# THAI EFL LEARNERS' COMPREHENSION AND PRODUCTION OF ENGLISH IF-CONDITIONALS

**BY**

**MR. PRATHEEP KATIP**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF**
**THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS**
**IN ENGLISH FOR CAREERS**
**LANGUAGE INSTITUTE**
**THAMMASAT UNIVERSITY**
**ACADEMIC YEAR 2015**

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THESIS

BY

MR. PRATHEEP KATIP

ENTITLED

THAI EFL LEARNERS' COMPREHENSION AND PRODUCTION OF ENGLISH IF-CONDITIONALS

was approved as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts Program

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| | |
|---|---|
| Chairman | Supakorn Phoocharoensil<br>(Asst. Prof. Supakorn Phoocharoensil, Ph.D.) |
| Member and Advisor | Chanika Gampper<br>(Ajarn Chanika Gampper, Ph.D.) |
| Member | N. Wadsorn<br>(Asst. Prof. Nussara Wadsorn, Ph.D.) |
| Dean | Pornsiri Singhapreecha<br>(Assoc. Prof. Pornsiri Singhapreecha, Ph.D.) |

| | |
|---|---|
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| Author | Mr. Pratheep Katip |
| Degree | Master of Arts Program |
| Department/Faculty/University | English for Careers<br>Language Institute<br>Thammasat University |
| Thesis Advisor | Ajarn Chanika Gampper, Ph.D. |
| Thesis Co-Advisor (If any) | - |
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in English for Careers (English Program)

## ABSTRACT

This study sought to determine which conditional verb forms proved most difficult for Thai secondary school students to understand and produce, as well as what errors resulted in written and spoken English. The participants were 68 twelfth grade students in an integrated English program at a public high school in Bangkok, Thailand. The data was collected by a comprehension task to determine the Thai learners' comprehension of English conditional verb forms; a gap-fill task to examine students' production performance and conditional errors in written English; and a spoken task to explore the performance and errors of 20 students. The results of the comprehension task were that Thai English as a foreign language (EFL) students found Future Predictive Conditionals most problematic and Present Counterfactuals easiest to understand. In the gap-fill task, the participants scored highest in Future Predictive Conditionals and lowest in Past Counterfactual Conditionals. The spoken task results concurred with the written ones. In the gap-fill task, the present simple tense accounted for the most errors in linguistic taxonomy, while misformation errors were most frequently produced in surface structure taxonomy. In the spoken task, the future simple tense was most commonly misused in linguistic taxonomy, while omission errors were most

frequent in surface structure taxonomy. The pedagogical implications are provided in (2) study.

**Keywords:** Conditional verb forms, Thai EFL learners, Grade 12 students, Comprehension, Production, Spoken, Performance

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# CHAPTER 1
# INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 BACKGROUND

English *if*-conditionals are regarded as one of the crucial resources that are worth mastering in academic discourses, both in spoken and written languages, due to the fact that they can be employed to "hypothesize, hedge, interact with addressee, promote" (Thomas & Jolivet, 2008, p. 191) or even soften research claims. Mastering this grammatical feature can make a great contribution to learners' proficiency (Luu Trong Tuan, 2012). Additionally, *if*-conditionals are commonly used in various situations in our daily life. Eastwood (2002) also points out that *if*-conditionals can be used with a main clause in different purposes, e.g. to "request, advise, criticize, suggest, offer, warn or threaten" (Eastwood, 2002, p. 334). For instance:

(1) ***If*** *you're going to the nearby department store, could you buy me some coffee?* (Request)
(2) ***If*** *you need to take days off, you should ask your boss for permission.* (Advise)
(3) ***If*** *I win the lottery, I'll share the money with you.* (Offer)

Nonetheless, syntactic as well as semantic complexities of the *if*-conditional are an obstacle to learners of English as a second (ESL), and as a foreign language (EFL), and even native speakers have difficulty with this grammatical point (Covitt, 1976, as cited in Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999) owing to the fact that it represents a wide range of meanings, forms, and is utilized for various discourse functions (Norris, 2003). Covitt also makes clear that ESL teachers are faced with three main difficulties in teaching conditional sentences: (1) *Structure*: conditional constructions are different from other grammatical features as they have two clauses: an *if*-clause and a main clause, which are more complicated than other grammatical constructions in English; (2) *Semantics:* a receiver has to understand the meaning or the message a speaker is trying to convey in the *if*-conditional, e.g. a request, advice, criticism, possibility, or an action; (3) *Tense-aspect and modal auxiliaries*: this area can be problematic for EFL/ESL learners as the verb forms in the *if*-conditionals frequently do not maintain their typical references to time. In addition, Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999) point out that only forms and meanings of the three traditional *if*-conditionals are described in ESL course books or grammar books, which do not include the complexity and variety of other English conditional forms and meanings when it comes to experiencing

other excluded English *if*-conditionals; therefore, most EFL/ESL learners often find it difficult to deal with. In light of the problems noted above, teachers of English encounter barriers to teaching English conditionals. It is, therefore, not surprising at all if ESL/EFL learners find such syntactic and semantic areas challenging to comprehend and produce as well.

In Thailand, this grammatical area had received little attention from Thai researchers, with few studies having investigated it. According to Sattayatham and Honsa (2007), Thai EFL learners from four medical schools at Mahidol University found it most difficult to produce the verb forms of *if*-conditionals in written English. Past Counterfactual Conditionals (or past unreal type) were the first ranked grammatical error made by the students. In addition to the errors and problems discovered in the written data from previous studies, the present study will bridge the gap by further exploring the possible errors Thai EFL learners might commit as well as the challenges they encounter when it comes to the comprehension and production of the four types of English *if*-conditionals, which are emphasized in ESL or EFL teaching materials as well as included in a wide variety of grammar course books (Chou, 2000). This was done by employing three different research tasks, which aimed to evaluate both the receptive and productive performance of Thai EFL high school students in an Integrated English Program from a public school in Bangkok, Thailand. Additionally, this study hopes to shed some light on the acquisition of *if*-conditionals as well as identify the culprits or factors contributing to the errors in each *if*-conditional type among Thai EFL learners.

### 1.2 Research questions

This study aims to answer the two following research questions:

1.2.1 Among the four English *if*-conditionals, which one is the most problematic for Thai EFL students in terms of comprehension and production performance, i.e. spoken and written language?

1.2.2 What errors do Thai EFL students frequently make in the production of English *if*-conditionals both in written and spoken language?

### 1.3 Objectives of the study

The objectives of this study are as follows:

1.3.1 To investigate the types of *if*-conditionals that are most problematic for Thai learners in terms of comprehension and production performance in an Integrated English Program

1.3.2 To investigate the possible errors that Thai EFL students frequently make in production tasks in both written and spoken English

**1.4 Statement of the problems**

As past studies make clear, English *if*-conditionals appear to be challenging and play a crucial role in language learners' acquisition (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999; Chou, 2000; Lai-chun, 2005; Luu Trong Tuan, 2012; Sattayatham & Honsa, 2007). The current study aims to investigate this grammatical point among Thai EFL learners in the upper secondary level, i.e. Grade 12 students, from an Integrated English Program. Since Thai language does not contain marked verb tenses, auxiliaries, and inflected verb forms (Smyth, 2013), English if-conditionals can be challenging and problematic for Thai EFL students to master in terms of both comprehension and production performance, i.e. speaking and writing skills.

**1.5 Scope of the study**

1.5.1 **Thai EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners**

The current study aimed to explore *if*-conditional performance and errors among Grade 12 Thai EFL students in Bangkok. This group of students had studied all four of the target types of *if*-conditionals assessed in the study. Therefore, 68 Grade 12 students from an Integrated English Program in a public school were recruited for the study.

1.5.2 **English *If*-conditionals**

This study was limited to four typologies of *if*-conditionals. These types are typically taught to Thai EFL students and included in the EFL curricula or English textbooks and used by the school where this study was conducted, as shown in Table 1.1 below. In addition, the number of grammatical features was adapted from Chou (2000), originally based on O'Grady's (1997) Cumulative Complexity principle, as illustrated in Table 1.2 below.

Table 1.1 The four English *if*-conditionals assessed in the current study

| **Name** | **Structure** |
|---|---|
| Factual Conditionals | If + present simple, present simple<br>e.g. *If we heat ice, it melts.* |
| Future Predictives | If + present simple, will + verb<br>e.g. *If he comes, we will be happy.* |
| Present Counterfactuals | If + past simple, would/could/might + verb<br>e.g. *If I found one billion dollar, I would return it to the police.* |
| Past Counterfactuals | If + past perfect, would/could/might have + past participle<br>e.g. *If she had come with me, I would have been happy.* |

Table 1.2 The number of grammatical features of *if*-conditionals assessed in the study

| **Name** | **Number of grammatical features** |
|---|---|
| Factual Conditionals | [- past], [- perfect], [- modal] |
| Future Predictives | [- past], [- perfect], [+ modal] |
| Present Counterfactuals | [+ past], [- perfect], [+ modal] |
| Past Counterfactuals | [+ past], [+ perfect], [+ modal] |

Adapted from Chou (2000, p. 67), originally based on O'Grady's (1997) Cumulative Complexity principle

### 1.5.3 **Tasks**

#### 1.5.3.1 **The Comprehension task**

This task was adopted from Ko (2013) and then modified to draw information on the interpretive performance with respect to English *if*-conditionals. It contained 20 test items, five for each of the conditional types. The five items of each type were proportionate to three affirmative sentences and two negative ones. In the negative sentences, one was in the form of 'verb + not' and the other one was represented by the conjunction 'unless'.

#### 1.5.3.2 **The Gap-filling task**

This task contained 20 test items, five for each of the conditional types. The number of test items was proportionate, as stated above. This task put an emphasis on the grammatically correct verb forms of the focus conditional types by assessing the learners' *if*-conditional performances and types of errors in written English.

#### 1.5.3.3**The Spoken task**

The task contained 12 test items, three for each of the conditional types. The *if*-clause and main clause consisted of either affirmative or negative sentences, except for the conjunction 'unless'. This task centered on the verb pattern of *if*-conditionals assessed in the study, exploring both the *if*-conditional performances as well as types of errors in spoken English.

## 1.6 Limitations of the study

Due to the fact that the sample was drawn from an Integrated English program (IEP) in Bangkok, the findings might not be generalizable to those from other programs such as regular programs in the Thai education system. Moreover, the number of participants in the spoken task could have been increased to find more possible conditional errors in learners' spoken English. Even though there exist other types of *if*-conditionals in authentic contexts or natural data e.g. corpora, which contain *if*-conditionals in both spoken and written English like, '[…**i**]**f had to be putting on a performance then I get really on edge**[….] (Farr and McCarthy (2002), as cited in O'Keef, McCarthy, and Carter (2010, pp. 127-129), only four types of *if*-conditionals were examined in this study. The conjunction ***If*** was primarily used in the test items of the three tasks due to the fact that it is one of the most frequent conjunctions used in English language even though there are many other words, expressions, and constructions that can introduce conditions (Carter et al., 2000). Additionally, the conjunction *unless* was also included in the study because it is frequently found in grammar books or textbooks in the Thai education system, and it is the "negative counterpart of *[if]*" that is worth exploring (Al-Shorafat, 1982, p. 236). Lastly, only irregular verbs were used in the Past Counterfactual Conditionals of the spoken task in order to precisely determine whether or not a participant produced and pronounced the grammatically correct verb forms.

## 1.7 Definitions of terms

### 1.7.1 Theoretical definitions of terms

**Conditional clause** "is one that usually begins with if or unless and describes something that is possible or probable" (Oxforddictionaries.com, 2015).

**Main clause** is "a clause that can form a complete sentence standing alone, having a subject and a predicate" (Oxforddictionaries.com, 2015). In this study, it refers to the consequent of a conditional.

**Competence** "is one's underlying knowledge of the system of a language—its rules of grammar, its vocabulary, all the pieces of a language and how those pieces fit together" (Brown, 2000, p. 31).

**Performance** "is actual production (speaking, writing) or the comprehension (listening, reading) of linguistic events" (Brown, 2000, p. 31).

**Receptive skills** refer to listening and reading skills, which are used to receive language produced by someone (Obilisteanu, 2009, p. 65). These skills can be evaluated by employing computer-scored and multiple-choice items (Powers, 2010, p. 1).

**Productive skills** refer to speaking and writing skills, which are "the ability to communicate actively in the foreign [language], to speak it and write it" (Davies, 1976, p. 441). These skills can be evaluated by using performance tests or constructed-response tests (Powers, 2010, p. 1).

### 1.7.2 Operational definitions of terms

**Productive task** refers to a gap-filling task (see Appendix B), which aimed to assess the students' production performance with respect to *if*-conditionals in written English.

**Receptive task** refers to a comprehension task (see Appendix A), which aimed to assess the students' comprehension performance with respect to English *if*-conditionals.

**Spoken task** refers to a speaking test (see Appendix C), which aimed to assess the students' production performance with respect to *if*-conditionals in spoken English.

**Grade 12 students** refer to high school students who studied in the upper secondary level or Mattayom 6 from an IEP in the Thai education system.

**Integrated English Program students**

The participants in this study were Grade 12 students in an IEP from a public school in Bangkok, Thailand. This program is different from regular programs in that the students study all English classes with only native English speakers, whereas those in regular programs in the majority of high schools in Thailand study with either Thai teachers of

English or native English speakers. They study some other classes, i.e. computer, mathematics, and sciences, with Thai teachers in English. Additionally, they have studied English for more than 10 years.

### 1.8 Significance of the study

Few research studies have explored English if-conditionals with respect to Thai EFL learners. Moreover, studies that have done so merely investigated the production of if-conditionals in terms of writing skills, e.g. paragraph writing (Sattayatham & Honsa, 2007). It seems that no studies have investigated Thai students' performance of other aspects of if-conditionals, i.e. comprehension and production performance in written English, in regular or other programs. Accordingly, the present study aims to fill the gap by evaluating the students' performances by employing: (a) a gap-filling task evaluating the students' production skill of if-conditional verb forms in each target conditional type; (b) a comprehension task evaluating the interpretive capability and comprehensibility of students in each conditional; and (c) a spoken task assessing the students' spoken performance with respect to each conditional. Therefore, the findings will have pedagogical implications for teachers of English or related educators, which can be applied to adjust their teaching and learning materials.

Apart from determining the learners' comprehension and production performance, the current study aimed to examine if-conditional errors in each target typology in written and spoken English by employing a gap-filling task and spoken task, as noted above. The outcomes from this research disclosed the if-conditional errors produced by Thai learners. Thus, teachers could benefit from the findings by exposing their students to the conditional types that are most problematic, helping to reduce the errors so that the students can acquire this grammatical point.

### 1.9 Organization of the study

Chapter one outlines the background of study, research questions, objectives of the study, statement of problems, scope of the study, limitations of the study, definitions of terms, significance of the study, and organization of the study. Then, chapter two reviews the theory of English if-conditionals, authentic uses of English if-conditionals, acquisition order of English if-conditionals, the problems with acquisition of English if-conditionals by EFL/ESL learners, description of errors, and relevant previous studies and summary. As for chapter three, it illustrates the participants; the research instruments that include the Oxford

Placement Test and a demographic information questionnaire, a comprehension task, a gap-filling task, and a spoken task; the research procedures; and data analyses, which include frequency, error analysis, along with descriptive statistical analyses. Moreover, chapter four presents the findings and the discussion of the research questions. Finally, chapter five provides a summary of the study, a summary of the findings, the conclusion of the study, pedagogical implications, and recommendations for further research.

# CHAPTER 2
# REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter reviews the literature in six major areas: (1) theory of English *if*-conditionals; (2) authentic uses of English *if*-conditionals; (3) acquisition of English *if*-conditionals by first language learners and EFL/ESL learners; (4) problems with the acquisition of English *if*-conditionals by EFL/ESL learners; (5) description of errors; and (6) relevant research studies and a summary.

## 2.1 Theory of English If-conditionals

### 2.1.1 Definition and background of conditional sentences

An *if*-conditional basically contains an *if*-clause or the protasis and a main clause or the apodosis (Bache & Davidsen-Nielsen, 1997; Sandford, 2003); for example:

*If I take physics, I need to take calculus first.*

*If I go to a medical school, I will have to borrow lots of money.*

In a conditional sentence such as, *if you were our boss, you would be able to solve this problem,* the first clause, *if you were our boss,* is called the 'antecedent', and the second clause, *you would be able to solve this problem,* is called the 'consequent'. However, the sequence of the two clauses can be changed without affecting the meaning: *You would be able to solve this problem if you were our boss* (Sandford, 2003).

Bhatt and Pancheva (2005) define "conditionals as structures involving an adverbial clause interpreted as stating the conditions under which the proposition expressed by the main clause is true" (p. 638). Bennett (2006) proposes that "[w]e encounter a conditional through a sentence expressing it, that is, a sentence whose meaning it is" (p. 3).The author explained that an element is accepted as a conditional if it is represented by an English sentence containing '*if*' followed by another sentence followed by 'then' followed by the other sentence. The author also added that the conditional sentence can omit '*if*', e.g. *"Had the civil war not been fought, American slavery would have continued into the twentieth century"* (p. 3). As a result, conditional sentences refer to a cause and an effect, which may be possible events, unlikely events, or impossible events. They can talk about the past, present, or future (Marsden, 2008).

Gabrielatos (2003) proposes that a wide variety of English language teaching materials provide learners with the information about *if*-conditionals, as follows:

- The tense-aspect marking of the main verbs in the *if*-clause and main clause.
- The modal auxiliaries that can be used in the *if*-clause and the main clause.
- The time reference of the each conditional sentence.
- The user's attitude towards possibility.

(Gabrielatos, 2003, p. 1)

### 2.1.2 Types of English If-conditionals in English language teaching

Many studies categorize English *if*-conditionals into various types, structures, and usages as well as use different names for individual types of conditionals. In teaching English grammar, Scrivener (2014, pp. 231-242) enumerates four types of English conditional sentences with their meanings and usages, as follows:

Four types of English conditional sentences

| Type | Structure | Meanings & Usages |
|---|---|---|
| Factual conditional | *If + present simple, present simple* | state things that are generally or always true. |
| First conditional | *If + present, S + will/can/ might/may/should/must/have to* | state things that are normal, possible, and seem likely to happen. |
| Second conditional | *If + past simple, S + would + base form of verb* | state things that are impossible or nearly impossible. |
| Third conditional | *If + past perfect, would/could/might/must + have + past participle* | state things or events in the past that cannot be altered. |

Ko (2013, p. 144) classified *if*-conditionals into five types in order to study the acquisition of *if*-conditionals in terms of comprehension and production by Korean and Spanish ESL learners, as shown below:

Five types of English conditional sentences

| Name | Structure |
|---|---|
| Present Generic (PG) | If + present simple, present simple |
| Future Predictive (FP) | If + present simple, will/be going to/ |

| | |
|---|---|
| | should/must/can/may + verb |
| Present Counterfactual (PC) | If + past simple/were/were to verb, would/might/could + verb |
| Past Counterfactual (PPC) | If + past perfect, would/could/might have past p. |
| Mixed-Time Reference (MTR) | If + past perfect, would/could/might + verb |

(Adapted from Ko, 2013, p. 144)

Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999, pp. 548-552) classifies English conditional sentences by their meanings or semantics for ESL/EFL teachers into three main types, as follows:

1. Factual Conditional Sentences

Factual conditionals contain four types: generic, habitual, implicit inference, and explicit inference.

1.1) Generic Factual Conditionals

These conditionals represent relationships that are true and unchangeable; for example, If ice is heated, it melts. If water is frozen, it becomes ice.

*If + present simple, present simple* is the structure of these conditionals. Furthermore, they are often found in scientific writing as sciences are frequently associated with these relationships.

1.2) Habitual Factual Conditionals

These conditionals express either past or present true relationships that are typical or habitual, and they are similar to generic factual conditionals as they express a timeless relationship. If the habitual relationship refers to the present time event, the present simple tense is used in both the *if*-clause and the main clause; moreover, the past simple tense is used in the *if*-clause and the main clause if the habitual relationship refers to the past time event; for example,

*Present:* If I cook, Sandy set the table.

*Past:* If Yaya sang, Barry danced.

(Adapted from the examples by Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman, 1999, p. 549)

Additionally, *when* or *whenever* can substitute for *if* in the factual conditionals and still express the same idea; for example,

When (ever) I cook, Sandy set the table.

When (ever) Yaya sang, Barry danced.

1.3) Implicit inference conditionals

These conditionals "express inferences about specific time-bound relationships" (p. 549), and they are likely to sustain the same tense and aspect or the same modal in the *if*-clause and the main clause. Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999, p. 549) provide some examples below:

If you'll bring some wine, I'll bring some beer and potato chips.

If it's Tuesday, it's Sam's birthday.

Nonetheless, *if* cannot be substituted for by *when* or *whenever* like in generic and habitual conditionals. Doing so can change the meaning and make the sentence ungrammatical; for example: When(ever) it's Tuesday, it's Sam's birthday.

1.4) Explicit inference conditionals

Parallelism of tense, aspect, or modal is not strict in both clauses of this conditional type due to the fact that the *if* clause is primarily used for inferring explicitly; thus, the main clause or the result clause has an inferential modal, conventionally *must* or *should*; for example,

If anyone is so busy, it must be Anne.

If someone is diligent, it should be John.

2. Future (Predictive) Conditional Sentences

2.1) Strong condition and result

Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999, p. 550) propose that these "sentences express future plans or contingencies". The normal form of this type is the present simple tense in the *if* clause and will/ be going to in the result clause:

If Marry arrives at the office early, she's going to check her e-mail messages first.

If you get this task done, I'll buy you a glass of iced coffee.

2.2.) Degrees of weakened or result

A weaker modal of prediction, e.g. *may* or s*hould,* can be used in the result clause when the outcome is not sufficiently certain to use *will* or *be going to*:

If Marry arrives at the office early, she may check her e-mail messages first.

If you get this task done, I should buy you a glass of iced coffee.

Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999, p. 550) point out the prediction scale in progressively weakened result from *will* to *might*, as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| Will, Be going to | Certain (strong result) |
| should | Probable |
| may | Possible (stronger) |
| might | Possible (weak) |

The researchers also add that *should, happen,* or a combination of them can be used to weaken the condition in the *if*-clause. They provide the following examples:

If it { should / happens to / should happen to } rain, I'll stay home.

3. Imaginative Conditional Sentences

This type of conditional includes two subtypes. i.e. hypothetical conditionals and counterfactual conditionals.

3.1) Hypothetical conditionals

This type of conditional "expresses what the speaker perceives to be unlikely yet possible events or states in the *if*-clause" (Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman, 1999, p. 551). For example:

If Joe had the time, he would go to Mexico. (present hypothetical)

In addition, the possibility of the result clause can be stronger if the negative quality of the *if* clause is further weakened:

If Joe { should have / happened to have / should happen to have } the time, he would go to Mexico.

In contrast, weakening does not occur in a counterfactual conditional because the condition is not possible and the *if*-clause is strongly negated.

Furthermore, the researchers suggest that this type of conditional can refer to both the future and the present, and they provide the examples, as follows:

*Present:* If Joe had the time, he would go to Mexico.

*Future:* If Joe were to have the time, he would go to Mexico.

3.2) Counterfactual conditionals

This type of conditional expresses impossible events with respect to both the present and the past. The researchers provide the explicit sentence examples below:

*Present counterfactual:* If my grandfather were alive today, he would experience a different world.

*Past counterfactual:* If my grandfather had been still alive in 1996, he would have been 100 years old.

### 2.1.3 English *if*-conditionals and probability

Wu (2012) concludes that teaching second language learners the probability approach would be beneficial in terms of acquiring or dealing with English *if*-conditionals effectively. Wu points out that 'probability' is an indicator guiding the selection of the correct type of conditional sentence when composing conditional statements. In the production of any conditional construction, learners must first consider the possibility of an event; then, they apply the selected type depending on the degree of possibility and its grammatical usage. Wu categorized conditional sentences by the estimated degrees of probability of each type, as shown in the following table:

Types of English conditional sentences by probability

| Types | Probability (%) | Structure | Example |
|---|---|---|---|
| Factual conditionals | 100 | If+ present, present simple | If water boils, it becomes steam. |
| Predictive conditionals | 50 | If + present simple, future simple | If it rains, I will stay at home. |
| Hypothetical counterfactuals | 10 | If + past simple, would + verb | If I won the lottery, I would buy a house. |
| Counterfactual conditionals | 0 | If + past perfect, would have + past participle | If I had won the lottery, I would have bought a house. |

Adapted from Wu (2012, p. 42)

### 2.1.4 Other words with conditional senses

Apart from the conjunction *if*, other conjunctions, words, and expressions can be used to introduce conditions (Carter, Hughes, & McCarthy, 2000; Hayden, Pilgrim & Haggard,

1981; Narayanan, Liu, & Choudhary, 2009; Swan, 1996) and some of them can be used interchangeably with *if* (Carter et al., 2000). In addition, most of the words similar to *if* are used in written texts so as to make the contexts more formal (Carter et al., 2000). Some of the most frequently used words that introduce conditions are *imagine (that), suppose (that)/ supposing (that), providing (that)/ provided (that), on condition (that), as long as, so long as, given (that)*. For example:

(1) *Imagine (that)* human can fly around the world.

(2) *Supposing (that)* you got a scholarship to study abroad, which country would you go?

(3) Students are eligible to take the final examination *on condition that* they have attended 80 percent of all classes.

(4) You can come with us *as long as/ so long as* you share the petroleum expenses.

### 2.1.5 Other relevant points to *If* structures

1. Swan (1996, pp. 261-267) points out that there are other grammatical features that are used instead of *if*.

1.1. Formal inversion constructions: omitting *if*

*If* can be left out and the three commonest auxiliary verbs, i.e. *were, should,* and *had,* can be placed before the subject; for instance,

*Should* I study hard,… (= If I *should* study hard,…)

*Were* she the president of company,… (= If she *were* the president of company,…)

*Had* they joined your birthday party,… (= If they *had* joined your birthday party,…)

(Examples were adapted from Swan, 1996, p. 261)

1.2. Conversational context: omitting *if*

*If* can be omitted at the beginning of a sentence in order to make conditions or threats.

You look at me again. I'll slap your face. (= If you look…)

You want to eat snacks, you'll need to pay. (= If you want…)

(Examples were adapted from Swan, 1996, p. 261)

1.3. *But for* can be used instead of 'if it were not for' or 'if it had not been for'.

e.g. *But for* your clear-cut explanations, I might not understand this lesson.

(Examples were adapted from Swan, 1996, p. 261)

2. Will/ would in *If*-clause

The modal verbs, *will* and *would*, can be used in polite requests. *Will* does not refer to future events or situations, but it represents 'be willing to', while *would* is used in more polite requests (Swan, 1996, p. 259). For example,

If you *will* await me here for a while, I'll bring you a cup of coffee.

If your friend *would* resubmit his progress report, I'll bring it to the manager.

(Examples were adapted from Swan, 1996, p. 259)

3. If I were you…

The structure 'If I were you…' can be used to give advice.

e.g. *If I were you,* I would help him.

4. *If* in fixed and semi-fixed expressions

Carter et al. (2000, p. 75) propose that *if* in fixed and semi-fixed expressions *(i.e. If in doubt, If so and If not, If possible and If necessary, If anything, If only, If ever, If at all)* are useful for speakers and writers of English in terms of the economical use of language as these expressions are shorter than clauses. Although they are in the form of ellipsis, they can be expanded into clauses. Below are some of the most frequent ones:

**If in doubt** means if you are uncertain/ unsure, e.g. If in doubt, try to ask me. (= If you are in doubt…)

**If about to** (Swan, 1996, p. 261), e.g. If about to take a long vacation, get all your tasks done. (= If **you are** about to…)

**If so** and **If not** "are used to signal whether conditions have been fulfilled" (Carter et al., 2000, p. 75). For instance,

Check whether or not he has finished his assignments yet. *If so* (= If he has finished his assignments), allow him to go home.

Is the weather is pleasant today? *If not* (= If the weather is not pleasant), we are not going for a picnic.

**If possible** and **If necessary** (= If it is possible and If it is necessary) "[…refer to a situation and condition to which they are linked" (Carter et al., 2000, p. 75).

e.g. *If possible,* submit your job application in person.

**If anything** is used to strengthen a statement.

e.g. A: Jacky's academic performance is getting poor.

B: No, he is not. If anything, his is getting better!

**If only** is used to introduce wishes, e.g. If only I (or If I only) had the time, I would travel to Samui Island.

**If ever** is used to strengthen a statement, e.g. If ever he (or If he ever) did this task, he would understand why it is so complicated.

(Examples were adapted from Carter et al., 2000, p. 75)

**If at all** is used to express that "a speaker doubts that the preceding statement is true or valid" (Carter et al., 2000, p. 206), e.g. *If at all,* he hasn't eaten anything yet today.

## 2.2 Authentic uses of English if-conditionals

Apart from the traditional types of *if*-conditionals existing in English language teaching materials and ESL/EFL course books, there indeed exists a wide variety of *if*-patterns in actual usage of which many English users might not be aware.

Farr and McCarthy (2002, as cited in O'Keef, McCarthy, and Carter, 2010, pp. 127-129), reveal the uses of *if*-constructions in the corpus of Post-Observation-Teacher-Training Interactions in that the classic three types of *if*-conditionals occurred rather significantly less than non-traditional types. The commonest *if*-pattern was *If + present simple, present simple/ progressive* or called 'Factual conditionals'. The three traditional types made up less than half of the frequency of alternative *if*-forms. Below are some examples of alternative *if*-conditionals from the POTTI corpus (Farr and McCarthy, 2002):

(1) Yeah I mean get them involved quickly **if they do come in late.**

(2) **If you are teaching that class,** don't feel obliged to explain everything to her.

(3) **If I were to do it** I would go with giving good clear instructions.

Phoocharoensil (2014) carried out a study on '*If*-conditionals in authentic corpus-based English'. The study aimed to find out the occurrences of *if*-conditionals in the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA). It was revealed that up to 20 alternative forms, plus the Factual conditionals were found in actual use. The three conventional types occurred in less than half of the total occurrences. It was found that the first conditional (*If + present simple, will* and other modals, e.g. can, may should) was the most frequent *if*-pattern. For example:

Type I: (1) If you don't leave this case alone, I *will* ruin you politically, publicly.

(2) If this is what fashionable, I *can* do it better than the other people.

Factual conditional (If + present simple, present simple): If it *smells*, the dog *takes* it.

*If + present simple, imperative:* If you *don't want* our child, *give* him to me to raise.

Other alternative *if*-forms, as exemplified below:

(a) *If + past simple, would have + past participle*

(b) *If + present simple, present progressive*

The following are their sentence examples:

(a) If it *was* meant for you to die today, you *wouldn't have found* this.

(b) If this war *continues*, I'*m taking* you to Canada!

Likewise, Jones and Waller (2011) undertook a study on *'If only were true: the problems with the four conditionals'* by examining 250 concordance lines randomized from the British National Corpus (2009). The study revealed that the highest number of *if*-patterns was *If + present simple, present simple*. Of all the tokens studied, alternative *if*-constructions evidently accounted for more than the classic three types. Below are some of the non-traditional *if*-forms from the BNC.

*If + present simple, present simple:* If an earn out is to be used, it is recommended that it does not form too significant a part of the purchase price…

*If + going to, should:*… if you're not going to join us, then…you should let us join you.

*If + present simple, past continuous:* If it means anything else, Hume was making fun of Adams.

*If + past simple, present simple:* … even if we did, we have no divers abroad…

Petcharapirat (2013) shed light on the production frequency and error analysis of *if-conditionals* by Thammasat University students, which was a corpus-based study. *The Thai Learners English Corpus* (TLEC) (http://ling.arts.chula.ac.th/TLE/) is a 1.3 million-word corpus collecting written essays in open topics produced by people with different English proficiency levels. The scope of the study was limited to the written essays produced by Thammasat University students at the intermediate level. '*If*' was the only key word to be searched in the corpus. Three hundred and twenty five lines out of the 500 concordance lines containing the word 'if' were qualified and analyzed. Two hypotheses were formulated based on the theory of Developmental Law by O'Grady (1997), as cited in Chou (2000): (a) "The production frequency of if-conditional sentences by intermediate learners should begin with

the conditional type that has the highest number of grammatical features and ends with the type that has the lowest features: 1) future factual, 2) future predictive, 3) past factual, 4) present counterfactual, 5) mixed counterfactual, and 6) past counterfactual conditional; and (b) The error frequency order in the if-conditionals produced by intermediate learners should be in a reverse order with the production frequency" (p. 582). The significant findings revealed that as for the production frequency order, the Future Predictive Conditionals accounted for the highest frequency among the six types followed by Factual Conditional in present factual form (*If + present simple, present simple*); Present Counterfactual; Factual Conditional in past factual form (*If + past simple, past simple*); Past Counterfactual; and Mixed-time-reference Counterfactual, respectively. In terms of error frequency order, 119 out of the 325 lines were found to be if-conditional errors. It was found that Past Counterfactual Conditional accounted for the highest number of errors followed by Mixed-time-reference Counterfactual; Factual Conditional in past factual form; Present Counterfactual; Factual Conditional in present factual form; and Future Predictive Conditional. It was concluded that the production order and the accuracy order produced by Thai EFL students in Thammasat University did not support the formulated hypotheses.

Hesabi (2013) performed a study on *'A comparative analysis of the frequency and function of if-clauses in applied linguistics and chemistry articles'*. Fifty research articles from two fields, i.e. 29 chemistry articles and 21 applied linguistics articles, all of which were published between 2007 and 2010, were used to elicit *if*-patterns. In the two corpora, it was discovered that alternative *if*-patterns (63 tokens) slightly outnumbered the conventional ones (60 tokens). The pattern of *If + present simple, present simple* accounted for the most in both disciplines. The form of *If + present simple, modal* (e.g. might, can) made up the second proportion across the two disciplines as well. Surprisingly, the constructions of *If + past perfect, would; if + past simple, past simple; and if + past simple, modal* (e.g. might, can), were not found at all in the articles from the chemistry field, and they were rarely accounted for in those from applied linguistics.

Thomas and Jolivet (2008) conducted research on *'If-conditionals in medical discourse: From theory to disciplinary practice'*. The study aimed to find out the occurrences of *if*-conditionals in a corpus of medical texts in oncology, which covered three genres, i.e. research articles (RA), conference presentations (CP), and editorials (ED). Only native English authors and speakers were included in the data. Both full conditional sentences and elliptical constructions such as *if necessary* were included in the data analysis. Three macro-

functions were elicited from the data and were used as the major categories in the study: *Factual, Refocusing, and Discourse Management functions*. The Factuals category was concerned with generic, habitual conditionals, and scientific discourse. The Refocusing category was concerned with "a marked argumentative function" (p. 194) and making claims. The Discourse Management category included an if-clause part to guide readers and listeners about the author's attentions and provide polite directives, as in *Now if we go to patients who experienced mucositis toxicity*… (CP). The significant findings were that a higher number of if-conditionals was found in ED, CP, and RA, respectively. The highest proportion of Factuals was found in the RA; the highest frequency of occurrences falling in the Refocusing category was in the ED; and in the CP, the highest proportion was the Factuals. Surprisingly, the Discourse Management functions were only discovered in the CP, but did not exist in the other two genres. Furthermore, among the IMRD (introduction, methods, results, and discussion) sections in the RA, if-conditionals were distributed in the method section the most.

It can be clearly seen from the aforementioned previous studies that non-traditional *if*-constructions accounted for more than the three classic typologies in naturally occurring texts. The commonest type was the Factual conditional, which might or might not be included in EFL/ESL course books or even teaching materials. In addition, at this stage it can be assumed that most ESL/EFL learners are familiar with only the traditional types, and they might get confused when encountering variations to *if*-patterns in actual use.

## 2.3 Acquisition order of English *If*-conditionals

### 2.3.1 Acquisition order of English conditionals by first language learners

There have been studies investigating the acquisition of *if*-conditionals by L1 learners, discussing the developmental stages of individual conditional types in each age group as well as providing certain contributing factors to the acquisition order of each structure; for example,

Reilly (1982) investigated the acquisition of English *if*-conditionals. The researcher employed naturalistic data in longitudinal research with three children aged between 18 months and four years, together with those in a cross-sectional experimental design with 28 children aged between two and nine. Six English conditionals, namely, Present conditionals,

Generic conditionals, Past conditionals, Predictives, Hypotheticals, and True counterfactuals, were used to find out the acquisition order of the conditional system in seven age groups.

It was found that children aged between two years and six months as well as three years and two months begin to produce and use English *if*-conditionals. They first form present conditionals so as to talk about present situations or events and to make predictions—predictive conditionals, about circumstances that they believe will happen. Their utterances are basically linked with their needs and experiences, e.g. "What *if* you were a bird? **I'm not a bird, just a people**" (p. XI, abstract). Mastering the entire conditional system, however, takes approximately seven years.

The conditional modal **would** is acquired, and hypothetical conditionals are produced by most students aged about three years. Nonetheless, they do not have absolute insight into hypothetical conditionals as well as subjunctive or true counterfactuals. Children aged four years have the cognitive capabilities to comprehend English hypotheticals and counterfactual conditionals as well as to create generic conditionals. However, children aged five years have not yet reached a significant turning point in conditional development.

Children aged six years produce **woulda** and **would've** in counterfactual conditionals, both of which are considered informal forms in adult uses. Furthermore, it has been found that they are the first group that can re-order the two clauses in an *if*-conditional construction. The subjunctive form **were** is first used and frequently produced at seven, along with the contracted modal forms, **woulda/would've**. Although this is a morphological simplicity, it appears late in the conditional development. The formally conditional perfect forms **wouid+have+past participle** are demonstrated at age eight, along with "a new morphological awareness of tense co-occurrence restrictions in the antecedent and consequent" (p. 234).

In addition, Reilly concluded that there were different factors that influence and direct the acquisition sequence of conditional types, as follows:

> (a) The semantic complexity of a structure, and the child's cognitive abilities to understand and manipulate those particular semantic notions and relationships, are responsible for the basic sequence of development.
>
> (b) The complexity of the formal morphological structure generally motivates the time schedule for the appearance of specific structures in the child's grammar.

> c) Intersecting these two major pathways is the child's perception of the meaning of a conditional question.
> (d) Sociolinguistic and pragmatic considerations are additional contributing factors, responsible for the late acquisition of more formal, supplementary forms. (Reilly, 1982, p. 199)

Crutchley (2004) carried out a study on *If she had of shutted the cage, the rabbit wouldn't escape: Past counterfactuals.* The data were elicited from a large number of first language learners of English aged 6 to 11 years (n= 799). It was discovered that children began producing the target counterfactual structure at six years of age, and those aged between 6 to 11 years had an increasing capability to produce this structure as they become older. Nonetheless, control of the target structure was not achieved by some of the children in this age group, even those aged 11 years.

It can be seen that even first language learners of English find conditional structures relatively difficult to acquire. Although they begin to use conditional structures at the age of two to three years, they need at least 9 to 11 years to fully acquire and master these structures.

### 2.3.2 Acquisition order of If-conditionals by second language learners

Many previous studies have explored the acquisition of *if*-conditionals by adult EFL/ESL learners: most of the studies propose various acquisition sequences of the structures; for example,

Lai-chun (2005) concluded that the acquisition sequence of English *if*-conditionals by Chinese ESL learners can be explained by the syntactic complexities embedded in each conditional type. The study was based on O'Grady's Development Law (1997), which states that a conditional construction containing more grammatical features is more complex and difficult to acquire than those having less. It was found that the acquisition order applying to both the *if*-clauses and the main clauses lies in the following respects:
(1) *Present Factual* (If + present simple, present simple); (2) *Future Predictive* (If + present simple, future simple); (3) *Present Counterfactual* (If + past simple, would + infinitive); and (4) *Past Counterfactual* (If + past perfect, would have + past participle).

Therefore, Lai-chun's findings support the O'Grady's Development Law in that the Present Factual, which has the least grammatical features, is acquired first, but the Past Counterfactual (grammatical features in the *if*-clause: [+past][+perfect]; main clause: [+modal] [+past][+perfect]) is acquired last.

In 2000, Chou also employed the Developmental Law (O'Grady's, 1997) to determine the acquisition order of English conditionals, both the *if*-clauses and main clauses of six *if*-conditional types, i.e. present factual, past factual, future predictive, present counterfactual, past counterfactual, and mixed-time-reference by Chinese ESL learners. It was found that the acquisition order of the *if*-clauses of the six target types is *past counterfactual* that was scored highest, *following by mixed-time-reference counterfactual; past factual; present factual; future predictive; and present counterfactual* (scored lowest), respectively. On the contrary, the acquisition sequence of the main clauses is *past factual* (scored highest); *future predictive*; *mixed-time-reference counterfactual*; *present counterfactual*; *present factual;* and *past counterfactual* (scored lowest). It can be clearly seen that the learners found the *if*-clause of *past counterfactual* (*If* + had + past participle) simple to produce, whereas they found the main clause of the same type (would have + past participle) difficult to form. Another point that can be noticed is the acquisition order of the *if*-clause and main clause of future predictive type in that the participants perceived its *if*-clause rather difficult to deal with, but perceived its main clause relatively easy. Furthermore, Chou also argued that it is not merely the syntactic complexity of English *if*-conditionals, but also L1 interference that influence the acquisition order of English conditionals by Chinese learners; for example, they tended not to change the past simple form to the past perfect form when forming the *if*-clause of past counterfactual conditionals.

Ko (2013) obtained contradictory results to those of Lai-chun (2005) in that Spanish ESL and Korean ESL learners found *future predictive* the easiest to produce, followed by *present generic* (Factual conditional) and *present counterfactual*, respectively. Conversely, they found *past counterfactual*, along with *mixed-time-reference* the most difficult. It, however, seems to be difficult to compare the findings of Ko with those of Chou (2000) as Chou analyzed conditional constructions separately; that is, the *if*-clause and the main clause as aforementioned. Ko also determined that the acquisition sequence of *if* structures by L2 learners in the comprehension data laid in the following order from the easiest to the most difficult types to comprehend: *future predictive; present generic* and *present counterfactual*; and *past counterfactual*, along with *mixed-time-reference*. Additionally, Ko concluded that English proficiency in both groups of L2 learners, i.e. Spanish and Korean learners, had an important effect on the *if*-conditional acquisition. That is, the learners with lower English proficiency in each group of L2 learners had greater difficulty with the production of English conditional sentences than those with higher English proficiency, while there were no

significant distinctions in the comprehension of *if*-conditionals between the two groups of L2 learners. More importantly, the researcher also argued that input frequencies, grammatical complexities and L1 effect were the three possible factors that can be used to explain the acquisition sequence of the *if* structures; nonetheless, the input frequencies could be the most notable one in this case.

### 2.4 Problems with acquisition of English If-conditionals by EFL/ESL learners

"English conditionals have been thought of as one of the most difficult structures to acquire for second language (L2) learners (Ko, 2013, p. 146)". According to Sanford (2003), we cannot basically convert a conditional sentence frame such as *If . . . , then . . .* into a complete sentence by filling in the blanks with certain terms; for example,

*If not sour, then too expensive.*

*If human, then mortal.*

*Unhappy if unappreciated.*

Although the examples above might be comprehensible in some contexts, they cannot be counted as complete conditional sentences.

Smyth (2013) compared and contrasted certain grammatical features between Thai and English languages that could lead to a challenge or an obstacle to Thai EFL learners' proficiency in English. For example, *syntactical structures*: the two languages have a very distinct grammatical construction in that the verb tenses of Thai language are basically unmarked, and also adjectives and adverbs can function as verbs; *auxiliaries*: Thai language has no auxiliary verbs like those of English; and *time, tense, and aspect*: there are no inflected verb forms in Thai language. Simply put, Thais use a single word to cover all verb inflections such as *kin* (= eat) that can cover eat, eats, ate, eaten, is eating, was eating, has eaten, had eaten, will eat, and so on. For this reason, Thai EFL learners find verb inflections and complex verb phrases difficult to deal with, and many of them are likely to use the unmarked base form of the English verb instead; for instance, 'Yesterday we visit London.', 'She pay already.' and 'I leave him since ten o'clock.' In addition, he also points out that a Thai who may have a problem with pronunciation rather than grammatical points is likely to use the base form of a verb.

In addition, Thai students' writing errors resulted from first language (L1) interference with the acquisition of L2 and from inadequate development of the target

language. Learners' writing errors were mainly derived from either interlingual causes such as lexical errors and syntactic errors, or intralingual causes like, false analogy, and incomplete rule application (Kaweera, 2013, p. 16). In a similar vein, Bennui (2008) points out three major features of L1 interference in Thai EFL students' English writing, namely, (i) features of L1 lexical interference, (ii) features of L1 syntactic interference, and (iii) features of L1 discourse interference.

Shiu (2011) revealed that out of the 20 grammatical points studied, Chinese EFL learners perceived *unreal conditionals, participial construction,* and *real conditionals* as the most difficult syntactic features, respectively. It was concluded that the learners' L2 knowledge, L2 grammar learning experience, and L1 knowledge were the possible factors that influence their perceptions of grammatical difficulty. For example, the metalanguage that is used to explain the formulation or the rules of comprehending and producing real or unreal conditionals like, "to form real conditionals, write an *if*-clause and a result clause. Use present tense in the *if*-clause, and use present/future tense or modal auxiliaries plus base form of the verb in the result clause" (pp. 148-149).

Bryant (1984) studied the classic errors in English committed by Japanese EFL learners. It was concluded that in addition to incorrect verb tenses, the learners were likely to have difficulty with expressing unreal conditionals in English. Bryant provided the following examples:

*If I **was** in the same situation as Phoebe, I would tell someone about it.* (present unreal).

*If she had had such friends, she **didn't** need to be troubled*. (past unreal)

It can be seen that the incorrect verb forms of both the present and the past unreal conditionals were employed. The researcher, therefore, suggested that in dealing with English verb forms in a complex sentences such as conditional sentences, ESL learners need to be aware of the sequence of verb tense and the reality or the unreality of the predication as expressed in the sentence.

Luu Trong Tuan (2012) found that there were various causes to mistakes in using English *if*-conditionals by Vietnamese EFL learners, e.g. (i) how English grammar was taught and learned at school, particularly how to use conditionals in their writing; (ii) the possible impact of their L1 effects on the acquisition of conditionals; and (iii) their study behaviors such as they paid less attention to learning English grammar and also spent less time practicing it.

### 2.4.1 First language influences on acquisition of English If-conditionals

In a reference guide for EFL teachers, Swan and Smith (2013) argue that the difficulties of English learners in understanding and producing English conditional sentences arise from their mother tongues, called 'first language inferences'. Learners of English from different countries in Asia, i.e. Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Japan, China, and Korea, encounter such challenges.

Smyth (2013) points out that the word '*if*'' in the Thai system is often left out in *if*-conditionals; thus, this grammatical variant is occasionally taken into English *if*-conditionals. In addition, Thai EFL learners find verb tenses in complex sentences, e.g. conditional sentences, difficult to produce correctly. Similarly, Malay and Indonesian learners have difficulty with structuring correct and grammatical complex sentences as well (Yong, 2013)

Thompson (2013) makes it clear that there are no formal differences between real and unreal conditionals in the Japanese system; therefore, this poses a major problem for Japanese EFL learners in forming grammatical English *if*-constructions, as the mistakes in (1) and (2) below:

(1) *If I know you are here, I would come sooner.*

(2) *We can go swimming tomorrow if we got up early.*

Chang (2013) states that Chinese learners tend to use present tenses and modals instead of subjunctives— '*were*', and past unreal conditionals, which is incorrect, since they do not distinguish subjunctive from indicative mood, as in (3) below:

(3) *If I am you, I shan't go.* But the correct one is *If I were you, I wouldn't go.*

Lee (2013) points out that Koreans normally have difficulties with differentiating unreal conditionals from possible ones. The perfect form such as '*I would have been late*', which does not exist in the Korean system, is a concrete example of this problem.

### 2.4.2 Description of errors

James (1998, as cited in Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005) points out that learner errors in the target language in terms of production skills can be classified into two major types: *a linguistic taxonomy* and *a surface structure taxono*my, as follows:

(1) A linguistic taxonomy

This taxonomy basically involves general grammatical points, i.e. sentence structure, verb phrases, verb complementation, noun phrases, prepositional phrases, adverbials, subjunctives, auxiliary verbs, and non-finite verbs. For example, *If I *am you, I would not do that.*
The above sentence contains one verb phrase error— *am, because it is a Present Counterfactual conditional sentence in which the verb phrase 'were' must be used. Thus, this error would be categorized under this taxonomy in the verb phrase section.

(2) A surface structure taxonomy

Dulay, Burt, and Krashen's (1982, p. 150, as cited in Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005) make it clear that this taxonomy is concerned with "the ways sentence structures are altered" (p. 150) in either spoken or written sentences. The following are four crucial ways that learners alter target forms:

2.1) Omission

Kasper and Kellerman (1997, as cited in Sattayatham & Honsa, 2007) propose that learners are more likely to omit function words, e.g. auxiliary verbs, prepositions, articles, conjunctions, and pronouns, rather than content words, e.g. nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. For example, omission of an auxiliary verb 'do' in the verb pattern like,

*Jenny *not (✓does not) like to cook.*

2.2) Addition

According to Dulay, Burt, and Krashen's (1982, as cited in Sattayatham & Honsa, 2007) *addition* is the "result of all-too-faithful use of certain rules" (p. 150). That is to say, learners fail to consider exceptions and apply grammatical rules to certain constructions wrongly; for instance, forming 'goed' for 'went'. Moreover, learners do "double marking" in which they overuse certain grammatical aspects in other constructions unnecessarily like,

*If we *exercise**s*** *(✓exercise)* every day, *we burn some calories.*

2.3) Misformation

Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1982, as cited in Sattayatham & Honsa, 2007) propose that it is the "use of the wrong form of a structure or morpheme" (p. 174). The authors also provide example sentences, like:

*I* seen (✓saw) her yesterday.*

*He hurt* (✓hurts) himself.*

2.4) Misordering

In forming written and spoken sentences in the target language, learners perform "word for word translations of native language surface structure" (Dulay, Burt, and Krashen, 1982, p. 162, as cited in Sattayatham & Honsa, 2007), resulting in misordering. In other words, they misorder the words in a sentence even though they choose the right forms for the right context of use. For example,

**They every day get up early.* *(✓They get up early every day.)*

**Where you have been?* *(✓Where have you been?)*

**My brother younger* *(✓My younger brother)*

In addition, James (1998, as cited in Sattayatham & Honsa, 2007) provides another category, i.e. misselection in which the learners use the wrong words, not the wrong forms in either spoken or written sentences; for example,

*If you *look (✓see) him, tell him to call me back.*

*If I were you, I would not *make (✓do) that.*

**2.5 Relevant research studies**

The following relevant research studies focus on ESL/EFL learners in terms of the acquisition of English conditional sentences, together with other related syntactic and semantic structures.

Ko (2013) conducted a study on the acquisition of *If*-Conditionals by Korean-& Spanish-speaking learners of English that focused on the acquisition of *If*-conditionals by L2 learners of English with two native tongues, Spanish and Korean, and with two different proficiency levels, high and low. The participants included higher-level and lower-level Korean-speaking learners, along with higher-level and lower-level Spanish-speaking learners. The learner participants were students studying in the United States. A small booklet employed as an instrument contained three tasks: (i) the first task, used to test the proficiency of the learner participants; (ii) the second task, used to study the way the L2 learners produce *if*-conditionals called a '*Production Task*'; and (iii) the third task, used to study the way they comprehend *if*-conditionals called a '*comprehension task*'. The study revealed the following major findings: The Future Predictive type was acquired by the L2 learners first, while the Past Counterfactual and Mixed-Time Reference types were acquired last. The two groups of L2 learners (Korean & Spanish learners) with different L1 backgrounds did not display distinctions in their acquisition order of *If*-conditionals either in production or in comprehension. Higher-level learners (higher proficiency) had less difficulty with *If*-

conditionals than lower-level learners (lower proficiency). Among the three factors (input frequencies, grammatical complexities, & L1 influence), the input frequencies best explain the acquisition order of *If*-conditionals.

Sattayatham and Honsa (2007) investigated '*Medical Students' Most Frequent Errors at Mahidol University, Thailand'*. This study aimed to examine two areas: (1) finding the most frequent errors of medical students by employing three pieces of writing (i.e. sentence level translation, paragraph level translation, and opinion paragraph writing); and (2) identifying the dependency among sentence level translation, paragraph level translation, and opinion paragraph writing by applying Pearson's Chi-square. A total of 237 first-year medical students from four medical schools (i.e. Siriraj, Ramathibodi, Praboromchanok, and Bangkok Metropolitan) participated in the study. It was discovered that the medical students made the highest number of writing errors (85.23%) in *past unreal conditional* or *Past Counterfactual* in the sentence level translation. However, regarding the opinion paragraph writing, *present unreal and past unreal conditionals* were fifth ranked (34.18%) among the top ten errors.

Lai-chun (2005) investigated the acquisition of English conditionals by Chinese ESL learners. Four types of English conditionals were employed to elicit the data from the participants, as follows:

Type 0: If/When + simple present, simple present
Type Ia: If/When + simple present, modal + infinitive
Type Ib: If/When + simple present, will + infinitive
Type IIa: If + was, would + infinitive
Type IIb: If + were, would + infinitive
Type IIc: If + simple past, would + infinitive
Type III: If + had + pp, would + have + pp.

The participants included 57 Chinese-speaking Secondary Six students and 41 Secondary Four students. Both groups of students had mixed ability and were relatively poor at grammar rules. A translation task and a blank-filling exercise were employed as the research instruments in the study. The translation task was used to obtain the data on the learners' interpretation of Chinese Conditionals and their preference towards English Conditionals. The blank-filling task included some distractions and was used to obtain the data on the verb-phrases in conditionals. The main findings were that the Chinese learners had the highest scores in the Factual conditional type but had the lowest ones in conditional type three in the

translation task, which indicates that they found it difficult to produce the correct verb forms of this type. Additionally, the students still scored the highest in the Factual conditional type but scored the lowest in types three and two in the blank-filling task, respectively. Therefore, it was concluded that the Chinese ESL learners appeared to have difficulty with the acquisition order of the English *if*-conditional types three and two, both of which are Counterfactual conditionals as well as contain more grammatical features than their counterparts do. The Factual conditional type was found to be the simplest one to deal with by the participants as it contains the least number of syntactic features.

Chou (2000) examined how the grammatical complexity of English *if*-conditionals and first language transfer influence Chinese ESL learners' acquisition order of conditionals. The syntactic complexity of six conditionals: present factual, past factual, future predictive, present counterfactual, past counterfactual, and mixed-time-reference counterfactual conditionals was determined using the *Cumulative Complexity principle* by Brown (1973). The prediction of the acquisition orders of the *if*-clause and the main clause of English conditionals was done by employing the Developmental Law of O'Grady (1997). Additionally, the production data of English conditionals were drawn from 20 native-speakers of English and 36 adult Chinese speakers by employing a written cloze test simulating oral conversations. The responses from both groups of participants were compared. The findings revealed that Chinese ESL learners' acquisition orders of *if*-conditionals appeared to have been influenced by the syntactic complexity of English conditionals and the L1 effects in different respects: a) Chinese participants were likely to show preferences for the smallest changes in rule from one developmental stage to the next one. That is to say, the same past simple tense was employed in the *if*-clauses for both present and past counterfactuals when Chinese ESL learners acquired from present to past counterfactual conditionals; b) the acquisition order of all the conditionals studied was influenced by the over-production of the form 'modal + verb' in the main clause, e.g. most of the participants used the modal 'will' in the main clause of Present Factual conditional, which is incorrect.

Wu (2012) conducted empirical research on '*The probability approach to English If-conditional sentences'*. The study aimed to determine whether or not the students in an experiment group and those in a control group would show improvement in their understanding of English conditional sentences, determined by the difference in their scores between a conditional quiz one and a conditional quiz two, along with investigating whether

the experiment group, who received a 30-minute lecture on the Probability Approach to the English *if*-conditional sentences, would have higher scores from the first and the second conditional quizzes than the control group, who did not receive the lecture. Two blank-filling conditional quizzes, i.e. conditional quiz one containing 19 questions and conditional quiz two comprising 14 questions, were administered as the research instruments in the study. The participants were 65 freshmen English majors from a teacher college. The main findings of the study were that the experiment group and the control group had significant differences in their scores between the first quiz and the second quiz. That is to say, their scores in the second quiz were higher than those in the first one. In addition, the participants in the experimental group showed greater improvement in their scores than those in the control group. As a result, it was proven that students' understanding of the English conditional sentences can be enhanced by the Probability Approach.

Luu Trong Tuan (2012) undertook research on *'Learning English Conditional Sentences'* to determine the problems EFL learners encountered when learning English conditional structures at the University for Natural Resources and Environment, Ho Chi Minh City (UNRE-HCMC) as well as the causes behind these problems. Two research instruments were employed: (1) a survey questionnaire utilized to elicit the data from 98 EFL learners and (2) interviews containing questions used to interview teachers regarding students' English backgrounds and performances such as common mistakes in English conditionals. The main findings of the study were that 56 (57.14%) of the 98 EFL learners still found it difficult to use conditional sentence types; 40 (40.82%) and 52 (53.06%) usually had difficulty understanding the English conditional structures explained by the teacher in the classroom and from grammar books, respectively. In addition, 77 (78.58%) acknowledged that their Vietnamese mother tongue had a strong impact on their acquisition of English conditional structures.

**In summary**

Many previous studies have investigated the causes leading to conditional errors, e.g. syntactic complexities (Chou, 2000; Ko, 2013; Lai-chun, 2005;), L1 interferences (Chou, 2000; Lai-chun, 2005; Sattayatham & Honsa, 2007), the error patterns in each conditional type, and the acquisition of English *if*-conditionals in terms of the production and comprehension of conditional structures by EFL learners having the same L1 or ESL learners

with various first languages (Ko, 2013). However, there remain research gaps to be filled in; for example, Chou (2000) should have increased the number of participants (n=36) in order to reveal a significant acquisition sequence of conditionals influenced by L1 transfer effects. Furthermore, the study could have shown an explicit acquisition order of the *if*-conditionals rather than present the acquisition order of the *if*-clause and the main clause separately. In addition, Lai-chun (2005) employed a translation task to elicit the data on the interpretive capability of *if*-conditionals by Chinese learners; however, this task contained only eight test items and only one test item for the Factual Conditional, but two for each of the Future Predictives, Present Counterfactuals, and Past Counterfactuals. Therefore, it would be logical to increase the total number of test items, especially the number of Factual Conditionals so as to arrive at reliable conclusions. In the study by Luu Trong Tuan (2012), the actual test scores of *if*-conditionals by Vietnamese EFL learners should have been used to measure the performances of learners as well as to examine the conditional problems or errors. Instead, a questionnaire and interviews were used to explore the conditional problems in various respects, e.g. the inadequate development of L2; L1 interference to the acquisition of *if*-conditionals; and the improper English teaching approaches and materials.

In Thailand, Sattayatham and Honsa (2007) examined only two types of *if*-conditionals: Present Unreal (Present Counterfactual) and Past Unreal (Present Counterfactual), in Thai EFL learners' writing. Although the focus of this study was examining the overall grammatical errors made by Thai learners, it should have included at least three classic types of *if*-conditionals, plus other frequently occurring types such as the Factual Conditional so as to find out more possible pattern of errors and the causes behind these errors.

Accordingly, the current study aims to fill some research gaps from the previous studies as aforementioned by employing three types of tasks to obtain data on the comprehension and production competence and to determine English *if*-conditional errors by Thai EFL learners. Detailed explanations of the individual tasks will be provided in Chapter 3.

# CHAPTER 3
# RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

## 3.1 Participants

The population of the current research study was Grade 12 Thai EFL learners studying in an Integrated English Program (IEP) in a public school in Bangkok, Thailand. Seventy-seven Grade 12 students from the IEP with different majors, i.e. Science – Mathematics, Mathematics – English, English – French, English – Chinese, and English – Japanese, were requested to participate in the study by means of convenience sampling; that is, they studied all of the target English *if*-conditionals, were available at a certain period of time to volunteer and participate in the study, and were assumed to have acquired more English language skills than any other group of students in the upper secondary level (Grades 10 to 12). As a result, 68 students, including 28 males and 40 females of this program, voluntarily participated in the research study. Additionally, this group of participants took English classes with native English speakers using three English textbooks covering the four target English *if*-conditionals in the current study. These textbooks were employed in different Grade levels, as follows: *Upstream*: *Upper Intermediate Level, B2+* (Obee & Evans, 2007) in Grade 10; *Upstream*: *Proficiency* (Evans & Doobey, 2002) in Grade 11; and *Upstream*: *Advanced* (Evans & Edwards, 2003) in Grade 12.

## 3.2 Research instruments

The comprehension task, gap-filling task, and spoken task employed as the three major research instruments were formally examined and validated by a research committee member and a linguistics instructor, who is a native English speaker. The Oxford Placement Test, version 1.1, was used to divide participants into a low English proficiency group and a high English proficiency group for the spoken task. Furthermore, a demographic information questionnaire was the other research instrument used to collect the data on the participants' educational background and English *if*-conditionals. Below are the detailed descriptions of the individual instruments.

### 3.2.1 The Oxford Placement Test

This test, version 1.1, was obtained from Oxford University Press and University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (Photocopiable © UCLES 2001, Retrieved from http://www.grad.mahidol.ac.th/grad/event/pdf/oxfordtest.pdf). It comprises three parts: part one (questions 1 to 40); part two (questions 41 to 60); and part three (writing section). In this study, only the first two parts covering reading signs, cloze tests, and vocabulary tests were used to assess the students' English proficiency and to recruit 20 qualified students out of 68 for the spoken task.

### 3.2.2 Demographic information questionnaire

A demographic information questionnaire containing nine questions was employed to draw the information regarding the students' backgrounds, e.g. name, age, gender, educational programs, and education levels, along with certain aspects regarding English *if*-conditionals, the types of English *if*-conditionals they have studied, and the ones with which they were familiar.

### 3.2.3 Tasks

Three tasks were used to elicit the information from the target participants, as follows:

#### 3.2.3.1 Comprehension task

The comprehension task (see appendix A), a 20-item test, was employed to determine the students' comprehension skills with respect to English *if*-conditionals. This task was adopted from Ko (2013) and then modified, validated, and approved by the committee member to draw the information from the participants in the current study. This task covered the four types of conditional sentences, as noted and contained 20 items, five items for each. The participants were asked to interpret the correct meaning of each *if*-conditional altogether. That is to say, the meanings in English of both the *if*-clause and main clause as provided and then choose the best choice out of the three options in each item. In addition, the name of each type was not shown in the test. The students were given 30 minutes to complete this task. This is an example of the task: *I wouldn't work if I were rich.*

A. I'm not rich.
B. I don't work.
C. I worked.

Therefore, the answer is option '**A**'

#### 3.2.3.2 Production tasks

**(1) Gap-filling task**

The gap-filling task (see appendix B) was a test aiming to assess students' productive skills with respect to *if*-conditionals in written English. This task covered the four types of English *if*-conditionals and comprised 20 test items, five items for each. The name of each conditional type was not mentioned or specified in the task. Each of the items was designed to provide adequate and obligatory hints of contexts, i.e. temporal references (i.e. present, past, future) and probability degrees for each type of *if*-conditionals. The students were given 30 minutes to complete this task. Therefore, they needed to produce the verb forms in both the *if*-clause and main clause, which matched the grammatically correct verb forms or structures of the individual *if*-conditional types. For example:

Test item: At that time, I believe that if you_____ (study) hard one month before the last mid-term examination, you_____ (pass) all the subjects for sure.

**Answer:** At that time, I believe that if you **had studied** hard one month before the midterm exams, you **would have passed** all the subjects for sure. (*Past Counterfactual)*

**(2) Spoken task**

The spoken task (see appendix C) was a test that concentrated on assessing students' productive skills with respect to *if*-conditionals in written English in a real situation. Due to time limitations and so as to avoid overwhelming the participants with many test items, this task was limited to 12 items, three for each of the *if*-conditional typology. The participants performed this task one week after they had completed both task 1 (gap-filling task) and task 2 (comprehension task). Twenty qualified participants out of 68 were asked to volunteer to participate in this task individually. As aforementioned, the hints of contexts, i.e. time references and probability levels for each *if*-conditional type, were properly provided in each test item. Each participant was randomly provided with each conditional sentence in Thai language in order to allow them to form and utter the grammatical *if*-conditional sentence in the English equivalent within 10 seconds for each. That is, after a participant had finished reading a conditional sentence in Thai, he/she needed to utter its equivalent in English within 10 seconds. Their English utterances were recorded and subsequently transcribed into written forms in order to examine the *if*-conditional verb patterns thoroughly.

In this spoken task, an utterance that was acceptable for the target English verb forms in this study must be grammatically correct in both the *if*-clause and main clause and was

counted as two points; that is, one point for either an acceptable *if*-clause and one point for the main clause. For example:

Thai language: **ถ้าฉันเป็นแฮรี่ ฉันจะตั้งใจเรียน**

English equivalent: If I **were** Harry**,** I **would pay** attention to studying.

### 3.3 Research Procedures

To collect the data, the researcher took the following steps:

**1.** The researcher sent a letter to the director of the target school so as to obtain permission to conduct the research. Then, the researcher also sought cooperation from the English teachers, who were teaching Grade 12 students in the IEP to administer the research instruments.

**2.** Prior to participating in the study, the researcher provided the participants with a written consent form to make them aware of the purposes, nature, time range for the research, the number of research activities they were required to attend, the confidentiality of their personal information and the institute, and the foreseeable risks and benefits of the research.

**3.** In order to recruit 20 participants for the spoken task, all of the 68 participants were first asked to perform the Oxford Placement Test (OPT) to determine their English proficiency for approximately 50 minutes. Among the 20 participants, the bottom ten students whose scores ranged from 11 to 18 out of 60 were assigned to a low English proficiency group; meanwhile, the top ten participants whose scores ranged from 30 to 42 were assigned to a high English proficiency group. As for both groups of 20 participants, there were nine male and 11 female students. The high proficiency group included three male and seven female students, while the low proficiency group comprised six male and four female learners.

**4.** In the following week, the 68 participants were asked to fill in the demographic questionnaire for 10 minutes. After that, they were requested to do task 1 for 30 minutes, followed by task 2 for the same amount of time. The participants, however, were not allowed to consult with friends, a dictionary, English textbooks, and other electronic devices.

**5.** As for the last task— the spoken task, the 20 students participated in this activity individually on the following week after they had completed task 1 and task 2.

### 3.4 Data analysis

#### 3.4.1 Scoring for comprehension and production performance

#### 3.4.1.1 Comprehension data

As an English *if*-conditional contains two clauses— the *if*-clause and the main clause, the test taker needed to interpret the meanings altogether and choose only one option; therefore, the total score for each test item was two. In this task, the participants interpreted the meaning of three affirmative English conditionals and two negative ones, which consisted of a sentence containing a negative form 'not' along with one containing an 'unless' conjunction.

#### 3.4.1.2 Production data

As the target goal of these tasks was to determine productive performance in forming grammatically correct verb forms of the target English *if*-conditionals, there were conventionally standard rules and certain exceptions in the current study in order to analyze the production data. In the gap-filling task, each test item contained two blanks for each verb construction in the two clauses; therefore, one point was assigned to each grammatically correct verb form. Meanwhile, as for the spoken task, the recorded utterances of English *if*-conditionals from the 20 participants were transcribed so as to examine and analyze the conditional verb patterns using the same procedure as described in the gap-filling task. Nonetheless, other similar words, phrases, expressions, synonyms or near synonyms of the surrounding words in an item were acceptable, e.g. according to the above example, *If I **were** Harry, I **would pay** attention to studying*. For this case, the expression '*would pay attention to'* can be replaced by *would study hard; would read books*; *would learn*, to name just a few. The following are the detailed descriptions of the procedures employed to examine and analyze the production data in each target if-conditional.

**1. Factual Conditionals**

A grammatically correct verb form in both the *if*-clause and main clause was acceptable and counted as two points. However, it was acceptable on condition that agreement between the subject and the verb was not completely achieved; for instance, (1) *If we heat water, it ***boil**;* and (2) *If we ***heats** water, it boils*. To illustrate, as in (1), it can be seen that the test taker failed to make the verb '***boil**' (✓boils) agree with the subject 'it' in the main clause; and, as in (2), the test taker over-applied a grammatical rule by singularizing the verb***heats** (✓heat) in the *if*-clause unnecessarily. For such cases, even though the test taker did not apply the complete rules, it could be assumed that he/she realized and perceived the above event or situation as a real condition and scientific fact of a Factual Conditional.

Therefore, a test taker who failed to make a verb agree with a subject in the simple present tense was given half a point (0.5). The following tables illustrate the scoring for acceptable *if*-conditional verb forms in Factual Conditionals in both written and spoken performance.

Table 3.1. Scoring for correct *if*-conditional verb forms of Factual Conditionals in the gap-filling task

| **Item** | ***If*-clause** | **Scoring** | | **Main clause** | **Scoring** | | **Total** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | unless + likes | 1 | | posts | 1 | | 2 |
| 6 | watches | 1 | | cries | 1 | | 2 |
| 9 | heat | 1 | | changes | 1 | | 2 |
| 12 | exercise | 1 | | burn | 1 | | 2 |
| 19 | do not get | 1 | | do not grow | 1 | | 2 |
| **Total** | | 5 | | | 5 | | **10** |

Table 3.1.1 Scoring for acceptable *if*-conditional verb forms of Factual Conditionals in the gap-filling task in case subject and verb agreement was not achieved

| **Item** | ***If*-clause** | **Scoring** | | **Main clause** | **Scoring** | | **Total** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | unless + like | 0.5 | | post | 0.5 | | 1 |
| 6 | watch | 0.5 | | cry | 0.5 | | 1 |
| 9 | heats | 0.5 | | change | 0.5 | | 1 |
| 12 | exercises | 0.5 | | burns | 0.5 | | 1 |
| 19 | does not get | 0.5 | | does not grow | 0.5 | | 1 |
| **Total** | | 2.5 | | | 2.5 | | **5** |

Table 3.2. Scoring for correct *if*-conditional verb forms of Factual Conditionals in the Spoken task

| **Item** | ***If*-clause** | **Scoring** | | **Main clause** | **Scoring** | | **Total** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | goes/ watches | 1 | | buys | 1 | | 2 |
| 5 | don’t have | 1 | | ask | 1 | | 2 |
| 10 | don’t eat | 1 | | die | 1 | | 2 |
| **Total** | | 3 | | | 3 | | **6** |

Table 3.2.1 Scoring for acceptable *if*-conditional verb forms of Factual Conditionals in the spoken task in case subject and verb agreement was not achieved

| Item | *If*-clause | Scoring | | Main clause | Scoring | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | go/ watch | 0.5 | | buy | 0.5 | | 1 |
| 5 | doesn't have | 0.5 | | asks | 0.5 | | 1 |
| 10 | doesn't eat | 0.5 | | dies | 0.5 | | 1 |
| **Total** | | 1.5 | | | 1.5 | | **3** |

**2. Future Predictive Conditionals**

This conditional contains the same structure as the if-clause of the Factual Conditional—*If + present simple tense*; thus, the same criterion to determine this clause from the students' responses was also applied. The structural components of the main clause— *will +base form of verb*, was examined; however, a participant was given half a mark on condition that he/she used the modal 'will' or 'will not' but failed to use a base form of the verb such as 'will + buys/ bought/ buying'. In addition, other non-targeted verb forms like, 'would/could/might + verb' were scored as zero. Below are the tables showing the scoring for acceptable *if*-conditional verb forms in both written and spoken English.

Table 3.3 Scoring for correct *if*-conditional verb forms of Future Predictives in the gap-filling task

| Item | *If*-clause | Scoring | | Main clause | Scoring | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | go | 1 | | will buy | 1 | | 2 |
| 7 | see | 1 | | will call | 1 | | 2 |
| 13 | does not hurry | 1 | | will miss | 1 | | 2 |
| 16 | unless + touch | 1 | | will not bite | 1 | | 2 |
| 17 | is | 1 | | will go | 1 | | 2 |
| **Total** | | 5 | | | 5 | | **10** |

Table 3.3.1 Scoring for acceptable *if*-conditional verb forms of Future Predictives in the gap-filling task in case subject and verb agreement and a base form of the verb were not achieved

| Item | *If*-clause | Scoring | | Main clause | Scoring | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | goes | 0.5 | | will + inflected forms of buy | 0.5 | | 1 |
| 7 | sees | 0.5 | | will + inflected forms of call | 0.5 | | 1 |
| 13 | do not hurry | 0.5 | | will + inflected forms of miss | 0.5 | | 1 |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 16 | unless + touches | 0.5 | | will not + inflected forms of bite | 0.5 | | 1 |
| 17 | are | 0.5 | | will + inflected forms of go | 0.5 | | 1 |
| **Total** | | 2.5 | | | 2.5 | | **5** |

Table 3.4 Scoring for correct *if*-conditional verb forms of Future Predictives in the spoken task

| **Item** | ***If*-clause** | **Scoring** | | **Main clause** | **Scoring** | | **Total** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | don't study | 1 | | will fail | 1 | | 2 |
| 7 | don't go | 1 | | will get | 1 | | 2 |
| 11 | doesn't have | 1 | | will give | 1 | | 2 |
| **Total** | | 3 | | | 3 | | **6** |

Table 3.4.1 Scoring for acceptable *if*-conditional verb forms of Future Predictives in the spoken task if subject and verb agreement and a base form of the verb were not achieved

| **Item** | ***If*-clause** | **Scoring** | | **Main clause** | **Scoring** | | **Total** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | doesn't study | 0.5 | | will + inflected forms of fail | 0.5 | | 1 |
| 7 | doesn't go | 0.5 | | will + inflected forms of get | 0.5 | | 1 |
| 11 | don't have | 0.5 | | will + inflected forms of give | 0.5 | | 1 |
| **Total** | | 1.5 | | | 1.5 | | **3** |

**3. Counterfactual conditionals: Present and Past Counterfactuals**

The standard and grammatically correct structures in both the *if*-clause and main clause were acceptable for scoring. As for Present Counterfactuals, only a past simple form in the *if*-clause along with the past modal + base form of verb (e.g. *would/ could/ might + base form of verb*) in the main clause were acceptable. However, it was acceptable for scoring if the copula '*was*' was used in place of the grammatical '*were*' in the *if*-clause as well as the inflected forms of a verb were used rather than the base form of a verb following a past modal in the main clause. Below are the tables displaying the scoring for correct and acceptable *if*-conditional verb forms of Present Counterfactuals in both the gap-filling task and the spoken task.

Table 3.5 Scoring for correct *if*-conditional verb forms of Present Counterfactuals in the gap-filling task

| Item | If-clause | Scoring | | Main clause | Scoring | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | unless + had | 1 | | would not travel | 1 | | 2 |
| 8 | met | 1 | | would give | 1 | | 2 |
| 11 | were | 1 | | would stay | 1 | | 2 |
| 15 | did | 1 | | would study | 1 | | 2 |
| 20 | did not believe | 1 | | would cancel | 1 | | 2 |
| **Total** | | 5 | | | 5 | | **10** |

Table 3.5.1 Scoring for acceptable *if*-conditional verb forms of Present Counterfactuals in the gap-filling task

| Item | If-clause | Scoring | | Main clause | Scoring | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | unless + had | 1 | | would not + inflected forms of travel | 0.5 | | 1.5 |
| 8 | met | 1 | | would + inflected forms of give | 0.5 | | 1.5 |
| 11 | was | 0.5 | | would + inflected forms of stay | 0.5 | | 1 |
| 15 | did | 1 | | would + inflected forms of study | 0.5 | | 1.5 |
| 20 | did not believe | 1 | | would + inflected forms of cancel | 0.5 | | 1.5 |
| **Total** | | 4.5 | | | 2.5 | | **7** |

Table 3.6 Scoring for correct *if*-conditional verb forms of Present Counterfactuals in the spoken task

| Item | If-clause | Scoring | | Main clause | Scoring | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | were | 1 | | would not be | 1 | | 2 |
| 6 | were | 1 | | would not do | 1 | | 2 |
| 8 | had | 1 | | would buy | 1 | | 2 |
| **Total** | | 3 | | | 3 | | **6** |

Table 3.6.1 Scoring for acceptable *if*-conditional verb forms of Present Counterfactuals in the spoken task

| Item | If-clause | Scoring | | Main clause | Scoring | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | was | 0.5 | | would not + inflected forms of be | 0.5 | | 1 |
| 6 | was | 0.5 | | would not+ inflected forms of do | 0.5 | | 1 |
| 8 | had | 1 | | would + inflected forms of buy | 0.5 | | 1.5 |
| **Total** | | 2 | | | 1.5 | | **3.5** |

As for Past Counterfactuals, *if + past perfect tense* (had + past participle) and the verb pattern '*would have + past participle*' in the main clause were the target structure for scoring. However, it was acceptable on condition that inflected verb forms of each verb were used in place of its past participle, as shown in the following tables:

Table 3.7 Scoring for correct *if*-conditional verb forms of Past Counterfactuals in the gap-filling task

| Item | If-clause | Scoring | | Main clause | Scoring | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | had not been | 1 | | would have gone | 1 | | 2 |
| 5 | had studied | 1 | | would have passed | 1 | | 2 |
| 10 | had bought | 1 | | would have been | 1 | | 2 |
| 14 | unless + had driven | 1 | | would not have happened | 1 | | 2 |
| 18 | had chosen | 1 | | would have won | 1 | | 2 |
| **Total** | | 5 | | | 5 | | **10** |

Table 3.7.1 Scoring for acceptable *if*-conditional verb forms of Past Counterfactuals in the gap-filling task

| Item | If-clause | Scoring | | Main clause | Scoring | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | had not + inflected forms of be | 0.5 | | would have + inflected forms of go | 0.5 | | 1 |
| 5 | had + inflected forms of study | 0.5 | | would have passed + inflected forms of pass | 0.5 | | 1 |
| 10 | had + inflected forms of buy | 0.5 | | would have + inflected forms of be | 0.5 | | 1 |
| 14 | unless + had + inflected forms of drive | 0.5 | | would not have + inflected forms of happen | 0.5 | | 1 |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 18 | had + inflected forms of choose | 0.5 | | would have + inflected forms of win | 0.5 | | 1 |
| **Total** | | 2.5 | | | 2.5 | | **5** |

Table 3.8 Scoring for correct *if*-conditional verb forms of Past Counterfactuals in the spoken task

| **Item** | ***If*-clause** | **Scoring** | | **Main clause** | **Scoring** | | **Total** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | had not been | 1 | | should have done | 1 | | 2 |
| 9 | had driven | 1 | | might not have been | 1 | | 2 |
| 12 | had gone | 1 | | would have bought | 1 | | 2 |
| **Total** | | 3 | | | 3 | | **6** |

Table 3.8.1 Scoring for acceptable *if*-conditional verb forms of Past Counterfactuals in the spoken task

| **Item** | ***If*-clause** | **Scoring** | | **Main clause** | **Scoring** | | **Total** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | had not + inflected forms of be | 0.5 | | should have + inflected forms of do | 0.5 | | 1 |
| 9 | had + inflected forms of drive | 0.5 | | might not have + inflected forms of be | 0.5 | | 1 |
| 12 | had + inflected forms of go | 0.5 | | would have + inflected forms of buy | 0.5 | | 1 |
| **Total** | | 1.5 | | | 1.5 | | **3** |

### 3.4.2 Analysis of English if-conditional errors

Non-target verb forms of the *if*-conditionals in the gap-filling task and spoken task were examined, counted, and regarded as *if*-conditional verb form errors. Nonetheless, the errors resulting from the misuse of a subject and verb agreement from the Factual Conditionals as well as the *if*-clause of Future Predictive Conditionals were regarded as a type of error as well; for example, *Cathy frequently* ***post** *just negative comments on Facebook, unless she* ***like** *what others say about her*. In this conditional sentence, there were two verb form errors, i.e. *post* and *like*, since these verbs did not agree with the singular subjects, *Cathy* and *she*, respectively. Below is a table illustrating all of the codes for analyzing English *if*-conditional errors, the definitions of the codes, and examples of tokens in the study.

Table 3.9. Codes for the English *if*-conditionals errors assessed in the study

| **Type of error (Code)** | **Definition** | **Explanation** | **Examples of Tokens** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Affirmative Form (Aff.) | "Stating that a fact is so; making an assertion: Contrasted with negative and interrogative" (Oxforddictionaries.com). | Used an affirmative form when a negative one was required. | *get (do not get)[0]<br>*hurry (does not hurry)[1]<br>*made (would not make)[2]<br>*is (had not been)[3] |
| Base Form of Verb (BaF.) | "the form of a verb which has no letters added to the end and is not a past form" (Sinclair, 2005, p. xviii). | Used a base form of the verb when an inflected verb form was required. | *be (is)[1]<br>*be (were)[2]<br>*not be (had not been)[3] |
| Conditional Auxiliary (CnA.) | Swan (1997) proposes that "The mixed verb would/ should/ [could] is often used as an auxiliary with verbs that refer to unreal or uncertain situations, (p. 629). | Used 'would + base form of a verb' instead of a target one. | *would heat (heat)[0]<br>*would buy (will buy)[1]<br>*would know (knew)[2]<br>*would go (would have gone)[3] |
| Future Simple Tense (Ftr.) | "the use of 'will' or 'shall' with the base form of the verb to refer to future events" (Sinclair, 2005, p. xxiii). | Misused this verb tense in other if-conditionals when it was required in the main clause of the Future Predictive Conditional. | *will like (likes)[0]<br>*will see (see)[1]<br>*will not make (would not make)[2]<br>*will go (would have gone)[3] |
| Infinitive (Inf.) | "the base form of a verb. It is often used with 'to' in front of it" (Sinclair, 2005, p. xx). | Used an infinitive with 'to' in place of a target finite verb form | *to post (posts)[0]<br>*to touch (touch)[1]<br>*to interrupt (interrupted)[2] |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | *to pass (would have passed)[3] |
| Misformation (MF) | The present study defines misformation as a form that does not exist in standard English grammar. | Used a grammatically unacceptable verb form | *crys (cries)[0]<br>*will called (will call)[1]<br>*not maked (would not make)[2]<br>*wasn't been (had not been)[3] |
| Past Continuous Tense (Pst-C) | "the use of 'was' or 'were' with a present participle usually to refer to past events" (Sinclair, 2005, p. xxiii). | Used this verb tense in place of the target verb form | *was missing (will miss)[1]<br>*were opening (opened)[2]<br>*wasn't trying (had tried)[3] |
| Past Participle (Pst-P) | "a verb form such as 'seen', 'broken', and 'given', which is used to form perfect tenses and passives, or in some cases an adjective" (Sinclair, 2005, p. xxi). | Used a non-finite verb rather than a target finite verb form | *gone (go)[1]<br>*known (knew)[2]<br>*gone (would have gone)[3] |
| Past Simple Tense (Pst.) | "the use of the past form to refer to past events" (Sinclair, 2005, p. xxiii). | Misused this verb tense in other if-conditionals when it was required in the if-clause of the Present Counterfactual | *posted (posts)[0]<br>*bought (will buy)[1]<br>*didn't make (would not make)[2]<br>*wasn't (had not been)[3] |
| Modal Perfect Infinitive (MPI) | Structure: *'modal verb* (would/ could/ should/ might) + *have* + *past participle*'. Sinclair (2005) | Misused this verb phrase in other if-conditionals when it was required in | *would have changed (changes)[0]<br>*would have bought (will buy)[1] |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | proposes that this structure is often used to refer to unreal situations or events. | the main clause of the Past Counterfactual | *would have blamed (would blame)[2]<br>*would have invited (had invited)[3] |
| Negative Form (Neg.) | A negative sentence or phrase is one that contains a word such as "not", "no", "never", or "nothing" (Dictionary.cambridge.org). | Used a negative form when an affirmative one was required. | *doesn't like (like)[0]<br>*don't touch (touch)[1]<br>*don't know (knew)[2]<br>* hadn't invited[3] |
| Omission (Om.) | In this study, it is defined as omitting an auxiliary in a negative form, or omitting a verb in either the affirmative or negative forms. | *"See definition"* | *not get (don't get)[0]<br>*not bite (will not bite)[1]<br>*will (would stay)[2]<br>*doesn't (had not been)[3] |
| Present Continuous Tense (Prs-C) | "the use of the simple present of 'be' with a present participle to refer to present events" (Sinclair, 2005, p. xxiii). | Used this verb tense in place of a target verb form | *are exercising (exercise)[0]<br>*are touching (touch)[1]<br>*are opening (opened)[2]<br>*is going (would have gone)[3] |
| Present Perfect Tense (Prs-Per) | The "use of 'had' with a past participle to refer to past events" (Sinclair, 2005, p. xxiii). | Used this verb tense in place of a target verb form | *have watch (watches)[0]<br>*have seen (see)[1]<br>*have known (knew)[2]<br>*have bought (had bought)[3] |
| Present Participle (Prs-P) | "a form ending in '-ing', which is used to form verb tenses, and as an adjective" | Used a non-finite verb rather than a target finite verb | *posting (posts)[0]<br>*going (go)[1]<br>*knowing (knew)[2] |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | (Sinclair, 2005, p. xxi). | form | *studying (had studied)[3] |
| Present Simple Tense (Prs.) | "the use of the base form and the 'S' form, usually to refer to present events" (Sinclair, 2005, p. xxiii). | Misused this verb tense in other if-conditionals when it was required in the Factual and the *if*-clause of Future Predictive Conditionals. | *buy (will buy)[1]<br>*don't make (would not make)[2]<br>*isn't (had not been)[3] |
| Subject and Verb Agreement (S-V) | A verb agrees with a subject on condition that a sentence contains a singular subject, and it is followed by a singular verb; however, if it contains a plural subject, then it is followed by a plural verb (Hewings, 1999). | Failed to apply the complete rule of subject and verb agreement. | *like (likes)[0]<br>*goes (go)[1]<br>*opens (opened); plural subject (we)[2]<br>*weren't (had not been); singular subject (Ann)[3] |
| Word Choice (WC) | In this study, it is defined as using another verb that is incorrect rather than a given one, or using another verb form, which is considered as irrelevant to the context of an *if*-conditional. | *"See definition"* | *can't grow (don't grow)[0]<br>*look (see)[1]<br>*will not tell (would not make)[2]<br>*brought (had bought)[3] |

**Remarks:** a) 0: Factual Conditionals; 1: Future Predictive Conditionals; 2: Present Counterfactual Conditionals; and 3: Past Counterfactual Conditionals.

b) Correct verb forms are put in parentheses.

### 3.4.3 Statistical analysis

Descriptive statistics, i.e. mean, frequency, and percentage, were used to compute the scores from both the comprehension and production data.

The research questions, along with the analytical procedures, are illustrated in the table, as follows:

| Research questions | Analytical procedures |
|---|---|
| **RQ 1:** Among the four English *if*-conditionals, which one is the most problematic for Thai EFL students in terms of comprehension and production performance, i.e. spoken and written language? | Frequency |
| **RQ 2:** What errors do Thai EFL students frequently make in production tasks in both written and spoken language? | Error analysis & Frequency |

# CHAPTER 4

# RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In chapter 4, the overall findings from the comprehension task, gap-filling task, and spoken task are shown and discussed in order to answer the research questions that are aimed at finding out which English *if*-conditional type is the most problematic for the students with respect to both their comprehension and production performance; the acquisition order of English *if*-conditionals; and the possible errors they are likely to commit in the production tasks.

**4.1 Results of the research question 1:** Among the four English *if*-conditionals, which one is the most problematic for Thai EFL students in terms of comprehension performance and production performance, i.e. spoken and written language?

### 4.1.1 The overall performance on the comprehension task

The purpose of this research question was to discover the most problematic conditional type for Thai EFL learners who studied in Grade 12 from a public school. To determine this, the four conditional types, namely, Factual Conditionals, Future Predictive Conditionals; Present Counterfactual Conditionals; and Past Counterfactual Conditionals, which are most frequently taught and included in the English teaching and learning materials and also in those of the target school were employed. Below are the overall findings regarding the comprehension of each English *if*-conditional type.

Table 4.1 Percentage of scores for the performance on English *if*-conditionals from the comprehension task (n=68)

| **Conditional Types** | **Items** | **Frequency of correct answers** | **Total scores** | **Percentage** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Factual Conditionals | 2 | 49 | 98 | 72.06 |
| | 5 | 35 | 70 | 51.47 |
| | 10 | 37 | 74 | 54.41 |
| | 14 | 15 | 30 | 22.06 |
| | 18 | 30 | 60 | 44.12 |
| | **Total** | 166 | 332 | $\bar{X}$ = **48.82** |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Future Predictives | 3 | 26 | 52 | 38.24 |
| | 6 | 29 | 58 | 42.65 |
| | 9 | 29 | 58 | 42.65 |
| | 12 | 32 | 64 | 47.06 |
| | 19 | 17 | 34 | 25.00 |
| | **Total** | 133 | 266 | $\bar{X}$ = **39.12** |
| Present Counterfactuals | 4 | 53 | 106 | 77.94 |
| | 7 | 53 | 106 | 77.94 |
| | 13 | 36 | 72 | 52.94 |
| | 16 | 32 | 64 | 47.06 |
| | 17 | 19 | 38 | 27.94 |
| | **Total** | 193 | 386 | $\bar{X}$ = **56.76** |
| Past Counterfactuals | 1 | 45 | 90 | 66.18 |
| | 8 | 30 | 60 | 44.12 |
| | 11 | 30 | 60 | 44.12 |
| | 15 | 25 | 50 | 36.76 |
| | 20 | 32 | 64 | 47.06 |
| | **Total** | 162 | 324 | $\bar{X}$ = **47.65** |

Table 4.1 shows the participants' performance on English *if*-conditionals in regard to interpreting the correct meanings of each conditional type. According to the table, the most problematic *if*-conditional for the students was Future Predictive Conditionals, which accounted for only 39.12 percent of correct answers. Among the five items (i.e. 3, 6, 9, 12, 19) of this type, the smallest number of correct answers was found in item 19, which accounted for merely 34 scores or 25 percent. This smallest percentage indicates that the students found Future Predictive Conditionals the most difficult to understand. Furthermore, it was discovered that most of the learners found items 4 and 7 of Present Counterfactuals the least problematic to comprehend, accounting for 106 tokens (77.94%). On the other hand, they found item 14 (30 tokens/ 22.06%) of Factual Conditionals the most problematic of all the test items.

### 4.1.2 The overall performance on the gap-filling task

The written data on the production performance regarding English *if*-conditionals by the participants are summarized and reported as frequencies and percentages in Table 4.2 below. The scores were categorized into both the *if*-clause and main clause separately and altogether in each conditional type.

Table 4.2 Percentage of scores for the performance on English *if*-conditionals in the gap-filling task (n=68)

| **Conditional Type** | **Item** | **Frequency of correct answers** | | **Total scores** | **Percentage** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | ***If*-clause** | **Main clause** | | |
| Factual Conditionals | 3 | 37 | 36.5 | 73.5 | 54.04 |
| | 6 | 29 | 38 | 67 | 49.26 |
| | 9 | 44 | 12.5 | 56.5 | 41.54 |
| | 12 | 50 | 35 | 85 | 62.50 |
| | 19 | 28.5 | 11.5 | 40 | 29.41 |
| | **Total scores** | 188.5 | 133.5 | **322** | $\bar{X}$ **= 47.35** |
| Future Predictives | 4 | 22 | 45 | 67 | 49.26 |
| | 7 | 47 | 44.5 | 91.5 | 67.28 |
| | 13 | 22.5 | 25 | 47.5 | 34.93 |
| | 16 | 43 | 26 | 69 | 50.74 |
| | 17 | 31.5 | 28 | 59.5 | 43.75 |
| | **Total scores** | 166 | 168.5 | **334.5** | $\bar{X}$ **= 49.19** |
| Present Counterfactuals | 1 | 3 | 4 | 7 | 5.15 |
| | 8 | 5 | 2 | 7 | 5.15 |
| | 11 | 3.5 | 1 | 4.5 | 3.31 |
| | 15 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.00 |
| | 20 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 2.21 |
| | **Total scores** | 12.5 | 9 | **21.5** | $\bar{X}$ **=3.16** |
| Past | 2 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 1.47 |
| | 5 | 2 | 0.5 | 2.5 | 1.84 |
| | 10 | 1.5 | 0 | 1.5 | 1.10 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Counterfactuals | 14 | 1.5 | 0 | 1.5 | 1.10 |
| | 18 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0.74 |
| | **Total scores** | 8 | 0.5 | **8.5** | $\bar{X}$ **= 1.25** |

Table 4.2 reveals the overall performance of students on the production of grammatically correct verb forms in the *if*-clause and main clause of each conditional type. According to the table, the most troublesome types of English *if*-conditionals for this group of students were Past Counterfactuals, along with Present Counterfactual Conditionals, both of which accounted for only 1.25 percent and 3.16 percent of acceptable responses, respectively. These very low percentages of scores for the two conditional types are especially worrying due to the fact that they are the conventional typologies included in most of the grammar books or course books in the EFL/ESL fields, as stated above. Consequently, it is rather clear that the students faced problems producing grammatical verb forms of the two conditional types, specifically item 15 of Present Counterfactuals (0%), together with all of the items, i.e. 2, 5, 10, 14, and 18 of the Past Counterfactual Conditionals, each of which accounted for less than two percent. Another remarkable finding was that all of the students apparently were unable to produce a grammatical construction with 'would have + past participle' in the main clause of the Past Counterfactual. The following are the grammatically correct structures of item 15 of Present Counterfactuals as well as some items— 10, 14, and 18, of Past Counterfactual Conditionals:

Item 15: The teacher is explaining about some important problems of global warming. It **would be** impolite if we **interrupted** her right now.

For the above item, the preceding sentence serves as an explicit and obligatory hint of context clues for a contrary-to-fact situation; that is, *It would be impolite if we interrupted her right now*, which refers to the present time and an improbable occurrence, since both the speaker and listener should be aware and perceive that interrupting the teacher while she is explaining an important issue would be impolite and thus unlikely to occur. Most of the participants, however, formed ungrammatical constructions, as in (1) and (2) below:

(1) The teacher is explaining about some important problems of global warming. It ***will be** impolite if we ***interrupt** her right now.

(2) The teacher is explaining about some important problems of global warming. It ***is** impolite if we ***interrupt** her right now.

Item 10. I am very lucky that I didn't buy that expensive car. For sure, I **would have made** a big mistake if I **had bought** that car last month.

Item 14. Jack was injured in a car accident last week and is still in the hospital. I think the accident **would not have happened** unless he **had tried** to answer his phone while driving.

Item 18. It's a pity! If we **had invited** him last night, he would have **enjoyed** the party with us.

As for the items 10, 14, and 18 of the Past Counterfactuals, the preceding sentences in each item, i.e. *I am very lucky that I didn't buy that expensive car; Jack was injured in a car accident last week and is still in the hospital;* and *It's a pity!*, explicitly express situations or circumstances that happened in the past; thus, the *if*-conditionals, as followed, were used to create conditions that are contrary to these situations. However, most of the students formed the following constructions, as in (3), (4), and (5), respectively:

(3) I am very lucky that I didn't buy that expensive car. For sure, I ***will make/ *make** a big mistake if I ***buy/ *will buy/ *bought** (buy) that car last month.

(4) Jack was injured in a car accident last week and is still in the hospital. I think the accident ***will not happen/ *isn't happen/ *happened** (not happen) unless he ***try/ *tried/ *trying** (try) to answer his phone while driving.

(5) It's a pity! If we ***invites/ *invited/ *will invite** (invite) him last night, he would have ***will enjoy/ *enjoy/ *would enjoy** (enjoy) the party with us.

### 4.1.3 The overall performance on the spoken task

In order to explore which conditional typologies are the most troublesome to the students' productive capability of English *if*-conditionals and what type of conditional errors are attributed to this phenomenon, the present study further employed a spoken task to find out the possible culprits behind these problems.

Table 4.3 Percentage of scores for the performance of English *if*-conditionals from the spoken task by both groups of students (n=20)

| **Conditional Type** | **Item** | **Frequency of correct answers** | | **Total** | **Percentage** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | ***If*-clause** | **Main clause** | | |
| Factual Conditionals | 2 | 10.5 | 7.5 | 18 | 45.00 |
| | 5 | 13 | 6 | 19 | 47.50 |
| | 10 | 17 | 4 | 21 | 52.50 |
| | Total | 40.5 | 17.5 | **58** | $\bar{X}$ = **48.33** |
| Future Predictives | 1 | 13.5 | 13 | 25.5 | 63.75 |
| | 7 | 12 | 18.5 | 30.5 | 76.25 |
| | 11 | 8.5 | 16 | 24.5 | 61.25 |
| | Total | 34 | 47.5 | **80.5** | $\bar{X}$ = **67.08** |
| Present Counterfactuals | 3 | 0.5 | 0 | 0.5 | 1.25 |
| | 6 | 8 | 3.5 | 11.5 | 28.75 |
| | 8 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 10.00 |
| | Total | 9.5 | 6.5 | **16** | $\bar{X}$ = **13.33** |
| Past Counterfactuals | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 7.50 |
| | 9 | 0.5 | 0 | 0.5 | 1.25 |
| | 12 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 7.50 |
| | Total | 2.5 | 4 | **6.5** | $\bar{X}$ = **5.42** |

Table 4.3 shows the overall performance on the spoken task by the students (n=20). The most frequently incorrect usages of conditional verb forms were found in Past Counterfactuals (5.42%), along with Present Counterfactuals (13.33%). A large gap in the percentage between the two counterfactuals and the other two typologies was also discovered in this task. It is evident that these findings reinforce those of the written data in that this group of Thai learners still encountered difficulty producing grammatical verb forms of the counterfactual conditionals, highlighted by syntactic complexities embedded in the two types. In the counterfactual conditionals, all the students found the conditional sentences in item 3

(1.25%) of Present Counterfactuals as well as in item 9 (1.25%) of Past Counterfactual the most difficult to utter their correct verb patterns. On the contrary, most of them did best on item 7 (30.5 tokens/ 76.25%) of the Future Predictive Conditionals. Below are correct answers for the two items:

Item 3: Thai sentence: เราจะไม่มีความสุข ถ้าตอนนี้แจ็คกี้เป็นเจ้านายของเรา (โชคดีที่เขาไม่ใช่เจ้านายเรา)

English equivalent: We **would not be** happy if Jacky **were** our boss now.

Item 9: Thai sentence: ถ้าเมื่อวานคุณพ่อขับรถไปทำงานเอง เขาคงจะไม่ไปทำงานสาย

English equivalent: If my dad **had driven** to work yesterday, he **might not have been** late.

In item 3, most of the students used the present verb forms, ***is/ *are**, rather than **were** and used the forms ***will not be/ *won't be** to utter the English equivalent for the given situation that is contrary to fact in the present time. Similarly, most of them misused the verb forms in both the *if*-clause—mostly ***drive**, and the main clause—mostly, ***won't** and ***don't**, in item 9.

#### 4.1.3.1 Comparison of the performances of if-conditionals in spoken English between the high proficiency students (n=10) and the low proficiency students (n=10)

In this activity, one participant spent approximately 2 to 5 minutes, depending upon their speaking skill proficiency, for the total number of 12 test items; therefore, it took 40 to 60 minutes for the 20 participants. Below is the table displaying the spoken performance of both groups of participants:

Table 4.4 The overall performances on *if*-conditionals in the spoken task by the high English proficiency students (n=10) and the low English proficiency students (n=10)

| **Type** | **High English Proficiency** | | | | | **Low English Proficiency** | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Item | Frequency of correct answers | | **Total (%)** | | Frequency of correct answers | | **Total (%)** |
| | | *If*-clause | Main clause | | | *If*-clause | Main clause | |
| Factual | | | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Conditionals | 2 | 5.5 | 4.5 | 10 | | 5 | 3 | 8 |
| | 5 | 9 | 4 | 13 | | 4 | 2 | 6 |
| | 10 | 10 | 1 | 11 | | 7 | 3 | 10 |
| | **Total** | 24.5 | 9.5 | **34 (56.67)** | | 16 | 8 | **24 (40)** |
| Future Predictives | 1 | 8 | 10 | 18 | | 5 | 3 | 8 |
| | 7 | 8 | 8.5 | 16.5 | | 4 | 9 | 13 |
| | 11 | 6.5 | 9 | 15.5 | | 6 | 7 | 13 |
| | **Total** | 22.5 | 27.5 | **50 (83.33)** | | 15 | 19 | **34 (56.67)** |
| Present Counterfactuals | 3 | 0.5 | 0 | 0.5 | | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 6 | 8 | 3.5 | 11.5 | | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 8 | 0 | 2 | 2 | | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| | **Total** | 8.5 | 5.5 | **14 (23.33)** | | 1 | 1 | **2 (3.33)** |
| Past Counterfactuals | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 9 | 0.5 | 0 | 0.5 | | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 12 | 1 | 2 | 3 | | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | **Total** | 2.5 | 4 | **6.5 (10.83)** | | 0 | 0 | **0 (0)** |

According to Table 4.4, it can be seen that the students with higher English proficiency had a higher scores in each conditional type than their counterparts. As for the counterfactual conditionals, the high proficiency group outperformed its counterpart; nonetheless, both groups of participants apparently found these conditional typologies the most challenging to deal with in spoken English, which is in line with the findings of the written task. To the researcher's surprise, none of the participants in the low English proficiency group were able to produce the English if-conditionals of Past Counterfactuals in their utterances. It was, however, discovered that both groups of learners shared the common pattern of performance in order of simplicity in if-conditional types, as follows: *Future Predictives* > *Factual Conditionals* > *Present Counterfactuals* > *Past Counterfactuals.*

**4.2 Results of research questions 2**: What errors do Thai EFL students frequently make in the production of English *if*-conditionals in both written and spoken language?

Question numbers 5 and 6 from the demographic questionnaire asked the students about what conditional types they have studied and the ones with which they were familiar. Seventeen students out of sixty-eight noted that they could not remember the types they have

studied, and many other students did not provide responses for these questions. Likewise, twenty students also noted that they were not familiar with any of the conditional types. With reference to the conditionals that they have studied, the types that the participants mentioned the most were Future Predictive and Factual Conditional Conditionals. They also could provide grammatically correct constructions along with some sentence examples for the two types, as follows:

(1) If I study hard, I will pass the exam.

(2) If you come, I will go.

(3) If I heat water, it boils.

What's more surprising is that fourteen participants provided either the *if*-clauses or the main clauses separately, and some of the *if*-clauses were deviant forms, as follows:

(4) *If + have + past form of verb

(5) *If + S + has + past participle

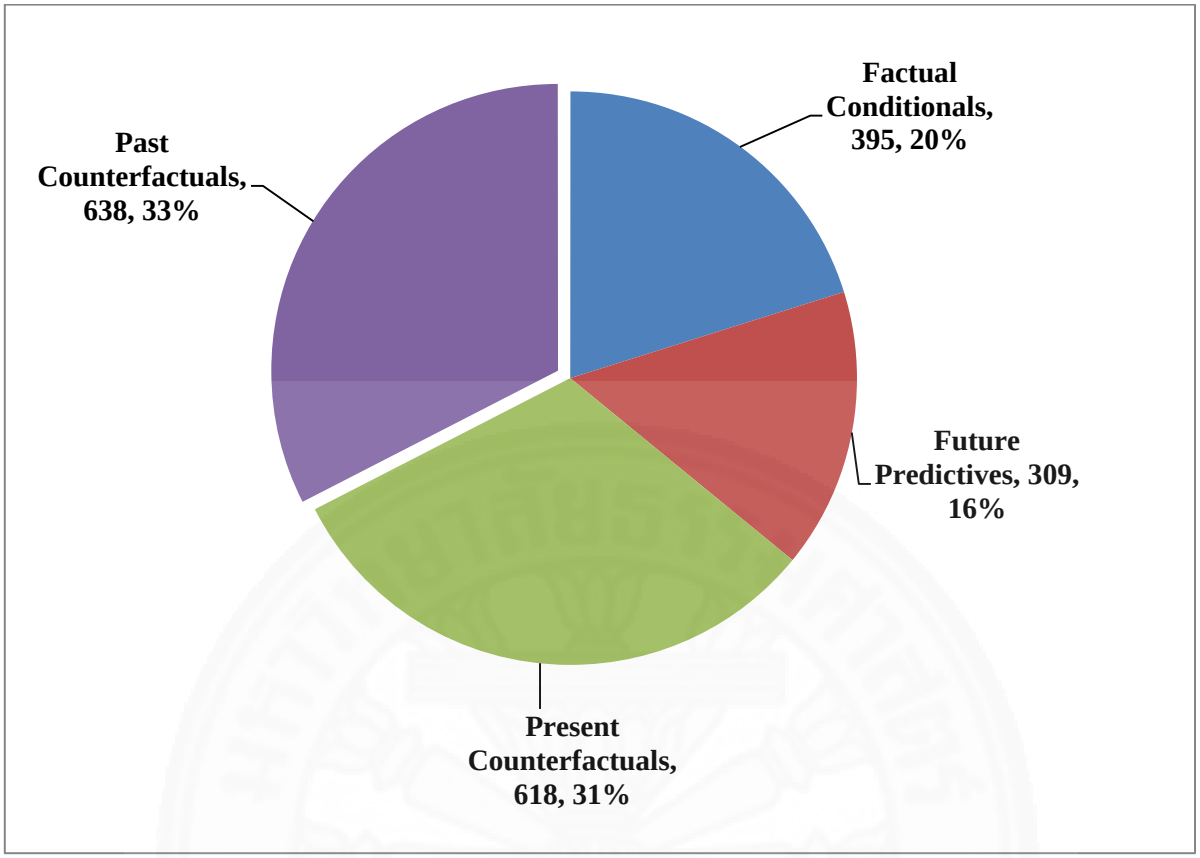
(6)*If + have/has + infinitive

This could reflect that many of the students from this group appeared to lack accurate and precise knowledge of the semantic and syntactic English *if*-conditionals they studied, particularly counterfactual conditionals, to which none of the participants referred, and these conditional types contain more grammatical features than their counterparts. Consequently, it seems that they produced a wide variety of deviant conditional verb forms, resulting in English if-conditional errors, as shown in Figure 1, along with the other tables showing the summary of errors discovered in the four English *if*-conditionals, types of errors in each English if-conditional, and other different types of conditional errors that occurred together, as shown below.

### 4.2.1 The overall errors found in the gap-filling task

The English *if*-conditional errors committed by this group of Thai EFL learners that resulted from the four conditionals studied could be single errors, errors in pairs, tri-errors, as well as deviant forms of errors, most of which were concerned with verb phrase errors, since the main focus of this part was examining conditional verb forms in each target *if*-conditional typology. However, other types of errors like, misformation, omission, and misselection, i.e. misusing word choice, were discovered in individual types as well.

Figure 4.1 The overall number of English *if*-conditional errors found in the gap-filling task




The pie chart above illustrates the overall number of conditional errors discovered in each typology from the gap-filling task. According to the chart, it was discovered that the participants were more likely to have trouble producing grammatically correct verb forms in the Past Counterfactual and Present Counterfactual Conditionals than the other *if*-conditional structures. As a result, the majority of participants produced more errors in both counterfactuals than the other conditional types. Thus, it can be assumed that they found Past Counterfactual and Present Counterfactual Conditionals the most problematic to cope with in written English, whereas the Future Predictive and Factual Conditionals were the easiest, respectively. This finding is consistent with their responses in the questionnaire in that they referred to the latter conditionals the most in terms of their experience of studying this grammatical point.

Table 4.5 Summary of errors in Factual Conditionals from the gap-filling task (n=68)

| Rank | Type of error | Code | Freq. | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Subject and Verb Agreement | S-V | 96 | 26.67 |
| 2 | Future Simple Tense | Ftr. | 93 | 25.83 |
| 3 | Present Participle | Prs-P | 45 | 12.50 |
| 4 | Past Simple Tense | Pst. | 43 | 11.94 |
| 5 | Misformation | MF | 38 | 10.56 |
| 6 | Omission | Om. | 15 | 4.17 |
| 7 | Conditional Auxiliary | CnA. | 13 | 3.61 |
| 8 | Infinitive | Inf. | 5 | 1.39 |
| 9 | Past Continuous Tense | Pst-C | 3 | 0.83 |
| 10 | Affirmative Form | Aff. | 2 | 0.56 |
| 10 | Negative Form | Neg. | 2 | 0.56 |
| 10 | Word Choice | WC | 2 | 0.56 |
| 11 | Past Perfect Tense | Pst-Per | 1 | 0.28 |
| 11 | Modal Perfect Infinitive | MPI | 1 | 0.28 |
| 11 | Present Continuous Tense | Prs-C | 1 | 0.28 |
| **Total** | | | **360** | 100.00 |
| **Mean (SD)** | | | **24.0 (32.72)** | |

Table 4.5 displays the overall number of errors found in the Factual Conditionals. According to the table, the most common conditional errors, found in both the *if*-clause and main clause of this conditional type, were the misuse of subject and verb agreement (96 tokens/26.67%), along with future simple tense (93 tokens/25.83%). Put differently, the majority of students in the study applied the two grammatical points more frequently than the other ones. Despite the fact that only the verb tense of present simple is the primary structure of both the *if*-clause and main clause of this typology, many students were likely to confuse the usage of this verb tense by applying the structures of the future simple tense, present participle, and past simple tense in lieu of the target structure, as shown in the table.

Table 4.6 Types of errors in Factual Conditionals from the gap-filling task

| Item | If-Clause | Freq. | Type of Error | Item | Main Clause | Freq. | Type of Error |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | **(likes)** | | | 3 | **(posts)** | | |
| | like | 12 | S-V | | post | 23 | S-V |
| | will like | 11 | Ftr. | | will post | 7 | Ftr. |
| | has like | 2 | Prs-Per, MF | | posted | 7 | Pst. |
| | liked | 2 | Pst. | | posting | 2 | Prs-P |
| | doesn't like | 2 | Neg. | | to post | 2 | Inf. |
| | would like | 2 | CnA. | | is posts | 2 | MF |
| | didn't like | 1 | Pst, Neg. | | was post | 1 | Pst, MF |
| | will liked | 1 | Ftr, MF | | | | |
| | don't like | 1 | Neg, S-V | | | | |
| | is likes | 1 | MF | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| 6 | **(watches)** | | | 6 | **(cries)** | | |
| | watch | 16 | S-V | | cry | 16 | S-V |
| | watching | 14 | Prs-P | | crys | 9 | MF |
| | watched | 7 | Pst. | | crying | 7 | Prs-P |
| | will watch | 7 | Ftr. | | will cry | 4 | Ftr. |
| | watchs | 3 | MF | | cried | 2 | Pst. |
| | have watch | 1 | Prs-Per, MF | | to cry | 2 | Inf. |
| | is watch | 1 | MF | | would cry | 2 | CnA. |
| | | | | | be cry | 1 | MF |
| | | | | | cryed | 1 | Pst., MF |
| | | | | | | | |
| 9 | **(heat)** | | | 9 | **(changes)** | | |
| | heats | 8 | S-V | | will change | 30 | Ftr. |
| | heating | 6 | Prs-P | | changed | 5 | Pst. |
| | heated | 4 | Pst. | | will changes | 3 | Ftr, MF |
| | will heat | 2 | Ftr. | | changing | 3 | Prs-P |
| | have heat | 1 | Prs-Per, MF | | change | 3 | S-V |
| | would heat | 1 | CnA. | | will changed | 2 | Ftr, MF |
| | were heat | 1 | Pst, MF | | was changing | 2 | Pst-C |
| | were heating | 1 | Pst-C | | was change | 2 | Pst, MF |
| | heat to | 1 | MF | | would change | 1 | CnA. |
| | | | | | would have changed | 1 | MPI |
| | | | | | | | |
| 12 | **(exercise)** | | | 12 | **(burn)** | | |
| | exercises | 12 | S-V | | burning | 10 | Prs-P |
| | are exercise | 3 | MF | | burned | 9 | Pst. |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | exercised | 2 | Pst. | | will burn | 7 | Ftr. |
| | exercising | 1 | Prs-P | | burns | 2 | S-V |
| | doing exercise | 1 | Prs-P | | will burned | 1 | Ftr, MF |
| | were exercise | 1 | Pst, MF | | would burn | 1 | CnA. |
| | are exercising | 1 | Prs-C | | to burn | 1 | Inf. |
| | have exercise | 1 | Prs-Per, MF | | would have burn | 1 | MPI, MF |
| | | | | | had burned | 1 | Pst-Per |
| | | | | | | | |
| 19 | **(don't get)** | | | 19 | **(don't grow)** | | |
| | aren't get | 11 | MF | | will not grow | 18 | Ftr. |
| | not get | 8 | Om. | | not grow | 7 | Om. |
| | willl not get | 7 | Ftr. | | aren't grow | 4 | MF |
| | wouldn't get | 2 | CnA. | | is not grow | 3 | S-V, MF |
| | didn't get | 2 | Pst. | | wouldn't grow | 3 | CnA. |
| | get | 2 | Aff. | | doesn't grow | 3 | S-V |
| | hadn't get | 1 | Pst-Per, MF | | didn't grow | 3 | Pst. |
| | don't getting | 1 | MF | | grows | 2 | Aff, S-V |
| | weren't get | 1 | Pst, MF | | not grows | 2 | Om, S-V |
| | weren't got | 1 | Pst, MF | | can't grow | 2 | WC |
| | aren't gets | 1 | MF | | hadn't grow | 1 | Pst-Per, MF |
| | doesn't get | 1 | S-V | | couldn't grow | 1 | CnA. |
| | | | | | willn't grow | 1 | Ftr, MF |
| | | | | | not growing | 1 | Prs-P |
| | | | | | not growed | 1 | Pst, MF |
| | | | | | wasn't grow | 1 | Pst, MF |

According to Table 4.6, the conditional errors resulting from subject and verb agreement outnumbered the other grammatical points among the five items. The following are some of the students' deviant answers in each test item:

In item 3, the expected verb forms are ***likes*** and ***posts***, as in "*Cathy frequently **posts** just negative comments on Facebook, unless she **likes** what others say about her*." In this item, many students produced the verb forms without singularizing them, as in (1) and used a non-target verb tense unnecessarily, i.e. the future simple tense in both the *if*-clause and main clause, as in (2) below:

(1) Cathy frequently ***post** just negative comments on Facebook, unless she ***like** what others say about her.

(2) Cathy frequently ***will post*** just negative comments on Facebook, unless she ***will like*** what others say about her.

Item 6: the expected verb forms are ***watches*** and ***cries***, as in *"She loves watching sad movies on weekends. She often **cries** if she **watches** any sad movies."* It is clearly seen that most of the students still failed to consider the relationship between the subject and verb by omitting the 'S form' that should follow the verbs, as in (3). Furthermore, many of them used the present participle in the *if*-clause that is not acceptable and the verb form '**crys**', which is considered misformation in the current study, as in (4) below:

(3) She often ***cry** if she ***watch** any sad movies.

(4) She often ***crys** if she ***watching** any sad movies.

Item 9: the acceptable verb forms are ***heat*** and ***changes***, as in "*It's always the same! If we **heat** ice for a few minutes, it **changes** into water.*" Surprisingly, some of the students were not aware of using the verb form in the *if*-clause. They tended to over-apply the 'S form' after the verb and many of them misused the verb structure of future simple tense in the main clause without considering the given context— *It's always the same!*, which implies factuality or scientific facts, as in (5). Another two non-target verb patterns were also employed, i.e. heating (present participle) in the *if*-clause and changed (a past form of verb) in the main clause, as in (6):

(5) It's always the same! If we *__heats__ ice for a few minutes, it ***will change** into water."

(6) It's always the same! If we *__heating__ ice for a few minutes, it ***changed** into water."

Item 12: the acceptable verb forms are ***exercise*** and ***burn***, as in *"An expert on health suggests that if we **exercise** every day, we usually **burn** a lot of calories."* As stated above, many students still had trouble dealing with the agreement between the subject and verb. That is to say, they failed to pluralize the verb 'exercise' in the *if*-clause and also employed the forms of the present participle and past tense for the word 'burn' in the main clause, as in (7):

(7) An expert on health suggests that if we ***exercises** every day, we usually ***burning/ *burned** a lot of calories.

Item 19: the acceptable verb form are ***don't grow*** and ***don't get***, as in *"Seeds **don't grow** if they **don't get** enough water and light."* For this item, the meaning of the context clearly expresses a factual situation or scientific facts, which require the verb tense of present simple in both clauses of the Factual Conditionals. It was, nonetheless, found that the most common

verb form error produced by the students was '***aren't get**' in the *if*-clause, which is regarded as misformation in the study. In this case, it is valuable to note that even though the students might have realized that the present form of verb should be used in the *if*-clause due to the context of factual situation, they failed to employ the standard structure 'don't get'. In addition, it is highly possible that many of the students misinterpreted the situation in the main clause; they, as a result, employed the future simple tense in place of the present simple structure, as in (8):

(8) Seeds ***will not grow** if they '***aren't get**' enough water and light.

What's more interesting, nevertheless, is that many of the students in this group were not able to correctly apply the full form of a grammatical structure, i.e. an auxiliary verb + not + verb, by omitting the auxiliary verb 'do' in both the *if*-clause and main clause, as in (9):

(9) Seeds ***not grow** if they '***not get**' enough water and light.

Table 4.7 Different types of errors found in Factual Conditionals from the gap-filling task

| Number of Codes | Rank | Token | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Two codes | 1 | Pst, MF | 10 | 28.57 |
| | 2 | Ftr, MF | 8 | 22.86 |
| | 3 | Prs-Per, MF | 5 | 14.29 |
| | 4 | S-V, MF | 3 | 8.57 |
| | 5 | Pst-Per, MF | 2 | 5.71 |
| | 5 | Om, S-V | 2 | 5.71 |
| | 5 | Aff, S-V | 2 | 5.71 |
| | 6 | MPI, MF | 1 | 2.86 |
| | 6 | Neg, Pst. | 1 | 2.86 |
| | 6 | Neg, S-V | 1 | 2.86 |
| **Total** | | | **35** | **100.00** |

Apart from the misuse of various grammatical features in the Factual Conditionals, a large number of tokens (n = 35) was unnecessarily concerned with doubling a verb pattern into other deviant forms. According to the table, it can be seen that the most frequent deviations were past simple tense and misformation (10 tokens/28.57%), along with future simple tense and misformation (8 tokens/22.86%). This high percentage (51.43%) was explicitly in relation to the wrong use of the two verb tenses that have nothing to do with the

factual situations in the Factual Conditionals. As a result, it can be assumed that most of the participants were likely to misinterpret the semantics of the given situations or events in this conditional type. What's more remarkable, over eighty percent of the verb patterns (82.86%) produced were regarded as misformation, which do not exist in the standard English language, e.g. using misformed past simple tense, as in (10); misformed future simple tense, as in (11); misformed present perfect tense, as in (12); misformed subject and verb agreement, as in (13); misformed past perfect tense, as in (14); and misformed modal perfect infinitive, as in (15):

(10) Cathy frequently ***was post** (posts) just negative comments on Facebook, unless she *likes* what others say about her.

(11) Cathy frequently *posts* just negative comments on Facebook, unless she ***will liked** (likes) what others say about her.

(12) It's always the same! If we ***have heat** (heat) ice for a few minutes, it *changes* into water.

(13) Seeds ***is not grow (**do not grow) if they *do not get* enough water and light.

(14) Seeds ***hadn't grow (**do not grow) if they ***hadn't get** (do not get) enough water and light.

(15) An expert on health suggests that if we *exercise* every day, we usually ***would have burn** (burn) a lot of calories.

Table 4.8 Summary of errors in Future Predictive Conditionals from the gap-filling task

| Rank | Type of error | Code | Freq. | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Present Simple Tense | Prs. | 43 | 18.45 |
| 2 | Future Simple Tense | Ftr. | 33 | 14.16 |
| 2 | Past Simple Tense | Pst. | 33 | 14.16 |
| 3 | Present Participle | Prs-P | 28 | 12.02 |
| 4 | Past Participle | Pst-P | 18 | 7.73 |
| 4 | Subject and Verb Agreement | S-V | 18 | 7.73 |
| 5 | Misformation | MF | 16 | 6.87 |
| 6 | Conditional Auxiliary | CnA. | 13 | 5.58 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | Omission | Om. | 9 | 3.86 |
| 8 | Word Choice | WC | 7 | 3.00 |
| 9 | Infinitive | Inf. | 3 | 1.29 |
| 9 | Modal Perfect Infinitive | MPI | 3 | 1.29 |
| 10 | Affirmative Form | Aff. | 2 | 0.86 |
| 10 | Negative Form | Neg. | 2 | 0.86 |
| 10 | Present Perfect Tense | Prs-Per | 2 | 0.86 |
| 11 | Past Continuous Tense | Pst-C | 1 | 0.43 |
| 11 | Past Perfect Tense | Pst-Per | 1 | 0.43 |
| 11 | Present Continuous Tense | Prs-C | 1 | 0.43 |
| **Total** | | | **233** | 100.00 |
| **Mean (SD)** | | | **12.94 (13.35)** | |

Table 4.8 presents the ranking of conditional errors found in the Future Predictive Conditionals. According to the table, the majority of students (43 tokens/18.45%) incorrectly employed the verb tense of the present simple in the main clause, as in (16) below as well as that of future simple (33 tokens/14.16%) in the *if*-clause of this conditional type, as in (17). The past simple tense was also in the same rank as future simple tense, as in (18). What's more interesting, however, is that the present participle and past participle, which are non-finite verbs and unacceptable in the English *if*-conditional constructions studied, accounted for 19.75 percent, as in (19) and (20). Like that of the Factual Conditionals, the subject and verb agreement was still ranked in the top five conditional errors, since this type of error was caused by the incomplete use of a grammatical rule in the present simple tense, as in (21).

(16) If I *go* to a nearby supermarket next week, I ***buy** (*will buy*) you some chocolate.

(17) Have a good time on your summer vacation, Yaya! Don't worry about your house! If I ***will see** (see) a burglar breaking into your house, I *will call* the police immediately.

(18) Have a good time on your summer vacation, Yaya! Don't worry about your house! If I ***saw** (*see*) a burglar breaking into your house, I ***called** (*will call*) the police immediately.

(19) This is the rainy season now. We *__going out__ (*will go out*) tomorrow if the weather *__being__ (*is*) good.

(20) This is the rainy season now. We *__gone out__ (*will go out*) tomorrow if the weather *__been__ (*is*) good.

(21) Don't be afraid! Unless you *__touches__ (*touch*) the dog, it *__don't bite__ (*won't bite*) you.

Table 4.9 Types of errors in Future Predictive Conditionals from the gap-filling task

| Item | If-Clause | Freq. | Type of Error | Item | Main Clause | Freq. | Type of Error |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | **(go)** | | | 4 | **(will buy)** | | |
| | will go | 13 | Ftr. | | buy | 8 | Prs. |
| | goes | 8 | S-V | | bought | 6 | Pst. |
| | gone | 7 | Pst-P | | buys | 4 | Prs, S-V |
| | going | 6 | Prs-P | | would buy | 1 | CnA. |
| | went | 4 | Pst. | | would have bought | 1 | MPI |
| | would have goen | 1 | MPI, MF | | buying | 1 | Prs-P |
| | have to go | 1 | WC | | | | |
| | will goes | 1 | MF | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| 7 | **(see)** | | | 7 | **(will call)** | | |
| | saw | 7 | Pst. | | call | 11 | Prs. |
| | seen | 7 | Pst-P | | called | 6 | Pst. |
| | will see | 3 | Ftr. | | calling | 2 | Prs-P |
| | have seen | 2 | Prs-Per | | will called | 1 | MF |
| | seeing | 1 | Prs-P | | calls | 1 | Prs, S-V |
| | sew | 1 | WC | | | | |
| | look | 1 | WC | | | | |
| | had seen | 1 | Pst-Per. | | | | |
| | have see | 1 | Prs-Per, MF | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| 13 | **(doesn't hurry)** | | | 13 | **(will miss)** | | |
| | isn't hurry | 11 | MF | | miss | 16 | Prs., S-V |
| | will not hurry | 7 | Ftr. | | missed | 9 | Pst. |
| | don't hurry | 7 | S-V | | missing | 8 | Prs-P |
| | not hurry | 5 | Om. | | misses | 2 | Prs. |
| | wouldn't | 4 | CnA. | | had miss | 2 | Pst-Per, |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | hurry | | | | | | MF |
| | hasn't hurrry | 3 | Prs-Per, MF | | would have missed | 1 | MPI |
| | didn't hurry | 2 | Pst. | | will missed | 1 | MF |
| | hadn't hurry | 1 | Pst-Per, MF | | will missing | 1 | MF |
| | wasn't hurried | 1 | Pst. | | was missing | 1 | Pst-C |
| | not hurrys | 1 | Om, MF | | were miss | 1 | Pst, MF |
| | isn't hurring | 1 | MF | | | | |
| | weren't hurry | 1 | Pst, MF, S-V | | | | |
| | hurry | 1 | Aff. | | | | |
| | will hurry | 1 | Ftr, Aff. | | | | |
| | wasn't hurry | 1 | Pst, MF | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| 16 | **(touch)** | | | 16 | **(will not bite)** | | |
| | touching | 6 | Prs-P | | don't bite | 8 | Prs, S-V |
| | will touch | 3 | Ftr. | | doesn't bite | 7 | Prs. |
| | can touch | 2 | WC | | is not bite | 7 | Prs, MF |
| | to touch | 2 | Inf. | | wouldn't bite | 4 | CnA. |
| | touches | 2 | S-V | | not bite | 4 | Om. |
| | had touch | 1 | Pst-Per, MF | | didn't bite | 3 | Pst. |
| | have touch | 1 | Prs-Per, MF | | go out | 3 | Prs, WC |
| | don't touch | 1 | Neg. | | not bited | 2 | Om, Pst. |
| | are touching | 1 | Prs-C | | hadn't bite | 1 | Pst-Per, MF |
| | try | 1 | WC | | wasn't bite | 1 | Pst, MF |
| | | | | | isn't bites | 1 | Prs, MF |
| | | | | | not bites | 1 | Om, MF |
| | | | | | bite | 1 | Aff. |
| | | | | | went out | 1 | WC, Pst. |
| | | | | | | | |
| 17 | **(is)** | | | 17 | **(will go out)** | | |
| | be | 7 | BaF. | | go out | 15 | Prs. |
| | will be | 7 | Ftr. | | have go out | 2 | Prs-Per, MF |
| | will | 3 | Ftr, Om. | | going out | 2 | Prs-P |
| | was | 3 | Pst. | | goes out | 2 | Prs, S-V |
| | been | 2 | Pst-P | | went out | 2 | Pst. |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | being | 2 | Prs-P | | go out to | 1 | Prs, WC |
| | to be | 1 | Inf. | | goes | 1 | Prs, S-V, WC |
| | will is | 1 | Ftr, MF | | were go out | 1 | Pst, MF |
| | are | 1 | S-V | | won't go out | 1 | Neg. |
| | are be | 1 | S-V, MF | | gone out | 1 | Pst-P |
| | were | 1 | Pst, S-V | | have to go out | 1 | Prs, WC |
| | so | 1 | WC | | are go out | 1 | Prs, MF |
| | | | | | been | 1 | Pst-P |

Table 4.9 shows the sources of errors derived from a wide range of grammatical features, which are non-target constructions in both clauses of Future Predictive Conditionals. According to the table, it can be explicitly seen that the number of future simple tense errors dominated the *if*-clauses of all items altogether (33 tokens), while the present simple tense errors outnumbered the other grammatical aspects in the main clauses of the five items (43 tokens). This could reflect the confusion over the usage of target verb tenses between the two clauses in this group of participants. To illustrate, the following are some of the deviant verb forms of the *if*-clauses and main clause produced in each test item where the correct forms are put in parentheses:

Item 4. If I ***will go** (go) to a nearby supermarket next week, I ***buy** (will buy) you some chocolate.

Item 7. Have a good time on your summer vacation, Yaya! Don't worry about your house! If I ***will see** (see) a burglar breaking into your house, I ***call** (will call) the police immediately.

Item 13. John hasn't finished his breakfast yet. Certainly, he ***miss** (will miss) the school bus if he ***will not hurry** (does not hurry).

Item 16. Don't be afraid! Unless you ***will touch** (touch) the dog, it ***don't bite** (won't bite) you.

Item 17. This is the rainy season now. We ***go out** (will go out) tomorrow if the weather ***will be** (is) good.

According to the table, it can be noticed that the verb construction errors in pairs in the main clause accounting for the most in items 13 and 16 above were the present simple tense, together with the relationship between subjects and verbs, in which many students not only failed to use the acceptable structures but also failed to make the verb forms '*miss*' and '*don't bite*' agree with the singular subjects 'he' and 'it', respectively, as in (22) and (23).

(22). John hasn't finished his breakfast yet. Certainly, he ***miss** (misses) the school bus if he *does not hurry*.

(23). Don't be afraid! Unless you *touch* the dog, it ***don't bite** (doesn't bite) you.

Another point worth noticing is that some of the participants employed other irrelevant verbs or words rather than the provided ones in forming an *if*-conditional verb structure, most of which did not sound logical in the context of *if*-conditionals. The following are some examples of this conditional error:

(25) Have a good time on your summer vacation, Yaya! Don't worry about your house! If I ***sew/ *look** (*see*) a burglar breaking into your house, I *will call* the police immediately.

(26) Don't be afraid! Unless you ***try** (*touch*) the dog, it ***go out**/ ***went out** (*will not bite*) you.

(27) This is the rainy season now. We ***have to go out**/ ***go out to** (*will go out*) tomorrow if the weather ***so** (*is*) good.

Additionally, some of the participants seem to be confused over the usage of the conditional auxiliary (would, could, might + verb) with those of both clauses of the Future Predictive, particularly the main clause. Below are certain sentence examples from the students' answers:

(28) If I *go* to a nearby supermarket next week, I ***would buy** (*will buy*) you some chocolate.

(29) John hasn't finished his breakfast yet. Certainly, he *will miss* the school bus if he ***wouldn't hurry** (*doesn't hurry*).

(30) Don't be afraid! Unless you *touch* the dog, it ***wouldn't bite** (*won't bite*) you.

Table 4.10 Different types of errors in Future Predictives from the gap-filling task

| Number of Codes | Rank | Type of Errors | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Two codes** | 1 | Prs, S-V | 32 | 42.11 |
| | 2 | Prs, MF | 9 | 11.84 |
| | 3 | Prs-Per, MF | 5 | 6.58 |
| | 3 | Pst-Per, MF | 5 | 6.58 |
| | 3 | Prs, WC | 5 | 6.58 |
| | 4 | Pst, MF | 4 | 5.26 |
| | 5 | Ftr, Om | 3 | 3.95 |
| | 6 | Aff, S-V | 2 | 2.63 |
| | 6 | Om, MF | 2 | 2.63 |
| | 6 | Om, Pst | 2 | 2.63 |
| | 7 | Ftr, MF | 1 | 1.32 |
| | 7 | S-V, MF | 1 | 1.32 |
| | 7 | MPI, MF | 1 | 1.32 |
| | 7 | WC, Pst | 1 | 1.32 |
| | 7 | S-V, Pst | 1 | 1.32 |
| **Three codes** | 1 | Pst, S-V, MF | 1 | 1.32 |
| | 1 | Prs, S-V, WC | 1 | 1.32 |
| **Total** | | | **76** | **100.00** |

As can be seen in the table, many of the students not only formed a wide variety of non-target verb constructions in pairs in both the *if*-clause and main clause of the Future Predictives but also produced these constructions that are regarded as non-standard in English usage or misformed constructions. Of all of these, the most frequent construction was the present simple tense, along with the relationship between a subject and verb (32 tokens/ 42.11%). In other words, the combined errors produced by most of the participants in the main clause of this type were present simple tense with errors in the relationship between a

subject and verb. In addition, the misformed structure of present simple tense (9 tokens/11.84%) was second ranked, indicating that some of the students not only failed to employ the target verb pattern of the main clause but also the standard English, as in (31).

(31) Don't be afraid! Unless you *touch* the dog, it ***is not bite*** you.

Thus, it can be clearly seen that the verb phrase ***is not bite*** was derived from the present simple tense, which is considered an error or non-target form in this context of use. This verb phrase also does not conform to the standard English; thus, it is regarded as a misformed pattern in the study.

Table 4.11 Summary of errors in Present Counterfactuals from the gap-filling task

| Rank | Type of error | Code | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Present Simple Tense | Prs. | 223 | 45.14 |
| 2 | Future Simple Tense | Ftr. | 166 | 33.60 |
| 3 | Present Participle | Prs-P | 31 | 6.28 |
| 4 | Past Simple Tense | Pst. | 18 | 3.64 |
| 5 | Base Form | BaF. | 13 | 2.63 |
| 6 | Omission | Om. | 12 | 2.43 |
| 7 | Present Continuous Tense | Prs-C | 8 | 1.62 |
| 8 | Past Participle | Pst-P | 6 | 1.21 |
| 9 | Misformation | MF | 4 | 0.81 |
| 10 | Infinitive | Inf. | 3 | 0.61 |
| 10 | Subject and Verb Agreement | S-V | 3 | 0.61 |
| 11 | Conditional Auxiliary | CnA. | 2 | 0.40 |
| 11 | Present Perfect Tense | Prs-Per | 2 | 0.40 |
| 12 | Past Continuous Tense | Pst-C | 1 | 0.20 |
| 12 | Past Perfect Tense | Pst-Per | 1 | 0.20 |
| 12 | Modal Perfect Infinitive | MPI | 1 | 0.20 |
| **Total** | | | **494** | 100.00 |
| **Mean (SD)** | | | **30.88 (65.21)** | |

Table 4.11 shows the overall non-target forms or errors in Present Counterfactual Conditionals. It was discovered that the most frequent structures produced by the students

were present simple tense (223 tokens/45.14%) and future simple tense (166 tokens/33.60%), respectively. It can also be noticed that the majority of participants evidently did not acquire the English *if*-conditionals from the former typologies to the latter ones. Simply put, they still employed the verb form of Factual Conditionals in forming both clauses, particularly the *if*-clause, as well as mostly applied the verb pattern of the main clause of Future Predictives in producing the main clause of Present Counterfactual Conditionals. For instance, the expected verb forms of both the *if*-clause and main clause of Present Counterfactuals were '**interrupted**' and '**would be**', as in test item 15 '*The teacher is explaining about some important problems of global warming. It **would be** impolite if we **interrupted** her right now.*' However, the highest number of non-target forms were '*__interrupt__' in the *if*-clause and '***is**' in the main clause. Additionally, the acceptable answer in the main clause is '**would not make'**, as in item (1) *'Unless I knew the future, I **would not make** any plans to travel far away right now.'*, whereas the commonest answer was ***will not make,** which is considered an error in this conditional aspect. Another point worth noticing is that unlike those in the Factual and Future Predictive Conditionals, the students did not have difficulty dealing with affirmative and negative forms, as well as word choice. That is to say, they did not misuse the three grammatical aspects in forming the verb patterns in both clauses of this typology.

Table 4.12 Types of errors in Present Counterfactuals from the gap-filling task

| Item | If-Clause | Freq. | Type of Error | Item | Main Clause | Freq. | Type of Error |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | (**knew**) | | | 1 | (**would not make**) | | |
| | know | 34 | Prs. | | will not make | 26 | Ftr. |
| | knows | 11 | Prs, S-V | | don't make | 16 | Prs. |
| | will know | 6 | Ftr. | | didn't make | 4 | Pst. |
| | have known | 2 | Prs-Per | | not make | 3 | Om. |
| | don't know | 1 | Prs, Neg. | | can't make | 1 | Prs. |
| | will knows | 1 | Ftr, MF | | will not tell | 1 | Ftr, WC |
| | knowing | 1 | Prs-P | | am not make | 1 | Prs, MF |
| | had known | 1 | Pst-Per | | wouldn't have make | 1 | MPI, MF |
| | knews | 1 | MF | | will not know | 1 | Ftr, WC |
| | known | 1 | Pst-P | | am not made | 1 | Prs, MF |
| | would know | 1 | CnA. | | made | 1 | Aff, Pst. |
| | | | | | not maked | 1 | Om, MF |
| | | | | | am making | 1 | Prs-C, Aff. |
| | | | | | not making | 1 | Prs-P |
| | | | | | | | |

| 8 | (**opened**) | | | 8 | (**would blame**) | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | open | 33 | Prs. | | will blame | 33 | Ftr. |
| | opening | 10 | Prs-P | | blame | 13 | Prs, S-V |
| | opens | 6 | Prs, S-V | | blames | 7 | Prs. |
| | are open | 2 | Prs. | | blamed | 5 | Pst. |
| | will open | 2 | Ftr. | | would have blamed | 1 | MPI |
| | were opening | 1 | Pst-C | | blaming | 1 | Prs-P |
| | were open | 1 | MF | | will blamed | 1 | Ftr, MF |
| | are opening | 1 | Prs-C | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| 11 | (**were**) | | | 11 | (**would stay**) | | |
| | is | 41 | Prs. | | will stay | 39 | Ftr. |
| | being | 6 | Prs-P | | stay | 10 | Prs. |
| | be | 5 | BaF | | staying | 4 | Prs-P |
| | been | 3 | Pst-P | | stayed | 3 | Pst. |
| | was | 3 | S-V | | will | 1 | Ftr, Om. |
| | will be | 2 | Ftr. | | will stayed | 1 | Ftr, MF |
| | have been | 1 | Prs-Per, S-V | | staies | 1 | Prs, S-V, MF |
| | is being | 1 | Prs-C | | not stay | 1 | Neg, Om. |
| | | | | | were stay | 1 | Pst, S-V, MF |
| | | | | | was stay | 1 | Pst, MF |
| | | | | | | | |
| 15 | (**interrupted**) | | | 15 | (**would be**) | | |
| | interrupt | 31 | Prs. | | is | 27 | Prs. |
| | will interrupt | 10 | Ftr. | | will be | 18 | Ftr. |
| | interrupts | 7 | Prs, S-V | | be | 8 | BaF. |
| | interrupting | 5 | Prs-P | | will | 3 | Ftr, Om. |
| | are interrupting | 4 | Prs-C | | being | 2 | Prs-P |
| | were interrupt | 2 | Pst, MF | | was | 2 | Pst. |
| | aren't interrupting | 2 | Prs-C, Neg. | | been | 2 | Pst-P |
| | was interrupting | 1 | Pst-C, S-V | | has | 1 | Prs, WC |
| | to interrupt | 1 | Inf. | | to be | 1 | Inf. |
| | | | | | will been | 1 | Ftr, MF |
| | | | | | not be | 1 | Neg, Om. |
| | | | | | is be | 1 | Prs, MF |
| | | | | | | | |
| 20 | (**did not believe**) | | | 20 | (**would cancel**) | | |
| | doesn't believe | 16 | Prs. | | cancel | 24 | Prs, S-V |
| | don't believe | 10 | Prs, S-V | | will cancel | 18 | Ftr. |
| | will not believe | 9 | Ftr. | | cancels | 5 | Prs. |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | not believe | 9 | Om. | | is cancel | 4 | Prs, MF |
| | wasn't believe | 3 | MF | | canceled | 3 | Pst. |
| | not believes | 3 | Om, MF | | is canceling | 2 | Prs-C |
| | isn't believe | 3 | Prs, MF | | has cacel | 1 | Prs-Per, MF |
| | won't believe | 3 | Ftr. | | be cancel | 1 | BaF, MF |
| | haven't believe | 2 | Prs-Per, S-V, MF | | canceling | 1 | Prs-P |
| | wouldn't believe | 1 | CnA. | | had cancel | 1 | Pst-Per, MF |
| | were not believe | 1 | S-V, MF | | to cancel | 1 | Inf. |
| | hasn't believe | 1 | Prs-Per, MF | | was cancel | 1 | Pst, MF |
| | unbelieve | 1 | Prs, MF | | were cancel | 1 | Pst, S-V, MF |

Table 4.12 displays the overall number of conditional errors in individual items of Present Counterfactuals. According to the table, the majority of students employed the verb tense of present simple in producing the *if*-clauses of all test items, i.e. 1, 8, 11, 15, and 20, as well as the main clauses of items 15 and 20. They, furthermore, employed the verb tense of future simple in the main clause of items 1, 8, and 11 rather than the conditional auxiliary. Additionally, apart from the top errors as aforementioned, many students also produced other unexpected and deviant answers in each item, as follows:

Item 1. The correct verb forms were ***knew*** and ***would not make***, as in *'Unless I **knew** the future, I **would not make** any plans to travel far away right now.*' However, the second most non-target verb pattern in frequency was ***knows** (11 tokens) in the conditional clause, along with ***don't make** (16 tokens) in the main clause, as in (32).

(32) Unless I***knows** the future, I ***don't make** any plans to travel far away right now.

It is also evident that the use of ****knows***, as mentioned above, indicates that some participants still lacked the understanding of the fundamental grammatical association between the subject and verb used. That is to say, they over-applied the 'S form' by singularizing the verb ***know*** unnecessarily. They also employed the present simple structure ****don't make*** rather than the conditional auxiliary (wouldn't/couldn't/shouldn't make) in the main clause, thereby representing ungrammatical usage of the verb tense in the main clause.

Item 8. The correct verb forms were ***opened*** and ***would blame***, as in *'Knocking at the door before entering a person's room is a good manner. If we **opened** the door now without knocking, our boss **would blame** us.'* In this item, some students opted for the present

participle (10 tokens) for the structure in the *if*-clause and the verb tense of present simple for the main clause (13 tokens), as in (33).

(33) *Knocking at the door before entering a person's room is a good manner. If we* ****opening*** *the door now without knocking, our boss* ****blame*** *us*. In addition, it can be noticed that there was the singular subject 'our boss' in the main clause; however, some of the students failed to make it agree with its subject.

Item 11. If today ***were*** Sunday, I ***would stay*** at home.

As for the item 11, there were six tokens of the present participle ****being*** in the *if*-clause and ten tokens of the present verb form ****stay*** in the main clause, both of which were ranked second. In addition, even though there were three tokens involving the use of ****was,*** which also represented the past simple tense in this clause, it is not the expected verb pattern. In other words, the participants basically applied the verb ***were*** to all types of subjects in the standard use of English Present Counterfactuals. For this reason, it can be assumed that the students producing the three tokens might have realized the correct usage of past simple tense, but they were unable to use the grammatical verb pattern in this context of use.

Item 15. The acceptable verb structures were **would be** and **interrupted**, as in *'The teacher is explaining about some important problems of global warming. It* ***would be*** *impolite if we* ***interrupted*** *her right now'*. As can be seen, the verb forms ****will interrupt*** (10 tokens), along with ****will be*** (18 tokens) were ranked second, both of which are the future simple tense structure, as in (34). Another point worth noting is that there were up to twelve tokens centering around the verb ending in **–ing** form in the *if*-clause of this item, including the present participle (5 tokens), present continuous tense (4 tokens), present continuous tense in the negative form (2 tokens), and past continuous tense with an error in the subject and verb relationship (1 token), as in (35), (36), (37), (38), respectively.

(34) The teacher is explaining about some important problems of global warming. It ****will be*** impolite if we ****will interrupt*** her right now.

(35) The teacher is explaining about some important problems of global warming. It *would be* impolite if we ****interrupting*** her right now.

(36) The teacher is explaining about some important problems of global warming. It *would be* impolite if we **** are interrupting*** her right now.

(37) The teacher is explaining about some important problems of global warming. It *would be* impolite if we ****aren't interrupting*** her right now.

(38) The teacher is explaining about some important problems of global warming. It ***would be*** impolite if we ****was interrupting*** her right now.

Item 20. The expected verb patterns were ***would cancel*** and ***did not believe***, as in *'Charyl **would cancel** the ticket booking right now if he **did not believe** you would travel with him.'* In this item, the verb pattern of the present simple tense made up of 50 tokens in both *if*-clause and main clause. Of all of these, 34 tokens were concerned with the error in the association between subjects and verbs due to the fact that both clauses contain a singular subject, as in (39).

(39) Charyl ****cancel*** the ticket booking right now if he ****don't believe*** you would travel with him.

Table 4.13 Different types of errors in Present Counterfactuals from the gap-filling task

| Number of Codes | Rank | Type of errors | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Two codes | 1 | Prs, S-V | 72 | 58.06 |
| | 2 | Prs, MF | 11 | 8.87 |
| | 3 | Pst, MF | 5 | 4.03 |
| | 4 | Ftr, Om | 4 | 3.23 |
| | 4 | Om, MF | 4 | 3.23 |
| | 4 | Ftr, MF | 4 | 3.23 |
| | 5 | Prs-Per, MF | 2 | 1.61 |
| | 5 | Ftr, WC | 2 | 1.61 |
| | 5 | Neg, Om. | 2 | 1.61 |
| | 5 | Prs-C, Neg. | 2 | 1.61 |
| | 5 | Ftr, WC | 2 | 1.61 |
| | 6 | Pst-Per, MF | 1 | 0.81 |
| | 6 | Prs, WC | 1 | 0.81 |
| | 6 | Aff, Pst | 1 | 0.81 |
| | 6 | Aff, Prs-C | 1 | 0.81 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 6 | S-V, MF | 1 | 0.81 |
| | 6 | MPI, MF | 1 | 0.81 |
| | 6 | BaF, MF | 1 | 0.81 |
| | 6 | Pst-C, S-V | 1 | 0.81 |
| | 6 | Prs-Per, S-V | 1 | 0.81 |
| **Three codes** | 1 | Pst, S-V, MF | 2 | 1.61 |
| | 1 | Prs-Per, S-V, MF | 2 | 1.61 |
| | 2 | Prs, S-V, MF | 1 | 0.81 |
| **Total** | | | **124** | **100.00** |

Table 4.13 provides a summary of errors in pairs and in tri-errors discovered in the Present Counterfactuals. According to the table, it can be clearly seen that the highest number of errors was the misuse of the present simple tense, together with the agreement between a subject and a verb (72 tokens/58.06%). This very high percentage is especially worrying, since the majority of participants apparently had trouble dealing with two grammatical aspects in forming the verb patterns of this *if*-conditional. This phenomenon could reflect that not merely did they produce the non-target verb patterns but they were also confused over the link between subjects and verbs in conditional sentences. Another remarkable finding is that the present simple tense structures produced in the main clause (11 tokens/8.87%) were grammatically misformed, as in (40), (41), (42) below.

(40) Unless I *knew* the future, I ****am not make*** (would not make) any plans to travel far away right now.

(41) The teacher is explaining about some important problems of global warming. It ****is be*** (would be) impolite if we *interrupted* her right now.

(42) Charyl ****is cancel*** (would cancel) the ticket booking right now if he *did not believe* you would travel with him.

Table 4.14 Summary of errors in Past Counterfactuals from the gap-filling task

| Rank | Type of error | Code | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Future Simple Tense | Ftr. | 149 | 32.04 |
| 2 | Present Simple Tense | Prs. | 136 | 29.25 |
| 3 | Past Simple Tense | Pst. | 105 | 22.58 |
| 4 | Conditional Auxiliary | CnA. | 32 | 6.88 |
| 5 | Present Participle | Prs-P | 24 | 5.16 |
| 6 | Misformation | MF | 4 | 0.86 |
| 7 | Past Participle | Pst-P | 3 | 0.65 |
| 7 | Present Continuous Tense | Prs-C | 3 | 0.65 |
| 8 | Infinitive | Inf. | 2 | 0.43 |
| 8 | Modal Perfect Infinitives | MPI | 2 | 0.43 |
| 8 | Present Perfect Tense | Prs-Per | 2 | 0.43 |
| 9 | Past Continuous Tense | Pst-C | 1 | 0.22 |
| 9 | Negative Form | Neg. | 1 | 0.22 |
| 9 | Omission | Om. | 1 | 0.22 |
| **Total** | | | **465** | 100.00 |
| **Mean (SD)** | | | **33.21 (54.01)** | |

Table 4.14 summarizes the number of conditional errors found in the Past Counterfactual Conditionals. As can be seen in the table, it was found that the top three errors involved the future simple tense (149 tokens/32.04%), present simple tense (136 tokens/29.25%), and past simple tense (105 tokens/22.58%), respectively. These very high percentages support the findings, as noted earlier, in that the majority of the participants appear not to acquire the English *if*-conditionals from the earlier types to the later ones. To put it another way, they tended to employ the verb patterns of Factual Conditionals and Future Predictives for those of the Present Counterfactuals as well as to apply those of the Factual Conditionals, Future Predictives, and Present Counterfactuals for those of the Past Counterfactuals. On the other hand, none of the students had any problems using the

affirmative form, the base form of a verb, the past perfect tense, agreement between a subject and verb, and word choice in this conditional type. Interestingly, there were only two tokens (0.43%) regarding the use of the modal perfect infinitive; nonetheless, it was employed in the *if*-clause rather than the main clause of Past Counterfactuals, as in item 18. '*It's a pity! If we* ****would have invited*** *(had invited) him, he would have enjoyed the party with us last night.'*

Table 4.15 Types of errors in Past Counterfactuals from the gap-filling task

| Item | If-Clause | Freq. | Type of Error | Item | Main Clause | Freq. | Type of Error |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | (**had not been**) | | | 2 | (**would have gone**) | | |
| | isn't | 17 | Prs. | | went | 21 | Pst. |
| | wasn't | 10 | Pst. | | will go | 17 | Ftr. |
| | don't be | 5 | Prs, S-V, MF | | would go | 10 | CnA. |
| | not be | 5 | BaF, Om. | | goes | 4 | Prs. |
| | doesn't | 4 | Prs, Om. | | going | 3 | Prs-P |
| | wasn't been | 2 | Pst, MF | | gone | 3 | Pst-P |
| | won't be | 2 | Ftr. | | go | 2 | Prs, S-V |
| | don't was | 2 | Prs, Pst, S-V, MF | | will goes | 2 | Ftr, MF |
| | wouldn't be | 1 | CnA. | | will went | 2 | Ftr, MF |
| | doesn't be | 1 | Prs, MF | | will going | 1 | Ftr, MF |
| | hasn't | 1 | Prs-Per, Om. | | would | 1 | CnA,Om |
| | is | 1 | Prs, Aff. | | is going | 1 | Prs-C |
| | willn't been | 1 | Ftr, MF | | would went | 1 | CnA., MF |
| | aren't be | 1 | Prs, S-V, MF | | will | 1 | Ftr, Om. |
| | isn't be | 1 | Prs, MF | | | | |
| | wasn't | 1 | Pst. | | | | |
| | weren't | 1 | Pst, S-V | | | | |
| | be | 1 | BaF, Aff. | | | | |
| | aren't | 1 | Prs, S-V | | | | |
| | not being | 1 | Pre-P | | | | |
| | not to be | 1 | Inf. | | | | |
| | don't | 1 | Prs, Om. | | | | |
| | isn't being | 1 | Prs-C | | | | |
| | wasn't be | 1 | Pst, MF | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| 5 | (**had studied**) | | | 5 | (**would have passed)** | | |
| | study | 32 | Prs. | | will pass | 40 | Ftr. |
| | studied | 10 | Pst. | | pass | 9 | Prs. |
| | studies | 9 | Prs, S-V | | would pass | 4 | CnA. |
| | studys | 3 | Prs, S-V, MF | | passed | 3 | Pst. |
| | studying | 2 | Prs-P | | passes | 2 | Prs, S-V |
| | will study | 1 | Ftr. | | would passed | 1 | CnA., MF |
| | are study | 1 | Prs, MF | | were pass | 1 | Pst, MF |
| | were study | 1 | Pst, MF | | will pass | 1 | Ftr. |
| | should studying | 1 | CnA., MF | | will past | 1 | Ftr, WC, MF |
| | studie | 1 | Prs, MF | | to pass | 1 | Inf. |
| | | | | | would have pass | 1 | MF |
| | | | | | are passed | 1 | Prs. |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | will passed | 1 | Ftr, MF |
| | | | | | passing | 1 | Prs-P |
| | | | | | | | |
| 10 | (**had bought**) | | | 10 | (**would have made**) | | |
| | bought | 22 | Pst. | | will make | 24 | Ftr. |
| | buy | 21 | Prs. | | make | 14 | Prs. |
| | will buy | 10 | Ftr. | | makes | 11 | Prs, S-V |
| | brought | 3 | Pst, WC | | making | 5 | Prs-P |
| | won't buy | 1 | Ftr, Neg. | | made | 4 | Pst. |
| | buys | 1 | Prs, S-V | | would make | 3 | CnA. |
| | have bought | 1 | Prs-Per | | had make | 1 | Pst-Per, MF |
| | had buy | 1 | MF | | would made | 1 | CnA, MF |
| | will buying | 1 | Ftr, MF | | have make | 1 | Prs-Per, MF |
| | will bought | 1 | Ftr, MF | | maked | 1 | Pst, MF |
| | buying | 1 | Prs-P | | | | |
| | am buy | 1 | Prs, MF | | | | |
| | buies | 1 | Prs, S-V, MF | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| 14 | (**had tried**) | | | 14 | **(would not have happened**) | | |
| | try | 18 | Prs, S-V | | will not happen | 16 | Ftr. |
| | will try | 10 | Ftr. | | is not happen | 8 | Prs, MF |
| | trying | 9 | Prs-P | | wouldn't happen | 7 | CnA. |
| | tried | 7 | Pst. | | not happen | 6 | BaF, Om. |
| | tries | 7 | Prs. | | don't happen | 5 | Prs, S-V |
| | don't try | 2 | Prs, Neg, S-V | | wasn't happen | 3 | Pst, MF |
| | had try | 1 | MF | | didn't happen | 2 | Pst |
| | wasn't trying | 1 | Pst-C | | doesn't happen | 2 | Prs. |
| | doesn't try | 1 | Prs, Neg. | | hadn't happen | 1 | Pst-Per, MF |
| | didn't try | 1 | Pst, Neg. | | happen | 1 | Prs, Aff. |
| | is trying | 1 | Prs-C | | willn't happen | 1 | Ftr, MF |
| | will trying | 1 | Ftr, MF | | weren't happen | 1 | Pst, MF |
| | will try | 1 | Ftr. | | not happen | 1 | BaF, Om. |
| | no tried | 1 | Neg, MF | | not happened | 1 | Om. |
| | trys | 1 | Prs, MF | | happens | 1 | Prs, Aff, S-V |
| | | | | | happened | 1 | Pst, Aff. |
| | | | | | not happening | 1 | Prs-P |
| | | | | | haven't happened | 1 | Prs-Per |
| | | | | | unhappen | 1 | MF |
| | | | | | | | |

| 18 | (**had invited**) | | | 18 | (**would have enjoyed**) | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | invite | 26 | Prs. | | will enjoy | 24 | Ftr. |
| | invited | 18 | Pst. | | enjoy | 10 | Prs, S-V |
| | invites | 9 | Prs, S-V | | enjoyed | 7 | Pst. |
| | will invite | 3 | Ftr. | | would enjoy | 5 | CnA. |
| | would have invited | 2 | MPI | | will enjoyed | 3 | Ftr, MF |
| | hadn't invited | 1 | Neg. | | enjoys | 3 | Prs. |
| | inviting | 1 | Prs-P | | is enjoyed | 2 | Prs, MF |
| | are invite | 1 | Prs, MF | | enjoies | 2 | Prs, MF |
| | will invites | 1 | Ftr, MF | | enjoying | 1 | Prs-P |
| | would invite | 1 | CnA. | | would | 1 | CnA., Om. |
| | | | | | is enjoy | 1 | Prs, MF |
| | | | | | would be | 1 | CnA. |
| | | | | | would enjoyed | 1 | CnA., MF |
| | | | | | will enjoying | 1 | Ftr, MF |
| | | | | | was enjoyed | 1 | Pst, MF |
| | | | | | has enjoy | 1 | Prs-Per, MF |
| | | | | | enjoy | 1 | Prs, S-V |
| | | | | | would be enjoy | 1 | CnA., MF |

Table 4.15 displays the conditional errors in each test item of the Past Counterfactuals, in which the majority of participants produced a wide range of variant forms. It was, surprisingly, discovered that the verb pattern of the present simple tense outnumbered the other grammatical features in the *if*-clause of items 2, 5, 14, and 18, except for item 10, in which this verb pattern was in the second rank of frequency. However, the past form ***bought** was the most frequently used in item 10. Below are some of the deviant verb patterns in the *if*-clause, with the correct forms put in parentheses in each item:

Item 2. I really enjoyed watching the movie *"Transformer 3"*. If Ann ***isn't** (had not been) sick, she *would have gone* to the cinema with us yesterday.

Item 5. Stop being so sad, Jimmy! I believe that if you ***study** (had studied) hard before the last midterm examination, you *would have passed* all the subjects.

Item 10. I am very lucky that I didn't buy that expensive car. For sure, I *would have made* a big mistake, if I ***bought** (had bought) that car last month.

Item 14. Jack was injured in a car accident last week and is still in the hospital. I think the accident *would not have happened* unless he ***try** (had tried) to answer his phone while driving.

Item 18. It's a pity! If we ***invite** (had invited) him, he *would have enjoyed* the party with us last night.

As for the main clause from each item, the verb tense of the future simple accounted for the most, as in items 5, 10, 14, and 18, except for item 2, in which this verb tense was in the second rank of frequency. Instead, the past form of verb ***went** was in the first rank of frequency in item 2. The following are the unacceptable verb patterns of the main clause, with the correct forms put in parentheses in each item:

Item 2. I really enjoyed watching the movie *"Transformer 3"*. If Ann *had not been* sick, she ***went** (would have gone) to the cinema with us yesterday.

Item 5. Stop being so sad, Jimmy! I believe that if you *had studied* hard before the last midterm examination, you ***will pass** (would have passed) all the subjects.

Item 10. I am very lucky that I didn't buy that expensive car. For sure, I ***will make** (would have made) a big mistake, if I *had bought* that car last month.

Item 14. Jack was injured in a car accident last week and is still in the hospital. I think the accident ***will not happen** (would not have happened) unless he *had tried* to answer his phone while driving.

Item 18. It's a pity! If we *had invited* him, he ***will enjoy** (would have enjoyed) the party with us last night.

Table 4.16 Different types of errors in Past Counterfactuals from the gap-filling task

| Number of Codes | Rank | Types of errors | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Two codes** | 1 | Prs, S-V | 69 | 39.88 |
| | 2 | Prs, MF | 20 | 11.56 |
| | 3 | Ftr, MF | 16 | 9.25 |
| | 4 | Baf, Om. | 12 | 6.94 |
| | 5 | Pst, MF | 11 | 6.36 |
| | 6 | CnA, MF | 6 | 3.47 |
| | 7 | Prs, Om. | 5 | 2.89 |
| | 8 | Pst, WC | 3 | 1.73 |
| | 9 | Prs, Aff. | 2 | 1.16 |
| | 9 | CnA, Om. | 2 | 1.16 |
| | 9 | Prs-Per, MF | 2 | 1.16 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 9 | Pst-Per, MF | 2 | 1.16 |
| | 10 | BaF, Aff. | 1 | 0.58 |
| | 10 | Ftr, Om. | 1 | 0.58 |
| | 10 | Ftr, Neg. | 1 | 0.58 |
| | 10 | Neg, MF | 1 | 0.58 |
| | 10 | Pst, S-V | 1 | 0.58 |
| | 10 | Pst, Neg. | 1 | 0.58 |
| | 10 | Pst, Aff. | 1 | 0.58 |
| | 10 | Prs-Per, Om. | 1 | 0.58 |
| | 10 | Prs, Neg. | 1 | 0.58 |
| **Three codes** | 1 | Prs, S-V, MF | 10 | 5.78 |
| | 2 | Prs, Neg, S-V | 2 | 1.16 |
| | 3 | Ftr, WC, MF | 1 | 0.58 |
| | 3 | Prs, Aff, S-V | 1 | 0.58 |
| **Total** | | | **173** | **100.00** |

As can be seen in table 4.16, the verb tense of the present simple tense, along with the relationship between a subject and a verb (69 tokens/39.88%), which were the conditional errors in pairs, accounted for the most. That is to say, not only did most of the participants use the present simple tense in forming the Past Counterfactual Conditionals, but they also failed to consider the association between a subject and verb, as in item 18 below.

Item 18. It's a pity! If we ***invites** (had invited) him, he ***enjoy** (would have enjoyed) the party with us last night.

In addition, the misformed verb tense of the present simple was in the second rank of frequency (20 tokens/11.56%), thereby reflecting that many students did not succeed in applying grammatically correct rules, as in item 14.

Item 14. Jack was injured in a car accident last week and is still in the hospital. I think the accident *would not have happened* unless he ***trys** (had tried) to answer his phone while driving.

What's more interesting, nonetheless, is the top two errors in pairs— Prs, S-V and Prs, MF, seem to be patterned among the three typologies, i.e. Future Predictives, Present Counterfactuals, and Past Counterfactual Conditionals in the current study. Another remarkable result is that some participants formed three kinds of errors in this typology more frequently than the other ones, as exemplified in items 2 and 5, below:

Item 2. I really enjoyed watching the movie *"Transformer 3"*. If Ann ***don't be** (had not been) sick, she *would have gone* to the cinema with us yesterday.

Item 5. Stop being so sad, Jimmy! I believe that if you***studys** (had studied) hard before the last midterm examination, you *would have passed* all the subjects.

In the above items, they produced the form ****don't be*** and ****studys,*** which could be categorized into three aspects of errors, i.e. Prs, S-V, and MF. This problem will likely continue unless the students fully acquire basic grammatical elements, e.g. agreement between subjects and verbs, misformed structures, and omission errors, prior to mastering the target English *if*-conditionals.

### 4.2.2 The overall errors found in the spoken task

Similarly, the majority of participants produced various kinds of errors concerning verb phrases, especially the misuse of the relationship between subjects and verbs as well as the present simple tense, which were most frequently used in each target conditional. As for other deviant forms, misformed constructions were outstanding among the other errors like, omission and misselection. Below are the tables showing the types of errors produced by the high and low English proficiency groups in spoken English.

Table 4.17 Types of English *if*-conditional errors in the spoken task by the high English proficiency students (n = 10)

| Type | Item | If-Clause | Freq. | Type of Error | Item | Main Clause | Freq. | Type of Error |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Factual Conditionals | 2 | **(goes/ watches)** | | | 2 | **(buys)** | | |
| | | go | 5 | S-V | | buy | 9 | S-V |
| | | watch | 2 | S-V | | bought | 1 | Pst. |
| | | going | 1 | Prs-P | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| | 5 | **(don't have)** | | | 5 | **(ask)** | | |
| | | won't have | 1 | Ftr. | | will borrow | 1 | Ftr. |
| | | | | | | will beg | 1 | Ftr. |
| | | | | | | told | 1 | Pst. |
| | | | | | | will give | 1 | Ftr, WC |
| | | | | | | | | |
| | 10 | **(don't eat)** | | | 10 | **(die)** | | |
| | | *No errors* | 0 | - | | will die | 9 | Ftr. |
| **Total** | | | **9** | | | | **23** | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| | 1 | **(don't study)** | | | 1 | **(will fail)** | | |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | didn't read | 2 | Pst. | | *No errors* | 0 | - |
| | | won't read | 1 | Ftr. | | | | |
| | | haven't read | 1 | Prs-Per | | | | |
| Future Predictives | | | | | | | | |
| | 7 | **(don't go)** | | | | **(will get up)** | | |
| | | didn't go | 1 | Pst. | 7 | will woke up | 1 | Ftr, MF |
| | | haven't go | 1 | Prs-Per | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| | 11 | **(doesn't have)** | | | 11 | **(will give)** | | |
| | | don't have | 6 | S-V | | would give | 1 | CnA. |
| | | have no | 1 | S-V | | | | |
| **Total** | | | **13** | | | | **2** | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| | 3 | **(were)** | | | 3 | **(would not be)** | | |
| | | is | 7 | Prs. | | will not | 5 | Ftr, Om. |
| | | be | 1 | BaF. | | won't be | 4 | Ftr. |
| | | is not | 1 | Prs, Neg. | | wouldn't | 1 | CnA, Om. |
| | | was | 1 | S-V | | | | |
| Present Counterfactuals | | | | | | | | |
| | 6 | **(were)** | | | 6 | **(would not do)** | | |
| | | am | 1 | Prs. | | will not do | 4 | Ftr. |
| | | is | 1 | Prs, S-V | | wouldn't done | 1 | MF |
| | | | | | | will never do | 1 | Ftr. |
| | | | | | | will don't do | 1 | Ftr, MF |
| | | | | | | | | |
| | 8 | **(had)** | | | 8 | **(would buy)** | | |
| | | have | 9 | Prs. | | will buy | 7 | Ftr. |
| | | earn | 1 | Prs. | | would have bought | 1 | MPI |
| **Total** | | | **22** | | | | **25** | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| | 4 | **(had not been)** | | | 4 | **(should have done)** | | |
| | | isn't | 3 | Prs. | | should do | 2 | CnA. |
| | | doesn't | 1 | Prs, Om. | | should be done | 1 | CnA. |
| | | don't | 1 | Prs, S-V, Om. | | could done | 1 | CnA., MF |
| | | haven't | 1 | Prs-Per, S-V, Om. | | should did | 1 | CnA., MF |
| | | won't | 1 | Ftr, | | could do | 1 | CnA. |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | Om. | | | | |
| | | don't be | 1 | Prs, MF | | should will do | 1 | CnA., MF |
| | | did not | 1 | Pst, Om. | | need to work | 1 | Prs, WC, S-V |
| | | | | | | | | |
| Past Counterfactuals | 9 | **(had driven)** | | | 9 | **(might not have been)** | | |
| | | drove | 4 | Pst. | | wouldn't be | 2 | CnA. |
| | | drive | 4 | Prs, S-V | | will not work late | 2 | Ftr. |
| | | go | 1 | Prs, S-V, WC | | won't go to work late | 1 | Ftr. |
| | | had driving | 1 | Pst-Per, MF | | won't be | 1 | Ftr. |
| | | | | | | might not go to work late | 1 | CnA. |
| | | | | | | don't work | 1 | Prs, S-V |
| | | | | | | will not | 1 | Ftr, Om. |
| | | | | | | would have not go | 1 | MPI, MF |
| | 12 | | | | 12 | | | |
| | | **(had gone)** | | | | **(would have bought)** | | |
| | | went | 4 | Pst. | | will buy | 3 | Ftr. |
| | | go | 3 | Prs. | | would buy | 2 | CnA. |
| | | have had | 1 | Prs-Per, WC | | might buy | 1 | CnA. |
| | | had went | 1 | Pst-Per, MF | | might bought | 1 | CnA., MF |
| | | had go | 1 | Pst-Per, MF | | would bought | 1 | CnA., MF |
| **Total** | | | **29** | | | | **26** | |

Table 4.17 shows the English *if*-conditional errors found in the high English proficiency students' utterances. As can be seen in the table, the most problematic *if*-conditionals for this group of participants were Past Counterfactuals (55 tokens), Present Counterfactuals (47 tokens), Factual Conditionals (32 tokens), and Future Predictives (15 tokens), respectively. To put it another way, the students found the Past Counterfactuals the most difficult, whereas the Future Predictives were the easiest to utter. In addition, when analyzing the English *if*-conditionals separately, it was found that the most troublesome *if*-clauses were those of the Past Counterfactuals (29 tokens), Present Counterfactuals (22

tokens), Future Predictives (13 tokens), and Factual Conditionals (9 tokens), while the most difficult main clauses were those of the Past Counterfactuals (26 tokens), Present Counterfactuals (25 tokens), Factual Conditionals (23 tokens), and Future Predictives (2 tokens). In other words, they found the *if*-clause of Past Counterfactuals the most difficult but that of the Factual Conditional the easiest. On the contrary, they found the main clause of Past Counterfactuals the most troublesome but those of the Future Predictives the simplest to deal with in their conditional utterances.

As for the Factual Conditionals, the most frequently used verb tense was the future simple tense, particularly in the main clause. In item 2, the majority of participants were not able to correctly utter singularized conditional verb patterns in both the *if*-clause (n=7) and main clause (n=9), especially the latter. In item 5, some of them used the verb structure of future simple tense in forming both clauses; furthermore, one of them employed the wrong verb ***give** in the main clause, which has the opposite meaning to the given Thai word *kŏr (ask)* or other rational words such as *borrow*, *beg*, and *request*. Surprisingly, all of the participants uttered the grammatical verb pattern of the *if*-clause in item 10, whereas nearly all of them (n=9) uttered the unacceptable verb-tense of the future simple in the main clause. Below are some of the authentic utterances where the grammatically correct verb forms are put in parentheses in each item:

Item 2: (2.1) He always ***buy** (buys) a popcorn if he ***go** (goes) to a movie.

(2.2) He always ***bought** (buys) popcorn every time if he ***watch** (watches) the movie.

Item 5: (5.1) Regularly, I *tell* my mom that I want money if I ***won't have** (don't have) money.

(5.2) Normally, my mum ***will give** (I usually ask) money for me if I *don't have* money.

Item 10. If we *don't eat* anything, we ***will die** (die).

As for the Future Predictives, all of the participants (n=10) performed best in the main clauses when compared to the same clause of the other *if*-conditional types. What's more compelling, none of the participants in this group committed verb form errors in the main clause of item 1, and only one error was found in the same clause of items 7 and 11. Furthermore, it can be noticed that even though many students (n=7) used the correct verbs in terms of tense, i.e. ***don't have** and ***have no** in the *if*-clause of item 11, they failed to consider the agreement between the subject and verb. Simply put, they did not make the two

verb forms agree with the singular subject ‘James’. Below are some of the authentic utterances from each item:

Item 1: (1.1) You *will fail* the exam if you ***didn’t read** (don’t read) a book before.

(1.2) You *will fail* the exam if you ***won’t read** (don’t read) anything.

(1.3) You *will fail* if you ***haven’t read** (don’t read) a book for test.

Item 7: (7.1) If you ***didn’t go** (don’t go) to bed early, you *will go* to work late.

(7.2) If you ***haven’t go** (don’t go) to bed earlier, you ***will woke up** (will wake up) late.

Item 11: (11.1) If James ***don’t have** (doesn’t have) money, I *will give* him 100 Baht.

(11.2) If James ***have no** (has no) money, I *will give* him 100 Baht.

(11.3) If James *doesn’t have* money, I ***would give** (will give) him 100 Baht.

In the Present Counterfactuals, it was found that most of the participants (20 tokens) employed the present simple verb tense in the *if*-clause and future simple one (22 tokens) in the main clause. It is rather worrying that none of the participants (n=10) were able to utter acceptable verb patterns in either the *if*-clause or main clause of item 3; for instance, none of the students (n=10) uttered the target verb form ‘**were**’ in the *if*-clause of item 3. In item 6, only two deviant verb forms were produced in the *if*-clause but there were seven in the main clause. Additionally, nearly all of the participants in this group chose to utter the verb ***have** rather than **had** in the *if*-clause, while only two of them succeeded in forming the verb tense in the main clause in item 8. Below are some of the deviant verb patterns from the students’ utterances:

Item 3. We ***won’t be** (wouldn’t be) happy if Jacky ***is** (were) our boss.

Item 6. If I ***am** you (were), I ***will don’t do** (wouldn’t do) like that.

Item 8. If I***have** (had) enough money, I ***will buy** (would buy) new house.

As for the Past Counterfactuals, the present simple tense (14 tokens) and past simple tense (9 tokens) were most frequently uttered in the *if*-clause, whereas the conditional auxiliary (15 tokens) and future simple tense (8 tokens) were the commonest constructions in the main clause, respectively. As can be clearly noticed, some tokens in the *if*-clause of item 4 were omission errors such as omitting a main verb like, ***be***, as in (4.1) and (4.2), and some tokens in the main clause related to misformed conditional auxiliaries such as ***could done** and ***should did**, as in (4.3) and (4.4).

Item 4: (4.1) Sandy *could done (could have done) her homework yesterday if her ***doesn’t** (had not been) sick.

(4.2) Sand *should do (should have done) her homework if she ***don't** (had not been) sick yesterday.

(4.3) Sandy ***could done** (could have done) her homework yesterday if her *doesn't (had not been) sick.

(4.4) Sand ***should did** (should have done) her homework if yesterday she *is not (had not been) sick.

In item 9, not merely did the verb tense of the present simple outnumber the other grammatical aspects in the *if*-clause, but it was also involved in the errors of the relationship between subjects and verbs, e.g. ***drive** and ***go** should agree with the singular subjects 'father' and 'dad', as

in (9.1) and (9.2), while the future simple tense accounted for the most in the main clause, as in (9.3).

Item 9: (9.1) If father ***drive** (had driven) by himself, he *would have not go (would not have gone) to work late.

(9.2) If yesterday dad ***go** (had gone) to work by a car, he *won't be (would not have been) late.

(9.3) If yesterday my father *drive (had driven), he ***will not work** (would not have worked) late.

Lastly, it can be assumed that two students tried to utter past perfect structures in the *if*-clause of item 12; however, these structures are considered misformation, i.e. ***had went** and ***had go**, as in (12.1) and (12.2). Furthermore, the conditional auxiliaries were most frequently uttered in the main clause of this item, two of which were misformed, as in (12.3).

Item 12: (12.1) If I ***had went** (had gone) to market last week, I would have bought apple.

(12.2) If I ***had go** (had gone) to market last week, I *might bought (might have bought) apple.

(12.3) If I *go to (had gone) the market week before, I ***would bought** (would have bought) an apple.

Table 4.18 Types of English *if*-conditional errors in the spoken task by the low English proficiency group (n=10)

| Type | Item | If-Clause | Freq. | Type of Error | Item | Main Clause | Freq. | Type of Error |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Factual Conditionals | 2 | **(goes/ watches)** | | | 2 | **(buys)** | | |
| | | go | 6 | S-V | | buy | 6 | S-V |
| | | watch | 3 | S-V | | will buy | 3 | Ftr. |
| | | see | 1 | S-V | | could buy | 1 | CnA |
| | 5 | **(don't have)** | | | 5 | **(ask)** | | |
| | | no | 2 | Om. | | *[Skipped]* | 4 | - |
| | | *[Skipped]* | 2 | - | | will beg | 1 | Ftr. |
| | | not have | 1 | Om. | | will borrow | 1 | Ftr. |
| | | *[Not if-conditional]* | 1 | - | | forget | 1 | WC |
| | | | | | | *[Not if-conditional]* | 1 | - |
| | 10 | **(don't eat)** | | | 10 | **(die)** | | |
| | | don't ate | 1 | MF | | will die | 5 | Ftr. |
| | | am not eat | 1 | MF | | dead | 2 | WC, Om. |
| | | couldn't eat | 1 | CnA | | | | |
| **Total** | | | **19** | | | | **25** | |
| Future Predictives | | | | | | | | |
| | 1 | **(don't study)** | | | 1 | **(will fail)** | | |
| | | fail | 2 | Aff, WC | | fail | 3 | Prs. |
| | | aren't read | 1 | MF | | will lost | 1 | WC, MF |
| | | didn't read | 1 | Pst. | | will | 1 | Om. |
| | | doesn't read | 1 | S-V | | will not read | 1 | WC, Neg. |
| | | not read | 1 | Om. | | will don't read | 1 | WC, Neg, MF |
| | 7 | **(don't go)** | | | 7 | **(will get up)** | | |
| | | sleep | 2 | Aff, WC | | get up | 1 | Prs. |
| | | not sleep | 1 | Wc, Om. | | | | |
| | | *[Skipped]* | 1 | - | | | | |
| | | not go | 1 | Om. | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | couldn't go | 1 | CnA | | | | |
| | 11 | **(doesn't have)** | | | 11 | **(will give)** | | |
| | | don't have | 7 | S-V | | give | 3 | Prs. |
| | | haven't | 1 | S-V | | | | |
| | | not have | 1 | Om. | | | | |
| | | no | 1 | Om. | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| **Total** | | | **22** | | | | **11** | |
| Present Counterfactuals | | | | | | | | |
| | 3 | | | | 3 | | | |
| | | **(were)** | | | | **(would not be)** | | |
| | | is | 7 | Prs, S-V | | don't | 3 | Prs, Om. |
| | | are | 1 | Prs, S-V | | will not | 3 | Frt, Om. |
| | | don't | 1 | Prs, Neg, Om. | | unhappy | 1 | WC, Om. |
| | | *[Omitted verb form]* | 1 | - | | are unhappy | 1 | Prs, WC |
| | | | | | | will be | 1 | Frt. |
| | | | | | | will don't | 1 | Frt, MF |
| | 6 | | | | 6 | | | |
| | | **(were)** | | | | **(would not do)** | | |
| | | is | 2 | Prs, S-V | | don't do | 3 | Prs. |
| | | *[Skipped]* | 2 | - | | will not make | 2 | Ftr, WC |
| | | can will | 1 | MF | | *[Skipped]* | 2 | - |
| | | will be | 1 | Ftr. | | *[Incomplete clause]* | 1 | MF |
| | | be | 1 | BaF | | will don't make | 1 | Ftr, WC, MF |
| | | like | 1 | WC | | will do | 1 | Ftr, Aff. |
| | | same | 1 | WC | | | | |
| | | *[Incomplete clause]* | 1 | - | | | | |
| | 8 | **(had)** | | | 8 | **(would buy)** | | |
| | | have | 6 | Prs. | | will buy | 5 | Ftr. |
| | | don't have | 1 | Prs, Neg. | | buy | 2 | Prs. |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | *[Not if-conditional]* | 1 | MF | | will | 1 | Frt, Om. |
| | | *[Omitted verb form]* | 1 | - | | *[Not if-conditional]* | 1 | - |
| | | | | | | | | |
| **Total** | | | **29** | | | | **9** | |
| Past Counterfactuals | 4 | **(had not been)** | | | 4 | **(should have done)** | | |
| | | not | 3 | Om. | | will make | 2 | Ftr, WC |
| | | *[omitted verb form]* | 3 | - | | would do | 1 | CnA |
| | | is | 1 | Prs, Aff. | | could do | 1 | CnA |
| | | couldn't | 1 | CnA, Om. | | should be make | 1 | CnA, MF |
| | | doesn't | 1 | Prs, Om. | | do | 1 | Prs, S-V |
| | | *[Skipped]* | 1 | - | | write | 1 | Prs, S-V, WC |
| | | | | | | will do | 1 | Ftr. |
| | | | | | | will done | 1 | Ftr, MF |
| | | | | | | *[Skipped]* | 1 | - |
| | 9 | | | | | | | |
| | | **(had driven)** | | | 9 | **(might not have been)** | | |
| | | drive | 6 | Prs, S-V | | don't | 2 | Prs, S-V |
| | | go | 2 | Prs, S-V, WC | | hasn't | 1 | Prs-Per, Om. |
| | | drives | 1 | Prs. | | couldn't come | 1 | CnA |
| | | driving | 1 | Prs-P | | doesn't go | 1 | Prs. |
| | | | | | | doing | 1 | Prs-P |
| | | | | | | will not work | 1 | Ftr. |
| | | | | | | don't go | 1 | Prs, S-V |
| | | | | | | will not | 1 | Ftr, Om. |
| | | | | | | will go | 1 | Ftr, Aff. |
| | 12 | **(had gone)** | | | 12 | **(would have bought)** | | |
| | | go | 9 | Prs. | | will buy | 6 | Ftr. |
| | | went | 1 | Pst. | | can will | 1 | MF |
| | | | | | | could buy | 1 | CnA |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | want | 1 | Prs, WC |
| | | | | | | buy | 1 | Prs. |
| **Total** | | | **30** | | | | **30** | |

Table 4.18 displays the overall number of conditional errors discovered in the low English proficiency students' utterances. As can be seen in the table, the most problematic *if*-conditionals for this group of participants were Past Counterfactuals (60 tokens), Factual Conditionals (44 tokens), Present Counterfactuals (38 tokens), and Future Predictives (33 tokens), respectively. Put differently, the students found Past Counterfactuals the most challenging, while Future Predictives were the easiest to utter. Additionally, when analyzing the English *if*-conditionals separately, it was found that the most troublesome *if*-clauses were those of the Past Counterfactuals (30 tokens), Present Counterfactuals (29 tokens), Future Predictives (22 tokens), and Factual Conditionals (19 tokens), whereas the most difficult main clauses were those of the Past Counterfactuals (30 tokens), Present Counterfactuals (29 tokens), Factual Conditionals (25 tokens), and Future Predictives (11 tokens). That is to say, they found the *if*-clause of Past Counterfactuals the most difficult but those of the Factual Conditionals the easiest; on the other hand, they found the main clause of Past Counterfactuals the most problematic but those of the Future Predictives the simplest to cope with in their conditional utterances.

As for the Factual Conditionals, the participants mostly (16 tokens) had problems with the association between subjects and verbs in both clauses of item 2, as in (2.1) and (2.2). In Item 5, some of the students were unable to make conditional utterances as a result of skipping the *if*-clause and main clause altogether (2 tokens), the main clause (2 tokens) and forming one irrelevant sentence (1 token), as in (5.1), (5.2), and (5.3), respectively. In addition, only three deviant verb patterns were produced in the *if*-clause, while seven were formed in the main clause of item 10, most of which involved the verb tense of the future simple, as in (10.1), and (10.2).

Item 2: (2.1) He always ***buy** (buys) popcorn if he ***watch** (watches) he movie.

(2.2) He ***buy** (buys) popcorn always if he ***see** (sees) movie.

Item 5: (5.1) [*skipped both clauses]

(5.2) If I don't have money, [*skipped the main clause].

(5.3) My mother give my money because I haven't money. [*irrelevant sentence]

Item 10: (10.1) If I ***don't ate** (don't eat), I ***dead** (die).

(10.2) We ***will die** (die) if we don't eat.

In the Future Predictives, due to the fact the *if*-clause of this typology is the same as both clauses of the Factual Conditionals, it is not a surprise to the researcher that most of the tokens related to errors in the relationship between subjects and verbs. In contrast, the commonest error in the main clause was the misuse of the present simple tense (7 tokens) in lieu of the future simple one. As for items 1 and 7, the acceptable verb structures in the *if*-clauses were ***don't study*** and ***don't go***, as in item 1'*You will fail the exams if you **don't study** hard before the exams'* and item 7 *'If you **don't go** to sleep early, you will get up late'*.
Nonetheless, some of the students used affirmative verb patterns ***fail** in item 1 and ***sleep** in item 7, both of which were incorrect and inappropriate in the contexts of use. Below are their utterances in items 1 and 7:
Item 1. If you test ***fail** (If you don't study), you *will don't read test (you will fail the test).

Item 7. If you ***sleep** at night (If you don't go to sleep early), you will wake up late.

In the main clause of item 1, the number of tokens regarding the use of the present simple tense was equal to that of word choice, in which the students attempted to form the future simple tense. Nearly all of them (n=9), however, found it easy to utter the main clause of item 7. In item 11, most of them (n=8) failed to employ the singular verb forms for the *if*-clause but had less difficulty forming the main clause, as follows:
Item 11: (11.1) If James ***don't have** (doesn't have) a money, I *will give* him 100 baht.
(11.2) If James ***haven't** (hasn't) a money, I *will give* him 100 baht.

In the Present Counterfactuals, it was found that the highest number of tokens was the present simple tense (27 tokens), particularly in the *if*-clause (18 tokens), whereas the verb tense of the future simple (15 tokens) dominated the main clause of this typology. It can be also noticed that none of the participants could utter the grammatically correct verb patterns in both clauses of items 3 and 6; on the other hand, only one participant could produce those of item 8. To illustrate, most of the students chose to use the verb ***is** (n=7) rather than the expected **were** in the *if*-clause of item 3, thereby reflecting that they not only uttered the ungrammatical verb form but also failed to singularize the target verb because the subject of this item is 'we', while the errors in the main clause were in relation to different grammatical

aspects, e.g. omission errors with regards to the present simple tense, future simple tense, and word choice, as in (3.1), (3.2), (3.3):

Item 3. (3.1) I **don't** happy if Jacky *is….

(3.2) We ***will not** happy if Jacky *is boss.

(3.3) We ***are unhappy** if Jacky *is master now.

In item 6, two participants could not utter the English *if*-conditional at all, and one participant could not form the complete sentence; that is, *'If I and you, I don't your my work'*, for which the complete one should be *If I **were** you, I **would not do** that*. Most of the tokens in the main clause were future simple tense (4 tokens), all of which contained other deviant aspects, e.g. word choice, misformed words, and affirmative forms. In item 8, the present verb tense ***have** was most frequently produced instead of the target form ***had*** in the *if*-clause, while the future verb tense ***will buy** was most commonly uttered in the main clause rather than the pattern ***would buy***, as in *'If I ***have** a lot of money, I ***will buy** new house.'*

As for the Past Counterfactuals, none of the participants in the low proficiency group were able to correctly utter the *if*-conditionals in this type. To illustrate, the correct verb forms in both clauses of item 4 were ***should have done*** and ***had not been***, as in *'Sandy **should have done** her homework if she **had not been** sick.'* It was, however, found that the majority of tokens (5 tokens) were concerned with omission errors; that is, some students omitted certain grammatical elements, as in (4.1), (4.2), while the future simple verb tense (5 tokens) was most frequently employed rather than the modal perfect infinitive in the main clause, as in (4.3) and (4.4).

Item 4: (4.1) If yesterday she ***not** (had not been) sick, today sandy *will done (would have done) your homework.

(4.2) Sandy *could do (could have done) her homework if yesterday she ***couldn't** (had not been) sick.

(4.3) Sandy ***will make** (would have done) homework if yesterday she *not (had not been) sick.

(4.4) Sandy ***will do** (would have done) her homework if yesterday she *not (had not been) sick.

In item 9, the acceptable verb patterns were ***had driven*** and ***might not have been***, as in *'If my dad **had driven** to work, he **might not have been** late'*. Nonetheless, the majority of students employed the present simple tense containing errors in the relationship between subjects and verbs in both clauses, as in (9.1) and (9.2).

Item 9: (9.1) If my dad ***drive** him car, he ***don't go** to work late.

(9.2) Yesterday my dad ***go** to work by car, he ***don't** late work.

In item 12, almost all of the participants (n=9) used the present verb tense ***go** in lieu of the past perfect form ***had gone*** in the *if*-clause, while many students (n=6) used the future verb tense ***will buy** rather than the modal perfect infinitive ***would have bought*** in the main clause, as in *'If ***go** to market last week, I ***will buy** apple.'*

In brief, when comparing the spoken performances of English *if*-conditionals between the students in the two groups of proficiency, it can be seen that the students with low English proficiency produced a wider range of English *if*-conditional verb form errors than those with high English proficiency. In other words, they were likely to have more difficulty uttering the *if*-conditionals than their counterparts both in the *if*-clause and main clause in each target typology, as shown in the table below.

Table 4.19 The number of English *if*-conditional errors in both groups of participants

| Type | **High Proficiency Students** | | | | **Low Proficiency Students** | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Frequency of errors | | **Total** (%) | | Frequency of errors | | **Total** (%) |
| | *If*-clause | Main clause | | | *If*-clause | Main clause | |
| Factual Conditionals | 9 | 23 | **32** (21.5) | | 19 | 25 | **44** (22.6) |
| Future Predictives | 13 | 2 | **15** (10.1) | | 22 | 11 | **33** (16.9) |
| Present Counterfactuals | 22 | 25 | **47** (31.5) | | 29 | 29 | **58** (29.7) |
| Past Counterfactuals | 29 | 26 | **55** (36.9) | | 30 | 30 | **60** (30.8) |
| **Total** (%) | **73** (49.0) | **76** (51.0) | **149** (100.0) | | **100** (51.3) | **95** (48.7) | **195** (100.0) |

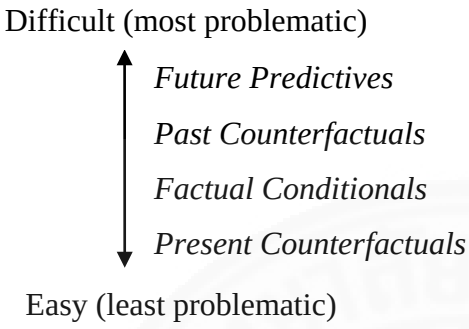
### 4.3 Overall discussion of the findings

**Research Question 1:** Among the four English *if*-conditionals, which one is the most problematic for Thai EFL students in terms of comprehension and production performance, i.e. spoken and written language?

### 4.3.1 The overall discussion of the comprehension task

As for the findings from comprehension task, it is valuable to note here that the acquisition order of this group of students' comprehension of English *if*-conditionals was as follows:

Diagram 4.1 Summary of the findings: comprehension of English *if*-conditionals




Simply put, they found the Future Predictive Conditionals the most difficult, and the Present Counterfactuals the easiest to understand. On the other hand, Ko (2013) provided contradictory findings for the acquisition order in that the Future Predictive Conditionals were the easiest type to comprehend, followed by Present Generic (or the Factual Conditionals in the present study) and Present Counterfactuals; and Past Counterfactuals and Mixed-Time Reference Conditionals, respectively. Regarding this phenomenon, many of the participants might have found the meaning of some of the test items of each conditional type too difficult to interpret; for example, some test items required logical reasoning so as to interpret their meanings, as in item 19 of the Future Predictive Conditionals, in which the majority of participants scored lowest among all test items.

Item 19. *If we order the book now, we will receive it tomorrow.*

A. We probably order the book. (**Correct**)

B. We possibly ordered the book

C. We've perhaps received the book.

All of the three options above contain synonymous words representing the likelihood of the above event happening, i.e. probably, possibly, perhaps, which might seem ambiguous and make it difficult to choose the right option. Thus, it needs to be acknowledged that the pilot study of the three tasks were not carried out with a proper number of samples in order to ensure that the study yield consistent results; therefore, this could constitute a limitation in regard to assessing the participants' actual comprehension performance of Future Predictive Conditionals, making this type of conditional the most problematic. Another notable finding

is that the students scored lowest in item 14 of the Factual Conditionals although this conditional type was in the second rank of correct responses. Below is the correct answer of item 14:

Item 14. *If you pay for your hotel room late, there is a charge of 500 Baht.*

Due to late payment, you_____500 Baht.

A. _____might be charged_____.

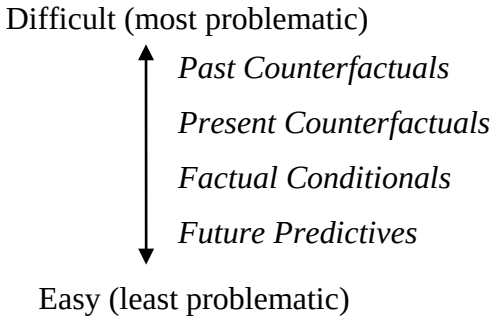
B. _____are charged_____. (**Correct**)

C. _____were charged_____.

The meaning of this conditional sentence conveys things that "seem generally and always true" such as the rule in item 14. However, the majority of students found it too challenging to interpret the semantics. To be more specific, although the correct answer is option B, the modal 'might' in option A also represents the possibility of the given situation. This limitation might have put the students' comprehension performance of this conditional type at the third rank of difficulty despite the fact that it does not contain grammatical features: [-past], [-modal], [-perfect]. The overall findings of the study, nonetheless, convincingly revealed that the meanings of English conditionals are one of the major difficulties and hindrances to the acquisition of this grammatical point owing to the fact that learners need to interpret the meanings that individual if-conditional types convey and the contexts in which they are embedded (Covitt, 1976, as cited in Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman, 1999).

In the gap-filling task, it can be concluded that this group of students encountered difficulties with producing different structures, tense-aspect, and modal auxiliaries in the if-conditionals, particularly the Past and Present Counterfactuals. These findings are consistent with those of Covitt (1976) in that ESL/EFL learners found the forms and time-tense relationship in English conditional sentences to be challenging. Nevertheless, the study revealed a considerable difference in the percentage between the Factual and Future Predictive Conditionals and the two counterfactuals, as shown in Table 4.2 above. Accordingly, it is rather clear that the findings from this group of participants revealed that the acquisition order of English *if*-conditionals in written English performance could be predicted, as follows:

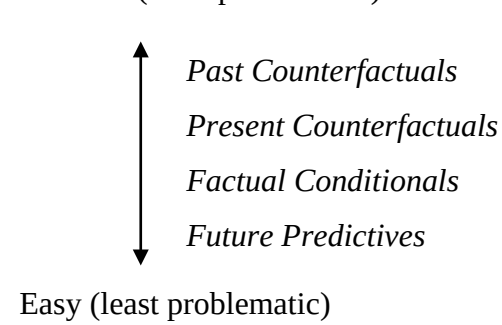
Diagram 4.2 Summary of the findings: Production of *if*-conditionals in written English




To be more explicit, Future Predictive Conditionals appear to be the simplest for the learners to acquire or produce grammatical verb forms in both the *if*-clause and the main clause, whereas the Past Counterfactuals seem to be the most difficult. This phenomenon could be explained by the theories of Brown's Cumulative Complexity (1976) and O'Grady Development Law (1997), both of which have been cited in Chou (2000, p. 70), in that the syntactic complexity in each conditional type plays a part in influencing the acquisition order of English *if*-conditionals. That is to say, the greater the number of grammatical features an English *if*-conditional contains, the more complicated it is. As for the target conditional types in this study, the Future Predictive Conditionals contain less grammatical features in both the *if*-clause and the main clause: [-past], [+modal], and [-perfect], than the Past Counterfactuals do: [+past], [+modal], and [+perfect]. Interestingly, the findings of current study apparently support those of Ko (2013) in that the Future Predictive Conditionals were acquired earliest, followed by Present Generics and Present Counterfactuals; and Past Counterfactuals and Mixed-time-References, respectively. On the other hand, Lai-Chun (2005) revealed contrary results on the acquisition order by L2 learners in that the sequence of the four English conditionals was acquired by L2 learners from the simplest one having no grammatical features (Factual Conditionals) to the most difficult one (Past Counterfactuals).

In the spoken task, it is worth noticing here that the students manifested a similar acquisition order in the productive performance in both the written and spoken skills, in which they scored highest in the Future Predictive Conditionals, whereas the lowest in the Past Counterfactuals. This phenomenon could be elucidated by past studies (Brown, 1973; Chou, 2000; Ko, 2013, Lai-chun, 2005; O'Grady, 1997; Sattayatham & Honsa, 2007) in that syntactic complexities could play a crucial role in learner's acquisition of English if-conditionals. Below is a summary of the participants' acquisition order of conditionals in spoken English in the study.

Diagram 4.3 Summary of the findings: Production of if-conditionals in spoken English




**Research Question 2**: What errors do Thai EFL students frequently make in the production of English *if*-conditionals in both written and spoken language?

### 4.3.2 Description of errors from the gap-filling task

According to James (1998), learners' errors in the target language regarding production performance, i.e. written and spoken performance, can be grouped into linguistic taxonomy and surface structure taxonomy. In the linguistic taxonomy of this study, the majority of student errors were associated with verb phrase errors; meanwhile, with regard to surface structure taxonomy, learner errors mostly resulted from misformation, omission, and misselection or misusing a word in a context, respectively. Below are the summaries and descriptions of errors in each English if-conditional type from the gap-filling task.

Table 4.20 Description of errors in Factual Conditionals from the gap-filling task (n=68)

| **Error categories** | **Frequency** | **% of total errors** |
|---|---|---|
| **A. Linguistic Taxonomy** | | |
| 1. Verb phrase | | |
| Subject and Verb Agreement | 104 | 24.19 |
| Future Simple Tense | 101 | 23.49 |
| Past Simple Tense | 54 | 12.56 |
| Conditional Auxiliary | 13 | 3.02 |
| Present Perfect Tense | 5 | 1.16 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Affirmative Form | 4 | 0.93 |
| Negative Form | 4 | 0.93 |
| Past Continuous Tense | 3 | 0.70 |
| Past Perfect Tense | 3 | 0.70 |
| Modal Perfect Infinitive | 2 | 0.47 |
| Present Continuous Tense | 1 | 0.23 |
| 2. Non-finite verb | | |
| Present Participle | 45 | 10.47 |
| Infinitive | 5 | 1.16 |
| **B. Surface Structure Taxonomy** | | |
| Misformation | 67 | 15.58 |
| Omission | 17 | 3.95 |
| Misselection (word choice) | 2 | 0.47 |

Regarding Table 4.20, it can be seen that the highest number of errors in the linguistic taxonomy resulted from the failure to use subject and verb agreement (104 tokens/24.19%), along with the future simple tense (101 tokens/23.49%), respectively. Moreover, the present participle (45 tokens/10.47%), which is a non-finite verb, accounted for the most errors among all of the if-conditional types studied. As for the surface structure taxonomy, the use of misformed constructions (67 tokens/15.58%) was in the first rank of all the three types of errors.

Table 4.21 Description of errors in Future Predictive Conditionals from the gap-filling task

| **Error categories** | **Frequency** | **% of total errors** |
|---|---|---|
| **A. Linguistic Taxonomy** | | |
| 1. Verb phrase | | |
| Present Simple Tense | 90 | 23.26 |
| Past Simple Tense | 56 | 14.47 |
| Subject and Verb Agreement | 42 | 10.85 |
| Future Simple Tense | 37 | 9.56 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Conditional Auxiliary | 13 | 3.36 |
| Present Perfect Tense | 7 | 1.81 |
| Past Perfect Tense | 6 | 1.55 |
| Modal Perfect Infinitive | 4 | 1.03 |
| Affirmative Form | 4 | 1.03 |
| Negative Form | 2 | 0.52 |
| Past Continuous Tense | 1 | 0.26 |
| Present Continuous Tense | 1 | 0.26 |
| 2. Non-finite verb | | |
| Present Participle | 28 | 7.24 |
| Past Participle | 18 | 4.65 |
| Infinitive | 3 | 0.78 |
| **B. Surface Structure Taxonomy** | | |
| Misformation | 45 | 11.63 |
| Omission | 16 | 4.13 |
| Misselection (word choice) | 14 | 3.62 |

According to Table 4.21, the present simple tense (90 tokens/23.26%) and past simple tense (56 tokens/14.47%) accounted for the most errors in the linguistic taxonomy, respectively, whereas misformation (45 tokens/11.63%) made up the highest proportion of errors across the other two types in the surface structure taxonomy. In this case, it should be noted that even though the present simple tense is the main structural component of the if-clause in this conditional type, most of the learners used this verb tense incorrectly. In other words, the participants mostly formed the if-clause by employing the construction of the future simple tense (37 tokens/9.56%) rather than that of the simple present tense as well as formed the main clause by using the simple present tense structure in place of the future simple one. Another unexpected finding is that the past simple tense (56 tokens/14.47%), which is irrelevant to this conditional type, was in the second rank of errors.

Table 4.22 Description of errors in Present Counterfactuals from the gap-filling task

| Error categories | Frequency | % of total errors |
|---|---|---|
| **A. Linguistic Taxonomy** | | |
| 1. Verb phrase | | |
| Present Simple Tense | 308 | 41.18 |
| Future Simple Tense | 178 | 23.80 |
| Subject and Verb Agreement | 83 | 11.10 |
| Past Simple Tense | 26 | 3.48 |
| Present Continuous Tense | 13 | 1.74 |
| Present Perfect Tense | 7 | 0.94 |
| Negative Form | 4 | 0.53 |
| Conditional Auxiliary | 2 | 0.27 |
| Past Perfect Tense | 2 | 0.27 |
| Modal Perfect Infinitive | 2 | 0.27 |
| Affirmative Form | 2 | 0.27 |
| Past Continuous Tense | 1 | 0.13 |
| 2. Non-finite verb | | |
| Present Participle | 31 | 4.14 |
| Base Form of Verb | 14 | 1.87 |
| Past Participle | 6 | 0.80 |
| Infinitive | 3 | 0.40 |
| **B. Surface Structure Taxonomy** | | |
| Misformation | 39 | 5.21 |
| Omission | 22 | 2.94 |
| Misselection (word choice) | 5 | 0.67 |

According to Table 4.22, the present simple tense (308 tokens/41.18%) and the future simple tense (178 tokens/23.80%) were in the first and second ranks of errors in the linguistic taxonomy, while the present participle (31 tokens/4.14%) accounted for the most errors among the non-finite verbs. In addition, misformed construction errors (39 tokens/5.21%) were in the top rank in the surface structure category. Another point worth discussing is that although the top three grammatical features in the linguistic category have nothing to do with

any morphological aspect of this conditional type, most of the students applied them more frequently than any other grammatical point.

Table 4.23 Description of errors in Past Counterfactuals from the gap-filling task (n=68)

| Error categories | Frequency | % of total errors |
|---|---|---|
| **A. Linguistic Taxonomy** | | |
| 1. Verb phrase | | |
| Present Simple Tense | 246 | 29.82 |
| Future Simple Tense | 168 | 20.36 |
| Past Simple Tense | 122 | 14.79 |
| Subject and Verb Agreement | 83 | 10.06 |
| Conditional Auxiliary | 40 | 4.85 |
| Negative Form | 7 | 0.85 |
| Present Perfect Tense | 5 | 0.61 |
| Affirmative Form | 5 | 0.61 |
| Present Continuous Tense | 3 | 0.36 |
| Modal Perfect Infinitives | 2 | 0.24 |
| Past Perfect Tense | 2 | 0.24 |
| Past Continuous Tense | 1 | 0.12 |
| 2. Non-finite verb | | |
| Present Participle | 24 | 2.91 |
| Base Form of Verb | 13 | 1.58 |
| Past Participle | 3 | 0.36 |
| Infinitive | 2 | 0.24 |
| **B. Surface Structure Taxonomy** | | |
| Misformation | 73 | 8.85 |
| Omission | 22 | 2.67 |
| Misselection (word choice) | 4 | 0.48 |

According to Table 4.23, the top three errors in this conditional type were the present simple tense (246 tokens/29.82%), future simple tense (168 tokens/20.36%), and past simple tense (122 tokens/14.79%) in the linguistic category. The highest number of errors in the

surface structure taxonomy category was misformation (73 tokens/8.85%), which outnumbered those of the other conditional types in the same taxonomy.

Thus, it could be briefly summarized that the misuse of the present simple tense was in the top rank of errors in the three conditional types, i.e. Future Predictives, Present Counterfactuals, and Past Counterfactuals in the linguistic category. As for the surface structure category, all of the if-conditional types possessed the common top three errors, i.e. misformation, omission, and misselection, in order of quantity, respectively.

### 4.3.3 Description of errors from the spoken task

Apart from exploring the *if*-conditional errors in the gap-filling task in terms of written English, the spoken data of each conditional type were transcribed, examined, and categorized based on the work of James (1998), as follows:

Table 4.24 Description of errors in Factual Conditionals from the spoken task (n=20)

| **Error categories** | **Frequency** | **% of total errors** |
|---|---|---|
| **A. Linguistic Taxonomy** | | |
| 1. Verb phrase | | |
| Subject and Verb Agreement | 32 | 45.71 |
| Future Simple Tense | 23 | 32.86 |
| Past Simple Tense | 2 | 2.86 |
| Conditional Auxiliary | 2 | 2.86 |
| 2. Non-finite verb | | |
| Present Participle | 1 | 1.43 |
| **B. Surface Structure Taxonomy** | | |
| Omission | 5 | 7.14 |
| Misselection (word choice) | 3 | 4.29 |
| Misformation | 2 | 2.86 |

According to Table 4.24, the findings revealed that the misuse of subject and verb agreement (32 tokens/45.71%), along with the future simple tense (23 tokens/32.86%) were the top two ranks in the linguistic taxonomy. This finding was consistent with that of the

written English of the same conditional type. On the other hand, omission, misselection, and misformation were most frequently found in the surface structure taxonomy, respectively.

Table 4.25 Description of errors in Future Predictives from the spoken task (n=20)

| **Error categories** | **Frequency** | **% of total errors** |
|---|---|---|
| **A. Linguistic Taxonomy** | | |
| 1. Verb phrase | | |
| Subject and Verb Agreement | 16 | 28.07 |
| Present Simple Tense | 7 | 12.28 |
| Past Simple Tense | 4 | 7.02 |
| Affirmative Form | 4 | 2.86 |
| Future Simple Tense | 2 | 3.51 |
| Conditional Auxiliary | 2 | 3.51 |
| Negative Form | 2 | 3.51 |
| Present Perfect Tense | 2 | 3.51 |
| 2. Non-finite verb | | |
| - | - | - |
| **B. Surface Structure Taxonomy** | | |
| Misselection (word choice) | 8 | 14.04 |
| Omission | 6 | 10.53 |
| Misformation | 4 | 7.02 |

As can be seen in Table 4.25 above, most of the participants failed to consider the relationship between subjects and verbs (16 tokens/28.07%) when producing a conditional verb pattern in their utterances as well as wrongly used the present simple tense structure in the main clause of Future Predictive Conditionals. Further, the pattern of errors, i.e. misselection, omission, and misformation, in the surface structure taxonomy were commonly found in this conditional type, which is different from that of the Factual Conditionals. In addition, non-finite verbs were not used in this conditional type.

Table 4.26 Description of errors in Present Counterfactuals from the spoken task (n=20)

| Error categories | Frequency | % of total errors |
|---|---|---|
| **A. Linguistic Taxonomy** | | |
| 1. Verb phrase | | |
| Future Simple Tense | 38 | 28.79 |
| Present Simple Tense | 27 | 20.45 |
| Past Simple Tense | 20 | 15.15 |
| Subject and Verb Agreement | 12 | 9.09 |
| Negative Form | 2 | 1.52 |
| Conditional Auxiliary | 1 | 0.76 |
| Affirmative Form | 1 | 0.76 |
| Modal Perfect Infinitive | 1 | 0.76 |
| 2. Non-finite verb | | |
| Base Form of Verb | 2 | 1.52 |
| **B. Surface Structure Taxonomy** | | |
| Omission | 15 | 11.36 |
| Misformation | 7 | 5.30 |
| Misselection (word choice) | 6 | 4.55 |

Regarding Table 4.26, the non-target constructions, i.e. future simple tense (38 tokens/ 28.79%) and present simple tense (27 tokens/ 20.45%), accounted for the most errors in Present Counterfactuals. More interestingly, however, the past simple tense, which is a major structure of the if-clause, was mostly and incorrectly used in the main clause of this conditional type rather than the construction ‘would + verb’. As for the surface structure taxonomy, the findings showed the following pattern of errors in order of quantity: omission, misformation, and misselection.

Table 4.27 Description of errors in Past Counterfactuals from the spoken task (n=20)

| Error categories | Frequency | % of total errors |
|---|---|---|
| **A. Linguistic Taxonomy** | | |
| 1. Verb phrase | | |
| Present Simple Tense | 44 | 26.83 |
| Subject and Verb Agreement | 22 | 13.41 |
| Future Simple Tense | 22 | 13.41 |
| Conditional Auxiliary | 21 | 12.80 |
| Past Simple Tense | 10 | 6.10 |
| Present Perfect Tense | 6 | 3.66 |
| Affirmative Form | 2 | 1.22 |
| Modal Perfect Infinitive | 1 | 0.61 |
| 2. Non-finite verb | | |
| Present Participle | 2 | 1.22 |
| **B. Surface Structure Taxonomy** | | |
| Omission | 13 | 7.93 |
| Misformation | 12 | 7.32 |
| Misselection (word choice) | 9 | 5.49 |

According to Table 4.27, the top three errors regarding verb phrases resulted from the misuse of the present simple tense (44 tokens/26.83%), future simple tense (22 tokens/13.41%), and subject and verb agreement (22 tokens/13.41%) in the linguistic taxonomy. Additionally, the findings revealed the same pattern of errors in order of quantity as that of the Present Counterfactuals in the surface structure category. Moreover, the wrong use of words, i.e. misselection, outnumbered those in the other conditional typologies.

All in all, this group of high school students produced a wide range of *if*-conditional errors in both the written and spoken tasks. The written task, i.e. the gap-filling task, revealed interesting and unexpected findings in that there were three if-conditional types sharing the same pattern of error types concerning verb phrases in the linguistic taxonomy. Simply put, the misuse of the present simple tense was found in the first rank of the linguistic error

taxonomy in Future Predictives, Present Counterfactuals, and Past Counterfactuals. To illustrate, although this verb tense is a grammatical structure in the if-clause of Future Predictive Conditionals, the majority of the participants misused it in the main clause of the same conditional type unnecessarily. What is more surprising, nevertheless, is that this verb tense has nothing to do with the grammatical features of counterfactual conditionals; however, the participants mostly applied it for the if-clause and main clauses of these two conditional types. Moreover, all of the conditional typologies, except for Future Predictives, shared the second type of error, i.e. the misuse of the future simple tense, in the production of conditional verb patterns in written English. Despite being a part of Future Predictive constructions, this type of error was found in this conditional type as well, since most of the participants misused this verb tense in the if-clause rather than the main clause. The work of Chou (2000) concluded that the acquisition of all the English conditional types studied was influenced by the over-production of the verb pattern 'modal + verb', particularly 'will + verb' unnecessarily. This finding is also consistent with that of Chou (2000) in that L2 learners tend to show slight progress with regard to understanding the rules for English if-conditionals from one acquiring stage to the next one; for example, as in the findings of this study, when they acquired the Future Predictives followed by the Present Counterfactuals and the Past Counterfactuals, the verb pattern of the present simple tense was still used by the majority of participants. What is more interesting is that the past simple tense structure was in the second rank of linguistic errors in Future Predictives, along with the third rank of errors in Factual Conditionals and Past Counterfactuals in the linguistic taxonomy. In fact, the past simple tense has nothing to do with the if-clauses and main clauses of the Factual and Future Predictive Conditionals, since they do not contain past grammatical features [-past] that could be explained by Brown's Cumulative Complexity (1976) and O'Grady Development Law (1997). Moreover, despite having both past [+past] and perfect [+perfect] grammatical features in the Past Counterfactual structures, nearly all of the participants merely employed the past simple form when producing both clauses of this conditional type. Therefore, it can be assumed that they could not acquire the Past Counterfactual Conditional, which has the highest number of grammatical features and is the most grammatically complex among the three other types studied (Chou, 2000; Ko, 2013; Lai-chun, 2005; Sattayatham & Honsa, 2007). In the surface structure taxonomy, all of the if-conditional types showed the same pattern of errors, i.e. misformation, omission, and misselection, respectively. These errors were caused by learners who modified the target structures unnecessarily (Dulay, Burt, &

Krashen, 1982, as cited in Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005). Among these errors, misformation errors were most frequently produced in all of the conditional typologies. Further, misformed constructions accounted for the most errors in the Past Counterfactuals, whereas it was omission errors in both counterfactuals, and misselection errors or the wrong use of word choice in the Future Predictive Conditionals.

As for the spoken task, the most common type of error of Factual Conditionals along with Future Predictive Conditionals was the incompletely grammatical use of the relationship between subjects and verbs. This is partly congruent with the findings of the gap-filling task, since the Factual Conditionals comprise the present simple verb tense in both clauses, and the Future Predictives also contain this verb tense in the if-clause; thus, the highest number of such error types was found in the two conditional types. What is more compelling, however, is that the misuse of subject and verb agreement accounted for the second most errors in the Past Counterfactuals because this type of error could be partly caused by the wrong use of the present simple verb tense, which was in the first rank among the linguistic errors. Additionally, many students formed the verb phrase ‘conditional auxiliary’— would + verb, which is a grammatical verb pattern in the main clause of Present Counterfactual, in the Past Counterfactual wrongly. With regard to the surface structure taxonomy, omission resulted in the highest number of errors in all of the conditional types, except for Future Predictive Conditionals, in which misselection errors were the most common.

# CHAPTER 5
# CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents a summary of the study; a summary of the findings; the conclusion; pedagogical implications; and recommendations for further research.

## 5.1 Summary of the study

The objectives and research procedures of the study are summarized as follows:
Two main purposes of the study were formulated: a) to examine the types of *if*-conditionals that are most problematic for Thai learners' in terms of comprehension and production performance; and b) to explore the types of conditional errors that Thai EFL students frequently make in production performance in both written and spoken English.

The sample of twelfth-grade students was drawn from an IEP program in a public school in Bangkok. The materials employed in this research included 1) a comprehension task to explore the students' comprehension performance with respect to *if*-conditionals; 2) a gap-filling task to examine the students' performance with respect to *if*-conditionals and the types of conditional errors in written English; 3) a spoken task to investigate the students' performance with respect of *if*-conditionals and the types of conditional errors in spoken English made by 20 students from the same group; 4) the Oxford Placement Test to recruit 20 students out of 68 for the spoken task; and 5) the demographic information questionnaire to draw the information regarding the students' backgrounds (e.g. name, age, gender, and educational background). Written consent forms were distributed to the participants prior to conducting the research. Moreover, for clear-cut understanding, the instructions for performing all the research materials were provided to the participants in Thai.

## 5.2 Summary of the findings

As revealed and discussed earlier in chapter 4, the major findings from the three research instruments are provided so as to answer the research questions as previously put forward.

The first research question was formulated as follows: *Among the four English if-conditionals, which one is the most problematic for Thai EFL students in terms of comprehension and production performance, i.e. spoken and written language?* To answer this research question, the major findings from the comprehension task are briefly

summarized here again. It was revealed that the students found the Future Predictive Conditionals the most troublesome to comprehend compared to the other English *if*-conditional typologies, whereas they found the meaning of the Present Counterfactuals the easiest to interpret in both the *if*-clause and main clause. As a result, the acquisition order of the comprehension of English *if*-conditionals by this group of Thai EFL learners was *Present Counterfactuals* (56.76%) > *Factual Conditionals* (48.88%) > *Past Counterfactuals* (47.65%) > *Future Predictives* (39.12%), respectively. As for the gap-filling task, the major findings revealed that the majority of participants found the verb patterns in Past Counterfactuals the most challenging to produce in written English, while they found the Future Predictive Conditionals to be the easiest. Therefore, the acquisition order of if-conditional types was *Future Predictives* (49.19%) > *Factual Conditionals* (47.35%) > *Present Counterfactuals* (3.16%) > *Past Counterfactuals* (1.25%), respectively. In a similar vein, as for the spoken task, the same acquisition order of *if*-conditional types as that of the written language was found; that is, *Future Predictives* (67.08%) > *Factual Conditionals* (48.33%) > *Present Counterfactuals* (13.33%)> *Past Counterfactuals* (5.42%), respectively. Likewise, the participants with high English proficiency outperformed their counterparts in all of the *if*-conditional types in spoken English; however, both groups of learners displayed the same acquisition order of *if*-conditionals in this skill as follows: *Future Predictives* > *Factual Conditionals* > *Present Counterfactuals* > *Past Counterfactuals.*

The second research question was as follows: *What errors do Thai EFL students frequently make in the production of English if-conditionals in both written and spoken language?* The major findings that answered this research question were derived from Task 2, the gap-filling task, along with Task 3, the spoken task. In the gap-filling task, the Past Counterfactuals accounted for the most errors (638 tokens/ 32.55%), followed by Present Counterfactual (618 tokens/ 31.53%); Factual Conditional (395 tokens/20.15%) followed by Future Predictive Conditionals (309 tokens/15.77%). To be more specific, the majority of participants misused subject and verb agreement (104 tokens/24.19%), along with the future simple tense (101 tokens/23.49%) in Factual Conditionals; the present simple tense (90 tokens/23.26%) in Future Predictives; the present simple tense (308 tokens/41.18%) in Present Counterfactuals; and the present simple tense (246 tokens/29.82%) in Past Counterfactuals. These errors were categorized into linguistic taxonomy due to the fact that they involved verb phrase errors. Furthermore, all of the *if*-conditional types studied shared the same pattern of errors in surface structure taxonomy: misformation, omission, and

misselection (word choice), in order of quantity. According to the spoken task, the Past Counterfactuals accounted for the most errors (164 tokens/38.77%), followed by Present Counterfactuals (132 tokens/31.21%), Factual Conditionals (70 tokens/16.55%), and Future Predictives (57 tokens/23.48%), which showed the same pattern with regard to the number of errors by *if*-conditional types as that of the gap-filling task. To illustrate, the misuse of subject and verb agreement was most frequently found in Factual Conditionals (32 tokens/45.71%) together with Future Predictives (16 tokens/28.07%), while the future simple tense (38 tokens/28.79%) was misused in Present Counterfactuals and the present simple tense (44 tokens/26.83%) was misused in Past Counterfactuals. Moreover, as for the surface structure taxonomy, omission, misselection (word choice), and misformation errors were the most common in the Factual Conditionals, respectively; meanwhile, misselection, omission, and misformation errors were most common in the Future Predictives, and omission, misformation, and misselection, were most common in Present as well as Past Counterfactuals.

## 5.3 Conclusion

The objectives of this study were achieved in terms of the following aspects. The first objective was to investigate the types of English *if*-conditionals that were most problematic for Thai EFL students with respect to both comprehension and production performance; the second objective was to explore the conditional errors that Thai EFL students frequently make in production tasks in both written and spoken English. The current study casts some light on the English conditional sentences that are the most problematic for Thai EFL learners in terms of both receptive and productive competence as well as many linguistic and surface structure errors that constitute obstacles to acquiring *if*-conditionals. This knowledge could be beneficial for Thai EFL teachers, educators, and relevant curriculum planners in the attempt to assist students in achieving mastery of these grammatical points.

## 5.4 Pedagogical implications

English *if*-conditionals are one of the most crucial grammatical points for EFL/ESL learners. However, this grammatical feature can pose an obstacle for learners, even native English speakers, in terms of both the comprehension and production of conditional

sentences (Covitt, 1976, as cited in Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999). Having conducted this research study, some constructive suggestions for the improvement and adjustment of English language teaching materials, lesson plans, syllabuses, and course outlines concerning English *if*-conditionals can be made.

First, teachers of English and curriculum planners should realize the significance of teaching and learning English *if*-conditionals in their classes as a prerequisite starting point, the problems and difficulties that most learners frequently encounter, and also make their students aware of the acquisition of conditionals so as to enable them to achieve mastery of this grammatical feature.

Second, the most common English *if*-conditional errors found in this research resulted from verb phrase errors, which are basically grouped into linguistic taxonomy (James, 1998). This phenomenon could be caused by a lack of accurate knowledge regarding the comprehension and production of English conditional sentences. To be more explicit, the atypical answers from the participants clearly showed that many of them had not mastered even fundamental grammatical morphemes, e.g. (1) many participants were not able to make a verb form agree with its subject like, '*Cathy frequently* ****post*** *just negative comments on Facebook, unless she* ****like*** *what others say about her*' and some of them over-applied a grammatical rule like, '*An expert on health suggest that if we* ****exercises*** *every day, we usually* ****buns*** *a lot of calories'*; (2) many of them used misformed constructions like, ***aren't gets** instead of 'don't get', ***crys** rather than 'cries', and ***will changes** in lieu of 'changes'; and (3) some of them omitted an important grammatical element such as auxiliaries, as in ***not hurry** (does not hurry); ***not bite** (will not bite); and ***not make** (would not make). Consequently, teachers and educators are suggested to place a high priority on such a problem prior to teaching students more complicated structures like the English *if*-conditionals; otherwise, they might not be able to fully acquire the target grammatical point due to their poor performance on basic syntactic constructions and morphology.

Third, the present study and other previous studies (Bryant, 1984; Chou, 2000; Ko, 2013; Luu Trong Tuan, 2012; Massafi et al., 2014; Petcharapirat, 2013; Sattayatham & Honsa, 2007;) discovered that counterfactual conditionals, especially Past Counterfactuals, appeared to be the most problematic for EFL/ESL learners in that their syntactic complexities, to some extent, play a vital role in learners' acquisition, especially in terms of production performance. For this reason, teachers should pay particular attention to

counterfactuals and provide their students with ample opportunities to practice these conditional typologies; for example, the teachers first need to teach students both the clear-cut meanings, usage, and verb patterns of counterfactuals and also compare their grammatical features to those of other conditional types. For example, apart from the gap-filling task in the present study, teachers could allow students to translate conditional sentences in their mother tongue to English equivalents in written language; thus, they could further discover their actual performance with respect to the production of English conditionals in other dimensions.

Fourth, teachers, curriculum planners, and educators should adjust and develop the characteristics of existing English *if*-conditional lessons in the Thai language system, especially exercises, tasks, and tests that are used to assess students' performance with respect to the production of conditional verb patterns, since it has been observed that the majority of these materials merely focus on a verb pattern in either the *if*-clause or main clause without allowing learners to use context clues such as temporal references to a present, past, or future situation (Gabrielatos, 2003) or degrees of possibility (Wu, 2012) in a test item when it comes to forming conditional structures; for instance, *If* ***were*** *him, I_____ (not do) like that.* It is highly likely that this type of test item measures whether a language learner has memorized grammatical verb forms in both clauses of each typology and can then recall them when structuring a conditional verb pattern. Furthermore, there are few pedagogical materials aimed at assessing Thai EFL learners' authentic understanding of conditionals through tests or examinations other than production performance. As can be seen from the findings of the current study, the learners found the Future Predictive Conditionals the most challenging to comprehend even though they performed this conditional type comparatively well in the production task; moreover, most of them referred to this type when asked what English *if*-conditionals they had studied and were familiar with, and many of them could identify the grammatically correct structures as well.

Fifth, despite the fact that there has been a wide range of natural and authentic uses of English *if*-conditionals produced by native English speakers (Farr & McCarthy, 2002, as cited in O'Keef, McCarthy, & Carter, 2010; Jones & Waller, 2011; Phoocharoensil, 2014; Thomas & Jolivet, 2008) and speakers from various contexts, it is suggested that teachers have their students master the standard typologies first owing to the fact that the classic types are frequently used to assess students' knowledge of English conditional constructions through certain standardized tests and examinations. It is also advisable that teachers present

alternative *if*-constructions along with some sentence examples from concordance lines in corpora to their students. It is, nevertheless, inappropriate for teachers to include a large number of alternative or colloquial *if*-forms in their lesson plans, as doing so could overwhelm and confuse students unnecessarily.

### 5.5 Recommendations for further research

The following recommendations could serve as a guideline for future research so as to generalize the findings of the present study by covering some other English *if*-conditionals, increasing the number of participants, and employing more research materials.

First, the current study placed an emphasis on the four most frequently taught *if*-conditional types, namely, *Factual Conditionals, Future Predictives, Present Counterfactuals,* and *Past Counterfactuals,* among Thai EFL learners. Therefore, additional typologies, e.g. mixed-time reference conditionals, that might be included in students' grammar books and taught in other high schools could be further explored by other researchers.

Second, regarding certain limitations and time, this study was limited to 68 students from an Integrated English Program in a public school in Bangkok for the comprehension and gap-filling tasks, along with 20 out of the 68 participants for the spoken task. Therefore, further research studies could increase the number of students from other programs in either public or private schools in Thailand.

Third, the research instruments employed in this study covered all production skills (i.e. speaking and writing) and nearly all receptive ones (i.e. reading, listening), but lacked listening skill to assess the students' competence as it pertains to *if*-conditionals. Therefore, further research studies could expand on the findings of the current study by including this skill in their methodology in order to determine students' capability as it relates to this grammatical point.

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# APPENDIX A

## COMPREHENSION TASK

**Instruction: This test is concerned with the comprehension of English *If*-conditionals. Choose the correct meaning of English *If*-conditionals by marking only one letter A, B or C on your Answer Sheet.**

**คำชี้แจง: แบบทดสอบนี้เกี่ยวกับ 'ความเข้าใจประโยคเงื่อนไขในภาษาอังกฤษ' จงเลือกความหมายที่ถูกต้องมากที่สุดในประโยคเงื่อนไขภาษาอังกฤษ ดังต่อไปนี้**

1. *If Harry had read the news yesterday, he would have known the election result.*

   A. Harry did not read the news yesterday.

   B. Harry knew the election result yesterday.

   C. Harry might read the news yesterday.

2. *If you heat ice, it melts.* (Scrivener, 2014, p. 231)

   A. Ice melts when heated.

   B. You have heated ice.

   C. Ice has been heated.

3. *If we have enough time tomorrow, we will go to visit our grandparents.* (Adapted from Swan, 1996, p. 259)

   A. We might not have enough time to visit our grandparents.

   B. We will have gone to visit our grandparents in the future.

   C. We are going to visit our parents as we have earlier planned.

4. *I wouldn't work if I were rich.*

   A. I'm not rich.

   B. I don't work.

   C. I worked.

5. *If we pour oil on water, it floats.* (Adapted from Swan, 1996, p. 258)

   A. Oil will be poured on water by us.

   B. Oil floats whenever poured on water.

   C. Oil was floated when poured on water.

6. *If he does not arrive here on time, we will leave without him.*

   A. He does not arrive late.

   B. We might leave with him.

   C. We have left with him.

7. *If I had a nice car, I would drive it to school.*

A. I used to have a nice car.

B. I don't have a nice car.

C. I drive a nice car.

8. *If you had attended the English reading class last week, you might have gained a lot of knowledge.*

A. You did not attend the English reading class last week.

B. You gained much knowledge from the English reading class.

C. You had participated in and could get more knowledge.

9. *I will call her tomorrow unless I see her in the room this morning.*

A. I have decided to call her tomorrow.

B. I may not see her in the room this morning.

C. She will not be seen in the room this morning.

10. *Normally, people do not have financial problems if their country does not encounter a long economic crisis.*

People……...problems whenever encountering a long economic crisis.

A. ……have financial……

B. ……had financial…..…..…..……

C. ……have had financial……..

11. *I wouldn't have felt sick if I hadn't forgotten to take medicine.* (Adapted from Scrivener, 2010, p. 242).

A. I forgot to take medicine.

B. I did not feel sick either.

C. I have been feeling sick.

12. *Sara will give Sandy 3,000 Baht if she stops smoking.* (Adapted from Swan, 1996, p. 261)

A. Sandy cannot stop smoking.

B. Sandy may not stop smoking.

C. Sandy has planned to stop smoking.

13. *I would apply to be a translator if my Japanese were better.*

A. I applied to be a translator soon.

B. My previous job was a translator.

C. My Japanese language is poor.

14. *If you pay for your hotel room late, there is a charge of 500 Baht.* (Adapted from (Scrivener, 2014, p. 232)

Due to late payment, you……..500 Baht.

A. ……..., …..might be charged…….

B. ……..., …..are charged…….

C. ……..., …..were charged……...

15. *The holiday would have been sad unless the weather had changed.*

(Adapted from Carter, R., Hughes, R., McCarthy., M., 2000, p. 252)

A. In fact, the weather changed.

B. In fact, the holiday was sad.

C. In fact, the weather did not change.

16. *James wouldn't go to Hua Hin if he didn't have the time.*

(Adapted from Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman, 1999, p. 551)

It is highly possible that James…….

A. ……went to Hua Hin.

B. ……have the time.

C. ……had the time.

17. *If you finished this task today, I would buy you coffee.*

A. You can't finish the task today.

B. I bought you coffee today.

C. You got your task done today.

18. *We don't break the law unless we commit crimes.*

A. We committed crimes when breaking the law.

B. We break the law when committing crimes.

C. We broke the law and also committed crimes.

19. *If we order the book now, we will receive it tomorrow.*

A. We probably order the book.

B. We possibly ordered the book

C. We've perhaps received the book.

20. *Mario could have cut his fingers if he had used the knife carelessly.* (Adapted from Swan, 1996, p. 260)

A. Mario has cut his fingers because he used the knife carelessly.

B. Mario used the knife carefully, so he didn't cut his fingers.

C. Mario has cutted his fingers as he was careless to use the knife.

# APPENDIX B

## GAP-FILLING TASK

**Instruction: Fill in the grammatically correct verb forms for each *if*-conditional in the following sentences.**

**คำชี้แจง: จงเติมเต็มส่วนของกริยาที่ขาดหายไปให้สมบูรณ์ ตามโครงสร้างของหลักไวยากรณ์**

For example, If he **comes** (come) over here, I **will tell** (tell) him about this.

1. Unless I _____(know) the future, I_____(not make) any plans to travel far away right now.

2. I really enjoyed watching the movie *"Transformer 3"*. If Ann_____(not be) sick, she_____ (go) to the cinema with us yesterday.

3. Cathy frequently_____(post) just negative comments on Facebook, unless she_____(like) what others say about her.

4. If I_____(go) to a nearby supermarket next week, I_____ (buy) you some chocolate.

5. Stop being so sad, Jimmy! I believe that if you_____(study) hard before the last midterm examination, you_____(pass) all the subjects.

6. She loves watching sad movies on weekends. She often_____(cry) if she _____(watch) any sad movies.

7. Have a good time on your summer vacation, Yaya! Don't worry about your house! If I_____(see) a burglar breaking into your house, I_____(call) the police immediately.

8. Knocking at the door before entering a person's room is a good manner. If we _____(open) the door now without knocking, our boss _____(blame) us.

9. It's always the same! If we_____(heat) ice for a few minutes, it_____(change) into water.

10. I am very lucky that I didn't buy that expensive car. For sure, I_____ (make) a big mistake, if I_____(buy) that car last month.

11. If today_____(be) Sunday, I_____(stay) at home.

12. An expert on health suggests that if we _____(exercise) every day, we usually _____(burn) a lot of calories. (Adapted from Kalasin et al., 2007, p. 57)

13. John hasn't finished his breakfast yet. Certainly, he_____ (miss) the school bus if he_____(not hurry).

14. Jack was injured in a car accident last week and is still in the hospital. I think the accident_____(not happen) unless he_____ (try) to answer his phone while driving.

15. The teacher is explaining about some important problems of global warming. It _____(be) impolite if we_____ (interrupt) her right now.

16. Don't be afraid! Unless you_____(touch) the dog, it_____(not bite) you. (Adapted from Vince, 1994, p. 44)

17. This is the rainy season now. We _____ (go out) tomorrow if the weather _____ (be) good. (Adapted from Vince, 1994, p. 44)

18. It's a pity! If we _____ (invite) him, he_____(enjoy) the party with us last night.

19. Seeds _____(not grow) if they _____(not get) enough water and light. (Adapted from Parrott, 2002, p. 474)

20. Charyl_____(cancel) the ticket booking right now if he_____(not believe) you would travel with him. (Adapted from Scrivener, 2014, p. 237)

# APPENDIX C
# SPOKEN TASK

## ***If*-Conditionals in Thai**

1. คุณจะสอบตก ถ้าคุณไม่อ่านหนังสือก่อนสอบ

2. เขาผู้ชายซื้อป๊อปคอร์นอยู่เสมอ ถ้าเขาไปดูหนัง

3. เราจะไม่มีความสุข ถ้าตอนนี้แจ็คกี้เป็นเจ้านายของเรา (โชคดีที่เขาไม่ใช่เจ้านายเรา)

4. แซนดี้ควรจะได้ทำการบ้านของเธอ ถ้าเมื่อวานเธอไม่ป่วย

5. ปกติฉันขอเงินจากคุณแม่ ถ้าฉันไม่มีเงิน

6. ถ้าฉันเป็นคุณ ฉันจะไม่ทำแบบนั้น

7. ถ้าคุณไม่เข้านอนแต่หัวค่ำ คุณจะตื่นสาย

8. ถ้าตอนนี้ฉันมีเงินมากพอ ฉันจะซื้อบ้านหลังใหม่

9. ถ้าเมื่อวานคุณพ่อขับรถไปทำงานเอง เขาคงจะไม่ไปทำงานสาย

10. ถ้าเราไม่ทานอาหารเลย เราตาย

11. ถ้าเจมส์ไม่มีเงิน ฉันจะให้เขา 100 บาท

12. ถ้าฉันได้ไปตลาดเมื่อสัปดาห์ที่แล้ว ฉันคงจะได้ซื้อแอปเปิ้ล

**APPENDIX D**

**DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION QUESTIONNAIRE**

**Please provide correct and clear information for all the following items. Your information will be used for research purposes only and kept confidential.**

1. Name: ……...……Age: ……

2. Gender……☐ Male ☐ Female

3. Program: ☐Science-Mathematics ☐ Language-Arts ☐ Other…….

4. Education level (e.g. Grades 10, 11, or 12): …….

5. What types of English *If*-conditionals have you ever studied?

Explain……...……...……...

……...……...……

……...……...……

6. What types of English *If*-conditionals are you familiar with?

Explain……...……...……...

……...……...……

……...……...……

7. Have you ever studied or stayed in any English-speaking countries?

☐Yes ☐No

If yes, how long…..……months……years? and where……?

8. How many years have you been studying the English language?

Specify…… years

9. Do you study other subjects in English (e.g. Mathematics, Biology, Computer studies)?

☐Yes ☐No

If yes, how many hours do you study the other subjects in English at school per week?

Mathematics……hours/ week.
Physics……..…hours/ week.
Chemistry…….……hours/ week.
Biology……...……hours/ week.
Social studies……hours/ week.
Others……hours/ week.

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**Thank you very much for your kind cooperation.**

# APPENDIX E
# INFORMED CONSENT FORM

## แบบยินยอมเข้าร่วมวิจัย

งานวิจัยนี้เป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษา เพื่อสำเร็จการศึกษาระดับปริญญาโท หลักสูตรภาษาอังกฤษเพื่ออาชีพของ นายประทีป กาติ๊บ สังกัดสถาบันภาษา มหาวิทยาลัยธรรมศาสตร์ โดยมุ่งเน้นการวิจัยเรื่อง "*ความเข้าใจและการสร้างประโยคเงื่อนไขภาษาอังกฤษ (If clauses) โดยผู้เรียนในระดับมัธยมศึกษาตอนปลาย*" โดยผู้เข้าร่วมงานวิจัย สมัครใจเข้าร่วมทำแบบทดสอบจำนวน 3 ครั้ง ดังต่อไปนี้

ครั้งที่ 1. ทำแบบทดสอบ Oxford Placement Test จำนวน 60 ข้อใช้เวลาประมาณ 1 ชั่วโมง

ครั้งที่ 2. ทำแบบทดสอบเรื่อง "ความเข้าใจและการสร้างประโยคเงื่อนไขภาษาอังกฤษ" จำนวน 40 ข้อ ใช้เวลาประมาณ 1 ชั่วโมง

ครั้งที่ 3. ทำแบบทดสอบเรื่อง "สร้างประโยคเงื่อนไขภาษาอังกฤษโดยการพูด (Speaking Test)" จำนวน 12 ข้อใช้เวลาประมาณ 2 นาทีต่อผู้เข้าร่วมงานวิจัย 1 คน โดยแบบทดสอบชุดนี้ต้องการอาสาสมัครจำนวน 25 คน

ผู้วิจัยขอยืนยันว่าข้อมูลที่ได้จากกการศึกษาวิจัยครั้งนี้จะถูกเก็บไว้เป็นความลับและจะถูกนำไปใช้เพื่อการศึกษาวิจัยเท่านั้น การเข้าร่วมทำแบบทดสอบทั้ง 3 ครั้งดังกล่าว จะไม่มีผลกระทบใดๆทั้งสิ้นต่อคะแนน เกรด และผลการเรียนของผู้เข้าร่วมวิจัย

ทั้งนี้ ผู้วิจัยขอขอบคุณทุกท่านที่ให้ความร่วมมือ และหวังเป็นอย่างยิ่งว่างานวิจัยครั้งนี้จะเป็นประโยชน์ต่อโรงเรียนของท่านและโรงเรียนมัธยมอื่นๆในประเทศไทย

หากท่านมีข้อสงสัย หรือข้อซักถามใดๆ กรุณาติดต่อผู้ทำวิจัย คุณประทีป กาติ๊บ เบอร์โทรศัพท์ 081-8468508 หรือ อีเมล: pktae.999@gmail.com

ข้าพเจ้าขอยืนยันว่า ได้รับรู้ถึงที่มา วัตถุประสงค์ของการวิจัย และกิจกรรมของงานวิจัยครั้งนี้ โดยข้าพเจ้ามีความสมัครใจที่จะเข้าร่วมงานวิจัยครั้งนี้

…….. ……

ลงชื่อ วันที่

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| | |
|---|---|
| Name | Mr. Pratheep Katip |
| Date of Birth | March 1, 1987 |
| Educational Attainment | 2009: Bachelor's Degree, Medical Technology |
| Work Position | English lecturer, Mahanakorn University of Technology |
| Scholarship | 2015: Thesis Scholarship from Master of Arts in English for Careers |

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Work Experiences June, 2010 – May 2015: Research Associate, at College of Population Studies, Chulalongkorn University

APA