

THAI STUDENTS' WRITTEN ENGLISH

.....A Syntactic Analysis

John Paul Fieg

Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University

I. INTRODUCTION Learning to speak grammatical, idiomatic, appropriate English is clearly not an easy task for native speakers of Thai. For in their language, articles do not exist, verbs are not inflected, and a single relative pronoun embraces "that" and the various WH-forms in English. To make matters worse, semantic fields often do not nicely overlap in the two languages, certain constructions differ considerably and differences in rhythm and intonation make pronunciation a persistent problem.

Given these substantial differences between the two languages, are there certain areas which one could predict would pose problems for Thai students generally? If these areas could be isolated, a teacher could then plan lessons which would deal with these specific problems, thus leading to a more efficient use of classroom time. Individual students, of course, might have certain additional difficulties, and a well-prepared teacher should be aware of these individual problems as well.

In this paper, I will examine the writings of four Thai students in order first to search out any common errors they may be making and then to focus in specifically on each individual student to see what additional problems each has. A brief "English profile" will then be prepared for each student; this profile could assist a teacher in knowing what specific areas to concentrate on and also which areas to avoid. Errors in verb tense, word choice, and article and preposition usage -- though considerable -- will not be considered. Rather the focus will be on specific constructions which are giving the students problems.

Absolute generalizations are naturally impossible from such a

small number of students. But the mere fact that four individuals with differing educational backgrounds, exposures to English, and current English-language programs share certain problems might well indicate that these areas would pose problems for Thai students generally.

The four students will be identified simply as A,B,C, and D. Student A is a University of Hawaii(UH) graduate student in public health. This is her first semester at UH, but some time ago she lived in the United States for about four years. Data for this student were taken from eight in-class essays, which she wrote for an English language course. B, who is in his second semester at Hawaii Pacific College, studied English formally in Thailand for more than 12 years and also worked in a Bangkok hotel where he spoke English with the guests, but, as he put it, "not quite well." His data come from five essays which he wrote as out-of-class assignments for a writing course.

C is in the same class at Hawaii Pacific College, and, like B, had approximately 12 years of formal instruction in Thailand, most of which he "hated" because of all the rules and vocabulary that had to be memorized. He furnished four essays written outside of class. D is a senior at a local high school and has been in the U.S. for about two years. Her data consist of 77 in-class writing exercises, which she cranked out daily over the course of the fall semester.

II. ERRORS IN COMMON

A. "Although (Even though)..." construction. Each student has trouble with this construction, as we can see from an examination of several sentences. For the sake of clarity, only relevant portions of sentences will be given, and errors outside the scope of the point under consideration will sometimes be corrected (see Appendix for original sentences). The letters in parentheses following the sentence identify the author as student A,B,C, or D.

(1) Although she enjoyed with her new jobs but she would like to learn more experiences in the new world. (A)

(2) Although old people are weakness and senile minds, but they are the same of us. (B)

(3) Although someone said that the population will explosion, but we can use technology and science to stop population explosion. (C)

(4) Even though the development of scientific is going higher and higher, but nothing can influence what's people believe. (D)

Since all four students incorrectly insert "but" to introduce the second clause, it would appear that they are transferring to English the pattern which exists in Thai:

Although he wants to go to the U.S., he still hasn't gone.

ถึงแม้ว่า	เขา	อยาก	จะ	ไป	สหรัฐ	แต่	เขา	ก็	ยัง	ไม่	ได้	ไป
thyn mae waa	khaw	jaak	ca	paj	saharat	tæ	khaw	koo	jan	maj	daj	paj
Although	he	want	to	go	U.S.	but	he		still	not	get	to
												go

(adverb-auxiliary not translated into English)

Interestingly enough, student D also at times uses the correct form:

(5) Even though sometimes the truth is harmful in the first place, it will turn out good at last. (D)

(6) ...Even though I am a foreign student, I could still be good and have a chance to get the award. (D)

This indicates that her everyday exposure to an all-English environment at high school has at least partially broken down this transference from Thai. Perhaps if she simply considers how the sentence should sound in English, she will form a correct sentence; whereas, if she instead thinks first of the corresponding Thai sentence, she will

erroneously insert "but."

B. Confusion of "have" and "there is (are)." A single Thai verb (มี-มี) embraces both "to have" and "there is (are)" in English. Thus the students seem at times confused as to which English meaning is appropriate, as illustrated in the following sentences (words in parentheses indicate the supposed intended meaning of the student):

(7) So all in the world has (=there are) about 4 billion people.
(B)

(8) An old person might be near death or there isn't (=he doesn't have) anything to do. (C)

(9) ...In racing (=there is) always has a winner and a loser. (D)

(10) ... In this whole wide world there still have (=are) a lot of poor people.... (D)

C. Problems with "most," "almost," "almost all (of the)...." Exactly how to fit these words together with NPs seems to puzzle the students, as can be seen from the following sentences:

(11) Almost people live in the extended families....(A)

(12) Almost of old people are afraid of old age.... (C)

(13) ...Almost all of old people...are in old peoples' homes. (C)

(14) Almost twelve we stopped and ate our sandwiches. (D)

In sentences (11), (12), and (13) the problem is putting together the right combination of "almost," "all," and "of" (or simply substituting "most"); in sentence (14), the initial preposition "at" is missing. In the first three sentences, the root of the problem might be in a confusion between "almost" and "most" coupled with the identical sound "all" and "al" (in almost). For in Thai there is a clear distinction in sound between the word for "most" (ส่วนมาก -

suanmaak) and the words for "almost" (แทบ - thaeb and เกือบ - kyab). Also complicating things is the fact that all of these words in English precede the noun; whereas in Thai "suanmaak" follows the noun, while "thaeb" and "kyab" precede it. Corresponding English and Thai phrases are given below:

Most people	คน	ส่วนมาก
	khon	suanmaak
	people	most

Almost all of the people

แทบ (เกือบ)	ทุก	คน
thaeab (kyab)	thuk	khon
almost	every	person

The Thai students seem either to be using "almost" when they should be using "most" or else correctly using "almost" but then fouling up the placement of "all" and "of" since the corresponding "almost" phrases in Thai (thaeb and kyab) do not follow the "almost all of the..." pattern in English.

D. Problems with comparisons such as "same as," "equal to," and "more than." A sampling of student errors in this area is given below:

(15) ...The number of people who died from lung cancer was two equals comparing with the dead from other diseases. (A)

(16) I prefer both of them as equally.... (A)

(17) Wives have tried to be equal husbands. (B)

(18) ...They are the same of us. (B)

(19) Husbands and wives in the present time are not same in the old time. (B)

(20) I really know the answer because it's the same of my reason. (D)

In sentence (15), the phrase "two equals comparing with" appears to be a direct translation from Thai:

สอง	เท่า	(ถ้า)	เทียบ	กับ
sǒng	thāw	(thāa)	thiab	kāp
two	equal	(if)	compare	with

In sentence (16), the reason for inserting "as" before "equally" is somewhat obscure, and there is the additional problem of the verb "prefer" since "like" would be more appropriate in a situation of equality. The corresponding Thai phrase would be:

ชอบ	เท่า	กัน
chǎp	thaw	kan
like	equal	mutually

Student A may have been somehow trying to fit the "kan" into the English sentence and mistakenly hit on "as" as the corresponding term.

The problem in sentence (17) through (20) revolves around the appropriate preposition ("to") to use after "equal" and the correct conjunction("as") to use after "same." The students tend either to omit the function word altogether (17 and 19) or else use "of" (18 and 20). Part of the problem seems to lie in the fact that in Thai the same preposition (กับ - kāp - with) would be used after both "equal" and "same," as illustrated in the following phrases:

the same as	equal to
เหมือน กับ	เท่า กับ
myan káp	thāw káp
same with	equal with

They may have learned not to use "with" in the corresponding

English sentences, but they seem unclear as to what function words should replace "kap" in different English contexts.

The "more than" construction also poses problems as can be seen from the following examples:

(21) When they addicted to it (marijuana), they have to pay money more than alcohol.... (B)

(22) ...because marijuana is expensive than alcohol. (B)

(23) Marijuana and alcohol cannot separate which is dangerous than the other.... (B)

(24) ...In Vietnam War American soldiers lived in Thailand more than 50,000. (C)

Two major problems are involved here. First, "more than" follows the noun in Thai; thus sentences (21) and (24) follow the Thai pattern:

เงินมากกว่า	ทหาร....มากกว่า
ng-n máak kwa	tahaan....máak kwa
money more than	soldiers ...more than

Second, the comparative form of adjectives does not take "more" in Thai, whereas in English, certain adjectives require "more" rather than simply adding "-er" (i.e., beautiful, expensive, dangerous, etc.). What happened in sentences (22) and (23) is that the student followed the Thai pattern, not realizing that "more" is required here in English. The Thai phrases are as follows:

more expensive than	more dangerous than
แพงกว่า	อันตรายกว่า
paen kwa	antaraaj kwa
expensive than	dangerous than

E. "One of the best (biggest, most important, etc.)" construction. Examples of this type of construction are given below:

(25) Even if pill is the one of best methods.... (A)

(26) We have many problems in society nowadays. The most important are the use of alcohol and marijuana.... (B)

Sentence (25) illustrates that it is difficult to get the words in proper order in this construction, enhanced by the fact that the Thai pattern differs considerably. Sentence (26), though grammatically correct is probably semantically incomplete. To see why this is so, it is helpful to examine the Thai phrasing in constructions of this type:

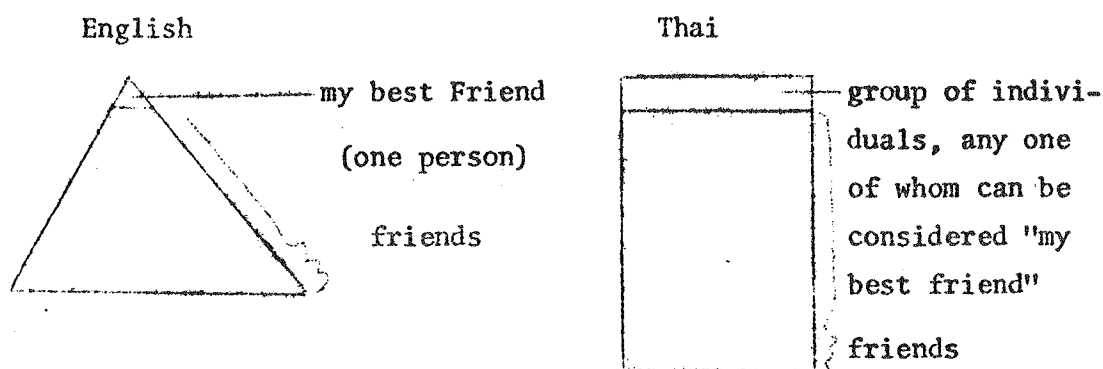
One of the most important cities

เมือง	ที่	สำคัญ	ที่	สุด	เมือง	หนึ่ง
myan	thii	samkhan	thii	sud	myan	nyu
city	that	important	most		city	one

The fact that the city is "the most important" (i.e., city that important most) precedes the notion that it is only one in the group of most important cities (i.e., city one). In English, on the other hand, we know right away that the particular city is only "one" of the most important cities since "one" comes initially in the phrase. In English, this initial qualification alerts the listener in a way that is impossible in the Thai construction. For in Thai, the superlative comes on prominently and then is sort of eroded away by the trailing qualification. Thus a Thai girl might be rather disappointed to be told by an ardent swain, "You are the most beautiful girl in the world" (=You are girl that beautiful most in world), pause, and then the letdown, "one of them" (=person one).

Actually what often happens in Thai is that the trailing qualification is simply omitted. Thus a Thai might introduce someone as "my best friend" (=friend who best) and five minutes later introduce

another person as "my best friend." From the American perspective, this would appear rather insincere, to say the least, since in American terms an exclusivity is implied by the superlative. In Thai, however, this does not seem to be the case, for the superlative rung is broad enough to embrace several entities at once. This difference in outlook can perhaps be captured in the following illustration (I am indebted to Peansiri Ekniyom, a Thai Ph.D. candidate in linguistics at UH, of suggesting these diagrams):



If it is absolutely essential to single out one item as the "most superlative" superlative, this can be done by inserting the appropriate classifier immediately after the noun, as in:

เพื่อน	คน	ที่	ดี	ที่	สุด
phyan	khon	thii	dii	thii	sùd
friend		that	good	most	
	classifier for people				

However, this is generally not done, and thus many individuals can be introduced as:

เพื่อน	ที่	ดี	ที่	สุด
phyan	thii	dii	thii	sùd
friend	that	good	most	

Interestingly enough, in sentence(26) the teacher challenged the student's contention that the use of alcohol and marijuana were the most important problems in society nowadays by writing "Is this true?" in the margin of the paper. For the American teacher could hardly believe that these were the greatest contemporary problems. Yet the Thai student may actually have intended a meaning closer to the idea that these were merely two important problems facing society today. He perhaps failed to understand that in English this use of the superlative necessarily implies the exclusion of all other problems as "most important."

F. Omission of copula when it precedes predicate adjective. The students often left out the copula when it preceded a predicate adjective, as can be seen in the following sentences:

- (27) Usually people in Asia:..easy going in living. (A)
- (28) Many children will help the parents when they old. (C)
- (29) ...I really happy with them. (D)
- (30) It was my brother who crazy about football so much. (D)

In Thai the copula and predicate adjective generally merge into a common predicate, and the students seem -- at least to some extent-- to carry this pattern over into English. This possibility of interference from Thai appears strengthened by the fact that the students did not omit the copula before a predicate nominative (such an omission is not possible in Thai) but only before a predicate adjective -- the exact environment where such omission is the rule in Thai.

G. "Over-nominalization," particularly after the copula. This seems to be a corollary of the problem just mentioned; for in sentences where the Thais do use the copula, they often follow it with a noun instead of the adjective required in English. This follows the Thai pattern in which a copula -- if realized -- is generally followed by

a noun rather than an adjective. Some examples of the students' errors are given below:

(31) It is difficulty to say.... (A)

(32) Others...become anxiety and tension.... (A)

(33) Although old people are weakness.... (B)

(34) The cycle of life, birth, and death is nature for animals and human beings. (B)

(35) ...Everyone can be...friendship.... (D)

H. Relativization. There is a general failure on the part of all four students to recognize the distinction between restrictive and non-restrictive relative clauses, with a particular tendency to treat clauses which should be non-restrictive as restrictive.

(36) ...One should not miss Hawaii where (=Hawaii, where) you can relax and enjoy nature. (A)

(37) Her father who (=father, who) alone earns money for family... (A)

(38) Most of people don't care what they eat, and they are getting fat that (=fat, which) makes them easy get a disease. (B)

(39) ...There are many dirty places in city especially in Hong Kong which (=Hong kong, which) has too many people.... (B)

(40) We should eliminate their problems that (=problems, which) are rejection by society, loneliness, and boredom.... (C)

(41) Equally important is loneliness which a (=loneliness, which is a) feeling that nobody wants them. (C)

(42) The rain comes from the sky from the atmosphere which symbol (=atmosphere, which is a symbol) for heaven. (D)

(43) And the bride who I used to call sister is just 22... (=the bride, whom I used to call sister, is just 22) (D)

As can be seen from the above examples, often the students fail to set off the non-restrictive clauses with commas and also use "that" to introduce what should be non-restrictive clauses, indicating that they simply do not understand the distinction between restrictive and non-restrictive relative clauses.

Though this distinction apparently exists in Thai, it is virtually never studied as a grammatical point. Thus very few Thais (probably only linguists) are even aware that one relative pronoun (ที่ - thii) is more often associated with restrictive clauses and another relative pronoun (ซึ่ง - syn) may be restricted solely to non-restrictive clauses. I say "may" because the point is currently undergoing scrutiny by Thai linguists, and the exact scope of the relative pronouns has not yet been conclusively established. There is even some indication that "syn" may not be a relative pronoun at all but rather some type of connecting word between clauses. In terms of general usage, most Thais seem to intuitively select the "correct" form although at least some speakers interchange the forms somewhat freely.

Since "thii" embraces "that," "which," "where," "who," "when," and "why" in English and since "syn" is considered by most Thais (and the authoritative Mary Haas dictionary) to be a synonym for "thii", it is difficult for Thais to know when to use "that" rather than "WH" forms in English and correspondingly troublesome to select the appropriate instances for insertion of commas.

Adding to the problem is the tendency in Thai to compound sentences rather than relativize. Thus the non-restrictive relative clause which is inserted in the midst of a sentence, as in:

New York City, which is the cultural and financial center of the United States, is not the capital of New York State.

is not a popular construction in Thai. This idea would usually

be expressed as a compound sentence in Thai. Non-restrictive relatives in Thai seem more often to follow a full clause, as in:

The prime minister was not willing to allow the other ministers to serve in the constitutional assembly, which is another example of his unusual way of ruling.

Given, then, that the distinction between restrictives and non-restrictives in Thai has not yet been fully mapped out and that the usual pattern of non-restrictive clauses differs in Thai and English, it should not be surprising that Thai students have failed to master the subtle distinction between the two in English.

I. Complementation. One particular construction is virtually never used correctly by these four students. The general pattern in English is as follows:

The { reason for going
most important thing } is that....
{ major effect, etc. }

When the students attempt this type of construction, the "that" and sometimes the copula are omitted, and the students just barge ahead with the complement sentence, as can be seen in the following examples (words in parentheses indicate what was omitted by the student but what is needed for a grammatical sentence):

(44) ...The most important (thing is that) you will have a chance to know generous and helpful people:... (A)

(45) The second effect is damaging brain (=is that it damages the brain). (B)

(46) The one thing that will happen is lacking food (=is that there will be a lack of food). (B)

(47) The answer I got was (that) school is the place that gives

you knowledge.... (D)

The reason for the confusion here seems to lie in the fact that the parallel Thai construction does not involve a complementizer/sentence introducer comparable to "that" in English. The Thai version of sentence (44), for example, would be:

สิ่ง	ที่	สำคัญ	ที่	สุด	คือ
sin	thii	sǎmkhan	thii	sud	(khyy)
thing	that	important	most		(be or namely)

คุณ	จะ	มี	โอกาส	รู้จัก	กับ	คน	ใจ	ดี
khun	ca	mii	ookaət	ruucàk	kàp	khon	caj	dii
you	will	have	chance	know	with	people	generous	

The parentheses indicate that the verb "to be" (in the sense of "namely") can be omitted if the speaker pauses between "most" and "you." Thus in Thai there is never a word comparable to "that" in this construction and "to be" is optional. This Thai pattern seems to be carried over into English, causing the students to omit "that" and sometimes the copula.

Student D again seems to be influenced by her daily all-English environment, for she is the only one of the four students to use this construction correctly, as in:

(48) The reason is that I have to leave my parents.... (D)

(49) ...One thing was that I would be proud of myself.... (D)

However, she also has some problems with this construction as indicated in sentence (47). Significantly, the two instances in which she uses the correct construction (48 and 49) occur late in the term, indicating perhaps that repeated exposure to the correct English form has weakened the influence of the Thai pattern.

An analogous problem concerns sentences in which "that" immediately follows the head noun and the copula is incorrectly omitted as in:

(50) The reason that I took it this year (was) because I didn't take it last year. (D)

(51) The reason that we didn't get the house right away (was) because it was so hard to find. (D)

The comparable Thai structure would omit the copula here; sentence (50) would thus be rendered in Thai as follows:

เหตุ	ที่	เอา	ปี	นี้	ก็
het	thii	aw	pii	nii	koo
reason	that	take	year	this	Adverb-auxiliary not translated in English

เพราะ	(ว่า)	ไม่	ได้	เอา	ปี	ที่แล้ว
praw	(waa)	maaj	daaj	aw	pii	thii laew
because	(that)	not	did	take	year	last

III. FOCUS ON INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS

A. Student A

1. -ing overuse or incorrect use. Student A has a tendency to overuse or incorrectly use the -ing form, sometimes using it after modals, as in :

(52) Someone can doing well...

Or, she may make a stative verb progressive as in:

(53) Medicines which usually containing estrogen...are taken by women....

Or she may correctly discern that a progressive form is called for but then omit the progressive aspect form of "be," as in:

(54) ...She traveled to America by herself and renting a room in Makiki,...

Her uncertainty with regard to the use of -ing is further illustrated by the fact that she also fails to use this form when it is called for, as in:

(55) I was puzzled while walked toward her....

2. Incorrect use of "since." Student A has a tendency to use "since" when an action has been completed in the past, whereas it should be used only when the action continues up to the present.

(56) She...started to learn piano since she was five years old.

Had the progressive form, "has studied," been used, "since" would have been appropriate; but here her act of starting to learn to play the piano was completed in the past.

A more complex problem is presented by the following sentence:

(57) ...They are used to smile until has become a habit since many generations.

Though the perfective form "has become" (or perhaps, more correctly, "has been") seems to indicate a link between past and present, there is no specific starting point in the past which would call for "since." Rather the habit of smiling has simply existed for many generations; it is merely a state or condition which has existed throughout a long period of time. Student A did not pick up this subtle distinction between something begun at a specific time in the past which continues up to the present and the longtime existence of a certain condition. Again, there appears to be interference from Thai in both (56) and (57), for the Thai word "ตั้งแต่" (tantae) would be appropriate in both instances; and this word generally translates as "since" in English.

It's just that the Thai word has a broader scope and simply cannot be used interchangeably with "since" in English.

3. Relativization. Like all the students, A has problems with non-restrictives; but generally she relativizes fairly well and is adept at WHIZ deletion as can be seen from the following sentences:

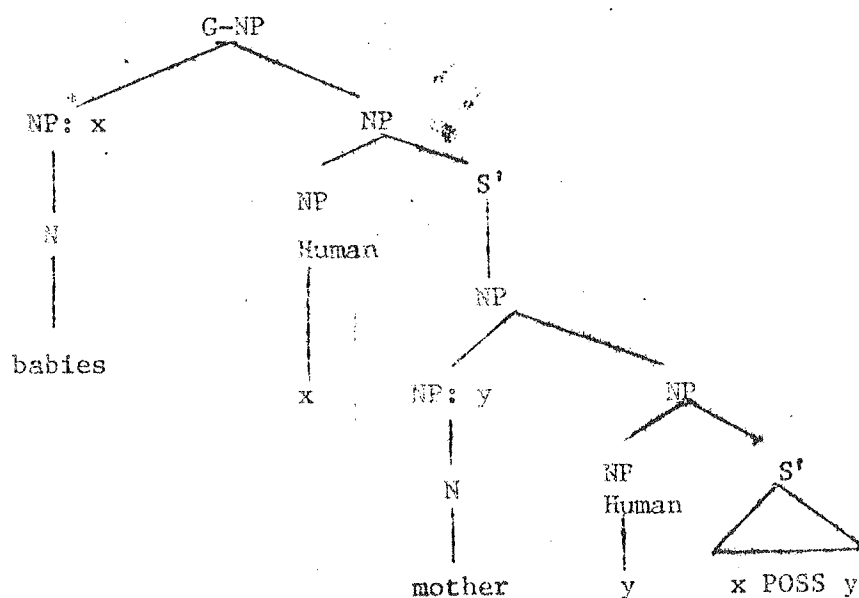
(58) She, ("who is" properly deleted) the oldest one in the family, has two brothers.

(59) A VW Rabbit has very little leg room and seatbelts ("which are" properly deleted) attached to the door.

She did have a problem, though, the only time she attempted a possessive construction.

(60) Babies who mother has had an accident....

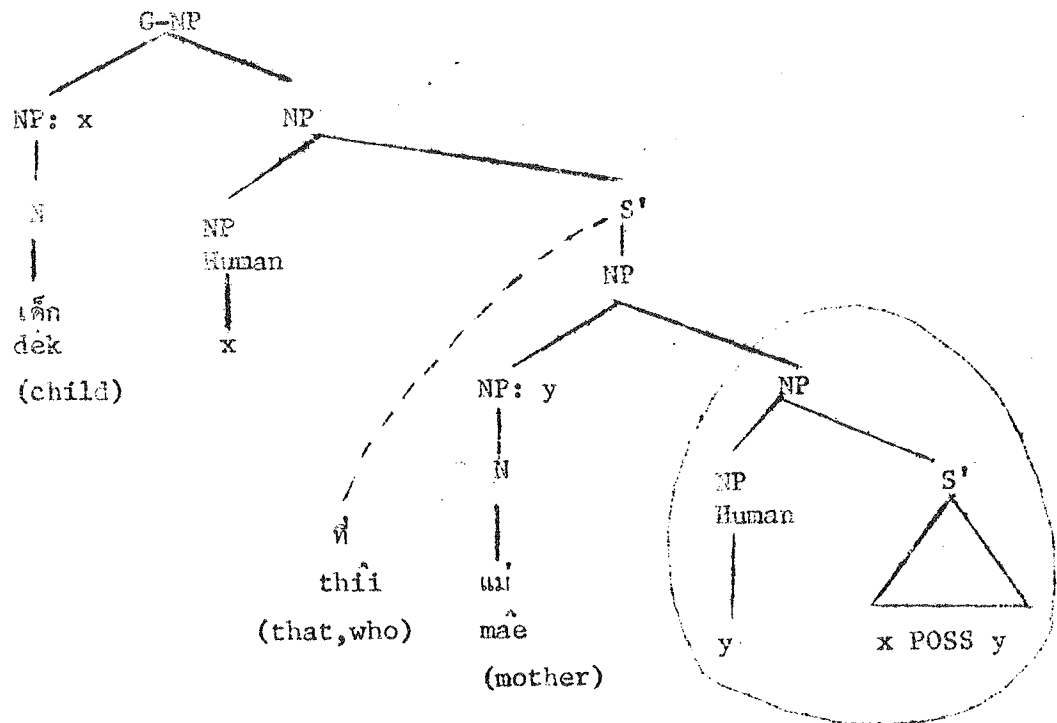
The underlying structure for the relevant portion of this clause would be as follows:



After complementizer insertion, relativization-deletion, POSS

nominalization, and relativization-WH-marking, the string would be as follows: mother of WH-HUMAN + POSS. Possessive preposing would then yield: WH-HUMAN + POSS (=whose) mother. Student A has somehow failed to incorporate POSS into this process, and thus her surface structure contains "who" rather than "whose."

Perhaps the difficulty can be traced to the fact that this POSS is generally not realized in the comparable Thai structure (or if it is, it does not merge with the relative pronoun as in English). It might be argued that the circled portion of the following diagram is somehow understood semantically by the speaker but that it ordinarily plays no syntactic role in the surface realization of the sentence.



Instead, the entire string of transformations that was necessary in English to place "whose" before "mother" is short-circuited, and the complementizer/relative pronoun "thii" (that, who) is simply inserted at the front of S' (much the way the complementizer "that"

is inserted in English). The resulting Thai clause is as follows:

เด็ก	ที่	แม่	เคย	มี	อุบัติเหตุ
dèk	thii	máe	khey	mii	ubàtiheet
child	that	mother	ever	have	accident
	(who)				

Since in Thai there was no need to indicate a possessive relationship, student A apparently was unaware that in English this relationship must be made explicit in the surface structure.

Another difficult construction for A was the following sentence (words in parentheses indicate what she left out):

(61) ...You can keep going on the new set, unless you took a 21-pill set (in which case) you must stop taking the pill;...

Student A apparently was not familiar with this somewhat tricky relative clause (in which case) following "unless...." There is a similar phrase in Thai --

ซึ่ง	ใน	กรณี	นั้น	→ which could be
sĭn	naj	karanii	nan	
which	in	case	that	

used in a comparable sentence.

However, this type of sentence is rarely used in Thai. The more favored construction would be a compound one something along the lines of, "If you didn't take a 21-pill set, you can keep going on the new set; but if you did take a 21-pill set, you must stop taking the pill." Since the "unless... in which case" construction was one the student would rarely use in her own language, it is not surprising that she would have difficulty making use of this construction in English.

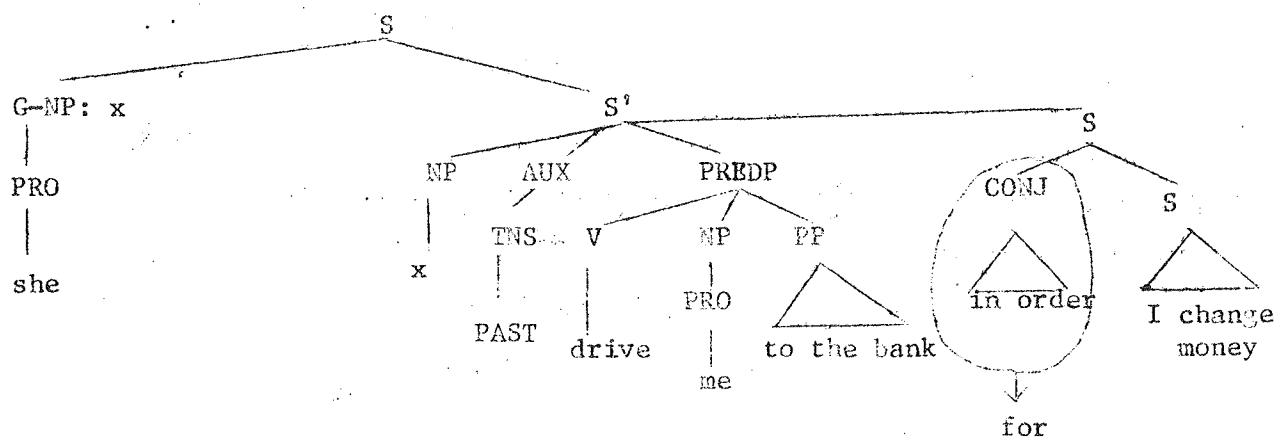
4. Complementation. Generally A handles complementation fairly well, but she does have problems with the "in order to" constructions in sentences such as:

(62) I...looked for information division finding (=in order to find) the way to go into town.

(63) She drove me to the bank for changing (=in order to change) the money....

(64) Even if there are many weak points for taking oral pill for prevent (=in order to prevent) pregnancy....

In two of the three sentences, A uses "for" immediately before the verb form, and in the third (62), she may have omitted the "for" simply because she thought the "for" in "looked for" obviated the need to insert a second "for." Her error can be pinpointed precisely if we examine the deep structure of sentence (63):



Since the "I" in the lowest sentence is removed through EQUI Deletion, "to" should be inserted to yield, "in order to change money." Student A, however, incorrectly used "for" instead of "in order" and then nominalized "change" to get, "for changing money." The problem seems to lie in the fact that the Thai word "เพื่อ" (phyá) has the dual English meaning of "in order to" (for the purpose of) and also "for" (as in, "She did it for her mother.").

The student told me that she wanted to use "phyá" in the first

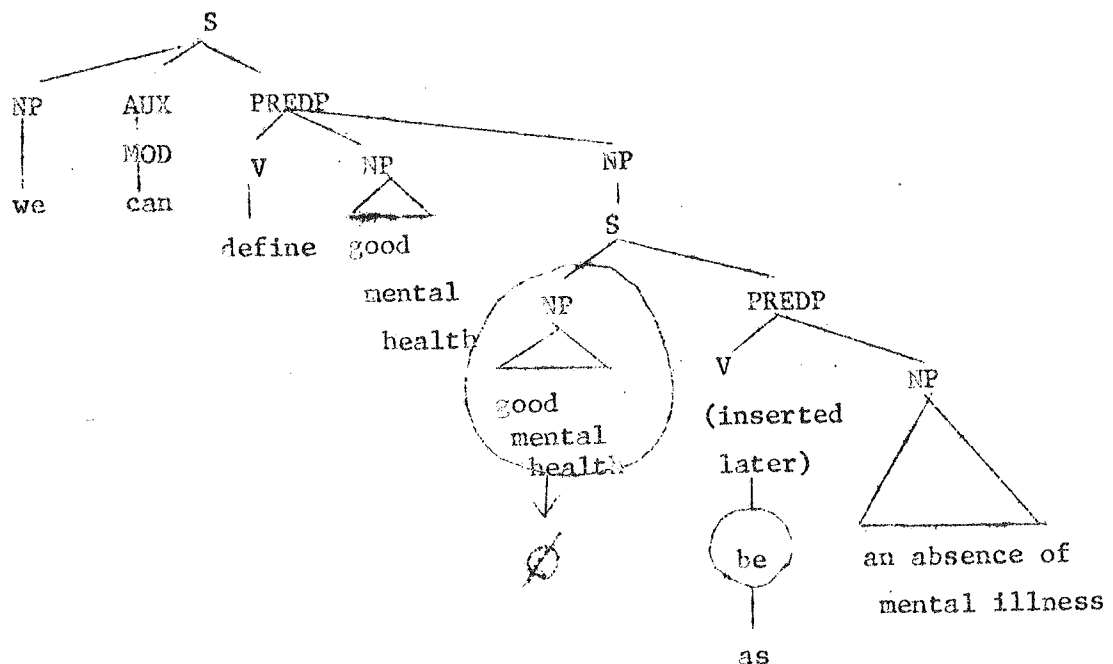
sense and thought that "for" alone would convey this meaning in English. In some contexts, this might be possible (i.e., "for" as an abbreviated form of "for the purpose of"). But here "in order to" (shortened often to simply "to") would be more commonly used in English. In this instance, the alternative form, "for the purpose of," sounds rather stilted. In any event, "for" alone does not suffice in many of these constructions, something that A was unaware of.

Another problem that A has with complementation is a failure to insert "as" when it is required as in:

(65) We can define good mental health is (=as) an absence of mental illness....

(66) Women have less time to perform (as) a good household worker....

The underlying structure for sentence (65) would be as follows:



When the subject NP of the lower sentence is deleted, "as" replaces "be." Student A correctly deleted the lower subject but then failed to substitute "as" for "be".

ENGLISH PROFILE FOR STUDENT A. Student A needs more work on constructions involving "although," "almost (all of the)," and "one of the (superlative)." She also has problems with comparisons (especially involving "equal to") and with over-nominalization, particularly after the copula. As for relativization, she has few problems other than with non-restrictive relative clauses. The only other aspect of relativization that seems to need particular attention is the possessive form. She appears to have a good grasp of restrictive clauses, including appropriate contexts for WHIZ deletion. Of the 39 instances of relativization in her essays, there were only nine errors, six of which involved non-restrictive clauses.

She is also fairly adept at complementation, erring only eight times out of 37 attempts. Four of these eight errors involved "in order to, " so this would seem to be the one area of complementation that calls for some remedial action. She has no problem whatsoever with for-to EQUI deletion following verbs such as "want" and "like" (e.g., I would like to learn, I want to compare).

B. Student B

1. -ing overuse. Student B has a tendency, like A, to use -ing after the modal, as in:

(67) We cannot thinking or control our mind.

(68) People who drink a lot cannot thinking....

2. Problem with nominalization. Like the other students, B tends to "over-nominalize" following the copula (see II,6). However, in other environments (i.e. objects of transitive verbs or objects of prepositions), he sometimes "under-nominalizes," that is, he will use an adjective instead of a noun, as in:

(69) ...Weakness is caused by sick or not doing exercise.

(70) ...People still use them and ignore their dangerous.

3. Omission of pronouns. B has some tendency to omit pronouns, as in:

(71) Old people...have to be careful about what they are going to do -- (you) can see (this) from your grandfather or grandmother.

(72) We ignore them and don't know how dangerous (they) are.

This omission of pronouns is perhaps carried over from Thai, for pronouns are frequently left out without causing any difficulty in understanding. The relevant portion of (71), for example, would be:

เห็น	ได้	จาก	คุณปู่	คุณแม่
hen	daj	caak	khunpuu	khunjää
see	able	from	g-father	g-mother

4. Problem with "either-or" question. The only time that B attempts an "either-or" question, he omits the fronted "do" and the subject "we" of the second clause:

(73) Do we just let them go in that way or (do we) help them?

B apparently did not realize that "do we" cannot be omitted in this case since there is a change in verb (from "let" to "help"). He might also be influenced by the comparable Thai sentence in which there would be no "do" and in which the pronominal subject of the second clause would probably be omitted.

5. Relativization. Like the other students, B has problems with the non-restrictives (see II, H). Though he has fair control over restrictive relative clauses, he has some difficulty knowing when and how to construct such clauses, as can be seen from:

(74) In the same manner of using things, it was getting too old and had to be mended....

Had he relativized here, B would have had a much smoother sentence, i.e., "Just like utensils which get too old and have to be mended..." This inability to construct relative clauses at appropriate times is reflected in the fact that B uses relative clauses only 15 times in five essays -- proportionately less than the other three students by far.

6. Complementation. B has fairly good control over complementation generally, but he has considerable trouble with "The reason is that..." construction (see II,I) -- perhaps because he tries it far more than the other students. He has two other specific problems as well: embedded questions and raising involving the verb "make." First, the embedded questions:

(75) Old people...have to choose what are the kinds of food to eat.

(76) Old people...have to be careful what are they going to do.

(77) People...don't know how dangerous are.

In (75) and (76), B has applied the question transformation, thereby interchanging the subject NP and the first element of the AUX. He has probably done the same thing in (77) although it is somewhat difficult to say for sure since the pronoun subject "they" has been deleted. However, since these are embedded -- rather than actual -- questions, this transformation should not have been applied. In (75), B should also have deleted the copula and "the" to yield "what kinds of food to eat."

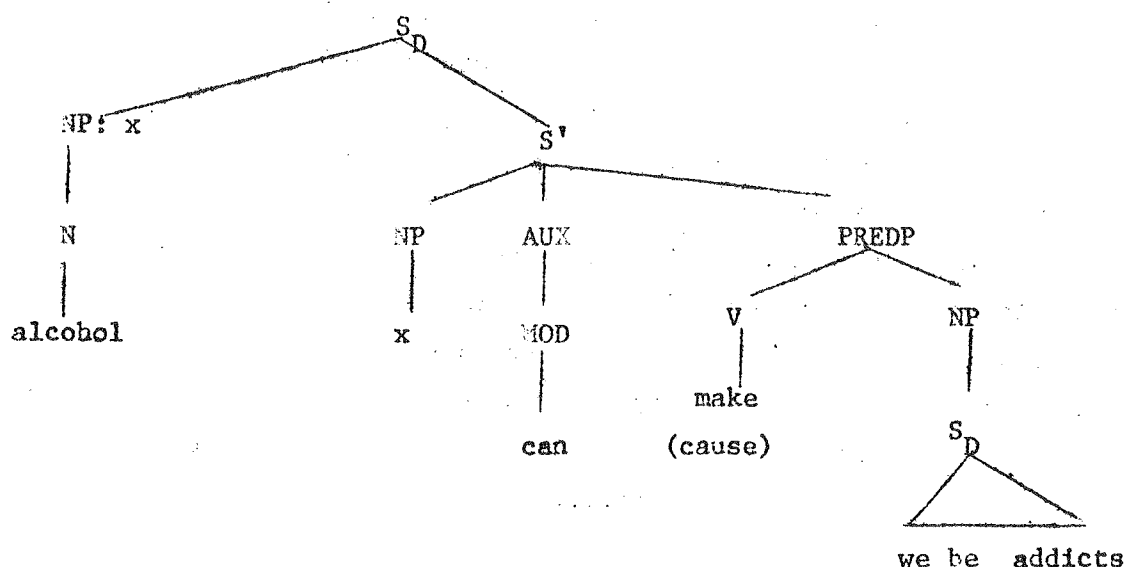
The raising problem can be seen in the following two sentences:

(78) Drinking a glass every day makes the body grows.

(79) ...Alcohol can make our addicts.

In both instances B has failed to detect that the subject of the lower sentence has been raised to object position. Since "body" is no longer the subject of "grow," the latter should not be inflected. In (79), "we" has been raised to object in the higher sentence and thus should appear as "us" rather than "our."

The underlying structure for (79) would be as follows:



After raising, the string would be: "Alcohol can make us to be addicts." When "make" is used, "to be" is then deleted (such deletion would not be possible in the case of "cause"). B has apparently failed to recognize this underlying structure and has instead treated "addicts" as if it were the direct object of "make." This is indicated by the fact that he uses the possessive pronoun "our," just as he might in a transitive sentence such as, "They took our addicts (to the AA meeting)." In so doing he fails to capture the causative element embodied in "make."

ENGLISH PROFILE FOR STUDENT B. B needs more work on the "although..." construction, the semantic notion of the superlative in English and all types of comparisons (equal to, same as, more than). He also needs to be steered away from using "-ing" after modals and

the tendency to omit pronouns. Though he tends to over-nominalize after the copula (i.e. use predicative nominative instead of predicate adjective), he often fails to nominalize a direct object or object of a preposition. Thus he clearly needs some explanation as to when either the adjective or the noun is appropriate. He also needs some help in distinguishing contexts for "have" and "there is(are)" since both are covered by the same verb in Thai.

He is weak in the area of relativization, particularly non-restrictives. Of the 15 times that he used a relative construction, he made seven errors -- six of them involving non-restrictives. The fact that he relativized so infrequently and eschewed relative clauses when they were clearly called for (see III,3,5) indicates that he needs help in this whole area. He is much better at complementation and is particularly adept at "for-to" EQUI deletion and "in order to" constructions. Virtually all of his 17 errors (in 44 attempts at complementation) were in one of three areas -- embedded questions, raising with the verb "make," and the generally troublesome construction of "The most important thing is that...."

C. Student C

1. Confusion of "after" and "afterwards (later)." Student C tends to use the preposition "after" instead of the adverb of time "afterwards (later)" which the sentence actually calls for, as in:

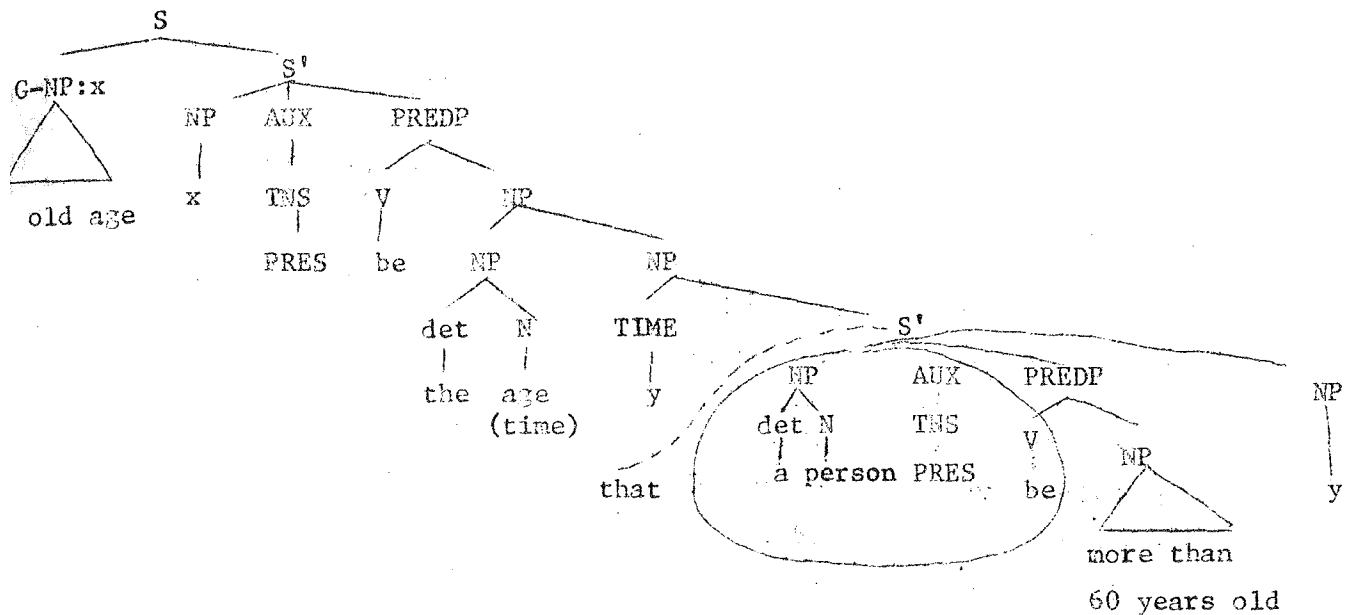
(80) After she (=Later, she) went to that village again, and many men told her..."

(81) G.I.'s...lived and got married with Thai girls during Vietnam War, and after (=afterwards or later) they brought them to U.S.A. with them.

2. Relativization. Other than a problem with non-restrictives, C handles relativization quite well. In his 26 attempts at relativization, he made only 5 errors, 4 of which involved non-restrictives. His only other error involved a relative clause of time:

(82) Old age is age that more than sixty years old....

The underlying structure for this sentence is as follows:



C had a couple of problems here. First, he omitted the entire circled portion of the tree, indicating either that he failed to recognize an embedded clause altogether or else that he incorrectly deleted the subject NP and the copula. Second, although he correctly inserted the complementizer "that", he should have followed through with a WH-relativization which would have yielded "the age at which" or "the age when." To avoid redundancy, "time" might have been chosen instead of "age" to give, "Old age is the time when a person is more than 60 years old." In any event, to fail to replace "that" with the WH form yields the somewhat awkward, if not altogether unacceptable, "Old age is the age that a person is more than 60 years old." Alternatively, the head noun could have been dropped altogether; this would have clearly precluded the "that" form, e.g. "Old age is when

a person is more than 60 years old."

3. Complementation. C handles complementation quite well with the exception of certain gerundive constructions as in:

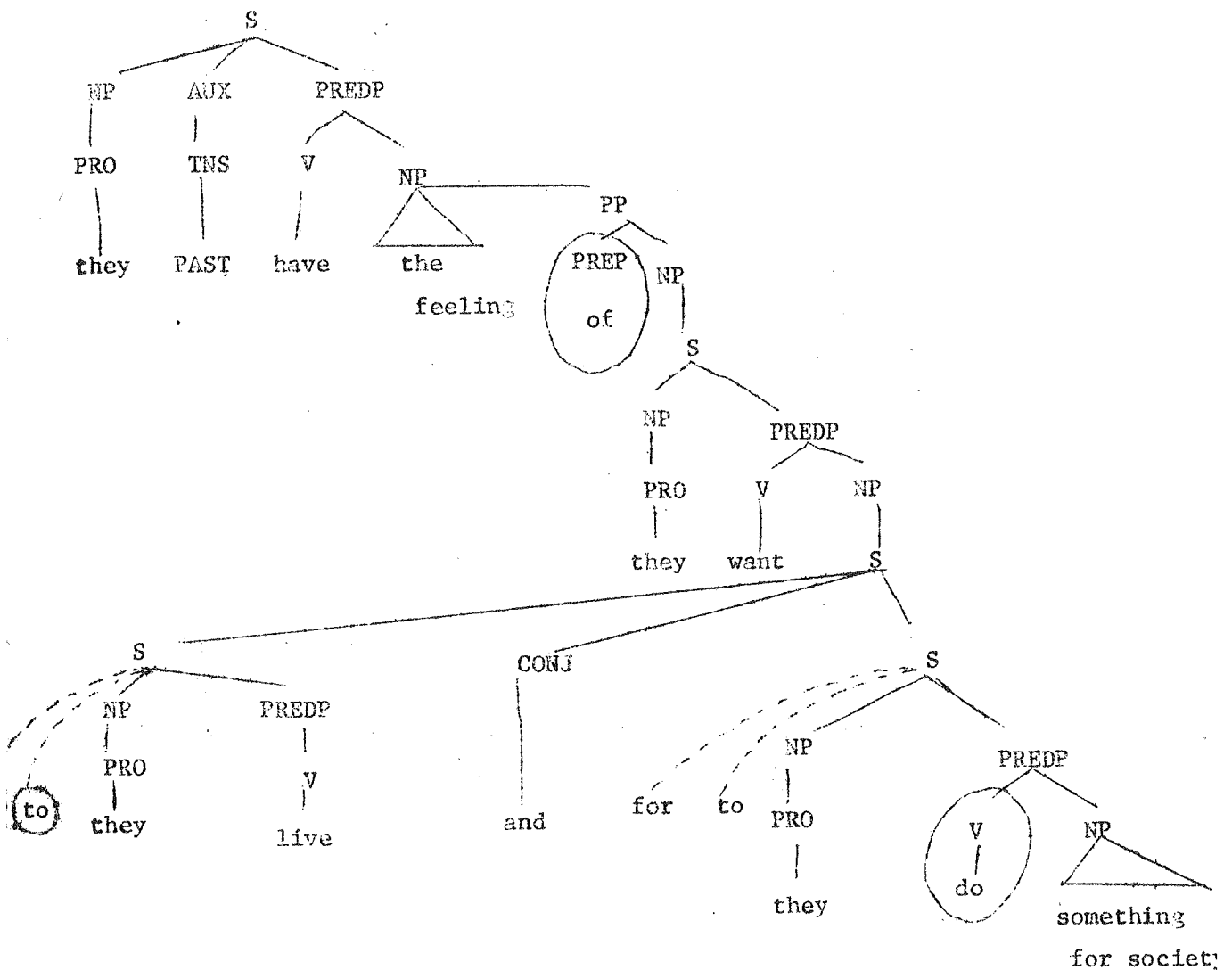
(83) No one can avoid from born, old, and died.

(84) They had feeling that wanting live in society and doing something for society.

(85) Thai people can immigrate to U.S.A. many methods -- for example, getting marriage or apply green card....

In (83), student C incorrectly used the preposition "from" and also failed to make gerunds of the underlying verbs. In fact, in two of the cases he failed to recognize that a copula was involved -- "be" in the case of "born" and "grow" or "become" in the case of "old." Gerundive nominalization, if carried out properly, would have produced, "No one can avoid being born, growing old, or dying." In (85), the preposition "by" was omitted after "for example"; and though "get" was properly nominalized, "apply" was not. C apparently did not realize that "apply" had to be nominalized as an object of a preposition--just as "get" did. Of course, since he left out the preposition altogether, it would naturally be hard for him to link "getting" and "applying" together as objects of a common preposition "by".

In (84), several things went wrong, as can be seen from an analysis of the underlying structure:



C's difficulties are highlighted by the circles. First, he failed to insert the preposition "of", which is required if he is going to nominalize "want." (Instead of using "of," he could have inserted the complementizer "that" before "they want;" but since he opted for the gerundive form "wanting," the analysis will be framed in terms of a missing preposition.) Second, he somehow failed to place "to" before

"live" when he properly EQUI-deleted the subject NP and "for." Then he failed to recognize that "do" was in a parallel construction with "live" (i.e. a "for-to") and thus should not have been nominalized. Instead he seemed to view "do" as in a parallel construction with "want," for he used the gerundive in both instances. He got off on the wrong foot by leaving out "of," then lost his way in the maze of embedded sentences which followed.

ENGLISH PROFILE FOR STUDENT C. C. needs help on "although..." clauses, "almost all of the..." construction, and comparisons involving "more than." He also has problems with the "have" versus "there is(are)" distinction and the use of the copula before predicate adjectives. Further practice is also needed in the distinction between "after" and "afterwards (later)."

He has little trouble with relativization other than with non-restrictives. One area, however, that could stand some polishing is the relative clause of time introduced by "when," "the time at which," etc. As for complementation, he erred only five times in 33 attempts, and three of these involved gerundives. He has problems with this construction both when the gerund is in the direct object position and also when it is the object of a preposition. He handles "for-to" EQUI deletion and "in order to" constructions quite well.

D. Student D.

1. Omits -en affix in certain passives. Student D often omits the -en affix in passivizing such verbs as bore, scare, and frighten.

(86) I like it when it rains without thunder or lightning because it makes me really scare.

(87) So that month I felt pretty bore.

(88) I became frighten, so I went to my father.

D may not even recognize these as passive constructions since they

are all agentless. She may view "scare," "bore," and "frighten" as predicate adjectives for which no affix is needed. Some transference from Thai might be involved here too since neither a passive construction nor a copula would be present in the comparable Thai utterance. Either the subject would be followed by a predicate which merges the copula and adjective, as in:

ฉัน	กลัว	Or else the word "feel" would be inserted, as in:	ฉัน	รู้สึก	เบื่อ
chan	klua		chan	ruusyk	bya
I	afraid		I	feel	bore

But in neither case would this be construed as an agentless passive form. A phonological factor might be at work here as well; for since Thai final consonants are generally unreleased, the student may be carrying this tendency over into spoken English. Since she doesn't orally produce the final sound, it is not surprising that she would not render it in writing.

2. Problem with "I came home tired, etc." construction. D apparently feels that an adjective cannot immediately follow a noun which seems to be in the direct object slot (actually it is an oblique noun phrase of location). Thus she attempts to turn what should be a simple adjective into a prepositional phrase, as can be seen in the following sentences:

(89) I came home with tiring.

(90) I got home late with wet and freezing.

3. Incorrect use of "ever." D occasionally inserts "ever" directly before the main verb, as in:

(91) Dreams that I ever have are good and bad.

(92) In my life. I've ever go hiking about three times.

This is undoubtedly a direct carryover from Thai, for the

comparable Thai pattern is:

ฉัน	เคย	ไป	เดิน	ระยะ	ทาง	ไกล	ราว ๆ	สาม	ครั้ง
chan	khej	paj	deen	raja	than	klaj	rawraw	saam	khraŋ
I	ever	go			hike		about	three	times

D uses this construction, however, only in her early essays. So once again, her long-term exposure to an all-English environment seems to have driven the Thai influence away.

4. Relativization. Like the others, she has problems with the restrictive/non-restrictive distinction. She has several additional difficulties as well, one of which is a failure to EQUI-delete pronoun objects, as in:

(93) ...There is a dance show that I used to watch it.

(94) ...There are about three formulas that we must know how to use them.

(95) It's a secret for me that I have to keep it.

(96) I could not know any meaning of those words that I supposed to find the opposite meaning of them.

This problem seems to arise solely in the environment in which there is a "for-to" EQUI deletion, especially one involving compulsion (i.e. must know how to use, have to keep, supposed to find, etc.). For some reason she feels that the lower object (or object of preposition) must be realized as a pronoun, whereas actually this lower object should be deleted. This is clearly not an instance of Thai interference, for Thai follows the English pattern here.

Another difficulty is a tendency to delete the copula. This is actually the verb-adjective merging problem (see II,F), which she extends to the relative clause environment as well, as in:

(97) There are many tunes that (are) sometimes very strange

and funny.

(98) The rain comes from the sky... which (is a) symbol for heaven.

(99) It was very interesting to see the volcano that (was) still active.

A third problem concerning relativization is a tendency to omit the relative pronoun altogether, both when there is a head noun (as before "who") and when there isn't (as with "where" or "what"):

(100) There are many kinds of accident (that, which) happen nowadays!

(101) Well, at least (when) you get used to something, you'll find it easier.

(102) Holiday !Holiday !That was (what) I always asking for.

(103) It was about a man and woman (who) fell in love....

(104) ...I'm going far away from (where) I usually am.

This again does not seem to be an instance of Thai interference, for Thai would not generally omit the relative pronouns in these cases. The one exception might be (103), for the Thai word "เรื่อง" (ryan) embraces both the noun "story" and the preposition "about" in English. If this word were used in Thai, it would not be necessary to use the relative pronoun.

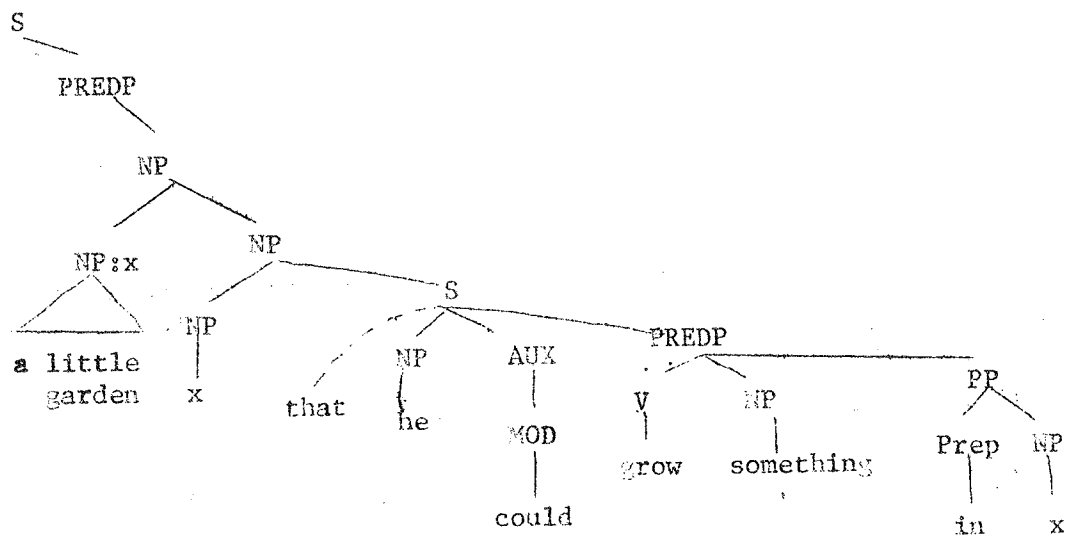
เป็น	เรื่อง	ผู้หญิง	ผู้ชาย	รัก	กัน
pea	ryan	phuujin	phuuchaj	rak	kan
(it) is	story	woman	man	love	each other

She also has some difficulties with relatives containing prepositional phrases, often omitting the preposition, as in:

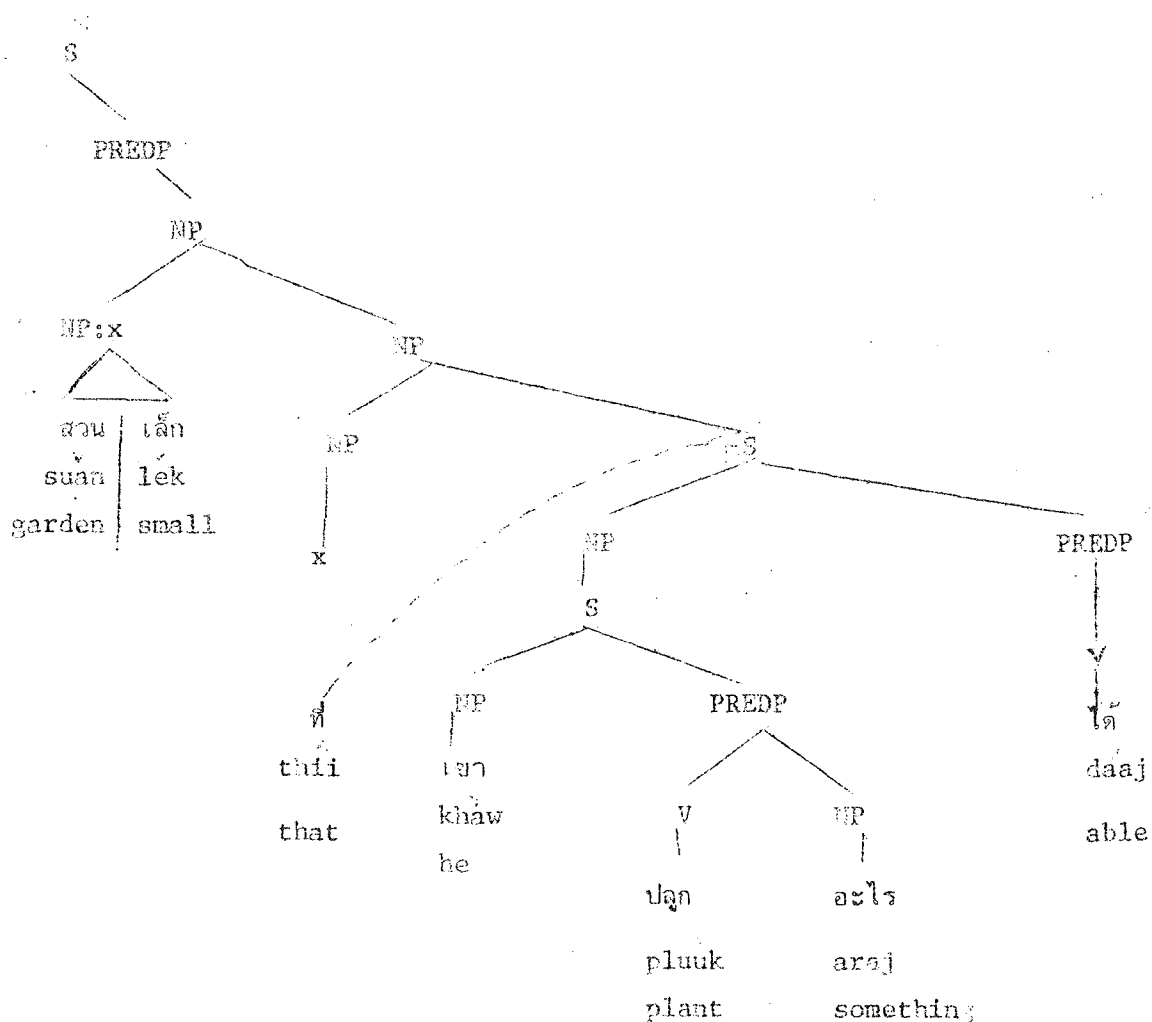
(105) ...My father wants to have a little garden that (=in which) he could grow something.

(106) ...It was after 8:30 a.m., (by) which (time) I was supposed to be there already.

The underlying structure for the relevant portion of (105) would be:



D has correctly inserted the complementizer "that" but has failed to leave the preposition "in" in final position which is mandatory if "that" is used. If D had instead opted for WH-relativization, the preposition would still be necessary; and it could then either be fronted with its object or left in final position. The difficulty in working the preposition in here may be related to the fact that no preposition would be called for here in Thai. In fact no prepositional phrase would be involved here at all, as the following diagram shows:



"daaj" (able) is a post-main-verb verb that is predicated of the entire sentence, "He plant something." This then yields, "Garden small that he plant something able."

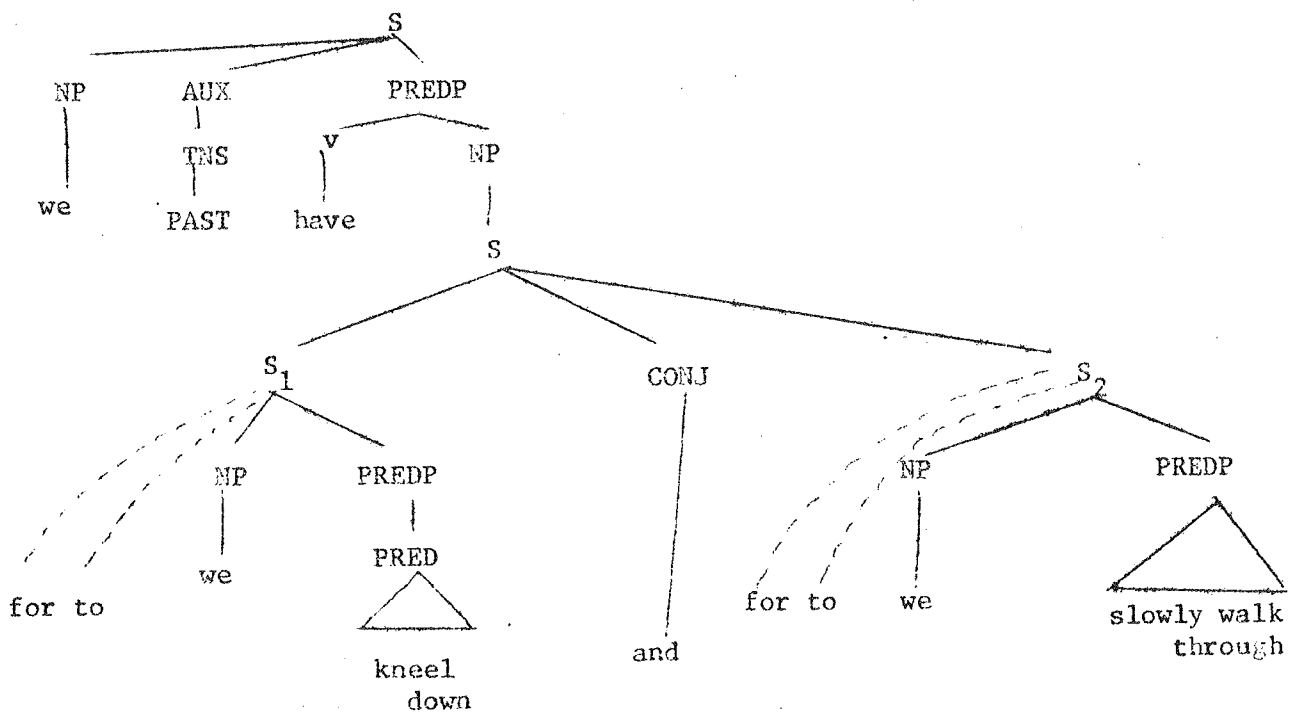
5. Complementation. Her overall grasp of complementation is quite good, but she has certain recurrent problems which could stand some work. One of these is a tendency in conjoined complements to inflect the second verb, not realizing that it should follow the same pattern as the initial verb, as in:

(107) So she told me that it was a good opportunity for me to come to America and continued study in here.

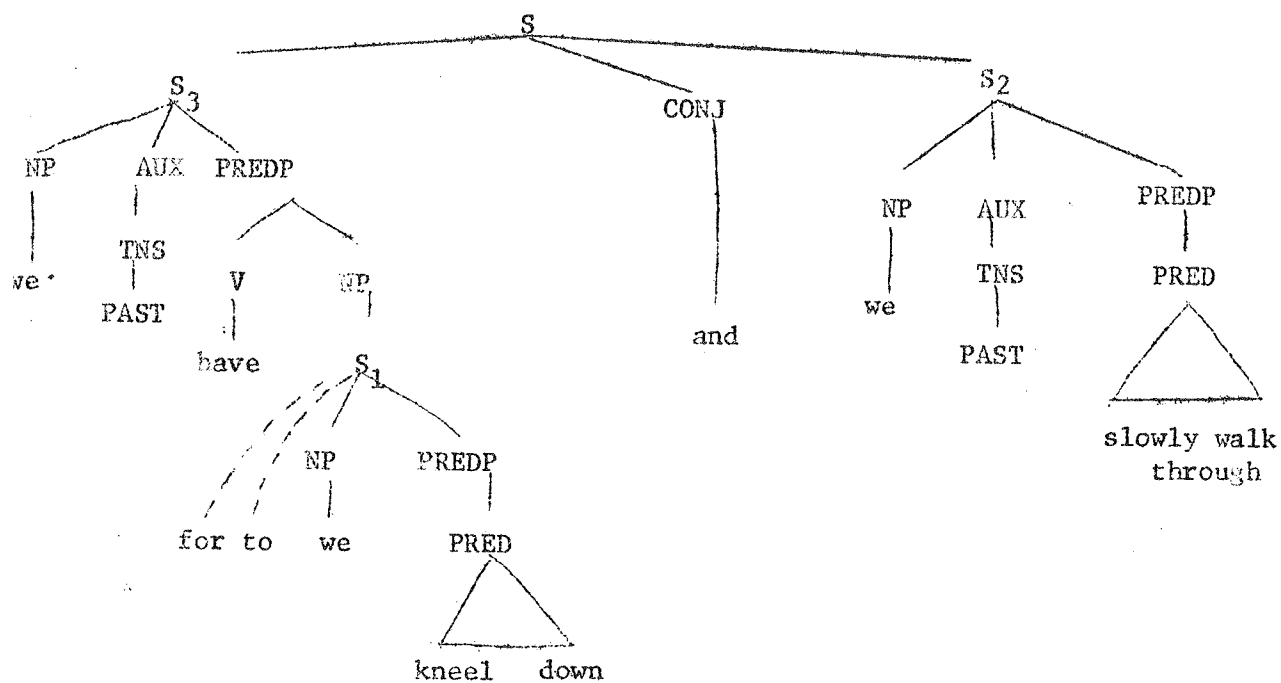
(108) We had to kneel down and slowly walked through.

(109) My greatest ambition this year is getting into college and can get good grade in the first semester.

The problem can be pinpointed if we take a look at the underlying structure of (108), for example:



Since D correctly performs the "for-to" insertion and EQUI deletion on S_1 (have to kneel down) but fails to do so with S_2 , it seems clear that she must not view them as parallel structures dominated by a common S node. Rather she must conceive of the underlying structure as something like this:



She seems, then, to view S₂ as parallel to S₃ rather than to S₁; thus she inflects the verb in S₂, just as she does in S₃. Only when she understands that S₂ is actually parallel to S₁ will she be able to perform the appropriate "for-to" insertion and EQUI deletion on S₂ as well.

D also has some problem in complementations involving "concern":

(110) I become concerned (about) my studying....

(111) ...I am concern about am I lucky about (=whether I am lucky enough) to make good marks and to get in college.

In (110) she omitted the preposition; and in (111), though she used the preposition, she flip-flopped AUX and subject NP rather than

using "whether" to introduce an embedded question. In such a construction, of course, the Question Transformation (flip-flop rule) is not appropriate.

Similarly, she has some difficulty with "how" embedded questions, again preposing as she would for an ordinary question, as in:

(112) I really want to see how are boys (=how the boys are) going to do.

(113) I am concerned about how am I (=how I am) going to make myself survive.

Finally, D confuses "feel like" with "feel that I would like" and thus omits most of the complement in:

(114) ...I don't feel (that I would) like to learn to dance myself.

ENGLISH PROFILE FOR STUDENT D. D shares with the other students a tendency to omit the copula before a predicate adjective, particularly in relative constructions. She also needs help in discerning when to use "have" and when to use "there is (are)" and in framing comparisons, especially with "same." She must learn to add the -en affix in agentless passive constructions and understand that adjectives can appear without prepositions in sentences such as, "She came home tired." D must be weaned away from her tendency to omit relative pronouns altogether and from her practice of failing to EQUI delete pronominal objects. She also needs some practice in forming relative clauses with prepositions and in distinguishing restrictive and non-restrictive clauses.

Her grasp of complementation is basically sound, and she generally handles "for-to," "that," and "POSS -ing" constructions quite well. Two lingering problems involve embedded question (especially with "how") and the mistaken inflection of the second verb in conjoined complements.

Of particular interest is the fact that three errors which showed up in her earlier essays (all of which seem primarily due to interference from Thai) appear to be gradually disappearing--the "although... but" mistake, the inappropriate use of "ever," and the tendency to omit "that" in constructions such as "The most important thing is that..." This would seem to indicate that her every-day exposure to English for almost two years has weakened the grasp of deep-seated Thai patterns and is enabling her to fashion English sentences without first filtering them through Thai structures.

Based on an examination of the writing of these four students, it appears that there are certain areas which would tend to be troublesome for Thais generally. Most, if not all, of these common errors, seem to indicate some measure of interference from Thai. Often a phrase is simply translated literally into English from Thai. Some of these translations were mentioned earlier; others that were not touched on strengthen this impression of Thai interference. Certain structural errors as well seem too closely tied to Thai constructions to be considered over-generalizations of any discernible English rules. This is not to say that all errors can be attributed to Thai interference, however, and I mentioned earlier that certain mistakes seem definitely not to be related to any interference from Thai.

Whatever the source of the errors of the students, the English profiles should enable a teacher to have a fairly good grasp of each individual's strengths and weaknesses. Lessons could then be planned accordingly, and specific exercises could be devised to treat individual problems. The difficult road to the mastery of English might thereby be made just a little bit smoother.

REFERENCES

- Baker, Carl L. 1978. Introduction to generative-transformational syntax, New Jersey, Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- Haas, Mary R. 1964. Thai-English student's dictionary Stanford, California, Stanford University Press.
- Jacobs, Roderick. 1979. Mimeographed handouts and lecture notes.

THAI CONSULTANTS

- Pongsuwan Bilmes, Instructor of Thai language, University of Hawaii.
- Peansiri Ekniyom, Ph.D. in linguistics, University of Hawaii.