

Assignment PG/01/04

**An Analysis of Student Error Patterns in Written English:
Suggested Teaching Procedures to help**

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1 Introduction

In Christopher Candlin's Preface to Rutherford's *Second Language Grammar: Learning and Teaching* (1987: 2) he discusses the relationship between the acquisition of particular languages and their organizing principles and argues that the development of interlanguage syntax is constrained by three factors. These are the "general organizing principles common to all language, the selective and focusing influences of mother tongue and target language, and the exploratory processes of learners' cognition." The second of these three factors - the influence of native and target language - bears directly on analysis of error patterns in samples of student writing presented below. Some patterns originate in the students' first language and are the result of negative transfer, while others are the product of general misuse or over-generalization of learning strategies within the target language itself. Error patterns and teaching procedures devised to assist students with such errors will be discussed.

1.1 Writing Task

The writing task assigned to the class under discussion was an 'application activity,' defined by Richards and Lockhart (1996: 165) as one in which students complete a written assignment incorporating rhetorical and discourse devices using ideas and information of their own. In this particular exercise, the students' objective was a comprehensive small business proposal and a writing model was provided to assist them (see Appendix B). A closed-task structure was decided on to provide the

students with a clear goal, more support, and opportunities to recycle new vocabulary and rhetorical devices. In addition, students engaged in a post-task public performance in which they were required to present their small business ideas to the rest of the class. It was thought that tension between the writing task and the performance requirement would contribute to heightened awareness and, in turn, more focus on accuracy (grammar/syntax/semantics). This is what Skehan (1994: 196) refers to as a 'retrospective' approach to task implementation. Students have the constraint that during the 'process' of writing their 'product' they are conscious of the fact that they will have to engage in subsequent public performance of the same task. He goes on to state that this is valuable to the learning process in that "it is likely that the learner's knowledge of what is still required may influence the nature of actual task performance" and will highlight the need for greater accuracy.

Throughout the process, students were requested to work as pairs and assist each other with corrections and advice as they worked through their compositions. Chaudron (1988: 99) cites several studies which suggest that:

more language, possibly more complex language, and no less grammatically correct target language can be encouraged if learners interact with their peers, in small groups, or on convergent tasks.

As far as the material for such tasks is concerned, Thornbury (1999: 73) claims that student texts may be the most effective, since they are likely to be of more interest and remembered longer than those introduced by teachers or course books.

A detailed discussion of learner ‘interlanguage’ and manifestations of both ‘interlingual’ and ‘intralingual’ error patterns in the student writing samples will be presented below, as will an explanation of the general contextual background in which the writing took place. In addition, a review of the literature on the topic and teaching procedures to assist students address errors in their writing will be outlined. Finally, the implications of such procedures on current teaching practice will be discussed.

2 General Contextual Background

2.1 Classes

The business English class from which the writing samples were collected consisted of a small group of eight native-speaking Japanese students with TOEIC scores of between 550-850. Classes of this sort frequently have students of mixed levels and confidence. Such factors have to be taken into consideration when a teacher is deciding which students to put into pairs and what criteria to use when judging their presentations. All of the students had some experience communicating with foreigners; perhaps on the job, traveling, or in English conversation class. They possessed a substantial knowledge of grammar and vocabulary and had studied and could recognize a large number of idioms. The students belonged to a Japanese overseas trading company and ability to communicate in English was a daily requirement for them. They were all primarily interested in improving their formal correspondence skills and had requested a one-day (7-hour) intensive course to assist them with written English in a business environment. All eight of the student writing samples presented below

represent attempts to formulate an original small business proposal.

3 Review of the Literature

3.1 Categories for Description of Errors

The categories for description of errors cited by Brown (1994: 222-3) and others help to distinguish between writing errors originating in a student's first language and others within the target language itself. In general, errors can be categorized as ones of addition, omission, substitution and ordering at either the sentence or discourse level. Within these, different levels of language can be considered including phonology, orthography, lexicon, grammar and discourse. In addition, errors can be classified as either those which hinder communication (global) or those which do not (local). However, for the purposes of this paper, discussion will center primarily on errors of omission and addition in the students' interlanguage, and their manifestation as either interlingual or intralingual errors respectively.

3.2 Interlanguage: Interlingual/Intralingual Transfer

The type of language produced by second and foreign language learners is often described as 'interlanguage.' Brown (1994: 215) states that interlanguage refers to the "separateness of a second language learner's system, a system that has a structurally intermediate status between the native and target languages." Within this intermediate language, learner errors may be caused by many different processes including: [a]

borrowing patterns from the mother tongue, and [b] extending patterns from the target language, or over-generalizing a learner rule. Connor (1996: 13) states that analyses of “interlanguage” systems of learners’ actual performance suggest that the influence of transfer on acquisition of the target language is quite complex. Other aspects now considered include knowledge about the target language itself, the learner’s communicative strategies, the instructional situation, and the combined effects of these factors. Therefore, she says, a learner is seen as “an active participant in the learning process, one who is forming and testing hypotheses in the process of creating an internalized system of how the target language works.”

The type of error mentioned in [a] above may also be categorized as ‘interlingual transfer,’ or ‘interference’ (a form of generalizing that takes prior language experiences and applies them incorrectly). These sorts of error are a direct result of influences from the learner’s native language. Brown (1994: 224) states that especially in the early stages of learning a second language, before the system of the second language is familiar, the native language is the only previous linguistic system upon which the learner can draw. The sorts of error resulting from this kind of ‘negative’ transfer vary widely and will be discussed more extensively in relation to the student writing samples below.

A second source of error frequently identified in learner interlanguage is ‘intralingual transfer’ (see [b] above). Errors appearing in student writing are often the result of faulty or partial learning of the target language and this is the negative element of intralingual transfer, or ‘over-generalization.’ Such errors may be caused by the

influence of one target language item upon another. Brown (1994: 225) cites research suggesting that the early stages of language learning are characterized by a predominance of interference (interlingual transfer), but once learners have begun to acquire parts of a new system, more and more intralingual transfer – generalization within the target language – is manifested. In the writing samples discussed below examples of both types of error will be highlighted. Given the students' familiarity with the target language (English), intralingual errors appear with more frequency in their writing than do interlingual ones.

3.3 Subject/Topic Prominent Languages

A further influence on error patterns in student writing can be traced to the fundamental differences between a learner's native language (hereafter referred to as L1) and the target language (L2). The *Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics* (1992: 161) defines English as a 'subject prominent' language in which the grammatical units of subject and predicate are basic to the structure of sentences. Conversely, a language such as Japanese functions as a 'topic prominent' language where 'topic' refers to the information-structure of sentences in which something is said about a person, thing or idea. This is not identical with the English subject/predicate construction which refers to the grammatical structure of a sentence rather than to its information structure. This distinction between subject-prominent and topic-prominent features of English and Japanese will be of some consequence in the discussion of student writing presented below.

4 Identifying Error Patterns in Student Writing Samples

4.1 Assessment Criteria

Citing Brown's list in **3.1** above, the sorts of error patterns to be discussed with regards to the student writing samples under investigation will center mainly on the incidence of 'omission' or 'addition' in the learners' developing interlanguage. Interlingual errors will be illustrated with reference to acts of omission involving certain features of language. These features are necessary to meet the requirements of English grammaticality but, due to language pattern influences from the L1, are somehow missing. Intralingual errors will be highlighted by drawing on examples which violate other rules of grammar through the unnecessary addition of features considered outside the boundaries of accepted English usage. Errors of both kinds will be drawn directly from the students' individual small business proposals. Where direct quotes are not displayed, but reference is made to a particular sample, refer to Appendix A.

4.2 Error Patterns Originating in Student L1

Spada and Lightbown (1999: 75) state that with regards to 'transfer' or 'interference' errors it is difficult to determine the source of such errors and there are often no clear insights into what causes learners to do what they do. For instance, learners sometimes avoid using certain features of language which they perceive to be difficult for them. The authors go on to state that this 'avoidance' may lead to the "absence of certain errors, but it also leaves the analyst without information about the

learners' developing interlanguage." That is, the absence of particular features will be difficult for the researcher or teacher to observe, but this "phenomenon of 'avoidance' may also be a part of the learner's systematic second language performance."

Related to this notion of 'avoidance' but more closely identified with negative transfer - or interference - is the 'omission' of certain grammatical features from the learner's developing interlanguage. Rutherford (1987: 92) claims that "where a learner (unconsciously) perceives cohesion as governed not by grammar but by discourse, we may find him more readily resorting to the tactics of ellipsis." Elliptical constructions are not themselves a pattern of error originating in the student's L1, however, their adoption into certain L2 situations can result in errors. For instance, a required object missing at the end of a sentence may be an acceptable grammatical construction in the student's L1, but not in the target language. The application of ellipsis, or the omission of 'understood' elements formally retrievable from the text, may result in errors in student writing and be regarded as a form of negative transfer. Ellipsis can occur with both nouns and clauses and a number of examples from the student writing samples are presented below. For instance, in sample 4 the student commits an error of omission after the phrase "to sell" by using an elliptical construction possible in Japanese, but not in English:

Using web site, we can sell our material to the customer around the world. We will have customers to sell.

The reader is left to infer 'what' is to be sold to the customers – presumably "our material" cited in the previous sentence. The word 'hanbai' in Japanese, meaning to sell

goods or services, does not require an object. The notion of what is being sold is already embodied in the term and would naturally refer back to the item's earlier appearance in the text. It's possible that the student is transferring this grammatical construction into English. A similar problem arises in sample 5 (below) with the omission of what it is the musicians would want "to play." This could be due to Japanese language influence:

I believe there are many 'used-to' musicians. Even if they don't have their band. Almost of them would want to play.

The word 'ensou' is a noun or verb in Japanese meaning to 'play music,' or to 'play a musical instrument,' and the omission of an object after "to play" could represent the student's conscious or unconscious transferring of a grammatical structure possible in Japanese but not in English. An additional error of this sort was found in sample 8:

I need 10 staffs to run shop. So to open shop, I finance 10 million yen from bank. I expect to profit one million-yen per month. So I can repay within one year.

The omission of pronominal 'it' in the last sentence, or some other reference to the borrowed money, may be the result of the student adopting a Japanese elliptical construction. 'kaesu' (return/repay) is a general verb in Japanese, and 'hensai' (financial return) is a specific one. The student may be transferring from their typologically topic-prominent Japanese into English resulting in the omission of an essential object, in this case 'it.' In addition, the repeated omission of the definite article 'the' in this sample and throughout many of the other student writing proposals may be an example of the tendency in Japanese not to assign articles to subjects.

Rutherford (1987: 92-3) states that “ellipsis comes about through co-reference to (discourse-defined) topic and not to (syntax-defined) subject.” Also consistent with the structure of topic prominent languages (e.g. Japanese) is the ellipsis of an ‘understood’ subject element. This is borne out by incidents in the student writing samples in which certain verb forms appear at the end of sentences and the expected object is never supplied. If the student is relying on an elliptical construction commonly used in Japanese but which violates the typically rigid subject-verb-object (SVO) requirements of English grammar, then this may be an example of negative transfer. Subject-prominence (see 3.3 above) would normally disallow the omission of such elements in a sentence. Sample 5 provides another example of this pattern with its use of the phrase ‘to run’:

The third supporting point is the problems. Firstly, it would be little noisy, so that the location should not be near the dwellings and needs sound proofing...
In conclusion, however there are many problems to run.

And again in sample 7 with the phrase ‘they can order’:

It is not certain hand made, bot customer can get an original guitar and feel hand making with cheaper price. Also we open the web site, customer only click and choose easily, they can order.

Since Japanese principally follows a topic-comment linguistic structure, errors in student writing often occur when they introduce the topic and disregard the rigid subject-predicate model that English adheres to in order to establish grammaticality. The examples cited above appear to be student attempts to use elliptical structures which work grammatically in Japanese, but that result in errors of omission in English. The

problem sentences are co-referential to a subject in a previous sentence but are themselves incomplete and examples of negative transfer (interlingual error).

4.3 Error Patterns Derived from Misuse/Over-generalization of Learning Strategies

The second pattern of error identified in the student writing samples can be categorized under the heading ‘intralingual’ error (see 3.2 above). Here errors are the result of an extension of target language rules to inappropriate contexts. One consistent pattern of error identified in the student writing samples was the systematic overuse of certain verb forms. Pica (1983: Larsen-Freeman et al 310-11) found that learners who had received formal second language instruction (as with the students in the class under discussion) showed a strong tendency to overapply grammatical morphemes, such as –ing and plural –s. These sorts of overapplication errors can consist of morphemes supplied in obligatory contexts (overgeneralization) and others in non-obligatory contexts (overuse). Pica goes on to note that “differing conditions of L2 exposure appear to affect acquirers’ hypotheses about the target language and their strategies for using it.” For instance, in student writing sample 1 there is clear evidence of overgeneralization of the English –ing morpheme: “Secondly, I will explain how I will start the business with researching and marketing.” And again in sample 2:

I will establish new game software product company in Tokyo city. I will explain my planning engineering, finding good programmer, future planning. Game Software increase selling in the world now. And I researched customer’s idea and another company planning. Then I planning New Game Software Product company.

Also, sample 7 shows the student misusing the English –ing morpheme in two different instances:

There are many guitar shops nowadays. But not all customer are satisfied with selling products. This easy hand making idea provides an original guital to customers easily and reasonable price. I'm going to explain the customer demands, methods and sales plan as following.

Errors of addition involving the –s morpheme in English were also frequent in the student writing samples. For instance in sample 1:

I will also open a small classes to teach people how to grow herbs, make oil and cook using herbs so that people can find what they like.

And again in sample 2:

After three years later, our selling will be 1 million dollares and will have 100's game softwares.

Two separate examples of misuse or overgeneralization of the –s morpheme also appear in sample 3:

My start-up funds is about \$600,000. I need much money, because medicine and foods are quite expensive... I need many staffs who have knowledge of medicine and skills of trimmer. I need also many tough staffs because the timetable often changes and have to go for a walk everywhere with pets.

Such errors represent faulty or partial learning of the target language rather than language transfer. Samples 7 and 8 are additional examples of a student extending the

use of a grammatical rule or linguistic item beyond its accepted uses, possibly to make words or phrases follow a more regular pattern:

We start this business with 8-10 staffs...This business is not big ones. But we can provide as original guitars only one in the world to customers. (sample 7).

I want to open custom audio equipments shop at akihabara or Nippon-bashi...Also, before open shop I must keep money, staff and spaces. It cost about one million yen to rent a space and it cost about 300 thousand yen per month to hire staff. I need 10 staffs to run shop. (sample 8)

The students' developing interlanguage shows signs of adjustments even within the same text with the use of the English –s morpheme in words such as ‘staff/staffs.’ Or in sample 6 with ‘price/prices’:

So this recycle shop buy them in low prices, and sell them to people who want in low price.

This is what McLaughlin (in Batstone 1994: 40) might refer to as ‘restructuring,’ or how a student continually revises their hypotheses and alters their vision of how the target language works. From the examples cited above, it is obvious that certain of the students were working on the assumption that –ing and –s morphemes follow much simpler rules than is actually the case. Learner attention, in these instances, has to be drawn to the fact that –ing and –s morphemes must be applied discriminately depending on the word in question. This is the sort of basic principle that will have to be recognized before the learner can move closer to the full target language system.

5 Devising Teaching Procedures

Beaumont and Gallaway (1994: Bygate et al. 160) argue that the teaching of grammar must integrate insights from three broad theoretical areas: language description, language processing, and language acquisition. They go on to state that it is only within such a broad theoretical perspective that the teacher can “begin to make informed judgments about appropriate classroom strategies relating to the teaching and learning of grammar.” Similarly, Leech (1994: Bygate et al. 28) suggests that in the classroom we should be looking for a compromise between ‘explicit’ learning, with a focus on rules, and ‘implicit’ learning, through exposure and practice. In order for a teacher to mediate effectively between the learner and the target language Bygate (1994: 243) adds that there are four main areas where a teacher may intervene in task-based learning: pre-task preparation; task selection; manipulation of on-task conditions; and post-task follow-up.

5.1 Overall Targets

The small business proposal activity the students were engaged in was designed to allow them to create a written scenario in a business context. It attempted to incorporate the criteria for successful task implementation mentioned in Leech and Bygate (above). A writing task of this sort has skill building and more complex communication as its overall targets. Skehan (1998: 143) claims that support aimed at making a task more structured could possibly lead to less error and more accurate performance overall. More importantly, however, emphasis should not be a

preoccupation with the grammar of the target language but a concern with communication. One of the best ways of simulating important aspects of communication is through the inclusion of a production stage in an appropriately graded task. In this way, the learner is given the opportunity to ‘flex’ their expanding grammars. Corder (in Rutherford 1987: 176) states that this progressive elaboration of the learner’s interlanguage system allows them to handle ever more complex communicative tasks:

If we can control the level of these correctly, the grammar will take care of itself. Instead, then, of grading the linguistic material that we expose the learner to, we should consider grading the communicative demands we make on him, thereby gently leading him to elaborate his approximative system.

Form-focused practice, therefore, in addition to message-focused practice during the production of the target language must also be ensured in order that the necessary communicative skill-building elements are present in a task.

5.2 Tasks/Exercises

Johnson (1994: Bygate et al. 127) states that a form-defocus model of automatization may be one way of helping a student balance the demands of form and message when attempting to communicate effectively in a second language. This might be facilitated through “gradually depriving the learner of the attention he/she requires to produce a given structure.” This could be accomplished by “gradually increasing the burden to be placed on the learner’s attention, leaving less attention for focus on the form being practiced.” A task could be made progressively more difficult through varying the conditions; more language would be required of the learner, and more

message focus would be demanded. The teaching exercises presented in Appendix C assist learners with building such skills and were successfully incorporated into post-task homework assigned to the students.

Skehan (1998:134) adds that if the appropriate level of task difficulty is chosen, there is much greater likelihood that “noticing will occur, that balanced language performance will result, and that spare attentional capacity can be channelled effectively.” He goes on to say that learners will not be so likely to depend upon lexicalized language, communication strategies, and elliptical communication, since they “will be able to cope with the informational demands placed upon them, and devote some attentional capacities to form, whether this is accuracy or complexity.”

5.3 Pair work/Peer Correction

Throughout the business proposal writing task students worked as pairs and were required to comment on what they considered difficulties in their partner’s composition. As a teaching procedure to assist students with error patterns in their writing, pair work and peer correction can be extended to later rewrites and redrafts. (see 5.4 below). Chaudron (1988: 134) comments on the nature of feedback and states that: “information available in feedback allows learners to confirm, disconfirm and possibly modify the hypothetical, “transitional” rules of their developing grammars.” One approach suggested by Keh (1996: 297) prepares students for peer feedback activities by giving them very structured check-lists, which progress to being less-structured, and are then finally abandoned. Students write questions about their

own drafts specifically to a reader in the wide ruled margins of their draft. Once students have received feedback from their peers, they revise their papers and write a second draft. This peer correction method was successfully adopted by students during the writing of their small business proposals and again during their successive re-drafts. A number of errors were identified as a result of this process and were subsequently corrected.

Spada and Lightbown (1999: 122) claim that when learners are given the opportunity to engage in meaningful activities, they are “compelled to ‘negotiate for meaning,’ that is, to express and clarify their intentions, thoughts, opinions, etc., in a way that permits them to arrive at a mutual understanding.” They go on to state that this is “especially true when the learners are working together to accomplish a particular goal, for example in task-based instruction.” This negotiation, in turn, leads learners to acquire the language forms – words and grammatical structures – which carry the meaning they are attending to. All of the eight students involved in the small business proposal assignment agreed that some skill-building of this kind had occurred during their seven-hour intensive course.

5.4 Rewrites/Redrafts/Restructuring

Nunan (1991: 152) claims that having a student rewrite or redraft their written document challenges them to reassess what they are trying to achieve. He states that such activities, especially when done as pairs, allow students to gain insight into their own approach to learning. Similarly, Skehan (1998: 150) argues that the “reworking of a

task seems to lead to a greater focus on form, with respect to both accuracy and restructuring and more complex language.” Bygate (1994: 242) refers to such restructuring and says that the use of unscripted tasks to encourage learners to look either explicitly or implicitly for generalizations about different aspects of their use of language could involve such things as post-task follow-up (e.g. presentations). This is likely to provide the opportunity for both repetition and formal feedback on students’ use of linguistic features as well as to help focus attention on form and meaning. During the writing of the small business proposals students were required to produce three separate drafts of their work before their oral presentation in front of the class.

Rutherford (1987: 174) claims that another means of achieving cohesion in learner interlanguage is the reiteration of a lexical item. Reiteration is a “ready-made tactic for binding textual matter where synonymy and grammatically governed anaphora, ellipsis, and substitution are still beyond the learner’s present competence.” (for learning exercises see Appendix C – sentence transitions). He goes on to state that the learner’s “act of editing his meaningful written communication can be said to produce the ‘comprehensible output’ that directs his attention towards formal accuracy in writing.” Batstone (1994: 41) adds that as students begin restructuring of this sort, the norms of the target language become more evident. “Through the gradual process of restructuring, more elaborate hypotheses are adopted and different language forms are deployed correctly across different lexical items.” If learners can formulate successive hypotheses of this sort, with one gradually giving way to another as they notice and incorporate more about the target language, then successful restructuring can occur.

6 Content in Relation to Current Teaching Practices

The small business writing task chosen for the students to complete demanded a high level of communicative ability. Three separate assumptions about the material were made with regards to its suitability: a) schematic (how much relative world knowledge do the students have), b) systemic (do the students have the necessary language structures to complete the assigned task), c) interpersonal (are the students comfortable with the assigned material). A closed replication task was thought of as the necessary grounding in organization and layout the students would require to complete the assignment.

Hedge (1988: 25) states that in such cases the teacher's role is essentially to provide an environment in which students will learn about writing, see models of good writing, get plenty of practice writing, and receive help during the writing process. She claims, however, that it is dangerous to focus a student's attention on only highly controlled writing exercises (whose primary aim is mastering form, rather than construction of meaning). Planned activities structured by the teacher should always be regarded as an enabling device or support rather than as a rigid control. Spada and Lightbown (1999: 134) warn, though, that second language learners may not be able to discover what is ungrammatical in their own interlanguage "if the focus is always on meaning even if the frequency and salience of correct models is increased." Therefore, some kind of middle ground, where both form and meaning are attended to, should be the objective for the teacher.

6.1 Integrated Skills Approach

In addition to the above criteria, a retrospective task framework should be adopted which has as its governing principle the notion that if a student is to address errors in their written work occurring either as the result of L1 transfer, or from misuse or overgeneralization of a target language rule, then a presentation element will be needed to help raise awareness of such errors to the learner's level of consciousness. If an integrated skills approach of this sort can be adopted, perhaps more effective skill-building and language acquisition will occur. Retrospective approaches to task implementation and their concern with a post-task public performance seem to achieve this balance. From the first 'brainstorming' stage through to the final draft version, a student's writing is influenced by the constraint that it will be judged by others. There is attention to doing the task itself countered by a concern with accuracy and correctness because of the public performance to come. Skehan (1994: 197) states that:

in this way, a retrospective methodology for task-based learning achieves balance between the different forces within language development: it enables the acquisition of fluency, integration and synthesis without compromising the way in which restructuring may occur, and learners also attend to accuracy.

It is, above all, however, the 'rehearsal' aspect of such tasks that contributes to improved accuracy in the handling of target language form. All eight of the students engaged in the small business proposal assignment felt that their oral presentations had allowed them to notice to some degree errors in their writing which had gone unnoticed by both their partners and themselves during the drafting and peer-editing stages.

7 Conclusion

Rutherford (1987: 178) notes that producing the target language may be the “trigger that forces the learner to pay attention to the means of expression needed in order to successfully convey his or her intended meaning.” He states that this can provide students the opportunity to test out hypotheses about the target language and to move from a purely semantic analysis of the language to a syntactic analysis of it. Many of the errors of transfer or misuse/overgeneralization appearing in the writing samples discussed above represent different students’ working hypotheses of how the English language works. Successive hypotheses of this sort allow students the opportunity to notice and incorporate more about the target language. Successful restructuring can occur under such circumstances. Retrospective application activities, with their requirement that the target language be applied in a structured assignment and then rehearsed in public, may be one of the best ways of integrating grammar into a writing skills-based lesson. As the suggested teaching procedures outlined above illustrate, this is one way that a teacher can make their teaching of writing and target language forms communicative while still moving learners towards a desire for accuracy.

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Appendix A – Student Writing Samples

Writing Sample 1

Assignment – Small Business Proposal

Aroma Good and Services

In our stressful life, we need to relax. One of the way to relax I can propose is using aroma. I will explain how I am going to start and grow my aroma business.

Firstly, I am going to explain why I came up with this business idea. In my childhood I was surrounded by many kinds of scent in rice fields, flowers of each season and so on. Sometimes we don't even notice, but each of us would have a different scent that he/she likes. Aromatherapy shows that scent can be used for healing without side effects. Then I thought I can start a business that provides any goods and services related to aroma.

Secondly, I will explain how I will start the business with researching and marketing. To start with, I make some kind of goods including original aroma oil, accessories, tea and cookies made of herbs. I will find places where people can see, smell and buy my products such as variety stores, galleries, café, restaurants, beauty salons, massage parlors, etc. **I will also open a small classes to teach people how to grow herbs, make oil and cook using herbs so that people can find what they like.** For a few years I will not have my own shop or hire staff to save cost. During this time I will research on what kind of people need what kind of aroma goods and services. I will also get feedback from customers, for example, what kind of problems my products may cause, and what insurance I should have.

Thirdly, I'll explain how I will grow my business. Based on my own research in the small business, I will open an aroma complex where you can enjoy and create your own aroma world, comprising all kinds of shops. At that time I will focus on my own shop and the internet as the route to sell my products so that people actually have to come to my shop.

This is my idea of the aroma business and I believe aroma can make people relax and happy!

Game Software Product Proposal

I will establish new game software product company in Tokyo city. I will explain my planning engineering, finding good programmer, future planning.

Game software increase selling in the world now. And I researched customer's idea and another company planning. Then I planning New Game Software Product company.

I think most important that employ the good programmer. Our company does advertise for programmer in internet, and there is a office in Tokyo city. Our employee can choose the working times and can work in their home. They will have salary more than another company.

After three years later, our selling will be 1 million dollars and will have 100's game softwares.

Then, game software is good business, good profit for you and will become a good company.

What is the important thing to open pet hotel?

I'd like to open a pet hotel. This hotel keep pet safely. So I have to take care of their condition. I'll explain my place, money, and staffing.

Place is the most important thing I think. Because I have to keep many kinds of dogs or cats. They often barking noisy all day long. So I have to find big building that have good air conditional systems.

My start-up finds is about \$600,000. I need much money, because medicine and foods are quite expensive. And I spend money to keep cleaning all rooms to disturb animal's disease and virus.

Staffing is also important thing. **I need many staffs who have knowledge of medicine and skills of trimmer. I need also many tough staffs because the time table often changes and have to go for a walk everywhere with pets.**

I think it's difficult to keep different animals. So I have to take care of checking their daily condition.

Used Record Shop Proposal

I believed a number of many reasons will bring us great success of Used Record Shop and music bussiness. I'll explain our customer, dealing materials, and bussiness expansion.

1. our customers and advertisement
 - a. In Japan we can find many guy who is called “mania”, particularly in music bussiness. The figure of them is so high. We're catching these guys at first.
 - b. Over 40's guy, who love Rock Music, but not available to outside Japan, is out there, because he can't speak English. We support them.
 - c. **Using web site, we can sell our material to the customer around the world. We will have customers to sell.**
2. bussiness materials. We sell these materials.
 - a. 1st edition of famous records. The Beatles, Stones ...
 - b. collectabilities, memorabilities, guitars featured artist autographs and legend concerts admission ticket
 - c. T-shirts out of prints but highly valued. We can stocked high valued materials.
3. future expansion
 - a. In Tokyo rental space fee is still higher. I would like to develop our website contineously, revised once a week.
 - b. To find agency in U.S.A./U.K. designated one partner who live in U.S.A. or U.K. as our agency to collect our materials, sometimes according to customers' requests.
 - c. We expand our material to video's including DVD. Big selling DVD soft show us how big impact the video materials have.
 - d. Import good music in the hidden area. There are great music we forget, now not available. We want to be introduced those music in our own Rebel or catalog. I'll bet you our bussiness will be great success. Please throw your money to my investment.

The Rental Rehearsal Room proposal

There are so much rental rehearsal rooms, but they have a few differences in their style. I will explain my new Rental Rehearsal Room below.

The first supporting point is the concept and the systems of the Rental Rehearsal Room. Firstly, it's not only for the professional or semi-professional musicians. **I believe there are many 'used-to' musicians. Even if they don't have their band. Almost of them would want to play.** This room is for them. They can use this room like karaoke box with abundant rental instruments. Secondly, this has the unique membership system. The member can play with another members who don't know. If customer becomes the member, he can visit this room alone. Thirdly, this room will be introduce the web reservation service(then the reservation will be easier). In conclusion, this would be a new type of rental rehearsal room.

The second supporting point is about the location. In order to be the type of rental rehearsal room above mentioned, it should be located near the place where the office workers come together. The it will become one of the amusement of them. So near Shinbashi or Shinagawa would be the best place.

The third supporting point is the problems. Firstly, it would be little noisy, so that the location should not be near the dwellings and needs sound proofing. Secondly, it needs 5 or more rooms. So it needs more than 500 square meter with space.

In conclusion, however there are many problems to run. It must be a new style of amusement buisiness.

Recycle Shop of Daily Goods

I propose recycle shop of daily goods as my small business. This shop offer daily goods for living to people who move. For example, furniture, refrigilator, TV, washing machine, micro wave oven, etc. We believe this shop success leads to decrease trash. Every year some new workers have to move for job, and some people don't need daily goods. **So this recycle shop buy them in low prices, and sell them to people who want in low price.**

What I need to success this shop is three points. The first is how we get stable customer. We connect with many company, we ask them to recommend people to move. Someone sells good they don't need and others buy them. The second is how we get reliance and popularity much. We need good advertizement and atomosphere to be familiar. The third is how we offer good quality goods to customer with low cost. We need to check in detail whether there is any problem goods bought.

These three points are important essence for my small business.

Easy Hand Making Guitar Shop

There are many guitar shops nowadays. But not all customers are satisfied with selling products. This easy hand making idea provides an original guitar to customers easily and reasonable price. I'm going to explain the customer demands, method and sales plan as following.

At first I explain the customer's demands. Generally most customers interested in music want their original "it means not same as their friend" sound and guitar. But there are some problems to realize. Usual hand made guitar is expensive. And difficult for beginners to order. These points must be cleared in this business.

To clear these points, I introduce build up system and internet order system. We prepare many kinds of guitar parts, body, strings, circuit... Customer can choose every part they want from recommended parts list. So they only choose parts, we build it up as they want. **It is not certain hand made, but customer can get an original guitar and feel hand making with cheaper price. Also we open the web site, customer only click and choose easily, they can order.**

We start this business with 8 – 10 staffs. The 1st year we try to keep income and pay as same. After the business works well we expand the business.

This business is not big ones. But we can provide an original guitars only one in the world to customers.

To Open Custom Audio Equipments Shop

I want to open custom audio equipments shop at akihabara or nippon-bashi.

Because it is my hobby to build audio equipments and it is easy and cheap to get the sound which the customer likes. Although it is expensive to change equipment in case of custom audio equipment, I change only few parts to upgrade. So it is easy and cheap to get the sound the customer likes. Also, it is pressure to have only one equipment on the world.

To open shop, I must reserch the sound trend and costs about Maker's product and reserch which electronics parts are good sound and effective.

I must make catarogue and homepage because customer can select parts to upgrade sound.

Also before open shop I must keep money, staff and spaces. It costs about one million-yen to rent a space and it costs about 300 thousand-yen per month to hire staff. I need 10 staffs to run shop. So to open shop, I finance 10 million yen from bank. I expect to profit one million-yen per month. So I can repay within one year.

I think it is good for me and customer to open custom audio equipments shop.

Appendix B – Model Small Business Proposal

Writing Project Assignment

Your written composition should focus on the following **theme**:

Proposal to Start Your Own Business

Use the space below to write down ideas about what business you would like to own and operate (you plan to set up a small business in your town or neighborhood).

FREEWRITING SPACE:

When you have finished exchange your **proposal** with your partner and ask them to read it. Do they have any **suggestions**? Ask them for some.

Business Proposal Outline

Now it's your turn to design your own **business proposal** and outline the first paragraph.

PROPOSAL IDEA: _____

BODY: 1st Supporting Point:

2nd Supporting Point:

3rd Supporting Point:

CONCLUSION: _____

Remember:

- 1. Discuss only one point in each paragraph**
- 2. All supporting sentences must directly support your business proposal.**
- 3. An outline is useful as a plan for a paragraph. It organizes the ideas.**

When you have completed your **proposal** exchange it with your partner and have them check it for organization, grammar and spelling.

Drafting Your Business Proposal

Step 1: Multi-Paragraph Outline

Step 2: Writing a First Rough Draft

Your next step is to add more details to your proposal. Think of new points to support your idea for a successful small business. Outline each new paragraph in the same way as your first one. Look at the multi-paragraph sample below:

SAMPLE:

Title: **Wordsmith Bookstore Proposal**

Introduction:

Central Idea: I believe opening a bookstore in my neighborhood would be a success for a number of reasons. I will explain my staffing, financing and future expansion plans...

Paragraph 1

Central Idea:

Reasons for a Bookstore

Supporting Ideas:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Paragraph 2

Central Idea:

Financing and 3-Year Plan

Supporting Ideas:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Paragraph 3

Central Idea:

Staffing/Wages

Supporting Ideas:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Conclusion:

Multi-Paragraph Outline

Now it's your turn to draft your own **multi-paragraph outline**. Remember to include as many details as you can from your **freewriting** exercise.

Proposal Title: _____

Introduction:

Central Idea: _____

Paragraph 1

Central Idea: _____

Supporting Ideas: 1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____

Paragraph 2

Central Idea: _____

Supporting Ideas: 1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____

Paragraph 3

Central Idea: _____

Supporting Ideas: 1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____

Conclusion: _____

Remember: Don't worry about correcting your writing at this stage. You have lots of time to make corrections in the **complete draft** section.

Appendix C – Suggested Exercises

The Parts of a Topic Sentence

Remember that a good topic sentence: a) is a complete sentence with a subject, a verb, and a controlling idea, b) states clearly the main idea of the paragraph but does not include specific details, and c) is usually the first sentence in the paragraph.

Identify the topic and underline the controlling idea in each of the following sentences.

Example: **Windows 2000 software** is easy to use.

Practice Samples:

1. Japanese electronics have a world famous reputation.
2. The hi-tech industry is a major part of the U.S. economy.
3. Trade is an important activity between most nations.
4. Bananas are a major export for Brazil.
5. Technology shares are traded heavily on the stock market.

Position of Topic Sentences

Model 1

Trade

Trade between countries is important for many different reasons. One reason is that trade help countries remain economically healthy. In order to compete in world markets they must remain financially strong. A second reason is friendly relations. Different countries need to maintain good relationships to participate in a global economy. Therefore, trade amongst countries is important for these and many other reasons.

Model 2

Stock Exchange

A stock exchange, where shares are bought and sold, is one measure of a country's economic status. These places are trading markets where people who represent companies and industry publicly buy and sell stocks and shares. They are very busy places with lots of noise and activity. A country's future economic strength is decided here. It is therefore important to recognize the central need of a stock exchange in ensuring a country's overall financial health.

Writing Topic Sentences

Practice Exercise:

Write good topic sentences for the following paragraphs in the space provided. Include both a topic sentence and a controlling idea.

Paragraph 1:

For example, the automotive, electronic and photographic industries are all well represented by Japanese companies. Famous product names such as Toyota, Sony and Nikon are known around the world. Furthermore, certain aspects of Japanese products such as compactness, fuel efficiency and affordability have become the industry standard and forced other product makers to follow their lead. Therefore, we can truly see the influence of Japanese products around the world.

Paragraph 2:

That is, a company may consist of different sections, departments or divisions. Various managers are in charge of these different parts of the company. These companies can even be referred to as subsidiaries when they are under the control of a larger organization. As you can see, companies can be multi-layered and quite complex.

Writing Concluding Sentences

Remember that a good concluding sentence: a) signals the end of the paragraph and, b) summarizes the important points briefly or restates the topic sentence in different words.

Model

Trade

Trade between countries is important for many different reasons. One reason is that trade helps countries remain economically healthy. In order to compete in world markets they must stay financially strong. A second reason is friendly relations. Different countries need to maintain good relationships to participate in a global economy. Therefore, trade amongst countries is important for these and many other reasons.

Practice Exercise:

There are many different sorts of companies, but one category is the retail sales business. This kind of company sells their products to individual consumers. They can be represented by individual, privately owned shops and outlets or franchised chains of the kind often found in the convenience store and restaurant business. _____

_____.

Practice Exercise:

When retailers want to stock their stores and businesses with the product they sell, they rely on a wholesaler to take care of their needs. This kind of company sells large quantities of merchandise to retail businesses. However, unlike the retailer, wholesalers are not in direct contact with the end-user of the products they sell. _____

_____.

Parallelism Adapted from: Kelly, C. 2000. Writing From Within. CUP.

Use parallelism with words and phrases to achieve coherence and rhythm in writing. When words or phrases are connected within a sentence, use the same kind of grammar.

Words (incorrect) I like swimming, running, and to play tennis.
(correct) I like swimming, running, and playing tennis.

Phrases (incorrect) He got up, took a shower, and eats breakfast.
(correct) He got up, took a shower, and ate breakfast.

1. Correct each sentence below. Make the sentences parallel in structure.

A. A computer can be used to search the Internet, writing reports and letters, and to keep in touch with friends via e-mail.

B. Before you leave, please turn off the lights, water the plants, and to lock the door.

C. Mr. Potter never saw the ocean, has never been on an airplane, and has never owned a car.

D. Max was a successful director, the winner of many awards, and he acted onstage.

Sentence Transitions

Adapted from: Kelly, C. 2000. Writing From Within. CUP.

Good writers try to make one sentence flow smoothly into the next. One way to do this is to start a sentence with the same idea that ended the previous one.

(weak transition) People in my country prefer **spicy foods**. A good example is **curry**.

(good transition) People in my country prefer **spicy foods**. **Curry** is a good example.

1. Read each pair of sentences. Then rewrite the second one so that the sentence transition is smooth.

A. Charles hopes to attend a prestigious university. His first choice is La Sorbonne in Paris.

B. We must study global issues. One of the most important is world peace.

C. This year, I plan to learn how to use a computer. My first task will be to send my brother an e-mail message.

D. Carrie often travels to southern Europe. Her favorite countries are Spain and Italy.

Written Drill: Noncount or Count?

Adapted from: Steer, J and K. Carlisi. 1998.
The Advanced Grammar Book. Heinle.

Directions:

Read the following sentences and indicate whether the bold noun is count or noncount.
Then explain the meaning of the noun.

Example: I'd like to order **two teas**, please.

Meaning: two servings

1. My aunt bought me an **iron** for Christmas.

Meaning: _____

2. His two children are the **joys** of his life.

Meaning: _____

3. The café down the street is now offering a new **coffee**.

Meaning: _____

4. **Poverty** is a fact of life in many cities in the United States.

Meaning: _____

5. Many Americans go into **business** for themselves.

Meaning: _____

6. Bill Gates has a **wealth** that most people can't even imagine.

Meaning: _____

Review of Present Progressive Verbs

Adapted from: Frodesen, J. and J. Eyring.
2000. Grammar Dimensions. Heinle.

Progressive verbs include a form of **be + a present participle (verb + -ing)**.

Exercise: Decide whether a simple tense or progressive tense is appropriate for each
Blank and give the correct form in parentheses.

1. Andre (come) _____ from Brazil and (be) _____ a native speaker of Portuguese. Currently he is (study) _____ English at the University of Colorado. He is (take) _____ two courses: composition and American culture.
2. Next summer our family (have) _____ a reunion during the July 4th holiday weekend. My uncle from Finland (try) _____ to come, but he (start) _____ a new business this year so it (be) _____ difficult for him to get away. Another uncle (spend) _____ the whole summer with us. He (work) _____ at my mother's travel agency from June through August.
3. For many immigrants to the United States, their ethnic associations (remain) _____ important in-groups long after they have left their home Countries. Even while they are (learn) _____ a new language, many (look to) _____ speakers of their native language as an in-group that (understand) _____ their struggles to adapt to a new way of life.