

# **First Language Transfer and the Acquisition of English Collocations by Thai Learners**

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## **Abstract**

It has been claimed that, for many ESL and EFL learners, the acquisition of English collocations is particularly difficult due to the negative influence of the first language. This paper investigates the English collocation knowledge of Thai EFL learners with two different mother tongues. All are pursuing English major in an international program at Fatoni University in Pattani, Thailand. The purpose of the study is to explore the degree to which their first languages impact upon their acquisition of English collocations. Thirty-nine Patani Malay speakers and thirty-nine Southern Thai speakers took part in the study. Based on a set of receptive and productive tests, an analysis was carried out on the students' performance under the lexical and grammatical categories of collocations, followed by individual interviews with twelve students. The results show significant differences between the two groups, particularly in lexical collocations.

## **Introduction**

Collocation is defined by Lewis (1993) as a group or a chunk of words which have syntagmatic relations and for which the fixed meaning is formed between free combination of words and idioms. For example, 'do homework', 'strong coffee', 'confidence in' and 'depend on' are standard English collocations. Many Thai learners, however, use non-standard forms such as 'make homework', 'powerful coffee', 'confidence on' and 'depend in'.

A collocation is made up of a node and a collocate. A node refers to a head word in the collocation, whereas a collocate refers to the word which co-occurs with the node (Shin & Nation, 2008, p. 341). For example, in the collocation 'commit a crime', 'crime' is the node and 'commit' is the collocate.

Investigations on collocation knowledge generally fall under two categories – productive and receptive knowledge (Bueraheng, 2014; Szudarski, 2012). Furthermore, both these categories can be further categorized under two types: lexical and grammatical collocations (Benson & Ilson, 1986). In lexical collocations, both the node and the collocate are content words, such as noun (N), verb (V), adjective (Adj) and adverb (Adv). Grammatical collocations consist of a content word and a function word, such as an infinitive or a preposition (Prep).

This study compares the English collocation knowledge of two groups of Thai learners from different first language (L1) backgrounds in an attempt to gauge the extent to which language transfer is an influencing factor in their acquisition of collocations.

### ***First language transfer and the acquisition of target collocations***

In Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research, collocation is a fundamental element of the acquisition of lexis (Lewis, 1993) and is an important indicator of maturity in terms of language proficiency for both written and spoken skills. Successful mastery of collocations enables increased fluency in the target language. Studies on second language acquisition and collocations have found that accuracy of collocation choice and use may be overwhelmingly influenced by the first language of learners, or what is called inter-lingual influence, which may influence them to use more non-standard collocations (Bahns & Eldaw, 1993; Nesselhauf, 2003; Odlin, 1989). The collocation ‘open the light’, for example, appears to have L1 influence in the form of negative transfer from the Thai context. Negative transfer here refers to an instance where transfer from the first language into the target language context results in a non-standard form, whereas for positive transfer the L1 has a similar structure as the target language so the L1 facilitates the learning in the target language (Gass & Selinker, 2008, p. 457).

Mongkolchai (2008) found that Thai EFL undergraduate learners majoring in English use lexical and grammatical collocations based on Thai, their first language, leading to non-standard forms. One example of non-standard lexical collocation by Thai speakers is ‘well-known reputation’, instead of the standard ‘great reputation’. In Thai, ‘well-known reputation’ occurs as *มีชื่อเสียงเป็นที่รู้จัก* *meechueseang penteerujak* which literally means ‘great reputation’ (p. 43). Another example is the grammatical collocation ‘experienced with’ instead of ‘experienced in’ in the sentence ‘She used to be a nurse as she is experienced in looking after children’ (p. 46). The frequency of such non-standard forms translated directly from Thai led Mongkolchai to claim that language transfer appears to be a major influence on the successful acquisition of English collocations.

According to Poocharoensil’s (2011) study on Thai learners’ errors in their acquisition of English collocations, it was found that first language transfer appears to be the most frequent strategy learners adopt, although other intra-lingual strategies used include synonymy and overgeneralization, strategies that are connected with intra-lingual issues in the target language, English, rather than influence from Thai. He found that even among high-proficiency learners, there was heavy reliance on the native language when it comes to the use of English collocations.

Furthermore, it is found that L1-L2 congruence plays an important role in the second language learner’s acquisition of the target collocations (Bahns & Eldaw, 1993; Granger, 1998; Murao, 2004; Nesselhauf, 2003, 2005; Pooncharoensil, 2011). Collocations that do not have translation equivalents in the L1 or non-congruent collocations present more challenges and difficulty for L2 learners than congruent items. Nakata’s study (2007) on Japanese learners’ acquisition of English collocations shows that more errors are committed where there are no equivalent collocations between Japanese and English. Poocharoensil (2011) found that in many instances, errors occur when Thai speakers assume a one-to-one correspondence between the L1 and L2 collocational choices when in fact there are none. On the other hand, where there are congruent items between the two languages, positive transfer occurs.

So far, such studies, especially those carried out in the Thai context, have tended to look at standard Thai as the first language. The current study is an attempt to investigate the impact of two vernacular languages spoken by southern Thais on the successful acquisition of English collocations.

## The context of the study

Although standard Thai is spoken and understood throughout Thailand, vernacular languages are used by speakers in different parts of the country in day-to-day interactions. In Southern Thailand, in the three southernmost provinces, Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat and some districts of Songkhla and Satun, people either speak Patani Malay (PM) or Southern Thai (ST) as their L1. These two vernacular languages are from different language families. Patani Malay is an Austronesian language, but Southern Thai is a member of the Tai Kadai family. The former is quite similar to standard Malay which is the national language of Malaysia and Brunei, while Southern Thai is quite similar to standard Thai which is the national and official language of Thailand. A large amount of the lexis and collocations in PM are borrowed and cognate with standard Malay, such as *kualiti rendah* ('poor quality') in Standard Malay which is *koliti renoh* in PM and *Taraf tinggi* or *standad tinggi* ('high standard') in standard Malay is *tarah tingi*, *standa?tingi* or *matatan tingi* in PM. In the last of these *matatan* is from standard Thai. Southern Thai, on other hand, is similar to standard Thai in terms of lexis and syntax. Some words are used with the same spelling but have different tones, like *ปรารถนา* *prattana* ('desire for'). It is written similarly but pronounced with different tones by the two groups of speakers. Some words are different because of the reduced syllables. For instance, 'happen to' is *เกิดอะไรขึ้น* *kuedaraikhuen* in Standard Thai but in ST it is reduced to *เกิดไทร* *kuedrai*

## Purpose of the study and research questions

This study attempts to investigate the extent to which the L1 interferes with the acquisition of English collocations among PM and ST learners in Southern Thailand. It does this by first comparing the differences, if any, between the two groups of learners in their competence in English collocations via a productive and a receptive test. This is followed by individual interviews in an attempt to elicit the reasons for the performance of the participants. Thus, the following research questions are posited:

- Is there a significant difference in the collocational competence of Fatoni University English major students who speak Patani Malay when compared to the ones who speak Southern Thai?
- Is there a significant difference between the two groups of learners' receptive and productive collocational knowledge?
- Is there a significant difference between the subjects' performance on lexical and grammatical collocation tests?
- To what extent are their differences due to L1 influence?

## Methodology

### Participants

This study comprises two groups of learners with different mother tongues; Patani Malay (PM) and Southern Thai (ST), taking English as their major in a local university in Southern Thailand. The learners have similar English exposure in terms of both formal and informal learning factors, a similar curriculum which is the international program, similar lecturers who are non-native speakers of English, and also a similar EFL environment. The major difference between them is their mother tongue.

Altogether, 296 English major students from year 1 to year 4 took the World English placement test (Chase, 2011). Following the test, 39 PM speakers and 39 ST speakers were

selected to participate in the study based on their similar level of English language proficiency.

### **Target collocations (see Appendix A)**

This study focuses on the Verb+Noun (V+N) and Adjective+Noun (Adj+N) collocations under lexical collocations and Noun+Preposition (N+Prep) and Verb+Preposition (V+Prep) collocations under grammatical collocations. These were selected because of (i) their frequent use in everyday communication in English (Nesselhauf, 2003), and (ii) their difficulty for Thai EFL learners (Phoocharoensil, 2012). As for the selection procedure for these target collocations, 547 collocations were extracted from the previous studies, mainly from Gyllstad (2007) and Shehata (2008), and these were checked with the British National Corpus (BNC, 2007) for frequency with a minimum of 100 occurrences. The researcher then consulted the Online Oxford Collocation Dictionary for Students of English (Oxford, 2002) to affirm that they were listed and marked as collocations. Finally they were cut down to 80 target collocations which included 20 from each category validated by a native speaker of English and by four EFL experts in southern Thailand.

A collocation congruence framework between the two vernaculars and the 80 target English collocations was then set up to ascertain the extent to which learners relied on their L1 in performing the tests. The ratio of congruent and non-congruent collocations is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Congruent and non-congruent collocations between the two vernaculars (PM & ST) and English

Participants		Type of Collocation				Total
		Lexical		Grammatical		
		V+N (N=20)	Adj+N (N=20)	N+Prep (N=20)	V+Prep (N=20)	
Patani Malay (N=80)	Congruent	11	13	4	2	30 (37.5%)
	Non-congruent	9	7	16	18	50 (62.5%)
Southern Thai (N=80)	Congruent	10	15	11	3	39 (48.7%)
	Non-congruent	10	5	9	17	41 (51.3%)

Table 1 shows a significantly higher number of non-congruent grammatical collocations than lexical collocations for both vernacular languages when compared with English ( $\chi^2 = 17.3$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .0001$  for PM,  $\chi^2 = 6.1$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p = .014$  for ST). Based on this framework and what was mentioned earlier about negative and positive transfer, it can then be hypothesized that the learners are likely to find grammatical collocations more challenging than lexical ones.

### **Instruments**

#### **Productive Test**

The productive test (see Appendix B for sample) was adapted from Szudarski's (2012) 45-minute gap filling test. In this study, however, the context was given as a clue together with the L1 collocation equivalent. There are two versions for this test based on the learners' mother tongue (Patani Malay and Southern Thai). The translation in the L1 is in parentheses – only the node and the collocate, not the whole sentence, as it was assumed that the

participants could comprehend the context (as all of them were studying English as their major in the international program).

### **Receptive Test**

The receptive test (see Appendix C for a sample) consisted of 80 test items (30 minutes) with the same target collocations which were adapted from an objective test from Gyllstad (2007, p. 308ff) as a Yes-No check for each item. Both groups of learners had to judge whether each collocation provided was correct or acceptable for them. There were 40 correct and 40 incorrect items throughout the test. The reason why this type of test was selected was to save time. To avoid the learners' guessing, their responses were matched with the productive test.

### **Interview**

To obtain more reliable data on opinions, attitudes as well as reasons for the answers in the productive and receptive tests, a 30–35 minute-long individual interview was conducted (see Appendix D). Following from the tests, six informants from each group were chosen based on the results of the two tests. They were at three levels of English language proficiency: beginner, intermediate and advanced. The interview consisted of two parts. The first part sought demographic information and collocation knowledge. They were asked to provide their personal and educational information, language learning experiences as well as language use (L1, L2 and L3). In the second part of the interview, the interviewees were asked to explain the reasons behind their answers on the tests. For example, they were asked questions such as, “why did you answer ‘strong rain’ not ‘heavy rain’?” or “‘make a crime’, not ‘commit a crime’?” They were also asked which language they think in when they speak or write English.

### **Data Collection**

A pilot study was carried out with Southern Thai and Patani Malay speakers studying English as their major at Prince of Songkla University (Pattani campus) for both the tests and the interview. After revisions were made on the instruments, the productive test was administered. The tests were administered on the same day with an hour interval between the two tests. After the tests were marked, individual interviews were carried out with students who had sat for the tests. The data collection lasted a week.

### **Data Analysis**

An independent t-test was used to compare the mean scores of the tests between two groups of participants. Data from the individual interviews were transcribed and reviewed by two of the researchers in the team separately. The interpretations from both researchers were compared and analyzed by means of thematic analysis.

### **Results and discussion**

The first question asked was whether there is a significant difference in the English collocation competence between PM and ST learners. Table 2 presents the overall scores for the two groups in both the productive and receptive tests.

**Table 2** Overall score of English collocation

<b>Participants</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>S.D</b>
Patani Malay (N=39)	<b>70.28</b>	12.40
Southern Thai (N=39)	<b>76.33</b>	11.33

The maximum score is 160: 80 in the receptive test and 80 in the productive test. The table shows a significant difference at the .05 level in the overall score for the two groups ( $t = 2.25$ ,  $df = 76$ ,  $p = .027$ , two-tailed, independent samples), so Southern Thai speakers performed a little better than Patani Malay speakers.

The second question posed was whether there was a significant difference between the two groups of learners in the productive and receptive English collocation knowledge. Table 3 shows the results of the productive and receptive test scores for the two groups.

**Table 3** The productive and receptive test scores

<b>Test</b>	<b>Patani Malay (N=39)</b>		<b>Southern Thai (N=39)</b>		<b>T-tests (independent samples, 2 tailed)</b>		
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>S.D</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>S.D</b>	<b><i>t</i></b>	<b><i>Df</i></b>	<b><i>p</i></b>
Productive (N=80)	24.28	8.265	28.36	7.432	2.291	78	.025
Receptive (N=80)	46.00	5.326	47.97	5.274	1.645	78	.104
<b>T-tests</b>	$t=13.79, p=.023$		$t=13.44, p=.025$				

The test scores in Table 3 show that the Southern Thai speakers outperformed the Patani Malay speakers with a significant difference at the .05 level in the productive test ( $p = .025$ ), but not in the receptive test ( $p = .104$ ). However, the learners in both groups did much better in the receptive test than the productive test overall. T-tests also revealed that there was a significant difference between the two areas of knowledge for the two groups ( $t = 13.79$ ,  $df = 158$ ,  $p = .023$  for PM,  $t = 13.44$ ,  $df = 158$ ,  $p = .025$  for ST). It appears that learners from both found the productive test to be considerably more challenging than the receptive tests. This is consistent with the studies of Bueraheng (2014), Koya (2003), Nesselhauf (2003) and Shehata (2008). This correlates with the language acquisition of children, which starts from listening before speaking and also reading before writing (Asher, 1972).

These results are supported by the interviews following the tests. From the interview transcripts, all six of the ST learners and four of the PM learners said they found the productive test to be more difficult, regardless of their English language ability. The most frequent reason given was that they were not offered choices in the productive test:

no choices provided (ST8)

we can guess (receptive test) and little possibility to be wrong (ST34)

The third question asked was whether there were differences between the two groups' performance in the lexical and grammatical tests. The results are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4** Lexical and grammatical collocational knowledge

Test	Patani Malay (N=39)		Southern Thai (N=39)		T-tests (independent samples, 2 tailed)		
	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Lexical (N=80)	29.38	5.064	32.67	4.868	2.636	78	.010
Grammatical (N=80)	40.90	7.472	43.67	7.296	1.656	78	.102
<b>T-tests</b>	<i>t</i> =7.471, <i>p</i> =.000		<i>t</i> =7.832, <i>p</i> =.000				

It is evident from Table 4 that the Southern Thai speakers outscored the other group in only the lexical test but for the grammatical test, the result is not significant ( $p=.102$ ). However, both groups performed better on the grammatical collocations test than the lexical collocations test. This does not support the findings of Phoocharoensil (2012), who reported that collocations with prepositions were likely to be more problematic for Thai EFL learners.

Furthermore, these results do not seem to adhere to the congruency theory in first language transfer. Referring back to Table 1 on the congruent and non-congruent collocations between English and the two vernaculars, learners were expected to perform better in the lexical collocations due to the higher frequency of congruence in these collocations between English and ST or PM. This was not the case from the results. It is accepted among linguistic scholars in second language acquisition and learning particularly that the congruence and non-congruence of collocations between the source language and the target language is crucial in the acquisition of collocations (Shehata, 2008). However, the current study found that the learners did better in grammatical collocations which have a lower frequency of congruence.

This leads to the final question posed at the beginning of this study, and that is to what extent the difference are due to L1 influence. What was found was that both groups of learners demonstrated inter- and intra-lingual influence in their acquisition of English collocations. The intra-lingual influence can be seen in the learners' use of, for example, 'foreign countries' replaced with '\*abroad country', 'do damage' as '\*make damage', 'make mistake' as '\*do mistake' and the inter-lingual influence in both PM and ST such as 'happen to' replaced as '\*happen with', 'classical music', replaced as '\*classic music', 'make beds' replaced as '\*set beds' and 'wait for' replaced as 'wait'. The chunk of words 'heavy rain' in ST is replaced as '\*strong rain' whereas '\*hard rain' was used in PM. Apart from the negative L1 transfer of the examples above, both groups also relied heavily on positive transfer in acquiring collocations. Examples are 'do damage', 'special offer', 'arrival at' and 'agree with'. It can be concluded that intra-lingual influence used by the learners comes from overgeneralization of words in English and inter-lingual influence from both positive transfer and negative transfer. This supports findings found in Poocharoensil (2011). Between the two types of influence, it appears that students rely more heavily on first language transfer when it comes to the acquisition of English collocations.

An analysis of the learners' answers shows the use of direct translation from their L1s to produce or judge the correctness of collocations. Due to the higher percentage of non-congruent collocations between Patani Malay (PM) and English, PM learners would be more likely to make errors caused by their L1 influence. The following examples show this to be true:

- Verb+Noun: 'lose (one's) temper' is not equivalent in PM, so it was replaced with '\*make one's temper' or the answer was left blank since there is no collocate with *mukeh* (lose temper) in PM; but in ST, it is equivalent resulting in an easy guess of the chunk of words.
- Adjective+Noun: the adjective 'poor', in the collocation 'poor quality' is used congruently by ST speakers. However, for PM speakers, the adjective 'poor' is

replaced by the adjective ‘bad’, a result of the direct translation of the Patani Malay expression *do?mole?*, literally translated as not beautiful.

- Noun+Preposition: ‘confidence in’ for ST learners did not seem to be problematic because of its L1 congruence whereas in PM, the word *yakeng* (‘confidence’) is collocated with the preposition *denga* (with). This explains why PM speakers tend to juxtapose the noun ‘confidence’ with the preposition ‘with’.
- Verb+Preposition: for ‘believe in’, the preposition ‘in’ was omitted in PM, but ST still maintains it after the word ‘believe’. That is why PM learners made more errors on English collocations than ST learners.

However, certain chunks of words were misused by both groups of learners. For example, ‘blonde hair’ in PM is *ramu?merah* in which the word *merah* means ‘red’ and it only signifies ‘blonde’ when collocating with *ramu?*. This is the reason why PM speakers are likely to get confused and replace ‘blonde hair’ with ‘red hair’ when they speak English. Similarly, most ST learners also misused it as ‘golden hair’ since in ST, ‘blonde’ is widely misunderstood as ‘bronze color’ or ‘color of silver’.

During the interviews, when learners from both groups were asked to explain their responses in the tests, the reasons were due both to inter-lingual and intra-lingual influences:

If I am not familiar, I will translate or reflect to my native language (ST14)

because in Thai it is called ‘classic’ (ST34)

...because I use direct translation (PM7)

I guessed from my own prior knowledge or reading. (ST8)

...coz I heard from English movies... (ST14)

When I don’t know some words, I just compare and trace back to word having close in meaning like ‘strong coffee’ and ‘strong smell’ may be referred to the same category. (PM6)

I relate (make a crime) to ‘make a sin’ that teachers use in class. (PM7)

It is evident from the interviews that the frequent intra-lingual influences are in the form of synonymy and overgeneralization, and this supports Poocharoensil’s (2011) study.

## Conclusion

This study revealed the findings on Patani Malay speakers and Southern Thai speakers with regard to their knowledge of English collocations. Both groups performed significantly poorer in the productive test compared to the receptive test. Although both groups did not perform well in the lexical collocations, Southern Thai learners performed significantly better when compared to the Patani Malay learners. The English collocation errors made by the two groups of learners were caused by cross-linguistic influence and learner errors. The former seems to be more problematic and their L1 influence on their acquisition of English collocations was both positive and negative. As a result, both Patani Malay and Southern Thai speakers, lecturers, curriculum developers and program leaders should recognize this factor in the acquisition of collocations. Furthermore, as learners showed weakness in lexical collocations, curriculum developers should emphasize a lexical approach to the learning of English collocations.



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**Appendix A: Target collocations**

<b>Lexical Collocation</b>			
<b>Verb+Noun</b>	<b>Frequency (BNC)</b>	<b>Adjective + Noun</b>	<b>Frequency (BNC)</b>
1. Take place	3259	1. Old age	1265
2. Make an attempt	1331	2. Social life	775
3. Make mistake	1080	3. High standard	411
4. Take actions	429	4. Ill health	321
5. Raise money	427	5. Private life	274
6. Draw conclusions	358	6. Close friends	238
7. Fill a gap	299	7. Blonde hair	233
8. Take turns	279	8. Major problems	228
9. Commit a crime	269	9. Heavy rain	225
10. Achieve goals	246	10. Serious problems	217
11. Earn a living	235	11. Current affairs	208
12. Set fire	208	12. Poor quality	194
13. See a doctor	190	13. Best wishes	190
14. Lose (one's) temper	163	14. Quick glance	166
15. Waste time	154	15. Special offer	159
16. Seize an opportunity	136	16. Big day	150
17. Keep a diary	133	17. Heavy smoker	147
18. Make the bed	129	18. Classical music	144
19. Have trouble	123	19. Foreign country	137
20. Do damage	123	20. Profound effects	124
<b>Grammatical Collocation</b>			
<b>Noun+Preposition</b>	<b>Frequency (BNC)</b>	<b>Verb+Preposition</b>	<b>Frequency (BNC)</b>
1. Need for	6836	1. Set up	8494
2. Access to	5988	2. Find out	4619
3. Experience of	4003	3. Put on	3451
4. Cause of	2959	4. Pay for	3154
5. Search for	2019	5. Pick up	2571
6. Control over	1976	6. Get in	2393
7. Attack on	1851	7. Work out	2258
8. Confidence in	1507	8. Depend on	2185
9. Respect for	1043	9. Agree with	2094
10. Faith in	1002	10. Carry on	2023
11. Preparation for	819	11. Respond to	1871
12. Escape from	796	12. Wait for	1820
13. Desire for	787	13. Ask for	1737
14. Invitation to	707	14. Happen to	1685
15. Reply to	646	15. Believe in	1546
16. Interview with	639	16. Contribute to	1509
17. Excuse for	494	17. Belong to	1432
18. Pride in	475	18. Add to	1424
19. Attention on	463	19. Comment on	1359
20. Arrival at	283	20. Hold on	1143

## Appendix B: Productive test

*Productive Test (for Southern Thai speakers)*

1. The next election in my village will \_\_\_\_\_ place on April 6<sup>th</sup> 2018. (จัดขึ้น)
2. My grandpa died at the ripe \_\_\_\_\_ age of 99. (อายุสูงวัย)
3. Stop cursing! There's no need \_\_\_\_\_ that kind of language. (ความจำเป็น)
4. Linda set \_\_\_\_\_ shop doing sewing repairs and dressmaking. (สร้าง)

*(Productive Test for Patani Malay speakers)*

1. The next election in my village will \_\_\_\_\_ place on April 6th 2018. (no? jadi)
2. My grandpa died at the ripe \_\_\_\_\_ age of 99.(omor banyo?)
3. Stop cursing! There's no need \_\_\_\_\_ that kind of language. (perlu)
4. Linda set \_\_\_\_\_ shop doing sewing repairs and dressmaking. (wa')

## Appendix C: Receptive test

- |                              |                              |                              |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Take place                | 2. Have an attempt           | 3. Do mistake                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No  | <input type="checkbox"/> No  | <input type="checkbox"/> No  |
| 4. Big day                   | 5. Hard smoker               | 6. Classic music             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No  | <input type="checkbox"/> No  | <input type="checkbox"/> No  |
| 7. Work of                   | 8. Depend at                 | 9. Agree with                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No  | <input type="checkbox"/> No  | <input type="checkbox"/> No  |

## Appendix D: Interview guide

1. How did you find the tests? Which one is easier? Why?
2. I want to ask you some questions today about how English words are combined, for example make a mistake, heavy traffic, listen to music etc. so, have you ever learnt in school? Do you think it is important for you to know word combinations? (how and why or why not?), Do you have any problem with that? Give an example.
3. Which one do you find most difficult? (V+N, Adj+N, N+prep or V+Prep) Why?  
Are the following sentences correct? If one says  
“Would you mind opening the light for me?”  
“Please take a fast shower because I am in a hurry.”  
“Self-confidence on speaking in the public is necessary.”  
“It depends in you to go to America or UK.”
4. Have you ever misused English collocations? Give me an example.
5. When you speak, do you always think in your native language or in English? If they say sometimes, they will be asked when they think in English and when they think in their L1s.
6. Is it acceptable to say “make a crime”, “powerful coffee”, “search in”, put off the glasses?

Remarks : Standard Thai was used in the interview for both groups of participants.