- b) Omission of the relative pronoun (2.2.3. (b); Chapter II; p. 27).
- c) Erroneous use of 'there is/there are' to introduce a sentence (5.2.3. (d); Chapter V; p. 80).

#### 10.2. The English 'no' and 'not' and an equivalent Thai word 'ไม่มี' [má:m].

While 'no' and 'not' are used in different grammatical circumstances: 'no' is used before a simple noun; 'not' is used when the noun is already modified by another modifier, a Thai equivalent 'ไม่มี' is used in either circumstance in Thai. Students tend to translate 'ไม่มี' into 'no' and 'not' and simultaneously transfer the distribution of 'ไม่มี' into that of the English word chosen, as can be seen in:

- Faulty choice of 'no' and 'not' (5.2.2. (a); Chapter V; p. 61).

#### 10.3. The English 'near' and 'very' and an equivalent Thai word 'ใกล้' [má:k].

While 'near' and 'very' are used in different grammatical circumstances: 'near' as an adjective is used to modify a noun; 'very', an adverb, is used to modify a verb or an adjective, a Thai equivalent 'ใกล้' is used to modify both a noun and a verb. Students tend to translate 'ใกล้'

into 'may' and simultaneously transfer the distribution of 'may' into the English word chosen, i.e. using the word chosen in all grammatical circumstances, as can be seen in:

- 'May and may' (5.1.2. (a) in; Chapter V; p. 63).

#### 10.4. The English 'also, too' and 'either' and an equivalent Thai word

'ทั้ง' [tɔ̃ŋ].

In English, 'also, too' and 'either' are used in different grammatical circumstances: 'also, too' are used in the absence of a negative; 'either' is used in the presence of a negative. The Thai equivalent 'ทั้ง' is used both in the presence and the absence of a negative. Students tend to translate 'ทั้ง' into 'also' or 'too' and simultaneously transfer the distribution of 'ทั้ง' into that of 'also' or 'too', i.e. using them in all circumstances, as can be seen in:

- Faulty choice of 'also, too' and 'either' (5.1.1. (d); Chapter V; p. 64).

#### 10.5. The English 'because' and 'because of' and an equivalent Thai word

'เพราะ' [phrɔ̃].

While 'because' and 'because of' are used in different grammatical circumstances: 'because' is followed by a clause; 'because of' is followed by a phrase or a word, a Thai equivalent 'เพราะ' can be followed by a clause, a phrase or a word. Students tend to translate 'เพราะ' into 'because' or 'because of' and simultaneously transfer the distribution of 'เพราะ' into that of the word chosen, i.e., using it in all grammatical circumstances,



as can be seen in:

- Faulty choice of 'because' and 'because of' (S.L.1. (c); Chapter V; p. 63).

10.6. In English 'meet' and 'find' and an equivalent Thai word '...'

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While 'meet' and 'find' are used in different contextual circumstances in English, the Thai equivalent '...' is used in any contextual circumstance in Thai. Students tend to translate '...' into 'meet' or 'find' and simultaneously transfer the distribution of '...' into that of the English word chosen, as can be seen in:

- Faulty choice of 'meet' and 'find' (S.L.2. (a) iii; Chapter V; p. 66).