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# **Habak, Lana, Bughat, and Other Terms: The Register used in *Tambal Binisaya***

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## **Abstract**

*Tambal binisaya* is the term used to refer to the alternative medicine used in Iligan City, Philippines. This form of treatment has been used for decades by quack doctors or *albularyos* and residents from low-income groups who cannot seem to afford “modern” treatments. Based on related researches and academic articles, it is suggested that a distinct communicative register is used by this kind of speech community. This is why this descriptive study, which used interviews, focus group discussions, observations and field notes, ventured to investigate the register used by *tambal binisaya* vendors in transacting with their patrons or when communicating among themselves. This study used a corpus obtained from 7 (seven) *tambal binisaya* vendors which revealed their profile and the register. Qualitative analyses indicated that all the vendors are women from middle to old age who were not able to finish school and mostly had this business as their only source of living. It was further discovered that the terms in *tambal binisaya* could fall under 5 themes. These themes are : protection and warding off (objects used to counteract supernatural entities such as witches and spirits), luck (objects used to attract good fortune or to attract blessings in love, education, spirituality or health, depending on the user’s desires), medication and treatment (objects used to treat ailments and diseases with natural and supernatural origins), afflictions (sicknesses and illnesses with natural and supernatural origins), and processes (terms which reveal how the medicines in *tambal binisaya* are used). Further analyses revealed that the terms used in *tambal binisaya* are linked with surrounding nature and the belief in the supernatural world. Finally, it is recommended to have other researchers engage in investigations similar to this to preserve the Filipino cultural heritage and identity in this globalizing world.

**Keywords:** Folk Medicine, Register, Spirituality, Terminologies, Themes

## 1. Introduction

According to the World Health Organization (2005), the practice of folk medicine in the republic of the Philippines is thought to have existed for hundreds of years, even before colonization by the Spaniards. The roots of traditional medicine appear to have originated from the practices of ethnic and indigenous groups of Filipinos. The assumption is that the spectrum of traditional medicine in the Philippines has been brought about by the influences mainly of ethnic Chinese traditional medicine systems, local folklore and experiments with the use of medicinal resources. Thus the Philippines due to the long influence from Spanish colonization, has merged its ancestral beliefs with the formal Christian influence. The use of amulets to ward off sickness, to protect from natural disasters and even from man-made aggression, is combined with prayers adapted from churches. In Iligan which is a Predominantly Roman Catholic City located in Northern Mindanao (Region 10), this kind of treatment is called *tambal binisaya* ([www.iligan.gov.ph](http://www.iligan.gov.ph)).

These *tambal binisaya* are being sold by small-scale vendors near St. Michael's Cathedral Parish. The medicines, which range from oils, roots, amulets, tree barks, and seeds are said to treat various ailments and afflictions such as flatulence, dysmenorrhea, fever, flu, and constipation, to name a few. Some even claim to have charms and trinkets which ward off curses, protect wearers from harm, and bless bearers with good luck in their business or their love life. Their typical patrons are *albularyos* or quack doctors and those people who come from lower income groups who cannot seem to afford "modern" treatments.

Interestingly, when the vendors transact with their costumers or when they converse among themselves, they use terms which are not quite familiar to most listeners. This is most likely their register. According to Radford (2009), A register is the specialized vocabulary common to a particular trade, occupation, topic or activity. Moreover, Yule (2010), mentions one of the defining features of a register is the use of jargon, which is special technical vocabulary associated with a specific area of work or interest. In social terms, jargon helps to create and maintain connections among those who see themselves as "insiders" in some way and to exclude "outsiders."

This is therefore the reason why this research is conceived, to be able to decipher the unfamiliar register used in *tambal binisaya*.

## 2. Method

In undertaking this study, seven Tambal Binisaya vendors were chosen as respondents. It employed a descriptive method using survey questionnaires, focus group discussions, field notes and observations. When all the data were gathered, the researcher then tabulated and glossed them with the aid of Wolff's Cebuano Visayan Dictionary for Sebuano terms, Oxford dictionary for proper names and English and Spanish words, and The New Philippines Comprehensive Dictionary & Thesaurus for Filipino words. Further analyses were done after tabulating and glossing the data.

### 3. Results

Table 1 shows the profile of the respondents. It includes their age, sex, address, educational attainment, years in stall operation, and reasons for having the stall.

**Table 1. Profile of the *tambal binisaya* vendors**

Name	Age	Sex	Residence	Educational Attainment	Years in stall operation	Reason for having the stall
Mirna Erano	32	Female	Bagong Silang, Iligan City	High School Graduate	almost 20 Years	<i>Wala nakahuman.</i> (She was not able to finish her studies.)
“Langga”	42	Female	Bacayo, Iligan City	1 <sup>st</sup> Year College	almost 10 Years	<i>Pamana</i> (Inheritance)
Michaela Ombing	35	Female	Iligan City	3 <sup>rd</sup> Year High School	30 Years	<i>Pamana</i> (Inheritance)
Benita Obsioma	62	Female	Mahayahay, Iligan City	High School Graduate	(since 1978) 38 Years	<i>Panginabuhi</i> (Livelihood)
Maribel Bernalez	33	Female	Del Carmen, Iligan City	High School Level	15 Years	Panginabuhi (livelihood)  Ang katoliko mahilig sa kinaraan (Catholics are fond of traditional ways.)  Ang tambal binisaya kinaraan (Tambal binisaya is traditional)
Florinda Cañares	51	Female	Fuentes, Iligan City	High School Level	5 Years	<i>Pamana</i> (Inheritance)
Michelle Navarce	32	Female	Tambo, Iligan City	High School Graduate	6 Years	To add income for the family

In terms of age, it is revealed that all the vendors are from middle to old age. The youngest ones are 32 years old while the oldest is 62 years old. Moreover, it is shown that all of them are women and are residents of Iligan City. In terms of educational attainment, it is apparent that all of them were not able to graduate from college. The highest educational attainment that one of them has is first Year College. All the rest either only finished high school or did not finish high school at all. In the Philippines, there is perhaps a penchant for a degree since it is the key to better jobs. That is probably why, some of the vendors remained in this kind of job (ranging from 5 to 38 years) because it is their only source of living. This is shown in the answers of three respondents who said that it is their *panginabuhi* or livelihood which is connected to the answer of one respondent who said that she is working there because she was not able to finish school. On the other hand, some decided to sell *tambal binisaya* because it likely holds sentimental value since they inherited their stalls from their parents. Uniquely though, one said that she is selling *tambal binisaya* because there are Catholics who are fond of traditional ways.

And by knowing the background of the vendors, one would be able to better understand the context of the *tambal binisaya* register since it is within these individuals where the register is used, enriched, and exist.

### 3.1. Register of Tambal Binisaya

This section discusses the different terms collected in the study. It is divided into five parts which are based on themes such as: protection and warding off, medications/ treatments, luck, sickness/ affliction, and processes.

#### Protection and Warding off

The following terms are related objects which are used to ward off evil spirits or to protect the user from different forms of harm.

Term	Meaning
Brilyanti [brljanti]	Gem which is mixed inside <i>habak</i> for protection
Habak [habak]	Amulet. It has various uses depending on the user's purpose. It could be used for protection, good luck, love or even wealth.
Inggu [inggu]	<i>Pili (Canarium ovatum)</i> Seeds which are mixed inside a bottle of <i>habak</i> or burned like an incense to protect pregnant women from harm
Insinsu [insinsu]	Incense
Kamangyan [kamanjan]	a dried form of the resin obtained from <i>almasíga</i> and other forest trees. It is burned over coals for its smoke, which is used in folk medicine and other rituals for magical purposes and also used as a mosquito smudge or for other non-magical purposes.
Lana [lana]	a concoction of oil and herbs having special curative properties or power to ward off evil of supernatural origin. It is mixed inside a bottle of <i>habak</i> .
Midalyun [midaljun]	protects the wearer from danger or harm.
Pulsiras nga lana [pulsiras nga lana]	it is used to warn the wearer if there are evil spirits around. The <i>lana</i> inside usually boils and oozes out of the hollow bracelet when danger is near.
Pulsiras sa bata [pulsiras sa bata?]	child's bracelet. It is used to protect a child from harm (esp. from supernatural beings).

<b>Term</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
Puti nga batu [puti? ŋa batu]	mixed inside <i>habak</i> for protection especially from evil spirits.
Tambagisa [tambagisa]	A seed which is put partly or wholly into the mouth or between the lips to protect the wearer from curse (esp.pikpik)
Tawas [tawas]	Alum. It is used by <i>albularyos</i> for rituals.
Tawastapul [tawastapul]	It is used as an incense.
Wagasn [wagas]	Seeds which are mixed inside <i>habak</i> for protection

As shown in the table, all the objects are used for protection against supernatural harm. These objects range from stones, seeds, incense, bracelets and amulets. All of which come from the surrounding nature and are believed to repel non-human entities such as spirits, ghouls, and even witches when used.

### **Medications/ treatment**

The following terms are related to objects which are used for medicine for both naturally and supernaturally caused ailments and conditions.

<b>Term</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
Agusu [agusu]	a bark of tree which is boiled. The extract is drank and is then used to treat relapse or to make menstruation stronger.
Agusukaswarina [agusukaswarina]	dried shrubs which are used to treat relapse and dysmenorrhea. It is soaked in wine and the extract is drank.
Asibar [asibar]	Seeds from the mahogany tree which are used to induce menstruation. It is also used to treat abnormal menstrual cycle.
Asupri [asupri]	Literally means sulfur. It is used to treat skin diseases.
Balugbug [balugbug]	small seeds which are used for the treatment of colic or heartburn. It is boiled and the extract is drank.
Banag [banag]	vines used to treat hemorrhage and <i>tingag</i> or relapse. It is boiled and the extract is drank.
Batubalisa [batubalisa]	Seeds used to treat affliction related to curse (da-ut). It is boiled and the extract is drank.
Bardsnis [bɑ̃ds nis]	it is used as an incense to treat of children who cannot go to sleep.
Bugayana [bugajana]	Powdered mixture of herbs and seeds which are used to treat flatulence and fever. It is boiled and the extract is drank.
Chinamut [tʃaInamut]	used as treatment for relapse or <i>bughat</i> . It is boiled and the extract is drank.
Dawa [dawaʔ]	small-seeded grass which are used to treat fever. It is boiled and the extract is drank.
Duguan [duguan]	twigs which are used to treat anemia and for recovery during miscarriage. It is boiled and the extract is drank. It is called this way because the extract is red which resembles blood ( <i>dugu</i> ).
Dugusaynamut [dugusaInamut]	used as treatment for relapse or <i>bughat</i> . It is boiled and the extract is drank.
Hurstil [hurstil]	herbs used to treat stomach ulcers and kidney stones. It is said that it could also boost appetite. It is called horsetail because it resembles a horse's tail.

<b>Term</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
Ilipanti [ilipanti]	a plant which is used for the treatment of hair fall. It is boiled and the extract is drank. It is called this way because it is shaped like the trunk of an elephant.
Kinilkig [kinilkig]	wood scraping which are used for the treatment of colic or heartburn. It is boiled and the extract is drank.
Kugang-kugang [kugang kugang]	low-growing, woody herb of waste places used to treat children who have the skin eruptions
Kulantru [kulantru]	used to treat <i>daut</i> . It is used by <i>albularyos</i> on their patients.
Lana [lana]	a concoction of oil and herbs having special curative properties or power to ward off evil of supernatural origin. It is applied on the affected area (usually massaged).
Makabuhay [makabuhaI]	herbs used to treat stomach ulcer. It is boiled and the extract is drank.
Maragaya [maragaja]	seeds which are used to treat <i>buyag</i> (esp. on the hands). The <i>albularyo</i> pokes a small hole on the hand and inserts a seed.
Sibukaw [sibukaU]	used as treatment for relapse or <i>bughat</i> . It is boiled and the extract is drank.
Tagulaway [tagulawaI]	used as treatment for relapse or <i>bughat</i> . It is boiled and the extract is drank.
Talimughat [talimughat]	used as treatment for relapse or <i>bughat</i> . It is boiled and the extract is drank.
Tinabu [tinabu?]	an herb used as an incense. It is used as treatment for children who cannot go to sleep.
Ubarina [ubarina]	used as treatment for ovarian problems and pregnancy It is boiled and the extract is drank.

It is revealed in the table that *tambal binisaya* offers a wide range of objects that are believed to have curative properties. And all though there are not much scientific evidences to prove such medicinal qualities, the vendors and the users nonetheless really believe in their effectivity. Some of the afflictions which *tambal binisaya* are said to treat are both natural and supernatural. Among the natural afflictions that *tambal binisaya* are said to treat are stomach ulcers, excessive hair fall, flatulence, skin eruptions, insomnia, relapse, colic, fever, and abnormal menstrual cycle. However, again, these are not yet scientifically proven. On the other hand, the supernatural afflictions which are believed could be cured by *tambal binisaya* are *buyag* and *daut* (curses).

## Luck

The next terms are associated with objects that bring luck to the users.

Term	Meaning
Bahay [bahaI]	Small red seeds which bring good fortune. they are mixed inside a bottle of <i>habak</i> .
Balay sa aninipot [balaI sa aninipot]	fireflies' house. It is used to bring good fortune. It is placed inside the cashbox.
Kandila [kandila?]	candle. They have different colors which could be lit for different purposes. Red=love Violet= spiritual gain Blue= peace and harmony Green= for money and fortune Pink- health Yellow= good spirit Orange= study or career
Kapinan [kapinan]	a kind of flat white shell mixed in a <i>habak</i> . It attracts good fortune.
million dollar [miljun dalar]	a kind of <i>lana</i> which is used to replenish the contents of a <i>habak</i> . It is said to attract love, money, or good health depending on the intention of the wearer.
Paduguk [paduguk]	a form of incense which attracts love, money, or good health depending on the intention of the person. It could also be mixed in a <i>habak</i> .
Pangamay [paŋamaI]	It comes from the <i>balete</i> tree and is placed inside the cashbox or mixed inside a <i>habak</i> to attract good fortune. It is shaped like a hand (Fil.kamay) which is why it is called pangamay.
Sihurs [sihurs]	It brings good luck to a person, esp. in business. It is placed inside the cashbox .

The table reveals that there are objects in *tambal binisaya* which could be used to draw or attract luck and fortune. Many of them are related to financial luck such as seahorse, pangamay, kapinan, bahay, balay sa aninipot and kapinan. Perhaps it could be inferred that there are indeed plenty of people who desire to become rich which is why there is a need for those kinds of charms. On the other hand, other charms are banking on intention and desire such as paduguk, million dollar and the use of kandila. Perhaps this is a reflection of the value of some people who strongly rely on fate and luck instead of actual hard work and perseverance.



### Sickness/ affliction

The next terminologies which follow are associated with ailments, conditions, and diseases that are believed to have natural and supernatural causes.

Term	Meaning
Atraytis <sup>1</sup> , giatraytis <sup>2</sup> [atraltis], [giatraltis]	Painful inflammation and stiffness of the joints <sup>1</sup> . to suffer from atraytis <sup>2</sup> .
Barang <sup>1</sup> , gibarang <sup>2</sup> [baran], [gibarang]	Sorcery whereby insects are introduced into the intended victim <sup>1</sup> . To be a victim of barang <sup>2</sup> .
Bughat <sup>1</sup> , nabughat <sup>2</sup> [bughat], [nabughat]	Sickness which results from leaving a sickbed or rising from childbirth too early, or from the return of a disease <sup>1</sup> . To suffer from bughat <sup>2</sup> .
Butud, gibuturan [butud], [gibuturan]	Flatulence <sup>1</sup> . To suffer from flatulence <sup>2</sup> .
Buyag <sup>1</sup> , nabuyagan <sup>2</sup> [bujag], [nabujagan]	disease afflicting a person or his possessions brought on by a compliment given by a <i>buyagan</i> or by a supernatural being <sup>1</sup> . To suffer from buyag <sup>2</sup> .
Daut <sup>1</sup> , gidaut <sup>2</sup> [daut], [gidaut]	harm with sorcery or for a supernatural being to inflict an illness <sup>1</sup> . To be a victim of daut <sup>2</sup> .
Dili katulog ang bata [dili? katulug an bata?]	A child cannot go to sleep
Gibinuangan [gibinuangan]	to experience ailment due supernatural beings or by witchcraft
Hilnat <sup>1</sup> , gihilnat <sup>2</sup> , gihilant <sup>3</sup> [hilnat], [gihilnat], [gihilant]	Fever <sup>1</sup> . To suffer from fever (it also signifies a past event) <sup>2</sup> . Adj. it describes the state of a person (he/she is having fever) <sup>3</sup> .
Hilu <sup>1</sup> , hiluan <sup>2</sup> [hilu], [hiluan]	N. poison someone by magical means <sup>1</sup> . V. It Signifies future event and reveals that the poisoning is to be done on somebody, n. one who practices magical poisoning <sup>2</sup> .
Kinabug [kinabug]	stay awake at night and sleep during the day like a bat.
Kabuhi <sup>1</sup> , gikabuhi <sup>2</sup> [kabuhi?], [gikabuhi?]	colic, heartburn <sup>1</sup> , to suffer from kabuhi <sup>2</sup>
Kagid <sup>1</sup> , gikagid <sup>2</sup> [gikagid], [gikagid]	contagious skin disease, characterized by small eruptions which develop white scales and itch intensely <sup>1</sup> , to suffer from kagid <sup>2</sup> .
Kalibanga <sup>1</sup> , gikalibanga <sup>2</sup> [kalibanga?], [gikalibanga?]	Constipation <sup>1</sup> , to suffer from kalibanga <sup>2</sup> .
Kidni <sup>1</sup> , gikidni <sup>2</sup> [kidni], [gikidni]	A hard mass formed in the kidneys, typically consisting of insoluble calcium compounds; arenal calculus <sup>1</sup> . To suffer from kidni <sup>2</sup> .
Layag <sup>1</sup> , gilayagan <sup>2</sup> [lajag], [gilajagan]	the missing of one's menstruation but not because of pregnancy <sup>1</sup> . To suffer from layag and it also describes a state <sup>2</sup> .
Luru <sup>1</sup> , nangluru <sup>2</sup> [luru], [nangluru]	for hair to fall out <sup>1</sup> . To describe the hair <sup>2</sup> .
Luspad <sup>1</sup> , nangluspad <sup>2</sup> [luspad], [nangluspad]	pale, for a person to have lost his color <sup>1</sup> , to look luspad <sup>2</sup> .
Luya <sup>1</sup> , nagluya <sup>2</sup> , galuya <sup>3</sup> [luya], [nagluya], [galuya]	weak, or lacking in strength of body or muscle <sup>1</sup> . To experience being luya in the past <sup>2</sup> . To experience being luya in the present <sup>3</sup> .

<b>Term</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
Minghoy [min̩huI]	appears weak
Nakwaan [nakwaan]	Miscarriage
Panuhut [panuhut]	muscular ache resulting from exposure to damp or draft, esp. during sleep.
Pikipik <sup>1</sup> , gikipik <sup>2</sup> , [pikipik], [gikipik]	A form of sorcery which causes pain and suffering to the victim. This is cast when the witch, called <i>mamikpikay</i> , taps or pats the victim. This curse could also be done even if the witch is afar as long as the victim is visible to his/her sight <sup>1</sup> . To be a victim of pikipik <sup>2</sup> .
Sakit <sup>1</sup> , nagsakit <sup>2</sup> , gasakit <sup>3</sup> , Sakit-sakit <sup>4</sup> [sakit], [nagsakit], [gasakit], [sakit sakit]	Sickness or ailment <sup>1</sup> , to suffer from sickness of ailment in the past <sup>2</sup> . to suffer from sickness of ailment in the present <sup>3</sup> . Various ailments <sup>4</sup>
Sakit ang ulo [sakit aŋ ulu]	Headache
Tingag [tiŋag]	Fatal relapse suffered by a woman who has recently had a baby, caused by overstrain or emotional disturbance.
Tipdas <sup>1</sup> , gitipdas <sup>2</sup> [tipdas], [gitipdas]	Measles <sup>1</sup> . To suffer from tipdas <sup>2</sup> .
Ulsir <sup>1</sup> , giulsir <sup>2</sup> [ulsir] [giulsir]	An open sore on an external or internal surface of the body, caused by a break in the skin or mucous membrane that fails to heal. This specifically pertains to stomach ulcers in Cebuano <sup>1</sup> . To suffer from ulsir <sup>2</sup> .

It is revealed in the register of *tambal binisaya* that they acknowledge afflictions which either have natural or supernatural origins. Among the afflictions with natural origins are measles, headache, stomach ulcers, kidney, relapse, etc. Alternatively, the afflictions with supernatural origins are curses, sorcery and diseases with magical roots.

### Processes

The following terms reveal how the products in *tambal binisaya* are used.

<b>Term</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
Asu <sup>1</sup> , paasu <sup>2</sup> [asu], [paasu]	Smoke <sup>1</sup> . To produce smoke (usually using incense) <sup>2</sup> .
Baga <sup>1</sup> , pabagahan <sup>2</sup> [baga], [pabagahan]	Ember <sup>1</sup> . To light up something with fire to form embers <sup>2</sup> .
Bukal <sup>1</sup> , ipabukal <sup>2</sup> , pabukalan <sup>3</sup> [bukal], [ipabukal] [pabukalan]	Boil <sup>1</sup> . To make a/the liquid (usually water) boil <sup>2</sup> . To let something (like herbs or roots) boil with the liquid (usually water) <sup>3</sup> .
Bulit <sup>1</sup> , bulitan <sup>2</sup> [bulit] [bulitan]	To caulk, plug up a hole or crack with viscous substances <sup>1</sup> . It Signifies future event and reveals that the caulking or plugging is to be done upon something or somebody <sup>2</sup> .
Haplas <sup>1</sup> , Haplisan <sup>2</sup> [haplas], [haplisan]	Something rubbed onto or a medicinal rub <sup>1</sup> . The process of applying a liquid or viscous material with broad strokes <sup>2</sup> .

Term	Meaning
Hugas <sup>1</sup> ihugas <sup>2</sup> , hugasan <sup>3</sup> [hugas], [ihugas], [hugasan]	To wash anything but clothes <sup>1</sup> . To use something for washing <sup>2</sup> . It Signifies future event and reveals that the washing is to be done upon something <sup>3</sup> .
Humul <sup>1</sup> , humulan <sup>2</sup> [humul], [humulan]	soak, steep <sup>1</sup> , . It Signifies future event and reveals that something will be soaked <sup>2</sup> .
Ihabak [ihabak]	To wear an amulet
Inum <sup>1</sup> , imnun <sup>2</sup> [inum], [imnun]	To drink <sup>1</sup> , signifies a future event and reveals that a form of liquid will be consumed entirely <sup>2</sup>
Laga <sup>1</sup> , lagaun <sup>2</sup> [laga], [lagaun]	broil water or water with <sup>1</sup> , It Signifies future event and reveals that something will be broiled <sup>2</sup>
Lina <sup>1</sup> , palina <sup>2</sup>	the material burned in the process of <i>palínà</i> <sup>1</sup> . a process of purification in folk medicine whereby some evil or bad effect is removed by exposing the victim to magical smoke, obtained from certain plants and compounds <sup>2</sup> .
Sagul <sup>1</sup> , isagul <sup>2</sup> [sagul], [isagul]	To mix <sup>1</sup> , it signifies a future event and indicates that the subject (ex. The herb) is the recipient of the action which is to mix <sup>2</sup> .
Sulud <sup>1</sup> , isulud <sup>2</sup> [sulud], [isulud]	Inside. <sup>1</sup> put something inside (indicates an action) <sup>2</sup>
Sumpa [sumpa?]	to counteract evil before it happens, usually of a magical nature.
Sunug <sup>1</sup> , sunugun <sup>2</sup> [sunug] [sunugun]	To burn <sup>1</sup> , signifies future event and it also signifies that the act of burning will be entirely done on something <sup>2</sup> .
Suut <sup>1</sup> , suutun <sup>2</sup> [suut], [suutun]	To Fit precisely over, around, or into <sup>1</sup> , it signifies a future event and reveals that someone will wear something <sup>2</sup> .
Tubil <sup>1</sup> , itubil <sup>2</sup> [tubil], [itubil]	To pour liquid into a container <sup>1</sup> , it signifies a future event and indicates that the subject (ex. The oil) is the recipient of the action which is to be poured into a container <sup>2</sup> .
Tumar <sup>1</sup> , tumarun <sup>2</sup> [Tumar], [Tumarun]	To drink <sup>1</sup> , signifies a future event and reveals that a form of liquid or solid(esp. pills and capsules) or a combination of the two will be consumed entirely <sup>2</sup>
Um-um <sup>1</sup> , um-umun <sup>2</sup> [umum] [umumun]	To put partly or wholly into the mouth or between the lips <sup>1</sup> . It Signifies future event and reveals that something will be put partly or wholly into the mouth or between the lips <sup>2</sup> .

The table reveals that there are various processes involved in the use of the *tambal binisaya* products. These processes range from boiling of herbs, drinking of extracts, wearing of amulets, pouring of oils in a charmed vessel, burning of incense, etc. It is believed that the products would only work if these are used in the right manner. That is why, it is very important to know these terminologies related to processes or the use of the products will be for naught.

#### **4. Discussion and Conclusion**

In conclusion, it is quite apparent that the register used by the *tambal binisaya* vendors was formed because of the need to fulfill communicative purposes in their trade which involved treatment of both natural and supernatural afflictions. And as mentioned by Wardaugh (2009), people participating in recurrent communication situation tend to develop similar vocabularies, similar features of intonation, and characteristic bits of syntax and phonology they use in these situations. That is why, this register was created, to be able to make sense of the world which the *tambal binisaya* vendors and their patrons are in.

Moreover, it is recommended that other researches engage in this form of research to protect the Filipino Identity and its cultural heritage in this globalizing world.

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# Morphology-Discourse Interface in Sinhala<sup>1</sup>

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## 1. Introduction

The information packaging such as Focus, Modality, and Topic are realized morphologically in Sinhala in the form of particles/suffixes. They can attach to any lexical category in an agglutinative fashion and take scope over the domain to the left. When the clause bears one of these particles showing any of the above discourse phenomena, the verb takes a special e-ending, as opposed to neutral a-ending. This special form the verb assumes is a notable syntactic characteristic of the Sinhala clause which warrants a detailed analysis. Example (1) is a neutral sentence, and (2-5) indicate the e-ending with a past tense verb.

1. Nimal            kaareka            seeduwa (**Neutral**)  
Nimal (Nom) car-def            wash (Pst)  
'Nimal washed the car'
  
2. Nimal            tamai kaareka            seeduwe/\*seeduwa (**Focus**)  
Nimal (Nom) Foc car-def            wash-E (Pst)  
'It was Nimal who washed the car'
  
3. Nimal            lu kaareka            seeduwe/\*seeduwa (**Evidential modality**)  
Nimal (Nom) Evid car-def            wash-E (Pst)  
'It is said that Nimal washed the car'
  
4. Nimal            ne kaareka            seeduwe/\*seeduwa (**Evaluative modality**)  
Nimal (Nom) Epis car-def            wash-E (Pst)  
'Nimal washed the car' (shared information)

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<sup>1</sup> An Indo-Aryan, spoken in Sri Lanka

5. Kau da kaareka seeduwe? /\*seeduwa (Wh)  
 Wh Q car-def wash-E (Pst)  
 ‘Who washed the car?’

However, in order for the e-suffix to surface, a number of other syntactic requirements are necessary, as shown below.

- a) The particular NP/DP should be in the narrow scope of the discourse particle (examples 2-5 above)

- b) Only one such particle can occur in a matrix clause (example 6)

- 6) \*Nimal tamai kaareka tamai seeduwe/seeduwa  
 Nimal (Nom) Foc car-def Foc wash-E (Pst)  
 ‘It was Nimal and it was the car he washed’

- c) When the discourse particle has wide scope (sentential scope), e-morphology does not appear (example 7)

- 7) Nimal kaareka seeduwa/\*seeduwe tamai/lu/ne  
 Nimal (Nom) car-def wash (Pst)/ wash-E (Pst) Foc/Evid/Epis  
 ‘It was Nimal who washed the car’  
 ‘It is said that Nimal washed the car’  
 ‘Nimal washed the car’ (shared information)

The above examples indicate the diverseness of discourse phenomena – such as focus, evidential modality, evaluative modality, and Wh- affected by e-marking on the verb. This differential behavior of the –e suffix highlights among other things: (1) it is not simply the modal/focus/wh- particle that determines the contrastive discourse interpretation, but the verbal inflection also takes part in this process. (2) It shows the scope marking potential of the discourse particle and the corresponding verbal morphology.<sup>2</sup> That is, when the discourse particle attaches to any phrase level constituent, the verb inflects for –e. This creates a set of alternatives out of which one individual/entity is given saliency. But, when the same particle attaches to the whole

<sup>2</sup> Karunatillake, W.S. (1992) calls this particular verb form with the –e suffix “emphatic verb”. However, he does not attempt a separate analysis of –e.

clause, it does not inflect for the–e suffix indicating that the alternative set is not available in this instance.

These examples which highlight the interaction of e-marking with the left periphery of the clause provide ample ground to explore the morphology-discourse interface with respect to Sinhala.

## 2. Objectives

This paper seeks to investigate morphology-discourse interface by examining the following in sufficient detail.

- a) What is this e-morpheme?
- b) What is the kind of phenomena that trigger it?
- c) Can the diverse discourse phenomena affected by this e-morphology be captured in a single generalization?

## 3. Theoretical Framework

The recent studies in the left periphery of the clause by Rizzi (1997, 1999), and Cinque (1999), have far reaching theoretical and empirical implications for further research on the clause structure of individual languages. Rizzi argues for a multiple layer approach to CP with two distinct head positions, FORCE and FINITENESS, interacting with two interfaces and activating a Topic Focus field. The C-system is interpreted as an interface between two layers of an information system, one interfacing with the domain of discourse - typing the clause as interrogative, relative, adverbial, etc., -- and the other interfacing with the domain of the sentence - expressing the content within IP, and determining its finiteness properties. Accordingly, the information contained in the higher structure is called the specification of Force (or Force) and the lower, more inward-looking structure headed by IP, as Finiteness. Unlike the Force-Finite system, which is an essential part of the C-system present whenever there is a CP, the topic-focus field is present in the structure only when it is activated, that is, when a constituent bearing topic or focus needs to be licensed by a Spec-Head criterion. Since Force and Finiteness closes off the C-system upward and downward, the topic-focus field is located between the two C-Heads on either side as shown below.

8) .....Force..... (Topic)..... (Focus).....Fin IP

The positions occupied by Force and Finiteness are justified on empirical grounds using the behavior of complementizers “di” and “che” in Italian (which Rizzi says is applicable to Romance in general).

Cinque (1999) proposes a universal hierarchy of functional heads represented by moods/modalities/tenses/and aspects which construct the natural language clause. Based on a wealth of cross-linguistic evidence, Cinque (1999) builds up the argument, that natural language clause is a construct of Moods, Modals, Tenses, and Aspects. He argues that these major clause-building categories are rigidly hierarchically ordered with respect to each other, as in (09) (Cinque (1999: 56).

- 9) MOOD speech act > MOOD evaluative > MOOD evidential > MOOD epistemic > T(Past) > T(Future) > MOOD (Ir)realis > ASP habitual > T(Anterior) > ASP perfect > ASP retrospective > ASP durative > ASP progressive > ASP prospective / MOD root > VOICE > ASP celerative > ASP completive > ASP(semel) repetitive > ASP iterative

Cinque further proposes that adverb phrases are unique specifiers of this fixed universal ordering of the set of Moods, Modals, Tenses, and Aspects.

Consequently, the above two proposals provide strong motivation to explore the discourse particles of Sinhala- focus, mood/modality and Wh- in a similar theoretical framework.

#### 4. Previous Literature

Gair, (1998), Hagstrom, (1998), Henadeerage, (2002), Kariyakarawana, (1998), (among others) have researched on Sinhala syntax. But there is no separate syntactic study on morphology-discourse interface where the interaction between verbal morphology (e- morpheme) and discourse phenomena is sufficiently explored. Also, most of these works are based on Chomsky's theory of Generative syntax – rather than cartographic. Nevertheless, their observations related to the verbal morphology (e- marking) of Sinhala are presented in brief below as this would throw light on how marginal is their treatment of this particular phenomenon.

Gair (1998) discusses the e-suffix as a special marking on the tensed verb which occurs in the focus construction. He concludes that the e-suffix indicates that the focus is external to the verb- that is, that the focus does not include the verb. He also generalizes that the clitics/ particles such as *da* (question), *yi* (emphasis or limitation), *tamai* (certainly, forsooth), *lu* (reportative) and *nan* (if) are Focus particles. Their occurrence on any constituent other than the verb requires the presence of the e-suffix.

Hagstrom (1998) discusses the WH question formation extensively by examining the syntax, morphology, and semantics of questions. Consequently he investigates the movement of the Q-particle (*da*) in Sinhala, the nature of the movement involved, constraints on movement, and the co-relation of Q-particle with e-morphology on the verb. Further, he discusses the Focus construction of Sinhala in relation to the question formation as the Q-particle “*da*” shows a similar distribution and shares similar scope marking properties. Hagstrom maintains that the role of e-suffix is central to the understanding of the movement relation and establishing the identity of the moving particle/constituent. He proposes that e- Suffix serves a scope marking function that depends on the distribution of the Q particle. Where Q (*da*) is clause internal, the embedded verb is marked with –e, but a clause peripheral Q (*da*) does not trigger -e on the verb. He identifies a strong syntactic parallel between WH and Focus on the basis of the above distributional evidence. He concludes that the e-morpheme is a morphological reflection of an unchecked feature and suffixation of the Q-head “*da*” or the focus head “*tamai*” can check this feature via movement.



Heenadeerage (2002) examines the role of the e-suffix in the context of the Sinhala focus construction. He identifies three distinct types of focus in Sinhala as Constituent Focus, Predicate Focus, and Clause-Final Focus. Constituent focus corresponds to morphological marking of focus with a focus particle where a pre-verbal constituent followed by the focus marker receives focus in the discourse. In this case the verb is e-marked. Predicate focus refers to the propositional focus where a focus particle occurs in the clause final position so that the whole proposition is focused. This does not trigger e- on the verb. The post verbal position (with the verb e-marked) where a constituent receives focus is identified as Clause Final focus. This is also identified as syntactic focus in literature. He too lists the particles *tamai* (focus), *yae* (dubitative), *lu* (reportative), *da* (Q-marker), *nang* (conditional), and *ne* (tag) as focus markers so that they share the same structural position and distribution.

Kariyakarawana (1998) investigates the focus phenomena of Sinhala in the theoretical framework of Government and Binding (Chomsky: 1981, 1982, and 1986 a, b) and attempts a comprehensive analysis of the focus construction. His critical examination of focus includes the cleft construction, WH movement, focus particles, focus and pre-supposition, and the verb marking. He lists the particles *lu* (reportative), *da* (interrogative), *ne* (tag), *tamai* (Foc) as focus markers that make any constituent immediately preceding one of them morphologically focused and observes that they attribute a contrastive meaning to the whole proposition, or a constituent that comes under the scope of such a particle thereby contributing to the propositional focus/constituent focus dichotomy. He generalizes that the different particles that encode some degree of focus and have a similar distribution are focus particles. Consequently, a critical investigation of the above particles and the corresponding e-marking on the verb has not been attempted.

A general observation that can be made regarding studies on Sinhala focus (and WH questions) that have been discussed in the preceding sections is the centrality of all the arguments and evidence on the focus phenomenon alone. On the basis of focus encoding properties displayed by such particles as *lu* (rep), *ne* (Tag), *yae* (Dub), *da* (Q), *nang* (If), and their similar distribution, all such particles have been subsumed under Focus. Consequently no attempt has been made to establish the exact identity of these particles and their relation to e-morphology in terms of morphology-discourse interface.

## 5. Methodology

Data for the present study consisted of the grammatical judgments of native speakers of Sinhala. Since the aim of generative syntax is to model the native speaker competence by examining his performance, this study too relied on such native speaker grammatical judgments. Although the researcher himself is a native speaker of Sinhala, it was still necessary to rely on a rather larger corpus. Hence, a sample of 10 native speakers representing different age groups was selected. This included 03 children aged between 8-13, and 6 adults in the age group of 30-60. The researcher too was considered as a member of the sample. About 40 sentences/questions were presented to them with different ordering of modality, focus, and Wh- particles. This was necessary in order to judge the scope properties of such discourse particles, in addition to testing accuracy of the utterances. The utterances included both matrix and embedded sentences.

## 6. Analysis and Discussion

### 6.1 Tense and Agreement in Sinhala

The verb inflects for Tense in Sinhala (example 10). However, the verb does not inflect for person/number/gender agreement (Phi-agreement) (example 12). (Kariyakarawana, Chandralal, Gair, Gair and Sumangala)

10) Nimal            kaareka            soodanava/seeduwa  
Nimal (Nom) car-def            wash (Prs)/wash(Pst)  
'Nimal is washing the car/Nimal washed the car'

11) A: oyala            monava-da            kanne/kaeve?  
You (pl)            what-Q            eat (pres) –e/ eat(pst)-e  
'What are you eating?/ What did you eat?'

12) B: **Mama** paan kanava/**kæva**, **Nimal** bath kanava/**kæva**, **meyala** roti kanava/**kæva**  
I bread eat (pres/pst) Nimal rice eat (pres/pst) these people roti eat (pres/pst)  
'I eat bread, Nimal eat rice, these (people) eat roti'  
'I ate bread, Nimal ate rice, these (people) ate roti'

Information structure encoding in Sinhala presents a challenge to the minimalist assumptions where topic/focus related information are considered pragmatic property and hence are not well motivated in the narrow syntax. In Sinhala, the picture is different as focus/modality encoding takes place morphologically through particles. Essentially, then these lexical items/particles should be in the lexicon before they become a Numeration, must have semantic features, and get computed in syntax. Hence, in a way, information structure of the clause is pre-determined. This indicates that, what drives the derivation cannot be the formal features alone, but the feature composition of the discourse particles too. Therefore, the morphological encoding of focus in Sinhala offers further empirical justification for a cartographic approach. This is not surprising because there are other languages too which realize information packaging overtly through particles/suffixes. Aboh (2010) presents evidence from Kwa and Bantu languages, notably from Gungbe and Zulu for focus encoding through focus markers (wC), (ya).

Thus, in line with the cartographic approach adopted by Rizzi (1997) and Cinque (1999), I propose that the information packaging particles in Sinhala (modal/focus) are distinct functional heads. Their head order is determined by their order of occurrence as shown in the following sections.

## 6.2 Head Order

In Sinhala, Focus and an evaluative/epistemic modal cannot co-occur, as shown in the following examples. Example (13) shows narrow scope marking while examples (14-15) show wide scope marking of the discourse particles. In both, these heads cannot co-occur in either order.

- 13) \*Nimal tamai lu/ne kaareka seeduwe  
Nimal (Nom) Foc Evid/Eval car-def wash-E (Pst)  
'It was Nimal as the people say/shared information/(disappointment) who washed the car'

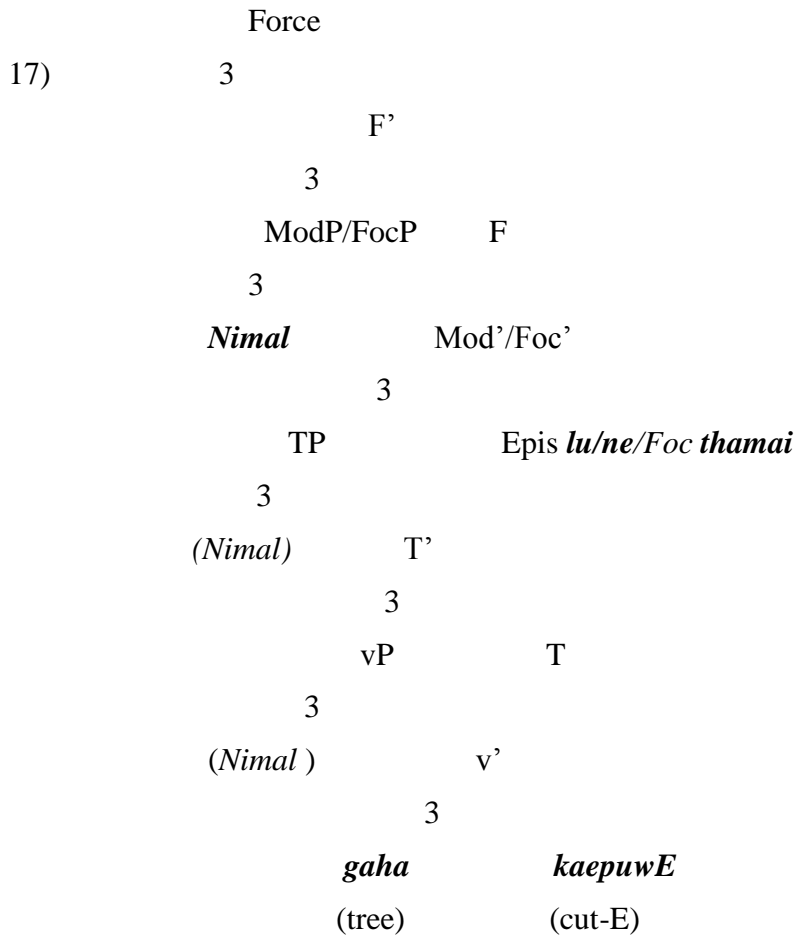
- 14) \*Nimal gaha kaepuwa thamai lu/ne  
Nimal tree cut(past) Foc Evid/Eval

- 15) \*Nimal gaha kaepuwa lu/ne thamai  
Nimal tree cut(past) Evid/Eval/ Foc

This complementary distribution shows that both Focus and epistemic modals compete for the same Head position. Further, these Heads are located in the C- domain, below Force. That these Heads are located below Force is evident as the highest Head in the clause is the C/Force as shown below (16).

- 16) [Nimal **thamai** gaha kaepuwe **kiyala**] Amma kiuwa  
Nimal Foc tree cutE(past) Comp mother said  
'Mother said that it was Nimal who cut the tree'

The syntactic analysis I propose for the information packaging particles in Sinhala is that, in narrow scope marking, the particular DP moves to the Spec of the Modal Projection, triggering Spec-Head agreement. What triggers this movement is the feature checking requirement of the particular Head and the DP. An overt reflex of this Agree relation is the –e marking on the verb (17).



## 7. Conclusion

This paper sought to investigate morphology-discourse interface with respect to data from Sinhala. The major claim in the proposal was that the e-marking on the finite verb which surfaces when there is a discourse particle in the clause provides sufficient evidence for morphology-discourse interface. As revealed in the data and the analysis, this e-marking also contributes to the particular modal/focus/Q/Wh interpretation. Although Sinhala lacks overt Person/Number agreement, it displays some information structure related agreement which is between a higher functional Head (Foc/Mod) and a lower constituent (NP/DP).

As discourse particles in Sinhala are introduced lexically in the derivation, and, among other things, these discourse particles determines the surface structure of the sentence, Sinhala provides sufficient evidence for discourse configurability. Since this e-morpheme is an overt reflex of an Agree relation, agreement in this language is tied to discourse phenomena. Sinhala speakers acquire these information structure sensitive particles as part of the lexicon.

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# Common Morphological Errors in English Writing of First Year Undergraduates of Vavuniya Campus as Second Language Learners

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## Abstract

This study aimed at investigating the frequently made common morphological errors in writing of the first year undergraduates of the Faculty of Business Studies of the Vavuniya Campus and to provide some solutions to these problems. The scripts of seventy two respondents were qualitatively analyzed. The respondents are multi-ethnic as Tamils, Sinhalese and Muslims. They are in the age group of twenty one to twenty three. The data were collected by conducting a creative writing test based on the particular topic. The findings of the study reveals that the students face problems in using the grammatical morphemes, the plural *-s*, the possessive *-s*, the simple present tense third person singular *-s* (subject-verb agreement).

**Keywords:** error, error analysis, grammatical morphemes, omission

## 1. Introduction

In this modern competitive globalized world, demand and necessity for English language has become prominent. There is no doubt in the concept. The language brings everyone under one roof by successful communication. English language is taught as a second language in many of the countries including Sri Lanka. Language learning deals with four important skills such as reading, writing, listening and speaking. All these four skills are inter-related and inter-dependent; reading skill gets better writing and listening skill improves speaking. Students are incompetent in the application of grammatical morphemes for various reasons. Though, plural –s comes first in the hierarchy order of the acquisition, still they have problems in using them. For example, the plural –s is a widely inflected morpheme and it has many allomorphs like –es, –ies, –ives, –ves, –en and zero allomorph (man-men); so the students face problems in using such grammatical morphemes successfully in writing.

However, students face more difficulties in writing compared to other skills. Since writing is more formal and professional it needs perfectionism rather than speaking. So, producing a flawless writing is a challenging task for students. Students often makes errors in their writing by omitting a necessary element. The grammatical morpheme, the third person singular –s is omitted in the context. Using simple present tense, third person singular in writing is also a great challenge for the students as the subject-verb agreement involvement is in the process. Grammatical morphemes are the smallest meaningful units of sound which function to express grammatical relationships. They are markers such as the plural –s, the possessive –s and the third person singular –s.

For the present study, three morphemes were selected such as the plural –s, the third person singular –s, which are the basic morphemes to construct any simple sentences. The Sri Lankan students dominantly use the morphemes in their writings while making many of the errors in their use.

### 1.1 Significance of the study

This study contributes to improve teaching and learning of English language by identifying the learners' common, frequently made errors and the problems students face in applying the correct grammatical morphemes. The reasons behind the poor performance in writing skill can be identified and improved. Error analysis is useful in second language learning because it reveals the problematic areas to teachers, syllabus designers and text book writers. Therefore, it is needed for teachers to identify these frequently appearing errors, and remind students of these errors as often as possible so that they can make greater effort to avoid them and improve their writing.

### 1.2 Research problem

The problem associated with this study is to find why students are unable to produce an error-free piece of writing in their own at the tertiary level in the university though they had studied English as a second language for nearly ten to twelve years in their primary and secondary education.

### 1.3 Objective of the study

To identify the errors made and the problems students of the Bachelor of Business Management of Vavuniya Campus face in learning and using grammatical morphemes.

### 1.4 Literature review

Understanding the word structure is effective for English language learners (Kieffer & Lesaux, 2008). When a word takes grammatical characteristics of function, the form is grammaticalized. Morpheme is defined by (Cook, 1993) as the smallest unit of language that

conveys a meaning or that has a role in grammatical structure. Studying the word structure can help students get a contextual understanding of the grammar. Morphological awareness helps students in writing error-free text. No learning happens without making errors. Since learning is a lifelong process errors are inevitable. "Making of errors is a strategy employed by children acquiring their mother tongue and by those learning a second language (Corder, 1974). According to Carl James (1998), error analysis developed out of the belief that errors indicate the learner's stage of language learning and acquisition. Norrish (1987 cited by Mungungu, 2010) defines an error as a systematic deviation when a learner has not learnt something and consistently gets it wrong. Systematic deviation can be interpreted deviation which happens repeatedly. Corder says this as he or she produces a form on the basis of analogy: 'look-looked': 'catch-catched' Ellis (1996 cited by Mungungu, 2010:29) states that overgeneralization errors occur when learners yield deviant structures based on other structures of the target language, while ignorance of rule restrictions refers to the application of rules to inappropriate contexts. Ellis (1997) reveals that "classifying errors in these ways can help us to diagnose learners' learning problems at any stage of their development and to plot how changes in error patterns occur over time." Corder (1993) says that "Errors are the result of partial knowledge because the teaching-learning process extends over time. Language is a self-contained system all parts being interconnected, a system of systems. In a sense nothing is 'fully' learned until everything is 'fully' learned".

## 2. Methodology

Seventy two first year undergraduates from the Bachelor of Business Management Program were selected as a sample for this study. The subjects came from different livelihood backgrounds as remote to metropolitan. Convenience sampling method was used. The significance of the sample selection of this study has two main purposes as the students' arrival to the university was right from the secondary education and they were easily accessible to the researcher who conducts sessions on a regular basis for this batch of students. The students are native speakers of Tamil and Sinhala and many of them belong to all the parts of Sri Lanka. Further, it was confirmed that all the subjects taken into this study have studied English in their schools as a second language. Medium of instructions in the campus is only English for their academic programmes.

The collected data were analyzed qualitatively. The aim of the creative writing assignment was to test their ability in the use of the morphemes naturally while focusing on the content of the essay. In the creative writing, an essay was given on the topic of 'University education and declining of discipline'. The word-limit was 250 words. After the allocated time of 30 minutes, the compositions were collected and analyzed.

The error analysis followed the below given steps based on Corder's error analysis method:

- (1) Identification of errors
- (2) Description of errors
- (3) Explanation /interpretation of errors

The above three steps are very important to achieve the findings. One of the main errors was identified as omission of a needed grammatical morpheme based on the three morphemes as they were chosen because they were the most frequent errors and the researcher considered them as serious errors which affect the grammaticality of sentences.



Analyzing the errors is the best way to show the proficiency level of the target language students are learning at a particular point of time. It helps the second language researchers to identify the students' learning problems as well as the factors generating it.

### 2.3 Error analysis

The morphological errors committed by the respondents were identified as omission of errors which is one of the major errors students make over and over again. The aim was to identify the types of errors, based on the use of the three morphemes by the respondents.

### 2.4 Errors of omission

Omission of errors means omitting a required element. It is widely found in the respondents' open-ended assignment (creative writing). Learners apply various strategies to develop their interlanguage. The different kinds of errors learners produce reflect different learning strategies. Omission of errors suggests that learners are in some way simplifying the learning task by ignoring grammatical features. Also, some of the respondents feel that certain structures are difficult to produce so that they avoid them as a result error of omission occurs.

Table 1 shows the respondents' erroneous forms in the examples 1-14 for the error of omission in the plural -s. The asterisk mark denotes erroneous forms.

**Table 1**

SN	Erroneous forms	Acceptable forms
1	The country has a <b>savaral</b> <b>*university</b>	The country has several <b>universities</b>
2	But <b>*nowaday</b> university education is destroyed by the <b>savaral factor</b> ...to <b>*all the university system</b>	But nowadays, university education is destroyed by <b>several factors</b> and it is a big problem to university system (or in universities)
3	<b>so many thing are</b> happening	So <b>many things</b> are happening
4	the government try to impose <b>*some rule and regulation</b> about the raging of <b>the new university student</b>	Nowadays, the government tries to impose <b>some rules and regulations</b> in preventing ragging newly admitted university students
5	<b>*Some of university student</b> do the political in the university	<b>Some of the university students</b> are engaged in political activities within universities
6	<b>*all the university system</b> in the country are facing so many difficulties; ... <b>all knowledgeable person</b> of a country.	<b>All the universities</b> in the country are facing so many difficulties
7	Not only this problem but also <b>*other political problem</b> there are.	Not only this problem but also there are <b>other political problems</b>
8	Otherwise the government has to face <b>*lot of problem</b> because university in main place of developing country	Otherwise, the government has to face <b>lot of problems</b> because university is in (or is the main place) the main place of any developing country.

SN	Erroneous forms	Acceptable forms
9	Therefore, the education activities also destroy and Not only that but also <b>*discipline of student are</b> destroyed	Therefore the educational activities are also destroyed and not only that, but also the <b>discipline of the students</b> are also destroyed.
10	According to z-score level they enter <b>one of the university</b> among 13 universities	According to their z-score performance, they enter <b>one of the 13 universities</b> .
11	Senior students are try to give <b>*some kind of punishment</b> for their freshers.	Senior students try to give <b>some kind of punishments</b> to their freshers
12	<b>*There is</b> declining a discipline	<b>There is a</b> decline in their discipline
13	<b>*All the universities</b> in Sri Lanka <b>has</b> so many problems	All the universities in Sri Lanka have so many problems
14	They learn the <b>*many discipline</b> from the school	They learn the <b>many disciplines</b> from the school

#### 2.4.1 Omission of the plural -s

In the example 1, the intention of the respondent is to pluralize the entity, 'university', but in his writing, he fails to use the correct plural morpheme indicator, *-ies* with the noun which is modified by a plural adjective, 'several'. However, the respondent uses the indefinite article, *a*, that is in conflict with the adjective modifier but in agreement with the singular noun. This shows that the ignorance of the number agreement with the article and the modifier which reveals its plural idea semantically, not as a grammatical morpheme. The word 'several' needs a plural noun.

In the examples 2 and 3, the same types of errors are observed, such as 'the several factor' and 'so many thing'. The determiner 'many' is also an indicator of the plural form, but, the respondent ignores that and writes as 'many thing' but subsequently using the correct auxiliary be verb, 'are' in agreement. 'All the university system' also falls into the same category in which the universal determiner is in plural sense but the noun, 'system' is singular creating disagreement between the modifier and the noun in number. Further, the respondent writes as 'all knowledgeable person' in the example 6; the universal determiner, 'all', is in disagreement with the attributed noun, 'person'.

The respondent writes as 'nowaday', nearly four times in the piece of creative writing by omitting *-s*, the plural marker. These types of errors are seemed to be registered permanently in their mind which is called fossilization. The respondent fails to place the correct plural marker-*s* at times.

The respondent mentions as 'some' as an adjectival modifier which should have plural nouns, 'some rules and regulations' (e.g. 4). The respondent has the correct thought in his mental schema but the ignorance of rules leads him for the poor presentation. Further, 'some' functions as a pronoun as well as an adjective. One can observe it in the following examples: *some are happy to help* (*some-pronoun*); *some people are happy* (*some-adjective*). The reason for omitting the plural -s can be expounded that the respondents do not realize that determiners such as 'some' and 'many' require plural nouns. These errors occur due to the lack of training or incomprehensibility of the rule. The respondents have displayed confusion in the use of different plural forms.

In the example 5, the respondent omitted the definite article, 'the' and the plural -s in the phrase, 'some of university student'. When 'some of' is used, the question raises 'of which', a particularization, 'the' follows usually.

This noun phrase with 'some' has some interesting point to be explained because generally 'some' has the plural meaning which the respondent does not consider that and writes in a singular sense. The simple expectation is that it should be 'some kinds of punishments'. However, Forero (2009) said that there are two kinds of some: the one that means "(a) certain unspecified", and the one that works like an indefinite article for plural or non-countable nouns. In "It is some kind of pen", "kind of pen" is singular count, so this 'some' is of the first kind. In "These are some kinds of pens", it could be either kind of some but is more likely meant to be the indefinite article kind of some.

In the example 6, the subject of the sentence is singular but the verb used is plural; 'university student' is a collective noun in grammar. It is more appropriate to write 'university students' since the respondent mentions about a general opinion about students. Further sociologically speaking, what is going on in universities is mob psychology. Individual student misbehave rarely in isolation; they commit a violation in groups appropriate to their age. The phrase, 'all the university' reveals the disagreement of the universal collective number with the singular entity 'university' but the expression, 'all the university system' not only reveals the number disagreement but also the respondent is confused with abstract word, 'system', and the concrete word, 'university'. The respondents need clear understanding about the abstract entities which should be distinguished from concrete entities at the tertiary level of education in which they will study more abstract and theoretical ideas than the concrete ones.

In the example 7, the respondent wants to express not a single particular problem but the 'other' existing problems too. Nevertheless, the respondent is not clear of what 'other' stands for; as a result, he uses the wrong forms of the morphemes. 'Other' is a grammatical word used to show a thing, person, or situation which is additional or different. Therefore, after 'other', a plural noun should be placed. In the example 8, again there is a disagreement between the plural head noun, 'lot', and the complement, prepositional phrase, 'of problem', in number.

'All' is a plural indicator. The respondent tries to say that the whole university system in plural sense; he is unable to express correctly in a way he really thinks because of the language barrier. It is an error of omission of the plural marker in the sentence. There is a misunderstanding at the semantic level, that is, the student means 'all the universities' in institutional terms but uses 'system' in an abstract sense. Further a singular verb 'has' is used with the subject 'all universities' (e.g. 13).

In the example10, the respondent wants to say ‘one of the 13 universities’ but he writes without the plural marker-*s* (with the morphophonemic alteration *-ies*). The significant error that featured prominently in the writings of the respondents surveyed is the choice of a plural verb with one of..., each of..., some of..., constructions. In simple present tense in a construction such as this, to satisfy the requirement of agreement between the subject and the verb, a singular verb in its present form with the addition of *-s* inflection is needed.

#### 2.4.2 Omission of the possessive –‘s

Some respondents omitted the possessive –‘s where it is needed. In this context, error of omission has taken place. If this type of error takes place in spoken language, the listener can understand (mutual intelligibility) the answer or the idea of the speaker. It does not affect the semantic of the sentence; therefore, it is a negligible or it is taken as a mistake of tongue slip in the spoken language. In writing, it is an important feature and if the writer omits –‘s that is considered as a serious error in the context. So, the readers can understand how the grammatical morphemes influence the writing skill.

**Table 2**

SN	Erroneous forms	Acceptable forms
1	We are still learning in spend our * <b>parents</b> ^ <b>money</b>	We are still learning spending our <b>parents’</b> money.
2	* <b>Today</b> ^ students are* <b>tomorrow</b> ^ president^.	<b>Today’s</b> students are <b>tomorrow’s</b> presidents.
3	Most of * <b>the universities</b> ^ degree programme should end at least 4 years	The Degree programmes of most of the universities are maximum 4 years
4	And also the university * <b>student</b> ^ <b>discipline</b> also <b>declining</b>	Discipline of the university students (or university <b>students’</b> discipline) is also declining

#### 2.4.3 Omission of the third person singular -s

The omission of the simple present tense third person singular *-s* morpheme is the most common and prominent morphological error found in the writings of the respondents. This is a frequently made common error by the L2 learners. The subject–verb agreement only decides the form of the verb. The factor clearly shows respondent’s difficulty in using the morpheme third person singular effectively in writing. It can be detected as a higher interference of learners’ first language towards the error. The respondents’ mother tongues, Tamil and Sinhala languages do not have the third person singular which appears in English. Therefore, it is a strange concept to their first language. As a consequence of this difference most of the respondents commit errors on third person singular. So, understanding the word structure is effective for English language learners (Kieffer & Lesaux, 2008). As a result of omission, they produce the verbs in the sentences with a bare stem as in the table below:

**Table 3**

SN	Erroneous forms	Acceptable forms
1	* <b>They hopes</b> to, we learn well& come a good place in a society.	<b>They hope</b> that we learn well and come to a good place in the society.
2		
3	Because * <b>parent think</b> the effectiveness of their children's going down	<b>Parents think</b> that their children need not to go to university because the positive social characteristics of their children going down
4	When the * <b>student come</b> to universities, most of the people are innocent	The University <b>students come</b> from different places. When the student comes to universities, most of the people are innocent.
5	... <b>it take</b> 5 or 6 years to finish the university education	... <b>it takes</b> 5 or 6 years to finish the university education.
6	So many <b>problems occurs</b> between government and university student.	Many <b>problems occur</b> (there have been many conflicts) between the government and university students

### Discussion, Conclusion and Suggestion

Errors are the evidence that the learning is taking place. The findings on error analysis can be used to determine what a learner still needs to be taught. They provide the necessary information about what is lacking in his /her competence. At the university level, within the three or four years of the study, it is a serious challenge for them to improve in this aspect. Another interesting point is that English language teaching and learning takes place during the first and second years only. The learning from making errors should have been completed at the secondary level of education in schools.

The results of the study show that the respondents make errors in basic grammar, at the tertiary level. They face serious problems in using the plural-s, the simple present tense third person singular -s and the possessive -s. They are considerably weak in using the grammatical morphemes successfully. To study their problems, error analysis is an efficient tool to identify the nature of errors in specific and to improve teaching and learning of grammatical morphemes applying appropriate techniques. Further, the error analysis can help the teachers identify the language problems students face in their writing for academic purposes so that teachers can focus more attention on these types of errors. These insights into language learning problems are useful to teachers as it provides information on common trouble-spots in language learning which can be used in the preparation of effective teaching materials. Studying the errors teachers can well-equip students minimize or overcome their learning problems. The findings of this study can provide insights in revising the syllabus to be implemented in an activity based grammar class. Based on the error analysis made in this study, the teachers can focus on structures where grammatical errors are frequently committed such as in the case of the use of all the allomorphs of the plural morphemes -s, -en, -ies, -es, -ves, possessive -s and the third person singular -s. This could be achieved by developing instructional materials focusing on such structures and spending more time on writing tasks.

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# Pagtuki sa Binalaybay: A Stylistic Analysis of Sebuano Figurative Language in Iligan National Writers Workshop's Sebuano Poems

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## Abstract

The place of poetry in Sebuano culture is central. Yet, no adequate compendium of poetry in Sebuano exists despite the abundant number of figurative expressions present in Sebuano, an Austronesian language spoken as a native language by a majority of the people in the Philippines.

This study intends to discover which expressions in Sebuano poems are figurative through markers that indicate a non-literal interpretation, and which traditionally-introduced categories are most commonly used among these expressions found in Sebuano poetry. The corpus of this paper are Sebuano poems found in the Poetry section of Volumes 1 to 20 (1994 to 2013) proceedings of the Iligan National Writers Workshop, a pioneering literary development in Mindanao after the two leading workshops in the country, namely that of University of the Philippines and Silliman.

The data was analyzed in terms of (a) Levin's linguistic deviation (1969); (b) McArthur and Perrine's markers of figurativeness (1992, 1982); and (c) categorization and characterization of figurative language. The study found that while there are those expressions that fall under the categories namely: metaphor, personification, simile, hyperbole, onomatopoeia, and synecdoche; there are, however, recurring patterns of Sebuano figurative expressions that defy categorization and are referred to by the researchers as 'Emerging Sebuano Figurative Language Categories,' including categories referred to by the researchers as (a) change of state and (b) animation.

This paper explores the depths and complexities of Sebuano figurative language and presents these findings as a preliminary description of Sebuano figurative language.

**Keywords:** Sebuano, linguistic deviation, markers of figurativeness, figurative language

# University Entrance Exams in Thailand: Case of the French Section, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Khon Kaen University.

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## Abstract

The supply of motivated and capable students depends on the selection procedure for university admissions. For this reason, such procedures are of critical importance. In Thailand there are two separate procedures: direct selection by a university in its geographic zone, called Quota, and a national-level selection process known as Admission. Nearly all exams under these procedures are multiple choice-type exams except secondary school grades which count for 20% of Admission and 5% of Quota. On average, exam results are inferior to 50% for subjects in the Thai language relying mainly on memorization. Average results are even lower for foreign languages and mathematics – thus effectively near zero when the effects of pure chance are removed. Overall results for students in the French section are slightly better than the averages. Correlation analysis shows that the average of secondary school results (GPAX) is a better indicator of university success than university entrance exams. The utility of existing selection procedures can be questioned despite differences in the secondary educational system, in particular given the national standardized exam administered in the last month of secondary school (O-NET M6).

**Keywords:** Admission, Quota, University Entrance Exams, Thailand.



## 1. Introduction

This study is motivated first and foremost by our desire to educate students well. University entrance exams play an essential role, because they should enable the selection of motivated students with the capacity to learn. It is thus of interest to know, first, how students are selected, given that the selection process is both complex and relatively unknown. Next we were interested in knowing whether entrance exams allow differentiation between students who will gain the full benefits of their four years of university education, and those who will benefit little or, worse, drop out before obtaining their degree.

The second reason for undertaking the study is more complex. The findings of previous research into the reasons behind the relative underperformance of many of our students in French language and grammar pointed to a worrying conclusion: their difficulties were not due to gaps in their education or to interferences between their mother tongue and the foreign language, but rather to a broader rejection of learning.

The usual hypotheses used to explain such a situation range from teaching methods to the quality of both teachers and students. While all except the last of these may have some justification, all converge towards the notion of motivation.

The hypothesis explored in this study is that the system used to evaluate students' capacities is one of the critical factors explaining the lack of motivation of a part of our students. Given that the Admission and Quota procedures are but the most visible and prevalent elements of the current system of evaluation and selection used in the Kingdom, a critical exploration of this system should be welcome.

## 2. Method

Two types of data were required for the study.

**A. Personal data on students in the French section**, such as their entrance exam results as well as their grade point averages in secondary school and at university.

Given that we wanted to study the correlation between entrance exam results and student performance at university, those included in the study had to have completed university. Some limitations were imposed by lack of upstream or historical information. Given these considerations, the classes of 2550 to 2556 (2007 to 2013) were selected for the study.

Another difficulty was the identification of students to include in the database, as the Admission and Quota procedures generate a relatively high number of drop-outs not due to difficulties encountered during the course of study. To be selected students must, at a minimum, have taken their first semester exams and have a GPA above 0. As such, our sample excluded those who were accepted into the section but did not actually pursue any studies in it – most frequently because they had decided to follow a different course of study. 438 students were registered in the database.

## **B. Data concerning the national procedure (Admission) and the University of Khon Kaen procedure (Quota)**

These data include the exams themselves, averages and distributions of results, as well as scoring methods.

Data up to the year 2558 or even 2559 (GAT) were used to ensure current information.

Given the shortcomings of exam result archives (lack of methodical archiving procedures and unavailability for consultation, except for averages for the O-NET exams) and that helpful programmers and public service employees do have more urgent tasks, our data were obtained from a range of sources as follows:

- State of Thailand websites such as *www.niets.or.th* or *cuas.or.th*
- University of Khon Kaen website: *www.kku.ac.th*
- Documents stored in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences or the French section
- Websites of tutorial schools such as *www.dek-D.com* or *www.theactkk.net*

Finally, it is important to note that the data were not always reliable. Differences emerged for our sample depending on whether information came from Bangkok or from Khon Kaen. Procedures were not consistent, nor did they always follow official or published processes. The general impression is one of a sector suffering from a lack of continuity.

Data were recorded on Microsoft Excel. The analysis and creation of graphics were made with Microsoft Excel and SPSS Statistics 17.0.

## **3. Results**

### **3.1. University entrance exams**

Except for the entrance to some renowned urban schools or assignment to certain classes, selection rate based on intellectual criteria is very low during secondary school. Thus, the essential is to pass the university entrance exam.

#### **3.1.1 University entrance modes**

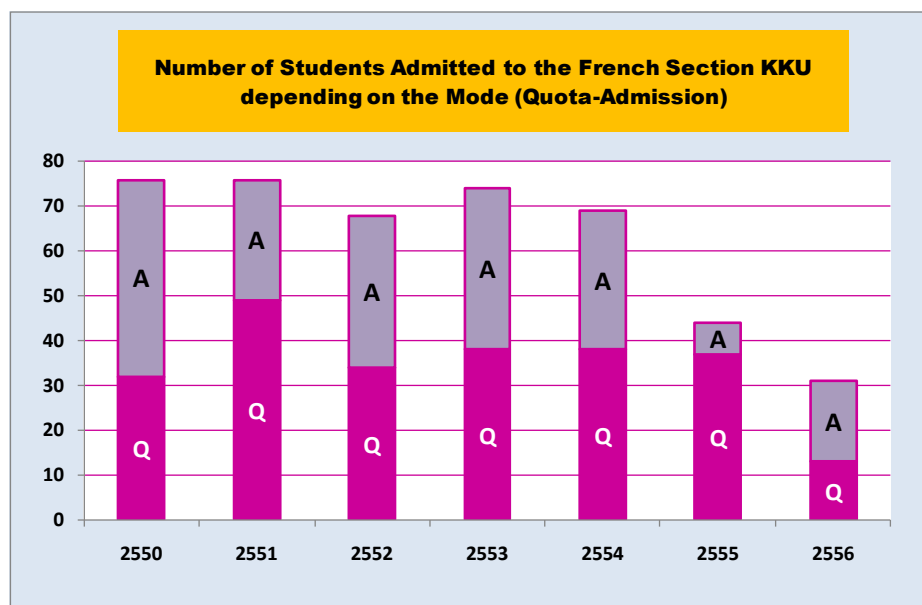
These two university entry modes are:

- **Quota**, procedure under the responsibility of the concerned university. Written exams and then interviews take place before New Year. Quota is, as its name suggests, reserved for specific categories of students. It is mostly those living in the area of the university, that is Isaan for the University of Khon Kaen, who take advantage of this facility.
- **Admission**, national procedure, open to all. Students can attempt specific written exams twice (GAT-PAT since 2553): in October and March. The interviews take place shortly after the second session.
- 

Between Quota (for Isaan students) and Admission (open to all), the general idea is to maintain a certain parity. Subsequently the exact number will depend mainly on personal choice of candidates.

Quota procedure, which takes place three months before Admission is troubled by the fact that about half of the selected students will withdraw, mostly because they passed the procedure just for practice before applying for their preferred faculty with Admission.

Below, we will find the number of students regularly enrolled in the first year of the French section by type of entrance examination.



The number of students for the French section KKU varied widely: from just 30 in the 40's (2540 !), it has more than doubled 10 years later when the University showed a growing interest in the market economy. Since 2555, we returned to 35 for various reasons, including the priority given to other sections, the desire to promote masters and doctorates, the decline in demand due to the birth rate curves.

### 3.1.2 Admission

ADMISSION - French Section KKU Score calculation						
Weighting of score's components (%)						
<i>N° of exam/course</i>	<b>GPAX</b>	<b>gpa</b> <i>21-22-23</i>	<b>O-NET</b> <i>01-02-03</i>   <i>01-...-08</i>	<b>A-NET</b> <i>31</i>	<b>GAT</b> <i>85</i>	<b>PAT</b> <i>77</i>
<b>2550</b>	10	20	35	35		
<b>2551</b>	10	20	35	35		
<b>2552</b>	10	20	35	35		
<b>2553</b>	20			30	40	10
<b>2554</b>	20			30	40	10
<b>2555</b>	20			30	40	10
<b>2556</b>	20			30	30	20
<b>2557</b>	20			30	30	20
<b>2558</b>	20			30	30	20

We will call *score* the total of points obtained by a candidate for admission and quota procedures.

We observe that a significant change took place in 2553. Previously, the Ministry of Education tried to enhance the high school using the marks obtained in these institutions in calculating the score. Then the *gpa* have been removed in order to minimize redundant information (with *GPAX*). The lack of uniformity of the education system has led to the decline in the share of high school which represents only 20% of the score now. The remaining 80% come from national examinations (O-NET, A-NET, GAT-PAT), all in the form of multiple choice questions.

*GPAX* is the weighted average of the all courses taken at high school (M4, M5 and first semester of M6).

*gpa* is the weighted average per subject at high school. Codes are: 21 Thai language, 22 Social sciences, 23 English, etc.

*O-NET* (Ordinary National Educational Test) is a national examination held during the last year of each level (P6-M3-M6). Its purpose is to create a standard given the disparity in the quality of teaching and assessments. Since 2558, M6 students have been passing five O-NET exams namely 01 Thai, 02 Social Sciences, 03 English, 04 Math and 05 Sciences.

*A-Net* (Advanced National Educational Test) was a test on specialized subjects, for our students a French exam.

*GAT-PAT* is a new series of central exams whose sole purpose is to serve as selection criteria for universities.

*GAT 85* (General Aptitude Test) wants to answer some of the criticisms about the Thai education system, too based on memorization. It assesses the potential of the candidate with:

- an exam in Thai language: ability to read, write, analyze, understand and solve a problem,
- an English exam: ability to communicate, conversation, vocabulary, structure and writing, reading comprehension.

*PAT* (Professional and Academic aptitude Test), A-NET successor, is for our students a French exam (PAT 77).

### 3.1.3 Quota

QUOTA - French Section KKU Score calculation								
Weighting of score's components (%)								
	GPAX	KKU exams					GAT	PAT-77
		01 Thai	02 Social	03 English	09 Maths	French		
2550	5	25	20	35	15	not in score		
2551	5	20	20	20		35		
2552	5	20	20	20		35		
2553	5	20	15	25			20	15
2554	5	15	15	25			10	30
2555	5	15	15	25			10	30
2556	5	15	15	25			10	30
2557	5	15	15	25			10	30
2558	5	30	30	35			no	no

Compared to Admission, the difference is that the exams 01 Thai language, 02 Social sciences, 03 English, etc. are produced by the University of Khon Kaen.

### 3.2 The role of chance in exams

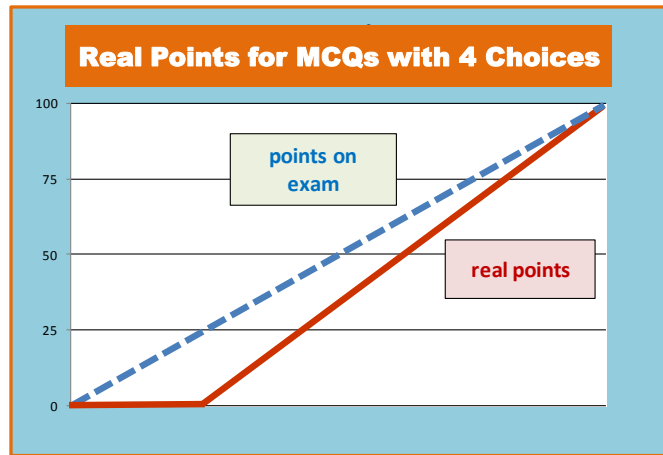
In none of the conversations with Thai professors, websites consulted or interviews of decision makers in state agencies did a fundamental element emerge – yet it is one that is necessary for a full analysis of the results: the role of chance.

This is a taboo subject, particularly in Asian culture that gives importance to saving face and to how people relate to error – not to mention a kind of “cult of the exam” in Thailand that is a combination of secretiveness and imposed respect.

The standard exam format in Thailand, at least until the first day of university, is the multiple-choice question with 4 possible responses. An exam-taker with no subject knowledge whatsoever thus has a probability of 1 in 4 of guessing the correct answer. With this probability and a test worth a total of 100 points, 25 points can be obtained for “free” – that is, based purely on probability.

In practical terms, test results include such “chance” responses as well as those based on knowledge or reasoning. How can these be differentiated? Here we propose a straightforward solution: incorrect test responses represent only 75% of unknown answers given that 25% of the responses would have been identified by chance.

Take the example of an exam-taker who obtains 52 points out of 100 on her exam – and has thus made 48 errors. Statistically, these 48 errors are part of a larger universe of questions to which the responses were not known: the unknown responses in fact totaled 64 (incorrect answers:  $64 \times 75\% = 48$ ; guessed answers  $64 \times 25\% = 16$ ). Thus our exam-taker’s real result is 36 points and not 52.

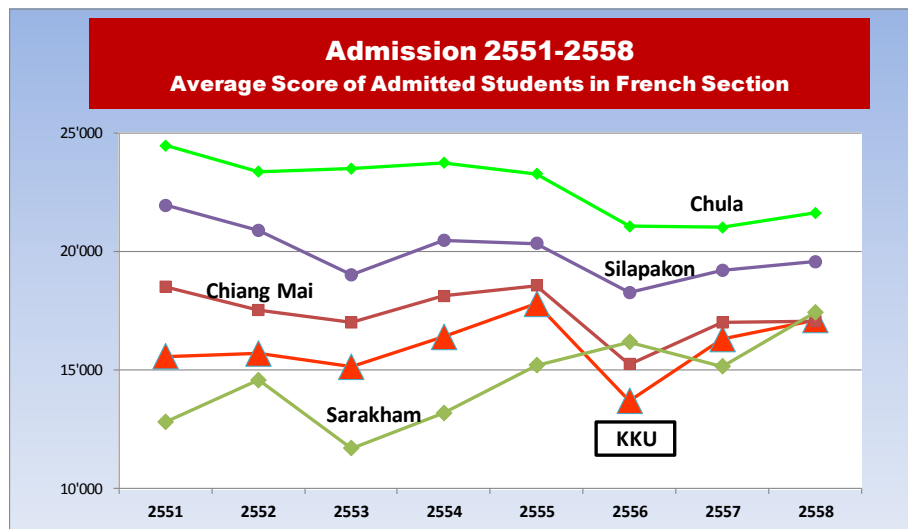


A score inferior to 25 points is, in reality, a score of 0. The difference is significant for mediocre scores and marginal the closer an exam-taker gets to the maximum possible score. The problem is that results of university entrance exams in Thailand typically fall between 25 and 50 points.

It is for this reason that we must consider the role of chance – that is, the possibility of scoring points on an exam despite a lack of subject knowledge.

### 3.3. Results for entrance exams to university

#### 3.3.1 Results for Admission procedure



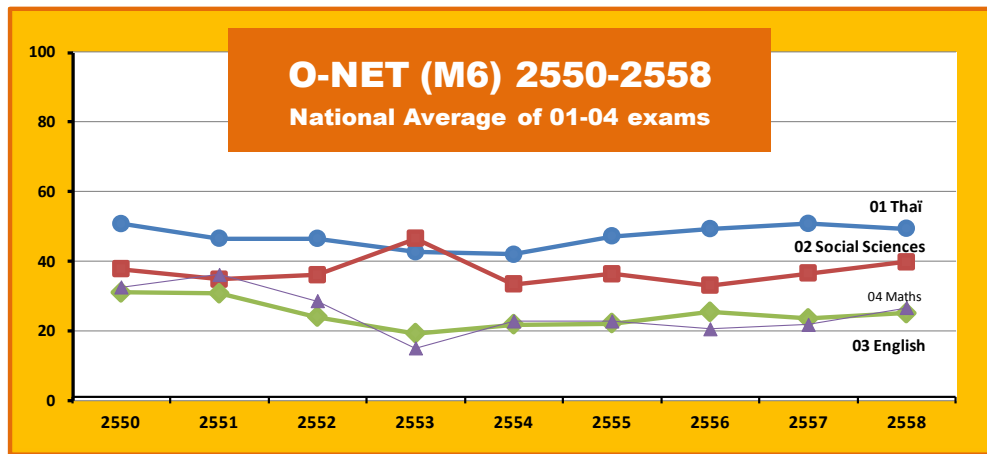
The maximum is 30,000 points.

The order of average scores to enter the French section on the chart above is consistent with the reputation of universities. The seemingly parallel curves actually tighten: all universities are found in 2558 in the range of 4,500 points down from 12,000 seven years before in 2551.

This symmetrical compression would sanction, if exams were standard, a degradation of the quality of students for universities in Bangkok and Chiang Mai, stagnation in Khon Kaen and significant improvement for Mahasarakham which is now at the same level than Chiang Mai and KKU.

Another remarkable fact is the fall of 2556 scores of Khon Kaen University. This anomaly came from a chaotic recruitment in 2555.

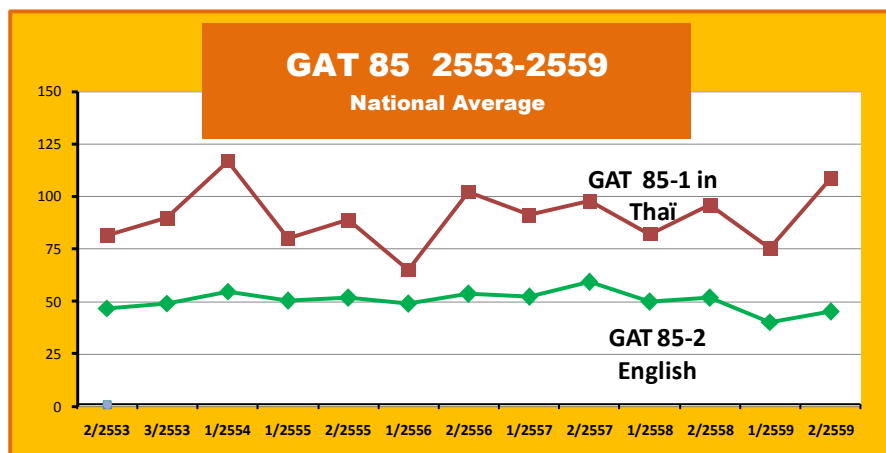
O-NET (30%) and GAT (30-40%) are the main components of score. Below are the national averages:



The averages are very low but they include unmotivated students who will not attend university. However, we must not forget the gift from the multiple choices! Thus, statistically, 25 points out of 100 actually means zero (MCQ with 4 choices).

The difficulty or non-standard nature of these exams should be emphasized. As an example, for all of Thailand (!), no students get more than 85 points in the Social sciences exam over the period.

The research includes analysis of distributions that we unfortunately cannot show due to lack of space.

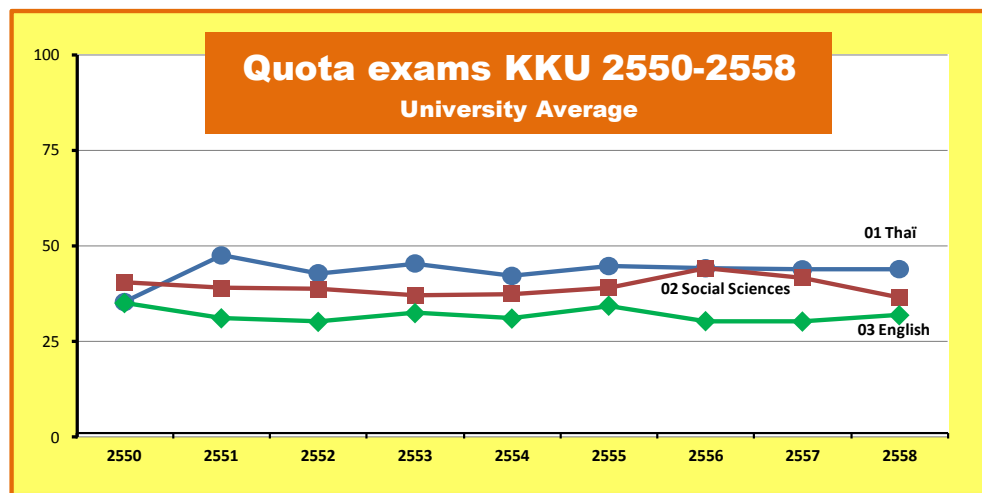


GAT 85 is actually 2 exams. GAT 85-1 in Thai is unique, the only easy exam of Thailand and the most unstable! It is amazing since it is supposed to test the analytical capacity, which is not the strong point of teaching. GAT 85-2 English complies with tradition with average just over MCQ "gift" (37.5/150).

### 3.3.2 Results for Quota procedure

Obviously comparisons between universities or even between sections / faculties cannot be made because the calculation basis and weighting differ.

We present below the statistical averages obtained in exams prepared by KKU which generally account for 60% of the score.



The averages are also very low but we can have doubts about their standard when for 40,000 candidates, none gets more than 60 points (Thai 2550), 70 points (Thai 2553 and 2554) or 80 points (all others Thai and Social sciences exams).



### 3.4. Correlation between the results of university entrance exams and academic success

#### 3.4.1 Quota vs Admission

Success Rate 2550-2556 - French Section KKU									
		Beginning of Studies	Départures during studies		Graduation				
		enrolled in year 1	section change	dropped out	graduated	%	more than 4 years	graduated in 4 years	%
ALL	2550	76	0	9	67	88%	7	60	79%
	2551	76	2	19	55	72%	5	50	66%
	2552	68	3	7	58	85%	13	45	66%
	2553	74	1	12	61	82%	8	53	72%
	2554	69	2	10	57	83%	9	48	70%
	2555	44	0	12	32	73%	1	31	70%
	2556 <sup>1</sup>	31	0	3	28	90%	8	20	65%
QUOTA	2550	32	0	2	30	94%	1	29	91%
	2551	49	2	15	32	65%	2	30	61%
	2552	34	0	6	28	82%	6	22	65%
	2553	38	1	3	34	89%	5	29	76%
	2554	38	2	3	33	87%	1	32	84%
	2555	37	0	11	26	70%	1	25	68%
	2556 <sup>1</sup>	13	0	1	12	92%	0	12	92%
ADMISSION	2550	44	0	7	37	84%	6	31	70%
	2551	27	0	4	23	85%	3	20	74%
	2552	34	3	1	30	88%	7	23	68%
	2553	36	0	9	27	75%	3	24	67%
	2554	31	0	7	24	77%	8	16	52%
	2555	7	0	1	6	86%	0	6	86%
	2556 <sup>1</sup>	18	0	2	16	89%	8	8	44%

<sup>1</sup>: For 2556, figures for departures and graduation are estimates (ongoing studies)

The global success rate, which is defined as the achievement of studies in 4 years, is 70%. It is generally identical for Quota and Admission.

However, the following exceptional cases should be noted.

Admission 2554 and 2556 saw a very low success rate, 52% and 42% respectively. 2556 can be explained by very low scores but it is absolutely not the case in 2554.

Quota 2550 and 2556 showed an exceptional success rate, with over 90% of students getting the degree in 4 years. These years have seen limited recruitment in numbers and therefore rather high scores.

### 3.4.2 Correlation Analysis

A correlation analysis was performed between the scores (Quota-Admission), the components of score (O-NET, GAT-PAT, KKU exams, GPAX) and the GPA at the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> year, which should procure an accurate measure of success in university studies.

As the bases of calculation for scores are very different, we separated Admission and Quota.

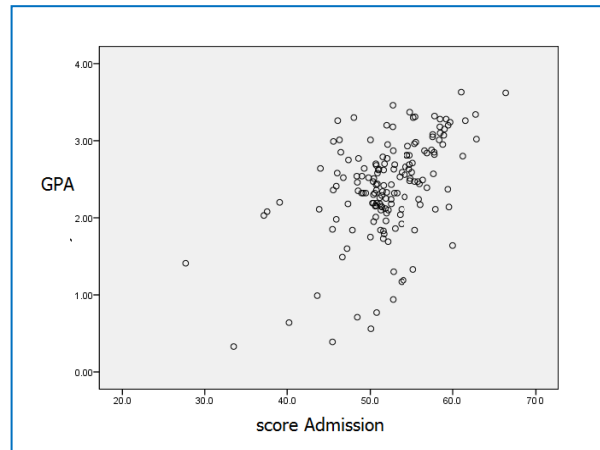
#### Correlation: Admission score - GPA

Computing the Pearson correlation coefficient gives the following values:

$$r = 0.488, N = 161, p = 0.00,$$

$$r^2 = 0.24$$

The effect can be described as important.



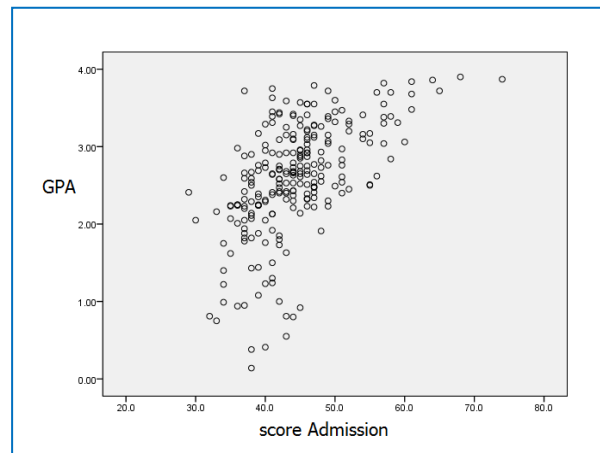
#### Correlation: Quota score - GPA

Computing the Pearson correlation coefficient gives the following values:

$$r = 0.563, N = 241, p = 0.00,$$

$$r^2 = 0.32$$

The effect can be described as important.



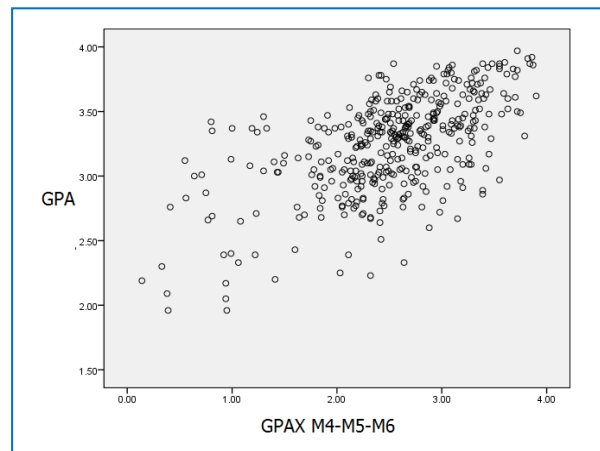
#### Correlation: GPAX - GPA

Computing the Pearson correlation coefficient gives the following values:

$$r = 0.603, N = 404, p = 0.00,$$

$$r^2 = 0.36$$

The effect can be described as important.



Thus, the component that best explains university success is GPAX (high school grade average M4-M5-M6). All other components, including exams considered individually (Thai, Social sciences, English, French, GAT) showed lower correlations.

#### 4. Discussion and Conclusion

From preceding lines an unwise reader will draw erroneous conclusions about the students. Contrary to what one may think after reading exams results, we ensure that our students have perfectly normal intellectual capacity, to which they add kindness and exquisite politeness.

But obviously, when facing exams where the work does not bring anything significant, or just a few more points, your motivation is not high. We think that any exam must have in him these two facets: reward the work, talent and punish laziness. A priori, the exams that we have mentioned do not, first because they offer 25 points out of 100 where a zero should appear, and second because they are not progressive enough to consistently reward those who provided an effort.

The main drawback of the multiple choice questions (MCQ) is to prevent any justification. It is precisely this ability to analyze, which can lead to different solutions, the GAT will promote... with a MCQ. Moreover, they are inherently filled with difficult questions because the correct answer is provided. Return to simpler tests and abandon the multiple choice questions throughout schooling could have beneficial effects.

Specific figures analyzed for entry procedures only concern KKU French section. There can be no question of drawing definitive conclusions for the country!

However, on their basis, one may wonder what is the real purpose of the entry procedures at the university since it seems that the weighted average of high school grades (GPAX) is enough to determine the level of future students, since we already have a series of national examinations (O-NET) to solve the problem of schools with different standards. It seems not very difficult to make comparisons between O-NET and schools grades to homogenize evaluations. Is entrance examination, at least for faculties such as Social sciences, not just a ceremony marking the transition between high school and university?

At present, there is pressure on university teachers for the dropping rate being close to zero, which has negative consequences on the overall level of learners. Could we not envisage a more flexible system where the university entrance would be more opened, giving a chance to more, but where those who are not motivated enough would be eliminated at the end of the first year?