GRAMMAR DIFFICULTIES IN ENGLISH ENCOUNTERED BY THAI STUDENT NURSES AT PRINCE OF SONGKHLA UNIVERSITY, HATYAI, SONGKHLA, THAILAND

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ABSTRACT:

"Sawasdee" is the first common greeting a tourist will hear when she steps into "Siam" the Land of Smiles-Thailand. This word is often used for both hello and goodbye different from that of English. Thailand has captured the hearts of people all over the world; by just coming to the kingdom is like stepping into a new world.

English in Thailand is not a medium of instruction in the schools, colleges and universities in a general sense. Specifically, the study was conducted to find out the difficulties in English encountered by the respondents in grammar. There were 145 respondents.

In the difficulties encountered in grammar specifically in sentence patterns, respondents have difficulties in subject + verb + object + complement which has the highest frequency followed by subject + linking + verb + complement. In subject-verb agreement respondents have difficulty with singular collective nouns used as the subject of the sentence requiring singular verb form and plural indefinite adjectives or pronouns such as few or both as subject which require the plural verb form. In the verb tenses and tense forms however, got the highest frequency in item number 7 with past progressive (was giving) followed by future-perfect tense.

In the levels of difficulties, respondents find it "moderately difficult" in verb tenses and tense forms. Subject- verb agreement is "less difficult" except for students from private schools who find it "moderately difficult".

There is "no significant" association encountered in sentence patterns in all variables while there is "significant" association in subject-verb agreement and verb tenses and tense forms.

KEYWORDS:

DIFFICULTIES, GRAMMAR, STUDENT NURSES, PSU (PRINCE OF SONGKHLA UNIVERSITY) THAILAND.

INTRODUCTION:

"Sawassdee", is the first common greeting a tourist will hear when she steps into "Siam" the Land of Smiles - Thailand. This word is often used for both hello and goodbye which is different from that of the English language.

The demand for English teachers is strong all across Asia and other parts of the world and that includes Thailand. Like any non-English speaking countries, the need for English teachers never runs out in Thailand. Many English teachers are needed even in the remotest part of the kingdom.

English is the language of business and truism of life that allows people from different backgrounds to communicate and make use of each other's resources (Carpenter, 2001). Somehow, teaching English in Thailand is an enjoyable and memorable experience, it seems rewarding especially when you hear your students improved their capacity to communicate and their learning experiences are moving toward success. The people have high respect to teachers, especially the parents and the children.

University students and small kids alike were sent to

Language centres in order to learn more and have better opportunities. Although grammar is taught by their Thai English teachers as well as the students' writing skill but they still find it hard to understand the way grammar is learned. After many decades, parents are still sending their children to special classes and language centres to improve their children's English communication skills and other parts in grammar.

Grammar and words according to Sowa, J.F. (2005) belong to the province of linguistics, but the concepts they express belong to the extra-linguistic knowledge about the world. Different languages, however, differ in the grammar, the words, and the concepts they express. Moreover, lexicon is the bridge between a language and the knowledge expressed in that language. Every language has a different vocabulary, but every language provides the grammatical mechanisms for combining its stock of words to express an open-ended range of concepts.

It is the desire of the researcher to find out the particular need as to why Thai students have difficulties in achieving competence in English and become proficient at all levels specifically in grammar. Thus, the researcher must look

into and give importance to those variables and areas contributing to the difficulties in English grammar encountered by Thai Student Nurses at Prince of Songkhla University in Thailand.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The main purpose of this study is to determine the difficulties in English grammar encountered by Thai student nurses at Prince of Songkhla University (PSU) during the academic year 2010-2011.

Specifically, this study aims to seek answers to the following questions:

1. What is the profile of Thai student nurses at Prince of Songkhla University when they are grouped according to the selected variables?

    a. Religion
    b. family monthly income
    c. high school origin

2. What are the difficulties in grammar encountered by Thai student nurses in the following areas?

    a. sentence patterns
    b. subject-verb agreement
    c. verb tenses and tense forms

3. What are the levels of difficulties in grammar encountered by Thai student nurses in the aforementioned areas when they are grouped according to the following variables?

    a. Religion
    b. family monthly income
    c. high school origin

4. Is there a significant association between the difficulties encountered by Thai student nurses in grammar and the selected variables?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is anchored on the theory of language acquisition by Krashen (1982) which makes use of concepts as pre linguistic and linguistic stages. The linguistic stages constitute grammar such as systems of categories and rules. The acquisition of language can be analyzed from the perspective of phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics.

Second language acquisition is the study of how native speakers of one language (L1) acquire another language (L2). Second language acquisition is filtered through the learner's first language. e second-language acquisition theory of Tricomi, (1986) emphasized in her study about Krashen, (1982) which has major implications for the teaching of writing in the first language. Moreover, she stated that the most important to Krashen's theory of second-language acquisition is his distinction between language acquisition and language learning. It is a distinction which other second-language acquisition researchers may have called the most important conceptualization in the field and which has made possible the most productive models of Second Language Acquisition or SLA.

Second Language Acquisition is filtered through the learner's first language, with the native language facilitating acquisition in those cases where the target structures are similar, and "interfering" with acquisition in cases where the larger structures are dissimilar or nonexistent (Parker & Riley, 2000).

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

"A language like English is more than just words in it. Words go together in certain ways according to a system called grammar or correct usage. Grammar in English is a theory of language which attempts to account, explain, justify or evaluate what speakers of the language do with it.

In grammar, correct can only mean socially acceptable" cited by Occeňa, (2003).

Thai language has characteristics that are different from English: there are no variants or plural forms for adjectives and nouns. Adjectives follow the noun. Thais say 'car red' (rot sii dɛɛng) instead of 'red car'. There are no verb conjunctions in Thai language. Native speakers understand tenses from the context or from adverbs of time. There are no articles (a, an, the), to indicate a definite object, the demonstrative adjectives ni (this, these) and nanh (that, those) are used and should follow the word they qualify. Just like in these examples; the house = baan nanh; this book = nangsue ni. There is no verb 'to be' with adjectives. 'She is beautiful' would be 'She beautiful' (kao suai). Thai usually omits the subject of a sentence when it is understood from the context.

In a plural form, Thais have different examples like; ying sib khon literally means "women ten people" and ban sib lang literally means "house ten buildings". For personal pronouns, Khon is generally used to address a Thai whose name is unknown (Kanchananaga, 2009).

WORDS COMMONLY USED:

1. Sàwàtdii or sawadi (sàwàssdee) – can be used in greeting or leave-taking at any time of day or night

2. Mâi bpenrai (will sound mai pen lai) has the following meanings: it doesn't matter; that's all right; not at all; it's nothing; never mind; don't mention it; forget it; you're welcome, etc.

3. "Kráp and ká/" are used as:

    a. Polite particles at the end of statements and questions.

    b. "Yes" – when answering a question.

    c. "Yes?" – As a reply when called or spoken to.

    d. Particles placed after a name, title or kin term to address or attract the attention of someone.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Grammar, like any other linguistic skill, helps to materialize our thoughts, idea, and emotions verbally. In like manner, learning grammar is essential for accurate

speaking in communicating with other speakers of English (Minasyan & Midova, 2016). In order to improve their skills in the English language, Camposilao (2005) stated as cited in Liboon's study (2010) that "language teaching today combines two approaches. Students study vocabulary and rules of grammar while practicing the skills of interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational communication".

Gabilagon (2007) expressed that, to be dexterous is a second language means effectively and efficiently converse or comprehend thoughts or ideas through the language grammatical scheme and its terminology, using its sounds or written symbols. Language is composed of oral such as listening and speaking as well as written like reading and writing mechanism and non-academic language.

Meanwhile, as quoted in Occeña (2003) from Jasmin Montejo's study on Proficiency Level of High School Seniors in Written English, her findings indicated the slightly low proficiency level of the respondents in an organization like sentence structure and in grammar, punctuation and spelling. In her recommendations; more emphasis should be given to organization, sentence structure in the area of description by making the students understand the structure and principles of grammar and syntax. Likewise, teachers should give emphasis on grammar, punctuation and spelling in all areas of written composition. Teaching techniques, procedures and strategies should be well chosen by English teachers to help students minimize, if not eliminate such errors.

Moreover, as quoted in Liboon (2010) from Arias' (2004) findings it was said that mastery of the basic sentence patterns and the relatively fixed word order in English is essential if you are to be successful in speaking and writing the language. Guided repetition, correction and drill must be performed well. An extensive reading approach had been formulated to improve students' attitude and motivation toward reading as well as improving their proficiency in reading and their English language ability.

Story grammar however, as stated in Stetter and Hughes (2010) provides students with a framework to help them understand narrative texts and includes common elements such as plot, character, setting, and theme. This review provides an overview of research focused on using story grammar as a comprehension strategy, as well as examines the success of the strategy with students with special needs and reading difficulties.

In like manner, Shipunova, an ESL teacher taken from Minasyan and Midova's (2016) study, she further stated that the grammar aspect is important in writing, like in academic essays, business correspondence and the like. Teaching grammar constantly helps students to become accurate while practicing speaking and writing skills in a classroom they are aware of their mistakes.'

A Thai national Arunee Wiriyachitra (2002) stated that the role of English in Thailand is quite important as it is in many developing countries. New technology and the adoption of the internet have resulted in a major transition in terms of business, education, science, and technological progress, all of which demand high proficiency in English.

Understanding the needs of the students in the field of English language communication and working toward helping them will be enrichment to students and teachers alike. All of the findings of the researchers given were included in order to relate to the study. The results may differ but the facts provided are necessary to make this research become more meaningful and worthwhile to readers.

METHODS

RESEARCH DESIGN

The study which is to determine the difficulties in English encountered by Thai Student Nurses at Prince of Songkhla University makes use of the descriptive research design. The purpose of descriptive research is to observe, describe, and document aspects of a situation as it naturally occurs and sometimes serve as a starting point for hypothesis generation or theory development.

In like manner, Ardales (2008) stated that this design is appropriate to studies which aim to find out what prevail in the present such as conditions or relationships, held opinions, beliefs, processes and effects, and developing trends.

RESPONDENTS OF THE STUDY

The respondents of the study were the freshmen Thai student nurses of Prince of Songkhla University, Hatyai Songkhla, Thailand. They are officially enrolled at Prince of Songkhla University during the Academic Year 2010-2011. There were 145 respondents in grammar covered in the study. Table 1 is shown below.

TABLE 1

PROFILE OF THAI STUDENT NURSES ACCORDING TO SELECTED VARIABLES

VARIABLES	CATEGORIES	F	%
Religion	Buddhist	119	82
	Muslim	26	18
Family Monthly Income	Below 20,000 baht	124	86
	20,000 baht and above	21	14

| High School Origin | Public | 122 | 84 |
| | Private | 23 | 16 |

N = 145

DATA GATHERING INSTRUMENT

Part I gathers information to establish a profile of the respondent, for reference purposes. Part II is the test proper which is subdivided into three areas to be tested. Ten items are included in every area such as sentence-patterns, subject verb agreement, and verb tenses and tense forms.

The sets of data-gathering instruments used in this study are for written test. The first set is the written test to identify their difficulty in grammar construction which is used to determine the errors in the areas of sentence patterns, subject-verb agreement, and verb tenses or tense forms. The test was composed of sentences identifying

correct grammar that was administered to the respondents to answer. Each sentence covers the three aforementioned areas.

The result of tests was utilized to identify the errors committed by the students in the written test in the areas of sentence pattern (word order), subject-verb agreement and verb tenses or tense forms. The instrument is composed of 10 pre-identified difficulties in the aforementioned areas. It is explained further in the next pages. The errors committed in the written test were the bases of determining the level of difficulty of the respondents.

THE NUMBER OF ERRORS WAS INTERPRETED AS FOLLOWS:

Number of Errors Committed	Interpretation Level of Difficulty
9-10	Very Difficult
7-8	Difficult
5-6	Moderately Difficult
3-4	Less Difficult
0-2	Not Difficult

Results of the test was mainly focused on the researcher's mean percentile scores in grammar.

The following tools were applied:

1. To determine the profile of respondents in terms of religion, family monthly income and high school origin, the frequency count and percentage were used.

2. To determine the difficulties encountered by the respondents in grammar, the frequency count and rank were used.

3. To determine the levels of difficulties encountered by respondents during the written test the mean was used.

4. To determine the significant association between the difficulties in English grammar when they are grouped according to variables Chi Square analysis of variance was used.

DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED BY THAI STUDENT NURSES IN GRAMMAR

The second objective on Grammar focused on the areas of Sentence Patterns, Subject-Verb Agreement, and Verb Tenses and tense Forms. Data gathered were tallied and computed in a statistical form. The difficulties were ranked accordingly based on the frequency of errors committed by the respondents. As shown in the data, difficulties in the

three areas vary. Tables 2, 3 and 4 show the results of this study.

IN THE AREA OF SENTENCE PATTERN

Table 2 shows that 65 respondents had difficulty in answering item number 6. Only two respondents committed errors in numbers 1 and 2 which are the lowest frequencies. Out of 145 respondents, 38 respondents committed errors in number 5, 26 in number 7 and the remaining numbers have lower errors committed. It clearly proves that the respondents have difficulty in the use of predicate, subject and object in the sentences provided.

In the difficulties encountered in grammar specifically in sentence patterns, respondents have difficulties in subject + verb + object + complement which has the highest frequency followed by subject + linking verb + complement. Results imply that respondents encountered difficulty arranging words in English sentences with predicate verb followed by two noun objects and adjective complement. The pattern is undoubtedly different from that of Thai native language.

As quoted in Liboon (2010) from Arias' (2004) findings it was stated that mastery of the basic sentence patterns and the relatively fixed word order in English is essential if you are to be successful in speaking and writing the language.

TABLE 2

DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED BY THAI STUDENT NURSES IN GRAMMAR IN THE AREA OF SENTENCE PATTERN

DIFFICULTIES	FREQUENCY	RANK
1. Subject + Verb	2	9.5
2. There + Verb + Subject	2	9.5
3. Subject + Verb + Object	7	5
4. Verb + Subject Pattern	11	4
5. Subject + Linking Verb + Complement	38	2
6. Subject + Verb + Object + Complement	65	1
7. Subject + Verb + Indirect + Object + Direct Object	26	3
8. Verb + Subject	6	6
9. Auxiliary Verb + Subject + Main Verb + the rest of the question	5	7
10. Auxiliary Verb + Subject + Main Verb + and the rest of the question	4	8

IN THE AREA OF SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT

The data in this area are shown in Table 3. Item number 2 got the highest frequency (ranked 1); there were 58 respondents who have difficulties in number 7 (ranked 2). Numbers 3 and 6 ranked 3 and 4 respectively. Results

Reveal that the respondents have difficulty with collective nouns used as the subject in the sentence.

Thais have different examples in a plural form like "ying sib khon" which literally means "women ten people" which is far more different from the English language as Kanchananaga (2001) stated.

TABLE 3

DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED BY THAI STUDENT NURSES IN GRAMMAR IN THE AREA OF SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT

DIFFICULTIES	FREQUENCY	RANK
1. Singular Subject + Singular Verb	12	10
2. Collective Noun (Singular) + Singular Verb	68	1
3. Singular Subject + Singular Verb	55	3
4. Plural Subject + Verb in Singular form	24	7
5. Compound Subject + Plural Verb	25	6
6. Plural Subject + Plural Verb	51	4
7. Plural Indefinite Pronoun (Few) + Plural Verb	58	2
8. Plural Pronoun + Verb in Singular form	17	8
9. Plural Subject + Verb in Singular form	15	9
10. Collective Noun + Singular Verb	29	5

IN THE AREA OF VERB TENSES AND TENSE FORMS

The next table shows the frequency result in the area of tenses of verbs which is the last area in grammar.   Item number 7 had the highest frequency (ranked 1), 78 out of 145 respondents; number 5 is next in rank with a frequency of 59; number 8 got 29 respondents who have

difficulty in answering correctly and number 4 got the lowest frequency. Results show that the respondents have difficulty using the past tense, future tense and present tense forms of verbs.

As Wang (2006) stated, EFL or ESL learners need more exercises during the processes of learning and teaching

since it's very hard for students to master the features of the languages.

TABLE 4

DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED BY THAI STUDENT NURSES IN GRAMMAR IN THE AREA OF VERB TENSES OR VERB FORMS

Difficulties	Frequency	Rank
1. Present Perfect Tense form: have never been	45	5
2. Simple Future - will give	32	8
3. Simple Future - will speak	50	3.5
4. Present Progressive - are studying	10	10
5. Future Perfect Tense - will have set	59	2
6. Passive Past - were designed	35	7
7. Past Progressive - was giving	78	1
8. Future tense - will give	29	9
9. Present Progressive (Plural) - are going	39	6
10. Present Perfect - has given	50	3.5

LEVELS OF DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED BY THAI STUDENT NURSES IN GRAMMAR WHEN THEY ARE GROUPED ACCORDING TO VARIABLES

The third concern of this study is focused on the levels of difficulties encountered by the respondents in grammar in the areas of sentence pattern, subject verb agreement and verb tenses and tense forms when they are grouped according to the three variables indicated.   Statistics on this issue are presented in Table 5.

BY RELIGION

Analysis of the data discloses that among the three areas, the third area which is the verb tenses and tense forms got

the mean of 5.26 for Muslims which means "Moderately Difficult" and 4.74 for Buddhists which verbally interpreted as "Less Difficult." Each area differs from the different variables indicated; the commonality lies on the area of sentence pattern since in all the variables, the respondents find it not difficult to answer. Therefore, to summarize the result, it shows that the respondents have no difficulty in grammar specifically in sentence pattern, and less difficulty in subject-verb agreement. It also shows that Muslims have difficulty in the verb tenses and tense forms than Buddhists do.

As Arunee Wiriyachitra (2002), a Thai national, she had stated that Thais' level of English proficiency is low in comparison with many countries in Asia like in Malaysia, Philippines and Singapore. A speech given by the Minister of the Ministry of University Affairs in March 2000 declared that the average TOEFL scores of Thais were the same as Mongolians but higher than North Koreans and

Japanese. For Thai people, appropriate and better knowledge in English language bring success since they can travel and communicate in English to different people from different countries.

BY FAMILY MONTHLY INCOME

Family monthly income is the second variable indicated in the research study. On the basis of the result, in all areas, the respondents got the result which is "Not Difficult" and "Less Difficult" respectively as shown in the presentation of the table below. The category below 20,000 baht shows that in the area of sentence pattern, the respondents got the mean of 1.24 which means "Not Difficult," while in the category 20,000 baht and above the mean is 1.78. In the area of subject-verb agreement and verb tenses and tense forms the mean scores are 4.25 and 4.85 respectively which means "Less Difficult" for both categories. The result proves that family monthly income below 20,000 baht and 20,000 baht and above do not have any influence on the respondents' difficulty in grammar.

Thai-Muslim students may have difficulty in the study of the English language since they learn how to speak several languages while Thai-Buddhist students may have high level of difficulty in English since they only learn Thai language.

BY HIGH SCHOOL ORIGIN

In both categories, public and private schools have something in common except for the verb tenses and tense forms which got the mean scores of 4.77 for students from public high school which means "Less Difficult" and 5.15 for those from private high school which means "Moderately Difficult." Public and private schools have the mean scores of 1.92 and 1.76 respectively in the area of sentence pattern. While in the area of subject-verb agreement public got the mean score of 4.22 and private got the mean score of 4.54. Table 5 shows the result of the mean scores. This means that those respondents who came from public schools do not differ in their learning of grammar with those who came from private schools. The

table below shows the result.

In order to improve the skills of the students in the English language, Camposilao (2005) stated as cited in Liboon's study (2010) that "language teaching today combines two approaches. Students study vocabulary and rules of grammar while practicing the skills of interpersonal, interpretative, and presentational communication".

TABLE 5

LEVELS OF DIFFICULTIES IN ENGLISH GRAMMAR ENCOUNTERED BY THAI STUDENT NURSES ACCORDING TO AREAS AND SELECTED VARIABLES

Areas	Religion		Family Monthly Income		High School Origin	
	Buddhist	*Muslim*	*Below 20,000 Baht*	*20,000 Baht and above*	*Public*	*Private*
Sentence Pattern	Not Difficult x=1.88	Not Difficult x= 1.96	Not Difficult x= 1.24	Not Difficult x= 1.78	Not Difficult x= 1.92	Not Difficult x= 1.76
Subject-Verb Agreement	Less Difficult x=4.25	Less Difficult x= 4.34	Less Difficult x= 4.25	Less Difficult x= 4.35	Less Difficult x= 4.22	Moderately Difficult x= 4.54
Verb Tenses and Tense Forms	Moderately Difficult x= 4.74	Moderately Difficult x= 5.26	Moderately Difficult x= 4.85	Moderately Difficult x= 4.83	Moderately Difficult x= 4.77	Moderately Difficult x= 5.15

SIGNIFICANT ASSOCIATION BETWEEN THE DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED BY THAI STUDENT NURSES IN GRAMMAR WHEN THEY ARE GROUPED ACCORDING TO RELIGION

Table 6 shows that there is no significant association between the difficulties in English grammar encountered by the respondents and their religion as indicated by the obtained Chi Square Test of 16.78 in the area of sentence pattern; however, 76.71 obtained in the area of subject-verb agreement and 35.72 in the area of verb tenses and tense forms which are higher than the critical value of 16.92 at 0.05 level of significance. The result shows that in the area of sentence pattern, there is no

significant association since the chi square result which is 16.78 is lower than the critical value which is 16.92. On the other hand, in the areas of subject-verb agreement, and verb tenses and tense forms, results show that there is significant association since the chi square result which is

76.71 and 35.72 respectively are higher than the critical value. The null hypothesis is therefore accepted in the area of sentence pattern and in the areas of subject-verb agreement and verb tenses and tense forms the null hypothesis is rejected. The tables are shown on the following pages respectively.

As mentioned earlier in the Thai national, Arunee Wiriyachitra (2001), she stated in her study that Thais' level of English proficiency is low when compared with the countries in Asia like in Malaysia, Philippines and Singapore. Moreover, the Minister of the Ministry of University Affairs in March 2000 declared in his speech that the average TOEFL scores of Thais were the same as Mongolians but higher than North Koreans and Japanese. Appropriate and better knowledge in English language bring success since they can travel and communicate in English to different people from different countries, for Thai people.

TABLE 6

SIGNIFICANT ASSOCIATION BETWEEN THE DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED BY THAI STUDENT NURSES IN GRAMMAR WHEN THEY ARE GROUPED ACCORDING TO RELIGION

Score Range	Sentence Pattern		Subject-Verb Agreement		Verb Tenses and Tense Forms	
	Buddhist	Muslim	Buddhist	Muslim	Buddhist	Muslim
1	3	0	14	0	79	17
2	4	1	68	13	36	9
3	8	2	67	16	47	14
4	9	3	40	8	16	6
5	37	4	35	6	93	22
6	76	12	73	17	53	16
7	29	8	96	22	64	18

8	6	1	26	5	57	15
9	7	0	27	7	48	3
10	10	1	62	11	57	15
	X^2 = 16.78		X^2 = 76.71		X^2 = 35.72	
	df = 9;	α = 0.05;	Critical Value (X^2) = 16.92			
Interpretation	Not Significant		Significant		Significant	

SIGNIFICANT ASSOCIATION BETWEEN THE DIFFICULTIES IN ENGLISH GRAMMAR OF THAI STUDENTS WHEN THEY ARE GROUPED ACCORDING TO MONTHLY FAMILY INCOME

Table 7 shows that the Thai student nurses' monthly family income is significantly associated with their difficulties in the areas of subject verb-agreement and verb tenses and tense forms as indicated in the tables below. The obtained values are 22.05, and 21.20 respectively

which are higher than the critical value of 16.92 at 0.05 level of significance. But in the area of sentence pattern, the obtained value is 13.93, lower than the critical value.

The result reflects that in the area of sentence pattern, there is no significant association that exists and the null hypothesis is accepted while in the area of subject-verb agreement and verb tenses and tense forms the null hypothesis is rejected.

TABLE 7

SIGNIFICANT ASSOCIATION BETWEEN THE DIFFICULTIES IN ENGLISH GRAMMAR OF THAI STUDENTS WHEN THEY ARE GROUPED ACCORDING TO MONTHLY FAMILY INCOME

	Sentence Pattern		Subject-Verb Agreement		Verb Tenses and Tense Forms	
Score Range	Below 20,000 Baht	20,000 Baht and above	Below 20,000 Baht	20,000 Baht and above	Below 20,000 Baht	20,000 Baht and above
1	3	0	12	2	80	19
2	3	2	73	8	46	7
3	8	2	71	12	53	8
4	9	3	42	6	20	2
5	32	8	34	7	98	17
6	61	13	75	15	51	18
7	34	3	95	23	66	16
8	7	3	25	6	62	10
9	6	1	24	10	42	9
10	4	1	62	11	67	10
	X^2 = 13.93		X^2 = 22.05		X^2 = 21.20	
	df = 9;	α = 0.05;	Critical Value (X^2) = 16.92			
Interpretation	Not Significant		Significant		Significant	

SIGNIFICANT ASSOCIATION BETWEEN THE DIFFICULTIES IN ENGLISH GRAMMAR OF THAI STUDENTS WHEN THEY ARE GROUPED ACCORDING TO HIGH SCHOOL ORIGIN

Table 8 also shows that in three different tables as shown

in the following pages, there is no significant association between the difficulties in English grammar and the high school origin of the Thai student nurses as reflected in the

results of the Chi Square Test, which are 13.61, 21.02 and 9.13 respectively in the areas of sentence pattern and verb tenses and tense forms. The null hypothesis in these areas is accepted while in the areas of subject-verb agreement, the result is 21.02 and the null hypothesis is rejected. The result presented implies that the difficulties encountered by the respondents coming from public or private high schools with or without exposure to school facilities that aid in their learning for a foreign language - English are not

associated or influenced by their high school background.

Although in the area of subject-verb agreement there is significant association between their difficulties and high school origin.

As quoted in Occeña (2003) from Jasmin Montejo's study on Proficiency Level of High School Seniors in Written English, her findings indicated the slightly low proficiency level of the respondents in an organization like sentence structure and in grammar, punctuation and spelling. In her

recommendations; more emphasis should be given to organization, sentence structure in the area of description by making the students understand the structure and principles of grammar and syntax. Likewise, teachers should give emphasis on grammar, punctuation and spelling in all areas of written composition. Teaching techniques, procedures and strategies should be well chosen by English teachers to help students minimize, if not eliminate the errors committed.

TABLE 8

SIGNIFICANT ASSOCIATION BETWEEN THE DIFFICULTIES IN ENGLISH GRAMMAR OF THAI STUDENTS WHEN THEY ARE GROUPED ACCORDING TO HIGH SCHOOL ORIGIN

	Sentence Pattern		Subject-Verb Agreement		Verb Tenses and Tense Forms	
Score Range	Public	Private	Public	Private	Public	Private
1	2	1	14	0	82	12
2	4	1	70	11	45	8
3	10	0	69	14	52	8
4	11	1	38	10	16	6
5	32	8	34	7	98	15
6	77	11	73	17	56	11
7	31	6	100	18	70	10
8	6	1	28	3	61	9
9	6	1	30	4	44	7
10	4	1	64	9	63	12
	$X^2 = 13.61$		$X^2 = 21.02$		$X^2 = 9.13$	
	df = 9;		α = 0.05;	Critical Value (X^2) = 16.92		
Interpretation	Not Significant		Significant		Not Significant	

CONCLUSIONS

1. In English grammar, generally, Thai students find the sentence patterns not difficult; with subject-verb agreement the respondents have less difficulty but have less and moderate difficulty in verb tenses and tense forms.

2. Results imply that respondents encountered difficulty arranging words in English sentences with predicate verb followed by two noun objects and adjective complement. The pattern is undoubtedly different from that of Thai native language.

3. The respondents whose native language has a different grammar system would find the English grammar system specifically in the subject-verb agreement area indeed difficult.

4. Results show that Thai students have difficulty using the

past progressive, future perfect tense, perfect tense, simple future, present progressive tenses and the passive past and past participle forms of verbs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. English and TESOL teachers with Thai, Filipino and speakers of other language learners when preparing lessons and instructional materials could help facilitate learning of their students if needs analysis is conducted at the start of classes. The needs of the students as well as the requirements of the country's education ministry or agency and that of the school should be taken into considerations in their syllabus design, selection and preparation of topics to be taught in grammar classes. Grammar skills must be the focus and diverse and varied activities for this skill should be planned and utilized inside and outside the classroom.

2. Thai, Filipino and other foreign students could benefit much if determined to learn English if they focus on the areas of weaknesses in grammar and be willing to take the risk to use the English language every opportunity they get.

3. School administrators should conduct a review of their

institutional programs and find out where English language teaching could fit in their curricula. They could provide much needed opportunity and venue for Thai students to be immersed in the language.

4. Qualified English and TESOL teachers could be employed to coordinate and implement English teaching and learning programs of the school.

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