

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the results and discussion derived from the data analysis in two sections. The first section reports and discusses the types and frequency of global and local errors in all students' written works. The second section presents and discusses the types and frequency of global errors in students' written works considered more incomprehensible.

4.1 Types and Frequency of Global and Local Errors in All Students' Written Works

Table 4.1 shows the types and frequency of global and local errors the students made in their written works.

Table 4.1 A Summary of Types and Frequency of Global and Local Errors in All Students' Written Works

Types of Errors	Global Errors		Local Errors	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Lexical Errors	247	53.58	230	10.09
Syntactic Errors	201	43.60	1,686	73.98
Morphological Errors	6	1.30	195	8.56
Orthographic Errors	7	1.52	168	7.37
TOTAL	461	100.00	2,279	100.00

The results of the study presented in Table 4.1 show that global errors with respect to lexicon occurred most frequently (53.58%). This was followed by syntactic errors (43.60%), morphological errors (1.30%), and orthographic errors (1.52%). As for local errors, syntactic errors formed the largest group or 73.98% of the total number of local errors. This was followed by lexical errors (10.09%), morphological errors (8.56%), and orthographic errors (7.37%).

Based on the data presented in Table 4.1, three observations can be made. First, global and local errors in lexicon and syntax occurred at a much higher rate than those in morphology and orthography. Second, global and local errors in lexicon and syntax occurred in reverse order of frequency. In other words, global errors with a high frequency of occurrence were errors in lexicon and syntax respectively whereas local errors with a high frequency of occurrence were errors in syntax and lexicon respectively. Third, local lexical errors occurred at a much lower rate than local syntactic errors. One possible explanation is that the syntactic category included the largest number of sub-types of errors which did not hinder the comprehensibility of the written works such as determiners and tenses.

The findings of types of global and local errors with a high frequency of occurrence, namely global and local errors of lexicon and syntax, will be presented and discussed in detail later in this section. The findings of types of global and local errors with a low frequency of occurrence, namely global and local errors of morphology and orthography, will be presented and discussed briefly first in this section. In so doing, the reader will be referred to relevant appendices for the summary and details of the findings. Examples of errors presented in this chapter are drawn from the data in this study. The students' errors are in italics and correct words or structures are given in brackets.

4.1.1 Morphological Errors

It was found that verb morphology errors occurred most frequently both in global and local types (see **Appendix D, Table 1**). However, as shown in Table 4.1, global morphological errors accounted for the smallest number of global errors. They occurred most frequently when ‘verb+ing’ was substituted for ‘verb+ed’. (See **Appendix D, Table 2**.) Examples are as follows:

<i>The old man was <u>boring</u>.</i>	(bored)
<i>Two children were <u>interesting</u>.</i>	(interested)

These errors might have resulted from the students’ confusion over the use of reverse psychological verbs (Burt, 1975; cited in Charas Ubol, 1979). Reverse psychological verbs are verbs used to express a cause and describe someone’s feelings and the thing or person that produces those feelings. There are three different forms and meanings of reverse psychological verbs. The first form is ‘verb’ expressing a cause. The meaning of this verb form is to cause oneself or somebody to have a certain feeling toward the thing or person. For example, ‘to frighten’ means ‘to make someone afraid (of)’. The second and the third forms are differentiated by inflectional morphemes: verb + -ed and verb + -ing, for example ‘to be frightened’ and ‘frightening’. ‘To be frightened’ means that someone is in a state of fear. ‘Frightening’ means that the thing or person causes fear. In the above examples, the use of ‘boring’ and ‘interesting’ in place of ‘bored’ and ‘interested’ changed the meaning of the sentence. The reader was likely to misunderstand the students’ intended meaning because the students used wrong form of psychological verbs in writing their composition.

Local morphological errors occurred most frequently as a result of the students’ omission of the regular -ed past tense and using the wrong forms of irregular verbs. The number of errors in omission of the regular -ed past tense was, however,

slightly higher than that in using wrong irregular past forms. (See **Appendix D, Table 2.**) Nonetheless, these errors did not cause difficulty in understanding the sentences.

The following examples illustrate omitted regular past -ed errors:

He hope that he would get fish. (hoped)

He didn't know what happen. (happened)

The use of 'hope' and 'happen' in place of 'hoped' and 'happened' is an example of error resulting from incomplete application of rules. The students were not aware that verbs must be inflected for past tense.

The following examples illustrate errors in using wrong forms of irregular verbs:

He thinked it would be a big fish for his lunch. (thought)

They standed to see the old fisherman. (stood)

The form 'thinked' and 'standed' represents an overgeneralisation of the regular -ed past tense.

4.1.2 Orthographic Errors

Global and local orthographic errors were categorised into two groups: spelling errors and capitalisation errors. Global orthographic errors occurred most frequently as a result of the students' misspelling. As for local orthographic errors, the number of spelling errors was much higher than that of capitalisation errors. (See **Appendix E.**) Examples of spelling errors are as follows:

He alway taugh his children. (always/taught)

The boy swam to his freinds under the bridge. (friends)

The first example reveals that the students probably produced spelling errors because of their pronunciation. The form 'alway' and 'taugh' may indicate that the students did not pronounce the final sounds 's' and 't' respectively. The possible

cause was the absence of a final sound in Thai. When the students did not pronounce the final /s/ and /t/ the sounds did not appear in writing, resulting in spelling errors. The possible sources of error in the second example were the students' carelessness and ignorance of spelling rules.

Examples of capitalisation errors are as follows:

the boy cried and swam to the bank of the river. (The)

It wasn't a big fish but It was a shoe. (it)

A few minutes later, His fishing-rod was jerked. (his)

Errors in capitalisation were likely to be caused by students' carelessness and handwriting habits. The second and the third examples may indicate that the students presumed that the subjects of the clauses had to be capitalised.

4.1.3 Lexical Errors

Table 4.2 presents the types and frequency of global and local lexical errors found in all students' written works.

Table 4.2 Types and Frequency of Global and Local Lexical Errors

Lexical Errors	Global Errors		Local Errors	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1. Verbs	127	51.42	152	66.09
2. Nouns	83	33.60	33	14.35
3. Adverbs	20	8.10	34	14.78
4. Adjectives	17	6.88	11	4.78
TOTAL	247	100.00	230	100.00

See **Appendix F** for detailed findings.

Global and local lexical errors mainly resulted from the students' limited vocabulary repertoire. In other words, the students did not have the verbs, nouns, adverbs and adjectives that they needed for writing their composition.

From the data reported in Table 4.2, global errors related to verbs made up 51.42% of the total number of global lexical errors. This was followed by noun errors (33.60%), adverb errors (8.10%), and adjective errors (6.88%). With regard to local errors, verb errors accounted for 66.09% of the total number of local lexical errors, followed by noun errors (14.35%), adverb errors (14.78%), and adjective errors (4.78%). It can be noted that verb errors occurred most frequently both in global and local types. This indicates that the students have limited knowledge of verbs necessary for narrating the story.

4.1.3.1 Global Lexical Errors

Global lexical errors occurred most frequently when verbs and nouns were misused. However, errors in misuse of verbs occurred at a higher rate than those of nouns. (See **Appendix F**.)

The following examples illustrate errors in misuse of verbs:

The boy dived and took an old boot on a fishing-hook. (put)

The old fisherman pushed the fishing-rod. (pulled/jerked)

The first example indicates that the verb ‘took’ was misused and, therefore, this made the meaning of the sentence unclear. As for the second example, the use of ‘pushed’ in place of ‘pulled’ reveals that the student was confused by the opposite words.

The following examples illustrate errors in misuse of nouns:

The bait wasn’t fish. (prey)

He threw the fishing-rod into the river. (fishing-line)

In this study some useful vocabulary with Thai equivalents was given in the writing task used as a research instrument for collecting the data for the study. (See **Appendix A**.) The use of ‘bait’ in the first example resulted from the students’ misuse of the word given as a clue. They misunderstood the meaning of the word ‘bait’ and, therefore, misused it. The source of this error can be traced back to the students’ native language, Thai, in which three English words, ‘bait’, ‘prey’ and ‘victim’, are represented by only one Thai word. However, these three words do not have exactly the same meaning and they are used in different contexts. Consequently, the use of ‘bait’ in the first example made the meaning of the sentence unclear because the reader may wonder if the student wanted to talk about food put on a hook to catch fish or about animals hunted for food. In the second example, the error was caused by the students’ making a wrong lexical choice. This error affected the intelligibility of the

sentence because the reader might mistakenly believe that the subject of the sentence did not want to fish so he threw the fishing-rod away.

4.1.3.2 Local Lexical Errors

Local lexical errors occurred most frequently when verbs were misused. (See Appendix F.) The following examples illustrate such errors:

He saw around a river. (looked)

The boy dived into the river and brought a shoe to put on the fishing-hook. (took)

It is obvious that the above errors in misuse of verbs were caused by the students' confusion of words having close proximity in meaning.

4.1.4 Syntactic Errors

The following table presents the types and frequency of global and local syntactic errors the students produced in their written works.

Table 4.3 Types and Frequency of Global and Local Syntactic Errors

Syntactic Errors	Global Errors		Local Errors	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1. Prepositions	105	52.24	173	10.26
2. Incomplete Structures	31	15.42	1	0.06
3. Word Order/Word Position	28	13.93	23	1.36
4. Pronouns	17	8.46	205	12.16
5. Conjunctions/Connectors	12	5.97	67	3.97
6. Determiners	3	1.49	595	35.29
7. Tenses	2	0.99	354	20.99
8. Infinitives and Gerunds	1	0.50	66	3.91
9. Auxiliary	1	0.50	39	2.31
10. Run-on Sentences	1	0.50	-	-
11. Agreement	-	-	32	1.90
12. Punctuation	-	-	104	6.17
13. There-be	-	-	22	1.30
14. Negative Constructions	-	-	2	0.12
15. Possessive and Attributive Structures	-	-	2	0.12
16. It-be	-	-	1	0.06
TOTAL	201	100.00	1,686	100.00

See Appendix G for detailed findings.

The number of errors presented in Table 4.3 shows that local syntactic errors occurred at a much higher rate than global syntactic errors and they fell into many more sub-types of errors.

4.1.4.1 Global Syntactic Errors

Global syntactic errors regarding prepositions accounted for 52.24% of the total number of global syntactic errors. This was followed by errors in incomplete structures (15.42%) and errors in word order (13.93%). The types of global syntactic errors with a low frequency of occurrence are presented in detail in **Appendix G**. The following sections delineate the types of global syntactic errors with a high frequency of occurrence.

4.1.4.1.1 Errors in Prepositions of Place/Position

Global syntactic errors in prepositions of place/position occurred most frequently when they were misused and omitted. The number of errors in misuse of prepositions of place/position was, however, higher than that in omission. (See **Appendix G, Table 1**.) Misused prepositions of place/position often made the meaning of a sentence ambiguous. The following examples indicate that the students had difficulty in using prepositions of place/position.

There were many fish on the river. (in)

The boy swam over the bridge and clapped his hands. (under)

The use of ‘on’ in place of ‘in’ in the first example caused ambiguity of the meaning of the sentence. The reader may understand that the fish stayed on the surface of the river. As for the second example, the use of ‘over’ in place of ‘under’ may make the reader understand that the boy swam in a position higher than the bridge. These two errors were considered global errors because what the students intended to say did not exactly match the given pictures. Thus, the reader may misunderstand their intended meaning.

Omitted prepositions of place/position also made the meaning of a sentence unclear. The students did not indicate the relationship between prepositions and nouns. They might not know that if prepositions are omitted, nouns that follow will become objects of verbs in the sentences. Therefore, the reader may not know what the subjects of the sentences wanted to do with those nouns. Examples are as follows:

The boy took a boot to put ^ the fishing-hook. (on/onto)

At that time he sat ^ a bridge. (near/under)

In the first example ‘on/onto’ was omitted and, therefore, the reader may not know what the student intended to say. He or she may understand that the boy wanted to put the fishing-hook in a boot. In the second example it was difficult for the reader to understand the sentence because he or she did not know exactly where “he” sat.

4.1.4.1.2 Errors in Incomplete Structures

The second highest number of global syntactic errors was errors in incomplete structures. They occurred because fragments other than ‘but clause’, ‘when/while clause’, ‘prepositional phrase’ and ‘because clause’ were used as a complete sentence. (See Appendix G, Table 2.) Examples are as follows:

The other beautiful days for this old man.

And the same time that the boy who was diving for tease an old fisherman.

These errors caused difficulty in understanding the written works because the reader was not sure what the students intended to say. There may be two possible sources of errors in incomplete structures. First, the students could not use punctuation properly. This is probably because there is no punctuation in Thai.

Second, they did not understand the relationship between main clauses and subordinate clauses.

4.1.4.1.3 Errors In Word Order/Word Position

The third highest number of global syntactic errors was errors in word order. They occurred most frequently when two nouns were in the wrong word order. (See **Appendix G, Table 3.**) The following examples illustrate such errors:

He put the fishing-hook on the shoe. (the shoe... the fishing-hook)

He dived into the river and hung (the old shoe... the fishing-line)

the fishing-line on the old shoe.

These errors in word order made the meaning of the sentence unclear. The students produced these errors because they did not know the sentence structure. It seemed that the students used the patterns of their native language, Thai, in writing the composition. Occasionally, the order of two nouns in Thai can be interchanged without affecting the meaning of a sentence.

4.1.4.2 Local Syntactic Errors

As shown in Table 4.3, the top four categories of local errors regarding syntax were determiner errors (35.29%), tense errors (20.99%), pronoun errors (12.16%) and preposition errors (10.26%). The findings of types of local syntactic errors with a low frequency of occurrence are presented in detail in **Appendix G.** The following sections further present and discuss the types of local syntactic errors with a high frequency of occurrence.

4.1.4.2.1 Errors in Determiners

Errors of the indefinite articles occurred at a lower rate than those of the definite article (see **Appendix G, Table 6**). Obviously, one explanation for this finding is that there is no determiner system in Thai. This is supported by Charas Ubol (1979), Suphat Sukamolsun (1980), Suwannee Lukanavanich (1988), and Bamrung Torut (1997) who found that the main reason for determiner errors in their studies was the absence of an article system in Thai. Therefore, misuse or omission of articles was common among Thai students.

Errors in the definite article occurred most frequently when it was misused and omitted. However, errors in misuse occurred at a higher rate than those in omission. (See **Appendix G, Table 6**.) The following are examples of misused definite article errors:

There was the boy who was diving. (a)

He wished to get the big fish. (a)

In the above examples, the students used 'the' in sentences at the beginning of the story. This error indicates that the students did not know that 'a' has to be used before a singular countable noun that has not previously been made specific.

Examples of omitted definite article errors are as follows:

He threw ^ fishing-line into ^ river. (the/the)

He was sitting on ^ bank of ^ river. (the/the)

These examples indicate that the students were not aware that articles are obligatory in English. In these two examples 'the' is needed to make nouns particular in context.

Errors in the indefinite articles occurred most frequently when they were misused and omitted. However, the number of errors in misuse of the indefinite

articles was higher than that in omission. (See **Appendix G, Table 6.**) Examples of misused indefinite article errors are as follows:

*A boy and his friends had a good idea. A boy wanted to tease
the old man.* (The)

*There was a small boy who swam in the river. A small boy looked
at him.* (The)

The above examples reveal that the students were not aware that ‘the’ has to be substituted for ‘a’ when the following noun has already been mentioned.

Examples of omitted indefinite article errors are as follows:

Tom was ^ bad boy. (a)

He thought it was ^ fish. (a)

The above examples reveal that the students did not realise that an indefinite article is obligatory in English. In the first example ‘a’ is required before a noun defined by an adjective. As for the second example, ‘a’ has to be placed before a singular countable noun that has not previously been made specific.

4.1.4.2.2 Errors in Tenses

The second highest number of local errors dealing with syntax was tense errors. Simple past errors occurred most frequently, followed by past continuous errors. (See **Appendix G, Table 7.**) There are three possible explanations for errors in tenses in this study. Firstly, students in this study produced these common errors due to their ignorance of rule restrictions. The story begins with “There is an old fisherman who lives in a small village. One day he went to...” The expression ‘One day’ and the verb ‘went’ signal past tense but they used simple present and present continuous in narrating the story. This indicates that they were not aware of time and overused simple present which is always taught in the early stages of learning

English. The second possible source of errors in tenses was induction. That is, the errors might be partly induced by the context of this study. The students might have presumed that the present tense was required in writing their composition because the beginning of the story was “There is...”, without noticing the time expression ‘One day’ in the second sentence.

Examples of tense errors are as follows:

There is an old fisherman who lives in a small village. One day he went to a river. He wishes to get a big fish for his dinner. The children are swimming in the river.

The third source of errors in tenses was the students’ inconsistency in using tenses. Examples are shown below:

There is an old fisherman who lives in a small village. One day he went to the river. He went there with his daughter. He sits on the bank. The children are swimming under the bridge. They wanted to tease him.

The results of this study are consistent with the results of the studies conducted by Charas Ubol (1979), Suphat Sukamolsun (1980), Suwannee Lukanavanich (1988), Bamrung Torut (1997), and Lush (2002). They all suggest that errors in tenses might have resulted from the different ways of regarding time in the Thai and English languages. For Thai speakers, time is considered as a separate unit by itself and adverbs of time are used to clarify it (Bamrung Torut, 1997). Similarly, Suphat Sukamolsun (1980) and Lush (2002) state that tense is one of the major difficulties for Thai learners of English because, in Thai, the different time references rely on context and the use of adverbs of time. Also, there are no different forms of verbs and no inflections are required in Thai.

4.1.4.2.3 Errors in Pronouns

The third most frequent type of local syntactic errors was errors in the use of pronouns. They occurred mostly when nouns were repeated instead of using subject or object pronouns. (See **Appendix G, Table 4.**) The following examples illustrate such errors:

The old fisherman was very angry. The old fisherman looked around the river.

So the old man swam and caught the boy. The old man took the boy to his house.

It can be noticed that these errors, which did not impede the comprehensibility of the written works, were caused by the different rules of usage between Thai and English. In Thai, nouns can be repeated. In English, on the other hand, repeating nouns instead of using pronouns makes the language repetitious and awkward-sounding. This explanation is supported by Charas Ubol (1979) who states that the source of errors in pronouns might have resulted from the differences between Thai and English. In Thai, the substitution of pronouns for nouns is usually optional, while in English it is often almost obligatory, avoiding repetition.

4.1.4.2.4 Errors in Prepositions

The fourth highest number of local errors regarding syntax was errors in preposition usage. The students produced errors most frequently when prepositions expressing place/position and prepositions expressing direction/motion were misused, and when prepositions as an adverbial particle of verbs were omitted. (See **Appendix G, Table 1.**)

The following examples illustrate errors in misuse of prepositions of place/position:

The old man sat at the bank until he slept. (on)

Many children were swimming on the river. (in)

The source of error in the first example can be traced back to the students' native language, Thai, in which different English prepositions used to refer to places or positions are represented by one Thai preposition. In this sentence 'on' is required. As for the second example, the students used 'on' in place of 'in'. This is probably because they wanted to make a clear distinction between 'dive' and 'swim' since it is shown in the given pictures that one boy dived into the river while others were swimming.

The following are examples of errors in misuse of prepositions of direction/motion:

He dived in the river. (into)

The old man went back at the village. (to)

The above examples indicate that the students overgeneralised the prepositions 'in' and 'at'. They did not realise that in English different prepositions are used to refer to direction and location. In the first example 'into' must be used in place of 'in'. The source of error in the second example can be traced back to the students' native language, Thai. While two different prepositions 'at' and 'to' are employed in English, a single preposition expressing location and direction is used in Thai.

The following are examples of errors in omission of prepositions as an adverbial particle of verbs:

He waited ^ it for a long time. (for)

The children on the bank were laughing ^ him. (at)

His mother told him to apologise ^ his uncle. (to)

One possible explanation of these errors is that some English verbs occur with specific prepositions so the students need to learn and memorise them. This is supported by Bamrung Torut (1997), who states that a lot of English verbs occur with particular prepositions which have to be learned as an integral part of the verbs. Another possible source of these errors is the absence of prepositions as an adverbial particle of verbs in Thai.

The findings of types and frequency of global and local errors made by all students in their written works can be summed up as follows:

Global errors with a high frequency of occurrence were errors of lexicon and syntax. Global lexical errors occurred most frequently when verbs and nouns were misused. This reveals that errors in misuse hinder the intelligibility of the written works more than any other types of global lexical errors. As for global syntactic errors, it was found that errors in preposition usage occurred most frequently when prepositions of place/position were misused and omitted. This is followed by errors in incomplete structures and errors in word order/word position. Errors in incomplete structures occurred most frequently when fragments other than 'but clause', 'when/while clause', 'prepositional phrase' or 'because clause' were used as a complete sentence. With regard to errors in word order, they occurred most frequently when two nouns were in the wrong word order.

Local errors with a high frequency of occurrence were errors of syntax and lexicon. However, local syntactic errors occurred at a much higher rate than local lexical errors because the syntactic category included the largest number of sub-types of errors which did not cause difficulty in understanding the written works. The top four categories of local syntactic errors were errors in determiners, errors in tenses, errors in pronouns and errors in prepositions. Determiner errors were frequently found when the definite article and the indefinite articles were misused and omitted. Tense

errors occurred most frequently when simple past and past continuous were misused. Pronoun errors occurred most frequently as a result of the students' repetition of nouns instead of using subject or object pronouns. Preposition errors were mainly caused by the students' misuse of prepositions expressing place/position and prepositions expressing direction/motion, and omission of prepositions as an adverbial particle of verbs. Local lexical errors occurred most frequently when verbs were misused.

It should be pointed out that both global and local errors with a high frequency of occurrence were errors of lexicon and syntax respectively. 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. In addition, the frequent errors which occurred both in global and local types were errors in misuse of verbs and errors in misuse of prepositions expressing place/position. Thus, it might be concluded that errors in misuse cause difficulty in understanding the students' written works much more than any other types of errors.

4.2 More Incomprehensible Written Works

The cut-off point used as a basis for dividing students' written works into two groups was established by using the formula shown in **Chapter 3**. It was found that the cut-off point was 0.05. As a result of testing the efficacy of the established cut-off point in classifying the students' written works into two groups by having three Thai teachers of English read and classify the sample written works into two groups depending on the comprehensibility of those written works, it was found that most of their classification was in accord with the classification based on the cut-off point. Therefore, it can be assumed that the cut-off point used in this study was a viable tool

for classifying the students' written works into two groups: 1) more incomprehensible, and 2) less incomprehensible.

Once the cut-off point was applied to classify all the written works into two groups, it was found that 19 out of 59 written works were classified as more incomprehensible and 33 as less incomprehensible. Samples of more incomprehensible and less incomprehensible written works are shown in **Appendices B and C**. More incomprehensible written works were then analysed for global errors.

4.3 Types and Frequency of Global Errors in More Incomprehensible Written Works

This section presents and discusses the findings of types and frequency of global errors which lead to a work being defined as more incomprehensible. The findings were based on the analysis of 19 so-defined written works. Table 4.4 presents a summary of the findings.

Table 4.4 A Summary of Types and Frequency of Global Errors in More Incomprehensible Written Works

Types of Errors	Number	Percent
1. Lexical Errors	116	51.56
2. Syntactic Errors	101	44.89
3. Morphological Errors	5	2.22
4. Orthographic Errors	3	1.33
TOTAL	225	100.00

As shown in Table 4.4, lexical errors accounted for 51.56% of the total number of global errors in the students' more incomprehensible written works. This was followed by syntactic errors (44.89%), morphological errors (2.22%) and orthographic errors (1.33%). It should be pointed out that in general the findings of the types and frequency of global errors in more incomprehensible written works occurred in similar patterns as those in all written works reported earlier.

The findings of types of global errors with a low frequency of occurrence, namely global errors of morphology and those of orthography, will be first presented and discussed briefly. Then, the findings of types of global errors with a high frequency of occurrence, namely global errors of lexicon and those of syntax, will be presented and discussed in detail. In so doing, the reader will be referred to relevant appendices for the summary and further details of the findings.

4.3.1 Global Morphological Errors

Global morphological errors occurred most frequently when 'verb+ing' was used in place of 'verb+ed'. (See **Appendix H**.) Examples are as follows:

The old fisherman was very exciting. (excited)

He was very surprising again. (surprised)

These errors led to incomprehensibility because they changed the meaning of the sentence. The reader was likely to understand that the students wanted to describe the characteristics of the subject of each sentence, rather than the feelings of the subject.

4.3.2 Global Orthographic Errors

Orthographic errors accounted for the smallest number of global errors. They occurred when verbs were misspelled. (See **Appendix I.**) Examples are as follows:

He through he got a big fish. (thought)

It made him tough to tease the old man. (thought)

The first example reveals that the students produced spelling errors because they might be confused by words having some similarity in form. The second example illustrates that the students probably produced spelling errors because of their pronunciation problem. The pronunciation of /θ/ is problematic for Thai students because they may not have much opportunity to practice pronouncing this sound in class. Moreover, /θ/ does not exist in Thai. When facing a problem in pronunciation, students tend to simplify the problematic sound by selecting the closest sounds in Thai, namely /s/ and /t/. In this example the students chose /t/. Consequently, the ‘th’ in ‘thought’ was pronounced as /t/ instead of /θ/. Also, the final /t/ was probably omitted because of the students’ carelessness. Another possible cause is the absence of a final sound in Thai. Once the students did not pronounce the final /t/ the sound did not appear in writing, resulting in a spelling error.

4.3.3 Global Lexical Errors

Table 4.5 shows the types and frequency of global lexical errors in the students’ more incomprehensible written works.

Table 4.5 Types and Frequency of Global Lexical Errors

Types of Errors	Number	Percent
1. Verbs	63	54.30
2. Nouns	40	34.47
3. Adjectives	7	6.03
4. Adverbs	6	5.17
TOTAL	116	100.00

See Appendix J for detailed findings.

As shown in Table 4.5, verb errors accounted for 54.30% of the total number of global lexical errors. This was followed by noun errors (34.47%), adjective errors (6.03%) and adverb errors (5.17%).

Notably, errors in misuse occurred most frequently in all categories of global lexical errors. This indicates that misused verbs and nouns hinder the intelligibility of the written works more than any other types of lexical errors.

Examples are as follows:

Then he got the bait on the fishing-line. (put)

The old fisherman thought it was a big bait. (fish)

The first example indicates that the verb was misused and, therefore, the meaning of the sentence was not clear. The second example reveals that the word 'bait' was misused because the students misunderstood its meaning. As noted earlier, a likely explanation is that English has a wider range of words to refer to the same thing than Thai, causing some confusion for Thai students.

4.3.4 Global Syntactic Errors

Table 4.6 presents the types and frequency of global syntactic errors in the students' more incomprehensible written works.

Table 4.6 Types and Frequency of Global Syntactic Errors

Types of Errors	Number	Percent
1. Prepositions	55	54.46
2. Incomplete Structures	15	14.85
3. Conjunctions/Connectors	10	9.90
4. Word Order/Word Position	9	8.91
5. Pronouns	8	7.92
6. Determiners	1	0.99
7. Sequence of Tenses	1	0.99
8. Modal	1	0.99
9. Run-on Sentence	1	0.99
TOTAL	101	100.00

See **Appendix K** for detailed findings.

As shown in Table 4.6, among the nine categories of global syntactic errors found in the students' more incomprehensible written works, preposition errors occurred most frequently, accounting for 54.46% of the total number. The second highest number was errors in incomplete structures, making up 14.85% of the total number. The other seven categories of global syntactic errors occurred with a low frequency.

4.3.4.1 Global Errors in Prepositions

Syntactic errors most frequently found in more incomprehensible written works were errors in preposition usage, especially prepositions of place/position. (See **Appendix K, Table 1.**) Misused and omitted prepositions of place/position caused difficulty in understanding many written works. However, errors in misuse of prepositions of place/position occurred more frequently than those in omission.

Examples of misused prepositions of place/position are as follows:

This boy put a boot in the fishing-hook. (on/onto)

On the bridge have the boys who swims in the river. (under)

The use of 'in' in place of 'on/onto' in the first example caused difficulty in understanding the student's intended meaning. The reader may wonder if the fishing-hook is big enough for putting a boot in. This error indicates that the student was not aware that the misused preposition of place/position entirely changed the meaning of the sentence and hindered their intended meaning. The second example contains many errors, but the focus of discussion here is on the error in preposition use. The use of 'on' in place of 'under' reveals that a preposition expressing an opposite position was misused, and this made the meaning of the sentence unclear. The reader may not understand what the student wanted to say. He or she may wonder about the exact place or position of the subject of the sentence, the boys.

The following are examples of omitted preposition of place/position errors:

He dived into the river and took a shoe to put ^ the fishing-line. (on/onto)

The children stood ^ the old man. (near/behind/by)

These errors made it difficult to understand the sentences. The reader may not know what the students wanted to convey. As discussed earlier, omitted prepositions made the meaning of a sentence unclear. In the first example the reader may be led to think mistakenly that the subject of the sentence wanted to put the fishing-line in a

shoe. In the second example the preposition required to express the exact position of the children was omitted. This results in a missing relationship between the two words, namely ‘stood’ and ‘the old man’ in the sentence. Therefore, the reader may not clearly understand the sentence.

4.3.4.2 Global Errors in Incomplete Structures

The second highest number of global syntactic errors in the students’ more incomprehensible written works was errors in incomplete structures. They occurred because but-clauses and fragments other than ‘but clause’, ‘because clause’, ‘when clause’ and ‘prepositional phrase’ were used as a complete sentence (see **Appendix K, Table 2**). Examples are as follows:

The best thing that he could do.

Hours and hours ago.

A boy suspected that something in a river.

Because an old fisherman forgotten bait.

A possible explanation is that the students were not aware of the relationship between dependent clauses and independent clauses. Many clauses were used as a complete sentence, resulting in fragments or incomplete sentences. These errors hindered the intelligibility of the written works because the reader may not know what the students intended to say. Also, these fragments or incomplete structures had no relation with the preceding or following sentences in the written works. This, in turn, makes it difficult for the reader to make sure of all that was written.

The types and frequency of global errors found in those written works identified as more incomprehensible can be summarised as follows:

Global lexical and syntactic errors were found most frequently in the students' more incomprehensible written works. However, the number of errors in lexicon was higher than that in syntax. Global lexical errors occurred in order of frequency as a result of the students' misuse of verbs and nouns. This indicates that errors in misuse of verbs and nouns impede the comprehensibility of the written works more than any other types of lexical errors. With respect to global syntactic errors, the top two categories were errors in preposition usage and errors in incomplete structures. Preposition errors occurred most frequently when prepositions of place/position were misused and omitted. Errors in incomplete structures 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.

Based on the aforementioned findings in this study, 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 lexical and syntactic errors. Global lexical errors occurred most frequently as a result of the students' misuse of verbs and nouns. Global syntactic errors were mainly caused by the students' misuse and omission of prepositions expressing place/position, and the students' use of incomplete structures as a complete structure.