

**THE DEVELOPMENT OF WRITING SKILLS AMONG ENGLISH
MAJORS AT TWO UNIVERSITIES IN THAILAND**

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Abstrak

Penyelidikan mengenai pendidikan bahasa dalam konteks Asia telah menekankan kepentingan pengajaran penulisan dalam kalangan pelajar. Namun begitu, kurikulum pengajaran bahasa Inggeris di Thailand tidak menekankan kepentingan penulisan yang boleh mempengaruhi pembelajaran pelajar menguasai bahasa Inggeris sebagai bahasa asing (EFL). Kebanyakan kajian lepas telah memisahkan isu kemahiran menulis dalam EFL berdasarkan teori-teori diskrit penulisan bahasa ibunda. Oleh itu, kajian ini bertujuan untuk meneroka kepelbagaian dimensi dalam proses pembangunan kemahiran menulis pelajar EFL Thai di dua buah universiti terkemuka di Thailand dengan menggunakan reka bentuk teori berasas. Data diperolehi daripada tujuh orang pelajar pengkhususan bidang bahasa Inggeris melalui pemerhatian kelas, temu bual dengan tenaga pengajar dan pelajar dan analisis dokumen. Data dianalisis secara kualitatif menggunakan pendekatan reka bentuk sistematik untuk mencadangkan satu teori baharu berkaitan dengan faktor yang mempengaruhi proses pembangunan penulisan pelajar Thai. Hasilnya, satu teori berasas tentang pembangunan kemahiran menulis terdiri dari faktor dalaman dan luaran dikemukakan. Faktor luaran iaitu konteks pendidikan, personaliti guru dan ketersediaan sumber bahasa Inggeris mempengaruhi faktor dalaman seperti tingkah laku pembelajaran. Faktor pengubah terdiri dari peranan guru, pendekatan pengajaran, reka bentuk sukatan pelajaran dan bahasa pengantar. Strategi pelajar untuk membangunkan kemahiran tersebut direalisasikan dalam empat bentuk yang berbeza: intrapersonal, interpersonal, proses penghasilan, dan integrasi pengetahuan bertulis dengan kemahiran pembelajaran yang lain. Kajian ini telah menghasilkan satu teori iaitu Teori Pembangunan Kemahiran Penulisan dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggeris sebagai bahasa asing. Dari segi implikasi pedagogi, andaian-andaian dalam teori ini memberi panduan kepada guru untuk meningkatkan lagi kurikulum pengajaran bahasa Inggeris dalam proses pengajaran penulisan.

Kata kunci: Teori berasas, Proses kemahiran penulisan, Teori Pembangunan Kemahiran Penulisan, Bahasa Inggeris sebagai bahasa asing

Abstract

Studies on English language education in Asian context have highlighted the importance of teaching writing to students. However, the current English language teaching curriculum in Thailand includes little or no writing which can affect the EFL students to acquire English. Most of the existing literature has compartmentalized issues of EFL writing skills based on discrete L1 writing theories. Therefore, the present study aimed at exploring the multidimensional process of Thai EFL students' writing skill development at two leading universities in Thailand using a grounded theory design. The data were obtained from seven English majors through class observation, interviews with instructors and students, and document analyses. The data were analysed qualitatively using a systematic design in order to formulate a new theory in relation to factors influencing Thai students' process of writing development. As a result, a grounded theory of writing skill development was formulated comprising both internal and external factors which explained how the seven English majors learn writing was established. The external factors consisted of the Thai students' educational context, perceptions towards writing, their teachers' personality and the availability of English language resources that influenced the internal factors such as students' learning behaviours. The intervening conditions encompassed teacher's roles, instructional approaches, the syllabus design and the medium of instruction. The EFL learners' strategies to develop the skills were realized in four different forms: intrapersonal, interpersonal, production process, and integration of writing knowledge and other learning skills. The present study has formulated a theory, which is *Writing Skill Development Theory* in learning English as a foreign language. In terms of pedagogical implications, the assumptions in this theory may provide some guidance to the teachers on the improvement of English language teaching curriculum in the process of teaching writing.

Keywords: Grounded theory, Writing skill process, Writing Skill Development Theory, English as a foreign language

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List of Abbreviations

ESL (English as a Second Language) – is used interchangeably with the term “EFL” throughout this study to mean English as a new language regardless of contexts in which it is used

EFL (English as a Foreign Language) – is used throughout this study to refer to English taught in the country where English is not used outside classrooms as a native or an official language

L1 - First Language

L2 - Second Language

NES – Native English Speaker

WU – Walailak University

PSU – Prince of Songkla University

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Being one among the international students back in the late 1990s at International Islamic University, Malaysia, who was asked to write a paragraph on “a favorite place” as the first writing assignment for the class, I experienced extreme writing shock then. I was never asked to write in English as my foreign language at school earlier. I asked myself: what am I going to write? How could I produce a paragraph when I never even practiced writing sentences? My main concern was merely linguistic formation to make a story related to the topic as long as I could. This is the way I did in my first language when required to do so though I seldom do. I then started to construct sentence after sentence to lengthen the paragraph. I ended it when I reached half of an A4-sized page, neatly typed then submitted to the course instructor. When it was returned with feedback, comments, and question marks indicating that many sentences were not intelligible and misleading, I became very disappointed. I scored two out of ten which was the lowest among the group in class.

Since then, I began to develop writing apprehension and feared that I might not be able to cope with the course. Fortunately, these feelings turned to be a positive force to drive me to work harder and attempted to reach the same level with other friends in the class. I developed a strong intrinsic and extrinsic motivation by spending more time reading English texts such as newspapers, books, paragraphs and essays. My reading skill was very poor then as I had to search meaning of new words in every sentence from my tiny bilingual paper dictionary. At the same time, I tried to practise writing few sentences after reading each text. Luckily, I was also privileged by the international environment where I could always talk and discuss issues using

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