

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of the Study

This study investigated the types and frequency of global and local errors which were made by a group of students in their written works and took the further step to look at the types and frequency of global errors in those written works identified as more incomprehensible as well. The subjects participating in the study were 59 first year Business Administration students who took Foundation English II in the second semester of the academic year 2000 at Prince of Songkla University, Hat Yai Campus. The data of this study were derived from students' written works, which ranged from 150 to 252 words. Two types of data analysis were conducted: analysis of types and frequency of global and local errors, and analysis of comprehensibility of written works. The findings of this study can be summarised as follows:

1. In all students' written works it was found that global errors with a high frequency of occurrence were errors of lexicon and syntax. Global lexical errors were mainly the students' misuse of verbs and nouns. With respect to global syntactic errors, errors in prepositions of place/position occurred most frequently when they were misused or omitted. The second highest number of global syntactic errors was errors in incomplete structures. They were found most frequently when fragments other than 'but clause', 'when/while clause', 'prepositional phrase' or 'because clause' were used as a complete sentence. The third highest number of global syntactic errors was errors in word order/word position. They occurred most

frequently when two nouns were in the wrong position. Local errors with a high frequency of occurrence were syntactic errors and lexical errors respectively. The number of local syntactic errors was much higher than that of local lexical errors as the syntactic category included the largest number of sub-types of errors which did not impede the comprehensibility of the written works. The frequent errors in syntax were determiner errors, tense errors, pronoun errors and preposition errors. Errors in determiners were mainly caused by misuse or omission of the definite article and the indefinite articles. Errors in tenses occurred most frequently when simple past and past continuous were misused. Errors in pronouns were frequently found when nouns were repeated in place of using subject or object pronouns. Errors in prepositions occurred most frequently when prepositions of place/position and prepositions of direction/motion were misused, and prepositions as adverbial particles of verbs were omitted. Local lexical errors were frequently found as a result of the students' misuse of verbs. It should be pointed out that both global and local errors with a high frequency of occurrence were errors of lexicon and syntax. However, local errors occurred in reverse order of frequency. That is, local errors with a high frequency of occurrence were errors of syntax and lexicon respectively. Besides, global and local errors of lexicon and syntax which occurred most frequently were errors in misuse of verbs and errors in misuse of prepositions expressing place/position.

2. Global errors that were frequently found in those written works identified as more incomprehensible were both global lexical and syntactic errors. Nevertheless, global errors in lexicon occurred more frequently than those in syntax. Global lexical errors were mainly caused by the students' misuse of verbs and nouns in order of frequency. As for global syntactic errors, errors in prepositions occurred most frequently as a result of the students' misuse or omission of prepositions of place/position. The second highest number of global syntactic errors was errors in incomplete structures. These errors occurred most frequently when 'but-clauses' and

fragments other than 'but clause', 'because clause', 'when clause' or 'prepositional phrase' were used as a complete structure. It should be noted that global errors with a high frequency of occurrence in all students' written works and in those written works identified as more incomprehensible were errors of lexicon and syntax. Global lexical errors were mainly caused by the students' misuse of verbs and nouns. Global syntactic errors occurred most frequently when prepositions of place/position were misused and omitted, and incomplete structures were used as a complete structure.

5.2 Pedagogical Implications

Six major implications can be drawn from the findings of this study. They are as follows:

1. It is essential for teachers to pay attention to global errors which lead to incomprehensibility and which indicate students' problems in using certain linguistic features due to their incomplete learning and the complexity of English structure. Students should be informed and encouraged to learn the English language from their errors. Students' errors should be presented in the classroom so that students can see their weaknesses in learning a language. Also, teachers should find ways to help students learn better by designing proper remedial materials and planning appropriate teaching techniques to overcome students' specific difficulties.

2. Since it was found that lexical errors in misuse of verbs and nouns were frequently produced by the students in this study both as global and local errors, it is important that teachers build up students' vocabulary repertoire through class activities and instructional materials. In teaching vocabulary, especially verbs, teachers should teach their forms, meanings and how to use them. Moreover, words with similar meanings should be introduced in their own context at different times. Also, teachers should provide students with strategies for learning vocabulary.

3. Another area that deserves attention is preposition usage. It was found that both global and local errors in misuse of prepositions of place/position were frequently produced by the students in this study. It is essential that teachers design materials and provide students with supplementary exercises which encourage them to practice using prepositions.

4. Since it was found that global errors in incomplete structures were frequently made in this study, it is important that teachers raise students' awareness of the relationship between dependent clauses and independent clauses. Also, students should be encouraged to practice writing compound and complex sentences. Besides, they should be taught to use punctuation properly.

5. Students in this study often produced local errors in determiners, tenses and pronouns. Although these errors do not always hinder the comprehensibility of students' written works, they indicate that students have not mastered these linguistic features. This should be a teachers' point of concern because mastering these features will enable students to use them accurately. Errors in determiners were caused by the absence of determiner system in Thai. Teachers should employ a contrastive analysis and make students aware of the distinction between Thai and English. Also, it is important that teachers devise materials and provide exercises which encourage students to practice using articles. Errors in tenses were frequently produced because the students did not use correct tenses appropriate to the context. It is, therefore, important that teachers teach both rules of use and rules of usage since it is not enough for students to master only linguistic forms. They must also be aware of their functions as well. Errors in pronouns were caused by the different rules of usage between Thai and English. It is essential for teachers to raise in students' mind a distinction between Thai and English.

6. Spelling errors can, at times, lead to difficulty in understanding students' written works. Since one of the causes of spelling errors may be mispronunciation, it

is important that teachers teach vocabulary and pronunciation simultaneously in order to help decrease spelling errors.

5.3 Recommendations for Further Research

On the basis of this study, some recommendations for further research can be provided as follows:

1. To get more information on the causes of certain errors students make in their compositions, an interview should be incorporated in further research. This will help the researcher understand better what the students intend to convey. Also, the researcher will get more accurate information and analysis of students' errors.

2. Future research should investigate errors made by students at other levels such as second and third year students to find out whether they produce the same types of errors. Also, it would be interesting to conduct a longitudinal study in which the researcher continuously collects the data over a longer period of time to analyse systematic errors. This will provide a better understanding of learning process of the students and implications for teaching methods including ways to handle their errors.

3. In order to gain a better understanding of students' difficulty in writing free compositions, future research should investigate errors most problematic for students, i.e. verbs, nouns, prepositions, and incomplete structures. The results of such study will provide teachers with suggestions for appropriate methods of error correction, teaching techniques and learning activities.

4. The data for this study were collected by using a composition. To get more specific information about students' knowledge and vocabulary, it would be useful to analyse errors by employing other types of test such as multiple choice and cloze tests.