
A Study of Difficulty in English Sentence Writing of the Myanmar Students at Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University

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Abstract

This research was to study the difficulty in English sentence writing of Myanmar students at Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University. Population was 253, the sample participants of this study were 153 B.A and M.A Myanmar students who were studying at the Faculty of Humanities in MCU. As a descriptive research, a research questionnaire with 16 questions including general information of the students was applied for quantitative data collection and the responses of students were analyzed the difficulties in English sentence writing of the students. For qualitative data collection, the researcher had done an In-depth interview to fifteen suitable Myanmar students; the responses of the students were recorded by voice recorder. The result of the study to analyze the collective data, the finding results occurred that half of Myanmar students had difficulty in English sentence writing. So, the result of average was moderate level equal to $\bar{X} = 3.09$, (S.D. 1.380) in the statements of difficulties in English sentence writing. In the result of providing way, the result of average level was high equal to $\bar{X} = 3.91$, (S.D. 1.189) because majority of the students were willing for providing way to write English sentences. The main results of in- depth interview was that the Myanmar students had difficulties in English sentence writing because the

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students were weak in four kinds of English sentences, phrases, clauses, using comma and using conjunction. Furthermore, the students could not analyze English sentences in reading books. Therefore, it can be concluded that half of Myanmar students have difficulties in English sentence writing and majority of the students are willing for providing way to write English sentences professionally.

Keywords: English sentence writing, Myanmar students, Difficulty in English

Introduction

English sentences writing is one of the most important parts in learning English and to write English sentences fluently. In English, there are mostly four kinds of sentences, which are simple sentence, compound sentences, complex sentence, and mixed sentences (compound and complex). These sentences concern with every part of English grammar. From these four kinds of sentence diverges all kinds of English grammatical rules. In writing academic paragraphs, it is necessary to use four kinds of sentences appropriately. If someone is skillful in these four kinds of sentence in detail, he or she will be confident to write academic paragraphs and to translate whatever difficult sentences from every part of the world. Therefore, the four kinds of sentence are the key of English grammar.

These four kinds of sentences are not separate with phrases and clauses. Actually they are correlating with each other because all kinds of phrase, sentence transfer usage, and subject transfer usage include into the simple sentence. According to both modern and old grammatical theory, simple sentence is very useful in English. Moreover, narration- direct and indirect speeches include into clauses which are complex and compound sentences. Combining the complex and compound sentences, it is called as mixed sentence or complex-compound sentence. Therefore, the four kinds of sentence are very important in learning English.

In Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, Ayutthaya, Thailand, many Myanmar students are facing the difficulty which does not understand the meaning of the whole sentence though they know individual words in sentences. Actually, the reasons of these problems and difficulties are non-understanding four kinds of sentences which include phrases, clauses, sentence transfer, and narration. If they understand clearly the four kinds of sentence, they can understand the meaning of however long and confusing sentences. Moreover, they can translate easily every kind of English sentences into their particular language and they can write academic paragraphs without mistake.

In 2009, for a thesis of master of art at Sumatera Utara University in Indonesia, Yun Friska Irene Gintin had submitted a research about English sentence structure. In that research, the researcher had analyzed English sentence structures including four kinds of sentence. For that research, the researcher investigated Williams' a streetcar named desire play. The researcher stated that to be fluent in English sentences structure, it is necessary to understand four kinds of English sentences.

In 1989 for M.A Dissertation at Northeast Missouri State University, Glenn Edward had presented a research about sentence combination. The researcher investigated 67 ESL students' sentence combining ways. In that research, the researcher had described how to combine English sentences and how to use conjunctions. The researcher stated that to be skillful in combining English sentences, it is important to understand English clauses.

For Ph.D. Dissertation at the University of British Columbia, in 2018, Rosario E. Maminta had conducted a research about language structure. In that study, the researcher had investigated Philippine schools' curriculum of language structure from grade three through university. In the curriculum of language structure, the researcher analyzed English structures, phrases and clauses or composition and he described that phrases and clauses are very important to be skillful in English sentence writing.

For M.A Dissertation at MCU University in 2018, Sunjib Barua submitted a research about English Writing skill. For that research, the researcher had investigated English writing skill of fourth year B.A students at the Faculty of Humanity in MCU and for secondary data; the researcher had collected information from professional thesis, books, academics and journal. The researcher proposed that for English writing skill, understanding English composition, punctuation, narration and understanding English structure are very important for writing skill.

Even though described above the researchers have conducted those researches concerning with English sentence writing unfortunately, in Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, Ayutthaya, Thailand nobody has regarded a research about the difficulty in English sentence writing of the Myanmar students. Therefore, the present researcher investigate what is the students' difficulty in English sentence writing and why they have difficulty and then what is better way for them to solve the difficulty to write English sentences fluently.

Objectives of Research

1. To study the difficulty in English sentences writing of B.A and M.A Myanmar students at the Faculty of Humanities in Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University
2. To provide the way for English sentence writing of the B.A and M.A Myanmar students at the Faculty of Humanities in Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University

Research Methodology

As a descriptive research, this study was designed by both qualitative and quantitative method. To investigate how and how many difficulties were being faced by the Myanmar students in English sentence writing, at the Faculty of Humanities in MCU, the researcher used quantitative method by a research questionnaire with 16 questions in this study. To regard the reason, feeling and opinion of the difficulty of the students in English sentence writing, the researcher used qualitative method by doing an in- depth interview to fifteen students.

This study was conducted on 253 target Myanmar students who were studying at the Faculty of Humanities in MCU. The sampling participants of this study were 110 B.A. students and 43 M.A. Myanmar students. Totally, 153 Myanmar students were the sampling of participants in this study. The researcher used both stratified and judgment sampling method in this study.

The tools of this research were a research questionnaire consisted of general background information of the participants and 16 questions to regard the students' difficulties and better way to write English sentences. An in-depth interview to know the reason of difficulties in English sentence writing of the students also was included in this study.

In data collection procedure, the research questionnaires were dealt to 153 suitable Myanmar students who were interesting to answer and who were staying at MCU dormitory. The researcher went to both their dormitory room and their class room to share the research questionnaires. After 20 minutes, the answers of the questionnaires were collected from the respondents. In In-depth interview procedure, the researcher had face to face interviewed to fifteen students who were expert in English. The answers were recorded by voice recorder.

After collecting the data from the 153 Myanmar students, to get statistical results, all the answers of questionnaires were analyzed by the Microsoft Excel 2010. Frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were used to analyze the finding result of the research. Then, the in-depth interview answers were described as the students' responses.

Results of research

Finding result of general information of the respondents

In this part, after analyzing the general information of the respondents consisting of gender, age, academic year of students; the years studied English and level of the students. The finding result occurred: for gender, majority of respondents were males (monks) about 147 (96.1%) and minority of respondents were females (nuns) about 6 (3.9%).

The ages of the respondents dividing into four groups: lower 20, 21-25, 26-30 and over 30 years old. Among them, 6(3.9%) of respondents were lower 20 years old, 22 (14.4%) of respondents were 21-25 years old, 85 (55%) of respondents were 26-30 years old and 40 (26.1%) of respondents were over 30 years old.

The academic years of the respondents consist of first to fourth year. Among them, 60 (39.2%) of respondents were first year students, 48 (31.4%) of respondents were second year students, 28(18.3%) of respondents were third year students and 17 (11.1%) of respondents were fourth year students.

The years studied English of the respondents dividing 2 years: 5 years and over 5 years. In those three dividing time, 61 (39%) of respondents studied English about 2 years, 47 (30.7%) of respondents studied English about 5 years and 45 (29.4%) of respondents studied English about over 5 years. The levels of the respondents consist of B.A and M.A. In those two levels, 110 (71.9%) of respondents were B.A student and 43 (28.1%) of respondents were M.A student.

Finding result of the difficulties in English sentence writing of the Myanmar students at MCU)objective one(

In the results of the difficulties in English sentence writing of the Myanmar students at MCU, there were eight tables from one to eight statements about difficulties in English sentence writing. By the eight statements, the researcher had regarded how much the students agreed or not with each statement of difficulties in English sentence writing. So, the first statement was to regard students' general difficulties in English sentence writing. The overall level of the statement number one was moderate $\bar{X} = 3.16$, (S.D. 1.402) because the agreement and disagreement of respondents were mostly same with the statement. Statement number two was to regard about using all types of sentences academically. For the statement number two, the overall level was moderate $\bar{X} = 3.02$, (S.D. 1.511) because of both agreement and disagreement side quite same. Statement number three was to regard about analyzing four types of sentences. The overall level of the statement number three also was moderate $\bar{X} = 3.05$, (S.D. 1.418) because among the two side of opinion both agree and disagree were mostly equal with the statement. Statement number four was to investigate phrases and clauses. For the statement number four, the overall level was moderate $\bar{X} = 2.87$, (S.D. 1.385) because half of students agree with the statement and half of students do not. Statement five was to regard about simple sentence. For statement number five, the overall level was high $\bar{X} = 3.20$, (S.D. 1.348) because majority of students agreed with the statement. Statement number six was to survey about complex sentence. In statement number six, the overall level was also high $\bar{X} = 3.22$, (S.D. 1.319) because most of the respondents agreed with the statement. Statement number seven was to investigate about compound sentence. In statement number seven, the overall level were moderate $\bar{X} = 2.97$, (S.D. 1.419) because both agreement and disagreement side of respondents were same. Statement number eight was to regard about mixed sentence. The overall level of the statement

number eight was high $\bar{X} = 3.21$, (S.D. 1.375) because most of the student agree with the statement.

The result of difficulties in English sentence writing, average level was moderate equal to $\bar{X} = 3.09$, (S.D. 1.380) because the agreement and disagreement of respondents were mostly same with the statements or questions of difficulties in English sentence writing of the Myanmar students.

Finding result of the providing way for the Myanmar students to write English sentences (objective two)

In the result of providing way for the Myanmar students to write English sentences, there also were eight tables for eight statements to investigate how much the students agree or not with each statements of providing ways. So, the first statement was about providing way for simple sentence. In the statement number one, the overall level was high $\bar{X} = 4.14$, (S.D. 1.089). Statement number two was to provide the usage of complex sentences. For the statement number two, the overall level was also high $\bar{X} = 4.19$, (S.D. 1.043). Statement number three was to provide the usage of compound sentences. In the statement number three, the overall level was also high $\bar{X} = 4.04$, (S.D. 1.051). Statement number four was to provide the usage of mixed sentences. The overall level of statement number four also was high $\bar{X} = 3.85$, (S.D. 1.123). Statement number five was to use comma. In the statement, the overall level was high $\bar{X} = 4.05$, (S.D. 1.037). Statement number six was to use punctuation. The overall level of the statement also was high $\bar{X} = 3.87$, (S.D. 1.062). Statement number seven was to use conjunctions. The overall level of the statement also was high $\bar{X} = 3.75$, (S.D. 1.189). Statement number eight was for providing the way to combine phrases and clauses. The overall level of the statement also was high $\bar{X} = 3.43$, (S.D. 1.341).

In the result of providing way for the students to write English sentences, the average level was high equal to $\bar{X} = 3.91$, (SD. 1.204) because majority of respondents agreed with the statements of providing way.

Main points of the in-depth interview results

To know the reason of difficulties in English sentence writing of the students, the researcher interviewed to fifteen suitable students. After the interview, in abbreviation, the reasons of difficulties in English sentence writing were that the students were confused in four kinds of English sentences. The students had difficulties in using comma, punctuation, conjunctions and vocabulary. The students were also weak in reading academic books and analyzing the sentences in the each book. Moreover, the students were weak in influence English idea.

Conclusion and discussion

After evaluating all results of the study, the researcher found that half the Myanmar students have difficulties in English sentence writing, at the Faculty of Humanities in MCU. In the result of difficulties, the average level was moderate equal to $\bar{X} = 3.09$ and standard deviation (S.D) was 1.380 because the students were weak in understanding four kinds of English sentences including phrases and clauses according to their responses.

Majority of the students are willing for providing way which include the usage of simple sentence, complex sentence, compound sentence, mixed sentence, comma, punctuation, conjunctions and the method to combine phrases and clauses. The average level was high equal to $\bar{X} = 3.91$ and standard deviation (SD) was 1.20. Therefore, it could be concluded that half of Myanmar students have difficulties in English sentence writing and majority of the students need the providing way for English sentence writing, at the Faculty of Humanities in MCU.

Suggestions for Research

According to finding result of the research, half of Myanmar students were facing difficulty about English sentence writing at Faculty of Humanities in MCU and majority of students needed good way to write English sentences. Therefore, the researcher would like to suggest further researchers who will investigate Myanmar students' difficulties at Faculty of Humanities in MCU. The further researchers can investigate these topics: (1) A study of difficulty in professional English writing skill of Myanmar students at MCU, (2) A study of difficulty in professional English-speaking skill of Myanmar students at MCU (3) A study of difficulty in academic writing skill of Myanmar students at MCU (4) A study of difficulty in paraphrase writing of Myanmar students at MCU.

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