

WRITING PROBLEMS AND WRITING STRATEGIES OF ENGLISH MAJOR AND
NON-ENGLISH MAJOR STUDENTS IN A THAI UNIVERSITY

A THESIS
BY
PANUPONG SEENSANGWORN

A large, faint, circular watermark of the Srinakharinwirot University seal is centered in the background. The seal features a central emblem with a cross-like design, surrounded by Thai script and a dotted border.

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Master of Arts in English
at Srinakharinwirot University
July 2017

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AN ABSTRACT
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A large, faint watermark of the Srinakharinwirot University seal is centered on the page. The seal is circular with a scalloped outer edge. Inside, there is a grid pattern with a stylized Thai character in the center. The Thai text 'มหาวิทยาลัยศรีนครินทรวิโรฒ' (Mahavithayalai Srinakharinwirot) is written around the inner circle.

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This study aimed to investigate the writing problems and the writing strategies experienced by Thai EFL university students in a university in Thailand. It also aimed to see whether there was a significant difference between the writing problems and writing strategies experienced by English major and non-English major students. The participants were 80 third-year undergraduate students consisting of 40 English majors and 40 non-English majors. The instruments employed in this study were the Writing Problems and Strategies Questionnaire and drafts of paragraph writing. The participants were asked about their problems they encountered when writing in English and their strategies they used when they wrote a paragraph in English. Also, they were asked to write a paragraph on the topic of their problems when they are about to write in English. It was found that there was a statistically significant difference between the writing problems encountered by both groups of students. The English major students had less writing problems than the non-English major students. In addition, there was a significant difference in the writing problems reflected in a paragraph written by both groups of students. The non-English major students had more problems about content and ideas, organizational pattern, the development of ideas, and language use than the English major students. Lastly, there was a statistically significant difference between the writing strategies used by both groups of students. The English major students used more strategies than the non-English major students.

ปัญหาการเขียนและกลวิธีการเขียนของนักศึกษาระบบภาษาอังกฤษและนักศึกษาที่ไม่ใช่ระบบภาษาอังกฤษ
ในมหาวิทยาลัยไทยแห่งหนึ่ง



บทคัดย่อ
ของ
ภาณุพงศ์ ศीलสังวรณ์

เสนอต่อบัณฑิตวิทยาลัย มหาวิทยาลัยศรีนครินทรวิโรฒ เพื่อเป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษา

ตามหลักสูตรศิลปศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต สาขาวิชาภาษาอังกฤษ

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วไลพร ฉายา.

การวิจัยนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาและสำรวจปัญหาการเขียนและสำรวจกลวิธีการเขียน
ของนักศึกษาที่เรียนภาษาอังกฤษในฐานะภาษาต่างประเทศในมหาวิทยาลัยแห่งประเทศไทย
นอกจากนี้เพื่อทดสอบว่ามีความแตกต่างกันอย่างมีนัยสำคัญระหว่างนักศึกษาสาขาวิชาภาษาอังกฤษและ
นักศึกษาที่ไม่ใช่สาขาวิชาภาษาอังกฤษในเรื่องของปัญหาการเขียนและกลวิธีการเขียน ผู้เข้าร่วมการวิจัย
มีจำนวน 80 คน เป็นนักศึกษาชั้นปีที่ 3 ประกอบด้วยนักศึกษาสาขาวิชาภาษาอังกฤษ จำนวน 40 คนและ
นักศึกษาที่ไม่ใช่สาขาวิชาภาษาอังกฤษ จำนวน 40 คน เครื่องมือที่ใช้ได้แก่ แบบสอบถามปัญหาการเขียน
และกลวิธีการเขียน และงานเขียนระดับอนุเจต ข้อมูลเชิงปริมาณและเชิงคุณภาพเก็บมาจกแบบสอบถาม
และงานเขียนอนุเจตและนำมาวิเคราะห์ ผลการวิเคราะห์พบว่า มีความแตกต่างโดยมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติใน
ด้านปัญหาการเขียนภาษาอังกฤษระหว่างนักศึกษาสาขาวิชาภาษาอังกฤษกับนักศึกษาที่ไม่ใช่สาขาวิชา
ภาษาอังกฤษ โดยนักศึกษาสาขาวิชาภาษาอังกฤษมีปัญหาน้อยกว่านักศึกษาที่ไม่ใช่สาขาวิชา
ภาษาอังกฤษ และมีความแตกต่างโดยมีนัยสำคัญในด้านปัญหาการเขียนภาษาอังกฤษระหว่างนักศึกษาทั้ง
2 กลุ่ม โดยนักศึกษาสาขาวิชาภาษาอังกฤษมีปัญหาที่พบในงานเขียนน้อยกว่านักศึกษาที่ไม่ใช่สาขาวิชา
ภาษาอังกฤษ รวมถึงมีความแตกต่างโดยมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติในด้านกลวิธีการเขียนภาษาอังกฤษระหว่าง
นักศึกษาทั้ง 2 กลุ่ม โดยนักศึกษาสาขาวิชาภาษาอังกฤษใช้กลวิธีการเขียนมากกว่านักศึกษาที่ไม่ใช่
สาขาวิชาภาษาอังกฤษ

The Thesis titled

“Writing Problems and Writing Strategies of English Major and Non-English Major
Students in a Thai University”

by

Panupong Seensangworn

has been approved by the Graduate School as partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the Master of Arts in English at Srinakharinwirot University.

.....Dean of Graduate School
(Asst. Prof. Chatchai Ekpunyaskul, M.D.)

July 2017

Thesis Committee

Oral Defense Committee

.....Major AdvisorChair

(Asst.Prof. Dr. Saiwaroon Chumpavan) (Dr. Pramarn Subphadoongchone)

.....Co-advisorCommittee

(Dr. Walaiporn Chaya) (Asst.Prof. Dr. Saiwaroon Chumpavan)

.....Committee

(Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nitaya Suksaeresup)

.....Committee

(Dr. Walaiporn Chaya)

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CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Introduction

In the twenty-first century, the significance of the English language has been on the rise ever since English became an international language of communication. It can also be used as a tool to assess repertoire of knowledge. As a result, the English language has become a compulsory course in academic institutions across the world. It is taught as both a second language and a foreign language, and students are expected to be able to use English effectively. In terms of teaching and learning, all four of the English language skills; listening, speaking, reading, and writing are taught and practiced. However, in most English classes, writing is regarded as the most difficult skill (Negari, 2011; Salma, 2015). In accordance with natural order hypotheses of language learning, writing comes at the end of the learning process (Javid & Umer, 2014). Regarding second or foreign language acquisition, the listening, speaking, and reading are naturally acquired before the writing which is finally acquired. For foreign language learners, it is more difficult to learn to write in English and when they are required to perform their writing ability in English, they often encounter a number of writing problems because of the differences in terms of linguistic features, rhetorical patterns, writing styles, and other cultural factors (Benson & Heidik, 1995, as cited in Mohamed & Zouaoui, 2014).

In spite of these difficulties, students at all educational levels need to improve their writing because it is one of the most useful and effective tools in global communication. Writing is an essential aspect of thinking and learning at the academic or the tertiary level

(Hammann, 2005). In addition, writing is a means of communication that enables individuals to share ideas, defend their opinions, and express their emotions (White & Arndt, 1991).

Furthermore, writing is an important tool that allows students to learn more effectively, and to increase their understanding of what they have been taught (Voon Foo, 2007). Mohamed and Zouaoui (2014) also assert that writing is a vital skill for learners, and that the development of their writing skills and an increase in their confidence in terms of expressing themselves in written English may lead to professional opportunities in the future, as well as empowering learners to take on new roles as citizens within the community.

In the academic arena, university students may be required to demonstrate their knowledge of the English through the performance of written assignments (Graham & Harris, 1988). Furthermore, the demand for good writing is required in both the academic and business world, such as reports on reading, the preparation of research papers, or written examinations or essays (Gebhardt & Rodrigues, 1989).

It is clear that writing is a crucial academic skill which students need to develop in order to succeed in their future careers (Boonpattanaporn, 2008; Grabe & Kaplan, 1996). In other words, writing can be considered the most important skill for English as second or foreign language (ESL/EFL) students to acquire and develop (Hyland, 2003). Therefore, it is necessary for writing teachers to put more effort into helping their students due to the fact that writing is both a crucial skill and a difficult one to acquire. The mastery of writing skills is particularly important in the ESL/EFL context. However, writing is often problematic, particularly for ESL/EFL students and teachers, in producing writing and assisting struggling students with their written work (Abdel-Hack, 2002).

Hence, it is interesting and challenging to examine the writing problems that Thai EFL university students encounter when writing in English and it is, consequently, to help writing teachers or instructors to improve their students' writing ability. In addition, many researchers and scholars agreeably maintained that writing strategies play a crucial role on writing processes and writing quality and the writing strategies are very important since they are the factors that distinguish high and low achievers (Arndt, 1987; Beare, 2000; Raimes, 1985; Zamel, 1982). The researcher is interested in investigating the writing problems and writing strategies used by Thai EFL university students. Many previous research studies revealed writing problems of EFL students in similar contexts because of the differences of linguistic features apparently appeared in English native writers and non-English native writers; however, all the writing problems found could not be applied to the same context of Thai EFL students. Furthermore, there are few studies that study the writing problems in-depth together with the writing strategies which are also the important factor that helps in the improvement of writing ability. Thus, this present study focused on investigating the writing problems and writing strategies experienced by English major and non-English major students in a public university in Thailand. The study specifically aimed to investigate the students' writing problems and writing strategies used in writing a paragraph in English hoping that the findings could lead to a more profound understanding of writing problems and writing strategies. The findings could be also beneficial to the EFL context and writing instruction in the Thai EFL classroom.

Purposes of the Study

The purposes of this study are as follows:

1. To investigate the English writing problems experienced by English major and non-English major Thai EFL university students when writing a paragraph in English.
2. To investigate the writing problems reflected in the paragraphs written in English by English major and non-English major Thai EFL university students.
3. To investigate the writing strategies employed by English major and non-English major Thai EFL university students during the processes of prewriting, writing, and revising when writing a paragraph in English.

Research Hypotheses

1. There is a significant difference in the writing problems experienced by English major and non-English major Thai EFL university students when writing a paragraph in English.
2. There is a significant difference in the writing problems reflected in a paragraph written in English by English major and non-English major Thai EFL university students.
3. There is a significant difference in the use of writing strategies employed by English major and non-English major Thai EFL university students during the processes of prewriting, writing, and revising when writing a paragraph in English.

Significance of the Study

This research is conducted in order to explore the writing problems and strategies used by Thai EFL students, both English and non-English majors. The study also intends to identify any writing problems revealed in paragraphs written by these students. Due to

the fact that there are still many problematic issues in the Thai EFL writing context, the findings obtained from this study may provide information about the actual problems experienced by the students when writing paragraphs in English, during the three main stages of the writing process: pre-writing, drafting/writing and revising. This information may be beneficial for students and writing teachers alike and in a number of ways. First, teachers can identify writing problems in the paragraphs composed by students, and find the most appropriate techniques in order to enhance the quality of their writing. Teachers can also assist students with solutions to their overcoming the difficulties that they experience when writing paragraphs in English. Third, writing teachers can teach effective writing strategies to their students in order to help them improve their writing skills. Furthermore, the findings of this study could also be used as a guideline for writing instructors, course developers and researchers to develop materials for writing instruction in the EFL context.

Scope of the Study

Theoretically, this study is based on the writing process, with a focus on the three main stages consisting of prewriting, writing, and revising. It also focuses on the problems of paragraph writing in English encountered by Thai EFL university students at a public university in Chonburi province, Thailand. This study also aims to investigate the writing strategies employed during the paragraph writing process in English by these students, including prewriting, writing, and revising strategies.

This study is exploratory, and combines quantitative data with qualitative data. The quantitative section investigates the writing problems faced by students in terms of paragraph writing, as well as the overall writing strategies frequently used in the three main stages of paragraph writing by both third-year English major students and non-English major students,

enrolled in the second semester of the 2015 academic year. The participants in this study will consist of 80 third-year students, who will be selected by purposive sampling from among the students enrolled in the *Paragraph Writing* course in the first semester of the 2015 academic year. The data will be collected through the Writing Problems and Strategies Questionnaire and the sample paragraphs will be obtained from the students.

Research Procedure

Research design.

This study was exploratory and used a combination of qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis. The quantitative aspect aimed to investigate the writing problems experienced by EFL students and the strategies that they used when writing a paragraph in English. The results of the questionnaire were then triangulated with the qualitative data obtained from the questionnaire. Additionally, pieces of paragraph writing written by students were also analyzed in order to identify any actual writing problems.

Selection of the participants.

The participants of this study consisted of English major students and non-English major students studying for their B.A. at a public university. In total, 80 third-year Thai EFL students participated in this research. There were 40 English major students from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences and 40 non-English major students from the Faculty of Management and Tourism. According to the university registration system, these two groups of students enrolled in the *Paragraph Writing* and *Writing for Careers* courses, offered in the second semester of the 2015 academic year. The participants were selected from the third-

year undergraduate students majoring in English and enrolled in the *Paragraph Writing* course, as well as students from the Faculty of Management and Tourism in the second semester of the 2015 academic year.

With regard to the prerequisite courses, the English majors were required to complete two compulsory writing courses, *English Writing Skills* and *Paragraph Writing*. Besides, non-English majors are required to take the *Writing for Careers* course as their first writing class.

Both groups of students are selected to participate in this research for three reasons. First, they are doing their Bachelor's Degree and they are expected to be proficient in English especially nowadays we are in the age of ASEAN and English is used as an official language. Second, both groups of students are required to enroll the writing course in as part of their compulsory subject. Therefore, they will be able to write a paragraph after the completion of the course. Third, their future career tends to be very challenging and English is indispensable for them to be used in their workplace.

Selection of the university.

There were four reasons for selecting a public university in Chonburi province, Thailand as a source of data. First, the public university was a leading and prominent educational institution, located on the east coast of Thailand. This university has been established for more than 60 years. Second, this university has consistently produced graduates in order to serve the recruitment needs of private sector; for example, international companies, workplaces, and industrial estates. Next, the subject of English as a Foreign Language was also a requirement for all majors of Bachelor's Degree offered by the

university. Thus, it may be interesting to investigate the writing problems and the writing strategies experienced by the university students. Lastly, the researcher has worked for the Student Affairs Division in this public university for over eight years which made the administration of the study and data collection more convenient, as well as providing feedback to the participants.

Characteristics of the participants.

The participants were Thai EFL (English as a Foreign Language) university students doing their Bachelor's Degree in the third year. According to the syllabus for undergraduate students, the English major students were required to complete the compulsory writing courses including the *English Writing Skills* course, the *Paragraph Writing* course, and the *Essay Writing* course, and the non-English major students were required to take the *English Writing for Careers* course. Each course students were required to study for 16 weeks per semester.

When Thai EFL university students take English courses, particularly paragraph and essay writing classes, they often encounter a number of writing difficulties. With regard to the mentioned problems including a lack of good writing strategies, a shorter period of training, exposure to the English language, as well as the different rhetorical patterns of L1 (Thai as a First Language) and L2 (English as a Second or Foreign Language) are considered to be the causes of writing problems that EFL students encounter. Hence, the researcher was interested in investigating the writing problems and writing strategies used by Thai EFL university students while composing a paragraph in English.

Instrumentation.

The research instruments used in the present study consisted of a questionnaire and drafts of paragraph writing written by the participants. The following section describes the research instruments in more details.

The Writing Problems and Strategies Questionnaire

The Writing Problems and Strategies Questionnaire is a self-development questionnaire constructed by the researcher and based on existing theoretical frameworks from the review of the literature. This also includes previous studies. In other words, the questionnaire was adapted from the previous works of other scholars (Nguyen, 2009; Baker & Boonkit, 2004) to suit the purposes of the current study. These researchers also investigated the writing problems experienced by university students and the strategies they used to overcome them in the ESL/EFL context. There are three parts to the questionnaire.

Part One contained the demographic data on the participants and is concerned with their personal data, such as their major, their years of experience learning English writing or exposure to English writing, as well as general questions about the attitudes of the participants towards English writing.

Part Two was used to elicit information about writing problems encountered by students during the writing process in a number of following aspects: (a) content and ideas, (b) organizational patterns, (c) the development of ideas, and (d) language use. This part of the questionnaire consisted of 30 items concerned with writing problems and utilized a five-point Likert scale ranging from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'. Five items of the open-ended questions were the last part of the questionnaire.

Part Three aimed to obtain data on the frequency of the writing strategies used by the participants in the three main stages of the process of writing: prewriting, writing, and revising. The questionnaire consisted of 36 items, with a scale ranging from 'always' to 'never'.

Validity of Research Instrument

The five-point Likert scale questionnaire was examined by an English native speaker. At the initial stage of designing and developing a questionnaire, there were 90 items or statements which were studied and adopted from previous research studies' questionnaire conducted in Thailand and abroad. Next, the researcher academically discussed with an English native speaker in order to select the essential and up-to-date statements to be used in the questionnaire. The content of each statement was carefully discussed. In this stage, adding and deleting some information to the statements was made. After that, the statements were carefully and thoroughly considered, and they were revised by the researcher. Finally, 10 items or statements were deleted in order to make the questionnaire concise.

Paragraph Writing

In order to investigate the writing problems in the writing samples provided by the students, they were instructed to compose a paragraph. These samples were collected from students enrolled in either the *Paragraph Writing* or *English Writing for Careers* courses in the second semester of the 2015 academic year. Forty English majors and forty non-English majors enrolled in these two courses. Hence, there were totally 80 drafts of paragraph writing.

Data Collection Procedures

The data of the research were collected in the following procedures. First, to answer the research hypotheses, the writing problems of students when writing a paragraph in English and the writing strategies employed, the researcher first collected the data at the beginning of the second semester, when the lecturer taught the *Paragraph Writing* course, and the *English Writing for Careers* course. In this course, the students were taught to write descriptive, narrative, cause and effect, and contrast and comparison paragraphs. This course lasted 16 weeks and consisted of 50 minute periods, with a total of 150 minutes for each individual class. In the mid-period of the course, the students were given the assignment of writing 150 words on a given topic. The samples submitted by the students were then be collected and copied for analysis. After that, the Writing Problems and Strategies Questionnaire were administered to the participants.

Data Analysis

The qualitative and quantitative data were analyzed in accordance in the following procedures.

First, the data from the first part of the questionnaire, demographic information of the participants were analyzed as complimentary to the main research hypotheses and discussion of the research. Then, it was presented in terms of frequency and percentage.

Second, the data obtained from the Writing Problems and Strategies Questionnaire, particularly in the second part, concerning writing problems, were analyzed using the computer processing program, in order to determine the frequency, percentage, means and standard deviation. The average mean ranges were then interpreted into the mean value level of from the highest to the lowest levels as follows. The highest = 4.21 - 5.00 = high = 3.41 -

4.20, moderate = 2.61 - 3.40, Low = 1.81 - 2.60, and the lowest = 1.00 – 1.80.

Then, the findings were tabulated and interpreted.

Third, the second research hypothesis: there was a significant difference in the writing problems reflected in a paragraph written in English by English major and non-English major students. The written works of the students in both groups were also analyzed by two raters using a rubric for rating the composition of a paragraph which includes the main components of effective paragraph writing. The raters then referred to this checklist in order to assess which of the four main categories of writing problems were evident in the writing samples provided by the students. Then the qualitative data from part three of questionnaire on the problems experienced by these students were analyzed, described and explained. The types of problems were assessed in terms of frequency, ordered from the highest to the lowest, and grouped in accordance with the types of writing problems.

Fourth, in order to answer the third research hypothesis: there is a significant difference in the use of writing strategies employed by English major and non-English major students during the writing processes of prewriting, writing, and revising when writing a paragraph in English. The data obtained from the third section of the questionnaire were processed by using the processing program, in order to determine the frequency, percentage, means and standard deviation. The mean scores of three main variables, the writing strategies employed in three main stages; prewriting, writing and revising, as well as items for individual writing strategies, were interpreted for the value level using the same interpretation value level of the writing problem mentioned earlier.

Finally, the open-ended part of the questionnaire were analyzed to find out other writing strategies the students reported using besides the strategies provided in the questionnaire items in Part two. The data were then grouped and explained descriptively.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are used specifically in this research:

Writing problems

Writing problems refer to difficulties experienced and the errors made by the writers which may prevent the achievement of a successful written product. The major problems include the content of ideas, grammar, the organization of ideas, sentence structure, as well as L1 to L2 translation (Chen, 2012). In this study, the problems under investigation include the following factors: (a) the content or ideas, and how to gather ideas, (b) the organizational patterns, unity, coherence, cohesion and transitional words, (c) the development of ideas, parts of paragraph writing, and (d) language use, such as sentence structure, word choice, and grammar points.

Writing strategies

Writing strategies refer to the techniques that language learners or writers use to control or improve their writing through a three-step process: planning, writing, and then revising. In other words, writing strategies refer to the steps or the operations performed by a learner in order to facilitate the acquisition, retrieval, storage, and use of information (Rubin, 1981, p. 5). In the present study, the researcher investigates the writing strategies

employed by students during the essay writing, which includes prewriting, writing, and revising.

Paragraph writing

Paragraph writing refers to the composition of a sequence of sentences that work together to support a main idea (Bohlke, 2012). A paragraph can be defined as a group of sentences which develop a single idea or topic, or a series of consecutive sentences regarding a single topic (Brown, et al, 1986).

Summary of the Chapter

This chapter discussed the background of the study, the importance of writing and writing problems EFL students encountered. It also discussed EFL students' writing problems concerning linguistic and rhetorical problems. The chapter also discussed the studies that described the writing problems and writing strategies, the importance factors in the writing processes that help to developed students' writing ability. The chapter also addressed purposes of the study, research hypotheses, scope of the study, and the significance of the study, including the definition of terms used in this research.

Organization of the Research

Chapter I of this study presents the background and research hypotheses of the study. Chapter II presents a review of related literature. Chapter III is concerned with methodology. Chapter IV reports the findings, and Chapter V contains a conclusion and discussion of t findings and recommendations for further studies.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

This study is an investigation of writing problems and writing strategies of English major and non-English major Thai EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students in a Thai university. The topics reviewed in this chapter are (a) definition of writing, (b) the writing problems experienced by ESL/EFL students, (c) the writing strategies used by ESL/EFL students, (d) definition of paragraph writing, and (e) paragraph structure. The final section of the chapter describes the previous related research conducted in Thailand and abroad.

Definition of Writing

Writing has been widely defined by several writing experts and scholars and described as follows.

Hayes and Flower (1981) defines writing as a cognitive complex process, and writing is best understood as a set of distinctive thinking processes which writers organize during the act of composing, while Zamel (1982) defines writing as a non-linear process and writing is a process of discovering meaning. Other explanation by Bareiter and Scadamalia (1987) proposed two models of writing that describes skilled and unskilled writers which they take different approaches of writing.

Hedge (1988) views the production of a piece of writing as ‘crafting’. In other words, writing is the way in which a writer puts together the piece of the text, developing ideas through sentences and paragraphs within an overall structure (p. 89).

Writing is defined as a complex cognitive activity and a task that cannot be performed without thought, discipline, and concentration (White, 1987), while Dyson and Freedman (2003) define writing as a developmental process (p. 976).

In this study, writing is defined as a record made by writers in order to convey or to express their ideas, opinions, feelings, and so on in the form of visual symbols which represent sound(s) or meaning(s). Therefore, writing is an expressive or productive skill. Unlike the other language-learning skills: listening, speaking, and reading, the uniqueness of writing is it can be changed, edited, revised, and polished.

The Writing Problems Experienced by ESL/EFL Students

Writing is often considered the most difficult skill for student writers to acquire because of the cyclical and recursive nature of the writing process (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996; Harris, Graham & Mason, 2003; Majid, 2007). According to White and Arndt (1991) writing is a complex cognitive process that requires a consistent intellectual effort over a considerable period of time. Similarly, Bereiter and Scardamalia (1982) point out that writing is a highly complex process involving many important aspects, such as form and features, purposes and goals, organization, as well as the expectations of the audience and an evaluation of the communication. Many researchers agree that writing in the ESL/EFL context is a complex, difficult and demanding task (Al-Khairy, 2013). English writing cannot be easily acquired because ESL/EFL students need an appropriate period of time in which to develop their English skills. Moreover, they need to learn the fundamental principles of English writing in order to compose an effective and successful written product (Hyland, 2003). For teachers, writing is considered a difficult skill to teach because it includes several

components: (a) a comprehensive command of grammar, (b) a grasp of spelling and punctuation, (c) the use of appropriate vocabulary, (d) a suitable style which meets the expectations of the readers, and (e) organizational skills (Musa, 2010). It is also time-consuming for teachers to read papers, to provide feedback and to ask for revision. Therefore, English writing has a tendency to be neglected in the English language classroom in language programs for both ESL/EFL students (White & Ardnt, 1991).

The causes of the problems experienced by ESL/EFL students stems from a number of factors, including the inherent complexity of writing, insufficient practice, inadequate feedback, and the limitations of the knowledge of the students (Anwar, 2000). In addition, students do not write very often in the classroom, and what they do produce tends to be limited to 'classroom-bound' writing practice (Bakir, 2013). The level of difficulty is significantly higher when a foreign language is involved (Mohamed & Zuoaooui, 2014). As a productive skill, writing can be considered one of the most complicated tasks for the majority of ESL/EFL students because of the differences between the linguistic and rhetorical patterns used in their first language and in second language (Kaplan, 1996). This requires ESL/EFL students to pay attention to and manage the differences between their first and their second languages (Ahmed, 2010). In academic terms, students are expected to produce coherent and well-organized written work, as well as using the most appropriate word choices, sentence structure; and most of all, successfully communicate their ideas (Khoshima & Robain Nia, 2014). Nevertheless, the majority of ESL/EFL students experience difficulty in meeting these requirements; for example, their essays are poorly written in terms of the content, conventions, ideas, organization, sentence structure, and vocabulary. These students also have problems with establishing and achieving their

communicative goals. Indeed, producing a piece of writing, regardless of whether or not it is a paragraph or an essay, seems to be particularly problematic for ESL/EFL students because of the different rhetorical patterns used in English composition, including elements such as organization, structure, and style (Leki, 1991). Therefore, the majority of students do not find it easy to write essays in English, without the assistance of writing teachers or members of the academic community that they belong to (Mohd Nor, Kim Hua, & Ibrahim, 2012).

Clearly, a solution for the aforementioned problems with writing experienced by ESL/EFL students can be found in the acquisition of essential writing skills by students. This can be achieved through teachers using the necessary techniques to develop the abilities of their students, and to equip them with the skills they need to produce acceptable and effective written communication. With regard to the teaching of writing skills, the focus has shifted from the product to the process, or the product-based approach. This also has also contributed to the change in writing instruction from a product-based approach to the process-based approach. This involves teachers providing more assistance during the writing process, including the prewriting stage, the writing stage, and the revising stage of assigned writing activities. Zamel (1982) points out that students will develop the ability to write proficiently in English if they clearly understand and experience the process of composition.

As the process is one of the key components contributing to good writing, many scholars and researchers have identified the steps of the writing process, based on Flowers & Hayes (1981) and Bereiter and Sacardamalia (1987). Some scholars and experts on writing (e.g., Brown & Hood, 1989; Scholes & Comley, 1989; Raimes, 2005) claim that the writing process has three main stages: prewriting, drafting, and post-writing. Within these three stages, writers usually practice numerous writing strategies, including brain storming or

quickly jotting down ideas in the pre-reading stage; starting writing in the drafting stage; and adding, rearranging, and checking grammar, spelling and punctuation in the post-writing stage. Winterowd and Murray (1988) claim that writers should proofread their work in the post-writing stage, examining each line carefully for grammatical errors, spelling, punctuation and style. Writers with a variety of writing strategies and skills may complete their writing tasks more successfully and confidently (Gebhardt & Rodrigues, 1989). Thus, in order to develop the competence of struggling students, teachers need to provide them with strategies in order to deal with the writing process, such as drafting, planning, and revising (Tracy et.al. 2009). The students also need to be familiar with a variety of writing strategies, as well as the ability to control their own writing process.

The role of such strategies in the writing process has become increasingly significant because of the way in which they may help students to achieve mastery of written English. Therefore, the focus of writing instruction should be on the effective use of strategies in the writing process. The researcher will investigate the repertoire of writing strategies employed by Thai ESL/EFL students majoring in English and non-majoring in English when writing essays. Therefore, the findings of this study may contribute to an improvement in the writing skills of ESL/EFL students. For this reason, it is essential to understand the concepts of writing strategies, and how they can be used to help students to develop and improve their writing skills.

The Writing Strategies Used by ESL/EFL Students

The concepts of writing strategies are explained differently by a number of researchers and scholars. Academically, writing strategies refer to techniques that language

learners or writers use to control while writing and to improve their piece of writing via three main steps: including planning, drafting/writing, and revising (Raimes, 2005).

With regard to writing strategies, Cohen (1998) defined a strategy as a process which is consciously selected by learners, and which results in actions taken to enhance the learning or the use of the foreign language, through the storage, retention, recall, and application of information about the language. In addition, researchers and writing experts have identified four to eight stages of the writing process. Arndt (1987) maintains that writing strategies consist of eight main categories: planning, global planning, rehearsing, repeating, re-reading, questioning, revising, and editing. On the other hand, Alharthi (2012) claims that writing strategies consist of only four components including metacognitive strategies – thinking about thinking, cognitive strategies – consciousness of writing, social strategies and affective strategies. In other words, with relation to the process of writing, researchers consider writing strategies to be fundamental for ESL/EFL students, as well as useful tools when composing a written product in English. Furthermore, in the English language classroom, writing strategies are crucial for and beneficial to both students and instructors. When the EFL students use the writing strategies to control and monitor their written product composed in three main stages consisting of prewriting, writing, and revising, they tend to overcome their writing difficulties they encounter and help them achieve their written products.

Studies on the Writing Problems and Writing Strategies Used by ESL/EFL Students

There have been many studies conducted on the writing strategies used in the ESL/EFL context, and the findings of a number of these studies can be applied to the present study. A number of researchers and writing experts have proposed that the use of some of

these strategies may contribute to higher levels of competence. Alharthi's research was used to study and give guidelines to carry out this research paper. Alharthi (2012) conducted a study to investigate the writing processes and the strategies used in the written compositions of male students majoring in English. This study also investigated the ways in which the more and the less-skilled students write in English and studied the impact of the use of strategies on the written product. Moreover, this study attempted to gain a deeper understanding of the sub-processes of writing, such as planning, structuring, reviewing, and revising. The instruments employed to collect data included written samples, a writing strategy questionnaire (WSQ), and think-aloud protocols (TAP). The findings indicate that firstly students experienced problems at the sentential and intersentential levels. Second, the students demonstrated an awareness of the use of writing strategies. Third, the students often failed to accurately report on their own writing processes. Fourth, the students mainly used affective, cognitive, and metacognitive strategies. However, only the more skilled students planned their writing both locally and globally, while the less-skilled students relied more on the cognitive process.

Definition of Paragraph Writing

The characteristics of a paragraph are defined by several writing experts as a sequence of sentences that function together in order to support a main idea (Bohlke, 2012).

A paragraph is also defined as a group of sentences which develops an idea, or topic or as a group of sentences concerned with a particular topic (Brown, et al, 1986.)

Jordan (1999) explains that a paragraph normally contains several sentences which are all concerned with the theme of the key or the topic sentence. Cohen and Miller (2001)

point out that the most important steps of the paragraph composition are (1) the organization of coherent paragraphs, (2) writing topic sentences, and (3) concluding sentences. In addition, the first sentence of a paragraph should capture the attention of the reader.

Folse et al. (2014) explains the characteristics of paragraph writing as a group of sentences about one specific topic and the paragraph has three main parts: the topic sentence, the body, and the concluding sentence.

Therefore, paragraph writing is a passage of writing that develops one topic and focuses on that topic, and the essential parts of a paragraph are (1) a topic sentence, (2) supporting details (examples and analysis), and (3) a concluding sentence or a conclude thought. All sentences in a paragraph are linked by the use of transitional words or linking words.

Paragraph Structure

Major elements of a paragraph consist of topic sentence, main idea, major supporting details and minor supporting details, and concluding sentence. The major components of a paragraph and the characteristics of individual part are described by English writing experts as follows.

O'Donnell and Paiva (1993: 2-4) describes the details about the important parts of a paragraph which include a topic sentence, supporting sentences, details, logical order, logical connectors, a concluding sentence, unity, and coherence. The ideas in a paragraph must be presented in a logical order by using transitional words or cohesive markers which indicate the relationship between the ideas. The concluding sentence, the final element of a

paragraph, summarizes or restates the main idea in a different way. According to Reid (1994: 42), the concluding sentence summarizes the contents, offers a solution or recommendation to the problem, predicts a situation, or states conclusion.

Next, there are descriptions of topic sentence and other essential elements described as follows. Dupont (1998) explains that a topic sentence provides the central topic or idea that the paragraph will be about. Folse, et al. (2014) states that the topic sentence is one sentence that tells the main idea of the whole paragraph. Also, the topic sentence is usually the first sentence in a paragraph. The topic sentence should not be specific or too general and must describe the information in all the sentences of the paragraph. Additionally, Loughheed (2010) explains that a topic sentence describes what each paragraph is about, and it can come at the start of a paragraph, in the middle, or at the end. It can either introduce paragraph or summarize a paragraph. Richard and Sandy (2009) points out a topic sentence is supported by the other sentences in the paragraph and effective topic sentence is neither too general nor too specific.

The next part of the topic sentence is the body. The body gives more information such as support, details, or examples, about the topic sentence. The body must be related to the topic sentence. In addition, the body should not include ideas that are unrelated or unconnected to the topic sentence (Folse, et al., 2014).

The last part of a paragraph, the concluding sentence ends a paragraph with a final thought. The concluding sentence gives a summary of the information in the paragraph and it gives information that is similar to the information in the topic sentence. The concluding

sentence can be a suggestion, opinion, or prediction. Importantly, the concluding sentence should not give any new information about the topic.

Related Research in Thailand

There are research studies on writing problems experienced by EFL students conducted in Thailand. They are explained as follows.

Sattayatham and Ratanapinyowong (2008) carried out their research study on analysis of errors in paragraph writing in English written by first year medical students from the four medical schools at Mahidol University, Thailand. The participants were one hundred and thirty-four medical students from Siriraj, Ramathobodi, Praboromchanok, and Bangkok Metropolitan Schools. They were assigned to write an opinion paragraph on the topic of medical topics based on a reading passage chosen from the Internet. A standard format consisting of ten criteria was used for evaluating the types of errors. The frequency of writing errors was calculated as percentage. A *Chi-square* was used to compare the errors among four groups of medical students. The results revealed that a *p*-value of <0.05 was considered statistically significant and most students had errors in standard format of paragraph writing. Their top four errors were: no transitional words, lack of organization, no introduction, and no conclusion. Praboromchanok medical students had the highest percentage of errors.

In addition, a research study on writing problems was conducted by Rodsawang (2017). It aimed at identifying the problems when EFL students write an essay in English. The participants were 27 second-year students majoring in Business English. They were assigned to write an essay on the topic of my special places. The designated rubric criteria

were used to score the essay writing. The results revealed that the writing problems regarded to EFL of the subjects were classified into four aspects: grammar uses, lexical issues, writing styles, and practicing hours and feedback from writing instructors. Such problems were found namely: grammatical errors, misspelling errors, misuse of grammatical structures, and problems of developing their essay writing.

Another research study on writing errors, Hinnon (2014) reviewed the studies of error analysis in English writing experienced by Thai university students during the past decade. It revealed that errors of grammar and vocabulary, first language (L1) interference (Thai as a first language), and writing organization are the three main errors detected from Thai university students' writing. In terms of grammatical and lexical errors, it was found that most of the errors were subject-verb agreement, tenses, word order, prepositions, determiners, and omission of subjects, verbs, objects, and complement including the incorrect use of sentence structure. Also, wrong choice of words, word formation, translation from Thai words into English and use of Thai words are categorized into the lexical errors. Ambiguous communication and miscommunication are also parts of semantic errors. Next, in terms of L1 interference, it revealed that the use of Thai words and the structure of Thai language are used when Thai students compose their writing in English. Lastly, errors of writing organization were (1) no transitional words, (2) lack of organization, (3) no introduction,, (4) no conclusion. In addition, the findings show that EFL writers had limited second language knowledge and the differences in both structure and vocabulary of L1 (Thai as a first language) and L2 (English as a second language).

For the section of research on writing problems and writing strategies of EFL students, Boonpattanaporn (2008) conducted her research on the strategies used in English essay writing and the perceived difficulties reported by English major students at the University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce. The participants consisted of students from both low and high English proficiency groups. A questionnaire was used to collect data, and the findings revealed that between the high and low proficiency students, there were significant differences at a level of 0.05 at all stages of the writing process, in terms of the composition of essays in English, and the difficulties experienced by the participants in terms of both the composition and organization of their writing in English. The results of a comparison of the writing problems faced by students from different backgrounds also revealed significant differences at a level of 0.05, in terms of composition and organization. The issue of gender was found to be irrelevant with regard to the writing problems experienced by the participants.

In brief, writing problems experienced by EFL learners are varied and most of the problems concern the lack of grammatical knowledge and lexical knowledge, as well as the difference of linguistic features between the mother tongue and the target language which obstruct the achievement of the written products of EFL students in English.

Related Research Abroad

Mojica's (2010) research on the self-reported writing problems and writing deficiencies of EFL students in the Philippines was carried out. The participants were 26 EFL students in the beginner's level – 13 male students and 13 female students and they enrolled in the Center for Language learning at De La Salle University. In her research, an

instrument consisted of three parts: Part One asking for demographic data, Part Two required the participant to write two or three paragraphs about their writing problems, and Part Three asked how they thought their problems could be solved. Final task was for the participant to rate their paragraph using 0-5 rating scale. Two English teachers were asked to be raters for the study. Rating the data collected from the written samples revealed the most frequent errors were on vocabulary and grammar. Grammar was collectively coded. The results showed that there is a deep involvement in thinking process before writing and it diminishes during the writing stage to the revising stage. The participants admit that consistently speaking and writing in English, and being given encouragement, as well as more opportunities to interact with foreigners, can help the overcome their writing problems.

Tan (2011) investigated the writing difficulties experienced by 95 second year non-English major students in Kun Shan University in Taiwan. The participants were doing their Bachelor's Degree from different colleges including College of Engineering, College of Information Technology, and College of Commerce and Management. They were assigned to write a paragraph in response to the article. The purpose of this writing task was to motivate students to express their opinions, feelings, and experiences after reading current events in which they have some background knowledge and personal interest. After collecting their paragraph writing which is written online on a blog, grammatical and lexical errors were examined and counted manually by the researcher. The results revealed that students had problems in word choice the most followed by the use of verb forms, missing subjects, and verb tenses. Causes of the problems were the students' limitation of vocabulary size, poor grammatical knowledge, and interference from L1 (Taiwanese as a first language). Six appropriate instructional strategies were suggested so that English teachers or writing

instructors can adopt more effective approaches to enhance EFL students' writing proficiency.

A study on writing problems conducted by Kim (2003), the purpose was to examine the writing errors experienced by 32 Korean high school students at the age of 15-18 years old. The students were categorized into three groups according to their level of English proficiency including Group A (the intermediate level), Group B (the high intermediate level), and Group C (the advanced level). The instruments were a three-section questionnaire and a writing assignment. The questionnaire consisted of Section One, students were asked to identify and rank the subject of difficulty in five categories: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and grammar, Section Two, students were asked to rank according to the level of difficulty of the five major writing problems: contents, organization, language, academic writing style, and mechanics, and Section Three, was about the list of everyday different text types and students were asked to design how often they read and write. Next, students were assigned to write a paragraph per week. Students' writing scores were given by five English native teachers under the same measurement standard. The results from the Section One of the questionnaire revealed that the writing is the most difficult part. The second one is grammar. The results of the ranking of five main writing problems revealed that organization (38 percent) is the most difficult part. The results of the third section indicated that students have read a lot of small advertisements or product labels more frequently than any types of written texts. After that, students' paragraphs were scored by raters and they reported that insufficient organization led to confusion of understanding ideas. The next problem was English grammar. The third one was word choice. Both contents and mechanics were not considered to make them confused. Three groups of EFL students were estimated to have

fairly good and creative ideas although sentence structure was still problematic. The three groups had organization problems in common. From this observation, organization was the most difficult part. All three groups received high scores on contents. These findings suggest that the inability of develop meaning from the given topics should not be blamed for lack of grammar or sufficiency or fluency.

Other research study on writing problems was conducted by Javid and Umer (2014) and their purpose was to investigate the writing problems encountered by Saudi EFL learners. The participants were 194 Saudi EFL learners studying at Taif University in Saudi Arabia, and they were asked to answer the 40-item Likert scale questionnaire. Descriptive analyses and Independent –samples t-test was run using SPSS version 17. The findings reported that the Saudi EFL learners had serious problems due to their weaknesses in (1) using appropriate lexical items, (2) organization of ideas, and (3) grammar points. Other problems concerning the language use were (1) wrong use of preposition, (2) misspelling, (3) misuse of irregular verbs, (4) misuse of article, (5) misuse of punctuation, and (6) misuse of prefixes and suffixes.

Concerning research on the writing strategies in English, to begin with Nguyen (2009) studied the writing strategies used by EFL students in Vietnam. The participants consisted of nine Vietnamese women, who were non-native English speakers and second-year university students. The instruments used to collect data were a questionnaire, an interview, and learning diaries. The findings revealed that the successful writers not only used strategies more frequently, but also used more cognitive, compensation, memory and metacognitive strategies than the less successful writers. These findings also demonstrated which strategies

the participants used the least and the most often by both the more and the less successful writers.

Chen (2011) conducted her study of the writing strategies used by Chinese non-English major students at Dezhou University in China. This study investigated the correlation between writing strategies and achievements, as well as the predictive power of writing strategies on writing achievement. The instruments were a writing test, a questionnaire, and an interview. The findings indicated that (a) in terms of frequency, the strategies used by the students included 'while-writing' strategies, pre-writing and revising strategies; (b) prewriting strategies and revising strategies which positively correlated with the writing achievements of the students; (c) writing strategies.

Other research study on writing strategies conducted by Sadi and Othman (2012) aimed at investigating the writing strategies employed by Iranian EFL undergraduate students. The participants were three Iranian good writer and three Iranian poor writers. These six writers were selected from initial 32 volunteer participants. Think aloud protocols, post writing interviews, written products, and stimulated recalls were collected. Analysis of the data revealed that, despite employing the strategies in combination and in a recursive fashion by both groups of participants, two groups of writers were found to differ in their planning, drafting, and reviewing. Good and poor writers were found to be different in employing certain strategies like rereading, repetition, L1 use, and rehearsing.

In addition, research on the investigation of writing strategies in English was conducted by Alnufaie and Grenfell (2012). The participants were 121 non-English major EFL undergraduate students studying at Saudi Arabian Industrial College, and the instrument

was a 40-item strategy questionnaire. The results revealed that all Saudi Arabian EFL students employed two categories of writing strategies: process-oriented and product-oriented and also revealed that the top five writing strategies used by the students were process-oriented. Such writing strategies include (a) using a similar word that the writer knows when he or she does not know the exact word in English, (b) thinking about the purpose of writing, (c) simplifying what to write when not knowing how to express thoughts in English, (d) thinking about the reader of writing, and (e) stopping after each sentence to relate ideas together and getting more new ideas.

In conclusion, writing strategies are major factors in terms of developing the abilities of ESL/EFL students to write more effectively and smoothly. Furthermore, writing strategies are practical and useful for ESL/EFL writers to use them in three main stages including prewriting, writing, and revising in order to overcome the writing difficulties they may encounter. One method is for writers to generate ideas or to brainstorm, plan the first step, then outline, draft, write and revise it. After that, they can compose their written product coherently and logically, and edit their own writing.

Summary of the Chapter

This chapter reviewed the definition of writing, definition of paragraph writing, major parts of paragraph writing, the writing problems experienced by ESL/EFL students, the writing strategies, used by ESL/EFL students, and the writing process. The related research studies conducted in Thailand and abroad about the writing problems and the writing strategies are the final section for this chapter.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This study intended to investigate the writing problems and writing strategies employed by English major and non-English major students of Thai EFL university students in a public university in Thailand. It also wanted to find out if the writing problems reported using by the participants reflects in their actual paragraph writing. This chapter describes research methodology consisting of research design, participants and the research setting, research instruments, as well as data collection procedure. In the final section of the chapter discusses data analysis.

Research Procedure

Research design.

This study was exploratory and used a combination of qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis. The quantitative data were self-report rating scales obtained from the writing problems and writing strategies questionnaires, whereas the qualitative data were paragraphs written by the participants, the English and non-English major students. The quantitative part aimed to investigate the writing problems experienced by ESL/EFL students and the writing strategies that they employed when writing paragraphs in English. The results of the questionnaire were then triangulated with the qualitative data obtained from the three-part questionnaire. Additionally, the written work of these students were analyzed in order identify any writing problems in their written work.

Selection of the participants.

The participants of this study consisted of English major undergraduate students and non-English major undergraduates studying for their B.A. at Burapha University, Chonburi, Thailand. In total, 80 third-year Thai EFL students, 40 English major undergraduate students from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences and 40 non-English major undergraduate students from the Faculty of Management and Tourism participated in the present study. According to the university registration system, these two groups of students enrolled in the *Paragraph Writing* and the *Writing for Careers* courses, offered in the second semester of the 2015 academic year. Thus, there were 100 students taking this course, and the researcher then selected the participants through a simple sampling technique. The participants were selected from the third-year undergraduate students majoring in English and enrolled in the *Paragraph Writing* course, as well as students from the Faculty of Management and Tourism in the second semester of the 2015 academic year.

With regard to the prerequisite courses, the English majors were required to complete two compulsory writing courses, *English Writing Skills* and *Paragraph Writing*. Besides, non-English majors are required to take the *Writing for Careers* course as their first writing class as their first English writing class. These writing courses are offered by the Department of Western Languages, the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, and the Language Institute respectively.

Both groups of students are selected to participate in this research for three reasons. First, they are doing their Bachelor's Degree and they are expected to be proficient in English especially nowadays they live in the age of ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations)

and English is used as an official language communicating among ten Southeast Asian countries. Second, both groups of students are required to enroll the English writing course in as part of their compulsory subject. Therefore, they should be able to write a paragraph appropriately after the completion of the course. Third, their future career tends to be very challenging in a real world today and English is importantly indispensable for them. Thus, they are expected to have enough potential in English to use English in their workplace such as writing an email, or a memo, and so on.

Selection of the university.

There were four reasons for selecting a public university in Chonburi province, Thailand as a source of data. First, the public university was a leading and prominent educational institution, located on the east coast of Thailand. This university has been established for more than 60 years. Second, this university has consistently produced graduates in order to serve the recruitment needs of private sector; for example, international companies, workplaces, and industrial estates. Next, the subject of English as a Foreign Language was also a requirement for all majors of Bachelor's Degree offered by the university. Therefore, it may be interesting to investigate the writing problems and the writing strategies experienced by the EFL university students. Lastly, the researcher has worked for the Student Affairs Division in this public university for over eight years which made the administration of the study and data collection more convenient, as well as providing feedback to the participants.

Characteristics of the participants.

The participants were Thai EFL (English as a Foreign Language) university students doing their Bachelor's Degree in the third year. According to the syllabus for undergraduate students, the English major students were required to complete the compulsory writing courses including the *English Writing Skills* course, the *Paragraph Writing* course, and the *Essay Writing* course, and the non-English major students were required to take the *English Writing for Careers* course. Each course students were required to study for 16 weeks per semester.

When Thai EFL university students take English courses, particularly paragraph and essay writing classes, they often encounter a number of writing difficulties. With regard to the mentioned problems including a lack of good writing strategies, a shorter period of training, exposure to the English language, as well as the different rhetorical patterns of L1 (Thai as a First Language) and L2 (English as a Second or Foreign Language) are considered to be the causes of writing problems that EFL students encounter. Hence, the researcher was interested in investigating the writing problems and writing strategies used by Thai EFL university students while composing a paragraph in English.

Instrumentation.

The research instruments used in this study consisted of a three-part questionnaire and paragraph writings provided by the students. The following section describes the research instruments in more detail.

The Writing Problems and Strategies Questionnaire

The Writing Problems and Strategies Questionnaire is a self-development questionnaire constructed by the researcher and based on existing theoretical frameworks

from the review of the literature and this also includes previous studies. In other words, the questionnaire was constructed by the researcher, but adapted from the previous works of other scholars (Nguyen, 2009; Baker & Boonkit, 2004) to suit the purposes of the current study. These researchers also investigated the writing problems experienced by university students and the strategies they used to overcome them in the ESL/EFL context. The questionnaire was in English with a Thai translation in order to help students to read and understand the questionnaire items more clearly so that the data obtained will be more reliable. There are three parts to the questionnaire.

Part One contained the background information on the participants and is concerned with their personal data, such as major, first language, their years of experience learning English writing or exposure to English writing, as well as general questions about the attitudes of the students toward English writing.

Part Two was used to elicit information about writing problems encountered by students during the writing process in a number of aspects: (a) content and ideas, and how to gather ideas; (b) organizational patterns or coherence, cohesion and transitional words, (c) the development of ideas, such as the thesis, the originality of the work, and the supporting details, (d) language use, such as the use of articles, sentence structures and tenses. This part of the questionnaire consisted of 30 items concerned with writing problems and utilizes a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 referring to 'strongly disagree' and 'strongly agree' respectively. This part of the questionnaire provided open-ended questions in which the respondents independently responded to the questions or describe their own writing problems, such as their inability to write a grammatically correct sentence in English, their inability to coherently express their ideas, their inability to use the most appropriate word

choices to express their ideas, or a lack of ideas about the topics that they are assigned to write about.

Part Three aimed to obtain data on the frequency of the writing strategies used by the students in the three main stages of the process of paragraph writing including prewriting, writing, and revising. In this part, the questionnaire consisted of 36 items, with a scale ranging from 1 to 5 referring to 'never or almost never true' to 'always or almost always true' respectively.

Validity of research instrument.

To establish the content validity, the five-point Likert scale three-part questionnaire was examined by an English native speaker to determine the validity of the content. At the initial stage of designing a questionnaire, there were 90 items or statements which were studied and adopted from previous research studies' questionnaires conducted in Thailand and abroad. Next, the researcher academically discussed with an English native speaker in order to select the essential and up-to-date statements to be used in the questionnaire. The content of each statement is carefully discussed. In this stage, adding and deleting some information to the statement was made. After that, all statements in the questionnaire were carefully and thoroughly considered. The researcher revised the questionnaire according to the English native speaker's comments. Finally, 10 statements or items were deleted in order to make the questionnaire concise.

Paragraph Writing

In order to investigate the writing problems in the writing samples provided by the students, they were asked to write a paragraph about problems when writing in English at least 150-200 words. These samples were collected from students enrolled in the *Paragraph*

Writing and the *English Writing for Careers* courses in the second semester of the 2015 academic year. There were 40 English majors and 40 non-English majors enrolling in these two courses. Hence, there were a total of 80 paragraph writing samples collected for the purpose of analysis.

Data Collection Procedures

The data of the research were collected in the following procedures. First, to answer the research hypotheses, the writing problems of students when writing a paragraph in English and the writing strategies employed, the researcher first collected the data at the beginning of the second semester, when the lecturer taught the *Paragraph Writing* course, and the *English Writing for Careers* course. In this course, the students were taught to learn parts of a paragraph and basically practice writing a short paragraph. This course lasted 16 weeks and consisted of 50 minute periods, with a total of 150 minutes for each individual class. In the mid-period of the writing course, the students were given the assignment of writing a paragraph on the topic of problems when writing in English at least 150-200 words. The drafts of paragraph writing submitted by the students were collected and copied for analysis. The students' paragraphs were rated by two American English native speakers. Their paragraphs were scored by using a writing rubric. Also, raters' comments for each student's paragraph writing were also made. After that, the Writing Problems and Strategies Questionnaire were administered to the participants to answer. The date and time for data collection were scheduled in advance and under supervision of the lecturer. Time allocated for the students to complete the questionnaire was 30-40 minutes.

Data Analysis

The qualitative and quantitative data were analyzed in accordance in the following procedures.

First, the data from the first part of the questionnaire, demographic information of the participants were analyzed as complimentary to the main research hypotheses and discussion of the research. Then, it was presented in terms of frequency and percentage.

Second, the data obtained from the Writing Problems and Strategies Questionnaire, particularly in the second part, concerning writing problems, were analyzed using the computer processing program, in order to determine the frequency, percentage, means and standard deviation. The average mean ranges were then interpreted into the mean value level of from the highest to the lowest levels as follows. The highest = $4.21 - 5.00 = \text{high} = 3.41 - 4.20$, moderate = $2.61 - 3.40$, Low = $1.81 - 2.60$, and the lowest = $1.00 - 1.80$. Then, the findings were tabulated and interpreted.

Third, in order to answer the second research hypothesis: there was a significant difference in the writing problems reflected in a paragraph written in English by English major and non-English major students, the drafts of paragraph writing of both groups of students were analyzed by two American English native raters using a writing rubric for rating the composition of students' paragraphs. In this stage, in statistics, inter-rater reliability was applied to analyze the degree of agreement on scoring students' paragraphs among raters. Then, the two raters referred to this checklist to assess which of the four main categories of writing problems were evident in the paragraphs written by the students. Next, the qualitative data from Part Two of the questionnaire on the writing problems experienced by Thai EFL university students were analyzed, described and explained. The types of

writing problems were assessed in terms of frequency. The four main types of the writing problems were (a) content and ideas, (b) organizational pattern, (c) development of ideas, and (d) language use.

Fourth, in order to answer the third research hypothesis: there is a significant difference in the use of writing strategies employed by English major and non-English major students during the writing processes of prewriting, writing, and revising when writing a paragraph in English. The data obtained from the third section of the questionnaire were processed by using the processing program, in order to determine the frequency, percentage, means and standard deviation. The mean scores of three main variables, the writing strategies employed in three main stages; prewriting, writing and revising, as well as items for individual writing strategies, were interpreted for the value level using the same interpretation value level of the writing problem mentioned earlier.

Finally, the open-ended part of the questionnaire were analyzed to find out other writing strategies the students reported using besides the strategies provided in the questionnaire items in Part two. The data were then grouped and explained descriptively.

Fourth, in order to answer the third research hypothesis, there is a significant difference in the use of writing strategies employed by English major students and non-English major students during the writing processes of prewriting, writing, and revising when writing a paragraph in English, the data obtained from the third section of the Writing Problems and Strategies Questionnaire were processed by using the processing program, in order to determine the frequency, percentage, means and standard deviation. The mean scores of three main variables, the writing strategies employed in three main stages; prewriting, writing and revising, as well as items for individual writing strategies, were interpreted for

the value level using the same interpretation value level of the writing problem mentioned earlier.

Finally, the open-ended-part of the questionnaire were analyzed to find out other writing strategies the students reported using besides the strategies provided in the questionnaire items in Part Two. The data were then grouped and explained descriptively.

Summary of the Chapter

This chapter described the research design, an exploratory study investigating the writing problems and writing strategies of English major and non-English major students. It then discussed the selection of the research context and participants, as well as their characteristics followed by the research instruments for collecting data in detail. The last part of the chapter described the data analysis.

Chapter 4 presents the quantitative and qualitative results of the research showing the writing problems and the writing strategies experienced by both groups of students when writing a paragraph in English.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The primary aim of this study was to investigate the writing problems experienced by English major and non-English major Thai EFL university students when writing a paragraph in English. The study also aimed to find out if the students' problems reflected in a paragraph written by both groups of the students. In addition, the study examined the writing strategies employed by English major and non-English major Thai EFL university students when writing a paragraph in English. This chapter first presents the results of quantitative data analysis obtained from three parts of the questionnaire: demographic data, writing problems experienced by the participants of both groups and the writing strategies they employed when writing a paragraph. Then results of the qualitative data, the content of students' paragraphs were presented. The following section presents demographic data of the participants.

Demographic Data of the Participants

The first part of the questionnaire asked the participants of both major and non-major English students about their personal background in terms of major and field of study, English proficiency level, year of studying English, any foreign language they know rather than English and opinion toward the importance of learning English. Table 1 presents the frequency and percentage concerning the demographic information of participants, English major and non-English major students.

Table 1

Demographic Data of the English Major Students (n = 40)

Items	Number (n)	Percentage (%)
Major		
English	40	100
University year		
Third year	40	100
First Language (Thai)		
Thai	40	100
Ability of any language(s) other than English		
Ability to write Thai and English	25	62.50
Ability to write other languages	15	37.50
Chinese	10	25
French	1	2.50
Japanese	2	5.00
Korean	2	5.00
Self-Rating of English Proficiency		
Excellent	1	2.50
Good	17	42.50
Fair	20	50
Poor	2	5
Importance of Writing		
Very important	29	72.50
Important	11	27.50
Not so important	-	-

As shown in Table 1, the participants consisted of 40 English major students. The average number of years studying English in schools is more than 10 years. All participants' first language is Thai and 62.50% of them are able to write in Thai and English, while 37.50% of them are able to write in other languages including Chinese, French, Japanese and Korean (25.00%, 2.50%, 5%, and 5.00% respectively). In accordance with their English proficiency levels, they rated themselves as follows: only one of them (2.50%) was "Excellent", 17 (42.50%) were "Good", 20 (50%) were "Fair" and 2 (5%) were "Poor." In addition, most of the English major students

(29.00%, 72.50%) reported that writing is very important for them, and 11 students (27.50%) viewed writing as important.

The demographic information of non - English major students was presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Demographic Data of the Participants: Non-English Major Students (n = 40)

Items	Number (n)	Percentage (%)
Major		
Marketing	37	92.50
Communication Arts	2	5.00
Cultural Resource Management	1	2.50
First Language		
Thai	40	100
Ability to any language(s) other than English		
Yes	12	30.00
No	28	70.00
If yes, specify		
Chinese	9	22.50
French	-	-
Japanese	1	2.50
Korean	2	5.00
Self-Rating of English Proficiency		
Excellent	-	-
Good	7	17.50
Fair	29	72.50
Poor	4	10.00
Importance of writing		
Very important	20	50.00
Important	19	47.50
Not so important	1	2.50

As shown in Table 2, the participants in this group consisted of 40 non-English major students 37 (92.50%) of them major in Marketing , 2 (5.00%) study in

Communication Arts major, and 1 (2.50%) majors in English Cultural Resource Management.

In terms of their ability to write in other foreign languages, 30% of the non-English major students can write, whereas 70% of them cannot perform this ability. For those who are able to write, 22.50% of them can write in Chinese, 2.50% of them can write in Japanese, and 5% of them can write in Korean. According to their English proficiency level, they rated themselves as follows. No one rated “Excellence” 7 (17.50%) reported that they were “Good”, 29 (72.50%) were “Fair” and 4 (10%) were “Poor.” In addition, half of the non-English major students (50%) reported that writing is very important for them, and 19 students (27.50%) viewed writing as at the important level, and one of them (2.50%) viewed writing in English is not important.

The next section presents the results of quantitative data analysis to test Hypotheses 1.

Research Hypotheses 1.

There is a significant difference in the writing problems experienced by English major and non-English major Thai EFL university students when writing a paragraph in English.

Data analysis of results from the questionnaire.

A comparison of writing problems of English major and non-English major students.

To test research hypotheses 1, the data from part two of the questionnaire using five-point Likert Scale which indicate the statements of writing problems which each item was scored 1 to 5, with a 5 being the strongly agreed and 1 being the strongly

disagree towards the statement of writing problems were analyzed for the means and standard deviations and then the independent t-test was used to calculate if there was a statistical significant difference between the mean score of the writing problems of English and non-English major students. Table 3 presents a comparison of writing problems between English major and non-major students.

Table 3

The Difference in the Mean Scores of Writing Problems between English Major and Non-English Major Students (N = 40)

Writing Problems	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
English major students	40	2.93	.60	4.19	.00*
non-English major students	40	3.53	.58		

* $p < .05$

As presented in Table 3, the results revealed that there was a significant difference in the writing problems experienced by English major and non-English major Thai EFL university students when writing a paragraph in English at the .05 level ($t = 4.19, p < .05$).

Analysis of four main types of writing problems experienced by English Major and Non-English Major Students.

Further, responses obtained from the writing problem questionnaires were analyzed in four main types of writing problems including (a) content and ideas, and how to gather ideas related to the assigned topic, (b) organizational pattern, unity, coherence, cohesion, and transitional words, (c) the developments of ideas: basics, parts of paragraph writing: topic sentence, supporting sentences, and concluding sentence, and (d) language use, such as sentence structure, vocabulary, or word

choice, and grammar points: articles, tenses, subject and verb agreement, pronouns, and singular and plural nouns. The means and standard deviations were tabulated with the interpretation level value as described below.

Interpretation of mean level	Highest	=	4.21 - 5.00
	High	=	3.41 - 4.20
	Moderate	=	2.61 - 3.40
	Low	=	1.81 - 2.60
	Lowest	=	0.00 - 1.80

Table 4

Overall Mean, Writing Problems of English Major and Non-English Major Students (N = 40)

Writing Problems (5-point Likert Scale Questionnaire)	English Major Students		Non-English Major Students	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1. Content and Ideas	3.33	.67	3.83	.59
2. Organizational Pattern	2.60	.87	3.54	.70
3. Development of Ideas	3.06	.79	3.61	.76
4. Language Use	2.88	.54	3.67	.67
Overall Writing Problems	2.93	.60	3.53	.58

As shown in Table 4, the overall mean of the writing problems English major students encountered fell into the moderate level ($M = 2.93$, $SD = .60$). They had the problem with the content and ideas the most and it fell into the moderate level ($M = 3.33$, $SD = .67$), followed by development of ideas ($M = 3.06$, $SD = .79$), and language use ($M = 2.88$, $SD = .54$). These two types of writing problems were at the moderate

level. The lowest level of writing problems of English major students was organizational pattern ($M = 2.60$, $SD = .87$); it was at the low level.

For non-English major students, the overall mean of the writing problems fell into the high level ($M = 3.53$, $SD = .58$). They had the problem with the content and ideas the most and it fell into the high level ($M = 3.83$, $SD = .59$), followed by language use ($M = 3.67$, $SD = .67$), and development of ideas ($M = 3.61$, $SD = .76$). Similar to the English major students, the non-English major students had the writing problems about organizational pattern the least ($M = 3.54$, $SD = .70$). However, this writing problem was also at the high level.

Figure 1 also illustrates comparison of the four main types of writing problems English major and non-English major students experienced in writing a paragraph.

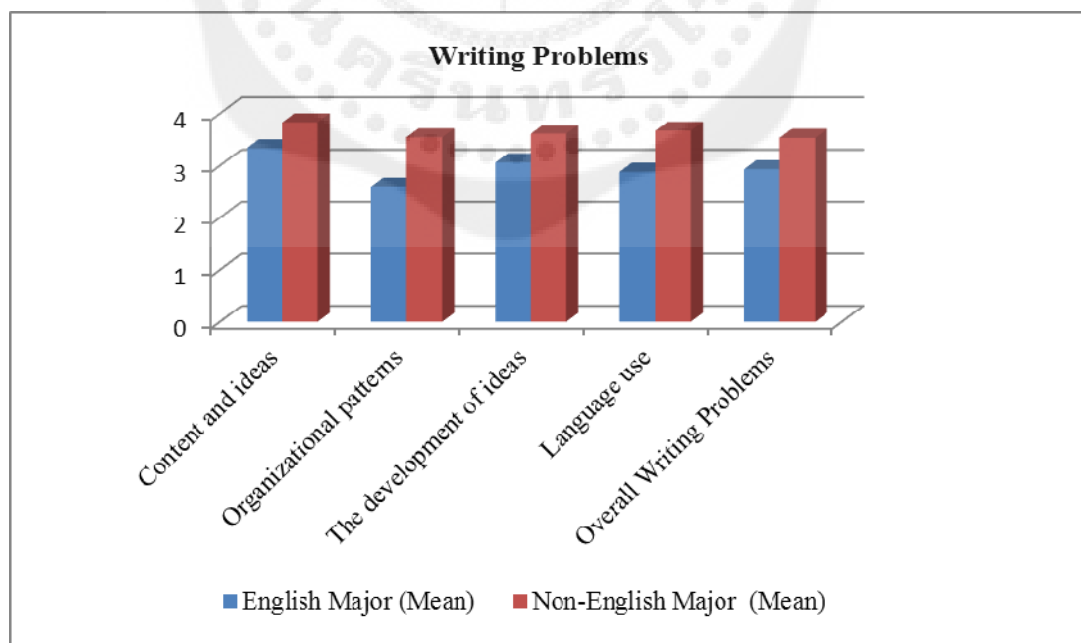


Figure 1. Writing Problems of English Major and Non-English Major Students

As can be seen in the Figure 1, it appeared that overall non-English majors had more problems than those of English majors. Moreover, non-English majors had more problems in all four main types of writing problems.

Results of the individual writing problems.

The individual writing problems, following the four main types of writing problems and 30 questionnaire items, of the English majors and non-English majors were also analyzed for the means and standard deviations and then interpreted into the value levels mentioned above. Table 5 presents the individual writing problem experienced by both groups of students when writing a paragraph in English.

Table 5

Means, Standard Deviation (SD) and Level of Writing Problems of English Major and Non-English Major Students (n=40)

Writing Problems		English Major Students			Non-English Major Students		
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Value level	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Value level
Content and ideas							
1.	I have difficulty in getting started to write a paragraph in English.	3.53	.93	High	3.93	.76	High
2.	I do not know what to write or cannot decide what to write.	3.10	1.01	Moderate	3.83	.81	High
3.	It takes long time to brainstorm ideas before start writing.	3.68	.97	High	4.05	.88	High
4.	It is difficult to put the ideas together in a coherent way.	3.58	.87	High	3.88	.69	High
5.	I do not have enough ideas about the assigned topic starting to write.	3.20	.79	Moderate	3.78	.83	High
6.	I do not know how to develop my ideas.	2.93	.94	Moderate	3.50	.88	High

Table 5 (Continued)

Writing Problems		English Major Students			Non-English Major Students		
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Value level	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Value level
Organizational patterns							
7.	I have poor knowledge of transitional words	2.78	1.03	Moderate	3.53	.88	High
8.	I do not know how to use transitional words appropriately and effectively.	2.75	.93	Moderate	3.60	.87	High
9.	I have problems using pronouns when writing a paragraph in English.	2.65	.83	Moderate	3.38	1.21	Moderate
10.	I do not know how to write a descriptive paragraph.	2.58	1.06	Low	3.68	.80	High
11.	I do not know how to write a narrative paragraph.	2.53	1.15	Low	3.58	.84	High
12.	I do not know how to write a cause and effect paragraph.	2.50	1.04	Low	3.50	.78	High
13.	I do not know how to write a comparison and contrast paragraph.	2.45	1.13	Low	3.50	.93	High
The development of ideas: basics, parts of paragraph writing: topic sentence, supporting sentences, and concluding sentence							
14.	It is difficult for me to write a topic sentence at the beginning of a paragraph.	3.10	.98	Moderate	3.53	.91	High
15.	It is difficult to write supporting sentences.	3.03	.89	Moderate	3.68	.89	High
16.	It is difficult to identify major and minor supporting details.	3.08	.94	Moderate	3.68	.89	High
17.	It is difficult to write a concluding sentence.	3.05	.96	Moderate	3.55	.93	High
Language use, such as sentence structure, vocabulary or word choice, and grammar points							
18.	I have poor or insufficient vocabulary (few choices of words).	3.45	1.01	High	3.50	.88	High
19.	I have difficulty choosing the right vocabulary to express my ideas.	3.30	.88	Moderate	3.53	.64	High
20.	I have difficulty using words properly or precisely.	3.35	.80	Moderate	3.43	.78	High

Table 5 (Continued)

Writing Problems		English Major Students			Non-English Major Students		
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Value level	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Value level
Language use, such as sentence structure, vocabulary or word choice, and grammar points							
21.	I am unable to respond appropriately when writing in English.	3.13	.76	Moderate	3.55	.75	High
22.	I produce grammatical errors when writing in English.	3.33	.86	Moderate	3.73	.96	High
23.	I have limited English grammatical knowledge.	3.08	.92	Moderate	3.50	.96	High
24.	I do not use the singular and plural form of the noun correctly.	2.45	.82	Low	3.20	1.24	Moderate
25.	I do not use the correct forms of verb tenses.	2.48	.72	Low	3.33	1.07	Moderate
26.	I do not know how to use articles correctly.	2.43	.75	Low	3.08	.94	Moderate
27.	I do not know how to use verb tenses correctly.	2.48	.91	Low	3.05	1.06	Moderate
28.	I do not know how to use subject-verb agreement correctly.	2.53	.93	Low	3.20	.99	Moderate
29.	I do not know how to use pronouns correctly.	2.30	.76	Low	3.00	.93	Moderate
30.	I feel that grammar points in English are too difficult.	3.20	1.20	Moderate	3.73	.90	High

The next section presents the answer for research question 2 as well as research hypothesis 2.

Research Hypothesis 2.

There is a significant difference in the writing problems reflected in a paragraph written in English by English major and non-English major Thai EFL university students.

Data analysis of results from the students' paragraph written by English major and non-English major students.

The difference of writing problems reflected in paragraphs written by English major and non-English major students.

To test research hypotheses 2, the data, the students' paragraphs were rated by two raters using the writing rubric created by the researcher. The raters investigated the writing problems in students' paragraphs in four aspects: content and ideas, organizational pattern, development of ideas, and language use and gave the scores holistically from 5 (the highest) to 1 (the lowest). The scores given by two raters were then calculated for the average mean score of 40 paragraphs written by English major students and another 40 paragraphs written by non-English major students. The mean scores of paragraph writing from both groups were compared using the independent t-test to determine there was any significant difference of overall writing problems. Table 6 presents the difference in the mean scores of writing problems reflected in a paragraph written by students of both groups.

Table 6

The Difference in the Mean Scores of Writing Problems Reflected in a Paragraph Written in English by English Major and Non-English Major Thai EFL University Students (N = 40)

Writing Problems	n	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
English major students	40	3.72	.86	11.88	.00**
Non-English major students	40	1.81	.80		

** $p < .05$

As shown in Table 6, the results revealed that there was a significant difference in the writing problems reflected in a paragraph written by English major and non-English major students at the 05 level ($t = 11.878$ $p < .05$). The result accepted the research hypothesis 1. This proved that there was a significant difference in the writing problems reflected in paragraphs written by English majors and non-English major students.

The difference in four aspects writing problems reflected in paragraphs written by English major and non-English major students.

To find out if there were differences in the four main component of writing problems reflected in the students' paragraphs written by the English major students and non-English major students, the written works of these students were analyzed. Two raters (English native speakers) used a writing rubric for rating the composition of a paragraph which included the main components of effective paragraph writing. The raters then referred to this checklist in order to assess which writing problems of the four main categories were evident in the drafts of writing in English provided by both two groups. Next, the two raters marked and specified the writing problems found in in each of students' paragraphs. The researcher then counted for frequency and transferred into percentage to compare the number of writing problems the students had in each of their papers. Table 7 presents the number of the students and percentage of writing problems found in the students' paragraph writing of both groups.

Table 7

Frequency and Percentage of Writing Problems of English Major Students (N = 40)

Writing Problems	English Major Students		Non-English Major Students	
	Number of frequency	Percentage	Number of frequency	Percentage
1. Content and Ideas	9	22.50	10	25
2. Organizational Pattern	6	15	9	22.50
3. Development of Ideas	5	12.50	8	20
4. Language Use	12	30	12	30
Total	40	100	40	100

As presented in Table 7, the four main types of writing problems were found in the students' paragraph of both groups. However, not all of the students in each group had the same problems. The problem of language use was found within the same number of students and paragraphs. That is, 30% of them (12 paragraphs in each group) had this problem with the highest percentage of all four types of problems. There was a slight difference in the problems of content and ideas. The writing problems about the content and ideas were found in 9 paragraphs (22.50%) written by the English major students' paragraphs whereas these problems were found in 10 paragraphs (25%) written by non-major English students. In addition, it was revealed that the paragraphs written by non-English major students had more problems (22.50%) in organizational pattern than paragraphs written by the English major students (15%). The analysis of paragraph writing for writing problems also showed that development of ideas appeared to be the least problem of both groups. For paragraphs written by the English major students, 12.50% of the problem in

development of ideas was found in their paragraphs, while 20 % this problem was found in paragraphs written by the non-major students.

Figure 2 illustrates the comparison of writing problems reflected in the paragraphs written by the English major and non-English major students.

Writing Problems Reflected in Students' Paragraphs

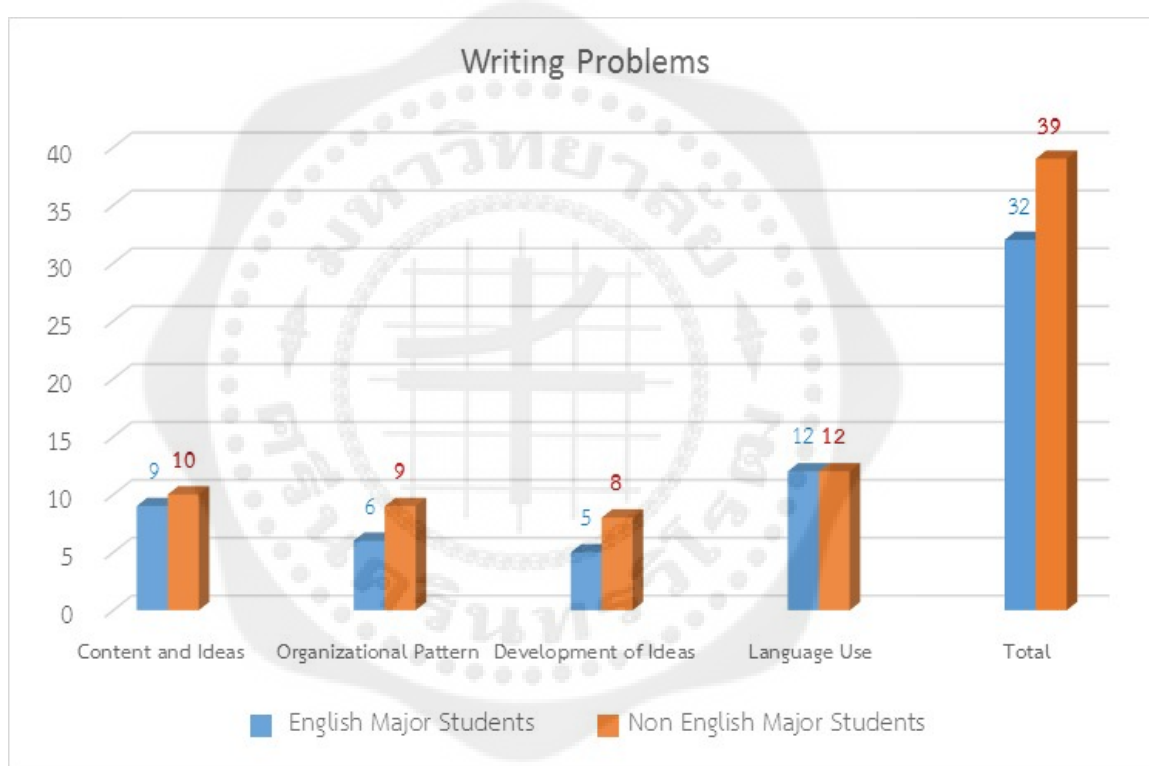


Figure 2. The Comparison of the Writing Problems Reflected in the Paragraphs Written by the English Major and Non-English Major Students

Figure 2 shows the difference of writing problems reflected in a paragraph written by English major and non-English major students. The first problem, content and ideas, non-English majors had problems more than English majors did.

Some of the writing problems found in the paragraphs written by the English and non-English major students reflected in the students provided by the raters were illustrated below in Table 7.

Table 7

Sample of Writing Problems Reflected in the Students' Paragraphs Written by the English Major and Non-English Major Students

Types of Writing Problems	English Major Students/ Sample of Problems Identified	Non- English Major Students /Sample of Problems Identified
Content and ideas	Very good content and an excellent gathering of ideas	Very little preparation is represented in the writing.
	The thoughts and ideas represented in your paragraph are eloquent and to the point. Your points are well supported and well thought out.	The writer needed to take more time to gather their thoughts before beginning.
	Ideas are expertly gathered and well-represented.	Gathered ideas but they weren't good ideas.
Organizational pattern	Your introduction, body, and conclusion flow well and are aided by the use of transitional words.	Poor organization, unity, coherence, and cohesion.
	Although sentences are grouped around the same general idea, the delivery is rushed and the result is very difficult to understand.	The writer's development of ideas is existent but incomplete. With practice the writer will improve!
	The paragraph is very organized and cohesive. It is fluent and movement is fluid from idea to idea.	Organized okay but needs more cohesion.

	Very well-organized. Easy to understand and great use of transitional words	There is little effort shown to organize the ideas into a cohesive paragraph. The writer likely struggle to address the prompt.
Development of Ideas	All parts flow well and ideas move along at a brisk, but thorough pace.	No development or parts of paragraph present.
	All parts of paragraph writing are present, but development of ideas is absent. I advise that you focus on being clear and direct.	Not developed well.
	The ideas are developed very well and the use of topic sentence, supporting sentences and a concluding sentence are all very good.	More development needed
	All sentences are great.	Needs conclusion! More support advised.
Language Use	Small grammar and spelling errors	The sentences are well written but left unconnected.
	You identified your problem very accurately in your paragraph: grammar.	Grammar needs to be improved.
	I suggest focusing on grammar and building your “word bank”. Everything else is great!	The language use is generally correct but some serious mistakes hold the writer back from achieving greater success.

The next section presents the answer for research question 2 as well as research hypothesis 3.

Research Hypothesis 3

There is a significant difference in the use of writing strategies employed by English major and non-English major Thai EFL university students during the processes of prewriting, writing, and revising when writing their paragraph in English.

Data analysis of results from the writing strategies questionnaire

Writing Strategies used by English major and non-English major students.

The following section is the result of the quantitative data analysis from the Writing Strategies Questionnaire. Responses from the questionnaire were analyzed in three main writing strategies including: prewriting, writing, and revising strategies. The Writing Strategies questionnaire consisted of 36 items of five-point Likert Scale which measure the frequency of writing strategies. Each item is scored 1 to 5, with a 5 being the most frequently used and 1 being the lowest frequently used of writing strategies. The scale values and interpretation are described as follows:

Interpretation of mean level	Highest	=	4.21 - 5.00
	High	=	3.41 - 4.20
	Moderate	=	2.61 - 3.40
	Low	=	1.81 - 2.60
	Lowest	=	0.00 - 1.80

To test Research Hypothesis 3 “There is a significant difference in the use of writing strategies employed by English major and non-English major Thai EFL university students during the processes of prewriting, writing, and revising when

writing their paragraph in English, the overall means of writing strategies employed by the students in both groups were compared using the independent t-test. The result of the t-test analysis was presented in Table 8.

Table 8

A Comparison of Writing Strategies of English Major and Non-English Major Students (N = 40)

Writing Strategies	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
English major students	40	3.41	.53	2.39	.02*
non-English major students	40	3.14	.48		

* $p < .05$

The results of this study indicated that there was a significant difference in the use of writing strategies employed by English major and non-English major Thai EFL university students when writing their paragraph in English ($t=2.39, p < .05$). In addition, the mean score of writing strategies employed by the English major students ($M = 3.41, SD = .53$) was higher than that of the non-English major students ($M = 3.14, SD = .48$). The results supported Research Hypothesis 3.

The quantitative data obtained from the writing strategies were also analyzed in accordance with writing strategies used by the students in the three main categories of strategies: prewriting strategies, drafting/writing strategies and revising strategies. The results revealed that the English major students used the writing strategies in the higher levels more than those of the non-English major students in all three writing stages of writing processes. Table 9 presents the mean scores and standard deviations of the three main categories of the writing strategies used by English major and non-English major students.

Table 9

A Comparison of Three Stages of Writing Strategies between English Major and Non-English Major Students (N=40)

Writing Strategies	English Major Students		Non-English Major Students	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>S.D.</i>
Prewriting Strategies	3.46	.59	3.16	.53
Writing Strategies	3.29	.52	3.09	.49
Revising Strategies	3.49	.72	3.16	.70
Overall Writing Strategies	3.41	.53	3.14	.48

As shown in Table 9, the English major students used revising strategies (post writing strategies) the most, ($M = 3.49$, $SD = .72$) and at the high level, followed by prewriting strategies, ($M = 3.46$, $SD = .59$) with the high level and writing strategies or while writing strategies were used at the moderate level ($M = 3.29$, $SD = .52$). For the non-English major students, they used all three writing strategies at the moderate level when revising strategies and prewriting strategies were used the most frequently ($M = 3.16$, $SD = .70$ and $M = 3.16$, $SD = .53$ respectively) and the while writing strategies were used the least ($M = 3.09$, $SD = .49$).

Figure 3 also illustrates the comparison of the writing strategies employed in the three stages of the writing processes by both English and non-English major students.

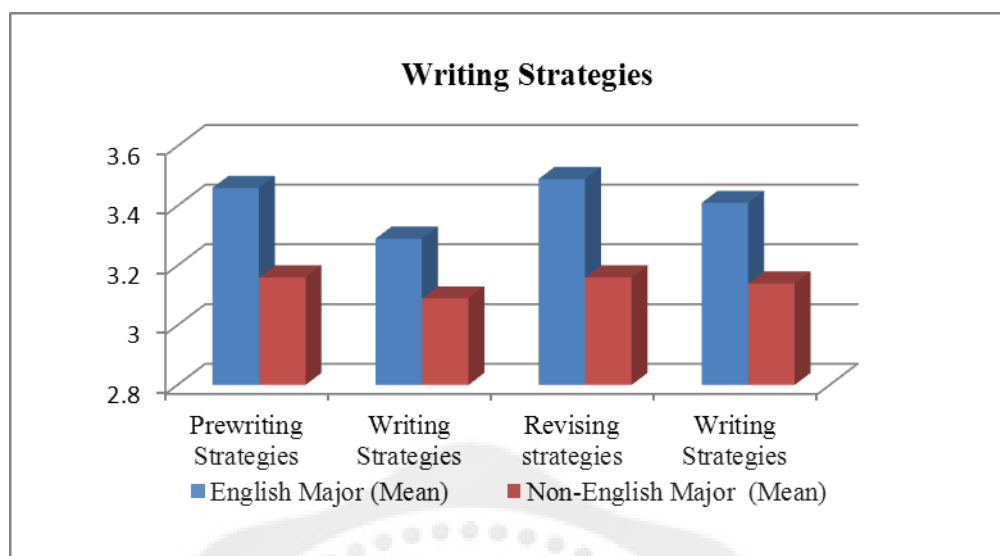


Figure 3. Writing Strategies Used by English Major and Non-English Major Students

Results of the individual writing strategies.

The individual writing strategies under the three main categories of writing provided in 36 questionnaire items employed by the English and non-English major students were also analyzed for the means and standard deviations and then interpreted into the value levels mentioned above. Table 10 presents the individual writing strategies when writing a paragraph in English.

No.	Writing Strategies	English Major Students			Non-English Major Students		
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Value	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Value
		Level			Level		
1	I think and plan in my mind before I start writing.	3.73	1.11	High	3.65	1.03	High
2	I do extra study outside the classroom to improve my writing.	2.73	.93	Moderate	2.90	.87	Moderate
3	I read my lesson notes and course requirements before I start writing.	3.25	.90	Moderate	2.93	.860	Moderate

4	I read the feedback from my teacher about my previous writing.	3.95	1.037	High	3.20	.97	Moderate
5	I consider the task or instructions carefully before writing.	3.43	.874	High	3.03	.962	Moderate
6	I discuss what I am going to write with other students or my writing instructors.	3.10	.98	Moderate	3.00	.75	Moderate
7	I brainstorm ideas to obtain suitable ideas for paragraph writing.	3.63	.95	High	3.13	.72	Moderate
8	I use my background knowledge to help me with ideas	3.93	1.01	High	3.48	1.03	High
9	I search the Internet to search for information.	4.13	1.09	High	3.88	1.13	High
10	I make notes in my mother tongue (Thai) before writing.	3.10	1.08	Moderate	3.33	1.22	Moderate
11	I think about the organization of the writing in Thai before writing in English.	3.08	.97	Moderate	3.45	1.01	High
12	I make an outline in my mind.	3.45	.932	High	3.40	.841	High
13	I use mind-mapping to plan my writing.	3.18	1.174	Moderate	2.55	.815	Low
14	I generate ideas for my writing.	3.38	.807	Moderate	3.08	.729	Moderate
15	I note down related words.	3.30	.992	Moderate	2.93	.729	Moderate
16	I make a list of any idea that I can think of.	3.75	1.00	High	2.98	1.09	Moderate
17	I write the outlines of my writing in English.	3.40	1.03	Moderate	3.00	.90	Moderate
18	I look at English paragraph models as a guideline for my writing.	3.50	1.06	High	3.13	.88	Moderate
19	When writing, I make notes about certain points.	3.35	.950	Moderate	2.95	1.08	Moderate
20	I try to write in a comfortable, quiet, place where I can concentrate.	3.78	1.02	High	3.20	1.11	Moderate
21	I write a draft in Thai first then translate into English.	2.80	1.35	Moderate	3.48	1.13	High
22	I write two or more drafts.	3.15	.89	Moderate	2.75	.92	Moderate
23	I arrange a paragraph with a single idea.	3.13	.82	Moderate	2.85	.83	Moderate
24	I use cohesive markers (transitional words).	3.50	1.10	High	3.25	.98	Moderate
25	I use word in mother tongue (Thai) until I find the most appropriate word in English.	3.13	1.01	Moderate	2.90	.87	Moderate

26	I pay close attention to grammar and vocabulary.	3.55	1.04	High	3.33	.89	Moderate
27	I am concerned about how to connect my ideas smoothly.	3.78	.95	High	3.08	.94	Moderate
28	I simplify my writing.	3.13	.79	Moderate	3.08	.89	Moderate
29	I consult Thai-English dictionaries and vice versa.	3.33	.97	Moderate	3.20	1.04	Moderate
30	I consult English-English dictionaries (monolingual dictionary).	3.38	.952	Moderate	2.95	1.01	Moderate
31	I edit my work as I am writing.	3.40	1.03	Moderate	3.13	1.09	Moderate
32	I edit my work when I have a finished writing a draft.	3.78	.999	High	3.15	1.051	Moderate
33	I go back to my writing to edit and change the contents and ideas.	3.25	.898	Moderate	3.08	.944	Moderate
34	I go back to my writing to edit and change the grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and punctuation.	3.75	.93	High	3.28	.82	Moderate
35	I edit my work as I am writing.	3.10	.71	Moderate	3.03	.80	Moderate
36	I edit my work when I have a finished writing a draft.	3.65	1.03	High	3.30	.85	Moderate

Results of Qualitative Data Analysis from Open-ended Questions

Responses from the open-ended part of the writing strategies questionnaire were analyzed to support the rating scales. The results showed that English major and non-English major students employed other writing strategies excluded in the questionnaire.

Here are comments and feedbacks towards the writing strategies which were not included in the questionnaire. In this section, the comments and feedbacks and their personal experiences were suggested by the English major students and the next ones were suggested by the non-English major students.

First, English major students' comments were: (a) the writing strategies employed: free writing and listing ideas, (b) using free writing, (c) thinking in mind and writing by feeling, (d) taking notes and memorize phrases or sentences, (e) chatting or talking to foreign friends, (f) brainstorming, usually do the free writing without worrying about the spelling and grammatical rules, (g) doing a peer review, (h) should be trained to write in English every day, (i) always check grammar on websites, (j) watching English Soundtrack movies that help to get new ideas, (k) consulting with foreigners via an online chat program, and (l) always chat online with a foreigner.

Second, comments provided by non-English major students were: (a) chatting or talking to foreign friends, (b) chatting online with foreigners in an online application and learn English from them, and (c) using a grammatical check for a draft of writing before submission to a writing teacher or instructor.

The above comments and suggestions mentioned are helpful for the researcher to analyze and discuss the information on their personal experiences towards the use of their writing strategies; as well as such information can be applied to make and compose a statement used in the questionnaire for next further study on writing strategies in the English language.

Summary of the Chapter

Chapter 4 presented the results of both the quantitative and qualitative data analysis. First, the results of the quantitative data were obtained from the Writing Problems and Writing Strategies Questionnaire. Second, the qualitative data analysis from students' paragraph writing showed that the students had various kinds of writing problems. In addition, students' feedback and comments were described

based on their experiences on writing strategies. The findings of the study with the discussion, implication of the study, and recommendations for further studies are proposed in the next chapter.



CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The purposes of the study were to investigate the writing problems and writing strategies of Thai university students studying English as a foreign language (EFL) including two groups: English major students and non-English major students when they write a paragraph in English. This chapter concerns summary of the research, followed by summary of the main findings. It also presents the discussion, implications, the limitation of the study, and recommendation for further study.

Summary of the Research

This study was conducted in order (1) to investigate the writing problems experienced by English major and non-English major Thai EFL students, (2) to investigate the writing problems reflected in paragraph writing written by both two groups of participants, and (3) to investigate the writing strategies used by both two groups of participants. The participants were 80 third-year undergraduate students in a public university in Thailand consisting of two groups: 40 English major students, and 40 non-English major students. They enrolled the Paragraph Writing course and the Writing for Career course, and at the end of the course, they were asked to answer the Writing Problems and Strategies Questionnaire and write a paragraph on the topic of my problems when I am about to write in English. The instruments used in this study were (a) the Three-Part Questionnaire on Writing Problems and Writing Strategies, and (b) a piece of paragraph writing containing at least 150-200 words.

The quantitative data, five-point Likert scales were obtained from two groups of students, English major students and non-English major students. English major students

enrolled in the *Paragraph Writing* course, while non-English major students enrolled in the *English Writing for Careers* course in the second semester of the 2015 academic year. In the mid-period of the course, the students were assigned to write a paragraph of at least 150 words in responses to the assignment. Drafts of paragraph writing written by students of both groups were then collected and copied for analysis. After that the Writing Problems and Strategies Questionnaire were administered to all of the participants. The date and time for data collection were scheduled in advance and under the supervision of the regular lecturer. Time allocated for students to complete the questionnaire was 30-40 minutes.

To test the research hypothesis 1, the data obtained from the writing problem part of the questionnaire from both groups were analyzed using the descriptive statistics for mean scores and standard deviations. Then the independent t-test was calculated to find out if there was a significant difference between the mean scores of English major and non-English major students.

To test research hypothesis 2, paragraphs written by both groups were rated, checked and given comments in accordance with the writing rubric created by the researcher on the students' works to identify real problems in each paragraph. The average means scores of written paragraphs from both groups were calculated using the independent t-test to find out if there was a significant difference in the writing reflected in students' written works.

To test research hypothesis 3, the data obtained from the writing strategies part of the questionnaire were also analyzed for the means and standard deviations and tabulated. Then the independent t-test were calculated to find out if there was a significant difference in the writing strategies employed in paragraph writing by English major

and non-English major students.

Summary of the Main Findings

The findings of the study are summarized regarding the main objectives and research hypotheses as follows.

The first objective of the study was to investigate the writing problems experienced by English major and non-English major Thai EFL university students when writing their paragraph in English. The findings revealed that there was a significant in the writing problems when writing a paragraph in English. Non-English major students had experienced more problems than the English major students. When considering four main categories of writing problems, it was found that non-English major students had experienced more problems than the English major students in all four main types of paragraph writing problems including content and ideas, organizational patterns, the development of ideas, and language use.

The second objective of the study aimed to investigate the writing problems reflected in the paragraphs written in English by English major and non-English major Thai EFL university students. The result showed a significant difference in the writing problems reflected in a paragraph written in English. The non-English major students had more problems than the English major students.

The third research objective was intended to investigate writing strategies employed when writing a paragraph in English and to find out if there was a significant difference in the use of writing strategies employed by English major and non-English major Thai EFL university students when writing a paragraph in English.

The results revealed that there was a significant difference in the use of writing strategies employed by both groups. In addition, the mean score of writing strategies employed by the English major students was higher than that of the non-English major students. Moreover, the results revealed that the English major students used the writing strategies in the higher levels more than those of the non-English major students in three writing stages of writing process: prewriting, writing, and post-writing.

Discussion of the Findings

Research Hypothesis 1

There is a significant difference in the writing problems experienced by English major and non-English major Thai EFL university students when writing a paragraph in English.

Results

The results revealed that there was a statistically significant difference in the writing problems experienced by English major and non-English major Thai EFL university students when writing a paragraph in English. English major students encountered three problems at the moderate level of agreement out of the 30 problems (18%) listed in the questionnaire. The problems they encountered the most included (a) taking long time to brainstorm before start writing, (b) having difficulty in putting the ideas together, and (c) having difficulty in getting started to write a paragraph. About their problems related organizational pattern, they had (a) poor knowledge of transitional words, and (b) they do not know how to use transitional words properly. Next, concerning the problem of development of ideas, problems were not found. The last part

is the language use, their problems include: (a) having insufficient vocabulary, (b) difficulty in using words properly and precisely, and (c) producing grammatical errors.

On the other hand, non-English major students encountered a wider variety of writing problems than the English major students did. This group encountered 22 of the 30 problems (60%). The writing problems for this group were (a) taking long time to brainstorm before start writing, (b) having difficulty in getting started to write a paragraph, and (c) having difficulty in putting the ideas together. Next, their problems related to the organizational pattern, the problems were: (1) not knowing how to write a descriptive paragraph, (2) not knowing how to use transitional words, (3) not knowing how to write a narrative paragraph and (4) having poor knowledge of transitional words. The next part, problems about the development of ideas, their problems were: (a) difficulty is writing supporting sentences, (b) difficulty in identifying major and minor supporting details, and (c) difficulty in writing a concluding sentence. Lastly, their problems of language use were: (a) producing grammatical errors when writing, (b) they were unable to respond appropriately when writing, (c) having limited English grammatical knowledge, and (d) having poor or insufficient vocabulary.

Discussion

Both English major and non-English major students encountered the same problems or difficulties when writing in English. Such problems are concerned in four main types: (1) contents and ideas, (2) organizational pattern, (3) the development of ideas, and (4) language use. English major students have less writing problems than non-English major students because English major students have studied more English courses and subjects and have practiced more often than non-English major students

have. In addition, non-English major students encountered all four types of writing problems especially problem with the organizational pattern and language use since they had few chances to practice English structure and grammar points in an English classroom. In other words, they lack grammatical knowledge. Also, they had less exposure to the use of English in all four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

The results of writing problems found in this study were similar to the study on writing difficulties conducted by Boonpattanaporn (2007). In her study, the participants were 272 proficient and less proficient English major students. The results reveal the English major students had problems with language use. Verb tense was the most difficult part for students. In their problems about content and ideas, they struck the taking long time to think of ideas and what to write, considering the purposes of writing and writing an outline.

Therefore, in order to solve the writing problems mentioned above, Thai EFL university students should be exposed to English more and practiced more regularly such as having extra activities in and outside a classroom to enhance their English ability or doing online exercises or quizzes and so on because English is globally important for academic context and future career for them nowadays.

Research Hypothesis 2

There is a significant difference in the writing problems reflected in a paragraph written in English by English major and non-English major Thai EFL university students.

Results

The results revealed that there was a statically significant difference in the writing problems reflected in a paragraph written in English. The non-English major students had more problems than the English major students. The results showed the problems of content and ideas, the non-English major students encountered taking long time to brainstorm ideas before start writing. Also, they had problems about the development of ideas that was they struggled to write a topic sentence, supporting sentences, and a concluding sentence. Besides that, they have problems of the language use. They had poor knowledge of English grammatical knowledge and had insufficient amount of vocabulary.

On the other hand, the English major students had only one major type of writing problems that is the language use. Only few errors were found in the paragraph writing written by English major students such as misuse of article, and misuse of verb tenses.

Discussion

Both English major and non-English major encountered the writing problem; however, the English major students had fewer problems than the non-English major when both groups write a paragraph. The problem about language use was the most difficult problem for both groups. In addition, the non-English major students encountered all four types of writing problem that was (a) content and ideas, (b) organizational pattern, (c) the development of ideas, and (d) the language use.

Research Hypothesis 3

There is a significant difference in the use of writing strategies employed by English major and non-English major Thai EFL university students during the processes of prewriting, writing, and revising when writing a paragraph in English.

Results

The results revealed that there was a significant difference in the use of writing strategies employed by English major and non-English major Thai EFL university students during the processes of prewriting, writing, and revising when writing a paragraph in English.

Discussion

Both English major and non-English major students use more different writing strategies than non-English major students because English major students have been taught by their writing instructors for several previous writing courses, as well as they have their own strategies which were not included in the questionnaire such as chatting to their friends or foreigners who are English native speakers. In terms of communication technology, they obviously use an online chat application that is convenient to access and talk to English native speakers such as FACEBOOK, LINE, and SKYPE. In this way, when they have difficulties, they can ask for advice to help them solve their writing problems. All these strategies used can help them master their paragraph writing, as well as decrease the amount of errors or difficulties occurred when they write.

Conclusion and Implications

Both English major and non-English major Thai university students realize that they have problems in writing in English. They were all experienced a number of writing problems. The major problems they encountered were with brainstorming the ideas, putting ideas together in coherent way, and errors in the language use such as grammar points and insufficient vocabulary. The non-English major students have more problems than English major students. Both two groups have a problem regarding language use.

Regarding the writing strategies, the English major students use strategies more than non-English major students effectively. The English major students often use their background knowledge or world knowledge to help them writing a paragraph and they make a list of ideas that they can think of in the prewriting stage. In the writing stage or while-writing stage, the English major students were concerned about how to connect contents and ideas smoothly. They had a strong awareness while writing their paragraph. In the revising stage, they went back to edit and changed the grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and punctuation.

To improve the level of English writing of Thai EFL university students, it is important for both student and writing instructor to seriously focus on the exact and existing problems so that the training course and curriculum can be customized and matched with the students' problems about writing in English. In addition, it is suggested that Thai English teachers or instructors can play an important role in raising students' consciousness and encouraging their students to make the most effective use of writing strategies to tackle with such difficulties and problems. Such instruction should be done regularly by writing instructors in the writing classroom in order to help students have

more awareness while writing and after they finish their writing. Consequently, the learning and practicing the use of prewriting, writing, and revising strategies into students' paragraph writing, the level of English writing proficiency of the Thai EFL university students may improve.

Recommendation for Further Studies

Some recommendations for further studies were presented as follows:

1. In order to gain more reliable information, further studies should be conducted to collect students' feedback from more student participants studying different majors such as engineering, medical science, nursing, logistics, and sport science.
2. A qualitative study using interview for both English major and non-English major students should be carried out in order to obtain in-depth data and more reliable information.
3. Further studies should be conducted with larger samples and a larger variety of non-English major students so that the results will be more generalized.

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VITAE



VITAE

Name: Panupong Seensangworn
Date of Birth: May 1, 1986
Place of Birth: Chanthaburi
Address: 4/183 Tachang sub-district, Mueng district, Chanthaburi province,
22000

Educational Background:

2016 Master of Arts (English),
Srinakharinwirot University, Bangkok
2009 Bachelor of Arts (English Language and Literature),
Burapha University, Chonburi
2004 Arts Program in English and Chinese,
Benchamarachutit High School, Chanthaburi

