

ABSTRACT

AN ERROR ANALYSIS OF BUSINESS LETTERS

WRITTEN BY VOCATIONAL STUDENTS

By

Pornchanok Kittiprasert

The purpose of this study is to discover the most problematic area of grammatical errors and to identify the major error subtypes frequently found in vocational students' business letter writing. The participants of this study were fifty third-year lower certificate students who attended Business English 1 at ACC during the first semester of 1997. Each participant was asked to write one business letter according to a given fictional situation. The number of errors was analyzed and classified by descriptive taxonomy, surface strategy, introduced by Venable (1974). This type of descriptive taxonomy was divided into four main areas: (1) omission errors, (2) insertion errors, (3) misformation errors, and (4) misordering errors. Quantitative data from the frequency tally of errors were calculated by percentage in order to find the numerical comparative values of errors found in all four areas of surface strategy. The results revealed that misformation errors were the major problem appearing frequently in vocational students' business letter writing; this was followed by omission, insertion, and misordering categories. The highest error percentage of total misformation, omission, insertion and misordering error subtypes was the use of irregular predicators, omitted articles, inserted short plurals, and misordered sentences, respectively.