A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ENGLISH ESSAY WRITING STRATEGIES AND DIFFICULTIES AS PERCEIVED BY ENGLISH MAJOR STUDENTS: A CASE STUDY OF SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES UNIVERSITY OF THE THAI CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

PORNPAN BOONPATTANAPORN

Title	A Comparative Study of English Essay Writing Strategies and Difficulties as Perceived by English Major Students: A Case Study of School of Humanities, University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce
Researcher	Pornpan Boonpattanaporn
School	School of Humanities
Year of Accomplishment	2007
No. of Pages	129 pages
Key Words	English essay writing strategies, English essay writing difficulties

ABSTRACT

The purposes of this study were to investigate English essay writing strategies used and English essay writing difficulties encountered by English major students at School of Humanities, University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce, to compare English essay writing strategies used and difficulties in writing English essays encountered by high and low English proficiency students, and to compare difficulties in writing English essays encountered by students with different background.

The data were gathered from 272 fourth year English major students of academic year 2005. The subjects passed two writing courses emphasizing on paragraph and essay writing. A questionnaire was used to collect data. Percentage, Means, Standard Deviation and t-test were used for data analysis.

The major findings are as follows: firstly, the students practiced most in gathering information for the prewriting stage by using the Internet and preparing to write essays by setting the main idea. Regarding strategies for writing essays, the student wrote

introduction by using facts and statistics, wrote the topic sentence as the first sentence in a paragraph, wrote conclusions by summarizing main points, and used transitional words to make ideas coherent. They consulted Thai-English dictionaries, revised and edited essays by checking spelling.

Secondly, the students had difficulties the most in getting readers' attention and using verb tenses.

Thirdly, when comparing strategies used in writing English essays between high and low proficiency groups, significant differences at 0.05 were found in all steps in the writing process namely gathering information for essays, planning, writing introduction, body and conclusion of essays, revising and editing.

Fourthly, when comparing difficulties encountered by high and low proficiency groups in organizing essays, there were significant differences at 0.05 in both organizing essays and writing essays in English language.

Lastly, when comparing difficulties encountered by students with different background, there was a significant difference at 0.05 between male and female students in having no time to revise and edit essays. When comparing students practicing and not practicing English outside classroom, it was found that there were significant differences at 0.05 in both organizing essays and writing essays in English language. Regarding comparison of difficulties encountered by students practicing writing skill and students practicing other skills outside classroom, there were significant differences at 0.05 in both organizing essays and writing essays in English language.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS (CONTINUED)

Page

TABLE OF CONTENTS (CONTINUED)

Page

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF TABLES (CONTINUED)

LIST OF TABLES (CONTINUED)

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

It is widely accepted that English is now the global language. English is definitely used as either the "second language" or the "foreign language" in most countries all over the world.

Thailand is not and cannot be an exception. In the globalization era, English becomes a crucial tool to communicate, for whatever purpose, with people throughout the world. Communication across borders is more essential than ever. Thanks to technology and communication networks, global communication is at the fingertips. This draws people outside the English-speaking countries into a situation where fluency and accuracy in English becomes critical in order to participate in the global interactions and competition.

The ability to communicate effectively in the global network fundamentally depends on writing skills; therefore, command of good writing skills is increasingly regarded as the vital tool for people to succeed in their career.

Anderson (1985 quoted in Grabe and Kaplan 1996) carried out a survey of 841 university graduates in seven different fields of study and concluded that writing turned out to be very important in the workplace. 93 per cent of respondents mentioned that writing is of some importance while 57 per cent ranked it as of critical importance. This is why, in many countries including Thailand, English has been being taught for several decades from primary to tertiary level. "Students in EFL contexts will need English writing skills ranging from simple paragraph and summary skills to the ability to write

essays and professional articles." (Grabe and Kaplan 1996: pp. 24 -25) At university level, writing is used both as a standard system of communication and a tool for acquiring knowledge. Writing expertise is an indication that students have mastered the cognitive skills and have the language required for a university study. However, most teachers find it difficult for students to achieve English writing skills.

Writing is a way to discover, organize and communicate ideas. It is a process but it is not simply a translation of words from one language to another. It comprises interdependent steps closely linked with critical thinking and reasoning skills. It is also seen as a developmental process. Sokolik (2003 p. 96) points out that steps in the writing process emphasize that learning to write is more than creating a final product. It is to learn these skills leading to that product.

This idea is similarly stated by Matsuda (2003: 21) that "Rather than the view of writing as a reproduction of previously learned syntactic or discourse structures, the process - based approach emphasized the view of writing as a process of developing organization as well as meaning.". Writing is regarded as a difficult skill as it requires effort and practice; moreover, writing in a second language is even more difficult since it involves ability to construct a text as well as ability to use the target language in order to express ideas effectively.

Writing steps, namely prewriting, planning, writing and editing, are therefore introduced to students hoping that they will follow these steps, get through the process and be able to produce a good piece of writing. Hyland (2003 p.12) emphasizes that "The teacher's role is to guide students through the writing process, avoiding an emphasis on form to help them develop strategies for generating, drafting and refining ideas." In fact, teachers tend to adopt a wide variety of methods depending on their circumstances, teaching situations and their beliefs about how students learn to write.

It is now the national agenda to increase students' English proficiency as it is shown that Thai students' English proficiency level is quite low, compared to that of neighbouring countries. Writing ability, which is regarded as a complicated skill since it requires several components such as use of vocabulary, structure, logical thinking, also needs to be improved.

There has been a long period where teachers at university level have wondered why students could not and cannot master writing skills although they have studied English, including practicing writing, for more than 10 years. There is plentiful research regarding error analysis aiming to find out typical errors students made hoping that the results would show ways to help students get through these obstacles.

However, reading the students' texts, pointing out errors and giving feedback might not be enough to help students improve their writing ability. Zamel (1982) found that regarding ability to write proficiently in English, competence in the composing process is more important than linguistic competence. The wide range of activities during the composing process might show a number of sub-processes that make writing strategies different from one person to another. Examining what students actually do and think when they write can reveal the strength and weaknesses they have and letting them disclose difficulties they have to struggle with in order to produce a piece of writing will give opportunities for teachers to advise and to guide them. Teachers can see what concepts students have misunderstood and what extra help they might need.

Kroll (1989) quoted in Reid (1993: 263) mentions
"One clear mistake that I made (early in my teaching career) was to assume that I knew what was best for (my students) and that what they had to say was of little or no value in shaping the course that I would provide for them. I have since learned that we not only must ask students to tell us about their difficulties in achieving writing proficiency, but we must also listen to what they don't yet know how to say but so much want to tell us."

At School of Humanities, University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce, the English major students' writing abilities are not up to a satisfactory level. Not only the writing process but also students'difficulties in writing English essays should be taken into consideration. Ploysangwal (2546) investigated problems in writing English of these majors and found that they had various problems in grammatical structure usage.

Not surprisingly, problems in writing English echo in other institutions from the past up to present. Teerawong (1982) found that the first year Chulalongkorn University students' writing proficiency was low. Their main problems in writing English were sentence arrangement, punctuation usage and grammatical structure usage. Lukanavanich (2531) pointed out that errors in composition of first year students at Bangkok University were grammatical errors, lexical errors and stylistic errors. Srinon (2542) stated in his study that first year students at Mahamakut Buddhist University made errors in the use of tenses, determiners, prepositions, verb forms and punctuation. Khao-urai (2545-2546) also found that major errors in writing English essays of Nakornpratom Rajabhat Institute students are grammatical errors, syntactic errors and lexical errors respectively.

Hyland (2003) mentions that students commonly identify language difficulties, particularly an inadequate understanding of vocabulary or grammar, as their main problem with writing. Another area considered as a problem for them is being unable to convey their ideas in appropriate and correct English.

Silva et al (2003) also remark that it seemed clear that L2 writers understood and were concerned about making grammatical, lexical and mechanical errors and their errors were local rather than global. They reported problems with articles, prepositions and verb tenses and difficulty of limited lexical resources.

For decades, teachers teaching English writing skill have dealt with students' errors and tried to find the proper way to help students achieve the writing ability at a satisfactory level. Hyland (2003 p.13) mentions "Despite considerable research into writing process, however, we still do not have a comprehensive idea of how learners go about a writing task or how they learn to write."

It is interesting to study whether and to what extent students follow the steps in the writing process and also to study whether high and low English proficiency students employ the same steps and techniques. This research will spell out what occurs during the process and it will also reflect the difficulties students have to deal with so that teachers can step in to help advise students regarding their writing practices. Hence, the results can be used to create a more supportive classroom environment to improve students' writing in a more practical and flexible way.

Purposes of the Study

The purposes of this study are as follows:

1. To investigate English essay writing strategies used by English major students at School of Humanities, University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce;
2. To investigate difficulties in writing English essays encountered by English major students at School of Humanities, University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce;
3. To compare English essay writing strategies used by high and low English proficiency students;
4. To compare difficulties in writing English essays encountered by high and low English proficiency students;
5. To compare difficulties in writing English essays encountered by students with different background.

Research Questions

1. What are the English Essay writing strategies used by English major students at School of Humanities, University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce?
2. What are the major difficulties in writing English essays encountered by English major students at School of Humanities, University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce?
3. How are English essay writing strategies used by high and low English proficiency students different?
4. How are difficulties in writing English essays encountered by high and low English proficiency students different?
5. How are difficulties in writing English essays encountered by students with different background different?

Significance of the Study

The result of this study will be beneficial for teachers in their teaching and for students in their learning English essay writing. Teachers will know more about the strategies used and difficulties encountered by both high and low proficiency students as well as students with different background. They can use this information to adjust their teaching techniques to be appropriate to each group of students. Moreover, teachers can intervene in the writing process and help ease difficulties the students might have during their process to produce a piece of writing. The outcome should be that teachers arrange environment for students to learn writing techniques useful for them in their career.

Definition of Terms

writing strategies   the writing techniques or actions used by the subjects in planning, writing, revising and editing an essay

writing difficulties   the obstacles faced by the subjects during planning, writing, revising and editing an essay

Limitation of the Study

There are several different factors such as class size, choice of textbook, teaching techniques and also students' motivation that influence the teaching situation in each university. These factors may affect the strategies used by students. Therefore the implications of this study can be used in specified situations. Different contexts especially in public universities should be recognized and taken into consideration. The generalization of the result of this study must be done with caution.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews theories and research regarding writing strategies as well as difficulties in writing English essays. The review of literature is divided into 4 areas as follows:

1. writing process theories
2. writing strategies
3. essay writing
4. difficulties in writing English essays.

This will provide a fundamental understanding how a person develops writing skills. In addition, relevant studies in the context of English as a second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language (EFL) are also discussed to provide background information on what has been previously studied in the area of writing English essays.

1. The Writing Process Theories

Writing, particularly in a foreign language, is one of the most complicated skills in learning and practicing the language. Sokolik (2003) describes writing as a combination of physical and mental acts. It is a physical act of committing ideas to a message and the mental act of generating and organizing ideas into paragraphs. Writing is also viewed as a process as Hyland (2003:23) explains writing as "a sociocognitive activity which involves skills in planning and drafting as well as knowledge of language, contexts and audiences."

The writing process is the process the writer uses when composing a message. It is a complicated and recursive process that consists of planning, writing, revising and editing. The writer can go back and forth from one step to another when he/she feels the need to arrange, add or delete ideas.

In the early 1970s, Janet Emig (1971) presented a more scientific way to study writing process based on cognitive psychology by using the think-aloud methodology and the case study approach. Emig's work had created the perception of writing as a process which changed writing instruction and the ways students learned to write. The idea of writing as a process has become popular because it enhances teachers and students interactions more meaningful. The cognitive approach to the writing process has got much attention from researchers and instructors. Two well-known models explaining the cognitive approach are the Flower and Hays Model and the Bereiter and Scardamalia Model. (Grabe and Kaplan 1996: 114-124)

The Flower and Hayes Model

In 1977, Flower and Hayes developed a writing process model which explains the writer's thinking process. They have stated three hypotheses of the composing process as follows:
- "composing processes are interactive, intermingling and potentially simultaneous;
- composing is a goal-directed activity;
- expert writers compose differently than novice writers."
(Grabe &Kaplan 1996:91)

After Flower and Hayes had collected and examined protocol, transcripts and videotapes of student's talking aloud while they are writing, they presented data supporting their perspectives on composing and later developed a model of composing process. According to their model, the writing process consists of three components:

- the task environment such as the topic, the readers, and the necessity to write;
- the writer's long term memory such as the writer's knowledge about the topic, about the readers;
- the composing processor consisting of planning, translating and reviewing.

     Planning includes three subcomponents: generating ideas, organizing information and setting goals.

     Translating is transforming ideas into the language by using the writer's knowledge such as vocabulary, structure. Translating for second language writer can be transforming ideas in the first language into the written piece in the second language.

     Reviewing is evaluating of what have been written. When the writer is not satisfied with the written work, it can be revised which means that the writer goes back to planning and translating again.

These three components of the writing process are controlled by a monitor or metacognitive. It determines when the writer should change from planning to translating or to reviewing. A monitor differs from one person to another and depends on each kind of writing. Flower and Hayes Model (Grabe and Kaplan 1996: 92) can be shown in diagram as follows:

TASK ENVIRONMENT

THE RHETORICAL

PROBLEM
Topic
audience
exigency

TEXT
PRODUCED
SO FAR

THE WRITER'S
LONG-TERM
MEMORY

Knowledge of topic,
Audience,
and writing
plans

PLANNING

GENERATING

ORGANIZING

GOAL
SETTING

TRANSLATING

REVIEWING

EVALUATING

EDITING

MONITOR
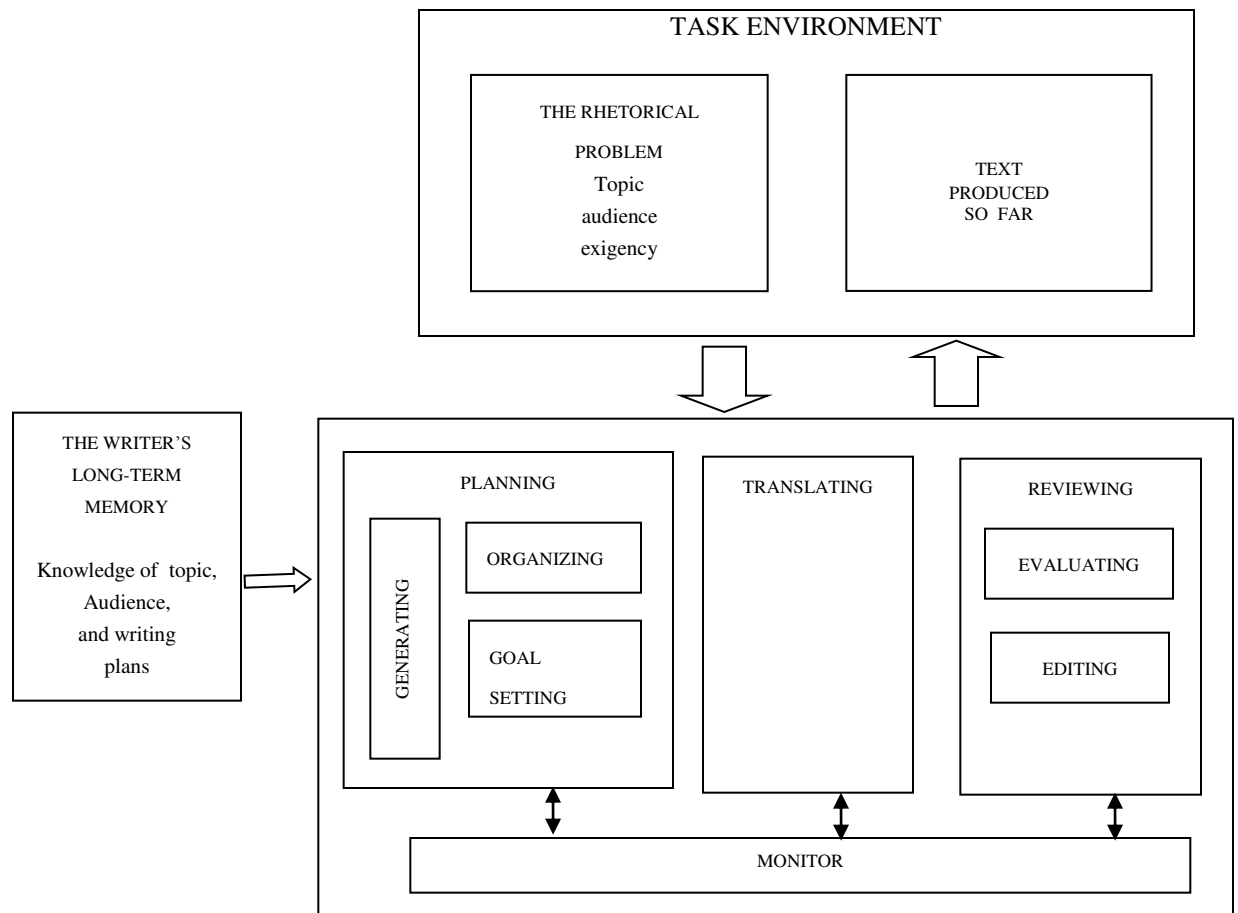
   Their theory has created research using protocol analysis. However, it was also criticized for its vagueness as the model doesn't contain how the text might be composed and what linguistic constraints might be dealt with.

   After presenting their writing model, Flower and Hayes developed the notion of the rhetorical problem in the task-based component of their model to show the range of potential writing problems during the composing process.

   They also suggested that the writing process features planning, drafting, revising and editing which are interactive, recursive and simultaneous.

The Bereiter and Scardamalia Model of the Writing Process

Berieter and Scardamalia model emphasizes the different processing stages of writing between the skilled and unskilled writers. Their two process models are knowledge-telling model and knowledge-transforming model.

The Knowledge-telling Model presents the fact that writers need to keep the task uncomplicated by bypassing complex problem-solving activities, investigate what they know about the topic, consider the genre of the topic to be written and search for relevant information from their memory. When writers find appropriate information, it is written down and is used to generate more information. The objective of writers is to tell what they have retrieved from their memory.

This writing model works well for writing personal experiences, writing in journals and diaries, writing narratives and stories. It is also stated that unskilled writers plan less than skilled writers. They also revise less often and less extensively, have limited goals and are concerned with generating content.

```
                    ┌─────────────────────────────────┐
                    │   MENTAL REPRESENTATION          │
                    │      OF ASSIGNMENT               │
                    └─────────────────────────────────┘
```

| CONTENT KNOWLEDGE | KNOWLEDGE-TELLING PROCESS | DISCOURSE KNOWLEDGE |

LOCATE TOPIC INDENTIFIERS

LOCATE GENRE IDENTIFIERS

CONSTRUCT MEMORY PROBES

RETRIEVE CONTENT FROM MEMORY USING PROBES

FAIL

RUN TESTS OF APPROPRIATENESS

WRITE (NOTES, DRAFT, ETC)

UPDATE   MENTAL REPRESENTATION OF TEXT
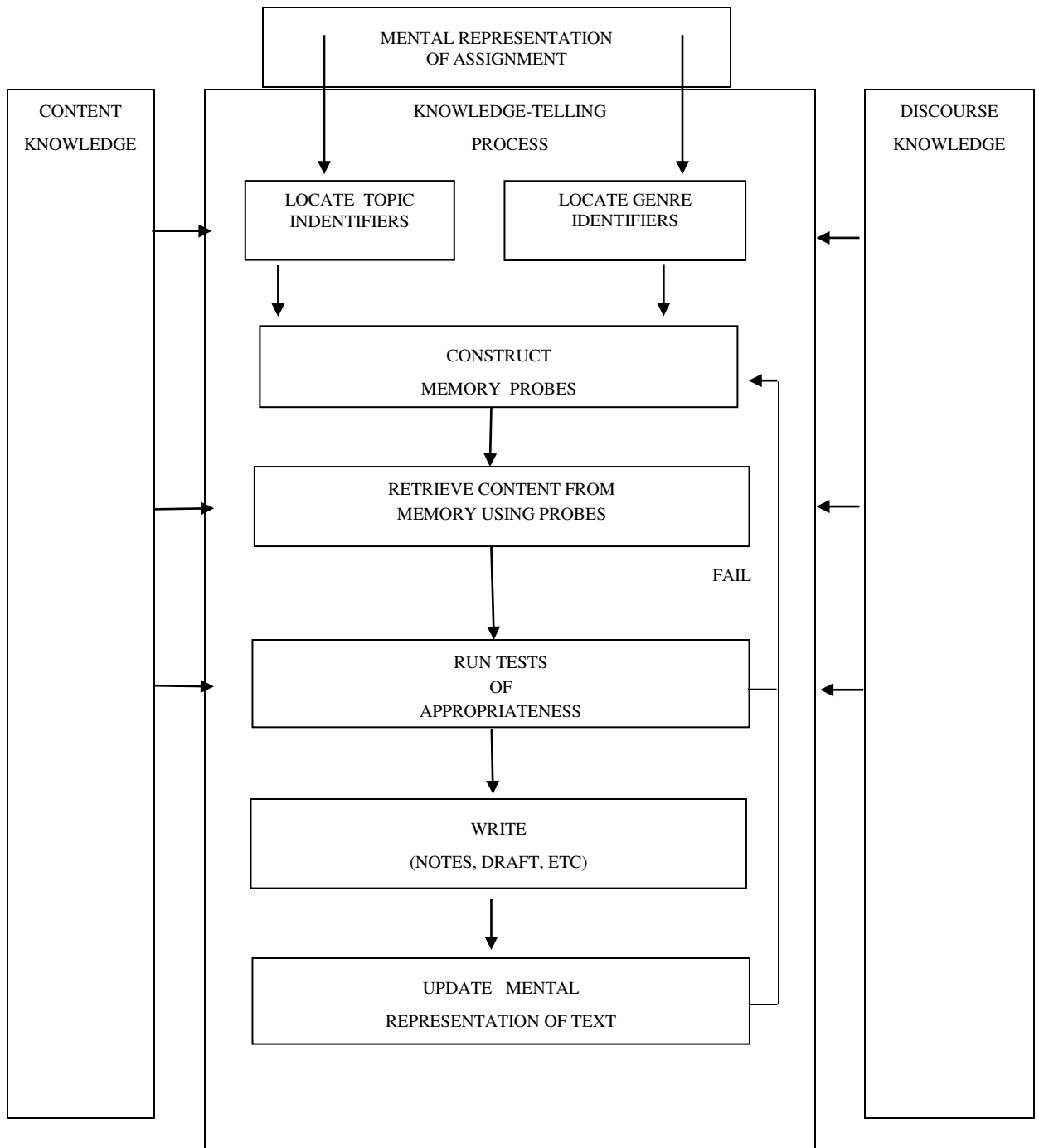
The Knowledge-telling Model   (Grabe & Kaplan 1996: 121)

 The Knowledge-transforming Model focuses on how writers find an appropriate way to approach the complexity of the task. It shows how skilled writers analyze problems and set goals for the writing task. The problem analysis and goal setting lead to plans to resolve the problems of content generation, content integration, audience expectation, writer intention, genre form, linguistic style and organizational logic.

 By using this model, writers start with interpreting the task, analyzing the problem and setting the goal for writing. During the writing process, writers also prepare to solve problems relating to content and language use. However, writers who have practiced one genre or writing task will not necessary transfer their skills to other genres or tasks.
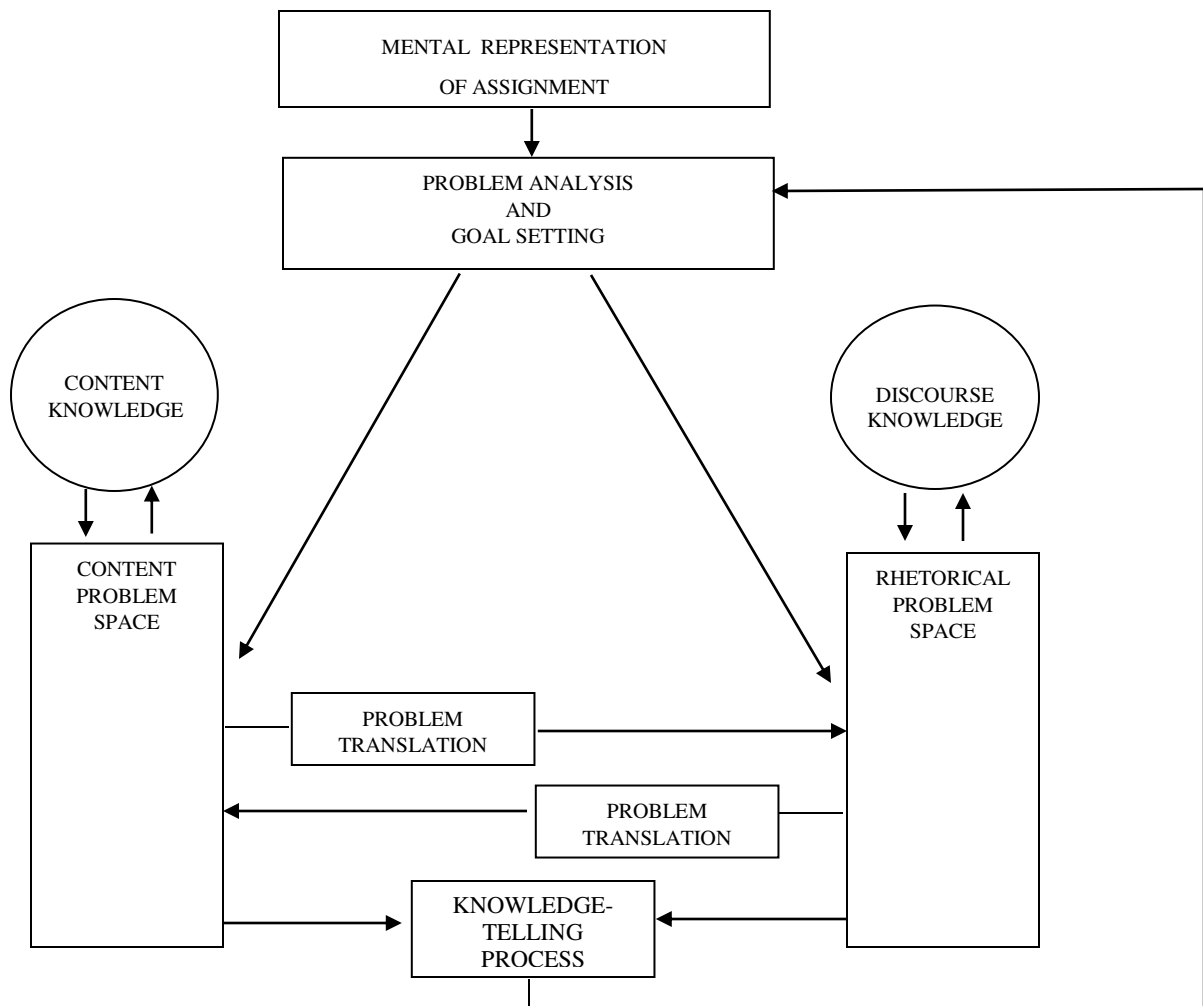
The Knowledge – transforming Model (Grabe & Kaplan 1996:122)

2. Writing Strategies

Writing is a productive skill that needs various competence such as linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence and discourse knowledge as well as knowledge about language use such as grammar, structure and vocabulary.

Apart from the mentioned competence, writing also needs strategies and an organized way of thinking; therefore, writing is not only one activity but a series of interrelated activities. It makes use of complex processes that interact to create ideas. Weigle (2002) mentions that writing is a set of skills gained from much practice and experience. Moreover, writing and critical thinking cannot be separated, so students should realize that employing reasoning skill is also necessary for producing a quality piece of writing. Reasoning skill plays a vital role in selecting appropriate ideas for essays and arranging them in an organized way. Ur (1999) states that the purpose of writing is the expression of ideas, the convey of a message to the reader; therefore, the ideas become the important aspect of the writing.

Either in the first or foreign language, students cannot master writing skill naturally. It is the responsibility of teachers to provide students with opportunities to stimulate ideas and practice writing. Due to limited English language knowledge, students studying English as a foreign language tend to focus on language rather than content when composing essays. That might be why content in some students' essays is not so well organized.

Studying and following the steps in the writing process is important for unskilled writers or students since it will ease the job and will improve the quality of writing as Zamel (1982) found that competence in composing process was more important than linguistic competence in the ability to write proficiently in English. Moreover, Zamel also

concluded that students' writing would improve when they understood and experienced composing as a process.

The importance of understanding the writing process is confirmed by Myles (2002) who explains that students writing in second language have to acquire proficiency in the use of language and writing strategies, techniques as well as skills. She also emphasizes that it is the act of composing that can create problems for students.

Raimes (2005) suggests that the writing process consists of planning, drafting and revising while Purdue University (2005) suggests that the writing process comprises invention, collection, organization, drafting, revising and proofreading.

In addition, Brandon (2005:30) mentions that "The writing process consists of a set of strategies that will help you proceed from idea or purpose to the final statement of a paragraph or an essay." He presents the writing process of only three main steps namely prewriting; organizing and developing support; and writing, revising and editing.

However, Trimmer (2004) mentions that the writing process can be divided into four stages: planning, drafting, revising , and designing.

Even though there are many terms and patterns used for the writing process suggested by various academics, the core elements are similar. They are as follows: prewriting, writing, revising, and editing.

Prewriting

Prewriting is the initial stage of writing that helps students generate ideas for and prepare them to write an essay. It is the time to plan how to organize the essay because a well thought-out plan will save time in the revision stage. Planning helps produce logical

and orderly ideas that are easy to follow as well as produce a thorough piece of writing. (Plotnick 2005) It is obvious that getting started is the most difficult part in writing for all students. Brandon (2005:253) gives the meaning of prewriting as "strategies that can help you get started and develop your ideas". At this stage, all ideas are preliminary and subject to change.

The prewriting stage can be put into two main parts:
- points to be considered when planning essays;
- techniques for generating ideas for essays.

Points to Be Considered When Planning Essays

Selecting and analyzing a topic

Either a topic is assigned or has to be chosen by the writer, the topic should be of a kind in which the writer has a strong interest. However, sometimes the topic is too broad to be covered in a single essay and the writer will find it difficult to generate a thesis with ideas or examples. Then it needs to be narrowed down to a specific idea.

Purpose of writing

After selecting or narrowing the subject to an appropriate topic, the writer needs to specify a purpose of the essay and consider whether he/she wants the reader to be informed, persuaded or entertained. The writer can ask himself/herself what he/she wants the writing to accomplish.

Readers' knowledge of the topic

Readers' knowledge determines the information to be given and the language to be used in the essay. The readers' knowledge will decide how deep the

content should be. Moreover, analyzing the readers' knowledge develops a clearer perception of the subject.

Techniques for Generating Ideas for Essays

After selecting a topic, setting a purpose of writing and analyzing readers' knowledge, the writer can start gathering information for the essay. Wyrick (2002:7-17) Trimmer (2004:30-47) Brandon (2005 :31-45) The Writing Center of the University of Kansas (2005) suggest techniques for generating ideas for essays as follows:

Freewriting

Freewriting or looping is a way to get ideas by writing whatever sentences come to mind about the topic without worrying about grammar, spelling, punctuation or the order of ideas. The purpose of freewriting is to look for ideas that can be used for the essay. The ideas that are not relevant to the topic will be crossed out.

Clustering

In clustering or mindmapping, the topic will be written in a circle in the middle of the page. Then related ideas, normally in words, will be written in smaller circles around the topic. More related ideas under each of the ideas previously noted can be put in even smaller circles.

Brainstorming

Brainstorming or listing is a prewriting activity in which students come up with a list of ideas about the topic. Brainstorming can be enhanced when it is done collaboratively in a group. Put a topic and then list down any ideas that comes to mind as quickly as possible. Then the ideas listed can be reviewed, scrutinized, arranged, added or deleted.

Interviewing

Interviewing is one of the most direct ways to get first-hand data. In order to use this strategy effectively, the interviewer should prepare a list of questions that will help organize what he/she wants to know. However, most interviews are dynamic; new questions can be inspired from the previous answers. Therefore, the interviewer should be aware that it can become a disorganized conversation. The information got should be arranged and reproduced in writing after the interview.

Reading and note taking

Reading is the most common method to collect information. It can be done either from printed materials or from websites. While reading, taking notes or answering questions set beforehand will help gather information needed for the essay.

Writing journal

Journal entries record what you are thinking about a certain issue. They can serve as reflections of what you have read, observed or imagined. These journal entries are sources of information for writing. Moreover, writing journal will increase confidence, develop writing skill and make writing a more comfortable activity.

Internet

The 'World Wide Web' or 'www' is now a part of every day life. Surfing the Internet is one of the easy ways to get information since the Web is a vast databank. Both subject archives and search engines are research tools but they work differently and give different results. A subject archive such as Yahoo provides links by topic area and generates relevant results while a search engine like Google allows searching by keyword and provides more comprehensive results.

Writing

Writing or drafting means writing a preliminary written version from the outline. It is the way to convert ideas into words. The writer is normally more at ease to draft if he/she makes an outline first. Most writers write straight through the first draft without stopping for correction. At this writing stage, outline is used as a guide to form an essay. The writer uses his/her knowledge and information gathered together with thinking strategies to produce a piece of writing. At this stage too, the writer also uses his/her linguistic competence and discourse knowledge to get the ideas across to the reader.

Raimes (2005) mentions that at this stage, the writer can make substantial changes by adding, deleting, and reorganizing the paper. The writer can also change the approach to parts or all of the paper. The purpose is to produce a piece of writing that can be shaped later during the revision stage. However, the writer should also be aware that an outline can eventually be adjusted to balance the development of ideas.

An outline is a framework that shows the plan and organization of a piece of writing. An outline divides ideas into sections and sequences these sections in an organized order. An outline can be made either in sentence format which is called sentence or formal outline or in key word or phrase format which is called topic or scratch outline.

Revising

Revising is the stage of making changes to better the piece of writing. According to Trimmer (2004), the purpose of revision is to examine and reevaluate all elements that have been produced. Changes can be made to content and organization by adding, deleting details or improving clarity, style or flow of idea. Moreover, changes can also be made to improve sentence variety, clarity unity, coherent tone or word choice.

Revising can be done as many times as a writer wants with different focuses. Faigley et al (quoted in Baguley 1994:124) summarize that experienced writers often make changes in content and form while less experienced writers revise at minor things. Sommers (1980) focused on revision of native less experienced and more experienced writers and found that less skilled writers revised in lexicon and teacher-generated rules but were not concerned with modifying ideas which had been written down. More experienced writers made changes at the discourse level. Raimes (2005) suggests putting the draft away for a few days then reading it again in a more critical way.

Peer revision is one of the ways to get comments and ideas for revision. This peer revision can be done either in pair or in group by commenting each other's work. In addition, student-teacher conference can be helpful for revising especially content and organization.

Editing

The final stage in the writing process is the editing. Editing includes checking various aspects on the surface level such as spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar or page formatting to ensure the appropriate convention and format. It is often helpful to proofread and read it aloud to detect errors. Brandon (2005) points out that reading aloud will help notice awkward expressions, misplaced words, omission and other errors.

Previous Studies on Writing Strategies

Apart from writing strategies suggested by several academics, there are some studies related to various aspects of writing strategies.

Jacobs (1982 quoted in Krapels 1993:40) studied eleven graduate students' writing. These eleven students consisted of six native and five nonnative speakers of English. Thirteen essays of each student and their interview were analyzed. The result showed that linguistic competence does not affect composing competence among second language writers.

Zamel (1982) studied the writing processes of eight university level proficient second language writers and found that competence in the writing process was more important than linguistic competence in the ability to write proficiently in English.

Zamel (1983) observed six advanced second language writers while they composed and found that the skilled L2 writers revised more and spent more time on their essays than the unskilled writers. They paid attention to ideas first, revised at the discourse level and edited at the end of the process. On the contrary, unskilled L2 writers spent less time on writing, revised less, focused on small bits of the essay and edited from the beginning to the end of the process.

Raimes (1985) collected data from eight university students who were categorized as unskilled writers. The data consisted of students' essays, students' scores on the Michigan Proficiency Test, the students' responses to a questionnaire on their background and attitude toward English and writing, composing-aloud audiotapes. She found that the students' composing competence did not correspond with their linguistic competence. They planned very little before or during writing.

Norton (1990) reported the interaction between students' strategies in essay writing and tutors' strategies in marking. This study showed that strategies leading to higher essay marks are the amount of time spent on the essay, the number of books used, the number of references cited and proportion of research based content found in the

essays. Moreover, it indicates that students were more concerned with content, whereas tutors were more concerned with argument.

Kasper (1997) studied whether strategy variables have an effect upon the writing performance of ESL students and found that there was a significant positive correlation between ESL students' metacognitive knowledge and writing performance. Their knowledge of effective writing strategies increased significantly as they became more proficient in the English language. Moreover, successful student writers tend to choose effective strategies including planning, monitoring and evaluating during the task of composing to communicate a message.

Bosher (1998) explored the writing process of Southeast Asian students with different educational background. They were asked to read an article and write their opinion about the topic then were interviewed about their writing process. The results showed that the students differed in the degree of metacognitive awareness, their ability to integrate information from the reading into their writing, the amount of attention paid to different aspect of their writing and the quantity and variety of problem-solving strategies used.

Kubota (1998) investigated whether individual Japanese students use the same discourse pattern in L1 and ESL writing. The essays were evaluated in terms of organization and language use. It was found that half of the writers used similar patterns in L1 and L2. The L1 writing ability, English proficiency and composing experience in English affect the quality of ESL essays.

Shi (1998) studied whether peer talk and teacher-led prewriting discussions affected the quality of students' compositions. It was found that students wrote longer drafts in the condition of no discussion, shorter drafts after teacher-led talk, and drafts

with a greater variety of verbs after peer talk. However, there was no statistically significant differences overall in the writing under the three conditions.

Paulus (1999) studied the effect of peer and teacher feedback on student writing. The results showed that majority of revisions were on the surface level. The revisions made as a result of peer and teacher feedback were more on the meaning level than the revision they made on their own. Moreover, it was found that writing multiple drafts resulted in essay improvement.

Sasaki (2000) compared writing process of three paired groups of Japanese EFL writers namely experts vs novices, more vs less –skilled student writers, novices before and after 6 months of instruction. The three groups were compared in terms of writing fluency, quality/complexity of the written texts, their pausing behaviours while writing and their strategies used. It was found that the experts spent a longer time planning a detailed overall organization than novices. While writing, the experts did not stop and think as often as the novices. Students with different L2 proficiency used writing strategies differently. The novices started to use some of the expert writers' strategies after 6 months of instruction.

Wang (2003) investigated how switching between first and second language of writers is related to second language proficiency. The results showed that the participants' frequencies of language switching varied slightly by their second language proficiency. This suggests that second language proficiency might determine writer's approaches and qualities of thinking while composing in their second language.

Wolfersberger (2003) examined the composing process and writing strategies of lower proficiency Japanese students in their first and second language. It was found that first language strategies may transfer to second language writing processes. Lower

proficiency writers tried hard to utilize all strategies that could help the writing process in the second language.

Ojima (2004) investigated concept mapping as a form of prewriting strategy in English as a second language learners' writing performance. The result showed that each learner made unique applications of the concept mapping strategy in their writing processes. It was concluded that concept mapping may help ESL learners improve their composing in unique ways according to individual experience, motivation and tasks.

There are some studies in Thailand too on the writing strategies or writing process.

Leukiatpaisan (2533) compared English writing process of high and low English writing achievers and found that students employed writing process at moderate level. The application of the writing process of the two groups was significantly different at .05 level.

Patarapongpaisan (2538) studied the effects of process approach on writing of undergraduate English major students of Rajabhat Institute Chandrakasem and found that the mean scores of the group using process approach were significantly higher. The result showed that the process approach led to better achievement in English writing.

Meechang (2543) compared English essay writing ability and strategies in groups of high and low proficiency in English of the 60 English majors at Naresuan University. It was found that the students used writing strategies at a moderate level. In comparing the writing strategies used between students in high and low English proficiency , it was found that they used prewriting strategies differently at .05 level of significance. There was no difference regarding writing strategies in writing and revising stage, and writing ability between high and low proficiency English.

Lukkunaprasit and Kannasuth (2548) reported opinions of lecturers at Chulalongkorn University Language Institute regarding process writing approach. The results showed that 68.29 % of the interviewed lecturers agreed that process writing approach is effective for teaching writing in class. However, this approach is more appropriate for high performance students than the low performance students. It was concluded that brainstorming was the prewriting technique that was the most effective and the most frequently used. Revision was regarded as the second effective tool used among the writing steps.

Ounwatana (2000) studied the relationship between language learning strategies and abilities in English language speaking and writing of students at the certificate of vocational education leveling Rajamangala Institute of Technology. The results showed that the ability in English language speaking of students was significantly related to their ability in English language writing at the 0.05 level but the language learning strategies were not related to their ability in English language writing.

3. Essay Writing

Definition

Brandon (2005), Meyer (2005), O'Donnell and Paiva (1993) Zemach and Rumisek (2003), Oshima and Hogue (1999) and Reid (1988) define an essay as a group of paragraphs about a single subject. It usually consists of the introduction containing a thesis statement, the body and the conclusion.

Framework for Essays

Reid (1988), O'Donnell and Paiva (1993), Clouse (1998), Zemach and Rumisek (2003) and Meyer (2005) suggest that an essay is composed of 3 parts as follows:

1. Introduction
2. Body paragraphs
3. Conclusion

Introduction

The introduction is the first paragraph that opens the essay and gives information about the topic. It is supposed to attract the reader's attention and also present the main idea of the essay or the writer's purpose. The quality of the introduction determines whether the essay gets read in the first place. A good introduction gives the reader a first impression and encourages the reader to read on.

An introduction normally begins with a general, interest-grabbing remark that will identify the topic, establish the tone and lead the reader from the broad view of the topic to the intention of the writing. It usually ends with a thesis statement containing the main idea of the essay.

The introductory paragraph is composed of 2 parts:

1. General statements

General statements are the first few sentences that attract the reader's attention and give background information on the topic. It also leads into the thesis statement which is usually the last sentence in the paragraph.

Clouse (1998), Brandon (2005) suggest several ways to attract readers' attention as follows:

- Give background information

    Giving fact or background information serves as a bridge to link the reader to the topic. The length of this background information depends on how much information the writer thinks the reader will need in order to understand the topic. It will help the reader to understand the topic and the writer's intention.

- Present a brief description

    The purpose of the description is to create a picture in the reader's mind. Using vivid words will help forming a scene as a start of the essay.

- Tell a brief story or an incident

    Normally the story can grab the reader's attention and lead him/her to the essay. The writer should be sure that the story is short, to the point and relate to the topic in order to generate interest. It can also start with a part of a conversation.

- Ask a question

    Asking a question establishes a common interest with the reader. A question should be one of which the answer is unpredictable.

- State a quotation

    A quotation can be used as a springboard for an essay. A quotation should not be long, boring or irrelevant. It is not recommended to analyze the quotation since it is used only for leading to the essay.

- Open with an example

    Examples engage the reader's interest and at the same time prove the truth of the thesis. Examples make writing more informative.

2. *The thesis statement*

The thesis statement is the sentence that states the main idea of the essay. A thesis statement should be general to cover all the points in the essay. It also guides or introduces the rest of the essay. It is usually placed at the end of the introduction paragraph. The thesis statement is discussed and explained with supporting details in the body of the essay.

Reid (1988) suggests that when writing introduction, the writer should avoid apologies, complaints, personal dilemmas and too broad statements. In addition, Raimes (2005) suggests that the writer should provide context and background information by not assuming that the reader have knowledge about the topic. The length of the introduction part can vary but the typical length is around three to five sentences.

Body

The body of the essay supports the main point of the thesis statement. These paragraphs clarify or explain the thesis statement by giving facts, statistics, examples, illustrations or descriptions. Each paragraph comprises a topic sentence and supporting details.

The supporting details in an essay should be arranged in order so that the reader will not get confused. There are three widely used patterns - chronological order, spatial order and order of importance. The writer can employ one or combination of these patterns to arrange supporting details.

1. Chronological order

Chronological order is order by time. Supporting details are arranged with order of their occurrence in time, from the first to the last event. Chronological order is often used in process and narrative essays. It tells events over a period of time. Normally the thesis statement in some way carries words indicating time order.

Chronological essays often contain time phrases or clauses to show sequence of events. The writer can begin from the beginning and arrange a series of events in a straightforward manner. Also, the writer can include a flashback technique to talk about the events that took place earlier while giving an insight on a present event.

2. Spatial Order

Spatial order is order relating to space or position of things. A description essay is best organized spatially. It is useful for arranging details to describe a place or a scene: left to right, top to bottom, inside out, the most prominent part to the least.

3. Order of Importance

Order of importance presents details according to their importance. It is suggested that this pattern should start with the least important and move to the most important idea. By writing this way, the writer can make a strong closing which is appropriate when the purpose is to persuade the reader.

Conclusion

Conclusion is the final paragraph that briefly summarizes the main points in the essay or gives a prediction, solution or recommendation. It concludes matters and should create the final impression, influence the reader's reaction to the essay and also leave the sense of closure.

Reid (1994) and Brandon (2005) suggest that the writer should avoid too long summary if the essay is short and should avoid new idea since the reader will expect clarification and also avoid apology about the quality of the essay.

Conclusion can be done in one of the following ways:

1. Summarizing main points

This technique will help remind the reader of the most important ideas in the essay. It is effective in a long essay since the readers may appreciate a summary. It is not just restate the sentences in the introduction as they may lack the strength to refocus the readers. It is saying the same thing in a forceful way with some degree of originality.

2. Making a solution

Offering a solution to a problem raised in the essay is one of the possible conclusions. However, avoid making absolute claims such as "This proves that…" since extreme claims are hard to prove.

3. Making a restatement

The thesis can be restated in different words in the concluding paragraph. The main purpose is to point out its significance. Restatement has the advantage of reinforcing all the major points one last time. It is appropriate for an essay of which the purpose is to prove a certain point.

4. Making a recommendation

Making a recommendation is psychologically effective for a persuasive piece of writing. After convincing the reader, the writer may need to recommend a course of action.

5. Making a prediction

Making a prediction is a way to end an essay a step further than a summary. It does not sum up the main points in the essay but it enhances the writer to make projections on the basis of the points presented.

6. Using a quotation

Quotations by well-known people that suit the essay can sum up and add interest to the conclusion.

In order to tie all ideas presented and make them flow smoothly, coherence, in various forms, should be used in an essay.

Coherence

Coherence is the relationship between paragraphs by linking ideas presented in the essay together. Coherence is one of the characteristics of a good essay because it makes the ideas flow continuously. Wyrick (2002:66), Brandon (2005:54-55) mention several ways to achieve coherence.

- Repetition of key ideas

Repetition of words or phrases will help the reader remember the main idea of the essay. Repeated words throughout the essay will tie one paragraph to another and this will make it easy for the reader to follow the main points.

- Pronoun reference

Pronouns offer connecting link in the essay. They guide the reader back to the former thought before leading to the new one.

- Transitional expressions

Transitional expressions or cohesive devices are words or phrases that connect sentences and paragraphs together. The writer can use these transitional expressions to vary sentence structure. Common transitions used can be classified according to the purpose.

To add:	again, also, and, besides, furthermore, in addition, moreover, too
To show sequence:	first, in the first place, further, next, second, then, last, finally
To compare:	in the same way, likewise, similarly
To contrast:	although, but, conversely, despite, even though, however, in contrast, nevertheless, on the contrary, though, yet, whereas
To give examples:	for example, for instance, that is, such as
To indicate place:	above, below, elsewhere, further on, here, near, next to, on the other side, opposite to, there, to the left, to the right
To indicate time:	after, afterward, as long as, as soon as, before, immediately, since, soon, until, now, shortly
To show cause and effect:	accordingly, as a result, because, consequently, hence, otherwise, since, therefore, thus
To summarize:	in brief, in conclusion, in short, in summary, therefore, to summarize

Kinds of Essays

Description

A descriptive essay serves to describe things, places, events, people or settings. It relies on giving clear and accurate information by employing words related to five senses. The reader should see, hear, smell, taste and feel through words used in the essay. The writer can use descriptive words to create the picture in the reader's mind as well as to move the reader's emotion.

In order to present the verbal picture of the things described, the writer should give specific and vivid details as well as arrange them in suitable sequence to project the image on the reader's mind.

Narration

A narration essay tells a story. It should be about an event the reader would find engaging. The writer should include conventions of storytelling such as plot, character setting, climax and ending. It relies on concrete, sensory details that explain and support the story. It is more interesting to actually recreate the incident for the reader to be involved than to simply tell about it. Therefore, it should be in details and clear with events arranged in an organized order.

Definition

A definition essay explains what a term means. A term can be defined by mentioning function, structure or analysis. Defining by function means to explain what something does or how something works. Defining by structure means to explain how something is organized. Defining by analysis means to compare the similarities and mention the differences from the words in the same group.

In defining these terms, it is suggested that clear and basic information should be used together with facts or examples that are easy to understand.

Process

A process essay gives the instructions on how something works or how to do something. The writer explains steps that lead to an outcome. In some processes, the sequence of steps is essential; therefore, transitions used need to be very obvious in order to make the steps clear and to help the reader recognizes each step. It is necessary to consider what the reader already knows and what he/she needs to know. The writer should include all necessary information for the reader to understand or to perform the process.

Classification

A classification essay sorts things into categories in a logical way. The first step in writing classification essay is to organize things into clear categories that do not overlap. The thesis statement includes the topic and how it is classified. The important thing is the writer should make sure that things are grouped with the same organizing principle.

Mayers (2005) suggests two guidelines to make sure the categories are clear and consistent: use only one criterion for classifying, and create categories that allow room for everyone or everything to be classified.

Comparison and Contrast

A comparison and contrast essay shows similarities and differences. A comparison shows similarities of unlike subjects and a contrast shows differences of similar subjects. A comparison and contrast essay is always presented together since there is no need to compare two similar things without contrasting them.

The thesis statement should name the topic to be compared and contrasted clearly. There are two methods for organizing a comparison and contrast essay:

- Item-by-item or block organization

In this pattern, one idea or one thing is totally and completely described and then, the other is similarly described. The writer writes about supporting points of the first topic, then compare and contrast the same points of the second topic. Summarizing the similarities and differences at the end will give the reader a clear picture of the two things.

- Point-by-point organization

The point-by-point pattern is used to compare and contrast one point about the two topics, then move to a second point, a third point.

Which organization is appropriate for an essay depends on the nature of the topic. The point-by-point organization makes the topic with a lot of details easy to follow because it provides more detailed development of the topic. The item-by-item organization is preferable for topics with limited details.

Previous Studies on Essay Writing

Hirose and Sasaki (1994) investigated the relationship between Japanese students' English expository writing and factors influencing the quality of their written product. It was found that first language writing ability was highly correlated with second language writing ability and students' composing competence was due to the use of several good writers' strategies, writing fluency and confidence in writing.

Rinnert and Kabayashi (2001) investigated perceptions of English composition among inexperienced EFL students, experienced EFL students, native English-speaking teachers, and nonnative English teachers in Japan. It was found that inexperienced EFL

students paid attention mainly to content in judging and commenting on composition whereas experienced EFL students, native and nonnative English-speaking teachers expressed more concern for clarity, logical connections and organization.

Choi (2005) examined in what different ways native speakers of Korean (ESL) and native speakers of English wrote English argumentative composition regarding error types, textual organization and cohesion device. The subjects consisted of 46 American students and 46 Korean students enrolled in Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. It was found that the Korean ESL students wrote shorter essays and showed more errors, more textual organization patterns and less use of cohesion devices. Both groups of students preferred the three-unit organizational structure (introduction-body-conclusion). The Korean students made article errors most often. The American students made, in a lesser degree, error in preposition and article. For cohesion devices, both Korean and American students used conjunctions and logical connectives most often in their essays.

Liu (2005) examined factors that influenced American and Chinese students' writing and examined the placement of thesis statement in argumentative essay composed by Chinese and American students. The subjects were 50 American students, 60 Chinese students writing in English and 60 Chinese students writing in Chinese. The results show that students engaged in genre of writing, elements of writing, target audiences, language background and place of main idea. Both American and Chinese students used a higher percentage of the thesis at the beginning in their argumentative essays.

Here are studies about essay writing in Thailand.

Wongtip (2541) studied relationship among English language knowledge, Thai language expository writing ability, English language expository writing knowledge and English language expository writing ability. The subjects were 156 fourth-year English major students in higher education institutions in Bangkok. The results revealed that there

was a positive relationship between English language expository writing knowledge and English language expository writing ability at .05 level of significance. English language knowledge could significantly predict English language expository writing ability of English major students at .05 level of significance.

Suwannasom (2544) studied the use of restructuring strategies and abilities in English language expository writing of undergraduate English majors at Naresuan University. The result showed that students used restructuring strategies on narrative, argumentative and descriptive writing respectively. These subjects had moderate ability in overall expository, narrative and argumentative writing.

Kaweera (2003) analyzed characteristics of narrative essays written by fourth year Naresuan University students. It was found that two major characteristics used for narrative essays were characteristic of the variety of the use of narrative factors namely orientation, complication, resolution, and evaluation as well as characteristic of the number of sentences occurring in each factor.

Phuwichit (2003) analyzed characteristics of argumentative patterns written by fourth year English major students at Naresuan University. The results showed that there were 22 out of 43 essays in which the students employed all three stages of argumentative pattern namely thesis, argument and conclusion. Most of the students of the high-rated essays composed their argument with three stages whereas the low-rated essays students composed their argument with poor organization.

4. Difficulties in Writing English Essays

Difficulty in writing is a common obstacle among students studying English as a second or a foreign language. It cannot be guaranteed that students with oral proficiency have the same level of capacity in writing. A person's goal, abilities and attitudes toward writing also affect the success in achieving the writing skills. The ability in the use of written English can only be gained through practices and experience since writing skills develop overtime through learning from mistakes. Students' difficulties are in both producing contents relating to topics of the writing and using proper as well as accurate English language

This is confirmed by Kim and Kim (2005) who mention that students learning English as a foreign language, when composing essays, struggle with structural issues, including developing ideas about the topics. They also have trouble in developing proper language use in different social contexts and language use in creative ways.

There are several aspects of difficulties that the writers especially second or foreign language students experience. These difficulties vary from one student to another depending on their background, English proficiency, and also the instruction received of each student. It would be helpful for these students if teachers know their shortcomings.

Mistakes or errors in writing can be caused by native language interference, overgeneralization of rules, insecurity about what to be expressed, and lack of familiarity with new rhetorical structures and organization of ideas. (Carson 2001, Connor & Kaplan 1987, Kutz, Gordon & Zamel 1993, Raimes 1987 quoted in Myles 2002)

First language interference has much influence on students' writing strategies. Friedlander (1993) also emphasizes that, according to several studies, writers try to transfer writing abilities and strategies from their first language to their second language no matter whether they are efficient or inefficient.

Regarding developing an essay, Grabe and Kaplan (1996:354) mentions that "a major problem for many writers including advanced writers, centres on appropriate ways to begin and end writing."

Lee (2004:1) mentions that "Low English proficiency students have difficulty making their writing coherent…. Many university students write incomprehensibly." Moreover, she also concludes common essay writing problems as follows:

     1. writing a paragraph without a topic sentence;

     2. too specific controlling ideas;

     3. difficulty in writing the thesis statement;

     4. tendency in deviating from the controlling idea.

Students studying English as a foreign language have different areas of difficulties. Lukkunaprasit (2537) states she experienced that Law students did not master basic sentence patterns and basic grammar rules. Their major errors were subject-verb agreement, wrong choice of word and wrong usage of words. Regarding writing paragraph, they had difficulty with both content and language in producing a writing task.

Students have different ways in dealing with the difficulties they encounter. Some students are concerned with fluency by taking the risk of losing accuracy while some students spend quite a long time checking and correcting their work. British Council (2006:1) mentions that "Some students take an eternity to produce a piece of writing as they are constantly rubbing out what they have written while at the opposite extreme the writing is done as fast as possible without any planning or editing."

Previous Studies on Difficulties in Writing English

Jones (1982 quoted in Krapels 1993: 39-40) investigated the written products and writing processes of two second language writers – the good writer and the poor writer. He found that the poor writer demonstrated less second language grammar proficiency than the good writer. Writing strategies affected writer's rhetorical structures. He concluded that the source of poor writer's difficulty in second language writing was the lack of competence in composing rather than the lack of linguistic competence.

Johnson (1985) gathered information on the composing processes of 3 Japanese and 3 Spanish advanced students of English as a second language and found that these students showed a wide variety of individual composing styles and problems. They also experienced special language related problems in grammar, spelling, punctuation and vocabulary.

Mbaye (2001) investigated the organizational problems nonnative students from Senegal are likely to experience in expository essay writing. The subjects were 22 Senegalese students enrolled in composition classes in the US. It showed that there were organizational problems at the overall essay, introduction, basic body paragraph and conclusion levels as well as the problem of the absence of a thesis.

Bacha (2002) carried out a study with L1 Arabic non-native speakers' English writing problems and found that their problems were lacking of lexical variety, subordination, redundancy, linking ideas over larger stretches of text, and the use of cohesive devices.

Park (2004) investigated 29 Korean EFL writers' difficulties in creating a logical sequence of sentences and using vocabulary effectively. It was found that passive voice and relative clause which contribute to connection of ideas were underused. These

Korean EFL writers have difficulties in using vocabulary productively, choosing the right word in context, realizing a word's part of speech, and using verbs appropriately.

There are various studies about difficulties in writing English of Thai students.

Teerawong (1982) investigated English writing proficiency level and analyzed the errors in writing English of the first-year Chulalongkorn University students. It was found that the first-year students' writing proficiency was low with the average score between 52-61%. The main writing errors were sentence arrangement, punctuation usage and grammatical structure usage.

Lukanavanich (2531) analyzed errors in compositions of first year students at Bangkok University. The result showed that written errors found were grammatical errors, lexical errors and stylistic errors. The causes of error made were ignorance of rule restriction, mother tongue interference, incomplete application of rules, overgeneralization, and false conceptualized respectively.

Srinon (2542) analyzed errors, causes of errors and Thai language transfer in free essays of first year students at Mahamakut Buddhist University, Ayuddhaya Province. It was found that the subjects made errors in the use of tenses, determiners, prepositions, verb forms and punctuation respectively. The causes of errors were mother tongue interference, carelessness, overgeneralization, ignorance of rule restriction, and false concept hypothesized.

Ketkaew (2000) investigated to what degree the students reflected on the use of analysis of grammatical errors in writing. The result indicated that the students gained benefits of using error analysis technique. This technique helps encourage the students to be aware of the use of their language.

Pongpairoj (2545) explored types and causes of errors Thai students made in writing English. The subjects of this study were 100 first-year Faculty of Arts students at Chulalongkorn University. The study reveals that the greatest number of errors is in word usage accounting for 41.14% of the total errors. Morphological errors equal 39.13% and syntactic errors are 19.56%. The main cause of all three types of errors is Thai language interference.

In order to develop a self-directed model for Communicative Writing 1 course, Ploysangwal (2546) investigated problems in writing English of English major students of School of Humanities, the University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce The results showed that students had problems in compound-complex sentence construction, the use of tenses, the use of adjectives, spelling, and writing a sentence without main verb.

Khao-urai (2545-2546) studied errors in writing English essay of English major students at Rajabhat Institute Nakorn Pathom and found that errors in grammar, syntax and lexicon were found respectively in guided writing and free writing. The grammatical errors found were the wrong use and incorrect form of tenses, misuse of prepositions, omission and misuse of articles, and wrong use of infinitive and gerund.

Regarding syntactic errors, it was found that students made errors in contraction form, incomplete sentence structure, compound sentences, word order and punctuation. Students made lexical errors in spelling, literal translation from Thai to English, inappropriate word choice in the context. The causes of errors made were ignorance of rule restriction and incomplete application of rules, mother tongue interference and false concepts hypothesized.

Both international and Thai researches have been reviewed here in order to investigate the area of essay writing strategies. As can be seen from the various researches mentioned, it is not an easy task for students studying English as a second or

foreign language to write English essays. Students face severe difficulties due to their limitations in the use of essay writing strategies and in language proficiency. Most of the researches were conducted in order to study the essay organization the students used and the errors they made.

However, there are very few studies focusing on writing strategies and difficulties in writing English essays. Thus, there is a need to examine how students use writing strategies to develop English essays in order to find possibilities to enhance their writing skills. Moreover, there is also a need to examine the difficulties they encounter when writing English essays in order to assist them in overcoming the difficulties to produce a good piece of writing.

CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter describes the research methodology used in this study. Included are the details of the subjects, instrument, the data collection procedure and the data analysis.

Subjects

The subjects were fourth-year English major students of academic year 2005, School of Humanities, University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce. The total number of students was 378. They were earlier arranged into 8 study groups by the English Department according to their English language capability. 272 students available at the relevant time, which accounted for 71.95%, participated in the study. The 106 students not participating were almost equally spread over the 8 groups mentioned (see Table 1); therefore, they represent no statistical or validity problem. In the semesters prior to this research, the subjects had already completed two writing courses namely Communicative Writing 1 which concentrates on paragraph writing and Communicative Writing 2 which deals with essay writing.

Table 1: Total Number of Students, Number of Subjects Participating and Number of Non-participating

Group	Total Number of Students	Number of Students participating	Number of Students Not participating
1	48	39	9
2	46	37	9
3	48	32	16
4	48	30	18
5	48	31	17
6	47	30	17
7	47	38	9
8	46	35	11
Total	378	272	106

Table 1 shows the total number of students, the number of students participating and the number of students not participating in the study.

The subjects were divided into high and low English proficiency groups in order to compare English essays writing strategies used and difficulties in writing English essays encountered by high and low proficiency students (questions 3 and 4). They were grouped by using English grade point average of 13 English major courses (Appendix C) consisting of courses concentrating on all 4 skills - listening, speaking, reading and writing. These courses were enrolled by the subjects up to the second semester of their third year of study, the semester prior to this research.

The subjects with English grade point average of 3.00 and above were classified as high English proficiency group which accounted for 104 and the subjects with English

grade point average of 2.50 and below were grouped into a low English proficiency group which was composed of 97. The subjects with grade point average between 2.51 and 2.99, accounting for 71, were not put into either group in order to make a clear cut between high and low proficiency groups.

Table 2: Number of Subjects in High and Low Proficiency Groups

English Proficiency	N	Percentage
High proficiency group (Grade point average of 3.00 – 4.00)	104	38.24
Middle proficiency group (Grade point average of 2.51 – 2.99)	71	26.10
Low proficiency group (Grade point average of 1.50 – 2.50)	97	35.66
Total	272	100

Table 2 shows that there were 104 students in high proficiency group and 97 students in low proficiency group.

In order to compare the difficulties encountered by students with different background (question 5), the subjects were also grouped according to their background of 1) gender, 2) practice of English outside classroom and 3) English skills practiced outside classroom as shown in Tables 3, 4 and 5.

Table 3: Gender of Respondents

Gender	N	Percentage (%)
Female	222	81.60
Male	50	18.40
Total	272	100

Table 3 reveals that 81.60% of respondents were female, and 18.40% were male.

Table 4: Number of Respondents Practicing English outside Classroom

Practice of English	N	Percentage (%)
Yes	206	75.70
No	66	24.30
Total	272	100

Table 4 reveals that 75.70% of the respondents practiced English outside classroom and 24.30% did not use English outside classroom.

Table 5: Language Skills the Most Practiced outside Classroom

Language skills	N	Percentage (%)
Listening	119	43.80
Speaking	43	15.80
Reading	28	10.30
Writing	16	5.90
Total	206	100

Table 5 indicates that, out of 206 students practicing English outside classroom, 43.80 % practiced listening skill, 15.80 % practiced speaking skill, 10.30 % practiced reading and 5.90 % practiced writing skill.

Instrument

This study was conducted with the use of a schedule questionnaire. It consisted of three parts.

The first part deals with the subjects' biographical data such as years of studying English, skills and activities practiced outside classroom. This part is in the form of a checklist.

The second part investigates strategies used in writing English essays. This part is in the form of rating scale to get the information about steps and extent used in preparing and writing each part of the essay. This part was constructed from the theoretical framework of Lee (2005), Meyers (2005), Oshima and Hogue (1999) and Clouse (1998). The following rating scale was set and explained to the respondents.

Never   means the strategy was never used in essay writing.

Rarely   means the strategy was used around 1-20% compared to other strategies.

Sometimes   means the strategy was used around 21-50% compared to other strategies.

Often   means the strategy was used around 51-80% compared to other strategies.

Always   means the strategy was used around 81-100% compared to other strategies.

The third part examines the difficulties encountered when the subjects composed English essays. This part was constructed in the form of rating scale to get information about area and extent of difficulties experienced by the subjects. This part was constructed based on the results of the studies of Khao-urai (2003), Ploysangwan (2003), and Pongpairoj (2002). The following rating scale was set and explained to respondents.

Never   means the subjects never experienced that difficulty during the essay writing process.

Little   means the subjects experienced that difficulty around 1-20% compared to other difficulties asked.

Moderate   means the subjects experienced that difficulty around 21-50% compared to other difficulties asked.

Much   means the subjects experienced that difficulty around 51-80% compared to other difficulties asked.

Most   means the subjects experienced that difficulty around 81-100% compared to other difficulties asked.

The questionnaire was checked by three experts (Appendix B) for content validity and objectivity and then was tried out in September 2005 with fifty fourth-year English major students to test the clarity of the questions and reliability before it was used in the study. The tried-out questionnaires were analyzed. The reliability of part two was 0.837 and that of part three was 0.842. The high reliability shows the consistency of the questionnaire.

Data Collection Procedure

After the questionnaire was tried out, analyzed and revised, the researcher administered the data collection procedure herself. The researcher first informed the subjects of the purposes of the study, and that the completion of the questionnaire would not have any effect on their grade and their study. The subjects participated in this study voluntarily. The researcher explained the three components of the questionnaire and every question was explained to the subjects to ensure that the subjects understood all questions asked. The data collection took 6 weeks, from 1 November to 15 December 2005.

Data Analysis

The data obtained from the questionnaires were analyzed by using Frequency, Percentage, Means, Standard Deviation, and t-test. The analyzing procedures were as follows:

Part 1: Demographic Data

The data from total number of 272 questionnaires were analyzed by using Frequency and Percentage.

Part 2: Writing strategies for composing English essays

The data from total number of 272 questionnaires were analyzed by using Means and Standard Deviation to identify the writing strategies used by all the subjects to answer the research question 1.

Then the questionnaires were grouped according to the criteria of high and low proficiency groups. 104 questionnaires belong to high proficiency group and 97 questionnaires belong to low proficiency group. The data from these questionnaires were analyzed by using t-test to compare the writing strategies used in order to answer research question 3.

Part3: Difficulties encountered in composing English essays

The data from the total number of 272 questionnaires were analyzed by using Means and Standard Deviation to identify the difficulties encountered during the essay writing process by all the subjects to answer the research question 2.

Then the questionnaires were grouped according to the criteria of high and low proficiency groups. The data from the two groups of questionnaires were analyzed by using t-test to compare the difficulties encountered in order to answer research question 4.

The questionnaires were then selected according to the subjects' background of gender, practice of English outside classroom, and skills practiced outside classroom. The data were analyzed by using t-test to compare the difficulties encountered by the subjects with different background in order to answer research question 5.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the data obtained from the questionnaires of 272 subjects. This chapter is divided into 6 parts.

The first part reports demographic data including gender, years of studying English, number of students practicing English outside classroom, skills and activities practiced outside classroom.

The second part reports the English essay writing strategies used by the respondents.

The third part presents the difficulties encountered by the respondents when writing English essays.

The fourth part presents data comparing the writing strategies used by the high and low proficiency groups

The fifth part presents data comparing the difficulties encountered by high and low proficiency groups.

The sixth part reports data comparing the difficulties encountered by respondents of different background.

Part I: Demographic Data

Table 6: Number of Years of Learning English Language

Years of learning English	N	Percentage (%)
18 years	163	60.00
15 years	68	25.00
12 years	39	14.30
10 years	2	0.70
Total	272	100

Table 6 indicates that more than half of the respondents (60.00%) had 18 years of experience in learning English. 25.00% of the respondents had 15 years, 14.30% of the respondents had 12 years, and only 0.70% had 10 years.

Table 7: Frequency of Practicing English outside Classroom per Week

Frequency of practicing English	N	Percentage (%)
Not at all	66	24.30
1 time	52	19.10
2 times	53	19.50
3 times	25	9.20
More than 3 times	76	27.90
Total	272	100

Table 7 shows that among respondents who practiced English outside classroom, most of respondents (27.90%) practiced more than three times a week. 19.50% of respondents practiced two times a week, and 19.10% practiced one time a week. However, 24.30% of respondents did not practice English at all.

Table 8: Language Skills Practiced outside Classroom

Language skills	N	Percentage (%)
Listening	180	87.40
Speaking	127	61.70
Reading	109	52.90
Writing	67	32.50

Note: Some of the subjects gave more than one answer.

Table 8 shows that the skills that the respondents often practiced outside classroom were listening (87.40%), speaking (61.70%) and reading (52.90%) respectively. Writing skill was practiced the least (32.50%).

Table 9: Methods of Practicing English outside Classroom

Methods	N	Percentage (%)
Listening to radio programmes in English	129	62.60
Watching soundtrack movies	174	84.50
Reading newspapers, magazines, or surfing the Internet	100	48.50
Writing e-mails	79	38.30
Attending a language school	42	20.40
Talking with foreigners	67	32.50

Note: Some of the subjects gave more than one answer.

Table 9 shows that the respondents mostly practiced English outside classroom by watching soundtrack movies (84.50%), listening to radio programmes in English (62.60%) and reading newspapers, magazines or surfing the Internet in English (48.50%) whereas attending a language school (20.40%) was practiced the least.

Part II: Strategies for Writing English Essays

Table 10: Strategies for Gathering Information in the Prewriting Stage

1. Strategies for gathering information	$\overline{X}$	S.D.
1.1 discussion with your friends	3.40	1.02
1.2 interview	2.29	0.86
1.3 reading and note taking	3.32	0.98
1.4 diary and record	2.13	1.01
1.5 internet	3.95	1.12
1.6 observation	2.86	0.90
1.7 free writing	3.32	1.25
1.9 mind mapping	2.55	1.15
1.10 writing journals	2.04	0.99
1.11 listing any ideas you can think of	3.53	1.09
1.12 not gathering information, just write	2.58	1.21

From Table 10, the results indicate that the respondents used internet for gathering information the most ($\overline{x}$ = 3.95). The other two strategies were listing any idea they can think of ($\overline{x}$ = 3.53) and discussion with friends ($\overline{x}$ = 3.40) whereas writing journals ($\overline{x}$ = 2.04) was used the least.

Table 11: Strategies for Preparing to Write Essays in the Prewriting Stage

2. Strategies for planning to write essays	$\overline{X}$	S.D.
2.1 analyzing the essay topic	3.89	0.91
2.2 considering the purpose of writing	3.72	0.94
2.3 considering readers' knowledge	2.84	1.01
2.4 writing an outline	3.63	1.08
2.5 setting the main idea	3.96	0.85
2.6 having a friend or your teacher check your outline	3.52	1.09

According to Table 11, the first three things done before writing essays were setting the main idea ($\overline{x}$ = 3.96), analyzing the essay topic ($\overline{x}$ = 3.89), and considering the purpose of writing ($\overline{x}$ = 3.72). Considering readers' knowledge was done the least ($\overline{x}$ = 2.84)

Table 12: Strategies for Writing the Introduction of Essays in Writing Stage

3. Strategies for getting readers' attention	$\overline{X}$	S.D.
3.1 facts and statistics	3.37	1.19
3.2 quotations	2.53	1.11
3.3 short stories and events	3.39	1.04
3.4 questions	3.34	1.09

Table 12 shows that the respondents got readers' attention in the introduction part by using short stories and events ($\overline{x}$ = 3.39), facts and statistics ($\overline{x}$ = 3.37) and questions ($\overline{x}$ = 3.34). Using quotations was used the least ($\overline{x}$ = 2.53).

Table 13: Strategies for Writing the Body of Essays

4. Strategies for organizing ideas for the body of essays	$\overline{X}$	S.D.
4.1 writing topic sentence as the first sentence in a paragraph	4.16	0.88
4.2 writing from general to specific ideas	3.78	0.94
4.3 writing from specific to general ideas	2.90	1.12
4.4 writing from whole to parts	3.49	1.06
4.5 writing from question to answer	2.81	1.20
4.6 writing from effect to cause	3.15	1.01
4.7 using time order in narrative essay	3.51	1.18
4.8 using time order in process essay	3.65	1.06
4.9 using spatial order in descriptive essay	2.99	1.15
4.10 using order of importance in cause and effect essay	3.47	1.00
4.11 using comparison and contrast in cause and effect essay	3.11	0.95
4.12 organizing information into groups in classification essay	3.26	0.98
4.13 using if-clause in problem solving essay	3.46	0.96

Table 13 reveals that, regarding the body of the essay, strategies employed the most by the respondents was writing topic sentence as the first sentence in a paragraph ($\overline{x}$ = 4.16). Writing from general to specific ideas ($\overline{x}$ = 3.78) and using time order in process essay ($\overline{x}$ = 3.65) were used respectively. The strategy used the least was writing from question to answer ($\overline{x}$ = 2.81).

Table 14: Coherence Used in Essays

5. Strategies for producing coherence in essays	$\overline{X}$	S.D.
5.1 repeating important words	3.26	1.03
5.2 using a lot of pronoun references	3.96	0.94
5.3 using transitional words	4.32	0.88

Table 14 shows that transitional words ($\overline{x}$ = 4.32) was the most frequently used to show coherence in essays. The other two strategies were using pronoun references ($\overline{x}$ = 3.96) and repeating important words ($\overline{x}$ = 3.26).

Table 15: Strategies for Writing the Conclusion of Essays

6. Strategies for writing conclusions	$\overline{X}$	S.D.
6.1 summarizing main points	4.37	0.84
6.2 making a prediction	2.58	1.07
6.3 making a solution	3.04	1.03
6.4 making a recommendation	3.22	1.07
6.5 making a restatement	3.42	1.21
6.6 using a quotation	1.94	0.93

Table 15 indicates that the respondents wrote the conclusion part by summarizing main points ($\overline{x}$ = 4.37), making a restatement ($\overline{x}$ = 3.42) and making a recommendation ($\overline{x}$ = 3.22). Using quotations was used the least ($\overline{x}$ = 1.94).

Table 16: Strategies for Writing Essays in English Language

7. Strategies for writing essays in English language	$\overline{\text{X}}$	S.D.
7.1 consulting English-English dictionary	3.38	1.20
7.2 consulting Thai-English dictionary	4.45	0.85
7.3 choosing the first meaning of the word looked for	2.92	1.19
7.4 translating directly from Thai to English	3.37	1.32
7.5 consulting grammar book	2.89	1.17
7.6 imitating the sentence patterns you have read	3.28	1.06
7.7 imitating the structure of a paragraph you have read	3.15	1.05

According to Table 16, the first three strategies used by the respondents for writing essays in English language were consulting Thai- English dictionary ($\overline{x}$ = 4.45), consulting English-English dictionary ($\overline{x}$ = 3.38) and translating directly from Thai to English ($\overline{x}$ = 3.37). The strategy used the least was consulting grammar books ($\overline{x}$ = 2.89).

Table 17: Strategies for Revising and Editing Essays

8. Strategies for revising and editing essays	$\overline{X}$	S.D.
8.1 checking with the outline	3.36	1.05
8.2 adding more details	3.46	0.88
8.3 adding more examples	3.06	0.97
8.4 deleting unnecessary points	3.02	1.05
8.5 changing the order of sentences	3.25	1.00
3.6 putting aside the essay for a few days before revising	2.48	1.11
8.7 using a check list	2.56	1.17
8.8 paying attention to the style of language	2.95	1.15
8.9 paying attention to the structure of essay	3.36	1.15
8.10 checking spelling	3.93	0.94
8.11 checking grammar	3.69	0.99
8.12 checking punctuation	3.58	1.00
8.13 checking capitalization	3.70	1.03
8.14 proofreading your essay 1 time	3.28	1.50
2 times	2.78	1.38
3 times	1.83	1.18
8.15 asking friends to read and to comment essays	3.49	1.23
8.16 making the essay good, correct and perfect from the first draft, no revising	2.29	1.13

Table 17 shows that the respondents revised and edited essays by checking spelling ($\overline{x}$ = 3.93) , checking capitalization ($\overline{x}$ = 3.70), and checking grammar ($\overline{x}$ = 3.69). The strategy used the least was proofreading the essay for 3 times ($\overline{x}$ = 1.83).

Part III: Difficulties Encountered when Writing Essays

Table 18: Difficulties in Organizing Essays

Difficulties in Organizing Essays	$\overline{\mathbf{X}}$	S.D.
1. getting started	3.69	1.01
2. spending too long time reading and thinking	3.62	1.05
3. building up confidence to write	2.95	1.19
4. choosing a topic	3.47	1.11
5. narrowing a topic	3.29	0.81
6. analyzing the essay topic	3.38	0.86
7. transforming ideas into outline	3.48	1.04
8. generating ideas for the essay	3.45	1.05
9. getting readers' attention	3.72	1.02
10. keeping to one idea in each paragraph	3.24	0.99
11. choosing methods of paragraph support	3.06	0.97
12. writing a narrative essay	2.70	1.01
a process essay	2.90	1.04
a descriptive essay	2.80	0.98
an explanatory essay	3.08	0.97
a cause and effect essay	3.10	0.93
a comparison and contrast essay	3.15	1.01
13. using connectors to show time order	2.58	0.99
spatial order	2.87	0.96
order of importance	2.87	0.91
comparison and contrast	2.96	0.96
14. writing a conclusion	3.33	1.06

Difficulties in organizing essays	$\overline{X}$	S.D.
15. accepting comments from peers	2.52	1.18
16. having no time to revise and edit the essay	2.69	1.11

Table 18 shows that the respondents experienced difficulties in getting readers' attention the most ($\overline{x}$ = 3.72). The second and third ranked problems were getting started ($\overline{x}$ = 3.69) and spending too long time reading and thinking ($\overline{x}$ = 3.62). The difficulty experienced the least by respondents was accepting comments from peers ($\overline{x}$ = 2.52).

Table 19: Difficulties in Writing Essays in English Language

Difficulties in Writing Essays in English Language	$\overline{X}$	S.D.
1. ordering ideas into sentences	3.54	0.88
2. choosing the right words	3.77	0.98
3. using parallel structure	3.21	1.16
4. using passive voice	3.43	1.14
5. using verb tenses	3.81	1.08
6. using plural form of noun	3.06	1.09
7. using modifiers (adj, adv)	3.38	1.08
8. using articles and determiners	2.96	1.02
9. misplace of modifiers	3.18	0.97
10. using punctuation	2.74	0.91
11. using capitalization	2.25	0.93
12. spelling	2.89	1.03

According to Table 19, the first three difficulties experienced by the respondents in using English language were using verb tenses ($\bar{x}$ = 3.81), choosing the right words ($\bar{x}$ = 3.77) and ordering ideas into sentences ($\bar{x}$ = 3.54). The difficulty experienced the least by the respondents was using capitalization ($\bar{x}$ = 2.25).

Part IV: The Comparison of Writing Strategies Used by High and Low
Proficiency Groups

**Table 20: The Comparison of Strategies for Gathering Information between High
and Low English Proficiency Groups**

1. Strategies for Gathering Information	High group		Low group		t	Sig 2-tailed
	$\bar{\text{x}}$	S.D.	$\bar{\text{x}}$	S.D.		
1.1 discussion with your friends	3.44	1.01	3.36	1.03	-0.57	0.57
1.2 interview	2.38	0.79	2.24	0.89	-1.24	0.22
1.3 reading and note taking	3.42	0.98	3.22	0.98	-1.49	0.14
1.4 diary and record	2.13	1.05	2.12	0.94	-0.01	0.99
1.5 Internet	4.22	1.03	3.69	1.11	-3.51	0.00*
1.6 observation	3.02	0.91	2.68	0.90	-2.65	0.01*
1.8 free writing	3.13	1.35	3.37	1.15	1.39	0.17
1.9 mind mapping	2.84	1.12	2.25	1.01	-3.91	0.00*
1.10 writing journals	2.13	1.03	1.97	0.92	-1.20	0.23
1.11 listing any ideas you can think of	3.66	1.09	3.35	1.04	-2.07	0.04*
1.12 not gathering information, just write	2.63	1.28	2.59	1.11	-0.22	0.83

Table 20 shows that the significant differences were found between high and low
English proficiency groups at 0.05 significant level in using the Internet, observation,
mind mapping and listing any ideas you can think of.

Table 21: The Comparison of Strategies for Planning Essays between High and Low

English Proficiency Groups

2. Strategies for Planning to Write Essays	High group		Low group		t	Sig
	$\bar{\text{X}}$	S.D.	$\bar{\text{X}}$	S.D.		2-tailed
2.1 analyzing the essay topic	4.05	0.78	3.78	0.84	-2.31	0.02*
2.2 considering the purpose of writing	4.04	0.84	3.44	0.94	-4.75	0.00*
2.3 considering readers' knowledge	3.00	1.01	2.77	1.08	-1.54	0.13
2.4 writing an outline	3.86	1.01	3.40	1.08	-3.08	0.00*
2.5 setting the main idea	4.22	0.72	3.77	0.86	-3.98	0.00*
2.6 having a friend or your teacher check the Outline	3.61	1.07	3.45	1.09	-1.00	0.32

Table 21 reveals that the high and low English proficiency groups used different strategies for planning at 0.05 significant level in analyzing the essay topic, considering the purpose of writing, writing an outline and setting the main idea.

Table 22: The Comparison of Strategies for Writing the Introduction of Essay

between High and Low English Proficiency Groups

3. Strategies for Getting Readers' Attention	High group		Low group		t	Sig
	$\bar{\text{X}}$	S.D.	$\bar{\text{X}}$	S.D.		2-tailed
3.1 facts and statistics	3.71	1.11	3.14	1.12	-3.60	0.00*
3.2 quotations	2.64	1.11	2.39	1.11	-1.60	0.11
3.3 short stories and events	3.40	1.04	3.37	1.02	-0.23	0.82
3.4 questions	3.60	1.01	3.09	1.07	-3.43	0.00*

Table 22 indicates that, between the high and low English proficiency groups, significant differences at 0.05 are revealed in using facts and statistics and using questions for writing the introduction.

Table 23: The Comparison of Strategies for Writing the Body of Essays between High and Low English Proficiency Groups

4. Strategies for Organizing Ideas for the Body of Essays	High group		Low group		t	Sig 2-tailed
	$\bar{\text{X}}$	S.D.	$\bar{\text{X}}$	S.D.		
4.1 writing topic sentence as the first sentence in a paragraph	4.37	0.84	3.91	0.89	-3.76	0.00*
4.2 writing from general to specific ideas	3.96	0.91	3.57	0.99	-2.93	0.04*
4.3 writing from specific to general ideas	2.80	1.15	2.88	1.07	0.50	0.62
4.4 writing from whole to parts	3.63	1.06	3.27	1.09	-2.36	0.02*
4.5 writing from question to answer	3.06	1.28	2.63	1.09	-2.55	0.01*
4.6 writing from effect to cause	3.28	0.94	3.04	1.09	-1.66	0.10
4.7 using time order in narrative essay	3.82	1.10	3.32	1.10	-3.19	0.00*
4.8 using time order in process essay	3.92	1.02	3.37	1.00	-3.86	0.00*
4.9 using spatial order in descriptive essay	3.14	1.21	2.88	1.11	-1.63	0.10
4.10 using order of importance in cause and effect essay	3.43	1.09	3.40	0.85	-0.22	0.82
4.11 using comparison and contrast in cause and effect essay	3.30	1.04	2.88	0.92	-3.05	0.00*
4.12 organizing information into groups in classification essay	3.59	0.89	2.94	0.97	-4.96	0.00*
4.13 using if-clause in problem solving essay	3.63	0.99	3.31	0.91	-2.43	0.02*

According to Table 23, the respondents used strategies differently at 0.05 significant level in writing topic sentence as the first sentence in a paragraph, writing from general to specific ideas, writing from whole to parts, writing from question to answer, using time order in narrative essay, using time order in process essay, using comparison and contrast in cause and effect essay, organizing information into groups in classification essay, and using if- clause in problem- solving essay.

Table 24: The Comparison of Coherence Used in Essays between High and Low English Proficiency Groups

Strategies for Producing Coherence in Essays	High group		Low group		t	Sig 2-tailed
	$\bar{\mathrm{X}}$	S.D.	$\bar{\mathrm{X}}$	S.D.		
5.1 repeating important words	3.27	1.08	3.25	0.87	-0.16	0.87
5.2 using a lot of pronoun references	4.16	0.87	3.64	0.99	-3.99	0.00*
5.3 using transitional words	4.40	0.85	4.14	0.92	-2.07	0.04*

Table 24 shows that the high and low English proficiency groups used coherence differently at 0.05 significant level in using pronoun references and using transitional words.

Table 25: The Comparison of Strategies for Writing the Conclusion between High and Low English Proficiency Groups

6. Strategies for Writing Conclusions	High group		Low group		t	Sig 2-tailed
	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	$\bar{X}$	S.D.		
6.1 summarizing main points	4.63	0.64	4.15	0.81	-4.55	0.00*
6.2 making a prediction	2.75	1.11	2.39	0.93	-2.47	0.01*
6.3 making a solution	3.28	1.02	2.73	1.03	-3.80	0.00*
6.4 making a recommendation	3.37	1.11	3.10	0.97	-1.79	0.08
6.5 making a restatement	3.58	1.26	3.27	1.09	-1.87	0.06
6.6 using a quotation	2.05	0.94	1.90	0.93	-1.15	0.25

From Table 25, it can be seen that there were significant differences in writing conclusion at 0.05 level of significance in summarizing main points, making a prediction, and making a solution.

Table 26: The Comparison of Strategies for Writing Essays in English Language
between High and Low English Proficiency Groups

7. Strategies for Writing Essays in English Language	High group		Low group		t	Sig 2-tailed
	$\bar{\text{x}}$	S.D.	$\bar{\text{x}}$	S.D.		
7.1 consulting English-English dictionary	3.76	1.12	3.02	1.22	-4.49	0.00*
7.2 consulting Thai-English dictionary	4.49	0.85	4.54	0.75	0.40	0.69
7.3 choosing the first meaning of the word looked for	2.88	1.31	2.90	1.07	0.07	0.94
7.4 translating directly from Thai to English	3.05	1.34	3.72	1.20	3.75	0.00*
7.5 consulting grammar book	3.20	1.18	2.56	1.05	-4.09	0.00*
7.6 imitating the sentence patterns you have read	3.34	1.15	3.22	0.93	-0.82	0.42
7.7 imitating the structure of a paragraph you have read	3.30	1.16	2.86	0.87	-3.08	0.00*

According to Table 26, the results show that the two groups of respondents used strategies for writing essays in English language differently at 0.05 level of significance in consulting English-English dictionary, translating directly from Thai to English, consulting grammar books and imitating the structure of a paragraph read.

Table 27: The Comparison of Strategies for Revising and Editing Essays between High and Low English Proficiency Groups

8. Strategies for Revising and Editing Essays	High group		Low group		t	Sig 2-tailed
	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	$\bar{X}$	S.D.		
8.1 checking with the outline	3.41	1.03	3.29	1.05	-0.85	0.40
8.2 adding more details	3.54	0.97	3.35	0.83	-1.48	0.14
8.3 adding more examples	3.13	1.05	2.97	0.98	-1.09	0.28
8.4 deleting unnecessary points	3.17	0.98	2.77	0.98	-2.89	0.00*
8.5 changing the order of sentences	3.45	1.04	3.09	0.97	-2.53	0.01*
8.6 putting aside the essay for a few days before revising	2.63	1.22	2.43	1.00	-1.22	0.22
8.7 using a check list	2.63	1.27	2.52	1.06	-0.66	0.51
8.8 paying attention to the style of language	3.22	1.21	2.76	1.04	-2.88	0.00*
8.9 paying attention to the structure of essay	3.67	1.23	3.25	0.95	-2.77	0.01*
8.10 checking spelling	4.05	0.94	3.81	1.00	-1.71	0.09
8.11 checking grammar	4.02	0.92	3.31	1.01	-5.19	0.00*
8.12 checking punctuation	3.70	1.02	3.41	1.06	-1.97	0.05*
8.13 checking capitalization	3.76	1.05	3.64	1.06	-0.81	0.42
8.14 proofreading your essay 1 time	3.26	1.49	3.36	1.54	-0.48	0.64
2 times	2.98	1.41	2.57	1.30	-2.16	0.03*
3 times	2.32	1.36	1.45	0.87	-5.33	0.00*
8.15 asking friends to read and to comment essays	3.68	1.19	3.41	1.19	-1.61	0.11
8.16 making the essay good, correct and perfect from the first draft, no revising	2.09	1.03	2.58	1.16	3.18	0.00*

Table 27 indicates that the significant differences at 0.05 were found in deleting unnecessary points, changing the order of sentences, paying attention to the style of language, paying attention to the structure of the essay, checking grammar, checking punctuation, proofreading the essay for two times, proofreading essay for three times and making the essay good, correct and perfect from the first draft.

Part V: The Comparison of Difficulties Encountered by High and Low

   English Proficiency Groups

Table 28: The Comparison of Difficulties in Organizing Essays between High and
Low English Proficiency Groups

Difficulties in Organizing Essays	High group		Low group		t	Sig 2-tailed
	$\bar{\mathrm{x}}$	S.D.	$\bar{\mathrm{x}}$	S.D.		
1. getting started	3.73	1.06	3.53	0.97	-1.43	0.16
2. spending too long time reading and thinking	3.67	1.12	3.53	0.98	-0.99	0.32
3. building up confidence to write	2.92	1.36	2.91	1.04	-0.09	0.93
4. choosing a topic	3.40	1.19	3.45	1.10	0.31	0.76
5. narrowing a topic	3.32	0.83	3.30	0.72	-0.17	0.88
6. analyzing the essay topic	3.28	0.89	3.47	0.93	1.53	0.13
7. transforming ideas into outline	3.45	1.11	3.44	1.08	-0.06	0.96
8. generating ideas for the essay	3.51	1.07	3.38	1.04	-0.86	0.39
9. getting readers' attention	3.70	1.09	3.69	0.96	-0.08	0.94
10. keeping to one idea in each paragraph	3.04	0.96	3.34	0.93	2.26	0.03*
11. choosing methods of paragraph support	2.88	1.00	3.18	0.96	2.10	0.04*
12. writing a narrative essay	2.63	0.99	2.75	1.05	0.89	0.38
a process essay	2.49	0.87	3.23	1.07	5.34	0.00*
a descriptive essay	2.64	0.90	2.93	1.08	2.02	0.04*
an explanatory essay	2.79	0.83	3.36	1.05	4.26	0.00*
a cause and effect essay	2.97	0.91	3.24	0.97	2.01	0.05*
a comparison and contrast essay	3.08	1.00	3.23	1.06	1.03	0.30

Difficulties in organizing essays	High group		Low group		t	Sig 2-tailed
	$\overline{x}$	S.D.	$\overline{x}$	S.D.		
13. using connectors to show time order	2.39	1.02	2.59	0.91	1.42	0.16
spatial order	2.71	0.95	2.93	0.96	1.60	0.11
order of importance	2.73	0.84	3.00	0.96	2.12	0.04*
comparison and contrast	2.79	0.93	3.12	0.96	2.51	0.01*
14. writing a conclusion	3.38	1.09	3.18	0.98	-1.43	0.16
15. accepting comments from peers	2.50	1.17	2.61	1.19	0.65	0.52
16. having no time to revise and edit essays	2.29	0.93	3.24	1.12	6.56	0.00*

From Table 28, it can be seen that difficulties in organizing essays encountered by the high and low English proficiency groups were different at 0.05 significant level in keeping to one idea in each paragraph, choosing method of paragraph support, writing a process essay, writing a descriptive essay, writing an explanatory essay, writing a cause and effect essay, using connectors to show order of importance, using connectors to show comparison and contrast, and having no time to revise and edit essay.

Table 29: The Comparison of Difficulties in Writing Essays in English Language between High and Low English Proficiency Groups

Difficulties in Writing Essays in English Language	High group		Low group		t	Sig 2-tailed
	$\overline{\text{X}}$	S.D.	$\overline{\text{X}}$	S.D.		
1. ordering ideas into sentences	3.35	0.94	3.62	0.78	2.23	0.03*
2. choosing the right words	3.64	1.06	3.85	0.93	1.43	0.16
3. using parallel structure	2.94	1.10	3.43	1.18	3.06	0.00*
4. using passive voice	3.10	1.10	3.56	1.07	3.00	0.00*
5. using verb tenses	3.68	1.14	3.84	1.05	0.98	0.33
6. using plural form of noun	2.88	1.10	3.16	1.07	1.83	0.07
7. using modifiers (adj, adv)	3.19	1.16	3.52	1.04	2.07	0.04*
8. using articles and determiners	2.90	1.13	3.07	0.96	1.14	0.26
9. misplace of modifiers	2.94	1.02	3.38	0.97	3.12	0.00*
10. using punctuation	2.62	0.96	2.79	0.88	1.37	0.17
11. using capitalization	2.13	0.94	2.32	0.94	1.46	0.15
12. spelling	2.85	1.01	2.95	1.05	0.71	0.48

Table 29 demonstrates that difficulties in writing essays in English language encountered by the high and low English proficiency groups were different at 0.05 significant level in ordering ideas into sentences, using parallel structure, using passive voice, using modifiers, and misplaced modifiers.

Part VI: The Comparison of Difficulties Encountered by Respondents of
Different Background

**Table 30: The Comparison of Difficulties in Organizing Essays between Male and
Female Respondents**

Difficulties in Organizing Essays	Female		Male		t	Sig
	$\bar{\text{X}}$	S.D.	$\bar{\text{X}}$	S.D.		2-tailed
1. getting started	3.68	0.95	3.74	1.23	-0.35	0.73
2. spending too long time reading and thinking	3.57	1.04	3.86	1.05	-1.77	0.08
3. building up confidence to write	2.95	1.22	2.96	1.09	-0.81	0.94
4. choosing a topic	3.48	1.06	3.42	1.31	-0.29	0.77
5. narrowing a topic	3.28	0.79	3.34	0.90	-0.44	0.66
6. analyzing the essay topic	3.40	0.85	3.28	0.88	0.90	0.37
7. transforming ideas into outline	3.53	1.02	3.28	1.11	1.52	0.13
8. generating ideas for the essay	3.49	1.05	3.28	1.05	1.26	0.21
9. getting readers' attention	3.77	0.99	3.52	1.13	1.58	0.12
10. keeping to one idea in each paragraph	3.27	0.96	3.10	1.13	1.10	0.27
11. choosing methods of paragraph support	3.05	0.96	3.12	1.02	-0.49	0.62
12. writing a narrative essay	2.70	1.00	2.70	1.06	-0.01	0.99
a process essay	2.86	1.02	3.08	1.12	-1.37	0.17
a descriptive essay	2.81	0.95	2.74	1.10	0.42	0.68
an explanatory essay	3.07	0.92	3.16	1.18	-0.52	0.61
a cause and effect essay	3.06	0.91	3.24	1.02	-1.13	0.26
a comparison and contrast essay	3.11	0.96	3.36	1.23	-1.36	0.18

Difficulties in Organizing Essays	Female		Male		t	Sig
	$\bar{\text{x}}$	S.D.	$\bar{\text{x}}$	S.D.		2-tailed
13. using connectors to show time order	2.54	0.96	2.78	1.09	-1.55	0.12
spatial order	2.87	0.97	2.84	0.91	0.23	0.82
order of importance	2.86	0.91	2.94	0.96	0.59	0.56
comparison and contrast	2.94	0.95	3.04	1.03	-0.68	0.50
14. writing a conclusion	3.36	1.04	3.24	1.17	0.70	0.49
15. accepting comments from peers	2.47	1.15	2.74	1.26	-0.15	0.14
16. having no time to revise and edit essays	2.55	1.05	3.32	1.15	-4.60	0.00*

Table 30 indicates that there was a significant difference at 0.05 between male and female respondents in having no time to revise and edit the essay.

Table 31: The Comparison of Difficulties in Writing Essays in English Language between Male and Female Respondents

Difficulties in Writing Essays in English Language	Female		Male		t	Sig 2-tailed
	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	$\bar{X}$	S.D.		
1. ordering ideas into sentences	3.53	0.88	3.60	0.86	-0.50	0.62
2. choosing the right words	3.77	0.98	3.74	1.01	0.23	0.82
3. using parallel structure	3.18	1.14	3.30	1.23	-0.64	0.53
4. using passive voice	3.43	1.12	3.42	1.23	0.70	0.94
5. using verb tenses	3.85	1.06	3.62	1.14	1.37	0.17
6. using plural form of noun	3.09	1.10	2.92	1.07	0.97	0.33
7. using modifiers (adj, adv)	3.39	1.07	3.36	1.12	0.16	0.87
8. using articles and determiners	3.00	1.04	2.82	0.92	1.10	0.27
9. misplace of modifiers	3.17	0.96	3.20	1.01	-0.19	0.85
10. using punctuation	2.69	0.85	2.96	1.14	-1.58	0.12
11. using capitalization	2.22	0.89	2.36	1.10	-0.83	0.41
12. spelling	2.90	1.01	2.86	1.11	0.23	0.82

Table 31 reveals that there was no significant difference between male and female respondents in having difficulties in writing essays in English language.

Table 32: The Comparison of Difficulties in Organizing Essays between

Respondents Practicing and Not Practicing English Outside Classroom

Difficulties in Organizing Essays	Practice		Not Practice		t	Sig
	$\bar{\mathrm{x}}$	S.D.	$\bar{\mathrm{x}}$	S.D.		2-tailed
1. getting started	3.54	1.00	4.15	0.90	-4.45	0.00*
2. spending too long time reading and thinking	3.51	1.05	3.97	0.96	-3.28	0.00*
3. building up confidence to write	2.83	1.14	3.32	1.28	-2.77	0.01*
4. choosing a topic	3.48	1.09	3.42	1.15	0.36	0.72
5. narrowing a topic	3.27	0.80	3.38	0.86	-0.97	0.33
6. analyzing the essay topic	3.36	0.84	3.42	0.91	-0.49	0.62
7. transforming ideas into outline	3.48	1.03	3.48	1.09	-0.03	0.98
8. generating ideas for the essay	3.42	1.04	3.53	1.10	-0.73	0.47
9. getting readers' attention	3.69	0.99	3.82	1.11	-0.86	0.39
10. keeping to one idea in each paragraph	3.25	1.01	3.20	0.92	0.40	0.69
11. choosing methods of paragraph support	3.09	0.95	2.97	1.04	0.85	0.39
12. writing a narrative essay	2.65	1.01	2.85	0.98	-1.39	0.17
a process essay	2.88	1.01	2.94	1.15	-0.38	0.71
a descriptive essay	2.84	0.97	2.65	1.00	1.40	0.16
an explanatory essay	3.18	0.97	2.79	0.92	2.88	0.00*
a cause and effect essay	3.11	0.94	3.06	0.93	0.35	0.73
a comparison and contrast essay	3.19	1.04	3.03	0.93	1.15	0.25
13. using connectors to show time order	2.63	1.01	2.45	0.93	1.23	0.22
spatial order	2.93	0.96	2.68	0.93	1.82	0.07
order of importance	2.89	0.94	2.82	0.82	0.54	0.59
comparison and contrast	3.00	0.98	2.83	0.92	1.19	0.24
14. writing a conclusion	3.21	1.06	3.73	1.00	-3.52	0.00*
15. accepting comments from peers	2.48	1.19	2.65	1.12	-1.06	0.29
16. having no time to revise and edit essays	2.71	1.09	2.62	1.17	0.59	0.56

Table 32 shows that there were significant differences between respondents practicing and respondents not practicing English outside classroom at 0.05 in getting started, spending too long time reading and thinking, building up confidence to write, writing an explanatory essay, and writing conclusion.

Table 33: The Comparison of Difficulties in Writing Essays in English Language between Respondents Practicing and Not Practicing English outside Classroom

Difficulties in Writing Essays in English Language	Practiced		Not Practiced		t	Sig 2-tailed
	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	$\bar{x}$	S.D.		
1. ordering ideas into sentences	3.51	0.89	3.65	0.83	-1.15	0.25
2. choosing the right words	3.69	0.94	4.00	1.07	-2.22	0.03*
3. using parallel structure	3.14	1.17	3.42	1.10	-1.77	0.08
4. using passive voice	3.34	1.14	3.70	1.10	-2.21	0.03*
5. using verb tenses	3.72	1.08	4.09	1.03	-2.46	0.01*
6. using plural form of noun	3.00	1.09	3.21	1.09	-1.35	0.18
7. using modifiers (adj, adv)	3.34	1.09	3.50	1.04	-1.02	0.31
8. using articles and determiners	2.87	1.02	3.24	0.99	-2.57	0.01*
9. misplace of modifiers	3.16	0.99	3.23	0.91	-0.49	0.63
10. using punctuation	2.72	0.92	2.80	0.90	-0.65	0.51
11. using capitalization	2.17	0.89	2.50	1.04	-2.36	0.02*
12. spelling	2.90	1.03	2.86	1.02	0.24	0.81

Table 33 states that there were significant differences between respondents practicing and respondents not practicing English outside classroom at 0.05 level in choosing the right words, using passive voice, using verb tenses, using articles and determiners, and using capitalization.

Table 34: The Comparison of Difficulties in Organizing Essays between Respondents Practicing Writing Skill and Other Skills outside Classroom

Difficulties in Organizing Essays	Writing Skill		Other Skills		t	Sig
	$\bar{\text{X}}$	S.D.	$\bar{\text{X}}$	S.D.		2-tailed
1. getting started	3.56	0.96	3.70	1.01	-0.51	0.61
2. spending too long time reading and thinking	3.81	0.91	3.61	1.05	0.74	0.46
3. building up confidence to write	2.75	1.48	2.96	1.17	-0.69	0.49
4. choosing a topic	3.63	1.03	3.46	1.11	0.59	0.56
5. narrowing a topic	3.13	0.72	3.30	0.82	-0.86	0.39
6. analyzing the essay topic	3.38	0.96	3.38	0.86	-0.02	0.99
7. transforming ideas into outline	3.44	0.89	3.48	1.05	-0.18	0.86
8. generating ideas for the essay	3.44	0.89	3.45	1.08	-0.04	0.97
9. getting readers' attention	3.44	0.89	3.74	1.03	-1.16	0.25
10. keeping to one idea in each paragraph	3.50	0.82	3.22	1.00	1.09	0.28
11. choosing methods of paragraph support	3.13	0.81	3.05	0.99	0.28	0.78
12. writing a narrative essay	2.56	0.96	2.71	0.01	-0.56	0.58
a process essay	2.44	0.73	2.93	1.06	-1.82	0.07
a descriptive essay	2.44	0.63	2.82	0.99	-2.26	0.03*
an explanatory essay	2.94	0.93	3.09	0.98	-0.62	0.54
a cause and effect essay	3.19	1.05	3.09	0.93	0.41	0.69
a comparison and contrast essay	3.19	1.17	3.15	1.00	0.14	0.89

Difficulties in Organizing Essays	Writing Skill		Other Skills		t	Sig
	$\bar{\text{X}}$	S.D.	$\bar{\text{X}}$	S.D.		2-tailed
13. using connectors to show time order	2.31	0.87	2.60	1.00	-1.13	0.26
spatial order	2.75	0.68	2.88	0.97	-0.51	0.61
order of importance	2.75	1.00	2.88	0.91	-0.55	0.59
comparison and contrast	3.06	0.85	2.95	0.97	0.46	0.65
14. writing a conclusion	3.31	0.95	3.34	1.07	-0.09	0.93
15. accepting comments from peers	2.88	1.15	2.50	1.18	1.25	0.21
16. having no time to revise and edit essays	2.50	1.10	2.70	1.11	-0.71	0.48

Table 34 reveals that there was a significant difference at 0.05 level between respondents practicing writing skill and respondents practicing other skills in writing a descriptive essay.

Table 35: The Comparison of Difficulties in Writing Essays in English Language between Respondents Practicing Writing Skill and Other Skills outside Classroom

Difficulties in Writing Essays in English Language	Writing skill		Other skills		t	Sig
	$\bar{\text{X}}$	S.D.	$\bar{\text{X}}$	S.D.		2-tailed
1. ordering ideas into sentences	3.44	0.89	3.55	0.88	-0.50	0.62
2. choosing the right words	3.81	0.91	3.77	0.99	0.19	0.85
3. using parallel structure	2.94	0.85	3.22	1.17	-0.96	0.34
4. using passive voice	2.81	0.98	3.47	1.14	-2.26	0.03*
5. using verb tenses	3.38	1.31	3.84	1.06	-1.66	0.10
6. using plural form of noun	2.63	0.81	3.08	1.10	-1.63	0.10
7. using modifiers (adj, adv)	2.75	1.13	3.42	1.07	-2.44	0.02*
8. using articles and determiners	2.19	0.91	3.01	1.01	-3.18	0.00*

Difficulties in Writing Essays in English Language	Writing skill		Other skills		t	Sig 2-tailed
	$\overline{X}$	S.D.	$\overline{X}$	S.D.		
9. misplace of modifiers	3.06	1.18	3.18	0.96	-0.49	0.63
10. using punctuation	2.69	0.95	2.74	0.91	-0.23	0.82
11. using capitalization	1.88	0.72	2.27	0.94	-1.64	0.10
12. spelling	2.50	0.82	2.91	1.03	-1.57	0.12

Table 35 shows that the difficulties in writing essays in English language encountered by respondents practicing writing skills and respondents practicing other skills outside classroom were different at 0.05 significant level in using passive voice, using modifiers, and using articles and determiners.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

The first section of this chapter summarizes the study and discusses the findings. The second section is concerned with the implications and the recommendations for future research.

A. Summary of the Study and Discussion of the Findings

1. Summary of the Study

This study was conducted in order to investigate English essay writing strategies used and difficulties encountered by English major students at School of Humanities. It also compared strategies used and difficulties encountered by high and low English proficiency students. The study furthermore investigated whether there is any difference in difficulties encountered as perceived by students with different background.

The subjects in this study were 272 fourth-year English major students of academic year 2005 consisting of 222 females and 50 males. The English grade point average of 3.00 and over was used to classify the subjects into a high English proficiency group and the grade point average of 2.50 and below was used to arrange the subjects into a low English proficiency group. There were 104 subjects in the high English proficiency group and 97 in the low English proficiency group.

Considering their background, the subjects were also divided into two groups. The first group consisted of 206 students practicing English outside classroom and the

other group was composed of 66 students not practicing English outside classroom. Among students practicing English outside classroom, they were grouped into 16 students practicing writing skills and 190 students practicing other skills.

The instrument used in the study was the questionnaire constructed by the researcher from the theoretical framework of Brandon (2005) Meyers (2005) Raimes (2005) Oshima and Hogue (1999) and Clouse (1998) as well as the studies of Khao-urai (2545-2546), Ploysangwal (2546) and Pongpairoj (2002). The questionnaire consisted of 3 parts: demographic data, strategies used in writing English essays and difficulties encountered when writing English essays.

2. Discussion of the Findings

Question 1: What are the English essay writing strategies used by English major students at School of Humanities, University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce?

The information below is presented according to the stage of writing as prewriting, writing, revising and editing

At the prewriting stage, the students gathered information for the essay by searching from the Internet as the most practiced method. It is quite clear that the Internet now becomes the most used source of information. Students can use various search engines to get data. This is possible because students are so keen on computer and they have an easy access to the Internet. The second strategy was listing any idea that they could think of. This practice was used as the way of writing from their own experiences or from their memory. Following was discussion with friends which could be in the form of brainstorming. This technique might arise from the condition that the size of writing class at School of Humanities is not ideal for teaching writing skills; therefore teachers employed heavily brainstorming and group work. This might be for several reasons. First,

students could practice working together, exchanging and discussing ideas and being a member of the team. Second, the teacher could administer class effectively in a limited period of time.

Interestingly, the first two practices that students used the least were writing journal and writing diary and record. The reason might be that the students do not have writing or note taking skills. They experience incidents and they just keep them in memory, not in writing.

Regarding planning the essay, it showed that students paid attention to setting the main idea the most. The students were well aware to make clear at the beginning what the essay is about and in what aspect they want to write. This might result from the emphasis of writing an outline and setting the main idea practiced in class. This result is supported by the study of Meechang (2543) which pointed out that students used all prewriting strategies at moderate level. Considering readers' knowledge was the least practiced among the students. This might be because they wrote these essays as assignments and they knew very well that their teacher would be their only reader so considering readers' knowledge did not come to their attention.

Concerning writing the introduction, the students used short stories and events the most and followed by using facts and statistics. It is noticeable that quotation was used the least. This might be the result of lacking reading habit among the students.

For the body of the essay, the students placed the topic sentence as the first sentence in a paragraph. This result agrees with Liu (2005) who found that American and Chinese students used a higher percentage of the thesis statement at the beginning of their argumentative essay. It is the easiest way to stick to the main point and develop the supporting details. Teachers also emphasized that the topic sentence must be presented in each paragraph. In developing the essay, the students used time order in narrative and

process essay. This showed that they used appropriate organization pattern for each kind of essay.

In essays, cohesive markers mostly used were transitional words as they are the most obvious devices for building coherence in paragraphs. It might also be because the students have studied conjunctions and cohesive devices for quite many years; therefore, it is easy for them to employ these devices. It is found that using transitional words was a lot more than using pronoun references and repeating important words. This result corresponds with the study of Choi (2005) who found that both Korean and American students in his study used conjunctions and logical connectives most often in their essays.

To end the essay, the students wrote the conclusion by summarizing the main points. They used this strategy significantly more than other strategies. Using quotations was still the least used as in the introduction part. This is understandable since it is not easy to find an appropriate quotation to match the essay.

Regarding writing essays in English language, the students used Thai- English dictionary. This practice was echoed by students' translating directly from Thai to English. This result is consistent with Meechang (2543) who pointed out that her subjects practiced generating ideas in Thai and then translated into English at high level. It is, of course, natural for students studying English as a foreign language to think in their first language. The difficult part for Thai students is to express their thoughts in appropriate English. The Thai and English language structures are very different. Errors caused by translating directly from Thai to English can be expected as Srinon (2542) found out that one of the causes of errors in free essays of first year university students was mother tongue interference.

After finishing the essay, the students revised and edited the essays by checking spelling, capitalization and grammar respectively. This is consistent with Paulus (1999)

who found that students revised and edited only on the surface level. The results are also relevant to Sommers (1980) who found that less skilled writers revised in a more limited ways and rarely modified ideas which had been written down.

Question 2: What are difficulties in writing English essays encountered by English major students at School of Humanities, University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce?

The students perceived getting readers' attention as the most difficult part in organizing the essay. To get readers' attention is a crucial part because if the writer cannot succeed in doing so, the essay may not be read. The second most difficult part for students was getting started. Some writers have to spend quite a long time to start the first sentence or some have to be in a certain environment. This difficulty seems to be universal as Myles (2002) mentioned that students may enjoy writing e-mails to friends but challenges such as difficulties getting started, finding the right words, and developing topics are plentiful.

The second difficulty mentioned led to the third difficulty that is spending too long time reading and thinking. The third difficulty was the consequence of the difficulty in getting started. Since the students did not know how to get started, they instead spent time on reading to get more information and thinking. Myles (2002) mentioned that formulating new ideas can be difficult because it involves transforming or reworking information which is much more complex than writing as telling. The least difficult thing for students was accepting comments from peers. This might be because the students are used to work in groups where they share and accept each other ideas.

Regarding using English language for writing essays, it is found that using verb tenses was the most difficult part for the students. This result echoes the results of the studies of Srinon (2542) Ploysangwal (2546) and Khao-urai (2545-2546) which show

that using verb tenses was one of the first two problems found among Thai university students. Using verb tenses has always been the difficulty for Thai students since there is no morphological markers conveying tenses in Thai language. They are not familiar with tense distinctions. Students tend to forget putting verbs into appropriate tenses or forget the form of verb in the tense used.

The second difficulty was choosing the right words. This result corresponds with the findings of Park (2004) that Korean EFL writers have difficulties in choosing the right word in context and also corresponds with the study of Lukkanaprasit (2537) that Law students had errors in wrong choice of words. The result also agrees with Bacha (2002) who reports that Arabic students studying English as a second language had problem in lacking of lexical variety. Translating from Thai to English tends to cause errors in writing as there is always first language interference. Grabe and Kaplan (1996:143) and Myles (2002) state that limited knowledge of vocabulary, language structure and content constrains a second language writer's performance. This difficulty might result from using Thai-English dictionary when the students composed essays. Since there are many words offered for a meaning searched for and some dictionaries do not give any examples, it is difficult for students to choose the right word for the context.

The third difficulty was ordering ideas into sentences. When students do not have solid knowledge of sentence structure and logic, they have difficulties in ordering ideas into sentences. They are not sure how to write their ideas down and how to organize all their ideas into the right sentences. Weigle (2002:36) states that the causes of difficulty in encoding ideas into written text may occur because the writer lacks linguistic knowledge or the writer puts so much effort into text generation that the idea is lost from working memory.

Question 3: How are English essay writing strategies used by high and low English proficiency students different?

The discussion presented below is divided into prewriting, writing, revising and editing.

Regarding gathering information for the essay, there was a 0.05 level of significance between the high and low English proficiency groups in using the Internet as the first source of information. The high proficiency group used it at a higher extent. Surprisingly, the low English proficiency group practiced free writing as the second way to gather information, whereas the high proficiency group practiced listing any ideas they could think of. This might be because the high proficiency group tended to be aware of the use of language and was not familiar to free writing which is writing whatever comes to mind by not worrying about correctness of the language. Discussion with friends came as the third way for both groups. However, the high proficiency group practiced more than the low proficiency group. This corresponds with Lukkunaprasit and Kannasuth (2548) who concluded that brainstorming was the most effective and the most frequently used method among high performance students. Writing journals was the least used for both groups, as well as diary and record which is the second least practiced. The result was related to the strategies for gathering information in item 1 that the students did not gather information by writing. It corresponds with data about activities which students practiced outside classroom. They did not practice writing so much as listening and reading skills.

Significant differences were found between high and low proficiency groups in using the Internet, observation, mind mapping and listing any ideas they could think of. The high proficiency group practiced all these four ways of gathering information more than the low proficiency group. These findings correspond with Sasaki's study (2000)

that students with different second language proficiency used writing strategies differently.

In the prewriting or planning stage, significant differences were found between the two groups in analyzing the essay topic, considering the purpose of writing, writing an outline and setting the main idea. It is noticeable that the high proficiency group practiced these strategies more than the low proficiency group. This might be because they realized the importance of the planning stage as Kasper (1997) found that successful student writers tend to choose effective strategies including planning during the task of composing. However, both groups considered readers' knowledge the least among steps of prewriting or planning. As discussed earlier, both groups of students might expect that their teacher would be the only reader of their essay since these writing practices were assignments of the course registered.

For the introduction part, there were differences in using facts and statistics, and using questions at 0.05 level of significance. The high English proficiency group employed facts and statistics to get readers' attention more than the low proficiency group. This might be because the students gathered information including facts and statistics from the Internet for their essays. Interestingly, both groups used quotation the least. This is understandable as students might realize that if the quotation is not so powerful or attractive, it cannot call readers' attention.

Concerning the body of the essay, both groups practiced writing topic sentence as the first sentence in a paragraph the most. This result is consistent with the study of Liu (2005) which shows that both American and Chinese students, in her study, put their thesis at the beginning of their essay. The second way for both groups was writing from general to specific ideas. However, the high English proficiency group used both strategies more than the lower group. There were significant differences at 0.05 level in these two strategies between the high and low proficiency groups. In fact, the high

English proficiency group used all strategies higher than the low proficiency group except writing from specific to general ideas which is the strategy that the high proficiency group used the least.

For the coherence used in the essay, there were significant differences at 0.05 in using a lot of pronoun references and using transitional words. Both high and low English proficiency groups used transitional words, pronoun references and repeating important words respectively. Transitional words are the easiest and the most obvious device to show relationship of two ideas. Choi (2005) found that both American and Korean students participating in his study used conjunctions and logical connectives most often in their essays.

To end the essay, significant differences at 0.05 were found in summarizing main points, making a prediction, and making a solution. Both the high and low English proficiency groups summarized main points of the essay as the most practiced strategy.

When comparing the strategies for writing essays in English between the high and low English proficiency groups, significant differences at 0.05 level were found in consulting English-English dictionary, translating directly from Thai to English, consulting grammar books, and imitating the structure of a paragraph read. The results show that the high proficiency group used English-English dictionary, consulted grammar book and imitated the structure of a paragraph more than the low proficiency group. It was also found that the low proficiency group translated directly from Thai to English more than the high proficiency group. Both groups consulted Thai-English dictionary the most. This shows that the students generate ideas in Thai first and then translate them into English.

The result is relevant to the study of Meechang (2543) which indicates that the fourth year majors at Naresuan University employed translation from Thai to English at

high level. While the high English proficiency group also used English-English dictionary and imitated the structure of a paragraph they have read, the low English proficiency group translated directly from Thai to English and imitated the sentence patterns they had read. As O'Malley and Chamot (1990:31) state that learners practice imitating accurate language models and patterns until they automatically can produce their own models. Brown (1980:8) concludes that translation is one of the crucial problems in learning a language since there may be first language interference which can cause errors in the target language.

Concerning the revision and edition of the essay, both high and low English proficiency groups checked spelling the most. The high proficiency group checked grammar and capitalization respectively. The low proficiency group checked capitalization as the second most, and checked punctuation and asking friends to read and comment the essay as the third most practiced. It is noticeable that the lower group was not so concerned with error as Raimes (1985, 1987) memtions that ESL writers know that they are language learners and they use the language imperfectly; therefore, they expect their teacher to correct the language.

There were significant differences between the two groups at 0.05 in deleting unnecessary points, changing the order of sentences, paying attention to the style of language, paying attention to the structure of essays, checking grammar, checking punctuation, proofreading the essay two times and three times, and making the essay good, correct and perfect from the first draft.

Question 4: How are difficulties in writing English essay encountered by high and low English proficiency students different?

In terms of difficulties in organizing essays, the high English proficiency group had difficulties in getting started the most. Getting readers' attention and spending too

long time reading and thinking were also found to be difficulties respectively. These results correspond with Bereiter and Scardamalia's writing model which explains that skilled writers often experience difficulties because of task complexity and lack of topic knowledge. These difficulties might also arise from the lack of confidence in writing which is quite common among novice writers.

The low English proficiency group reported that they found it most difficult to get readers' attention. The respondents also reported difficulties in getting started and spending too long time reading and thinking as the second most and analyzing the essay topic as the third most.

There were significant differences at 0.05 in keeping to one idea in each paragraph, choosing methods of paragraph support, writing a process essay, writing a descriptive essay, writing an explanatory essay, and writing a cause and effect essay. The significant differences were also found in using connectors to show order of importance and connectors to show comparison and contrast as well as having no time to revise and edit essays.

Considering the difficulties of the high and low proficiency groups in writing essays in English, there were significant differences at 0.05 level in ordering ideas into sentences, using parallel structure, using passive voice, using modifier, and misplace of modifiers. The low proficiency group had difficulties in all items asked more than the high proficiency group. These difficulties might be because they lack language competence. The results echo the study of Pongpairoj (2002) and Khao-urai (2545-2546) which show that students made syntactic errors because of mother tongue interference.

Question 5: How are the difficulties in writing English essays encountered by students with different background different?

Concerning difficulties encountered by male and female respondents, a significant difference was found in having no time to revise and edit essays. The results show that the first three difficulties mentioned by both genders were getting started, spending too long time reading and thinking, and getting readers' attention. These difficulties reflect that the respondents had no confidence to write. They spent time on preparing themselves to write.

In terms of difficulties in writing English essay, a significant difference between male and female students was not found. Both male and female respondents experienced the same first three most difficulties in ordering ideas into sentences, choosing the right words, and using verb tenses.

It can be concluded, in this study, that gender does not cause any difference in strategies used and difficulties they encountered.

Considering the factor of the respondents practicing or not practicing English outside classroom, the results report that significant differences at 0.05 were found in getting started, spending too long time reading and thinking, building up confidence to write, writing an explanatory essay, and writing a conclusion. It is noticeable that the first three difficulties of both groups were the same. They were getting started, spending too long time reading and thinking, and getting readers' attention.

Even though both groups had the same types of difficulties, the group practicing English outside classroom reported these difficulties to a lesser degree. This might reflect that students who are exposed to English more found it more manageable to deal with

writing tasks. However, Myles (2002) mentions that more contact with the language does not guarantee more acquisition of the second language.

Between the group practicing English and the group not practicing English outside classroom, it is found that there were significant differences at 0.05 level in choosing the right words, using passive voice, using verb tenses, using articles and determiners, and using capitalization. It can be seen that students practicing English outside classroom felt at ease more than the group not practicing English since they reported difficulties to a lesser extent.

Among respondents who practiced English writing skills and respondents practicing other skills outside classroom, there was a significant difference at 0.05 level between the two groups in writing an explanatory essay. Respondents practicing writing skills reported difficulties in spending too long time reading and thinking, choosing a topic, and getting started respectively. Respondents practicing other skills stated that their difficulties were getting readers' attention, getting started, and spending too long time reading and thinking respectively.

The students who practiced writing skills outside classroom mentioned that they practiced writing e-mails. It can be seen here that when they practiced writing e-mails, it was always among friends with an easygoing tone and not much of format and formality. When they need to write an essay, the difficulties still arose.

Concerning the difficulties in writing English essay, both respondents who practiced writing skills and respondents who practiced other skills outside classroom reported the same first three difficulties as choosing the right words, ordering ideas into sentences, and using verb tenses. There were significant differences at 0.05 level in using passive voice, using modifiers and using articles and determiners.

All in all, considering both strategies used and difficulties encountered, it is interesting to recognize that the high proficiency group chose to use preferable and more beneficial strategies to help compose essays. They used Thai-English dictionary and translated from Thai to English less than the low proficiency group whereas consulting English-English dictionary, consulting grammar books were employed more than those in the low proficiency group. Moreover, the high proficiency group had time to put aside essays before revising and accepted comments from peers more than the low proficiency group. This shows that the students in high proficiency group put more effort in the right ways to try to produce a piece of writing. Unfortunately, the low proficiency group seemed to choose the easy way out to finish the task and they might do the work in the last minute since this had the effect that they had difficulty in having time to put aside their essays before revising. They also reported the difficulty in having no time to revise and edit essays. This might stem from their limitation of time, linguistic competence and lack of confidence in writing.

It is noticeable that students practicing English outside classroom reported the same difficulties as students not practicing English outside classroom. Also students practicing writing skills still had the same difficulties as students practicing other skills. Both students practicing English and the group practicing writing skills had difficulties to a lesser extent. According to the data, they practiced English and writing skills only one or two times a week which might not be sufficient to improve their capability to do writing tasks successfully. Nevertheless, practicing English outside classroom should be encouraged to form appropriate learning behaviour.

Recommendations

The findings of this study point to details of strategies used in writing English essays and difficulties students encountered during the process. The researcher would like to make recommendations in two aspects:

- implication for teaching and learning English essay writing;
- recommendations for further study

Implication for teaching and learning English essay writing

Since writing is learnt through practices, the role of the teacher should be to provide positive and cooperative learning opportunities, allowing and encouraging students to express themselves without being afraid of the teachers' "red ink".

Teachers could stimulate students' thinking through various pre-writing strategies. Although students used the Internet as a major source of information to get fact and statistics, teachers should urge them to get other kinds of information such as quotations that they seldom used. However, the risk of copying information should be emphasized and the consequences of plagiarism should be stressed.

Apart from gathering information from the Internet, students can be encouraged to use free writing and writing journals strategies. When students practice these two strategies, they can just express their ideas without worrying about organization or mistakes. Practicing these strategies can make students feel at ease to write their essays and can help solve their difficulties in getting started and lacking confidence to write.

Another way to help improve writing skills can be to encourage students to form reading habit. Reading may give new knowledge in the subject area. Moreover, students can learn rhetorical and structural knowledge that they can use in their writing. Especially

when students can find the relevant reading of the specific genre of their writing, they can activate the knowledge they have got to develop their writing skills.

Most of the students lack confidence in writing. Getting started and spending too long time reading and thinking were listed by students in all groups. Teachers could use the techniques of free writing or brainstorming in a limited period of time to help students get ideas and train them to correct errors later. Students could be trained to be aware that the goal of writing is to communicate a message. They should learn to put the communicative aspect of writing as their priority. If unskilled or low proficiency students find these techniques too difficult, teachers can begin with oral dictation to make them get used to writing fast and start to build confidence in writing.

Moreover, teachers can apply talk-write method. Creating the atmosphere for students to talk what they want to write will reflect their organization of ideas. It will also build students' confidence as they have the opportunity to rethink what they have prepared for writing.

According to the data, students practiced English outside classroom by writing e-mails. Practicing writing e-mails should be encouraged to make students feel at ease to start writing. It would be profitable if teachers add computer-based writing as a part of the course or as a writing lab so that students are able to practice rapid drafting and reduce the anxiety of getting started. Moreover, a word processor allows students to use spelling and grammar check in the editing stage. Teachers can provide information about web sites so that students can, in writing lab periods, practice and learn more to improve their weaknesses.

During the planning stage, encouraging students to consider readers' knowledge should be emphasized. It is shown from the data that, among strategies in the planning stage, considering the readers' knowledge is the least practiced. It would be an advantage

if teachers design activities or assignments that create specific readers other than the teachers themselves so that students have a clear context for writing. They should be trained to consider shared knowledge between themselves and the readers, and adjust the content and strategies to be appropriate for the intended readers. Such activities or assignments would make students to be aware that, in reality, readers are rarely their teachers. In addition, it might be fruitful if they can realize that considering readers' knowledge is quite important because they can select appropriate content and approach for each writing task to meet the reader's expectation.

Some students, during the writing stage, might plan their essay in Thai language since translating directly from Thai to English was ranked as the third most used strategy. There are various research showing that planning in the first language helps generate content and reduce constraints on their composing even in the languages of different families. However, teachers should emphasize the different system of the two languages of which students should be aware when they translate from Thai to English. Word order, for example, is an obvious difference between Thai and English.

Both high and low proficiency students used Thai-English dictionary to help compose essays; nevertheless, they should be encouraged to use English-English dictionary more when they translate since they can learn structure and the usage of words from explanation and examples in the dictionary. Nowadays, English-English dictionaries give related references, links to other words and other additional information. Students can learn more and also enlarge their vocabulary.

Regarding feedback, teachers should give feedback on content and form separately. It might be a loaded job for students to both rearrange ideas and concentrate on form. This may be the reason why students both in the high and low proficiency groups revised only on the surface level: checking spelling, grammar, punctuation and capitalization. Oral conference between teacher and student is recommended for revising

the content. However, teachers should be aware that their role is to guide students through the process, but not to impose their ideas on students.

Teachers' comments should deal more with organization, students' logic in a more concrete way such as specific questions for more clarification of the issue to facilitate students' growth as writers and thinkers.

Moreover, it is shown from the data that students had no problem accepting comments from peers. Teachers should encourage peer conference among students to train them to read critically, learn to share ideas and accept other people's opinions. Furthermore, students should be trained to give comments and to learn in what aspect they should pay attention to. This can foster the development of critical thinking skills.

It might be profitable if students in low proficiency group share group work with students in high proficiency group so that they can gain experience from their peers how to accomplish a writing task.

Concerning difficulties in writing essays in English, students had problems in using verb tenses and choosing the right word for the context. Instead of teaching and drilling grammar points in class, teachers should suggest web sites about grammar revisions and writing tips that offer numerous explanation and exercises for students to practice.

All in all, students should be trained to develop and evaluate their plan that will help them complete the task successfully. Moreover, teachers should make them be aware of the accurate view of themselves as a writer and acquire strategies to deal with arising problems during their writing.

Even more importantly, teachers should try to create a positive atmosphere for students to practice their writing such as organizing activities to facilitate the writing task. It is important to make students realize that teachers are concerned more about their acquisition of writing process than about grading them. A positive and supportive atmosphere will create students' positive attitudes towards writing which may help students succeed in English essay writing. In addition, teachers should take the role of facilitators and guides in order to assist students in getting through the writing process successfully instead of filling the single role as evaluators checking accuracy and correctness as well as grading the paper. Red ink only on a writing piece is really a discouragement for students.

Recommendation for further study

A major concern of future research is in comparing the result between a group that receives process-oriented teaching and practicing in class and a group that receives in-class teaching plus computer-based lab practice in order to see whether computer-based practice shows any different effect on students' learning.

Further study should be focused on observing students' behaviours during the composing process to get the actual steps students use to produce a piece of writing. The results can give ideas to teachers to assist students in acquiring the skills in writing.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

American Psychological Association. (2001). *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (5th ed.). Washington DC: American Psychological Association.

Bacha, Nahla N. (2002). Developing learners' Academic Writing Skills in Higher Education: A Study for Educational Reform. *Language and Education*, 16, 3: 161-177.

Baguley, Phil. (1994). *Effective Communication for Modern Business.* Berkshire: McGraw- Hill Book Company.

Blanchard, Karen, and Root, Christine. (1997). *Ready to Write: From Paragraph to Essay.* White Plain: Addison Wesley Longman.

Bosher, Susan. (1998). The Composing Process of Three Southern Asian Writers at the Post-Secondary Level: An Exploratory Study. *Journal of Second Language Writing Online,* 7, 2 Retrieved July 29, 2005 from http://logos.unh.edu/jslw/vol07.html

Brandon, Lee. (2005). *Paragraphs & Essays* (9th ed.). Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Brandon, Lee. (2004). *Writing Connections: You, College, and Careers.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

British Council. (2006). *Error Correction 1*. Retrieved January 6, 2006, from http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/think/methodology/error_correct.shtml

Brown, H. Douglas. (1980). *Principles of language Learning and Teaching.* New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc.

Choi, Jeongsook. (2005). A Contrastive Analysis of Argumentative Essays Written in English by Korean ESL Students and by Native English-Speaking Students. Abstract from: Dissertation Abstracts Online Item: 3195303

Clouse, Barbara Fine. (1998). *Transition* (2nd ed.). USA: McGraw-Hill Companies.

Emig, J. (1971). *The Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders.* Urbana: IL: National Council of Teachers of English.

Flowerdew, John, and Peacock, Mathew (Eds.). (2001). *Research Perspectives on English for Academic Purposes.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Friedlander, Alexander. (1993). Composing in English: Effects of a First Language on Writing in English as a Second Language. In Barbara Kroll (Ed.), *Second Language Writing* (pp. 109-125) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Grabe, William, and Kaplan, Robert E. (1996). *Theory and Practice of Writing.* New York: Addison Wesley Longman Ltd.

Haines, Catherine. (2004). *Assessing Students' Written Work: Marking Essays and Reports.*   London: Routledge Falmer.

Hirose, K. (2003). Comparing L1 and L2 Organizational Patterns in the Argumentative
   Writing of Japanese EFL Students. *Journal of Second Language Writing Online*
   12: 181-209. Retrieved July 30, 2005, from http://logos.unh.edu/jslw/vol12html

_____ and Sasaki, Miyuki. (1994). Explanatory Variables for Japanese Students'
   Expository Writing in English: An Exploratory Study. *Journal of Second*
   Language Writing Online, 3, 3 Retrieved July 29, 2005 from
   http://logos.unh.edu/jslw/vol07html

Hyland, Ken. (2002). *Teaching and Researching Writing.* Harlow: Pearson Education.

_____ (2003). *Second Language Writing.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

James, Carl. (1998). *Errors in Language Learning and Use: Exploring Error Analysis.*
   New York: Addison Wesley Longman Limited.

Johnson, carol Virginia. (1985). The Composing Processes of Six ESL Students.
   Abstract from: Dissertation Abstracts Online Item: 8514773.

Jordan, R. R. (1997). *English for Academic Purposes.* Cambridge: Cambridge
   University Press.

Kasper, Loretta, F. (1997). Assessing the Metacognitive Growth of ESL Student
   Writers. *TESL-EJ*, 3, 1. Retrieved February 28, 2005 from
   http://www_writing.berkeley.edu/TESL-EJ/ej09/a1.html

Kaweera, Chittima. (2003). An Analysis of Narrative Pattern Written by Thai English
   Major College Students. Master's thesis, Graduate School, Naresuan University.

Ketkaew, Yaowaret. (2000). Conducting Analysis of Grammatical Errors in Written
    Work. Classroom-based research study, King Mongkut's University of
    Technology Thonburi.

Kim, Y. and Kim, J. (2005). Teaching Korean University Writing Class: Balancing the
    Process and the Genre Approach. *Asian EFL Journal,* 7,2. Retrieved April 9,
    2006, from http://www.asian-efl-journal.com/June_05_yk&jk.php

Krapels, A. R. (1993). An overview of Second Language Writing Process Research. In
    Barbara kroll (Ed.), *Second Language Writing* (pp. 37-56) Cambridge :
    Cambridge University Press.

Kroll, Barbara (Ed.). (2003). *Exploring the Dynamics of Second Language Writing.*
    USA: Cambridge University Press.

Kubota, Ryuko. (1998). An Investigation of L1 – L2 Transfer in Writing among
    Japanese University Students: Implication for Contrastive Rhetoric. *Journal of
    Second Language Writing Online,* 7, 1. Retrieved July 29, 2005 from
    http://www_writing.berkeley.edu/TESL-EJ/ej07/a1.html

KU Writing Center. *Prewriting Strategies.* Retrieved December 20, 2005 from The
    University of Kansas Web site:
    http://www.writing.ku.edu/students/docs/prewriting.shtml

Lee, Chien-Ching. (2004). Seeing is Understanding: Improving Coherence in Students'
    Writing. *The Internet TESL Journal,* 10, 7. Retrieved April 3, 2006 from
    http://iteslj.org/Techniques/Lee-Writing

Liu, Jinghui. (2005). Placement of the Thesis Statement in Argumentative Essays
        Written by Chinese and American Students: A Case Study of Contrastive
        Rhetoric. Abstract from: Dissertation Abstracts Online Item: 3185797

Lukkunaprasit, Duangta. (2537). Creating Students' Confidence in Writing. วารสารภาษา
        และภาษาศาสตร์, 13, 1: 76-93.

Matsuda, P. K. (2003). Second Language Writing in the Twentieth century: A Situated
        Historical Perspective. In Barbara Kroll (Ed.), *Exploring the Dynamics of Second*
        Language Writing (pp.15-34). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Mbaye, Aymerou. (2001). A Constrastive Study of EFL/ESL Writing problems: Case
        Studies of Five Senegalese Students in United States Colleges.   Abstract from:
        Dissertation Abstracts Online Item: 3023941

Meyers, Alan. (2005). *Gateways to Academic Writing.* White Plains: Pearson
        Education.

Myles, Johanne. (2002). Second Language Writing and Research: the Writing Process
        and Error Analysis in Student Texts. *TESL-EJ,* 6, 2 Retrieved June 6, 2006 from
        http://www_writing.berkeley.edu/TESL-EJ/ej22/a1abs.html

Norton, Linda S. (1990). Essay Writing: What Really Counts?. *Higher Education,* 20,
        4: 411-442.

Nunan, David (Ed.). (2003). *Practical English Language Teaching.* Singapore:
        McGraw Hill.

O' Donnell, Teresa D., and Paiva, Judith L. (1993). *Independent Writing* (2nd ed.). Heinle & Heinle Publishers.

Ojima, Maki. (2004). An Inquiry into Concept Mapping as a Form of Pre-task Planning in Adult Japanese ESL learners' Essay Writing. Abstract from: Dissertation Abstracts Online Item: MQ91361

O'Malley, J.M. and Chamot, A. U. (1990). *Learning Strategies in Second Language Acquisition.* USA: Cambridge University Press.

Oshima, Alice., and Hogue, Ann. (1999). *Writing Academic English* (3rd ed.). White Plains: Addison Wesley Longman.

Park, Tae Hyon. (2004). Korean EFL Writers' Difficulties with Sentence Cohesion and Vocabulary Use. Abstract from: Dissertation Abstracts Online Item: 3139523

Paulus, Trena M. (1999). The Effect of Peer and Teacher Feedback on Student Writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing Online,* 8, 3: Retrieved July 29, 2005 from http://logos.unh.edu/jslw/vol08html

Phuwichit, Panchai. (2003). An Analysis of Argumentative Pattern Written by Thai English Major College Students. Master's thesis, Graduate School, Naresuan University.

Plotnick, Jerry. (2005). *Organizing an Essay.* Retrieved December 9, 2005, from University of Toronto Web site: http://www.utoronto.ca/uceriting/organizing.html

Pongpairoj, Nattama. (2545). Thai University Undergraduates' Errors in English Writing. วารสารภาษาและภาษาศาสตร์, 20, 2: 66-99.

Purdue University Writing Lab. *Finding Your Focus: The Writing Process.* Retrieved 1
　　　October 2005 from http://owl.english.purdue/workshops/pp/writproc.PPT

Raimes, Ann. (1985). What Unskilled Writers Do as They Write: A Classroom Study of
　　　Composing. *TESOL Quarterly,* 19, 229-258.

_____(1987). Language Proficiency, Writing Ability and Composing Strategies: A
　　　Study of ESL College Writers. *Language Learning,* 37, 439-468.

_____ (2005). *Keys for Writers.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Reid, Joy M. (1994). *The Process of Paragraph Writing* (2nd ed.). Englewood Cliffs: A
　　　Simon & Schuster Company.

Reid, Joy M. (1988). *The Process of Composition* (2nd ed.). Englewood Cliffs: A Simon
　　　& Schuster Company.

Reid, Joy M. (1993). *Teaching ESL Writing.* Englewood Cliffs: A Simon & Schuster
　　　Company.

Richard, Jack C., and Lockhart, Charles. (1995). *Reflective Teaching in Second*
　　　Language Classroom. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rinnert, Carol and Kobayashi Hiroe. (2001). Differing Perceptions of EFL Writing
　　　among Readers in Japan. *The Modern language Journal,* 85, 2. Retrieved
　　　October 7, 2005, from http://polyglot.lss.wisc.edu/mlj/v85n2.htm

Robey, Cora L., Kreps, Sarah E., and Malony, Helen M. (1997). *New Handbook of Basic Writing Skills* (4th ed.). USA: Harcourt Brace & Company.

Sasaki, M. (2000). Toward an Empirical Model of EFL Writing processes: An Exploratory Study. *Journal of Second Language Writing Online,* 9. Retrieved July 29, 2005, from http://www.jslw.org

Shi, L. (1998). Effects of Prewriting Discussions on Adult ESL Students' Compositions. *Journal of Second Language Writing Online,* 7. Retrieved July 29, 2005, from http://logos.unh.edu./jslw/vol7.html

Silva, T. et al. (2003). Second Language Writing up close and Personal: Some Success Stories. In Barbara Kroll (Ed.), *Exploring the Dynamics of Second Language Writing* (pp.93-118). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sokolik, M. (2003). Writing. In David Nunan (Ed.), *Practical English Language Teaching* (pp. 87-108). Singapore: McGraw-Hill Education.

Sommers, N. (1980). Revision Strategies of Student Writers and Experienced Adult Writers. *College Composition and Communication,* 31, 378-388.

Teerawong, P. (1982). *Problems in Writing of First-Year Chulalongkorn University Students and the Evaluation of the Constructed Remedial Materials.* Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University.

Trimmer, Joseph F. (2004). *Writing with a Purpose.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

The University of West Florida Writing Lab. Essay Format: Description. Retrieved December 19, 2005, from http://uwf.edu/writelab/handouts/description.cfm

Ur, P. (1999). *A Course in Language Teaching Practice and Theory.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wang, Lurong. (2003). Switching to First language among Writers with Differing Second Language Proficiency. *Journal of Second language Writing,* 12, 4: 347- 375.

Wang, W. & Wen, Q. (2002). L1 Use in the L2 Composition Process: An Exploratory Study of 16 Chinese EFL Writers. *Journal of Second Language Writing Online,* 11, Retrieved July 30, 2005, from http://logos.unh.edu./jslw/vol11.html

Weigle, Sara Cushing. (2002). *Assessing Writing.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wolfersberger, Mark. (2003). L1 to L2 Writing Process and Strategy Transfer: A Look at Lower proficiency Writers. *TESL-EJ,* 7, 2. Retrieved December 23, 2005, from http://writing.berkeley.edu/TESL-EJ/ej26/ababs.html

Wyrick, Jean. (2002). *Steps to Writing Well* (8th ed.). Orlando: Harcourt College Publishers.

Zamel, V. (1982). Writing: The Process of Discovery Meaning. *Tesol Quarterly,* 16, 195- 209.

_____ (1983). The Composing Processes of Advanced ESL Students: Six case Studied. *TESOL Quarterly,* 17:165-187.

Zemach, Dorothy E., and Rumisek, Lisa A. (2003). *College Writing: From Paragraph to Essay.* Thailand: Macmillan Education.

ฐิติรัตน์ สุวรรณสม. (2544). การศึกษาการใช้กลวิธีการปรับโครงสร้างภาษาในการเขียนภาษาอังกฤษและความสามารถในการเขียนความเรียงภาษาอังกฤษของนิสิตวิชาเอกภาษาอังกฤษระดับปริญญาตรี มหาวิทยาลัยนเรศวร (A Study on Using Restructuring Strategies and Abilities in English Language Expository Writing of Undergraduate English Majors, Naresuan University) วิทยานิพนธ์ปริญญามหาบัณฑิต ภาควิชามัธยมศึกษา บัณฑิตวิทยาลัย จุฬาลงกรณมหาวิทยาลัย

ดวงตา ลักคุณะประสิทธิ์ และ กรองแก้ว กรรณสูต. (2548). ความคิดเห็นของอาจารย์สถาบันภาษา จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย. วารสารภาษาปริทัศน์ 22: 24-40.

ธิดารัตน์ ภัทรพงศ์ไพศาล. (2538). Effects of Process Approach on Writing of Undergraduate English Major Students of Rajabhat Institute Chandrakasem, Bangkok. วิทยานิพนธ์ปริญญามหาบัณฑิต บัณฑิตวิทยาลัย มหาวิทยาลัยเกษตรศาสตร์

พิชญ์สินี ขาวอุไร (2545-2546). การศึกษาข้อผิดพลาดในการเขียนเรียงความภาษาอังกฤษ: กรณีศึกษานักศึกษาวิชาเอกภาษาอังกฤษ สถาบันราชภัฏนครปฐม (A study of Error Analysis in English Composition: Case Study of English Major Students of Rajabhat Institute, Nakhon Pratom). วารสารภาษาปริทัศน์ 20: 137-156.

พันทิพา เข็มทอง. (2524). การศึกษาข้อบกพร่องในการเขียนภาษาอังกฤษของนักศึกษาวิชาเอกการ

สอนภาษาอังกฤษ มหาวิทยาลัยรามคำแหง วิทยานิพนธ์ปริญญามหาบัณฑิต ภาควิชาหลักสูตร

และการสอน บัณฑิตวิทยาลัย มหาวิทยาลัยรามคำแหง

ภาวิณี อุ่นวัฒนา. (2543). ความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างกลวิธีการเรียนรู้ภาษากับความสามารถในการพูดและ

การเขียนภาษาอังกฤษของนักเรียนระดับประกาศนียบัตรวิชาชีพในสถาบันเทคโนโลยีราช

มงคล (The Relationships between Language Learning Strategies and Abilities in

English Language Speaking, and Writing of Students at the Certificate of

Vocational Education Level in Rajamangala Institute Of Technology) วิทยานิพนธ์

ปริญญามหาบัณฑิต ภาควิชามัธยมศึกษา บัณฑิตวิทยาลัย จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

วนิดา พลอยสังวาลย์. (2546).การพัฒนารูปแบบการเรียนรู้ด้วยตนเองในรายวิชาการเขียนเพื่อการ

สื่อสาร1 สำหรับนักศึกษาวิชาภาษาอังกฤษ คณะมนุษย์ศาสตร์ มหาวิทยาลัยหอการค้าไทย

(Development of Self- Directed Model in Communicative Writing Course 1 for

English Majors, faculty of Humanities, The University of the Thai Chamber of

Commerce). วิทยานิพนธ์ปริญญาศึกษาศาสตร์ดุษฎีบัณฑิต บัณฑิตวิทยาลัย

มหาวิทยาลัยเกษตรศาสตร์.

วิเศษพงศ์ วงศ์ทิพย์. (2541). ความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างความรู้ภาษาอังกฤษ ความสามารถในการเขียน

เรียงความภาษาไทย ความรู้เกี่ยวกับการเขียนเรียงความภาษาอังกฤษ และความสามารถในการ

เขียนเรียงความภาษาอังกฤษ ของนิสิตนักศึกษาวิชาเอกภาษาอังกฤษ ในสถาบันอุดมศึกษา กรุงเทพมหานคร. (Relationship among English Language Knowledge, Thai Language Expository Writing Ability, English Language Expository Writing Knowledge and English Language Expository Writing Ability of English Major Students in Higher Education Institutions, Bangkok Metropolitan). วิทยานิพนธ์ ปริญญามหาบัณฑิต ภาควิชามัธยมศึกษา จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

สุพรรณี ลือเกียรติไพศาล. (2533). การเปรียบเทียบกระบวนการเขียนภาษาอังกฤษตามการรับรู้ของ นักศึกษาที่มีผลสัมฤทธิ์ทางการเขียนสูงและต่ำในสถาบันอุดมศึกษา กรุงเทพมหานคร. (A Comparison of English Writing Process as Perceived by High and Low English Writing Achievers in Higher Education Institutions). วิทยานิพนธ์ปริญญามหาบัณฑิต ภาควิชามัธยมศึกษา บัณฑิตวิทยาลัย จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

สุวรรณี ลัคนวณิช. (2531). การวิเคราะห์ข้อผิดพลาดในการเขียนเรียงความของนักศึกษาชั้นปีที่ 1 มหาวิทยาลัยกรุงเทพ. (An Analysis of Written Errors of First-Year English Students at Bangkok University) วิทยานิพนธ์ปริญญามหาบัณฑิต บัณฑิตวิทยาลัย มหาวิทยาลัย ศิลปากร

อารีรักษ์ มีแจ้ง. (2543). การเปรียบเทียบความสามารถในการเขียนภาษาอังกฤษและกลวิธีในการเขียน ของนิสิตชั้นปีที่ 4 วิชาเอกภาษาอังกฤษ มหาวิทยาลัยนเรศวรที่มีผลสัมฤทธิ์ทางการเรียน

ภาษาอังกฤษสูงและต่ำ. (A Comparison of English Writing Ability and Writing Strategies in Groups of High and Low proficiency in English of the 4th Year English Major Students, Naresuan University). วารสารศึกษาศาสตร์ 4, 3: 81-96.

อุดม ศรีนนท์. (2542). การวิเคราะห์ข้อผิดพลาดในการเขียนเรียงความแบบอิสระของนักศึกษาชั้นปีที่ 1 มหาวิทยาลัยมหามกุฏราชวิทยาลัย วิทยาเขตมหาวชิราลงกรณราชวิทยาลัย จังหวัดพระนครศรีอยุธยา.(An error Analysis of Free Composition of First-Year Students at Mahamakut Buddhist University, Mahavajiralongkorn Campus, Ayutthaya Province) วิทยานิพนธ์ปริญญามหาบัณฑิต ภาควิชาหลักสูตรและการสอน บัณฑิตวิทยาลัย มหาวิทยาลัยศิลปากร