

**Variable Production of English Past Tense
Morphology: A Case Study of a Thai-speaking
Learner of English**

Chariya Prapobaratanakul

Nattama Pongpairoj

English as an International Language Program

Chulalongkorn University

Abstract

The study investigated variable production of English past tense morphology by an L1 Thai-speaking learner of English. Due to the absence of the past tense inflectional morphology in the Thai language, production of English past tense morphemes poses a persistent problem for L1 Thai-speaking learners of English. Hypotheses have been made in accordance with Lardiere's (2003) Missing Surface Inflection Hypothesis (MSIH), which predicts that the participant possesses the syntactic knowledge of the English past tense morphology. The participant's variability in L2 production of English past tense morphology was not due to a lack of L2 grammatical knowledge but rather the result of syntactic mapping to the morphophonological form i.e. extra-syntactic factors. The results confirmed the MSIH, suggesting that English past tense

morphemes were acquired but the production problems lie in accessing the morphology.

Keywords: variable production, English past tense morphology, Thai learner, Missing Surface Inflection Hypothesis

Introduction

Variable production of inflectional morphology is well-attested across the production of adult second language (L2) learners (White, 2003), especially the inflectional morphology which exists in the L2, but is absent in the learners' first language (L1) (Dulay & Burt, 1974). English past tense morphology is a feature in which advanced L2 speakers of English from certain L1 backgrounds show persistent optionality in spontaneous production, as in “*the police caught the man and take him away” (Hawkins & Liszka, 2003, p. 21).

Various attempts have been made to explain this phenomenon (e.g. Bayley, 1991; Hawkins & Liszka, 2003; Lardiere, 1998; Goad, White & Steele, 2003). The Missing Surface Inflection Hypothesis (MSIH) claims that the cause of variability in L2 production of functional morphology is not due to the lack of L2 syntactic knowledge but rather the result of post-syntactic mapping to morphophonological form (Lardiere, 1998, 2000, 2003; Prévost & White, 2000; White, 2003). The Prosodic Transfer Hypothesis (PTH) proposes that the differences between the learners' L1 and L2 prosodic structures are the cause of variable production of the functional material in the learners' L2 (Goad, White & Steele, 2003). On the other hand, the Failed Functional Features Hypothesis (FFFH) views that learners' failure to supply L2 inflectional morphology is due to the impairment of the learners' grammar (Hawkins & Chan, 1997; Hawkins & Liszka, 2003; Franceschina, 2001).

Past tense in Thai is not expressed through inflected verbs (Supanvanich, 1973) but rather through context; thus, it poses a potential problem for L1 Thai learners' production of English past

tense morphemes. Various studies have been conducted cross-sectionally on the acquisition of English past tense by L1 Thai learners of English (e.g. Khumdee, 2013; Sriprom & Ratitamkul, 2014). However, to the best of our knowledge, there has been no study to date exploring the variable production of English past tense marking by L1 Thai learners with a case study and under the assumption of the MSIH (Lardiere, 2003) where the variable production lies in the mapping between the abstract feature of [+/-past] and its surface form. Therefore, the present study aims at exploring this issue and providing an in-depth analysis of the variable production of the past tense morphemes by an L1 Thai learner.

This paper will proceed as follows. The hypothesis will be presented first followed by a review of previous research, the methodology, the results and discussion, and the conclusion respectively.

Hypothesis

Based on the MSIH, the learner has the syntactic knowledge of English past tense morphology and the inaccurate use of English past tense morphology is due to extra-syntactic factors rather than the lack of syntactic knowledge according to the FFFH.

Literature Review

In this section, the two accounts of production of L2 functional morphology are presented followed by the previous studies addressing L2 acquisition of past tense morphology, and Pastness in Thai and English.

The three accounts of production of L2 functional morphology

- ***The Missing Surface Inflection Hypothesis (MSIH)***

The MSIH claims that the variability in L2 production of functional morphology does not necessarily point to the lack of L2

syntactic knowledge but rather means that the problems are with the production of the surface inflection. The variability is the result of post-syntactic mapping of a morphophonological form i.e. a processing problem occurs at a surface level of derivation (Haznedar & Schwartz, 1997; Lardiere, 1998; Prévost & White, 1999; Prévost & White, 2000). Based on this hypothesis, L2 learners can acquire and have the syntactic knowledge of the L2 grammar. However, they may have problems in producing the functional morphology in spontaneous production because of extra-syntactic factors.

- ***The Failed Functional Feature Hypothesis (FFFH)***

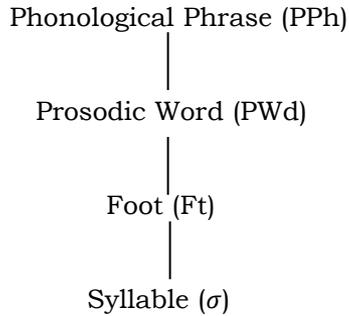
The FFFH proponents posit that learners' failure to supply inflectional morphology in their L2 is due to a lack of L2 morphosyntactic categories rather than the extra-syntactic factors or the syntax-morphology mapping. In other words, L2 learners' variable production of an L2 functional category stems from the impairment of the learners' grammar. The morphosyntactic categories that are not activated in the L1 grammar are inaccessible to the learners in their L2 (Franceschina, 2001; Hawkins & Chan, 1997; Hawkins & Liszka, 2003). The foundation for the FFFH was that the inventory of morphosyntactic features activated in any language is not universal, but is subject to parametric variation. Therefore, the learners whose L1 grammars do not activate a particular feature will be unable to acquire it in their L2.

- ***The Prosodic Transfer Hypothesis (PTH)***

The PTH proposes that different prosodic structures between languages are the cause of variation in production of L2 inflectional morphology (Goad, White & Steele, 2003). It is assumed that "if the L1 does not permit certain kinds of prosodic representations as required by the L2, then second language speakers will have difficulties in representing such morphology in the outputs of the phonological component of the interlanguage

grammar” (Goad & White, 2004: 122). Goad, White and Steele (2003) adopted the prosodic structures proposed by Selkirk (1986), as shown in (1):

(1) Prosodic hierarchy (partial):

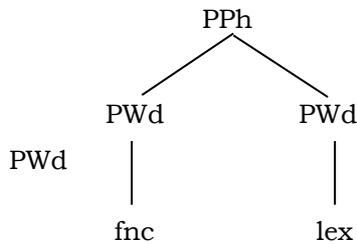


Goad, White and Steele (2003: 247)

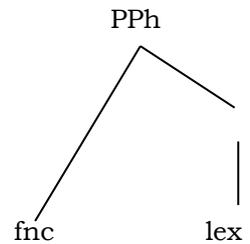
It is shown in (1) that the prosodic constituents are organized into hierarchy. Different organizations of prosodic words as proposed by Selkirk (1996) which are important parts in the analysis of the Prosodic Transfer Hypothesis are shown in (2):

(2) Different organizations of prosodic words:

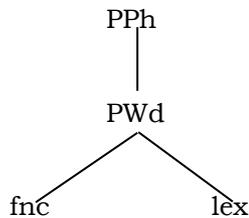
(a) Prosodic word



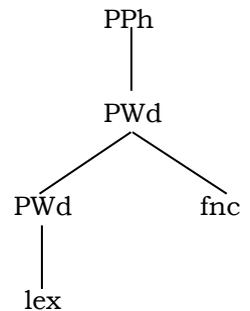
(b) Prosodic clitic: free clitic



(c) Prosodic clitic: internal clitic



(d) Prosodic clitic: affixal clitic



The structure in (a) refers to the function word (fnc) prosodized as a prosodic word (PWd). In (b), the free clitic refers to the case where the function word is sister to prosodic word (PWd) and daughter to the phonological phrase (PPh) e.g. ‘the book’ with ‘the’ as a function word and ‘book’ as a lexical word. In (c), the internal clitic is the case where the function word is dominated by the same PWd that dominates its sister lexical word. In the affixal case (d), the function word is sister to PWd and is dominated by the PWd e.g. the verb ‘yelled’ with ‘yell’ as a lexical word and the past tense morpheme ‘-ed’ as a function word.

According to the hypothesis, the L2 learners’ syntactic representations are appropriate for the target language. However, the functional material may be variably produced by the L2 learners due to the differences between the prosodic structure in their L1 and L2.

Previous Studies on the Acquisition of L2 English Past Tense

English past tense marking is one of the L2 inflectional morphemes variably produced by adult L2 learners from certain L1 backgrounds. Various studies have been conducted on this issue. Among these are Lardiere (2003), Hawkins and Liszka (2003) and Khumdee (2013), which are discussed in detail in this section.

Lardiere (2003) studied the acquisition of English past tense of a native Chinese speaker, Patty. Patty had been in an English speaking country for many years and was assumed to be already at her end-state grammar; however, she still produced low rates of suppliance of English past tense morphemes (under 35%). Lardiere reported that actually Patty had the knowledge of the syntactic factors employed for supplying the accurate past tense verb forms i.e. Patty’s failure to supply past tense marking could not be attributed to the failed feature [+past]. However, it was assumed that Patty’s low rates of suppliance of regular past tense morphemes was the result of an L1 constraint against final

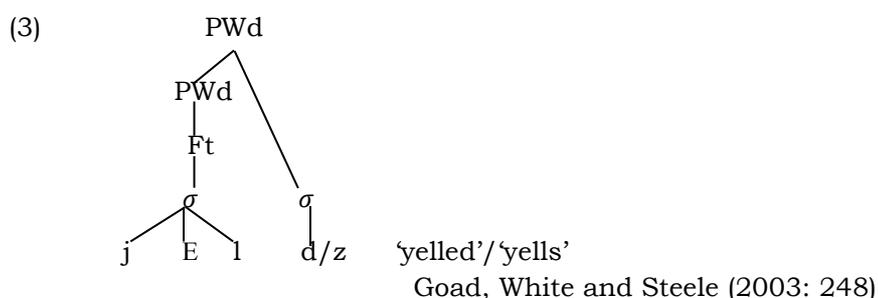
consonant clusters i.e. extra-syntactic factors. The asymmetric suppliance between certain syntactic features (e.g. past tense marking ‘-ed’) and a syntactic-related category (e.g. pronominal case) further supported Lardiere’s assumption that if the grammar is impaired in the learner’s functional morphology domain, suppliance of the syntactic categories and that of syntactic-related ones would be at the same rate. The results were in line with the MSIH claim that the learners possess the L2 syntactic knowledge but the variable production might arise from extra-syntactic factors.

Hawkins and Liszka (2003) analyzed the marking of thematic verbs for simple past tense by comparing the data from three L1 groups (German, Japanese, and Mandarin Chinese). Mandarin Chinese was the only language under investigation which did not grammaticalize tense. The results showed that L1 Chinese speakers provided significantly lower rates of suppliance of English past tense marking compared to L1 German and L1 Japanese speakers. Mandarin Chinese and Japanese had complex constraints against complex codas¹ which were usually employed by English regular simple past verbs. Therefore, if phonotactic L1 transfer affected low suppliance of past verb morphology in this case, the rates of suppliance of both L1 Chinese speakers and L1 Japanese speakers should have been the same. The researchers then argued for the inaccessibility of the L2 past tense morphosyntactic features not activated in the Chinese learners’ L1, supporting the FFFH claim that the morphosyntactic categories that are not instantiated in the L1 grammar are inaccessible to the learners in their L2.

Goad et al. (2003) studied the production of tense and agreement morphology of twelve Mandarin-speaking adult learners of English and proposed the Prosodic Transfer Hypothesis (PTH). It is claimed that the L2 learners’ syntactic representations are

¹ A complex coda refers to the portion of a syllable which follows the syllabic nucleus and contains more than one segment (Crystal, 2009), e.g. the /lp/ of /hElp/ ‘help’.

appropriate for the target language but the L2 learners may variably produce them due to the differences between the prosodic structure in their L1 and L2. The authors argued that Mandarin Chinese speakers had problems supplying English regular past tense and agreement inflections because of differences between the prosodic structures of the construction of verb stems and verbal inflection between English and Chinese. For English, the past tense /-ed/, and the third person singular agreement /-s/ were adjoined to the Prosodic Word (PWd) as in (3):



The past tense /-ed/ and the third person singular agreement /-s/ in Chinese, on the other hand, were not affixal clitics. The aspect marker was the only inflection in Chinese that was incorporated into the Prosodic Word. Results of a grammaticality judgment task and an oral production task showed that the participants seemed to have fully represented the functional category *Infl* and its associated features including tense and agreement features in their interlanguage grammar. The participants’ variable production of grammatical morphemes was due to their inability to construct L2 prosodic structures which were different from their L1. The findings supported the Prosodic Transfer Hypothesis and that L1 prosodic transfer affected surface production of inflectional morphology.

Khumdee (2013) investigated variable production of English past tense marking by L1 Thai learners. The results from the grammaticality judgment test, the cloze test and the story-telling test indicated that L1 Thai speakers showed variability and low suppliance of past morphemes in their production of English past

tense across the three tests. An asymmetric rate of suppliance between regular and irregular past tense marking was observed. The suppliance rates of English past tense marking were higher when adverbial phrases of time indicating pastness were present. The low suppliance together with the asymmetric phenomena supported the FFFH.

Pastness in Thai and English

Pastness in Thai is expressed differently from that in English. According to Noochoochai (1978), pastness in Thai is expressed through temporal expressions or lexical words, namely /dâay/, /khəy/, /lâew/, /dâay--lâew/ and /dâay--yüu lâew/ as in (4) and (5) and adverbs of time such as /mīawaanii/ ‘yesterday’ or /piikᳵᳵn/ ‘last year’.

(4) khāw dâay thāam aray nay thiiprachum
 he past ask what in meeting
 ‘What did he ask in the meeting?’

(5) phᳵᳵ faᳵ khāaw lâew
 father listen news past
 ‘Father listened to the news.’

Noochoochai (1978: 66)

The word /dâay/ in example (4) and /lâew/ in example (5) connote the past completed action for the sentences without any inflection of the verbs /thāam/ and /faᳵ/.

According to Koosamit (1984), pastness in Thai can also be expressed and inferred through contexts.

(6) Question: mᳵᳵlawaanniᳵi thᳵ paj na&j
 yesterday you go where
 ‘Where did you go yesterday?’
 Answer: paj roNphaᳵyaabaan
 go hospital
 ‘I went to the hospital.’

Koosamit (1984: 58)

There might not be any particular lexical word showing pastness in the answer in (6) but the audience can infer the pastness from the context.

The inflection of the verb and the auxiliaries, however, are used in showing pastness in English as shown in (7).

- (7)
- a. John talked to Mary.
 - b. John was talking to Mary.
 - c. Mary was talked to by John.
 - d. Mary was being talked to by John.
 - e. John has talked to Mary.
 - f. John had talked to Mary before he talked to Bill.

Bayley (1991:10)

In (7a), pastness is expressed through the inflection of the past tense morpheme ‘-ed’ on the verb ‘talk’ and, in (7b) and (7f), pastness is expressed through the auxiliaries ‘was’ and ‘had’, respectively. The inflections on verbs are obligatory expressing pastness in English and they are different from the Thai language where there is no tense-marking system (Noochoochai, 1978).

Methodology

The participant for the study is presented in this section followed by the materials and procedure.

Participant

The participant for this study was a 40-year-old adult Thai-speaking learner of English. Based on her score on the Grammar Test part of the Oxford Placement Test (Allan, 1992), she was an advanced learner of English. She had never studied in an English-speaking country up to the time of the study. Her English learning experience started when she was in grade 4. During her primary and secondary school experience, she studied with only Thai teachers. She became more exposed to English during her bachelor’s and master’s degrees as well as when she worked at an international company where English was the medium of

communication. At the time of the study, she was working as a high school English teacher in an English program at a public school. From the participant's experience in learning English, it could be assumed that she had little exposure to English before her critical period. She was an adult learner of English and was assumed to be at her end-state grammar.

Materials and Procedure

There were two tasks used in this study. The first one was the Grammaticality Judgment Test (GJT) which consisted of 80 forced choice elicitations. The time allocation for this task was one and a half hours. All of the questions were adopted from the grammar exercises in Murphy (1996) and Hewings (2001) as they covered all aspects of English past tense targeted in the investigation. 40 questions were the real test items for the study while the other 40 were distractors. The 40 test items included 20 regular verbs and 20 irregular verbs. The irregular verbs tested were ablaut, pseudo-inflection, suppletive, and identical forms². Ablaut refers to verbs that change their vowels for the past tense forms e.g. *see-saw*, *break-broke*, or *take-took* etc. Pseudo-inflection is a class of verb whose vowel is changed from long to short e.g. *lead-led*, *meet-met*, or *leave-left* etc. Suppletive refers to verbs whose forms are changed completely for past tense e.g. *is-was*, or *go-went* etc. The last type of irregular past tense verbs is the same forms when appearing in present tense and past tense e.g. *hit-hit*, *put-put*, or *cut-cut* etc. (See Appendix A).

The second task was the Spontaneous Production Task which was conducted after finishing the Grammaticality Judgment Test. The participant was interviewed by the researcher with questions aimed at eliciting the participant's production of English past tense morphemes. Most of the interview questions were about the participant's English learning and teaching experience (See Appendix B).

² 'Identical forms' refer to the English past tense verbs which have the same forms as their corresponding present tense verbs

The transcription of the interview was checked by two native speakers of English. One is a Philippine English teacher who was a bilingual with English as one of her native languages. The other was a Canadian English teacher who had a certificate in Teaching English as a Foreign Language.

Results and Discussion

Results for both the Grammaticality Judgment Test and the spontaneous production task are shown in this section followed by the discussion.

Table 1 presents the overall results of the Grammaticality Judgment Test

Table 1: Grammaticality Judgment Test Results

| Grammaticality Judgement Test | Number of Past Tense Morphemes | Scores | Percentage |
|--|---|---------------|-------------------|
| Regular | 20 | 17 | 85% |
| Irregular | 20 | 20 | 100% |
| Total | 40 | 37 | 93% |

The overall correct suppliance of the Grammaticality Judgment Task was 37 out of 40 i.e. 93% correct suppliance. The participant's correct use of regular past tense inflections was 17 out of 20 or 85%. The three incorrect answers were for questions number 4, 8 and 13 in the regular past tense morphemes part (See Appendix A). She inaccurately chose '*discovers,*' '*has started,*' and '*had remembered*' instead of the regular past tense verbs for the simple past tense form respectively. For irregular past tense morphemes, she could supply them all correctly i.e. 20 out of 20 or 100%.

Table 2 shows the results of the Spontaneous Production Task.

Table 2: Spontaneous Production Task Results

| Spontaneous Production | Number of Past Tense Morphemes | Scores | Percentage |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| Regular | 13 | 5 | 38% |
| Irregular | 49 | 47 | 96% |
| Total | 62 | 52 | 84% |

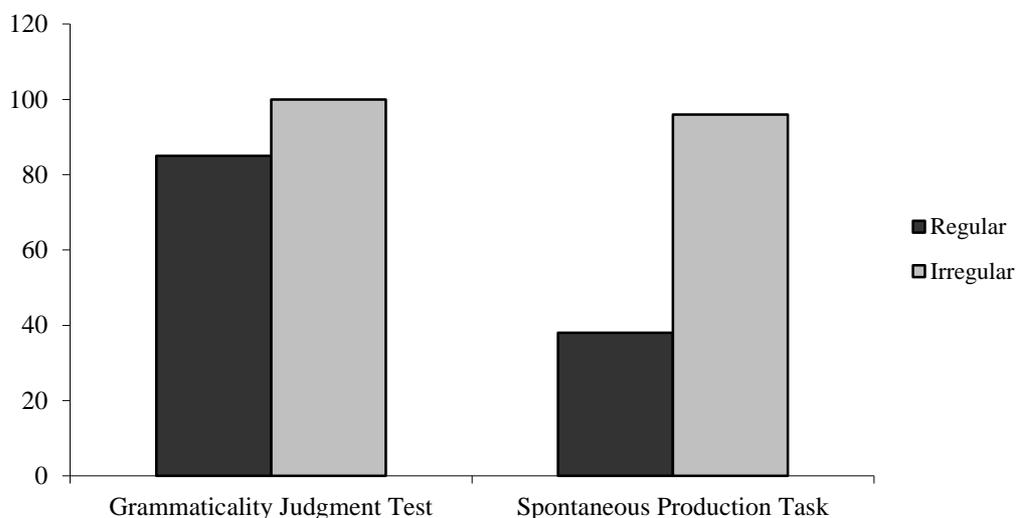
The total accurate suppliance for this task was 52 out of 62 or 84%. The participant's correct use of regular past tense morphemes was 5 out of 13 or 38%. The lists of verbs with correct and incorrect suppliances of past tense morphemes in the Spontaneous Production Task were presented in Appendix C. Examples of the incorrect use of the morphemes were “*I start learning English when I was in Prathom 5” and “*The class was small and everyone participate in class activities and contributed to group work.” For irregular past tense morphemes, her correct suppliance was 47 out of 49 or 96%. The two occurrences of incorrect suppliance of the morphemes were “*When I first start doing this, I find it interesting” when she was asked about her experience in teaching English and “*They got what I talk to them and I understand them” when she narrated her experience of travelling abroad (See Appendix D).

Table 3 and figure 1 show the comparison of the results from the Grammaticality Judgment Test and the Spontaneous Production Task.

Table 3: Grammaticality Judgment Test and Spontaneous Production Task Results

| | Grammaticality Judgment Test | Spontaneous Production |
|-----------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| | Test | |
| Regular | 85% | 38% |
| Irregular | 100% | 96% |
| Total | 93% | 84% |

Figure 1: Grammaticality Judgment Test and Spontaneous Production Task Results



The participant's correct suppliance of the past tense morphemes were 93% in the Grammaticality Judgment Test and 84% in the Spontaneous Production Task. Based on the criterion of 80% suppliance in obligatory contexts (Anderson, 1978), the participant had the syntactic knowledge of English past tense morphology though the grammatical feature is absent in the learners' L1. Moreover, the fact that the participant's performance was 93% on the Grammaticality Judgment Test and 84% on the Spontaneous Production Task, which was more demanding in terms of the spontaneity and the phonology involved suggested that the cause of the problems in the suppliance of English past tense was due to the extra-syntactic factors or the post-syntactic mapping to morphophonological form. The results then supported the MSIH, i.e. the learner had the syntactic knowledge of English past tense morphology and the learner's inaccurate use of English past tense morphology was due to extra-syntactic factors rather than the lack of syntactic knowledge according to the FFFH. If the cause of the variable production had been due to the lack of syntactic knowledge, the participant's scores in the Grammaticality Judgment Test would have been lower.

What were also noticeable were the suppliances of regular past tense morphemes. It could be observed that the participant's correct use on regular past tense morphemes was rather high in the Grammaticality Judgment Test (more than 80%) and was very low in the Spontaneous Production Task (less than 40%). The learner's low suppliance of regular past tense inflections in the Spontaneous Production Task supported the effect of extra-syntactic factors on the variable production of L2 English past tense.

The participant's inaccurate use of regular past tense morphemes in spontaneous production was due to her past tense inflections' omissions. The final sounds /-t/, /-d/, and /Id/ were omitted at 62% e.g. 'start' and 'remember' were produced in the context where 'started' and 'remembered' were needed respectively. The results could be explained by Lardiere's notion of consonant cluster reduction (2003), which argued for extra-syntactic factors as the cause of the learner's inaccurate use of English past tense morphology.

To illustrate, in Lardiere's (2003) study, her participant, Patty, failed to produce regular past tense morphemes correctly because of the extra-syntactic factors i.e. Chinese has no final consonant cluster so she could not produce past tense morphemes since they occurred as the final consonant cluster. According to Naksakul (2002), Thai has no final consonant cluster either. Therefore, Lardiere's consonant cluster reduction hypothesis might be able to explain why the participant of this study had problems with the regular past tense morphemes in the spontaneous production.

The data obtained from the study were also supported by the Prosodic Transfer Hypothesis. The results from the Grammaticality Judgment Test suggested that the learner had appropriate syntactic representations for the L2 English past tense. However, the functional material was variably produced in the spontaneous production task, which might be due to differences between the prosodic structures between the English and Thai past tense as stated in Section 3. Past tense in Thai is

not prosodically organized as affixal clitic, but rather expressed through temporal expressions, lexical words or contexts.

Although the past tense morphemes were not correctly produced in every obligatory context in the data collected, the high rates of accurate suppliance obtained from both the Grammaticality Judgment Test and the spontaneous production task suggested that ultimate acquisition of new features is possible, hence supporting the Missing Surface Inflection Hypothesis and the Prosodic Transfer Hypothesis, not the Failed Functional Features Hypothesis.

Conclusions

The results obtained in this study support the Missing Surface Inflection Hypothesis (MSIH) based on the results from the Grammaticality Judgment Test and the Spontaneous Production Task. The data suggest that a Thai-speaking learner of English acquires English past tense morphemes despite these features being absent in the Thai grammatical system. However, the participant still has problems in supplying the English regular past tense morphemes in the spontaneous production task which can be explained with Lardiere's (2003) hypothesis where the problem is due to the extra-syntactic factors. Therefore, this study confirmed the Missing Surface Inflection Hypothesis and not the Failed Functional Features Hypothesis. For pedagogical implications, it is suggested that L2 learners should be more exposed to the communicative tasks involving the use of English past tense. The present study was conducted with one participant with the aim of providing an in-depth analysis of the variable production of the past tense morphemes by L1 Thai learners. However, this study has a limitation in that it may not be generalized due to the limited number of participants. Future studies on the issue with L2 participants from L1 backgrounds with and without past tense inflectional morphemes are recommended.

The Authors

Chariya Prapobratanakul earned her B.A. and M.A. in English from the Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University, and is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in English as an International Language at the same institute. Her areas of interest include Second Language Acquisition and Psycholinguistics.

Nattama Pongpairoj received her B.A. (English) (first-class honors) from Chulalongkorn University, M.A. (Linguistics) from the University of Oregon, and Ph.D. (Linguistics) from the University of York. She is currently an Associate Professor in the Department of English, Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University. Her research interests include Interlanguage, Second Language Acquisition, particularly L2 cognitive processing and L2 acquisition of functional morphology.

References

- Allan, D. (1992). *The Oxford placement test*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Anderson, J. (1978). Order of difficulty in adult second language acquisition. In W. Ritchie (Ed.), *Second Language Research: Issues and implications* (pp. 91-108). New York: Academic Press.
- Bayley, R. (1991). *Variation theory and second language learning: Linguistic and social constraints on interlanguage tense marking*. ProQuest Dissertation and Theses database.
- Crystal, D. (2009). *Dictionary of linguistics and phonetics*. 6th ed. USA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Franceschina, F. (2001). Morphological or syntactic deficits in near-native speakers? An assessment of some current proposals. *Second Language Research*, 17, 213-247.
- Goad, H., White, L., & Steele, J. (2003). Missing surface inflection in L2 acquisition: a prosodic account. In B. Brachlev et al. (Eds.), *BULCD 27* (pp. 265-275). Somerville, MA: Cascadilla.
- Goad, H., & White, L. (2004). Ultimate attainment of L2 inflection: effects of L1 prosodic structure. *EUROSLA yearbook 4*, ed.

- By Susan Foster-Cohen, Mits Ota, Michael Smith and Antonella Sorace, 119-45. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Hawkins, R., & Chan, C. Y. (1997). The partial availability of universal acquisition: the 'failed functional features hypothesis.' *Second Language Research*, 13, 187-226.
- Hawkins, R. (2001). *Second language syntax: A generative introduction*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Hawkins, R., & Liszka, S. (2003). Locating the source of defective past tense marking in advanced L2 English speakers. In R. Van Hout et al. (Eds.), *The lexicon-syntax interface in second language acquisition* (pp. 21-44). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Haznedar, B., & Schwartz, B. (1997). Are there optional infinitives in child L2 acquisition? *BUCLD 21: Proceedings of the annual Boston University conference on language development*, ed. By Elizabeth Hughes, Mary Hughes, and Annabel Greenhwell, 257-68. Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Press.
- Hewings, M. (2001). *Advanced grammar in use*. 6th ed. UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Khumdee, M. (2013). *Variable production of English past tense marking by L1 Thai learners: an application of the Failed Functional Features Hypothesis*. (Unpublished master's thesis). Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand.
- Lardiere, D. (1998). Case and tense in the 'fossilized' steady state. *Second Language Research* 14, 1-26.
- Lardiere, D. (2000). Mapping features to forms in second language acquisition. *Second language acquisition and linguistic theory*, ed. By John Archibald, 102-29. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Lardiere, D. (2003). Second language knowledge of [+/-Past] and [+/-finite]. In J. M. Luceras et al. (Eds.), *Proceedings of the 6th Generative Approaches to Second Language Acquisition Conference (GASLA 2002)* (pp. 176-189). Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Proceedings Project.

- Murphy, R. (1996). *English grammar in use: a self-study reference and practice book for intermediate students*. 2nd ed. UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Naksakul, K. (2002). *Rabopsiengphasathai (The Sound System of Thai)*. Bangkok: Faculty of Arts Publications Project, Chulalongkorn University.
- Noochoochai, P. (1978). *Temporal aspect in Thai and English: a contrastive analysis*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). New York University, United States of America.
- Ponmanee, S. (2000). *Reading to learn Thai*. Chiang Mai, Thailand: Center for Teaching Thai as a Foreign Language, Chiang Mai University.
- Prévost, P., & White, L. (2000). Missing Surface Inflection or Impairment in second language acquisition? Evidence from tense and agreement. *Second Language Research*, 16, 103-33.
- Selkirk, E. (1996). The prosodic structure of function words. *Signal to syntax: bootstrapping from speech to grammar in early acquisition*, ed. By James Morgan and Katherine Dermuth, 187-213. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Koosamit, M. (1984). *A contrastive study of the expression of past time in English and Thai*. (Unpublished master's thesis). Chulalongkorn University: Bangkok: Thailand.
- Sriphrom, S. & Ratitamkul, T. (2014). Lexical aspect and the use of simple past tense by Thai learners of English. *MANUSYA: Journal of Humanities*, 17, 1, 64-77.
- White, L. (2003). *Second language acquisition and Universal Grammar*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Appendix A

Choose the best answer for each sentence.

Regular past tense morphemes

1. The rabbit just in my garden one day last week.
(1) appeared (2) has appeared
(3) will appear (4) appears
2. Few of the trees in our village the storms during the winter of 1991.
(1) have survived (2) survive
(3) had survived (4) survived
3. We with Mike and Sue last weekend.
(1) stayed (2) had stayed
(3) were staying (4) have stayed
4. John Grigg the comet now called Grigg-Skjellerup, at the beginning of the 20th century.
(1) has discovered (2) discovered
(3) discovers (4) is discovering
5. The police me several questions about my car before they let me go.
(1) are asking (2) were asking
(3) asked (4) have asked
6. Until she retired last month, she in the customer complaints department.
(1) is working (2) has working
(3) works (4) worked
7. At first Iinviting them to stay, but we soon became great friends.
(1) regretted (2) will regret
(2) have regretted (4) am regretting
8. Since the eruption all the villages on the slopes of the volcano have been evacuated.
(1) has started (2) starts
(3) started (4) was starting
9. Since he the girl from the frozen pond, he has been on TV and in the newspapers almost every day.
(1) was rescuing (2) rescues
(3) has rescued (4) rescued

10. When his mother was looking in the other direction, Steve
away quietly.
- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| (1) slipped | (2) was slipped |
| (3) has slipped | (4) slips |
11. I a drink while I was waiting for Pam to arrive.
- | | |
|------------------|------------------|
| (1) was ordering | (2) ordered |
| (3) am ordering | (4) had ordering |
12. Our guests were early. They as I was getting changed.
- | | |
|-------------------|------------------|
| (1) were arriving | (2) had arriving |
| (3) arrived | (4) have arrived |
13. I was just about to leave when I my briefcase.
- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| (1) has remembered | (2) was remembering |
| (3) had remembered | (4) remembered |
14. In a surprise move, the Prime Minister last night.
- | | |
|-------------------|--------------|
| (1) has resigned | (2) resigned |
| (3) was resigning | (4) resigns |
15. Maria hasn't wanted to drive since she her car.
- | | |
|-----------------|-------------|
| (1) had crashed | (2) crashed |
| (3) will crash | (4) crashes |
16. Yesterday, Sharon to work.
- | | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| (1) walks | (2) was walking |
| (3) has walked | (4) walked |
17. When he was 13, his parents to the United States.
- | | |
|---------------|----------------|
| (1) had moved | (2) moves |
| (3) moved | (4) have moved |
18. The police three people yesterday.
- | | |
|--------------|------------------|
| (1) arrested | (2) has arrested |
| (3) arrest | (4) had arrested |
19. He while he was walking.
- | | |
|------------|-----------------|
| (1) looks | (2) was looking |
| (3) looked | (4) has looked |
20. Throughout the summer of 1980 Malcolm to divide his
time between London and New York.
- | | |
|-------------------|---------------|
| (1) has continued | (2) continued |
| (3) is continuing | (4) continues |

Irregular past tense morphemes

Ablaut

1. I last you in Beijing three years ago.
(1) see (2) saw
(3) has seen (4) had seen
2. Helen her leg while she were skiing in Switzerland.
(1) was breaking (2) has broken
(3) broke (4) had broken
3. He the cake out of the oven and placed it carefully on the table.
(1) took (2) had taken
(3) has taken (4) takes
4. Last year, at his wedding he a green suit and red tie.
(1) wore (2) had worn
(3) had been wearing (4) wears
5. She closed the door and down quickly.
(1) sits (2) was sitting
(3) has sit (4) sat

Pseudo-inflection

1. We when I was working in a music shop.
(1) were meeting (2) met
(3) had meeting (4) have meeting
2. Ann gave me her address but I'm afraid I it yesterday.
(1) was losing (2) had lost
(3) lost (4) lose
3. Jenny school in 1991.
(1) was leaving (2) has leaving
(3) leaves (4) left
4. When Martha went to Choke Chai farm last month, she the horse.
(1) fed (2) has fed
(3) was feeding (4) feeds
5. John the discussion yesterday.
(1) leads (2) led
(3) has led (4) has been leading

Suppletive

1. When I picked up the coffee I surprised to find it that it was cold.

- | | |
|--------------|---------------|
| (1) has been | (2) was being |
| (3) was | (4) am |

2. Just as I was getting into the bath the fire alarm off.

- | | |
|---------------|--------------|
| (1) was going | (2) had gone |
| (3) has gone | (4) went |

3. I felt very tired when I got home, so I straight to bed.

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------|
| (1) has been gone | (2) went |
| (3) go | (4) was going |

4. I to my brother's party last night.

- | | |
|---------------|--------------|
| (1) was going | (2) has gone |
| (3) went | (4) had gone |

5. I very tired, so I lay down on the bed and went to sleep.

- | | |
|--------------|--------------|
| (1) was | (2) had been |
| (3) has been | (4) am |

Identical forms

1. I the windows as soon as it started to rain.

- | | |
|------------------|--------------|
| (1) was shutting | (2) has shut |
| (3) am shutting | (4) shut |

2. When the taxi came I my suitcase on the back seat.

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------|
| (1) put | (2) was putting |
| (3) has been putting | (4) has put |

3. Yesterday my teacher me

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------------|
| (1) was hitting | (2) hit |
| (3) has hit | (4) has been hitting |

4. Paul that tree 2 years ago.

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------|
| (1) was cutting | (2) cuts |
| (3) cut | (4) has cut |

5. It really my feeling when she said that to me.

- | | |
|--------------|---------------|
| (1) hurts | (2) will hurt |
| (3) has hurt | (4) hurt |

Appendix B

Questions for the interview

1. Could you please tell me your experience in learning English?
2. Where do you think was the best place for improving your English?
3. What was the most memorable situation in your English learning experience?
4. Could you please tell me your experience in teaching English?
5. How do you feel about your English teaching?
6. What is the most impressive situation or experience in your teaching career?
7. Could you please tell me your experience when you lived abroad and used your English?
8. What is your future plan about learning and teaching English?

Appendix C**Lists of verbs with correct and incorrect supplings of past tense morphemes in the Spontaneous Production Task**

| | Correct | Incorrect |
|-----------|---|--|
| Regular | supported (n=1) talked (n=1) contributed (n=1) | start (n=3) participate (n=1) find (n=1) understand (n=1) talk (n=1) help (n=1) |
| Irregular | was (n=17) were (n=13) had (n=9) came (n=1) got (n=3) went (n=3) learnt (n=1) | find (n=1) learn (n=1) |

Appendix D

Extracts from the Spontaneous Production Task

1. Could you tell me your experience in learning English?
"I start learning English when I was in Prathom 5. The chance for students to learn English was quite low during that time, especially in the province. Students had to learn English only in class... no tutoring schools. Learning resources were also rare ... At university level, English was my major. I learnt different English courses. I think some are still useful but others are not."
2. Where do you think was the best place for improving your English?
"... the best place for improving my English was in my workplace. In the firm, I had a British boss. I learn a lot of English from him. I talk to him about anything, especially something about business... Being a teacher in school which is still my workplace, I find that discussion with my co-workers who are native speakers of English does help improve my English."
3. Where was the most memorable situation in your English learning experience?
"... I think when I was doing my master degree in translation. I had good friends who came from different professions with different perspectives. The class was small and everyone participate in class activities and contributed to group work. The class was practical. Whenever there was any problem, we help solve the problem and supported each other."
4. Could you please tell me your experience in teaching English?
"I start teaching English 8 years ago in a public high school. I have been teaching mostly upper level students. I have found that most Thai students still have difficulty developing 4 skills in English even they have started learning English since they were very young."
5. How do you feel about your English teaching?
"When I first start doing this, I find it interesting. That was because it was something new, different from what I had done before. Now I sometimes think that it's boring especially if the subject I am teaching is not suitable for the students' level ... working system in public high schools doesn't facilitate my English teaching. Extracurricular activities and non-teaching workload often discourage me ... lower my energy and time on lesson preparation."