

**THE USE OF PERSONAL WRITING AS THE INITIATIVE
IN ACADEMIC WRITING**

A DISSERTATION
BY
KANOKWAN CADET

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Doctor of Philosophy Degree in English
at Srinakharinwirot University

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Advisor Committee: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Tipa Thep-Ackrapong,
Dr. Saengchan Hemchua, Dr. Supaporn Yimwilai

This research investigated the effectiveness of practising personal writing before academic writing. The purposes were (1) to find the differences between the pretest and posttest results of overall writing quality, and syntactic and vocabulary development, within the control and experimental groups; (2) to compare the differences of the overall writing quality from the gain of the pretest and posttest results between the two groups; (3) to compare overall writing quality, and syntactic and vocabulary development, of good, average, and weak students of each group between the two groups; and (4) to study the students' attitudes towards the writing instruction. The participants were 36 purposively-selected university non-English majors, enrolled in the Reading & Writing I course. To assess their English writing ability, and syntactic and vocabulary development, participants were assigned to write a pretest and posttest academic essay. Scores from the pretest were analysed to rank students into three sub-groups; good, average, and weak, with Matched Pair sampling the two groups. The experimental group practised personal writing, whereas the control group was taught only academic writing. All writing was holistically rated by three experienced university academics.

The findings showed a statistically significant difference in overall writing quality within each group, and between the subgroups of the good level. When the gain between the two groups was compared, no significant difference was found. Statistically significant difference was found neither in syntactic nor vocabulary development within the groups and between the subgroups. Questionnaires and interviews showed that practising personal writing before academic subjects was advantageous.

การใช้การเขียนเรื่องราวจากประสบการณ์ส่วนตัวเพื่อนำไปสู่การเขียนเชิงวิชาการ

บทคัดย่อ

ของ

กนกวรรณ กาเดท

เสนอต่อบัณฑิตวิทยาลัย มหาวิทยาลัยศรีนครินทรวิโรฒ เพื่อเป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษา
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การวิจัยครั้งนี้มีจุดประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาผลสัมฤทธิ์ของการฝึกเขียนเรื่องราวจากประสบการณ์
ส่วนตัวก่อนการเขียนเชิงวิชาการโดยการ (1) เปรียบเทียบความแตกต่างของคุณภาพการเขียนโดยทั่วไป
พัฒนาการด้านไวยากรณ์และพัฒนาการด้านคำศัพท์ภายในกลุ่มทดลองและกลุ่มควบคุม (2)
เปรียบเทียบความแตกต่างของคุณภาพงานเขียนโดยทั่วไปจากผลต่างของการทดสอบทั้งก่อนและหลัง
การวิจัย ระหว่างกลุ่มทดลองและกลุ่มควบคุม (3) เปรียบเทียบความแตกต่างของคุณภาพการเขียน
โดยทั่วไป พัฒนาการด้านไวยากรณ์และพัฒนาการด้านคำศัพท์ของกลุ่ม ตัวอย่าง 3 กลุ่มย่อย ตามระดับ
ความสามารถคือ เก่ง กลาง อ่อน กลุ่มละ 3 คน ของทั้งกลุ่มทดลองและกลุ่มควบคุม (4) ศึกษาทัศนคติ
ของกลุ่มตัวอย่างที่มีต่อการเรียนการสอนเขียนภาษาอังกฤษ

กลุ่มตัวอย่างของการวิจัยครั้งนี้ได้จากการสุ่มแบบเจาะจง (purposive sampling) มีจำนวน 36
คน ซึ่งลงทะเบียนเรียนวิชาการอ่านและเขียน 1 (English 001311 Read & Writing I) กลุ่มตัวอย่าง
ได้รับการทดสอบความสามารถทางการเขียน และพัฒนาการด้านไวยากรณ์ และคำศัพท์ ทั้งก่อนและ
หลังการวิจัยโดยการเขียนเรียงความเชิงวิชาการภายใต้หัวข้อเดียวกัน

คะแนนที่ได้รับจากการทดสอบก่อนการเรียนได้นำไปวิเคราะห์เพื่อหากลุ่มตัวอย่างย่อย 3 กลุ่ม
ตามลำดับความสามารถคือ เก่ง กลาง และอ่อนของทั้งกลุ่มควบคุมและกลุ่มทดลอง โดยมีกลุ่มละ 3 คน
จากนั้นจึงทำการจับคู่กลุ่มตัวอย่างของแต่ละคนให้เท่าเทียมกัน โดยใช้ matched pair method กลุ่ม
ทดลองฝึกเขียนเรื่องราวจากประสบการณ์ก่อนการฝึกเขียนเชิงวิชาการ กลุ่มทดลองเรียนการเขียนเชิง
วิชาการตั้งแต่เริ่มต้น เกณฑ์การให้คะแนนใช้วิธี Holistic Scoring โดยมีผู้เชี่ยวชาญตรวจ 3 คน

ผลการวิจัยพบว่าคุณภาพของการเขียนโดยทั่วไปของทั้งภายในกลุ่มและระหว่างกลุ่มเก่งของกลุ่ม
ย่อย มีความแตกต่างกันอย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติ แต่ไม่พบความแตกต่างในด้านพัฒนาการอย่างมี
นัยสำคัญทางสถิติ ทางไวยากรณ์และคำศัพท์ของทั้ง 3 กลุ่มย่อยและระหว่างทั้งสองกลุ่ม ผลการวิจัยที่
ได้จากแบบสอบถามและการสัมภาษณ์ พบว่า ผู้เรียนเห็นด้วยกับการฝึกเขียนเรื่องราวจากประสบการณ์
ส่วนตัวก่อนการเรียนการเขียนเชิงวิชาการ

The dissertation entitled

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by

Kanokwan Cadet

has been approved by The Graduate School as partial fulfillment of the requirements
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(Assoc. Prof. Dr. Somchai Santiwatanakul)

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Writing is known as an arduous skill requiring a long period of practice to achieve competence, particularly in English as a foreign language. Learners of English as a foreign and second language (EFL/ESL) at least initially are considered ineffective writers because of their deficient writing skills, while in the case of Thai students, incompetency in writing appears consecutively from the lower levels of education to the university level (Wetstanarak, 1994).

The obstacle they face in learning to write in Thailand can be seen as two-fold: the intrinsic difficulty of writing itself and the insufficient pedagogic attention paid to their writing at all levels. In terms of difficulty, writing is complicated because it requires various previously-acquired skills—from hand-writing, spelling, and syntax to organisation. It also consists of many stages. At each stage, writers are required to think, brainstorm, make decisions in choosing vocabulary, form and organise ideas, edit, and revise (Gould, Clifford & Viet, 2000).

Regarding the pedagogy, the problem is caused by the two following aspects: the teachers and the students. In terms of the teachers, they are usually loaded with numerous burdens. This practically means they have insufficient time to spend on investigating their students' written products. In the case of secondary students, Thai classes almost always accommodate too many students—classes of 60 are not unusual.

The consequence of the aforementioned hindrances is that writing—although considered an important skill—is neglected, although it is not only a most difficult skill to acquire but also laborious for teachers to teach and for students to become

successful at (Kheoankaew, 2003; Wichaipunth, 1996). This results in learners being poorly prepared to cope with writing assignments, which in turn leads to lack of creative imagination and intellectual enhancement. They can neither generate nor sequence ideas properly. Studies about English writing in Thailand have found that Thai students have problems in all aspects of writing, especially where knowledge of vocabulary and grammatical structures, expressions, punctuation, as well as spelling are concerned. Moreover, writing practice is lacking at all levels.

Psychologically, students feel inferior to their teachers in that their teachers have greater knowledge and authority. All these problems result in learners lacking confidence to write and thus cause students to have bad attitudes towards writing (Abdulsata, 2000; Arayaphan, 2004; Leeds, 2003; Phuwichit, 2004; Seedokmai, 1999; Wetstanarak, 1994).

Nevertheless, these problems can be solved. Learners can be assisted to write more fluently and to perform academic writing effectively. To do so, they need to practise writing a great deal. Through practice, some degrees of improvement will inevitably take place (Klomperee, 2006; Leeds, 2003; Pongsiriwet, 2001).

In practising writing, the theory propounded here is that students should initially write about their own personal experience because personal writing is beneficial in several aspects. First, it helps in forming and familiarising students with writing and improving overall writing quality. Moreover, it helps reduce students' anxiety and enhances confidence as well as a knowledge of self. It also promotes cognitive development and encourages coherence. Regarding the first aspect, practising writing in accordance with general knowledge accumulated from their own experience assists learners in forming the basis for all essays, and acts as a bridge to academic writing because "all kinds of writing root in experience and observation,"

(Allen, 2000, p. 254). It is believed that assigning students to practise personal writing is to prepare students to be accustomed to, and at ease with, writing before they commence the academic writing course (Sullivan, 2003). As Spigelman (2001) pointed out, “Narrative, in its various forms, is a legitimate mode of argument appropriate to the academic writing of both composition scholars and their students” (p. 64). Similarly, Oakes (2002) said, “Personal writing can be academically viable and useful, and autobiographical projects in particular are an effective way to teach the rhetorical fundamentals of argument students will need for further writing in college and beyond” (p. 9). Moreover, Allen (2000), Moran (2004) and Pennebaker (1990) have said that personal writing familiarises students with the techniques of writing by initially using information already available to them, before they need to deal with more complicated abstract subjects, since “abstract thinking and writing are necessarily grounded in subjective experience” (Moran, 2004, p. 99).

How personal writing helps in forming, familiarising, and improving writing quality is explained as follows. Allen reported on students who had experience of extensive writing of personal essays before being confronted with expository writing assignments. It was found that the students performed better expository writing in terms of “technical quality, honesty, vividness, and originality” (Moran, 2004, p. 255) than students who were assigned little or no practice in personal essays, but had been taught only the principles of expository writing. He also found that not only did these students perform better in the composition course but there was also evidence which showed that they had become better writers in other disciplines such as science, mathematics, philosophy, and survey law. His findings led him to insist, as noted above, that all kinds of writing originate from experience.

Another study to support personal writing was conducted by Tobin (1993), who found that his student writers could write more effectively when they were allowed to use their own style and voice. Similarly, Cody (1996) reported that his students who had had problems with writing assignments in other courses, over a period of time improved their writing after doing freewriting concerning their own experience in parallel with his other assigned writing subjects. Moran (2004) in particular studied the effect of writing about personal experience. She assigned her students to do private or personal writing extensively as well as respond to reading texts. She found that their ability to generate topics improved.

These then are some of the problems improving writing at the level of the university faces. The teachers at the elementary and secondary schools are overburden and classes are far too large for writing assignments to be properly corrected. Consequently, the students at the tertiary level are underprepared, and feel psychologically at a disadvantage vis-à-vis their instructors. Having recognised these problems, instructors need to provide the students with as much opportunity to practise writing as the timetable permits, and they should benefit most from being allowed initially to write on personal topics.

Second, personal writing psychologically helps lessen students' feelings of inferiority and heightens their confidence in writing. This is important because student writers tend to feel inferior to their teachers since their teachers have greater knowledge and authority. Besides, they may feel their ideas are not good enough, and their linguistic knowledge is insufficient. As a result, they become discouraged and have bad attitudes towards writing. Nudleman and Schrosser (1981) as well as Moran (2004) found that personal writing helped student writers to rid themselves of the feeling that their ideas were too poor for college writing. Apart from that, Sommers

(1992) explained that students were confident when writing about their own experience. On the other hand, when assigned to write about abstract fields, they became lost, losing their sense of identity. Their writing products turned out to be submissive. Nevertheless, Sommers pointed out that when students were encouraged to exploit their “primary source” (p. 43)—making use of their experience in writing—their writing ability would develop. Gradually, in so doing, students would be led to find their own ways to write academic composition. Speaking of her own students and those of other proponents of personal writing, Moran (2004) said that they believed the students write confidently and coherently about what is familiar to them, with enhanced insight into their own experiences and with benefits to their skills in the craft of composition. In addition, this is concordant with the comments of Connors (1988), who said that although the objective of university writing was academic, to be able to manipulate a person’s own voice or identity was a crucial proceeding. She was of the opinion that practising personal writing helped familiarise students with writing in general before advancing towards academic writing. Brooke (1991) had a similar notion. He stated that having students write about their own experience enhanced their self-knowledge and their experience for meaning because practising personal writing brings about, in the development of student writers, the ability to understand themselves. This results in being able to write meaningfully, which is regarded as, “more important than developing any sets of procedural competencies (p.15).”

In other words, students are helped by writing first about the matters familiar to them to overcome their self-doubts and psychological feelings of inferiority. Instead of the sensation of having lost themselves in trying to write academically, they

are helped towards finding and being confident in their ability to express themselves naturally, and not confused by the need to apply abstract procedures.

Cognitive development is another concomitant of personal writing concerning the third respect. Emig (1971) encouraged teachers to have students practise more expressive or personal writing. She confirmed that to be able to write on academic or literary subjects, students were needed initially to practise writing about their personal experience. She stated that commencing practising with personal writing based on their feelings and experience would promote cognitive development since personal writing embraces many stages, such as brainstorming, gathering information from students' own experiences, making decisions on choosing vocabulary, forming and organising ideas, and revising. To achieve these stages, students have to retrieve their experience or knowledge from memory. In doing so, they are obliged not only to employ their memory but rearrange and also integrate information. Students are unconsciously forced to think and work, learning to manipulate the information they have assessed systematically and logically in order to create a piece of writing. Moreover, Applebee (1984) noted that it was broadly accepted that good writing and careful thinking occur simultaneously. He stated,

The role of writing in thinking is usually attributed to some combination of four factors; (a) the permanence of the written words, allowing the writer to rethink and revise over an extended period; (b) the explicitness required in writing, if meaning is to remain constant beyond the context in which it was originally written; (c) the resources provided by the conventional forms of discourse for organising and thinking through new ideas and experiences and for explicating the relationships among them; and (d) the active nature of writing, providing a medium for exploring implications entailed within otherwise unexamined assumption (p. 577).

Such a systematic process promotes operational thinking, or cognitive development.

Students were reported to become better in writing research reports, business letters or

academic expository essays, apart from learning to take responsibility for the meaning of their essays (Britton, Burgess, Martin, McLeod, & Rosen, 1975).

In terms of encouraging coherence, the practice of personal writing leads students to see the importance of coherence and meaning in the creation of narrative. In producing personal writing, students have to derive their knowledge from their own experience and then arrange it competently. To make the retrieved information consistent and well-organised, they have to learn to follow a rhetorical pattern. If the students practise such writing adequately, it will assist them to become familiarised with the organisation and techniques of writing before they need to deal with more abstract subjects. Furthermore, practising personal writing also brings about development in student writers in that they can understand themselves more fully, thus enabling them to write with greater meaning, which is again considered more important than developing any sets of procedural competence (Pennebaker, 1990, Brooke, 1991, Moran, 2004).

It is then apparent that the cognitive development necessary for successful academic writing is also a product of personal writing. The retrieval of experience from memory and its meaningful organisation, stimulate the ability to think that will be necessary later in the many writing modes of which the expository essay is one. Writing personally, additionally, provides practice in organising and presenting their experiences coherently and this too will be advantageous in dealing with expository subjects later.

Because of the reasons mentioned above, particularly EFL students should practise writing about what they have known or have undergone adequately before moving on to more abstract subjects. Academic writing in particular should be delayed until students have already achieved the development that comes from

practising personal writing. In other words, the academic writing course should be postponed till students have been adequately prepared for the writing challenges of the upper-level courses (Elbow, 1995).

In summary, writing about personal experience leads students to unconsciously arrange the information they already have in an orderly form so as to tell a story. Doing this forces them to think systematically to produce a well-organised piece of writing. Students will then become familiar with writing organisation. The entire process enhances cognitive development. Furthermore, deriving the knowledge gained from their experience leads the students to realise the importance of coherence and meaning in the creation of narrative. Additionally, personal writing psychologically helps lessen the students' inferior feelings towards themselves and their teachers. Practising adequately will help them become more fluent and linguistically knowledgeable, and the practice of personal writing will gradually improve the students' writing ability and self-confidence.

Primarily, the present research focused on examining the effectiveness of personal writing on the students' writing ability in terms of overall writing quality, syntactic development, and vocabulary development. The priority was considered to be on the importance of the language perspectives—since the students were learning English as a foreign language—rather than as a means of self-manifestation. Nevertheless it was to be hoped that when they could write sufficiently well to become self-confident, they would also experience a feeling of justifiable self-worth.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to see if writing about personal experiences would enhance Thai undergraduates' writing abilities. In other words, the main focus was to see if there were any differences in terms of writing abilities between the experimental and control groups. The experimental group would write mainly about personal experiences before moving to more abstract subjects in their academic writing, while the control group would initially receive only academic writing instruction.

Research Questions

The following research questions were designed to establish what changes, if any, could be discerned as having taken place in the writing ability of the students between the pretest and posttests.

1. Are there any differences between the pretest and posttest results in terms of overall writing quality in both the experimental and control groups?
2. Are there any differences between the pretest and posttest results in terms of syntactic development in both the experimental and the control groups?
3. Are there any differences between the pretest and posttest results in terms of vocabulary development in both the experimental and the control groups?
4. Are there any differences when we compare the gain between the pretest and posttest results in terms of overall writing quality between the experimental and control groups?

To see if there was any development of the process of writing during the study, the following research questions were designed:

5. Are there any differences if we compare the overall writing quality of good, average and weak students between the two groups?

6. Are there any differences if we compare the syntactic development in the writings of good, average and weak students between the two groups?

7. Are there any differences if we compare the vocabulary development in the writings of good, average and weak students between the two groups?

In order to evaluate the students' attitudes to the course the following research questions were devised:

8. What are the opinions of the two groups about the teaching of writing in their course disclosed by their responses to the questionnaire?

9. What are the opinions of the two groups about the teaching of writing in their course disclosed in the interview?

Significance of the Study

This research investigated the effectiveness of personal writing in improving undergraduates' writing ability in terms of overall writing quality and syntactic and vocabulary development. The student participants practised personal writing before transferring to academic writing with the following expectations:

1. It is expected that the findings of this study will be beneficial to ESL/EFL writing teachers in helping them to design their writing courses and find appropriate means to modify and improve writing instruction.

2. This study will help add new information to the existing body of knowledge of previously conducted research, particularly on the effect of personal writing on the development of students' writing ability.

3. This study will provide information about students' attitudes towards the learning of writing, which should benefit future writing instruction.

4. The results of this study will introduce a writing innovation—starting a writing course with personal writing before crossing to academic writing in the curriculum.

5. The findings of this study will help establish the extent to which practising writing regularly and with frequency benefits the learners.

Scope of the Study

The scope of the study was as follows:

1. There were 36 participants, 16 in the experimental group, and 20 in the control group.
2. In studying the development of the process of writing during the semester, the work of only three good students, three average students, and three weak students from each group was considered.
3. In the 16 weeks, the assignments of weeks 7, 11, 13, 15, and the midterm and final examinations of only three students from each subgroup—good, average, and weak—were collected to be analysed.

Definition of Terms

Some crucial and related terms to this research are as follows:

1. Personal writing refers to writing about a person's various experiences in relation to families, friends, relatives, schools, favourite persons or things, events and feelings or thoughts. The main purposes in using it are to improve language fluency, and ameliorate emotional problems through writing.
2. Academic writing refers to the kind of writing which is usually serious and intended for a critical and informed audience. It is often an explanation, or it provides

sequential information about an event. It is characterised by well-organised and concise information. To perform academic writing effectively, a writer is required to have the knowledge of the elements and organisation of writing. These elements contain topic sentences and their topic-supporting details which may be carried by an explanation or illustration. The knowledge of the use of transitions or connectors to link the ideas either between lines or paragraphs to help unify the ideas is another important element. The writer of academic texts also needs to ensure that the content maintains its relevance to the topic. It is based on closely-investigated knowledge and posits ideas or arguments.

3. Writing ability refers to the ability to fully and effectively communicate all kinds of ideas and information. It is evaluated by the three raters following the holistic scoring criterion which includes the topic sentence and its supporting details, transitions or connectors, and linguistic competence. Besides, content must be in consonance with the topic.

4. Writing ability development refers to the writing development of students of both experimental and control groups evaluated from the beginning through the end of the experiment by comparing the scores gained from the achievement tests—pretest and posttest—and from the first draft of five assignments, to examine whether students have improved their writing ability.

5. Academic vocabulary development refers to the number of academic words students use from the beginning through the end of the experiment, investigated by using Coxhead's *Academic Word List* (2000) to establish the comparative increase of vocabulary during and after the experiment.

6. Syntactic development refers to the number of error-free T-units employed by the student writers in their writing. The number of error-free T-unit from the

pretest is compared with the posttest, and the number of error-free T-unit from all assignments between subgroups is compared.

Briefly, this chapter first describes the causes of the problems of English writing in the Thai classrooms. It then proposes the use of personal writing in the writing class before academic writing. It also describes how personal writing can academically help improve students' writing quality, psychologically lessen their anxiety, and encourage cognitive development and enhance coherence.

CHAPTER 2

Review of the Related Literature

This chapter provides information about personal writing issues and related research. It initially discusses different aspects of personal writing which are organised into; first, the different terms referring to personal writing, second, its perspectives, and third, the controversy among academics regarding applying personal writing in the writing class. In addition, it examines the research related to personal writing under the categories of education and psychology. Regarding the psychological aspect, it embraces two sub-fields: educational psychology, and educational medicine. Finally, the end of the section provides information about Coxhead's *Academic Word List* (AWL), error-free T-units, scoring criteria, and genre in relation to personal writing.

Terms of Personal Writing

The term *personal* writing is often used variously and interchangeably with the term “personal narrative” and “personal expressive essay” (Gere, 2001). It is sometimes called “reflective writing” (Emig, 1971), “expressive language” (Britton, Burgess, Martin, McLeod, & Rosen, 1975), or “autobiographical writing” (Murray, 1991). It is also referred to as “nonacademic discourse, private writing, or personal writing” (Elbow, 1991, 1995). The term “personal writing” is favoured by Bartholomae (1995), Allen (2000), MacCurdy (2000), Banks (2003), and Sullivan (2003). Apart from that, Berman and Schiff (2000) also call it “personal writing” but sometimes “nonacademic writing.” It is also named “life writing” (Bernstein, 2004), while Moran (2004) calls it either “personal writing” or “private writing.”

Some maintain that personal writing and academic writing are identical, others that all writing is personal. Murray (1991) explains that all writing, for instance, poetry, fiction, academic articles, essays, newspaper columns, newsletters, textbooks, and juvenile nonfiction are autobiography. The basis of these beliefs is that the researchers are of the opinion that all writings are derived from the writers' own knowledge and experience. Even the description or explanation retrieved from the results of experiments conducted in academic fields is personal because what is described is derived from a person's own knowledge. Others (Elbow, 1995; Oaks, 2002) define it as freewriting which can be seen in all kinds of writing, including that of academics. It allows personal aspects because a source of motivation and interest is lost if personal or emotional topics are avoided, and without reflection on personal experiences, it is difficult for students to acquire self-knowledge before shaping their relationship with others. However, according to Gere (2001), it is generally agreed that personal writing refers to "prose that gives significant attention to the writer's experience and feeling" (p.204).

For the most part, this research subsumes all these terms under the rubric *personal writing*, while examining and assessing the variations of meaning other researchers accord them.

Perspectives of Personal Writing

Personal writing has prospered in composition studies and has led to diversifications of opinions among expressivists, psychoanalysts, and social dimensionists. Gere (2001) explained that the expressivist perspective views personal writing as an implemental writing form. By rendering their experience in writing, students are exploiting their experience for meaning. In so doing, they are

simultaneously prompted to find their voice or sense of self, which for expressivism has become the central conception. Furthermore, by practising writing about personal experience, students master the foundation of writing before advancing to academic writing. Examples of expressive writing include poetry, prose, novel, and fiction.

Beyond expressivism, psychoanalytical discourse has offered an increasingly important perspective on personal writing. In regard to personal writing, psychoanalysis differs from expressivism in that it focuses on the complexity of the relationship between students and teachers, or what the psychological barriers to writing are. Some study the ways students negotiate identity in the writing class, or transform the writing class into a therapy session, for example comparing the transference between analyst and patient with that between students and teacher. Additionally, some others have studied the experience and condition of anxiety of students who were unable to write or became disorganised in writing. All these are performed with the purpose of finding out students' emotional problems in order to deal with them. This kind of writing is found in diaries or journal writing.

The last perspective—that of social discourse—concentrates on peering and collaboration, emphasising interactions and exchanges in which the writers are led to accommodate the responses of their peers, and away from the danger of solipsism. For example, Bleich's pedagogy of disclosure (1995) provides an example of social discourse. This pedagogy leads students to trust their peers and exchange their experiences with each other, thus merging their subjective and collective experiences. If such disclosure is accompanied by collaboration, it encourages students and teachers to look beyond the purely personal and be more conscious of their peers.

In conclusion, according to Gere (2001), personal writing has three perspectives: the expressivistic, psychoanalytic, and social dimensions. For

expressivists, voice or identity is primary, while psychoanalysis calls for multiplicity of meaning, and the social for identification and collaboration of membership.

Expressivists believe that experiential writing does not only empower students to know themselves but it also enables them to view things beyond their world. Personal writing prepares students before exposure to academic writing. Psychoanalysis studies the intricacy of the relationship between students and teacher, as well as students' experience of anxious conditions inhibiting them from writing. The social focuses on the collaboration and interactivity among students and their peers that helps to avoid solipsism.

Controversy

In terms of controversy, there was debate as to the role of personal or expressive writing in a composition course. Some scholars such as Bartholomae (1995) and Faigley (1992) disagreed with having students practise personal writing in a composition course for university students, whereas Elbow (1991, 1995), Newkirk (1997), Connors (1987), Allen (2000), MacCurdy (2000), Moran (2004), and Mlynarczyk (2006) saw the potential of personal writing to students. Bartholomae (1995) claimed that personal writing or “sentimental realism” (p. 69) is always engaged in a deterministic story. He insisted that “academic writing is the real work in the academy and a key term in the study of writing and the practice of instruction” (p. 63). He emphasised that through academic writing only, students would be able to transmit power, tradition and authority. He finally concluded that he would not allow his students to do personal writing although he knew they would perform well, because he did not want them to “become the natural and inevitable details of their life” (p. 71). Similarly, Faigley (1992) also opposed placing personal writing in a

writing course at the university level. He pointed out that writing about experiences and painful aspects of one's life emphasising the self is a romantic delusion. It should not be compared either to the effort demanded of or the result achieved by student writing about an academic aspect. For both Bartholomae (1995) and Faigley (1992) then the composition course based on the expression of self was invalid.

However, Elbow (1991) offered another viewpoint on personal writing. He stated that the freshman writing course should consist not only of academic discourse or academic writing. He proposed that nonacademic discourse or personal writing should be added to the writing course. He pointed out that it was important to have college freshmen practise personal writing because it would give them three benefits. First, he said, since there were not many who would use academic discourse after graduating; adding that students should be given opportunities to practise writing about their own experience because it would enable them to communicate effectively in their own social working environment after graduating. The language used in experience writing was the language of everyday life. The discourse they would use in most of their working life was different from academic discourse. Personal writing rendering their experience, he continued, was to be found in their notes, letters to friends, diaries, etc. Moreover, in order to gradually move them into academic discourse, he suggested that students might practise writing in a language journal in order to deal with the difficult subject they were studying. In addition, they might write poems either for themselves or for publication, which would lead them further towards academic discourse.

Second, Elbow (1991) stated, "discourse that renders", by which he meant one form of "personal writing" was equally important and should be accomplished simultaneously with "discourse that explains," meaning academic writing. Discourse

that renders enables students to discern things around them in a more insightful way. He stated that nonacademic discourse provides students with crucial “new cognitive insights such as helping us see an exception or contradiction to some principles we thought we believed” (p. 137), in other words, wider and more meaningful forms of discourse enabled the students practising personal writing to examine the tenets on which their understanding of themselves and the world around them were based and see both their strength and weaknesses.

Finally, as Elbow (1991) viewed it, another major benefit of practising nonacademic discourse or personal writing would be the establishment of a foundation for academic writing. He explained that practising nonacademic discourse would enable students to become proficient in academic discourse. Conversely, practising only academic discourse would not help students perform nonacademic discourse properly because it conceals the insufficiently true understanding. He found that when assigned to write about textbooks, students could repeat or explain the principles of the subjects they study in academic discourse, for example, economics or physics. However, they could not write, explain or “simply tell a story of what is going on in the room or country around them on account of that principle or what the room or country would look like if that principle were different” (p. 137). This was because they separated themselves “from experiencing or really internalising the concepts they are allegedly learning” (Elbow, 1991, p. 137). This means they have a limited understanding, which is isolated and impoverished, because it is not enriched by their wider, existential, understanding of the world around them.

In brief, nonacademic discourse or personal writing is important and should be retained in the writing course since it helps pave the way for academic writing as well

as establishes a firm foundation in using language properly and effectively in students' working surroundings after graduating (Elbow, 1991).

Another similar view is that of Newkirk (1997), who explained that the repudiation of personal writing in the composition course was due to various assumptions made by scholars in composition studies. Personal writing was considered “an institutional exercise of power” (p. 90), “a naive attempt to appropriate authoritative adult discourses” (p.91), and “a deliberate” attempt to promote individualism (p. 88). The scholars in other words are somewhat socially conservative and even reactionary, and see students who practise personal writing as trying to escape social and academic rules which academia itself lays down. Conversely, and others see personal writing as helping students achieve an individual maturity which makes them more valuable than they would otherwise be to the wider community.

Newkirk maintained that such considerations were not supportive of “communitarian values and resisted collective social action” (p. 88), that is, they were incompatible with the values and activities of the community. He viewed personal writing as a complex cultural performance. He said that from personal writing, students were provided with opportunities to engage in discourse which would lead them to a greater culture than they had encountered in schools or universities. He maintained that personal writing was not intended to discover or present an important life but to aim at a presentation of a possible self to its audience consisting of teachers and peers. The self was, then, conformed or constructed by the readers—in other words, by society. The self discovered was therefore social, not private.

Moreover, Connors (1988) said that good sources of motivation and interest that would encourage students to write are personal experience and emotional topics.

If such a source was eschewed in the composition course, the impetus to write was weakened (Connors, 1988). Furthermore, she stated that one of her objectives in incorporating personal or expressive writing in her writing course was the enhancement of her students' fluency, as well as the encouragement to scrutinise the topic, and to search for subjects appropriate to the creation of a piece of writing

Allen (2000) pointed out that personal writing was crucial and helpful in paving the firm foundation of writing for students since all kinds of writing were grounded in experiential writing. Students could benefit from both academic and personal writing. Moreover, personal writing could enhance academic writing since the procedure of deriving ideas from their own knowledge, which included arranging and organising them systematically and logically, resulted in familiarising students with the formation of writing. Apart from that, writing about what students know well, helped raise their confidence to write before having to move on to the abstraction of academic subjects (MacCurdy, 2000).

Mlynarczyk (2006) too did not agree with Bartholomae (1995). She pointed out that experiential writing could assist all students to acquire academic discourse. It was important for all students and particularly basic or ESL writers to start writing about their own experience, using their own language, because “without using the primary resource they bring with them to college—their own expressive language, language that is private, not public, language that is close to the self” (p.13)—it was not likely that students would be able to achieve their academic goal. She claimed that practising experiential writing initially, students would become accustomed to writing and gradually move to academic discourse. She concluded that in order to enable students to write academically and successfully, they should be introduced to the process of learning to write by employing the experiences stored in their minds.

In addition, embodied writing comes from embodied thinking (Banks, 2003). To encourage students to reach academic goals, they should initially be given opportunities to practise writing about what they have in mind, in other words using the knowledge gained from their personal experience.

Mlynarczyk (2006) agreed with Britton (1970) that writing employing expressive language or ideas on the personal cannot be disregarded if students are expected to acquire academic discourse in a meaningful and significant way. Britton explained the connection between personal and academic writing, maintaining that expressive discourse offers a crucial starting point for students to practise writing before advancing to academic writing by initially using “the language close to the self of the writer” (p. 179). Britton said that before proceeding to academic writing, it is important students should practise experiential writing adequately so that they will gradually be readied for impersonal writing.

Conclusively, there are two different points of view concerning whether personal writing should be included in a writing course. Some scholars oppose including personal writing in the writing courses. They say it is not realistic. Academic writing only should be taught (Bartholomae, 1995; Faigley, 1992). Conversely, others stated that personal writing, apart from enhancing students ability to acquire voice and identity, improves writing quality, encourages confidence, and paves the way for academic writing (Cornors, 1988; Elbow, 1991, 1995; Newkirk; 1997; MacCurdy, 2000; Mlynarczyk, 2006).

Research Related to Personal Writing

Research into personal writing of various kinds has been conducted, the objective to improve students’ writing ability. Others are psychological studies which

involve having students write out their feelings so that people can learn about their behaviour. These studies offer evidence of improvements in students' writing. What follows here describes research conducted in the educational area.

Educational research

With regard to research on personal writing conducted in the educational context, Cody (1996) arranged a series of six-week-remedial workshops to help students who had difficulties writing their assignments in other courses. They were allowed to use the language in everyday life. Cody said, "The language that is closest to their own is the language of their thoughts and their intimate conversations with friends and family" (p. 109). In Cody's study, students were assigned to write about their own experiences and relate them to the topics of the courses they were studying. He found that students who did so improved their overall writing quality. He strongly maintained that basic writing students should be encouraged to use expressive language as a means of crossing into the academic area.

Another example of experiential writing is Allen's (2000) "The Effective Writing Course." This course began with the teaching of grammar, structure, writing style, and writing in response to reading texts. The students were assigned to read and discuss model prose examples from a collection of classic nonfiction essays. They learned grammar, structure, and style, and then identified the errors found in their writing. The topics assigned were based on the readings. The papers were graded and commented on. After teaching this course for two years with four sections, Allen found that it was not successful and accepted that this course was not helpful in enabling the students to become effective writers. The students themselves were not responsive either to the class procedures or to the reading texts. When they wrote,

they were so concerned about not making mistakes that their writing failed to interest the readers, lacking both originality and conviction. Even when the essays attained to the writing requirements, Allen observed that they had no style and were tedious in the extreme. In terms of responding to the texts and their assignments, the students demonstrated that they were unfamiliar with the topics studied. When required to discuss their assigned texts, such as George Orwell's "Politics and the English Language," the students balked, remaining silent and began to miss assignments. One of Allen's students ignored the instructions. That student wrote her own personal story instead. Allen read her story to the class in order to alleviate the boredom of the teaching and learning process. Unexpectedly, the story drew the other students' attention. They then started writing about their own experiences. He read the students' writing to the class and had them discuss it. The students apparently then became eager to participate in the discussion and felt impelled to express their opinions. Allen explained that the students considered themselves justified in commenting because the subjects they discussed and wrote about were derived from their own knowledge and experience.

At this point, Allen decided to change his course. Although he maintained the original class paradigm, he incorporated the students' innovations. After learning that writing about students' own knowledge or experience encouraged them to write and improved the atmosphere of the writing classroom, he began giving students topics related to their own experience. Allen also said that the students became eager to write and participate in class discussion. The teacher edited the essays and the students revised. The students took on the role of writers while the teacher played the role of editor rather than judge.

After three years, Allen further adjusted the course. He made 50% of it personal writing to traditional expository essays. He reported that personal essays gave the students practice in concentrating on the content more than grammar. Furthermore, the students' work obviously showed improvement in the areas of technical quality, honesty, vividness and originality when compared with the work they had done in the traditional expository essay format.

Allen found that the students improved their expository essays and was sure that personal essay writing was the main key, his conviction strengthened by students reporting repeatedly that practising personal writing in his course helped improve their ability in other courses. Even more important in this respect was the assurance offered by two professors notorious for their rigor and conservatism in writing matters. They had observed that their students' writing quality had improved, and concluded that Allen's course had helped standardise their students' writing.

According to Allen, students are expected to learn and understand meaning, but are offered insufficient opportunity to create original meaning for themselves. He said that learning to know themselves is the most important form of knowledge, and helps establish the necessary base for other knowledge.

Allen started to experiment with his teaching. Before commencing the course, he conducted collecting qualitative and quantitative measures he thought might help answer why his students' writing became better. He first asked students before studying his course what they thought about themselves as writers, what their teachers had told them about their writing, and why they were taking the course in writing; second, asked the students at the end of the course what they thought about themselves as writers, what others had told them about their writing and any changes in their writing since they had been in this course, and third, investigated students'

grades and comments on their writing derived from other courses. This was done before, during, and after the course. Allen also had another “standard measure” (p. 256) to estimate the students’ writing quality. He encouraged his students to publish their writing, submitting their best assignments to magazines, newspapers, and prose collections.

Allen’s course was a three-month-and-a-half schedule in which for the first two months students had to write personal essays intensively. The course assigned students to write one personal essay a week for ten weeks and revise their writing. Besides, students had to attend weekly lectures and workshops on prose basic, and one-on-one sessions with the course instructor who provided recommendations on editing and revising.

Allen finally revealed how personal writing encouraged academic writing development. He explained that there were three important components which bridge personal writing to academic writing: relation of the self to meaning, relation of the self to the self, and relation of the self to language.

In terms of relation of the self to meaning, Allen explained that writing about experiences is transforming existent ideas into literature. In so doing, ideas are made more concrete. Interaction between the writer and the outside world occurs. He maintained that in such performance, the writers are becoming “conscious of consciousness” (p. 281), realising they have stored information of their own and transferred those ideas into writing. Writing pushes them to retrospect the events and themselves as a participant of their own experience. Doing so, they learn and understand themselves. Once they learn to write—knowing how to exploit their experience in writing—Allen said that that would help them transfer the competency and familiarity gained from experiential writing to perform “standard-forum writing,

like research reports, business letters, or the academic expository essay” (pp. 281-282) better.

Next is relation of the self to the self. Writing personal essays can lead to the discovery and understanding of the self, Allen claims, citing Freud and other psychologists, and describing the benefits it brought to his students. He explained that there were three important elements which assist students to discover and understand the “self.” Allen said that to perform writing, first, writers brainstorm. Writers also have to have courage to utilise imagination striven from existent information. In addition, writers need to allow new information of thoughts to come into existence. Those three elements assist writers to delineate and form the details simultaneously. The process of delineating the existent information provokes reflection. This assists these writers to visualise the “self” as well as understand themselves better. As a result, the writers perceive the existence of the sense of self-esteem, the crucial concomitant of the strong sense of individuality. Conclusively, according to Allen, the whole process of personal writing combines the writers’ inner self and the world that the self dwells in.

The last relation is relation of the self to the language. To perform writing, writers choose words to tell stories. In so doing, they consider the appropriateness of selecting words so that the message can be conveyed correctly and suitably. Experiential writing or “a range of life situation” (Allen, p. 285) requires writers to pull out their knowledge of language to communicate each situation to describe the content in accordance with such process appropriately. Thus the effort of working on language to make sense is counted primary. To confront with such process, writers are forced to ponder in dealing with language so as that they can make it appropriate,

creative, and flexible so that they can communicate, convey the message the right way and use the correct language.

In line with Allen's research, Berman and Schiff (2000) conducted one-semester-research. They assigned their 18 students in his Literary Suicide course to record their personal responses to literature in order to raise their consciousness about the problem of suicide and encourage suicide prevention because it was a main problem for high school and college students. Students were assigned to read a novel written by an author who was not suicidal and select poems and novels by famous writers who actually committed suicide. Apart from that, they wrote a diary entry weekly and received it back with the teacher's comments the following week. The teachers then read five diaries out of 18 to the class anonymously with the permission of the students. The diarists' identities were not revealed. Students were asked to draw their conclusion about the diaries read aloud. The researchers found that all of the students took the diary journal seriously. After practicing writing continually, apart from asserting that they understood more about the problems of suicide, it was reported it helped improve students' writing ability.

Moran (2004) examined the effect of keeping students studying a conventional freshman composition course writing about private experiences. She did not have a concurrent control group for comparison purposes, but her study included quantitative data derived from questionnaires asking students to rate their attitudes toward writing and to give comments. She found that extensive private writing potentially helped students perform better in their writing; students also had better attitudes toward writing. Besides, she emphasised that writing could be performed effectively and in a sustained way when it was related to one's own experience. The process of the instruction was as follows. Students read an essay from a reading book and then

wrote for at least 15 minutes as homework assignments. The writing could be either a response to the text they had read or their feelings or problems about a personal matter. Apart from being assigned private writing for homework, students were asked to do private writing for 10 minutes at the beginning of each class in response to a prompt given by the teacher. In dealing with grammar instruction, Moran explained that students were grouped into threes or fours. They discussed their writings, and provided feedback on each other's drafts. In doing this, the students could choose to bypass the group feedback session if their writing was about a sensitive topic, or they could talk to their teacher if they wanted. At the end of the semester, students turned in three of their revised essays and informed the teacher which one they would like to be published in the class magazine. The findings reported that not only did the majority of students' attitudes toward writing improve but also their writing. Moran concluded that students writing about their own experience should be encouraged to create richer essays, which come from real contents. As a result, they should be able to produce genuine and clear prose, and gradually form academic writing. Finally students would be more confident of producing pieces of writing.

Mlynarczyk (2006) conducted qualitative research on the journals of five multilingual Columbian, Chinese, Spanish, and Korean freshmen in a college ESL writing course. She assigned them to read and respond to reading texts. Additionally, the students were assigned to keep an open-ended journal to give them opportunities to write about themselves. The research required writing assessments and interviews at the end of the semester. In reflecting on the reading texts and journals kept, the students were asked to use their own personal or expressive language. Regarding open-ended journals, they were encouraged to write regularly and at least five papers a week. The journals were collected every two or three weeks. The teacher

corresponded at first personally, but later on the correspondence was done in groups and then with the whole class.

Mlynarczyk found that students' journal-writing indicated that using expressive language, "the language which is comfortable and close to the self" (p. 14), developed their writing. She observed that students performed well in responding to the reading texts. She noticed signs of development particularly in a Colombian student—one of the five—in her research group and exemplified this Colombian student because, in her opinion, he was the outstanding student of the group. He had emigrated from Columbia to the United States with his parents when he was 13 years old. He attended a high school and was placed in the lowest level of ESL. He was 18 when he entered college and was assigned to study in the development course because he did not pass the university's test of minimum competence in writing. He stayed quiet in the class because he felt insecure, coming as he did from a different culture. The way he addressed his classmates was distant and impersonal because he felt he did not belong to the new society. However, Mlynarczyk said that his journal writing displayed development in both language and adjustment to the world around him. He wrote sixty-five pages of journal in that course. He became markedly more easy-going. In one of his journals he wrote, "I know for a fact now that writing can be your best friend. Writing how you feel can make you realise many things. You can develop a lot of knowledge and open mind thinking" (Mlynarczyk, 1998, p. 55).

According to Mlynarczyk (2006), by the end of the semester this particular student became more confident in his ability to write. He performed well in every assignment as well as passing the writing assessment test required by this course. His next course was philosophy. This course required a great deal of writing, but students were not allowed to use personal language or offer personal opinions in their work.

This researcher reported that since this student had been emboldened by his success by writing freely using the expressive mode of the previous course, he was confident in his ability to think and write in other subjects. He was able to connect the writing competence he had gained with academic courses as, for instance, philosophy, in which he received an A on his first writing paper. Mlynarczyk stated that he was able to mentally process his ideas using the language form learned earlier while simultaneously following the rules of academic discourse. He had developed himself “as a writer, a thinker, and a college student,” (p. 18) said Mlynarczyk (2006). She also observed that he had become at ease in what had previously been an unfamiliar society, no longer feeling alienated from it. The pronoun by which he had usually referred to his classmates as *they* was changed to *we* when he talked about them. Mlynarczyk (2006) maintained that his ability to write, and to acquire academic language, as well as the confidence gained was the consequence of practising personal writing, in other words, acquiring expressive language. She concluded, “He was an example, perhaps the rare one, of a student who made a seamless transition from the developmental writing class to the academic mainstream” (p. 17).

Summarily, where educational studies are concerned, practising personal writing improves holistic quality of writing, and promotes writing academically. Students practising personal writing prior to academic writing perform academic writing more effectively. Apart from that, practising personal writing initially helps lessen student anxiety when they are assigned to write. Writing about the topics related to their own lives which they know well assists them to gain more confidence. Unexpectedly and surprisingly, it is reported that extensively personal writing enhances students to be better in other disciplines, for instance, philosophy, law, and even with subjects which do not require writing, like mathematics.

Psychological research

The movement of personal writing regarding the psychological aspect was initiated by Pennebaker (Moran, 2004), a psychology professor who conducted a series of experiments with college students. He found that disclosure writing, or expressing in writing one's thoughts and feelings about a painful or shameful experience could improve emotional and even physical health as well as academic performance. His findings inspired psychologists, neuroscientists, as well as language researchers. More psychological and neurological research which focused on the changes that occurred in the brain during disclosure writing was launched. Certain composition and literature professors also became interested and started to analyse the way narrative, imagery, and metaphor provide the writer with a sense of control and coherence. Certain studies followed the implications' writing and healing theory, held for the basic writing classroom.

Pennebaker (1990), for example, conducted psychological research to investigate the effects of having students write about their thoughts and feelings on their behaviour. Participants were students enrolling in a course which had been boring for students because of the heavy burden of reading assignments, impersonal lecture formats, and weekly discussions. Pennebaker changed the method of discussion. Before starting each discussion session, students would be given a short overview of the main ideas of the week's reading assignments and lectures. Then they were asked to write continuously about their thoughts and feelings about the topic for ten minutes. The writing assignments were then collected but not graded. After that the students started the discussion. It was reported that the discussion turned out to be lively and interesting. The students participated meaningfully and wisely gave comments to the topic which would have been unclear for them before.

Pennebaker, in addition, found that not only did the discussion become better but students' writing also improved. Their writing helped them pull out ideas from various sources, particularly from their own experiences.

The next psychological experimental research is based on the work of Pennebaker and Francis (1996). The experimental group was designated to write about their thoughts and feelings about coming to college, while the control group was asked to write about neutral topics. On averaging, it was found that the experimental group received good comments from teachers from other courses including before, during, and after the courses. This indicated that students did not write better only in the writing course but they also wrote better in other courses.

In addition, Reilly and Ring (2006) reported that there had been studies revealing that the physician's career was more liable to result in depression, substance abuse, suicide, and distress than those of other occupations. They explained that physicians first encounter the stress leading to these negative reactions when they are in medical school undergoing critical training, which intensifies under the load that working in the infirmary impose on them.

Their report examined the results that followed the effort to use personal writing as a means to promote physicians' well-being and self-awareness. The study was organised by the Family Practice Literature and Arts Periodical (FLAP), a community-family practice residency-based-publication located in the inner city of East Los Angeles. It deals with English-Spanish bilingual issues, and promotes the cultures and languages represented by the residency community. FLAP was established with the purposes of investigating whether writing by interns and physicians offers opportunity to reflect on patient care and at the same time provide a stress reduction forum. It also hoped that the reading of the stories written by

colleagues would provide insight, meaning and mutual understanding of the challenges and joys of patient care, with FLAP also serving as a forum where students could publish their writings and express their artistic talents.

In order to enable their medical personnel to cope better with the arduous daily tasks which give rise to emotional and physical problems, and to help improve their professional performance in providing care for patients, it encouraged residents and doctors as well as support staff to express their inherent literary talent by contributing to the periodical in such forms as short stories, poetry, essays, prose, memoir and reflection, as well as interviews with staff on the topic *art in their practice of medicine*. However, to retain a good relationship between doctors and patients, references to patients had to be made anonymously.

Reilly and Ring (2006) stated that writing fostered by and published in the periodical clearly helped bring about benefits. First, through writing, doctors were given opportunities to perform self-reflection which functioned as emotional catharsis – “a healthy stress outlet” (p.1) promoting personal growth and self-awareness. Moreover, it also provided them with a chance to improve the *art* of patient care (p. 1). Additionally, it offered doctors and other participants the chance to share their experiences.

Reilly and Ring concluded that the periodical was a successful publication. It was favoured by and received positive comments from different authorities, such as the faculty, residents and the hospital community. It was extolled by medical students from various health conferences.

In conclusion, so far, the research reviewed has confirmed that personal writing is beneficial to students. Personal writing is a tool to prepare students in the formation and familiarisation of writing before crossing to academic writing.

Research about personal writing has been conducted in two ways: educational and psychological. In the case of educational research, personal writing built up confidence and good attitudes toward writing, and simultaneously developed writing ability. According to psychological studies, students improved their writing as well as were relieved from tension.

Vocabulary and second/foreign language learning

Importance of vocabulary to language learning

Although vocabulary was neglected and considered a marginal aspect of language acquisition until recently, it is the fundamental building material of language (Cobb, 2001; Meara, 2002). Apart from being considered a primary linguistic element acquired by learners from the time language learning commences, words are the primary means of communication, expressing feelings and meanings, and establishing and maintaining relationships, and thus can claim pre-eminence in the language learning process. They are individual components of meaning from which larger structures, for instance, phrases, sentences, paragraphs and entire texts are constructed. Meaningful conversation cannot be conducted without words, and the more complex communication becomes, the more expansion of vocabulary knowledge to several thousand words is needed (Dagut, 1977; Meara, 1996). As stated by Laufer and Shmueli, “It is common sense that without words there can be no proper communication, however basic” (1997, p. 89).

Despite the fact that there are more than 54,000 word families in English, and although adult native speakers know approximately 20,000 of the word families, Nation and Waring (1997) stated that a smaller number of words comprising between 3,000-5,000 word families, in which most content words constantly appear, are

considered of high pre-eminence for language use and required as they are as a foundation for comprehension, should be acquired as early as possible. With this number of words, it is quite sufficient for a learner to gain a large proportion of the running words in a spoken and written text. Moreover, for second language learners entering university, Laufer (1992) found that knowing a minimum of about 3,000 words was required for effective reading at the university levels, whereas knowing 5,000 words indicated likely academic success.

It follows that this relatively neglected aspect of language teaching needs to be accorded the primacy it deserves, so that the more sophisticated language skills, those of writing among them, have the foundation they require.

Academic vocabulary and ESL students

In order to evaluate students' writing competency, it is necessary to know the level of their vocabulary attainment. Assessment of vocabulary size has demonstrated a positive correlation with the ability levels of reading (Laufer, 1997; Qian, 2004), writing (Engber, 1995), and general language competency (Meara & Jones, 1998). As Jong (2007) has said, "As vocabulary is a crucial component for overall literacy development, so is academic and technical vocabulary for academic literacy," (p.1). She further stated that students would not perform either reading or writing effectively and successfully if they did not have an adequate size and knowledge of the target vocabulary. Jong (2007) also pointed out that in terms of academic vocabulary, in order to attain to a higher level of ESL/EFL ability, students are required to be able to command English vocabulary at the advanced level so that they can perform effectively in academic courses.

Nation (2001) gave the reasons why it is indispensable for ESL/EFL learners pursuing progress in academic fields using English as a tool, to know academic words, as follows:

- (1) Academic vocabulary is common to a wide range of academic texts, and generally not so common in non-academic texts.
- (2) Academic vocabulary accounts for a substantial number of words in academic texts.
- (3) Academic vocabulary is generally not as well known as technical vocabulary.
- (4) Academic vocabulary is the kind of specialised that an English teacher can usually help learners with (pp. 189-191).

Furthermore, academic vocabulary allows speakers to both communicate and receive information about scientific matters. One way to estimate a vocabulary size is to use Coxhead's *Academic Word List* (AWL). It has replaced the *University Word List*. It is considered essential for students required to study academic subjects via the medium of English (Nation & Gu, 2007). Coxhead and Nation (2001) as well as Coxhead (2000) maintain that the word list is the first priority for students who want to do academic studies in English because it helps students learn how many academic words they have stored. Besides, it is the most complete and reliable word list, having a higher percentage of words found in academic texts, approximately 10% of the corpus.

Academic Word List

The AWL, developed by Coxhead, comprises 570 word families compiled from a corpus of 3.5 million running words from academic texts and journals. The texts were selected according to whether they were of suitable length—over 2,000 running words long—and were representative of the academic genre in that they were written for an academic audience. In selecting words for the AWL, Coxhead follows three selection criteria: range, frequency, and uniformity frequency. In terms of range, the selection ensures that the words in the AWL are useful for learners. It

covers various academic areas such as arts, commerce, laws, and science. Each of these faculty sections contains approximately 875,000 running words, and each faculty section is divided into seven subject areas of approximately 123,000 running words. One area which has sub-divisions is, for example, arts. This area alone contains education, history, linguistics, philosophy, politics, and sociology as its sub-divisions.

Where frequency is concerned, inclusion into the list of a family is made when it occurs over 100 times in the 3.5 million words of the *Academic Corpus*. To be included in the list, the academic words have to appear a minimum of 10 times in each faculty of the Academic Corpus to ensure the vocabulary is useful for all learners. The word list has been divided into sublists based on the frequency of occurrence of the words in the Academic Corpus. The words in sublist one occur more frequently in the corpus than the other words in the list, while sublist two occurs with the next highest frequency. The more frequent the words in the list are, the more likely they are to occur in academic texts.

Studies related to the academic word list

In order to establish the importance of vocabulary in language learning, this part of the study looks at the *AWL* and the research which has been carried out on studying language.

In 2005, Horst, Cobb, and Nicolae conducted research the objective of which was to investigate the effectiveness of teaching L2 vocabulary online. The study point was a review of research-informed techniques for teaching and learning L2 vocabulary, which indicated that the internet offered a little-explored world for meaningful vocabulary activities. The researchers determined to explore in greater

depth what the internet offered in this respect. Among the tools utilised in their research were a concordance and the data based with interactive self-quizzing features. The vocabulary target comprised both Coxhead's (2000) *AWL*—since it has been updated, is more streamlined, and is well-known to contain a list of 570 frequently recurring word families and cover a range of academic texts in a corpus of 3.5 million running words—and unfamiliar words the students meet in academic texts.

In the Thai context, Nakprakhon (2005), who investigated whether words in *AWL* were significantly high, and what the highest frequent 50 words were in the corpus of political research. This researcher used the *Concordance* programme to analyse the corpus of 122,811 words derived from *The Nation*, one of the local online newspapers. It was reported that words in *AWL* covered 5.7% of the total words in the corpus. Moreover, the top 50 words in the *AWL* were politically domain.

Sujan (2000) analysed the amount of vocabulary and lexical errors as well as investigated the informants' vocabulary development through the errors found and vocabulary size. The informants—46 first to fourth-year English major students—wrote a two-hour-essay. Twenty essays—out of 80—from each level were randomly selected to analyse the vocabulary size by employing the software programme called VocabProfile. Then out of 40 essays, ten essays of each level were analysed to find lexical errors. Sujan then examined the cross-sectional vocabulary development from the comparison of lexical errors found and vocabulary size. The findings showed that, in terms of vocabulary, the fourth-year English major students had progressed in the cross-section development of vocabulary. They were able to produce a wider range of difficult words in Base List Three although they were using words used mostly in Base List One. In the case of lexical errors, Sujan (2000) reported the

informants respectively made mistakes mostly in tense usage, meaning errors, parts of speech errors, collocations and extra words. However, the fourth-year informants produced less frequency of some kinds of errors than other levels.

Conclusively, the importance of vocabulary to language development is as the importance of bricks to the construction of buildings. With bricks but no architectural design, building may be limited, but with an architectural design but no bricks one can build nothing. It is therefore crucial to investigate the students' vocabulary knowledge. One way to examine students' vocabulary size is by using *Coxhead's Academic Word List*, which contains the greater percentage of words used in academic texts. It is essential for students who use English as a means to pursue academic goals to learn how many academic words they have acquired.

Error-Free T-Units

Syntactic maturity is important because it indicates the ability to use the syntax of the target language effectively, particularly in writing. Although there are many aspects used to determine good writing—for instance, investigation of coherence and content—the counting of linguistic error, linguistic accuracy or sentence complexity and variety, are a concern in writing assessment (Polio, 1997). Apart from being an essential indicator of syntactic maturity, Polio stated that linguistic accuracy is also related to research in three regions: L2 writing pedagogy, L2 writing assessment, and second language acquisition. Syntactic maturity can be measured using objective measures, for instance, mean T-unit length, and mean error-free T-unit length. These two means have been used successfully and broadly in both first and second language research (Gaies, 1980; Xinhua, 2008).

This part describes the occurrence of the T-unit, followed with its theory, how to use it, and research employing it.

The T-unit was introduced to language learning by Hunt (1965) and was originally designed to assess syntactic development in the written discourse produced by children learning their first language. It was also used to evaluate oral practice (Bardovi-Harlig, 1992; Gaies, 1980). Various measurements of complexity have been used with the T-unit, for example, words per T-unit, words per error-free T-unit, and clause per T-unit. Hunt (1977) described it as a minimal terminable unit, or “the shortest unit into which a piece of discourse can be cut without leaving any fragments or residue” (p. 189), in other words, sentences which contain simple or complex expression of discourse that have unity.

Identification of the T-unit.

A T-unit contains a main clause and in many cases a subordinate clause. A *simple sentence* is counted as one T-unit, e.g.

Grouchy is a small caterpillar. (1 T-unit)

A *compound sentence* or a *compound-complex sentence* is counted as two T-units or more, e.g.

Grouchy is a small caterpillar, and he is very hungry. (2 T-units)

A *complex sentence* is counted as one T-unit, e.g.

Grouchy is a small caterpillar which is very hungry. (1 T-unit)

Grouchy has eaten through five strawberries which were left on the ground. (1 T-unit)

As for a *run-on sentence* or *comma splices*, it is counted as two T-units or more, e. g.

Grouchy is very hungry because he has not eaten for a few days, and he is also moody because he cannot find anything to eat, so he is crawling on a branch of a big tree, he is sniffing around to find something to eat. (4 T-units)

Spelling, vocabulary errors, and punctuation have no effect in the scoring, e.g.

Grouchy is a catterpillar and he is very hungry and he is moody too.

(3 T-units).

Research employing the T-unit analysis

Error-free T-units are employed in studies in order to investigate students' syntactic development. The following exemplifies this use of T-units.

Robb, Ross, and Shortreed (1986) investigated the effect of four different kinds of error feedback on ESL students' written essays. They employed three of the objective measurements: ratio of EFTs/ Total T-units, ratio of ETTs/ Total Clauses, and ratio of words in ETTs/ Total Words, to measure accuracy. They found that all of error-free T-units could employ measured accuracy.

Moreover, Casanave (1994) investigated student writing to see whether there would be changes in the journal writing of 16 intermediate EFL students from two classes, nine and seven from each class, over three semesters of an intensive language programme. Both classes wrote ungraded 250-500 word journals every week during the first two semesters. In the third semester, they wrote once every two weeks. The topics they wrote about, although they were recommended to write on the themes discussed in class, were generally open.

She employed the ratio T-unit analyses using number of words per T-unit to investigate the length, number of clauses per T-unit and percentage of T-units to examine complexity, and percentage of error-free T-units and length of error-free T-

units to measure accuracy. In her study, spelling or typing mistakes were not counted as errors, while word endings, articles, prepositions, word usage, and tense were counted errors if students made errors in those particulars. She found that 56% of the students' accuracy improved but others did not. Casanave (1994) reported that, measured by EFTs, nine students (56%) wrote more accurately in the first period than later, and 11 students (69%) wrote longer EFTs during the same period, while 13 students (81%) wrote longer EFTs from the mid-journals to the final journals. She revealed that a large proportion of categories deteriorated. She found that one-third of categories from the first to the mid-journals, and 44% of the mid to the final journals had weakened. Over one-third of students in the third semester produced longer, but less complex, less accurate T-units than they did at the beginning of the first semester. Forty-five percent of the students did not improve their accuracy, while 55% actually did. Casanave (1994), however, confirmed that students who did not improve might have made progress in other aspects; for instance, in gaining sufficient confidence to take risks. She asserted that there were changes in the students' writing. Students produced longer, more complex, and more accurate sentences. Nevertheless, where accuracy was concerned, the results were somehow fluctuating, since there were "upward and downward movements" (p. 187) during the first and the mid-journals.

Polio (1997) conducted an empirical study to compare three accuracy measurements: holistic scale, error-free T-units, and word-classification system on the one-hour essays of 38 graduate and undergraduate ESL university students. Each essay was rated three times, twice by the researcher, and once by her graduate student assistant. She employed ratio of EFTs/ Total T-units, ratio of ETTs/ Total clauses, and ratio of words in ETTs/ Total words, to measure accuracy. She found that error-free T-unit was more reliable for range of proficiency.

Khirallah (1999) studied the actual linguistic differences in the second language writing of native language educated non-native speakers (NLE NNS) (for instance, completion of secondary school of the students' native country) and second language educated non-native speakers (SLE NNs) (i.e. three to five years of secondary school in the United States). Thirty-nine essays derived from 22 NLE, and 17 SLE altogether were independently coded by two coders for error-free T-units, words per T-units, error count, error classification and cohesion. To measure accuracy, Khirallah used error-free T-units, percentage of errors per T-units, error count, while word count and mean T-unit length were used to evaluate fluency, percent of nodes per T-unit used to assess complexity, and measure of cohesive ties to estimate cohesion. The findings revealed that there was no significant difference on essays of NLE NNS and SLE NNS in measurements of fluency applying word count and mean T-unit length, accuracy-applying error-free T-units, errors per T-units, error count, and error classification, complexity applying percent of nodes per T-units, and cohesion.

Seedokmai (1999) investigated the rhetorical patterns from 10 high-quality essays and 10 low-quality essays written by second-year Thai university English major students to find, first, the major characteristics of the rhetorical patterns embedded in the writing products, and, second, the difference between high-rated and low-rated essays. She used T-unit analysis to find out how topical material was carried across T-unit boundaries and how they were linked to form coherent texts. The findings showed that both high and low-rated groups were able to write essays realising the macro structure. Significant difference was found in the macro structure.

Kanteesan (2004) examined the development of syntax and cohesion of Thai students' journal entries. The purposes were to compare the number of error-free T-

units between the first and the last journal entries—14 of each, and to investigate the cohesive devices of the students who showed syntactic development. The journals were examined to count the error-free T-units. The data which showed syntactic development—increasing error-free T-units, were investigated to find how cohesion was used between the first and the last journal entries. The results revealed that five students improved their syntax. Moreover, Kanteesan (2004) found that the students who had syntactic development used more cohesive devices in the last journal entries than the first ones.

Yousuk (2004) studied the syntactic and cohesive development of Thai students' writing essays by comparing the number of error-free T-units in essays written by the students between the first and the second semester, and exploring the type, frequency and density of cohesion used in the essays in both semesters. T-unit analysis was employed to measure students' syntactic ability. From a total number of 20 essays, seven essays showed the syntactic improvement—increasing the number of error-free T-units in the second semester. Then, the seven essays were further studied to find the type, frequency and density of cohesion used in the essays of both semesters. The findings showed that the students used more types and more frequency of cohesive devices in the first semester but density of cohesion was found to be used more in the second semester than in the first semester.

Xinhua (2008) investigated whether syntactic maturity could be used as a reliable measure to examine the relationship between speaking and writing. Her 10 writing samples were collected from diagnostic essays written by college-level ESL students studying composition course, and ten spoken samples were derived from students' participation in a semi-direct, tape-mediated oral proficiency test, the Video Oral Communication Instrument (VOCI). Xinhua employed seven measures of

syntactic maturity: total number of words (TNW), mean T-unit length (MTUL), mean error-free T-unit length (MEFTUL), and percentage of error-free T-unit (% EFTU), subordination ratio (SR), mean clause length (MCL), and dependent clauses per clause (DC/C). Out of those measurements, mean error-free T-unit length (MEFTUL), and percentage of error-free T-unit (%EFTU) were used to measure the accuracy of both written and spoken performances. Xinhua noted that when looking closely at percentage of error-free T-units (% EFTU), all participants produced more error-free T-units in speaking than writing. From investigating the spoken transcripts of the participants, she explained, it was found that the subjects spoke in short sentences. This resulted in them being more unlikely to produce errors. On the other hand, when writing, the subjects tended to produce longer sentences containing more dependent clauses, which consequently made it easier for them to make mistakes. Finally, the findings showed that measurements of syntactic maturity could differentiate between proficiency levels.

Conclusively, grammar is considered an indicator of a language growth. It is, therefore, crucial to study how much of grammar knowledge students have. Assistance, then, will be provided in the right way to help them resolve the problems as well as gain more knowledge. Consequently, they will be able to communicate better and more understandably. In order to acquire such quality, error-free T-unit analysis is an important measurement to investigate students' grammar accuracy.

Scoring criteria

Writing assessment is important because it provides necessary information about the development of students' writing ability. To evaluate how students have developed their writing competency, two main approaches have been used widely.

One is indirect writing assessment, the other direct writing assessment. This section describes the scoring criteria. It discusses the following aspects respectively; direct and indirect assessment, types of direct assessment and illustrations of each.

Indirect writing assessment

Indirect writing assessment is sometimes called objective assessment. This type of assessing is mostly in a multiple-choice format the test takers or examinees have responded to. It does not require actual writing but relies on objective tests. The test takers or examinees judge the appropriateness of the use of the language in a provided series of objective test items (Mayo, 1996). Indirect assessment, according to Stiggins (1981), offers necessary, although not fully adequate, information for assessing a student's writing proficiency. It is more commonly used in guidance and placement than in direct writing assessment.

Direct writing assessment

Direct writing assessment is the assessment which examines the actual written essays performed by the test takers or examinees in order to evaluate their writing proficiency. They write in response to the provided prompt. The results are assessed in accordance with the prespecified criteria (Mayo, 1996; Stiggins, 1981; Weigle, 2002). This is the most common method to evaluating writing in both first and second languages. In making their assessment, two or more raters independently read and score the essays. Direct writing assessment comprises primary-trait scoring, analytic scoring, and holistic scoring method. Each of these types is described below.

Primary-trait scoring method

The rating scale of primary-trait is described as a tool to measure a specific writing assignment. An essay is rated according to the degree of success with which the writer has performed. Weigle (2002) explained that a primary-trait scoring guide can have several categories on which each script is to be judged, and says that the scoring rubric needs such items as, a writing task; an indication of the most important rhetorical feature of the task, as for example the production of a formal letter, a student essay, an advertisement, etc; an expectation of the accomplished outcome; a scoring table that rates the success or otherwise of the finished product; samples of the differing types of task, with explanation of their use for the raters; and a declaration of how the task itself and most important rhetorical feature are related.

Nevertheless, even though this type of scoring has the potential to contribute accurate and ample information concerning students' writing competency, it is not widely employed due to its time-consuming nature. To create a primary trait scoring model, a scoring guide must be developed for every particular writing task. According to Lloyd-Jones (1977), Weigle (2002), this takes up to 60-80 hours per task. Therefore, it is not practical to develop and employ this type of assessment in scoring writing tasks.

Analytic scoring method

Analytic scoring provides another method of assessing students' writing ability. Hughes (1989) explained that analytic scoring is a method of assessing student writing ability in which each number of aspects of a task is required to be scored separately, e.g. grammatical accuracy, vocabulary, organisation, relevance, coherence, and idiomatic expression, and thus draws attention to essential sub-skills

which might otherwise be overlooked, to the detriment of even development. He also points out that scorers employing this method become more reliable in their readings in proportion to the number of papers scored.

Another definition of analytic scoring made by Huot (1990) refers to the concerns with the identification of characteristics viewed as important to good writing and a number of these characteristics the papers contain. Each characteristic is scored separately and the scores are totaled to provide a rating. Analytic scoring system generally provides more detailed information that may be useful in planning and improving instruction and communicating with students.

Gilfert and Harada (1992) stated that analytical scoring concentrates on the mechanics of writing, not how the writer expresses her/his thoughts. The student is evaluated against a set of empirical standards. Scoring analytically, a composition is dissected in order to discover its critical points. Analytical scoring pre-determines criteria for grading. Many local tests of writing are graded in this manner, for example, the Jacob *et al.* scale, the TEEP scale, and the Michigan Writing Assessment Scoring Guide.

Holistic scoring method

There are many researchers who define holistic scoring.

For example, Cooper (1977), sees holistic assessment as a means for evaluating written work, which involves no correction or revision that can be accomplished speedily, with one and only one scanning. The rater completes his/her task either by matching the work in question with similar graded examples, or by assessing its incorporation of the features appropriate to that type of assignment and awarding a lettered or numbered grade. Cooper says that the rater is assisted by a

holistic scoring guide that takes account of each of the many features of an assignment.

For Hughes (1989), holistic assessment is defined as impressionistic scoring which involves the assigning of a single score to a piece of written product on the basis of an overall impression of it. The individual aspects of the text, for instance, spelling, grammar, or organisation, should not be considered as separate entities.

Elliot, Plata, and Zelhart (1990) said that in scoring holistically, the raters consider a particular piece of writing for a holistic perspective. They examine it as a whole considering these factors—treatment of topic, selection of rhetorical method, word choice, grammar and mechanics—as elements which work together to establish a piece of writing. These factors—the total impression that is sought in holistic scoring—are the elements which work together to engage the readers.

Hobson and Steele (1992) regard the holistic scoring method as a quickly-judged assessment of a work's quality on the basis of such features as its organisation, vocabulary, grammar and spelling. Once again, a single reading is considered sufficient.

Moreover, holistic scoring usually needs two or more scorers to evaluate a piece of writing. A passage is examined for overall quality rather than to consider its individual characteristics. Instead of focusing on such separate features as grammar, organisation, punctuation, and style, it concentrates on forming a general impression of a piece of the writing.

In holistic scoring, essays are not given low scores only because they contain many mechanical errors, nor are they given high scores only because they are well organised. The readers consider the overall impression created by the students'

writing samples and assign the scores consistent with that overall impression (Glowcki, 1992).

Different Points of View about Analytic and Holistic Scoring Methods

This part discusses the differences between the analytic and holistic scoring methods. In regard to the primary-trait scoring method, it is not much employed because it is time-consuming to develop, and scoring criteria must be developed for each task. The primary-trait scoring method is not included because this research did not employ it. Nevertheless, it needs to be mentioned here that although only the holistic scoring method was used in this research, a degree of controversy is to be found between the use of analytic and holistic scoring methods employed by different researchers proposing various points of views.

Concerning the two scoring methods, analytic and holistic, some important aspects should be taken into consideration. Concerning analytic scoring, Gilfert and Harada (1992), and Weigle (2002), said it has some advantages over holistic scoring. First, analytic scoring is easier for inexperienced raters to understand and use the criteria in their separated categories than holistic scoring. Second, analytic scoring reliability is likely to increase when additional items are made to a discrete-point text, which results in the improvement of reliability when multiple scores are given to each script.

Parenthetically, it may be observed also that for ESL learners, it makes apparent to them their uneven profile across different aspects of writing; for instance, “a script may be quite well developed but have numerous errors, or a script may demonstrate an admirable control of syntax but have little or no content,” (p.120).

However, analytic scoring has some disadvantages. One of them, discussed by both Huot (1990) and Weigle (2002) is that analytic scoring is time consuming. It takes more time than holistic scoring. Practically, to score each script, readers have to make multiple decisions. Another drawback is that if a composition score combined from different scores is made, it is possible that a lot of the information provided by scale is lost. Moreover, since, in analytic scoring, the evaluation of different categories are combined into a single score, it is likely that even experienced raters may be confused, liable to introduce a bias to bring it into consonance with what they expect the total score to come out as, thus “corrupting” their analytical method. Finally, concentration on different categories of the rating may result in insufficient attention being given to the overall effect of the piece of writing. Inasmuch as the whole is often greater than the sum of its parts, a composite score may be very reliable but not entirely valid.

In terms of holistic scoring, it is another method of scoring written work. When scoring, the raters or scorers investigate it as a whole and match it with a model they are all produced with.

Weigle (2002) sees problems with the holistic scoring system, pointing out that it does not allow the rater to take into account the differing skills deployed by the individual second-language writer, such as correct use of grammar and organisation, and thus makes a rating comparative with his/her peers difficult.

However, holistic scoring more accurately responds to the reader’s appreciation of the text and consequently a readers’ personal reaction to a text results in holistic scoring that is more valid than analytic scoring. When scoring analytically, paying excessive attention may result in insufficient attention being paid to the meaning (White, 1984). Regarding authenticity, it is more natural to read holistically

than to read analytically. Practically, reading is performed to obtain information, not for assessing or scoring. It can be, therefore, concluded that holistic scoring is more authentic than analytic method (White, 1995).

Nevertheless, this researcher emphasised that no measurement could be completely reliable, due to changes in performance by individual examinees that have nothing to do with the measure. “Holistic scoring is able to achieve acceptably high reliability by adding a series of constraints to the economically efficient practice of general impression scoring,” (p. 23). That is to say, although holistic scoring is immediate and impressionistic, certain rules are applied that help to keep it valid and varifiable.

Additionally, Hamp-Lyons and Henning (1990) stated that holistic assessment of writing is based on the view that there is inherent overall quality of writing which is greater than the sum of constituent parts; therefore, writing should be evaluated as a whole.

According to Weigle (2002), the holistic scoring method has been employed broadly in writing assessment due to the following circumstance. First, holistic scoring has the advantage of being very rapid. It is quicker “to read a script once and assign a single score than to read it several times, each time focusing on a different aspect of writing (p. 112).” Second, White (1984, 1985) supported this view by holding that the holistic scoring method helps raters concentrate on the strength of a piece of writing instead of its weaknesses. Thus, a writer is rewarded for her/his overall performance.

One well-known holistic scoring system for ESL writing was developed by The Educational Testing Service (ETS) in 1986, for scoring the Test of Written English (TWE) (see Appendix J). It uses a six-point scale based on a criterion-

referenced scoring guide developed to ensure consistency in scoring. The standardised Test of Written English from ETS in Princeton, and many other ESL university groups, use the holistic grading procedure for determining proficiency levels of ESL students (Gilfert & Harada, 1992; Weigle, 2002).

To fortify the holistic scoring criteria, Charney (1984) suggested that writing evaluation using holistic scoring would be reliable and valid if the following criteria were practised substantially:

1. The design of the training and rating sessions should include any important details which will stabilise the reliability.
2. The readers or scorers should be qualified and have similar backgrounds.
3. The criteria should be followed strictly.
4. The criteria should be appropriate whether it was established for the scorers or constructed by the scorers themselves.
5. The scorers should work quickly and should be supervised.

For this part, White (1985) stated that to decrease unnecessary variability in scoring, and to obtain an acceptably high reliability, the following procedures should be practised:

1. All of the papers should be read at the same time and in the same place.
2. There should be a scoring criteria guide which provides clear descriptions for papers at different points on the scoring scale.
3. There should be sample papers which give examples of papers at each point of the scoring scale. These papers should be unmarked and given to readers to score during training to help the readers internalise the scoring scale.

4. Experienced readers should act as leaders to check on the reading in progress and check scores to ensure that all readers continue to score at the same level.

5. Two readers read each essay independently. If there is a difference larger than one point between the two readers, a third reader should read the paper and the score should be averaged.

Additionally, Mayo (1996) expressed his conviction that the holistic method is an important measure used to evaluate the underlying constructs of writing and that its use should be advocated.

In brief, writing evaluation is important because it not only reveals the improvements and shortcomings of student writing, but also assists the teachers to find the right means to better their students' writing competency. The scoring methods used widely are first, primary trait scoring, second, analytic scoring, and third holistic scoring. Primary trait scoring is the method used to assess a specific writing aspect. Scorers grade an essay in accordance with the degree of success it displays. It is time-consuming to create this type of scoring. It takes at least 60-80 hours per task because each scoring criterion must be crafted for every specific task. Analytic scoring focuses on mechanics of writing more than overall impression. Scorers are required to grade each aspect of a task separately, attending to grammatical accuracy, vocabulary, organisation, style etc. Then the scores are summed up to provide a rating. Conversely, holistic scoring differs from analytic scoring in that it concentrates on overall efficacy. Scorers examine the total impression of a piece of writing and grade it in consonance with the overall impression.

In conclusion, holistic scoring is recommended because; first, it is faster to read and assign a single score. Second, it helps raters focus on the strength of writing instead of concentrating on the specifics of grammar, so rater rewards the writer's overall performance. The result is that this kind of scoring more precisely responds to the reader's appreciation of the task. As a result, a reader's personal reaction to a text results in holistic scoring is more valid.

Genre in relation to personal writing

This part discusses genre and its relationship to personal writing. It first gives definitions of the term *genre* as defined by some researchers. Then, it provides different views of applying genre in the classroom from the three theoretical schools of genre: Sydney, the English for Specific Purposes, and New Rhetoric Schools. It concludes with the description of the genre-based approach and the writing pedagogy, and the summary.

Writing pedagogy now focuses on the structures associated with the genre-based approach, and while there is a prevalence of the academic and expository exercise as a subject for written assignment, sufficient latitude can be found to include the personal approach.

What is genre?

In various locations around the world, genre approaches have been influential in deciding how discourse is perceived, as well in developing literary education (Hyland, 2002). Theorists and practitioners have defined it variously, particularly when applying it in the classroom.

For example Swales (1990) claims that genre is an agreed form of expression, divided by expert members of what he refers to as the 'discourse community' into

classes, which are unified in that each has a communicative purpose. This purpose, the rationale of each form of genre, maintains its structure, style and content and allows it to be judged against an exemplar that has proved its worth by satisfying both its expert discourse community and its intended audience. It is seen to be a valuable communication category but one needing continuing evaluation.

For Johns (2002) on the other hand, the word *genre* relates to more or less sophisticated spoken or textual reactions to the challenges presented by social context.

Jogthong (2001) concluded that *genre* means a particular kind of discourse called forth by and suited to a particular social constellation. For her, examples of genre are abstracts, grant proposals, laboratory reports, poems, letters, editorials and novels.

Weigle (2002) on the other hand maintained that genre knowledge means knowledge about socially and culturally appropriate forms that writing takes in a given situation for a given purpose.

Clark (2003) noted that the word genre has been redefined, focusing on function more than forms. She referred to Aristotle's defining genre as being a way of text type classification.

In brief, genre is an easily recognised setting for a frequently encountered communicative social event, ranging from painting, film-making, advertising, essay and many other forms of writing, each of which requires expression in accordance with its own internal 'grammatical' rules, which themselves will constantly undergo development and change.

Genre and ESL/EFL composition instruction

According to Johns (2003), genre has its roots as an analytical description of different types of literature, including poetry, novels and essays, but has increasingly been used in reference to social discourse, both literary and non-literary, cultural and cognitive. An understanding of genre has value in teaching composition since it may act as a shortcut to culture already familiar to students undergoing composition instruction.

Where the genre theory is concerned, an approach can be made through three bases: of text, process and social practice, in each of which questions of value in improving classroom teaching of composition are raised. Three prominent genre-based approaches to composition are those of the Sydney, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and the New Rhetoric Schools.

The first of these—the Sydney School—has the richest and most developed background and, based on the theoretical work of Halliday (1978) and Sydney Functional Linguistics—employing theories of functional grammar and discourse and focusing on the lexico-grammatical and rhetorical realisation of the communicative purposes contained in a genre (Flowerdew, 2002)—is devoted to the teaching of three Australian groups engaged in written language development. The pedagogies have emphasised the practical interaction of language and culture, identified basic genres applying to the learners' situations and produced a large body of research literature of use to the teaching of composition. In identifying the texts associated with different genres, the Sydney School provides teachers of composition at all levels not only with the texts themselves, but guidance on how to use them, paying special attention to the different types of learners. A key motif of all Sydney School curricular is a genre-based five-step cycle, based on Vygotsky's work, which provides a framework of

teaching-learning analysis, discussion and student composition. In spite of their values, the school's research and pedagogies are not without problems. Inexperienced teachers might use them without the required degree of flexibility, or over-emphasise the importance of texts alone.

Next is the ESP, the more recently-developed English for Specific Purposes School, which employs a linguistic approach like that of the Sydney School, and places emphasis upon needs assessment and the situational aspects of the composition learners, but also recognises the importance of practical goals. Mostly designed for adult learners, ESP utilises genres relevant to them—as, for example, provided by business, law and technology-based texts.

In addition, just as the Sydney and English for Specific Purposes Schools overlap to some degree, so do the ESP and the New Rhetoric Schools. The latter focuses less on lexico-grammar and rhetorical structures but concentrates more on situational context, which means the purposes and functions of genres and the attitudes, beliefs, values and behaviours of the members of the discourse communities within which genres are situated (Flowerdew, 2002). This School-based principally in North America has produced valuable research on genres in the historical and social backgrounds through which they came into being. New Rhetoricians argue that texts are context-based and become invalid outside their contexts and social purposes. They should be used as examples of genre in the teaching situation rarely, and only within limitations, though there will be some occasions when their explicit use may be advantageous.

The genre-based approach and the writing process pedagogy

As summarised from Clark (2003), genre has a long history which can be traced back to Aristotle. His view that genre was a way to classify text types continued with little change until recently. In the last 30 years, however, the rigidity of this view of genre – that it was essentially literary, had identities of form and content, was almost unchanging and neatly classified—had been relaxed. The concept has been broadened, genre now seen as referring to social action, providing a basis through which complexes of persons, events and relations could be manipulated. From a functional point of view, classification of social events such as letter writing, advertising, speech-making, report-completion and school composition could each create its own genre and through repetition and the resulting familiarity elicit predictable reactions.

Where the teaching of writing process is concerned however, opposition to the genre-based approach has recently encountered opposition. Clark (2003) referred to the work of Emig (1971), Murray (1991) and Elbow (1995) for whom particularly effective learning through process and stress was placed on pedagogy, through personal and self-discovery rather than the imposition of institutional imperatives and fixed genres.

In Australia most notably, process pedagogy established that writing was best learned by explorative writing and revising, rather than the imposition of general forms, and by individual instruction. Opposition from the Australia School of genre, among others, points out that process pedagogy, emphasising individual expression and personal voice has had less success among learners from minority groups than expected, and has done little to allow them the empowerment hoped for. Implementing the genre-based approach would enable the students to acquire

particular features of genre and eventually would assist them to create genre more efficiently (Swales, 1990; Willaim & Colombe, 1993). In turn, scholars of the process movement have counter-attacked, maintaining that Australian School genre principles cited as of value to the writing-learning process are far less valid than claimed. They also assert that the acquisition and manipulation of useful genre can occur naturally, that is without being imposed. Explicit teaching of genres has encountered strong opposition from Freedman (1995), who says it is immersion in the school background that alone provides understanding of the context necessary for its successful employment, and such immersion is rarely a pedagogic option.

Equally strong opposition voices are raised in the controversy over the value of the personal narrative writing class. However, proponents such as Freire (1968) and Villanueva (1977) believe personal writing generates self-awareness and bridges the gap between private and the public. Though Bartholomae (1995) holds that as the work of the university is academic, the personal voice must be subsumed by the need to deploy the complexities of the scientific world, Elbow (1995) in particular maintained that the first-person essay is empowering.

In conclusion, this chapter described information about personal writing issues and related studies. It discussed different view points about personal writing and how it had been adopted in several perspectives; expressivism, psychoanalysis, and social dimension. Controversy about whether personal writing should be included at the university level was described. At the end of the chapter, information about Coxhead's *Academic Word List* (AWL), and error-free T-units which were employed in this study are presented, and it closes with discussion of scoring criteria and genre in relation to personal writing.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

This chapter describes the methodology. First it describes the context of the study, the participants and the raters. It then explains the procedures of data collection, the instrumentation and the data analysis. The next part presents the scoring criteria and the interrater reliability. It concludes with the summary of the chapter.

Context of the Study

This research was conducted at Chiang Mai University which provides academic writing courses for non-English major students. The academic writing course entitled *Read and Write I* was purposively selected because it was the first writing as well as academic writing course for undergraduates, since—prior to this course—none of these non-English major students had ever practised writing substantially before. Thus, it was assumed that the results would be reliable.

The Participants

The participants of the research were 36 female Thai third-year non-English-major undergraduates, from various subjects. They all had taken four prerequisite fundamental English courses. Two sections of the students who enrolled in the Read & Write I Course in the first academic semester, starting on June 4th, 2007 at Chiang Mai University, were purposively selected by the English Department.

Experimental group

There were 16 participants in the experimental group. Seven (43.7 %) were accounting majors; one (6.25%) was a financing and banking major, while five participants (31.25%) were psychology, and three participants (18.75 %) were political science majors. Geographically, four participants (25 %) were from Chiang Mai province, while the rest were from different parts of the country. Their age range was between 20 and 22 years old. They reported that when they were studying at the secondary level, one participant (6.7%) had practised writing once a week, six participants (40.0%) once every two weeks, three participants (20.0%) once a month, three participants (20.0%) once a semester, and two participants (13.3%) had never practised.

Control group

There were 20 participants in the control group. Academically, 16 (80%) were majoring in information technology, while the rest—four participants (20%)—were Japanese majors. Nine participants (45%) of them were from Chiang Mai, and the rest were from different parts of the country. Their age range was between 19 and 22. In terms of writing experience, none of them reported that they had practised writing substantially prior to this course. Five participants (25%) had practised writing once a week, two participants (12.5%) once every two weeks, six participants (31.3%) once a month, one participant (6.3%) once a semester, and five participants (25%) had never practised.

Subgroups

The students of both the experimental and the control groups were classified into three subgroups, good, average, and weak, in order to investigate whether the teaching method would be appropriate to different levels of students. Each group accommodated three participants. To categorise the students into three levels, the pretest scores were analysed employing Median and quartile. The students, then, were grouped into each level according to their scores. The Matched pair method was used to pair up three students from each level of both the experimental and the control groups who had the same score to be the representatives of each level.

Raters

There were three native speakers of Thai who rated all of the written products in terms of overall writing quality. They had similar background in that they were long-term professional university academics who held Ph. D. degree in English. Two of them, who had been teaching over 20 years, were from Chiang Mai University, and the third, who had been teaching more than ten years, was from Phranakhon Rajabhat University. All of them were experienced in teaching English writing and other English courses, and marking essays. They were trained to score using the holistic scoring criterion (see Appendix C) and practised scoring with an essay provided before commencing the marking and grading.

It appeared that—in terms of overall writing quality—the scores derived from the pretest and the posttest to find differences within groups, and from all assignments to find difference between the subgroups of the two groups, which were graded by the first rater, were not consistent with those of the other two. This rater was then asked to consider her scoring again. However, although she adjusted the scores, the results

were still inconsistent with the other two raters. For that reason, the scoring was performed again by the fourth rater, who was also an experienced English lecturer from Chiang Mai University. This time the results were more fully in accordance with those of the other two raters.

Research Procedures

The research procedures included teaching procedures, and data collection.

Teaching Procedures

The procedures (see appendix K) with the participants were as follows:

1. The first two classes were the same for both groups. In the first class, the students were oriented and informed about the course syllabus. In the second class, both groups were assigned by the researcher to write an academic essay on the same topic as a pretest, entitled *Watching Violence on TV: What Effects Does It Have on People*. The purpose was to assess their writing ability and to rank them into three subgroups to obtain samples. From the third class on, the procedures adopted for the two groups were different.
2. In order to enable the participants to generate ideas consistent with the topics provided, both groups were informed in their first lesson to primarily focus on generating the consistent content with the topics assigned prior to considering grammar accuracy. Both groups received content and grammar corrections performed by the researcher right from the beginning until the end of the course. However, content feedback was done first, while grammar corrections were provided in the subsequent drafts.

3. The control group was assigned to follow the class schedules arranged by the English Department. They were taught academic writing organisation—following the genre-based approach—right from the beginning, and from then on practised academic writing and kept writing journals. However, the journal writing was neither scored nor graded. The instruction and assignments of this group followed the writing textbook provided by the English Department of Chiang Mai University.
4. Conversely, the experimental group was assigned to practise personal writing initially before being taught academic writing. The participants spent 20 minutes writing about personal experiences at the beginning of the first class of each week, using the prompts given by the teacher, as well as reading and responding to the reading texts provided by the teacher. These participants practised academic writing organisation in week six. During weeks seven and eight, they started writing academic essays simultaneously with the control group and on the same topics.
5. Weeks nine and ten were occupied by the university midterm examination.
6. From week 11 until week 14, both groups continued practising writing academic essays on the same provided topics. In this particular period of time, the experimental group was continuing to write personal essays, whereas the control group was reading and responding to the texts they read.
7. In week 15, the students were asked to write an academic essay as the posttest on the same topic as the pretest to assess their overall writing quality as well as syntactic and vocabulary development within their own groups and between groups. Apart from that, they were asked to answer questions and give opinions about the writing instruction from the provided questionnaires and through the interviews.
8. The students had their final examination on week 16.

Data Collection

The data collection was conducted from the first week of June, 2007, to the third week of September in the same year. The major sources of data included (1) the pretest and the posttest, (2) the first drafts of five other written products including the midterm and the final examination papers, and (3) the questionnaires and the interviews. The topics of all assignments were: *Positive Effects of Exercising*, *What a Person Should Do to Stay Healthy*, *The Disadvantages of Living in the Big City*, as well as the midterm and final examination papers entitled *Benefits of Working Part-Time While Studying*, and *Reasons Why More and More Asian People Are Staying Single*. What follows describes the procedures of each aspect respectively.

Overall writing quality

In order to examine the participants' overall writing quality the following procedures were carried out:

1. To answer research question one, the pretest and the posttest of the control and the experimental groups were collected and rated by the three raters.
2. To answer research question four to see if there was a different progress made between the two groups, the scores obtained from the pretest and the posttest of both groups were analysed.
3. To answer research question five to see if there was any detailed development of writing during the study, the first drafts of each assignment and the midterm and the final examination papers of the three participants from each subgroup—good, average, and weak—of the two groups were marked and graded.

Syntactic development

To examine the participants' syntactic development and to answer research questions two and six the researcher conducted the investigation herself. The following procedures were carried out:

1. To answer research question two, the pretest and the posttest of the two groups were collected and examined.
2. To answer research question six, the first drafts of the assignments and the midterm and final examination papers of the three participants from each subgroup were collected and examined.

Vocabulary development

In terms of vocabulary development, the researcher examined the data herself employing the program *AWL*. The following procedures were carried out:

To answer research questions three and seven, the data from the pretest, the posttest, and the first drafts of the five written assignments including the midterm and the final examination papers of the three participants from each subgroup were collected and typed into the program *AWL*.

In brief, to examine overall writing quality and the development of syntax and vocabulary, the data collection was made embracing information from all of the written products namely, first, the pretest and the posttests, second, the first drafts of the assignments including the midterm and the final examination papers of the three participants of each subgroup, good, average, and weak. Regarding the former, they were used to study the differences within the control and the experimental groups, and

between the two groups, whereas the latter was used to examine the differences of the subgroups between the two groups.

Questionnaires

In order to evaluate the participants' attitudes towards the writing instruction, the following procedures were carried out:

To answer research question eight, the participants of the two groups were asked to respond by giving their opinions about the writing instructions received, answering questionnaires or open-ended questions given by the researcher. This was done after the participants had completed the posttest.

Interviews

To answer research question nine, the participants of the two groups—nine from each group—were interviewed so as to acquire more details of qualitative information about the participants' attitudes towards the two forms of writing instruction. These nine participants of each group represented three categories of the participants of each subgroup: three good, three average, and three weak. The interview was conducted after the students had performed the posttest and completed the questionnaires. It was conducted both orally and in writing, and tape-recorded. The tape-recording was later transcribed.

In short, the questionnaires were distributed and the interview was conducted to study the participants' attitudes towards the proposed writing instruction. Both questionnaires and interview were conducted at the end of the course.

Research Tools

The research tool consisted of (1) the pretest and the posttest (see Appendix D), (2) five pieces of written assignments during the course and the midterm and final examination papers (see Appendices E, F, G, H, I), (3) the questionnaires (see Appendix J), and (4) the interview.

Pretest and posttest

The pretest and the posttest were a single academic essay entitled *Watching Violence on TV: What Effects Does It Have on People*. Using the same topic permitted an exact comparison of the development of overall writing quality, syntax, and vocabulary before and after conducting the research.

Both the pretest and the posttest were collected and photocopied before submitting to the three raters to mark and grade. Scores obtained from the three raters were analysed to find the interrater reliability, using Pearson product-moment correlation.

Writing assignments, midterm and final examination papers

Apart from the pretest and posttest, every first draft of each assignment as well as the midterm and final examination papers, of the titles aforementioned, were used with the three participants of each subgroup as research tools in order to evaluate any improvement of overall writing quality, syntax, and vocabulary that occurred during the course.

Questionnaires

There were two different questionnaires, one for the experimental group, and the other for the control group. Each version contained four sections. The first to the third sections of the questionnaires shared the same content (see Appendices I & J). The following describes the details of each section.

1. The first section asked the students to provide demographic information, such as age, sex, year of study, major and minor subjects, results of English courses taken when studying at the secondary level, frequency of practising writing while studying at the secondary level and grades earned from all of the prerequisite courses at the university level.

2. The second section comprised two parts. The first (no. 1- 9) required the students to give information about their own English proficiency, while the second (no. 1-3) asked the students what had caused them problems while studying this course.

3. The third section, containing three items—item one containing one question, item two comprising five sub-questions, and item three five sub-questions—asked the students to give opinions about the writing course and their department in it, to show how they responded towards the course while studying.

4. In the fourth section there were two different versions. One was for the experimental, and the other was for the control group. Both had six items, and spaces were provided at the end of the section for the students to write in if they wished to give more information about their opinions regarding the course and their estimation of the success of practising personal writing before academic writing. For the control group, space was also provided at the end of the section for the students to indicate their opinions about the course. The students were asked to express their approval or

otherwise of the process of writing they had encountered, and whether they should have practised writing about their own experiences adequately before studying academic essays.

In each statement, there were five choices of Likert Scale for the students to rate. The rating was divided into five categories: 1-5 in ascending order of approval, with the first category expressing approval very weakly, the second weakly, the third moderately, the fourth strongly, and the fifth very strongly.

Validity of the questionnaires

The questionnaires were designed in consultation with two experts in order to ensure the appropriateness of each item. They were then revised following the advice given. To avoid any misunderstandings likely to arise from the subjects being obliged to express themselves in English, the questionnaires were translated into Thai. In order to ensure that the contents of the questionnaire were relevant, and the language clear and understandable, the draft questionnaire was then piloted with 25 Chiang Mai University students with similar background to the project informants enrolled for study Read & Write I Course.

Following consultation with the two experts, some changes were made to sections 2 and 4 of the questionnaire before using it with the participants.

1. In Section 2:

- (a) Item nine was adjusted to eradicate ambiguity and achieve greater precision by changing from, “Having more ability to generate the supporting details” to, “Having ability to generate the supporting details of each topic.”

- (b) Item four, which read “Lack of practising writing English,” was removed because in meaning it was very close to the existing item three, which read, “Lack of experience in writing English...”
2. There were three changes in section 4, two concerning the control group and the other the experimental group.
- (a) There had initially been eight items for the control group to respond to, but following adjustment there were six. The last two items were removed after advice and piloting because they did not sufficiently relate to the content. The deleted items were as follows:
- You think that practising personal writing will help you read better.
 - You think that practising personal writing will lessen anxiety when you do academic writing.
- (b) In section 4 of the experimental group, one of the original had eight items but one item which said, “Helped you write the later assignments more easily after you had practised writing for quite a while” was removed because its meaning was repetitive in respect of item five, which said, “Helped you write the later assignments more easily as a result of becoming familiar with writing.”

In brief, after the questionnaires were piloted, two changes in section two, and three in section four were made for the purpose of validation of appropriateness.

Interview

The purpose of the interview was to gain more insight into and qualitative information about the students’ attitudes towards the two forms of writing instruction

they encountered, namely personal writing and academic writing. Interviewing is the common means to collect in-depth data in language learning strategies since it offers retrospective information on participants' recollections of the instruction they had been exposed to (Chamot & El-Dinary, 1999). It was then expected that the interview would provide useful detail on how the participants felt about the writing instruction and the problems they had encountered. Each participant interview took approximately 10 minutes. There were 18 participants all together. Nine were from the experimental group, and the other nine from the control group. The interview was conducted orally and was both recorded in writing and tape. The tape-recordings were later transcribed.

Data Analysis

The process of data analysis is described as follows:

Overall writing quality

To study the overall writing quality, the written products namely: (1) the pretest and the posttest, and (2) five pieces of written assignments during the course, and the midterm and final examination papers, were analysed. The data analysis was explained as follows:

1. The scores of the pretest and the posttest were analysed using a dependent *t*-test to investigate the difference within groups.
2. The gain received from the scores of the pretest and the posttest were analysed using an independent *t*-test to investigate the differences between the two groups.
3. The scores obtained from the written assignments during the course and the midterm and final examination papers of the three participants of each

subgroup between the two groups were analysed to find the differences, by applying an independent *t*-test. (SPSS, Thailand Co., Ltd., Bangkok, Thailand)

Syntactic development

The following procedures were followed:

1. The error-free T-unit was employed to measure all of the written work.

The number of error-free T-units in each piece of writing was counted and rendered as percentages.

2. The scores obtained from percentage calculation were then analysed using a *t*-test to compare the differences between the three participants of good, average, and weak between the control and the experimental groups. What follows here is an explanation of how error-free T-units are evaluated.

(a) A correct simple sentence is counted as one T-unit. If a participant wrote a grammatically correct simple sentence, she received one point, e.g.

- Grouchy is a small caterpillar. (1 error-free T unit)

(b) A compound sentence or a compound-complex sentence is counted as two T-units or more. If a participant wrote a grammatically correct compound sentence or a compound-complex sentence, she received two points or more, e.g.

- Grouchy is a small caterpillar, and he is very hungry. (2 error-free T-units)
- Grouchy has eaten through five strawberries which were left on the ground, but as he is still hungry, he is now looking for more to eat. (3 error-free T-units)
- Grouchy is a small caterpillar which is very hungry, and he is also moody. (2 error-free T-units)

3. A complex sentence is counted one T-unit. If a participant wrote a grammatically correct complex sentence, she received a single point, e.g.

- Grouchy is a small caterpillar which is very hungry. (1 error-free T-unit)
- Grouchy has eaten through five strawberries which were left on the ground. (1 error-free T-unit)

4. As for a run-on sentence or comma splices, they are counted as two T-units or more. If a participant wrote a grammatically correct run-on sentence, she received two points or more, e.g.

- Grouchy is very hungry because he has not eaten for a few days, and he is also moody because he cannot find anything to eat, so he is crawling on a branch of a big tree, he is sniffing around to find something to eat. (4 error-free T-units)

5. Spelling, vocabulary errors, comma splices, and punctuation had no effect on the scoring, i.e.

- Grouchy is a catterpillar and he is very hungry and he is moody too.

This sentence has a misspelling of *caterpillar*, and does not contain a comma.

However, it is not considered wrong since it can still convey the meaning.

6. To ensure the syntactic developmental investigation employing error-free T-unit analysis was fair and validated, and when encountering some problematic sentences in written products which might cause erroneous decision in investigating, the researcher consulted with two experts, and a native speaker of English, asking for their advice and opinions.

The following items show examples of the participants' T-units derived from their written work, and examples of erroneous attempts which failed to score.

1. *In my opinier, first, children will copy violence from TV.* This sentence has a misspelling of *opinion*. However it is scored one error-free T-unit since it is nevertheless intelligible.

2. *Finally, you will get older lately.* It is assumed that the writer of this sentence wanted to say *slowly* instead of *lately*. However, since it is grammatically correct, it is counted one error-free T-unit.

3. *They are make you over weight.* This sentence is considered wrong because it used the wrong verb form.

4. *If a person always exercises.* This sentence is considered grammatical wrong because it was not completed. It had only the if-clause.

5. *When people often watch violence on TV.* This shows an unfinished clause which is considered wrong.

6. *Parents should take care their children about violence behaviour on TV.* This sentence is considered wrong because of not having *of* after *take care*, and using the wrong part of speech of *violence*.

7. *according, there are many kinds of pollution such as air pollution, water pollution, and noise pollution.* This sentence is scored one error-free T-unit. Starting the sentence with *according* is not considered wrong since the whole sentence is intelligible.

This part describes the process of syntactic analysis. It explains how to use the error-free T units and to calculate the scores obtained from the analysis to find the differences within both groups and between the subgroups. It also displays some examples derived from the participants' written work.

Vocabulary development

To investigate the development of vocabulary, the following procedures described below were followed:

1. The pretest and the posttest, the written assignments, and the midterm and final examination papers performed by the participants of the subgroups during the course, were collected and typed before analysing.
2. The analysis was performed through the website -- www.nottingham.ac.uk/~alzsh3/acvocab. After accessing the website, the *AWL HIGHLIGHTER* was selected. Then the entire corpus of the typed-written texts was transferred into the hard-drive in a personal computer to be analysed. The program revealed the results with the academic words highlighted in bold type. The academic words thus appearing in each piece of written work were then counted and statistically analysed, employing a dependent *t*-test to compare the differences of vocabulary development within groups, and an independent *t*-test between the subgroups of the two groups.

Attitudes

Analysis of the data collected was carried out through:

1. Frequency counts to report demographic data
2. Percentage to display the demographic information, and
3. Transcription and interpretation of the interview.

Scoring criteria

The present study used holistic scoring criteria to rate the written products in terms of overall writing quality. It employed the TOEFL Writing Scoring Guide (ETS 1996) (see Appendix C) which is a well-known model scale holistic scoring

rubric in ESL. The scale comprises six levels ranging from 1-6, and a score half way between two points on the scale (i.e. 5.5, 4.5, 3.5, 2.5, 1.5) can also be given. It includes descriptors of syntactic and rhetorical qualities of writing proficiency. A written work receiving six points indicates that it is a well-written and competent piece of writing, while the written product receiving only one point means the writing was incompetent (Pongsiriwet, 2001; Weigle, 2002; Leeds, 2003).

Interrater reliability

To ensure the rating was reliable, three long-term academically experienced university professionals were asked to rate all of the written work – namely, the pretest and the posttest, all five written assignments—three written assignments, one midterm examination paper and one final examination paper—in terms of overall writing quality. Then the scores gained from the rating of all the papers were statistically analysed employing Pearson product-moment correlation to investigate interrater reliability.

The following tables show (1) the interrater reliability of the pretest and the posttest, and (2) the interrater reliability of all five written assignments.

Table 1 Interrater reliability results of pretest and posttest

Group		Pearson Correlation	Rater 1	Rater 2	Rater 3
Control	Pretest	Rater 1	1	0.878*	0.866*
		Rater 2	0.878*	1	0.871*
		Rater 3	0.866*	0.871*	1
	Posttest	Rater 1	1	0.888*	0.871*
		Rater 2	0.888*	1	0.744*
		Rater 3	0.871*	0.744*	1
Experimental	Pretest	Rater 1	1	0.575*	0.726*
		Rater 2	0.575*	1	0.657*
		Rater 3	0.726*	0.657*	1
	Posttest	Rater 1	1	0.703*	0.832*
		Rater 2	0.703*	1	0.520*
		Rater 3	0.832*	0.520*	1

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 1 shows the correlation of the three raters for scoring on overall writing quality of the pretest and the posttest of both the control and the experimental groups. Regarding the former, the correlation between rater 1 and rater 2, rater 1 and rater 3, and rater 2 and rater 3 was found strongly positive at 0.87, 0.86, and 0.87 for the pretest, as well as 0.88, 0.87, and 0.74 for the posttest. This indicates that the correlation between the raters was high.

Table 2 Interrater reliability result of all written assignments

Group	Students' English Level	Pearson Correlation	Rater 1	Rater 2	Rater 3
Control	Good	Rater 1	1	0.891	0.999*
		Rater 2	0.891	1	0.908
		Rater 3	0.999*	0.908	1
	Average	Rater 1	1	0.878	0.866
		Rater 2	0.878	1	1.000*
		Rater 3	0.866	1.000*	1
	Weak	Rater 1	1	0.999*	0.999*
		Rater 2	0.999*	1	1.000*
		Rater 3	0.999*	1.000*	1
Experimental	Good	Rater 1	1	0.875	0.564
		Rater 2	0.875	1	0.893
		Rater 3	0.564	0.893	1
	Average	Rater 1	1	0.814	0.64
		Rater 2	0.814	1	0.967
		Rater 3	0.64	0.967	1
	Weak	Rater 1	1	0.998*	0.999*
		Rater 2	0.998*	1	0.993
		Rater 3	0.999*	0.993	1

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 2 displays the correlation of the three raters for scoring overall writing quality of all five assignments completed by the participants of the three subgroups. The results were inconsistent. The correlation was found significant neither with every pair of raters nor in every subgroup. Regarding the control group, the correlation was found significant between rater one and three—0.999—from the good

level, and rater two and three—1.000—from the average level. For the weak level, it was found significant in every pair of raters. In terms of the experimental group, the correlation was found significant only in the weak level between rater one and two—0.998—and rater one and three—0.999.

In conclusion, this chapter describes the method of the research embracing the participants, raters, data collection, research tools, and data analysis. The participants were undergraduate-non English majors who enrolled in a writing course. The raters were three experienced English-university lecturers. The data were collected in terms of overall writing quality, syntactic development, vocabulary development and attitudes towards the writing instruction. The sources of data were the pretest and the posttest, assignments, midterm and final examination papers, and questionnaires and interviews. In regard to data analysis, a dependent *t*-test was used to analyse the scores of the pretest and the posttest to investigate the differences within groups. An independent *t*-test was employed to the gain received from the scores of the pretest and the posttest to investigate the differences between the two groups. The scores obtained from the written assignments, as well as the midterm and final examination papers of each subgroup between the two groups were analysed to find the differences applying an independent *t*-test. To investigate interrater reliability regarding overall writing quality, Pearson product-moment correlation was employed. The results show significant correlation between the three raters.

CHAPTER 4

Findings

This chapter presents the findings of the research. The research questions, previously posted in Chapter 1, are reiterated and answered respectively in relation to the data collected. The findings, in response to research questions one to seven, are tabulated and summarily discussed. Regarding research questions eight and nine, the findings are qualitatively described. Additional description relating to the findings is further presented in Chapter 5.

Answer to Research Question 1

Are there any differences between the pretest and posttest results in terms of overall writing quality in both the experimental and control groups?

Table 3 Overall writing quality within groups

Group	Test	n	$\bar{x}$	SD	t-test
Control	Pretest	20	1.93	0.654	4.53*
	Posttest	20	2.59	0.904	
Experimental	Pretest	16	1.97	0.361	7.41*
	Posttest	16	2.68	0.507	

($p < 0.05$)

To explore the differences of overall writing quality within both groups, Table 3 shows that the mean score of the pretest of the control group was 1.93 while that of the experimental group was 2.59. The posttest mean score of the control group was 1.97, and

that of the experimental group 2.68. When the mean scores of the pretest and the posttest of each group were compared, the posttest result was higher. This indicates that overall writing quality within groups of each group was different at the significant level of 0.05. It can be concluded that both groups improved their overall writing quality over the duration of the course.

The result of the experimental group in particular was consistent with those of Allen (2000), Moran (2004), and Mlynarczyk (2006), in that their students' overall writing quality developed after practising personal writing extensively.

Answer to Research Question 2

Are there any differences between the pretest and posttest results in terms of syntactic development in both the experimental and the control groups?

Table 4 Syntactic development within groups

Group	Test	n	$\bar{x}$	SD	t-test
Control	Pretest	20	5.05	4.740	-0.274
		20	5.45	4.478	
	Posttest				
Experimental	Pretest	16	5.88	6.859	-0.028
		16	5.94	5.591	
	Posttest				

($p < 0.05$)

In terms of syntactic development, Table 4 shows that the pretest mean score of the control group was 5.05, while that of the experimental group was 5.88, and the posttest mean score of the control group was 5.45, whereas that of the experimental was 5.94.

This indicates that syntactic development within groups was not found different at the significant level of 0.05. This reveals that, statistically, there was no syntactic development

found in either group. The findings of this research were not consistent with those of Fathman and Whalley (1990), and Chandler (2003), whose learners improved accuracy after practicing writing, having been given various kinds of error correction. Nonetheless, it was consistent with Padgate (1991) and Fazio (2001), who investigated the effect of differential feedback on the journal writing, and found no significant difference in accuracy.

Answer to Research Question 3

Are there any differences between the pretest and posttest results in terms of vocabulary development in both the experimental and the control groups?

Table 5 Vocabulary development within groups

Group	Test	n	$\bar{X}$	SD	<i>t</i> -test
Control	Pretest	20	5.90	4.471	0.229
	Posttest	20	5.60	3.789	
Experimental	Pretest	16	7.50	4.604	0.188
	Posttest	16	7.19	4.820	

($p < 0.05$)

Regarding vocabulary development, Table 5 shows that the pretest mean score of the control group to be 5.90, while that of the experimental group was 7.50, and the posttest mean score of the control group was 5.60, whereas that of the experimental group was 7.19.

This indicates that vocabulary development within groups was not found to be different at the significant level of 0.05. This means, statistically, no vocabulary development was found in either group.

This was not consistent with some previous studies such as that of Sujana (2000), who found that her fourth-year English major students had made some progress in the cross-

sectional development of vocabulary. It was plausible that Sujana's students were more experienced in that they were fourth-year English major students, while the participants of this research were third-year non-English major students.

Answer to Research Question 4

Are there any differences when we compare the gain between the pretest and posttest results in terms of overall writing quality between the experimental and the control groups?

Table 6 Gain of overall writing quality

Group	n	$\bar{X}$	SD	t-test
Control	20	0.67	0.658	-0.24
Experimental	16	0.71	0.382	

$$(p < 0.05)$$

To compare the differences of overall writing quality between the two groups, Table 6 shows the gain derived from the pretest and posttest results of the two groups. The mean score of the control group was 6.67 while that of the experimental group was 0.71. The results show no differences at the significant level of 0.05. This means that both groups had different progress. The result was inconsistent with the previous studies already mentioned under Table 3.

Answer to Research Question 5

Are there any differences if we compare the overall writing quality of good, average and weak students between the two groups?

Table 7 Overall writing quality from all assignments between subgroups

Group	Students' English Level	n	$\bar{x}$	SD	t-test
Control	Good	3	2.87	0.493	-3.16*
Experimental		3	3.94	0.324	
Control	Average	3	2.89	0.518	-1.01
Experimental		3	3.29	0.453	
Control	Weak	3	2.16	0.259	-1.59
Experimental		3	2.81	0.668	

($p < 0.05$)

To investigate the writing process in detail of students with various levels of competency, the findings are described and compared respectively regarding each level of the participants: good, average and weak students.

Regarding the good level, the mean score of the control group was 2.87, while that of the experimental group was 3.94.

At the average level, the mean score of the control group was 2.89, while that of the experimental group was 3.29.

In terms of the weak level, mean score of the control group was 2.16, while that of the experimental group was 2.81.

Table 7 reveals that there were differences at the significant level of 0.05 between the good level of both groups, but no statistically significant difference at the level of 0.05 in the average and weak levels. This suggests that personal writing is more beneficial to the good level students than to the others.

Answer to Research Question 6

Are there any differences if we compare the syntactic development in the writings of good, average and weak students between the two groups?

Table 8 Syntactic development between subgroups

Students'					
Group	English Level	n	$\bar{x}$	SD	t-test
Control	Good	3	7.13	2.809	0.357
Experimental		3	6.53	0.757	
Control	Average	3	6.53	1.101	0.254
Experimental		3	6.27	1.447	
Control	Weak	3	5.40	2.615	0.162
Experimental		3	5.07	2.411	

($p < 0.05$)

To examine syntactic development derived from all assignments, and midterm and final examination papers, the findings are described and compared respectively regarding each level of the participants: good, average and weak students.

At the good level, the mean score of the control group was 7.13, whereas that of the experimental group was 6.53.

Regarding the average level, the mean score of the control group was 6.53, while that of the experimental group was 6.27.

For the weak level, the mean score the control group was 5.40, while the experimental group was 5.07.

This reveals that there was no difference at the significant level of 0 .05 of the mean score of all the assignments, midterm and final examination papers of the good, average and weak participants in terms of syntactic development of both groups. As displayed in Table

8, it can be concluded that there was no difference in ability between the two groups in terms of syntactic development.

Answer to Research Question 7

Are there any differences if we compare the vocabulary development in the writings of good, average and weak students between the two groups?

Table 9 Vocabulary development of students between subgroups

Group	Students' English Level	n	$\bar{X}$	SD	t-test
Control	good	3	4.67	2.532	-1.233
Experimental		3	6.73	1.419	
Control	average	3	6.33	1.332	0.580
Experimental		3	5.80	0.872	
Control	weak	3	4.20	1.510	-0.751
Experimental		3	5.20	1.744	

$(p < 0.05)$

To investigate vocabulary development of participants of each subgroup, the data derived from all assignments, and midterm and final examination papers were analysed using AWL, the findings are described and compared respectively regarding each level of the participants: good, average and weak students.

At the good level, the mean score of the control group was 4.67, while that of the experimental group was 6.73.

Regarding the average level, the mean score of the control group was 6.33, while that of the experimental group was 5.80.

For the weak level, the mean score of the control group was 4.20, while that of the experimental group was 5.20.

This demonstrates that there were no differences at the significant level of 0.05 of the mean score in terms of vocabulary development of both groups. As shown in Table 9, rationalisation can be drawn from the aforementioned Table 5.

However, this table also shows that the mean score of the good writers of the experimental group was higher than that of the control group. It was likely that the former's practice of personal writing before academic writing helped them acquire greater knowledge of vocabulary.

Answer to Research Question 8

What are the opinions of the two groups about the teaching of writing in their course disclosed by their responses to the questionnaire?

This part of the research reports the findings supplied by the fourth section of questionnaires of both the experimental and the control groups. For the experimental group, the fourth section contained six statements, and for the control group six statements, to respond to.

The participants of the experimental group were asked to give their opinions and an estimation of the success of practising personal writing before academic writing. The control group was asked to give opinions about the process of writing, and whether they should have practised writing about their own experiences adequately before studying academic essays.

To respond to this particular section of the questionnaire the participants of both groups were asked to rate their degrees of agreement to six statements respectively about

personal writing on a five-unit scale. The findings of the experimental group are posted first followed with the findings of the control group.

Findings from Questionnaire Completed by the Experimental Group

The fourth section for the experimental group contained six statements. What follows are the sentence responses to the statements, expressed as percentages and also rendered as bar graphs.

The first statement

The first statement required a response to a statement that personal writing had helped them acquire more vocabulary. The findings show that 6.25% agreed to the statement, weakly, 25% moderately, 50% strongly, and 18.75% very strongly.

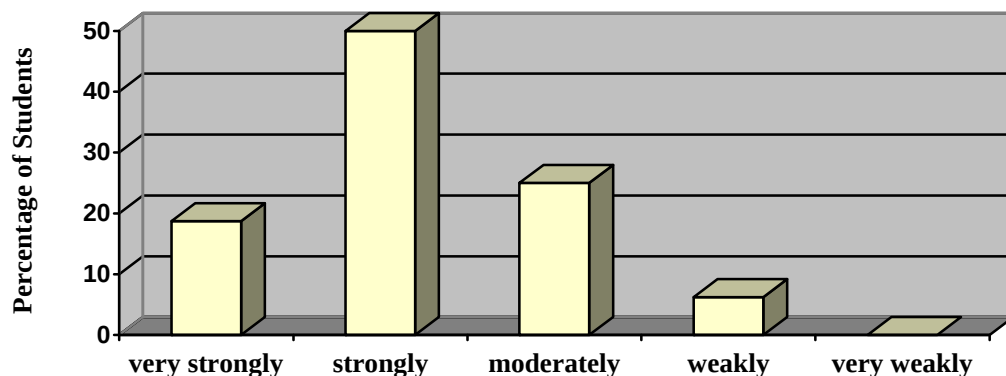


Figure 4.1 Response to the First Statement

The second statement

The second statement required the participants to respond to a statement that personal writing had helped refresh their knowledge of grammar usage. Twelve point five percent agreed with the statement moderately, 50% strongly, and 37.50 very strongly.

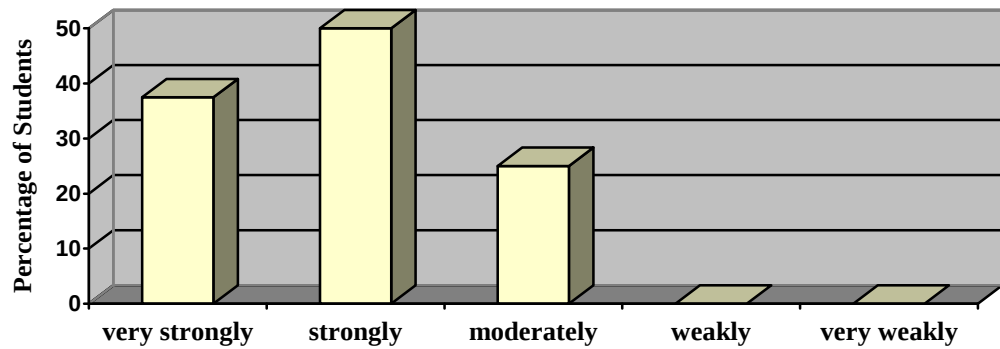


Figure 4.2 Response to the Second Statement

The third statement

The third statement stated that personal writing had helped the participants become more confident as a result of starting practising writing about familiar topics before academic writing, 31.25% agreeing moderately, 25% strongly, and 43.75% very strongly.

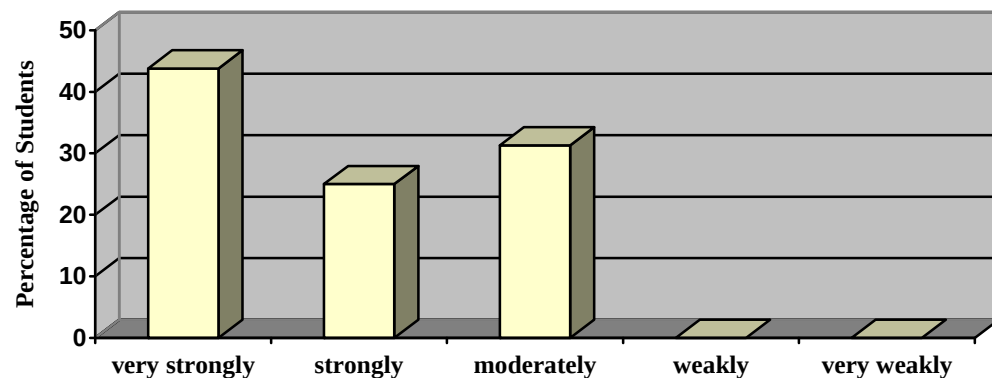


Figure 4.3 Response to the Third Statement

The fourth statement

To the fourth statement that personal writing had helped them write later assignments more easily as a result of becoming familiar with writing, 6.25% agreed weakly, 6.25% moderately, 56.25% strongly, and 31.25% very strongly.

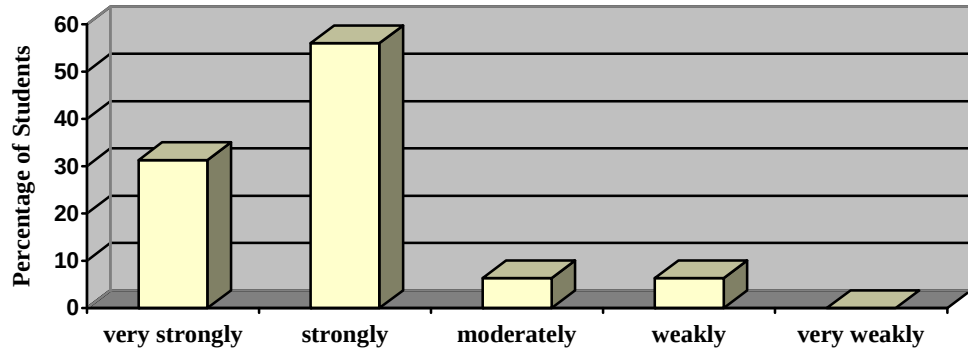


Figure 4.4 Response to the Fourth Statement

The fifth statement

To the fifth statement, that personal writing had helped them write consistently following the topics assigned, 12.50% agreed moderately, 62.5% strongly, and 25% very strongly.

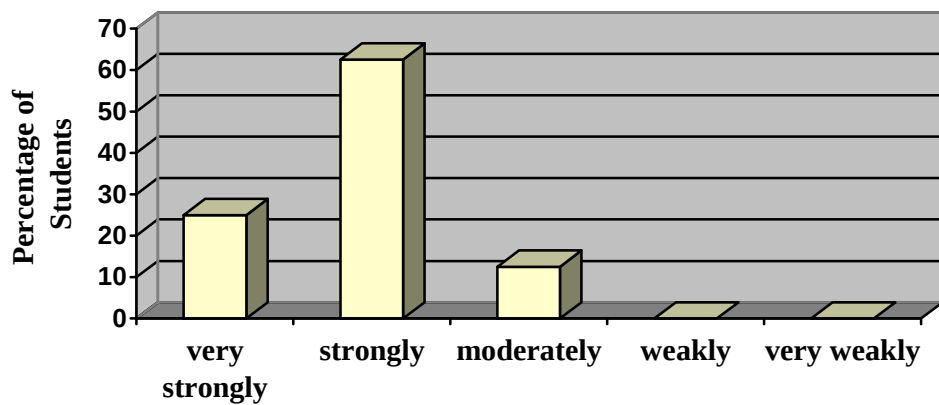


Figure 4.5 Response to the Fifth Statement

The sixth statement

The sixth statement stated that personal writing had helped them perform academic writing correctly in regard to grammar structure and vocabulary, 18.8% agreeing moderately, 75% strongly, and 6.3% very strongly.

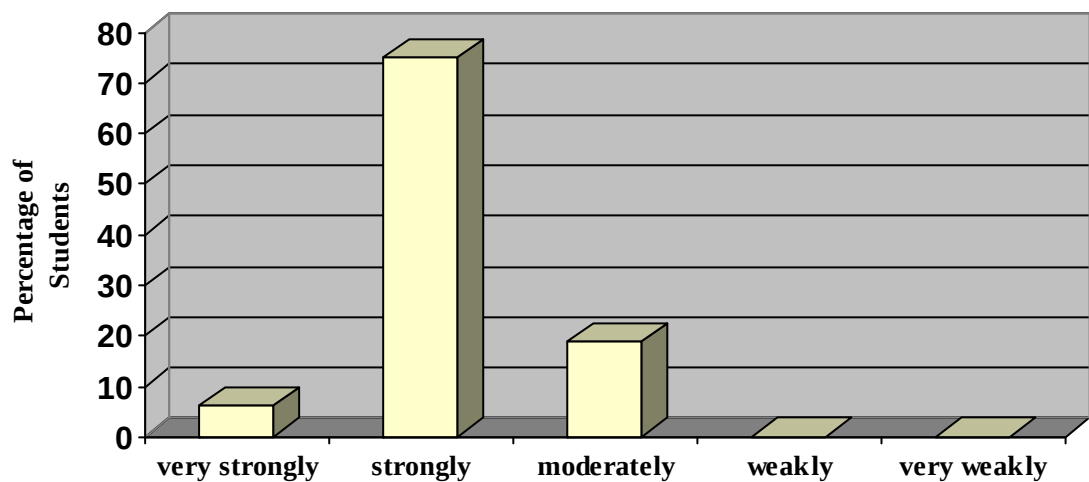


Figure 4.6 Response to the Sixth Statement

Briefly, the findings obtained from the questionnaires of the experimental group showed that they had positive attitudes towards personal writing, stating that it had helped them gain more knowledge of both grammar, vocabulary, and writing familiarisation, as well as increasing confidence and enabling them to write consistently following the topics provided.

Findings from Questionnaire Completed by the Control Group

This section was created based on the observations of the researcher while conducting the research. The researcher observed that the experimental and the control groups reacted to the writing course differently. Emotionally, the experimental group looked relaxed and was enthusiastic, whereas the participants of the control group were rather discouraged and

slow. Academically, the experimental group performed better in generating ideas and applying the knowledge of writing organisation in writing better than the control group although the latter started studying writing organisation and practised academic writing before the former. For that reason, the researcher wanted to know what the control group would think about the alternative way to improve their academic writing and lessen their anxiety. This section was then created to learn control group opinion towards personal writing, although the statements asking the control group to respond are not directly relevant to their academic writing.

Although what the participants of this group say here is not directly relevant to their academic writing, their admission that their inadequacies hindered their struggle to write academically, and belief that some preliminary personal writing would have been beneficial in this respect, provided valuable indirect support for such a preparatory course.

This fourth section for the control group comprised six statements. The details following reveal the percentage of the responses to the questionnaires.

The first statement

The first statement was that a writing course should allow students to practise writing about what they know from their own experience regarding family, close friends, health, preoccupations, and boyfriends, so that they become familiar with writing before writing about academic subjects. Twelve point four percent of the participants agreed moderately, 35.0% strongly, and 52.6% very strongly.

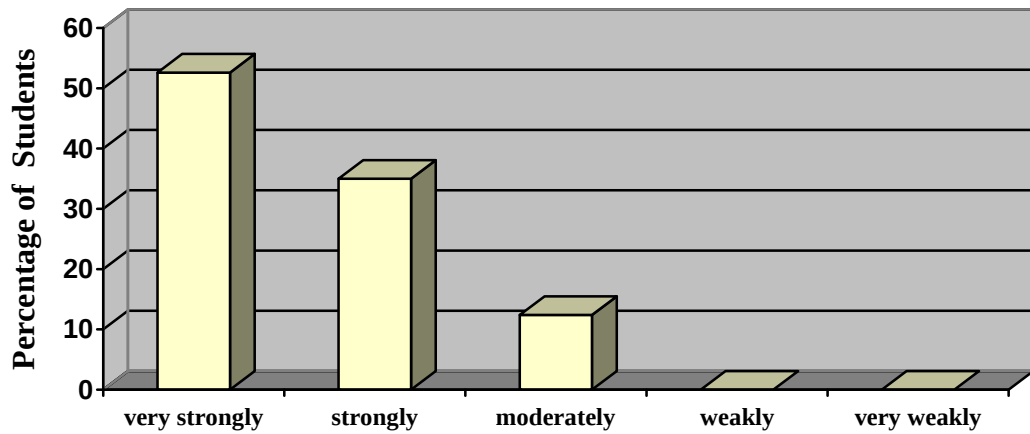


Figure 4.7 Response to the First Statement

The second statement

The second statement stated that the participants thought practising personal writing would have assisted them to gain more vocabulary. Twenty-one point one percent agreed moderately, 52.6% strongly, 26.3% very strongly.

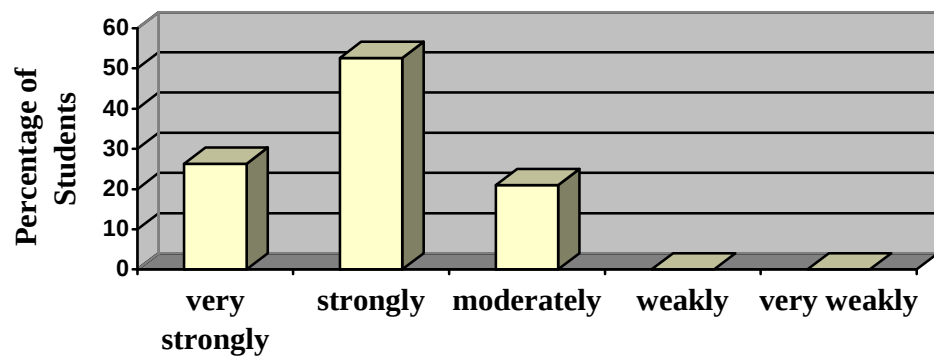


Figure 4.8 Response to the Second Statement

The third statement

The third statement stated that the participants thought personal writing would have helped review the knowledge of grammar, structures, and general usage before practising academic writing, 10.5% agreeing moderately, 57.5% strongly, 31.6% very strongly.

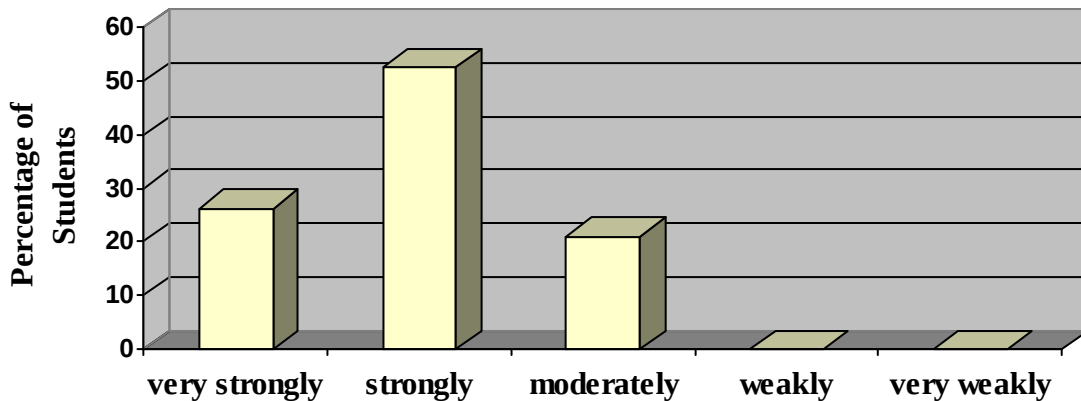


Figure 4.9 Response to the Third Statement

The fourth statement

As the fourth statement suggested, the participants thought that practising personal writing before academic writing would have helped build up their confidence and encourage them to write, 15.8% agreed moderately, 57.9% strongly, 26.3% very strongly.

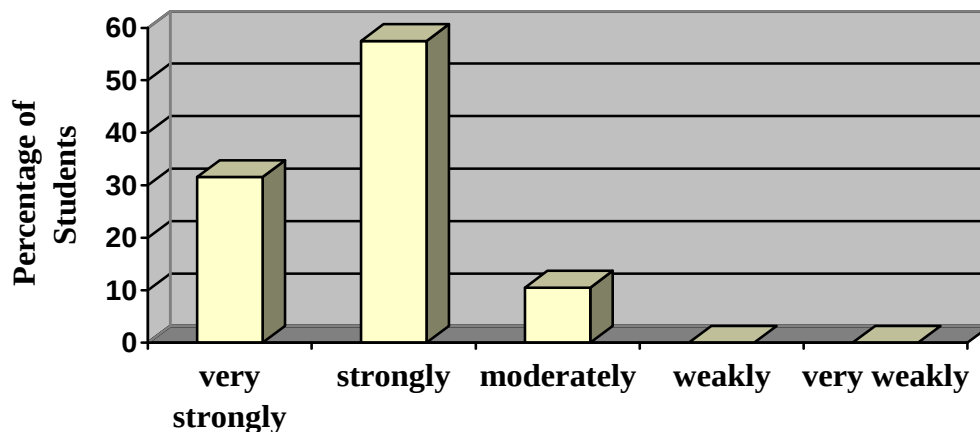


Figure 4.10 Response to the Fourth Statement

The fifth statement

The fifth statement was that the participants thought personal writing would have helped them perform the new writing assignments more easily because they would have already become more accustomed to writing, 10.5% agreeing moderately, 57.9% strongly, 31.6 very strongly.

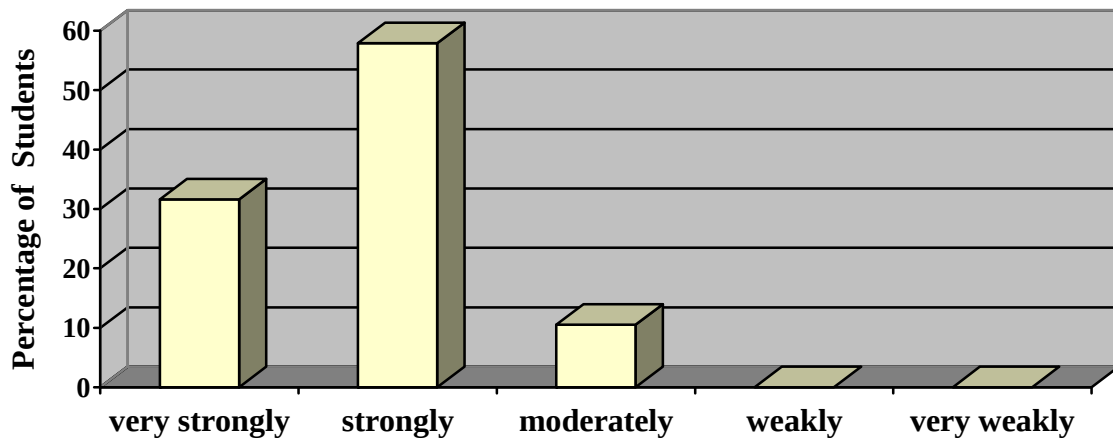


Figure 4.11 Response to the Fifth Statement

The sixth statement

To the sixth statement, that participants thought personal writing would have helped them write academic writing more efficiently and consistently in accordance with topics assigned, 31.6% agreed moderately, 52.6% strongly, and 15.8% very strongly.

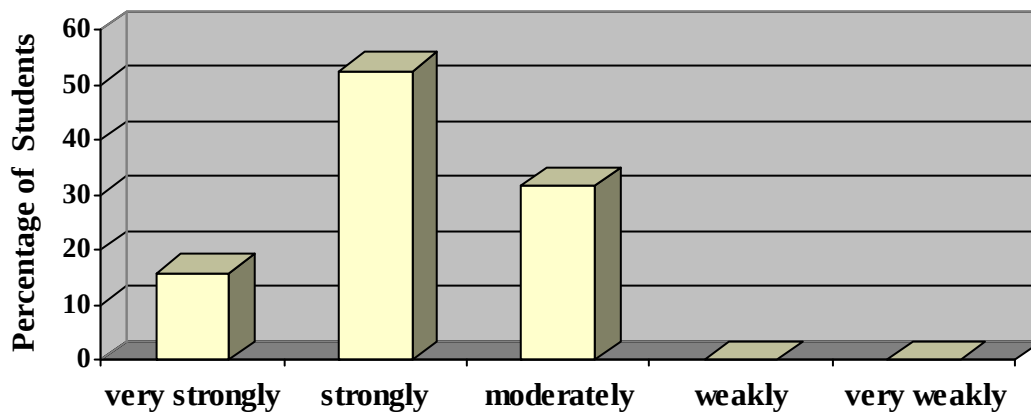


Figure 4.12 Response to the Sixth Statement

Shortly, the control group also had positive attitudes towards personal writing. They stated that had they practised personal writing prior to academic writing, they would have been helped to familiarise with writing, written academic writing, more effectively, and gained more knowledge of grammar and vocabulary. Additionally, they would have become more confident and performed academic writing better.

Answer to Research Question 9

What are the opinions of the two groups about the teaching of writing in their course disclosed in the interview?

This section was included in the research so as to investigate the attitudes and opinions of the participants of the control group towards and about the process of writing. Additionally, the experimental group was required to estimate their success in practising personal writing. The information was obtained from interviews with the 18 participants. Nine participants were from the experimental group, the other nine belonged to the control group.

Findings of the Interviews with the Experimental Group

The following is the interview information provided by the experimental group in reporting how they had responded to personal writing.

In response to the first statement, the participants of this group maintained that personal writing had enhanced their knowledge of vocabulary. Some of the participants expressed opinions which revealed that when they wrote, they had to compel themselves to think hard in order to discover the particular words or key words that would convey their message correctly, so that the reader would understand.

Moreover, one participant said, *“I think it is important to choose the right words to make ourselves understood. Therefore, it would be useful to start writing with easy topics because it would be easier to find the appropriate vocabulary.”*

In this same aspect some others added that they felt they had gained more vocabulary because there were various topics for them to write on. The more various the topics t, the more vocabulary they would acquire.

When confronted by the second statement—that practising personal writing helped refresh the knowledge of grammar usage—they replied that both personal writing and the process of drafting and revising were really helpful in reviewing their grammar knowledge. One said, *“Before this course, I did not know what my grammar was like. After the first story, I realised how bad it was. However, the practice of writing made me think back to what I had learned before. It seemed somehow I could recall it.”* Another participant added, *“It was like my grammar examiner. It warned me what I should do to improve it.”*

The next statement, that practising personal writing helped them become more confident in their ability to write as a result of starting practising writing about familiar topics before academic writing, drew the response that they believed practising personal writing had helped improve their confidence because they wrote about what they knew, or what they had in mind. They said they felt confident about the stories they were writing. Practising personal writing was a path leading them to academic writing. One said, *“I feel I have improved both writing and confidence. I know my writing is still not so good but it has become much better.”*

With the fourth statement—that practising personal writing helped them write the later assignments more easily as a result of becoming familiar with writing—the answer elicited was as follows. All of them said that they gradually felt writing becoming easier because after a few pieces of writing they learned to generate and sequence their ideas.

Apart from that, the topics about their experience made it easier to acquire the stages of generating and sequencing ideas since the knowledge was already in their own minds. When they were writing, they had to think about the past events, and then arrange them in an orderly and systematical way. They believed this resulted in being able to get to the point when writing. They felt they did not have to struggle as hard as before. One participant commented, *“It is because it is our own story, so it made it become easier to think before writing. And when we knew what we were going to write about, we felt relieved, you know.”* They also added that the process of drafting and revising also enhanced their confidence, since changing or correcting both content and grammar made them aware of their errors and led them to try to avoid them. Furthermore, drafting and revising helped review their grammar and instilled new aspects of grammar knowledge they had never mastered before.

In brief, all of those processes—extensively practicing writing using the topics relating to their experiences—eventually made them feel more confident in both personal and academic writing.

The fifth statement suggested practising personal writing helped them write consistently following the topic assigned. They said that both practising personal writing, and drafting and revising, assisted them in becoming consistent with the topics provided. The teacher’s advice when doing the drafting and revising led them in the right direction of both content and grammar. In conclusion, the participants seemed to prefer the teacher to give comments on the writing because it helped improve both grammar and the content.

As to the last statement, that personal writing helped them perform academic writing correctly in regard to grammar structures and vocabulary, one participant confirmed this aspect by saying, *“I think it directly helped, since apart from writing about topics which*

were easy, completing many assignments resulted in becoming more linguistically skillful, and sequential drafting and revising had also helped in this respect.”

Some participants added at the end of the interview that they liked personal writing because it was easier to write. However, they said that they could not write well enough because of the time limitation. One participant said, *“I believe that personal writing made you [the researcher] more familiar with the students because you had to mark our writing. So you would know our weakness and strengths in various aspects, whether of our grammar, vocabulary, or even private problems revealed in our writing. So you can help solve our problems.”* This particular participant also said, *“I think that practising personal writing helped me do assignments in other subjects better. I feel that I could think more systematically.”* Almost all of them added that every student should practise writing regularly but write about their own stories initially.

Another participant concluded seriously, *“After experiencing this way of studying writing, I think students should practise writing like we did. Every course should require students to write. They really should start from the first year. I mean writing stories like we did. It would be really useful. I know it because I experienced it myself. It helped prepare me to be ready before writing academically. At first, I felt really worried and clumsy in writing because I had never practised writing previously. For me it was like a measuring indicator of the competence of my grammar and vocabulary. I studied grammar a lot but never had a chance to apply it in writing.”*

Findings of the Interviews with the Control Group

This section has the same purpose as section four of the questionnaire. Both that questionnaire and this interview asked the participants of the control group to respond to the statements asking their opinion about the alternative way that may improve their academic

writing and reduce their frustration based on the observation of the researcher during the time of conducting the research. Although what the participants of this group say here is not directly relevant to the research, the fact that writing practice and the difficulties they faced in dealing directly with academic writing is indirectly supported for the value of personal writing, as they themselves recognised.

Even though this was not relevant to the subject they were studying, the researcher would like to know their opinions so as to find appropriate means to enhance students' writing ability. The interview was performed after the students had finished responding to the questionnaire.

For the control group, they were asked to give opinions of writing, and whether they should have practised writing about their own experiences adequately before studying academic essays. The following descriptions indicate their opinions.

When responding to the first suggestion that they should practise writing about their own experience so that they would become familiar with writing prior to practising academic writing, they mostly agreed that students should have a chance to write about what they were close to first, for example, families, friends, studies, boyfriends or girlfriends, dreams, health, special events, what they liked or did not like, and what they had in mind.

One participant said, *"It is easier to write about what is close to us. We do not have to struggle to think about what we have to write because the information is right here in our heads. Besides, we can use easy words to describe the stories."* Another added, *"It would be like a preparation for us before writing academic subjects. I had not practised writing at either secondary or university levels. Since entering university, this Read and Write I was my first writing course. I was worried and scared, particularly of grammar, although I had studied a lot of grammar when I was preparing the university entrance*

examination. I was afraid I would not be able to write well enough to convey my ideas correctly.”

Moreover, they stated that if starting writing with the subjects remote from their experience, it was difficult for them to summon appropriate language and structures, because they did not have knowledge of such particular subjects. As a result, they would not be able to organise their thoughts logically and smoothly. They believed that if they were provided with a chance to write about what they had in mind regularly and continually, they would be much more competent dealing with abstract academic subjects. One more participant commented, *“It sounds good and it would be nice to start practising writing about our own stories. If we had, we would not have had to struggle that much.”*

Based on the result of this particular item – that participants had pointed out they would have improved their writing if they had practised writing from the knowledge stored in their brain – it can be inferred that writing about their background knowledge will help them write reasonably better than writing about unfamiliar subjects. Moreover it would serve as a foundation before stepping up to more difficult subjects. This is in accordance with the schema theory which says that prior knowledge is crucial in helping learners perform well in any circumstances because the knowledge stored will be retrieved and used depending on each particular area. In addition, it is also helpful for the comprehension of new information (Anderson & Pearson, 1977). That means the prior knowledge learners possess will be gathered and transferred to link with new information which will assist them to have a better vision or understanding of unfamiliar subjects. The more schemata they use, the less difficulty they will confront in any field they enter. Thus, it is essential to have learners employ schemata or prior knowledge – in this case their own experiences – in writing because it will help organise and express new areas of study.

Regarding the second and third statements – that practising writing about their own experience would enhance their knowledge of vocabulary and review the knowledge of grammar structures and its usage before practising academic writing, they explained that since there would be various personal aspects to write about – such favourite things as parents, studies, friends, boy and girlfriends, or past events – then there should be quite a lot of vocabulary gained from thinking hard so as to exploit their background knowledge.

Another participant added, *“If we write often, we will certainly develop both grammar and vocabulary, but you will not see the result so quickly but gradually. It will take time.”* In addition, they said the teacher’s marking and suggestions, and the process of drafting and editing, would be one important factor which would help in obtaining such development. They agreed further, commenting that although practising writing about personal matters before writing about academic subjects seemed sensible and helpful, they still needed the teacher to help inform them when they made a mistake or when they became lost, since they did not have appropriate experience. They would not know when they had made a mistake. As for grammar development, they stated that it would undergo the same process as vocabulary development. More than that, they added that the drafting and revising would help them to isolate and eliminate their mistakes, which they believed could improve their grammar.

Statement four suggested that practising personal writing before academic writing would help build up the confidence and courage to write. The participants assumed that if they had a chance to practise personal writing regularly and continually, they would obtain confidence and encouragement to write. One of them added, *“If we practise a lot, we will become skillful. And if we become skillful, we will feel less fearful. And I feel sure we will have more confidence to write.”* They believed that once they felt confident after practising adequately, they could move to academic subjects, although they said that they might still

be worried about unfamiliar topics because of lack of knowledge in such fields. Moreover, they said they could use the knowledge they would have gained from practising personal writing with academic writing. *“I believe we can use the knowledge or whatever we gain from practising personal writing to link with academic writing,”* one girl concluded.

To the fifth statement that practising personal writing before academic writing would help them perform the next writing assignments more easily because they had already become familiar with writing, they expressed their feeling that if they had a chance to write about easy subjects regularly and continually, they thought that would make things easier for them. One of them added, *“In practising writing for whatever languages, if we keep practising, we will become skilled. For example, as Thai students, if we keep practising writing Thai a lot, we will become good at it. And this can be applied with English writing also.”*

The last statement suggested that practising personal writing would help them write on academic subjects more effectively and consistently in accordance with the topics assigned. They all agreed, and it could be concluded that it would be somehow similar to that involving vocabulary and grammar development. After practising sufficiently, anyone would be able to write consistently and more effectively on the topics assigned.

However, two participants disagreed, one explaining - while the other nodded her head, indicating she agreed with her friend, *“I do not think practising personal writing alone without the teacher commenting and suggesting will make us write effectively. We still need an experienced person like the teacher to guide us, give us advice, and tell us when we are taking the right or wrong direction.”* Nevertheless, they thought the point was that the subjects initially assigned should be interesting, as they would be if their own stories were involved.

When asked whether they would like to add more information, participants of the control group had similar opinion to those of the experimental group. As they had the hard experience of struggling and trying to write, they said that students should practise writing about easy topics, or anything related to their own experience, continually and adequately. They reasoned that they themselves had had a difficult time writing on academic subjects. They said they had had to struggle hard to think about the unfamiliar subjects given in order to generate ideas. They had already felt discouraged with their lack of knowledge of vocabulary and grammar, and having to deal with the difficulty of the unfamiliar subjects made the situation worse. They stated, *“Realising that our grammar is not so good is already worrying enough, but it is even worse to have to force ourselves to think about what we do not know in order to generate ideas, to do an outline, and to write about it, particularly when we had never practised writing before.”* One girl spoke out for her classmates, *“Personal writing sounds useful to me. Well, I believe to my friends too. Everybody should practise it. Start it from the first year, and every course should give the students practise doing it, so that it would not be such a struggle. Moreover, although we have finished the writing courses we are supposed to take, there should be writing courses afterward so that we would have the chance to keep practising, just to be with it, so that as a result we should not forget it.”*

In summary, this chapter reveals the findings in two different respects, those of the quantitative and qualitative results. It first quantitatively discusses the findings, answering each research question from tabulated illustrations. It then qualitatively describes the results derived from questionnaires and interviews. Where the quantitative findings are concerned, the findings of the research were based on the mean scores of the pretest and the posttest of both the experimental and the control groups. The analysis of the findings indicates that within each group there was no statistically significant difference in either syntactic or

vocabulary development, but there was a statistically significant difference in overall writing quality. When the gain of the pretest and the posttest scores of both the experimental and the control groups was compared, the results were of statistically significant difference. In terms of qualitative findings, the results of both the questionnaire and interview are similar. Regarding the experimental group, the participants mostly agreed that personal writing had helped them gain knowledge of vocabulary and review their grammar, leading to act to regulate it. They unanimously agreed that they had gained confidence in the writing done on this course and also found that personal writing had helped them write better in other courses. In addition, they confirmed that every English course should require students to practise writing continually, starting from the first year. Where the control group was concerned, the participants agreed that they too might have benefited from practising writing about their own experience prior to embarking on writing. They believed it would have helped familiarised them with writing before proceeding to academic subjects, particularly when they had never practised English language writing before. After confronting difficulties in coping with academic writing, they agreed that students should practise writing from the first year, regularly and extensively.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion and Suggestions

This chapter first presents a summary of the research. It discusses the findings under the headings of overall writing quality, syntactic and vocabulary development, and attitudes towards writing instruction. Under the heading overall writing quality, a comparison between two essays of the good students is displayed. Next are observations from the researcher. The end of the chapter offers suggestions, recommendations for teaching and further research, and the limitations.

Summary of the Research

This experimental research investigated the effectiveness of having the participants practise personal writing before academic writing. The purposes were, first, to find the differences between the participants' pretest and posttest results in terms of overall writing quality, and syntactic and vocabulary development, within the control and within the experimental groups, and also between the two groups; second, to compare the overall writing quality, and syntactic and vocabulary development, of the subgroups, three in each—good, average and weak students of each group between the two groups; and third, to study the students' attitudes towards the writing instructions received during the course. The participants of the research were 36 purposively-selected Thai third-year non-English major undergraduates who enrolled in the Read & Write I Course in the first academic semester, starting on June 4th, 2007, at Chiang Mai University. The students were assigned to do the pretest and posttest, writing an academic essay entitled *Watching Violence on TV: What Effects Does It have on People*. The students were arranged into three subgroups using the

score from the pretest employing Median and Quartile. Then the students from each sub-group were randomly selected and paired up employing the Matched Pair method. The experimental group was assigned to practise personal writing before being taught academic writing, whereas the control group was taught academic writing organisation from the beginning. The research tools comprised (1) the pretest and the posttest, (2) five written assignments during the course, and midterm and final examination papers entitled *Positive Effects of Exercising*, *What a Person Should Do to Stay Healthy*, *The Disadvantages of Living in the Big City*, *The Benefits of Working Part-Time While Studying*, and *Reasons Why More and More Asian People Are Staying Single* of 18 participants, as well as (3) two questionnaires and interviews. The Pearson product-moment correlation was used to analyse the scores obtained from the entire written works to account for the interrater reliability performed by the three raters. In terms of overall writing quality, an independent *t*-test was used to analyse (1) scores from the pretest to obtain the samples, (2) the differences calculated from the scores of the pretest and the posttest to compare the overall writing quality between the two groups, and (3) the scores from all of the written assignments and midterm and final examination papers in terms of overall writing quality, and syntactic and vocabulary development results obtained from T-unit and AWL analysis, between the three subgroups the two groups. An independent *t*-test was employed to analyse (1) the scores from all of the writing assignments and midterm and final examination papers in terms of overall writing quality, and syntactic and vocabulary development results obtained from T-unit and AWL analysis, between the three subgroups of the two groups. To investigate the differences within the two groups in terms of overall writing quality, and syntactic and vocabulary development, a dependent *t*-test was employed to analyse the scores of the pretest and the posttest.

The TOEFL Writing Scoring Guide (see Appendix C) was used as the criterion to score all of the written work.

The findings showed that—in terms of overall writing quality—there were significant differences at the level of 0.05 within both groups, and between subgroups from the good level. No significant difference was found when comparing the progress made between the two groups. Statistically significant differences of syntactic and vocabulary development were neither found within groups nor between the subgroups. The findings from the questionnaires and interviews indicated that the students thought that practising personal writing before academic subjects was advantageous.

Discussion

This part discusses the findings first by examining the writing quality of two academic writing essays written by the participants of the good level of the subgroups of both groups. The findings of each of the respects as posted in the research questions are then discussed. The overall writing quality is discussed first. The second and the third aspects—the syntactic and the vocabulary development—are discussed together. The last two findings from the questionnaires and the interviews— are also discussed together.

Overall writing quality

The findings of this research revealed mixed results regarding overall writing quality. There were two statistically significant differences found: within each group, and between the good writers of the two groups, but no significant difference was found when the gain of both groups was compared.

First, regarding research question one, both the control and the experimental groups improved their overall writing quality significantly. The mean score of the posttests of both groups were higher than those in the pretests. For the experimental groups, this is consistent with the previous studies of Allen (2000), Moran (2004), and Mlynarczyk (2006), whose informants' overall writing quality improved after extensively practising personal writing.

Where the control group was concerned the reason why this group also showed that students' overall writing improved can be attributed to two factors. First, they were practising academic writing following the recommended rhetorical structure of the academic genre. Practising a particular form of writing over a period of time is useful in that the students become familiarised with its features: for instant, the format and the language used. As Swales and Lindemann (2002), who championed the genre-based approach, said, "A typical writing sequence might show a cumulative demonstration of expertise in course, term paper, and independent research paper" (p.105). Moreover, this group also kept journal entries every two weeks as required by the course. It is plausible that incorporating writing journals, while following the genre-based approach, enhances writing quality. This is consistent with Kroll (2003)'s assertion, "One learns to write by writing" and "Many second language (L2) writers will grow into better writers simply by producing sufficient quantities of writing over an extended period" (p.115).

Second, in regard to the significant difference of the overall writing quality found between the three good writers, it can be explained as follows. First, these writers may possess three special qualities: attention, notice, and awareness, which are considered essential in language learning. Psychology and cognitive scientists have affirmed that these mental processes are crucial because possessing a high degree of

attention, notice, and awareness of the structures of discourse can assist learners to acquire knowledge of how formal written discourse is constructed (Schmidt, 1995 as cited in Hinkel, 2004). Apart from that, when students practise writing, they repeatedly learn the characteristics of the form of writing as the language features used in writing. This is likely to help them gradually become skillful and fluent, as well as consequently able to perform writing more effectively. In addition, good learners usually learn quickly and can be developed easily when given a proper trigger and motivation. Conclusively, being good students possessing the three qualities and having additionally practised writing extensively, may account for their significant improvement.

What follows here illustrates and analyses the academic essays written by one each of the good writers of the control and the experimental groups in regard to overall writing quality, syntax, and vocabulary. However, it should be noted that in terms of vocabulary, although basically the research investigated the vocabulary development regarding the quantity of vocabulary the participants produced, the following analysis concentrates on the quality of the vocabulary used by the two participants.

Essay 1 was the work of a participant of the control group, while Essay 2 was written by a participant of the experimental group. Both of them were from the subgroup categorised in the good level.

Essay 1

The benefits of working part-time while studying are divided into three parts. To start with, you can earn money by yourself. The money is yours. So you can spend the money on things that you are really want, may be there are nonsense things. For example, most of girls are usually spend their money on clothes or accessories and boy likes to spend them on game-players travel or eating.

Furthermore, the money from working part-time may be reduced money from your parents. It will makes your parents pround of you because they think that you can take care and responsibly yourself. If you working at night

The next benefit is working part-time while studying help you improve some skills such as responsibility and patience. If you working at night you should come to studying in the morning on time. Moreover, you will pay attention alot in your classroom for make your grades in good level because when your friends was reading books, you was washing the dishes at the restaurant. If you do not study hard you will lost the opportunity to get A or B plus. So that makes you feel try, *you must be patient a lot.*

Finally, you successful in working part-time while studying and also have some good grades you will pround in yourself. You will confident to do other things. When you believe that you can do it. So, you will do it on your best then, the result will be good. And it makes you grow up from inside. Because you learn that how was the value of the money and how difficultly to get them. So, you will spend your money in the right ways. That will makes you think as same as adult think.

The good students' overall writing quality of the control group

In terms of overall writing quality, the writer addresses the topic with a controlling idea – that the benefit of working part-time while studying could be divided into three parts – effectively and correctly. The essay comprises controlling ideas which are introduced using logical transitions, for example, “to start with,” “furthermore,” “the next,” “moreover,” and “finally,” to make the essay easy to follow and understand. However—when read through – there are some particular points in the essay that should be noted. First, it is evident that the ideas are not consensual. Each controlling idea is not supported by relevant supporting data. The details following each controlling idea are not appropriate because they are not consistent with either the topic or the controlling idea.

To illustrate this shortcoming, it should be noted that the first controlling idea—a person can earn money by working part-time—is not developed in accordance with the topic the writer has proposed. The writer does not focus on earning money by

oneself but instead on what to spend money one earns from working part-time, and what boys and girls like to buy.

Next, in the case of controlling idea two, the writer proposes that the benefits of working part-time are that it will help reduce the parents' burden. However, this controlling idea is not supported sufficiently and effectively. Instead of explaining decreasing the parents' burden in accordance with the topic proposed, the writer writes about the parents being proud of their children for being able to earn a living by themselves.

However, when looking at controlling idea three and its presumed supporting details, the reader finds them to be unfocused and ambiguous. It is difficult to judge whether the writer wants to suggest how one should behave when one had a part-time job, or what one will obtain from it. The impression is created that the writer lacks facility of language, misses the purpose of writing leading her to beat around the bush rather than saying what is needed directly and correctly.

Finally, the last controlling idea is not relevant to the topic provided since it does not deal with working part-time as assigned but what being successful from working part-time can provide one with. It is difficult to decide what the writer wants to convey. When the whole essay is read, it can be felt that there were serious problems with focus which result in incoherence.

Syntactic development

The second aspect is the syntactic development. The syntax embedded in Essay 1 is analysed using T-unit analysis. Essay 1 contains 19 sentences. There appear to be six error-free T-units. This essay displays an accumulation of errors in sentence structure and usage. For example,

“So you can spend money on things you are really want [that you really want]”, “... most of girls are usually spend [usually most girls spend] their money...” and “boy likes to spend them [a boy likes to spend it] on game-player [game-players], travel or eating.” “...If you working [work] at night...,” “Finally, you successful [if you succeed] in working part-time while studying and also have some good grades you will pround in [will be proud of] yourself...,” “When you believe that you can do [can do it].”

Moreover, this essay displays some other major and recurrent writing errors. For example, the wrong form of tense is used, and adjectives are used as verbs as the following examples show. “It will makes [make],” “...if you working at night [are working],” “... that you are really want [you really want],” “... girls are usually spend money [usually spend],” and “...you will pround in [will be proud of] yourself,”... “you will confident [will be confident].”

Such errors both display the writer’s poor grasp of English usage and weaken her ability to express her meaning.

Vocabulary development

The results of analysis of the vocabulary development of this essay can be summarised as follows:

On the whole, the writer's choice and correct placing of appropriate words was adequate, as her use of the misspelled but appropriate term *accessories* was used in referring to the purchase of women's minor appurtenances shows.

However, there appears to be some noticeably inappropriate choice of word forms, for instance, using *responsibly yourself* instead of *be responsible for yourself*, *come to studying* instead of *come to study*, *you successful* instead of *your success*, *difficulty* instead of *difficult*.

Essay 2

There are some benefits of working part-time while studying. First, working part-time helps you have real work experiences. When you are at work you will learn about working and solve a problem in different situations. It helps you have ideas for your problems in real life. Working part-time enhances you to be a good worker because you will have a lot of things from part-time work such as how to greet customer and make them happy etc.

Second, working part-time promotes sociability. It is another way to communicate with other people. for example if you are a waitress, you will have to talk to customers who you do not know before. It helps you are not shy with strangers. Moreover, it helps you know and understand other people because you have a chance to learn about a different kind of people by communicate with them at your work all the time.

Finally, It helps you relax after a hard study. When you are working you will forget about your study that causes you are tired and bored for a while. It is good for you to release a tension about your field. It helps you sleep easily that is good for your health because your body will get some rest and your mind feel stressless.

The good students' overall writing quality of the experimental group

Regarding overall writing quality, as with Essay 1, this essay addresses the topic —*There are some benefits of working part-time while studying*—effectively and correctly. Some transition words, for example, *first*, *second*, and *finally*, are used to introduce new controlling ideas which make it easy to follow and understand.

Moreover, when taking a close look at each controlling idea, the reader can see that it was developed and organised adequately because it contains appropriate and relevant details to support the controlling ideas and the topic sensibly and respectively. By way of elucidating this, one notes that the first controlling idea—working part-time helps one have real experiences—is supported and expanded by the followed underlined sentences:

First, working part-time helps you have real work experiences. When you are at work you will learn about working and solve a problem in different situations. It helps you have ideas for your problems in real life. Working part-time enhances you to be a good worker because you will have a lot of things from part-time work such as how to greet customer and make them happy etc.

The underlined sentences show the consistency of the details intended to support the controlling idea in the first sentence. They explain and give examples of how working part-time can provide real work experience.

The controlling ideas that follow are conveyed in the same way as the first controlling idea. They are all developed in the right direction because they are supported by relevant details consistent with the topic. Apart from that, illustration is given to make it easier to follow and understand, i.e., “for example if you are a waitress, you will have to talk to customers who you do not know before. It helps you are not shy with strangers.” As seen here, using both relevant and appropriate details and illustration helps create a coherent piece of writing. This means that the writer has focused well on the topic assigned.

Syntactic development

Second is the analysis of syntax. Essay 2 contains 14 sentences. It has ten error-free T-units, while there are 19 sentences in Essay 1, and six error-free T-units.

Essay 2 does not contain as many major errors of sentence structure as are found in Essay 1. Among the errors appearing in Essay 2, for example are: “It helps you are not shy [to not be shy] with strangers,” or “Moreover, it helps you know and understand other people because you have a chance to learn about a different kind of people by communicate [different kinds of people by communicating],” ...and “It is good for you to release a tension [tension] about your field.”

Although there are syntactic errors, they do not obscure the meaning of the essay they appear in.

Vocabulary development

Vocabulary analysis provides the following information. As in Essay 2, the writer uses suitable word choice all through the essay demonstrating her knowledge of vocabulary. She uses the right vocabulary to convey the meaning consistently with the topic and the controlling ideas. For instance, she uses, “real work experience,” “solve a problem in different situations,” “to greet customer, promotes sociability,” “and release tension.”

In conclusion, it is evident—as seen from and by comparing the two essays—that Essay 2 reads more smoothly and convincingly than Essay 1 due to the embracing of relevant and adequate controlling ideas and supporting details. It also displays consistent facility in deployment of language in using appropriate syntactic variety—correct verb tenses among them. The vocabulary—the word choice—used is suitable and conveys the message intended efficiently. This is consistent with the belief that practising personal writing before academic writing results in enhancing students’ overall writing quality, syntactic development, and vocabulary development. The findings of this research are consistent with those of Allen (2000) who had his

students practise personal writing extensively, prior to academic writing. He maintained that having students practise personal writing before academic writing helped them write more effectively in terms of writing organisation as well as fluency. Regarding syntactic development and vocabulary development, statistically significant differences were not found either within or between groups. Nevertheless, as seen from the comparison between the two essays—the good student from the experiment group performed better than in both aspects aforementioned.

Third, the reason why there was no significant difference when the progress of both groups was compared is explained here. It might be that both groups were practising as frequently as each other. While the experimental group was practising personal writing followed by academic writing, the control group was practising academic writing incorporating journal entries every two weeks. When both groups were working on academic essays, they both followed the same genres, and employed the same language. Consequently, this probably equally improved their writing and thus did not result in significant difference between the two groups.

In brief, the overall writing quality had mixed results. A significant difference was found within groups and between the good students of the two groups, while there was no significant difference when the gains of the experimental and the control groups were compared. In the first case—comparison within groups—it can be explained that both groups had been practising writing as frequently as each other. In the case of the experimental group, it was consistent with some previous research showing that personal writing enhances overall writing quality. Regarding the control group, practising academic writing following the genre based approach also improved their writing quality. In terms of the good students of both groups, the mean score of the experimental group was higher than that of the control group. It was consistent

with Allen (2000)'s study whose students' academic writing became better after practising personal writing than the ones who practised only academic writing. For the last result, no significant difference of the gain between the two groups was found. It can be explained that both groups were practising writing equally. The experimental group was practising personal writing followed with academic writing, while the control group was practising academic writing and journal writing. Both groups also followed the same genre of academic writing, using the same style of the language used. For that reason, they developed the quality of writing equally.

Syntactic development

Based on the findings of this research, in response to research questions two and six, no statistically significant findings concerning syntactic development were found either within the groups or between the subgroups of the two groups. This can be explained by referring to, for example, Padgate (1999) and Fazio (2001) whose studies had some similarities to this research. Both Padgate's and this research were conducted with the Thai participants. Padgate examined the students' writing ability through weekly journals, but this research used personal writing. The participants of both studies were university students who studied English as a foreign language. Regarding Fazio (2001), her study was similar to this research in that her participants were foreign language students, and they were assigned to write weekly journals. To discuss in detail, Padgate examined the effects of four different feedback types on the grammatical accuracy of the journal writing of Thai college students from five intact groups. There was a control group, and the other four were the experimental groups. They were assigned to write a nine-weekly journal. Four groups were given different feedback types: content, modeling, metalinguistic and corrective. The results

revealed no significant improvement on journal writing regarding grammatical accuracy. Furthermore, Fazio investigated the effects of differential feedback, i.e., correction or form-focused feedback, commentaries or content feedback, and a combination of the two on journal writing accuracy of minority and majority students taking French. The students were multilingual, for example, speaking Thai, Arabic, English, Farci, Khmer, Hindi, Romanian, and Italian, among other languages. The research procedures consisted of classroom observation, journal writing activity, and interview. The students were assigned to write in French once a week. No significant difference of grammatical accuracy was reported.

Another study which investigated the accuracy of 16 intermediate students' journal writing belonged to Casanave (1994), as aforementioned in chapter two.

Viewed from Casanave's study, the results were fluctuating, although the course itself was conducted for a long period of time—one academic year. It should then be explained here that since this present research was conducted for only one academic semester, it is credible that the results would not evidently show statistically significant differences, particularly with the small number of student participants concerned. Regarding the three subgroups of both the experimental and the control groups, each contained three participants. More participants might have displayed statistical significance.

Another reason—as revealed from the findings of the questionnaires and the interviews—may be the result of the inadequacy of writing practice both before and after entering the university. When there is less opportunity to write, there is less opportunity to apply the knowledge of grammar. For that reason, it is difficult to gain grammar improvement only within 15 weeks, particularly when not having writing experience before.

In addition, it is plausible that not focusing on grammar accuracy from the beginning—concentrating only on the content of the first draft—may cause the students to make more errors. Improvement of both content and grammar occurred when the two aspects were revised simultaneously in the process, whereas providing only content feedback resulted in more errors in subsequent drafts. Students' writing would improve if giving feedback took place in the process rather than at the end of it (Fathman & Walley, 1990; Ferris, 2003; Shih, 1998).

Summarily, the reasons why there was no statistically significant development of syntax can be concluded as follows. First, it is likely that the duration of 15 weeks was not sufficient to yield such a statistical result because language development takes a great deal of time to acquire (Casanave, 1994; Kolln, 1996; Leeds, 2003). Casanave's study shows the fluctuation of syntactic development although her study was longitudinal, displayed during a long period of three semesters. Next, it is plausible that the participants had not practiced writing sufficiently, before participating in this course. They came to the class as beginners. Finally, neither concentrating nor correcting accuracy from the first draft is also a likely cause of the lack of improvement.

Vocabulary development

In terms of vocabulary development and in response to research questions three and seven, statistical differences were not found in this present research, which is not in accordance with that of Sujan (2000), whose participants showed improved development of vocabulary by producing a wider range of difficult words in Base List 3—or sets of ordinary words—even though they were using words used mostly in Base List 1.

Another example of previous research concerning vocabulary development belongs to Laufer (1994), who conducted a longitudinal study investigating possible changes in the lexical quality of the written essays of advanced ESL, over a period of one academic year. The same written essays collected from different times—from the entrance examination, the end of the first semester (14 weeks), and the end of the second semester (28 weeks)—were analysed for lexical profile and lexical variation. The vocabulary of all the essays was classified into the frequency levels using the Lexical Frequency Profile (LFP)—a measure of lexical richness (Laufer & Nation, 1995). Laufer (1994) found that there was some progress of lexical profile in terms of richness, whereas there was no progress of lexical variation.

Statistically, increase in lexical richness occurred. However, Laufer (1994) pointed out that the interpretation of results should be made cautiously. Initially it might appear that there were some indications of progress, but when compared with the proportion of the basic 2000 words used and those beyond 2000 words, the lexical profile was still lower than that demonstrated in their written essays by younger native speakers, who were not even at the college level. Laufer said that the lexical profile of her student participants was obviously far behind those of the sophisticated native speakers' writing. She concluded that, viewing from the second language learning perspective, the progress found in her student participants' lexical profile was not remarkable.

However, there are some reasons why this research did not show statistical development of vocabulary. First, when comparing Sujana (2000)'s study with this research, her participants were fourth-year English major students, whereas the participants of this research were third-year students, and were from different majors. It is likely that Sujana's students, as English major students, were more experienced in

English usage than the student participants of this research, since normally, English major students study more English courses than other major subjects.

The second reason may be the insufficient length of time. This can be clarified by drawing from Laufer (1994), whose participants made progress of lexical profile regarding richness. Nonetheless, she pointed out that the progress did not reveal a real development because their knowledge of lexicon was far lower than those of younger native speakers who were under the college level when observing from the second language learning perspective, although the study was longitudinal – taking two semesters of investigation.

Comparing Laufer's with this research, although her study took two semesters to examine, the results did not appear significant. It follows that development from a one-semester—15-week—research course is likely to be at best, minimal.

The next reason may be concerned with the two categories of vocabulary, the receptive and the productive. It is normal for a person-receptive vocabulary to be larger than a productive vocabulary since it is easier to comprehend a word than to both comprehend and use it in its grammatical modes. A language learner's ability in respect of vocabulary will be best measured by his/her facility in using it in speech and writing. However, in the productive mode of the vocabulary use, it is also likely that the difficulty of manipulating the grammar needed for new vocabulary would inhibit its use. This would be another reason for the lack of significant difference.

Another reason why this research did not yield statistical evidence of vocabulary development might be attributable to what Schmitt and McCarthy (1997) had discovered. They explained that academic vocabulary contains multiple characteristics, for instance, polysemy—vocabulary which has several meanings, homonymy—vocabulary which can be represented by different forms, and

abstractness. All these characteristics of academic vocabulary are problematic for L2 learners.

Since L1 learners' development of lexicon and cognition occurs simultaneously, they have no trouble with the abstractness of words. However, L2 learners' semantic features have already developed, causing them difficulty and confusion when the meanings of L2 translation of an L2 word do not provide the multiple meanings of an L1 word. An example of a polysemous word presented here is *demonstrate*. This word has four different meanings: (1) to show something clearly by giving proof or evidence, (2) to show by your action that you have a particular quality, feeling or opinion, (3) to show and explain how something works or how to do something, and (4) to take part in a public meeting or march, usually as a protest or to show support for something (*Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*). Jong (2007) pointed out that in order to achieve success in academic fields, ESL/EFL learners need to acquire a particular size of vocabulary and a level of knowledge, so as to succeed in their academic writing and reading.

Finally it is plausible that during the time of research conducting, there was no teaching of academic vocabulary. It was the researcher's assumption that the students might develop the knowledge of academic words after practising writing over a period of time.

In conclusion, the reasons why this research did not show development of vocabulary statistically can be explained summarily as follows. First, within a period of 15 weeks, development is unlikely to be clearly evident. Second, the difficulty of manipulating the grammar needed for the use of new vocabulary would inhibit its use. Third, the complicated features of English vocabulary also inhibited vocabulary acquisition to a certain degree.

Attitudes

Where the attitudes are concerned, the findings obtained from the questionnaires and interviews of the participants of both the control and experimental groups were broadly in concurrence. Regarding the control group, the participants agreed that they might have benefited from practising writing about their own experience prior to embarking on academic writing. The benefits can be described as follows.

The first benefit—they believe—is that it would have helped familiarised them with writing before proceeding to academic subjects, particularly as they have never practised English language writing before. After confronting difficulties in coping with academic writing, they agreeing that students should practise writing from the first year regularly and extensively.

The second benefit was revealed by the experimental groups, the participants mostly agreed that personal writing had helped them gain knowledge of vocabulary and review their grammar, prompting them to regulate it.

The third benefit was the confident gained. They unanimously agreed that they had become more confident as a result of the writing done on this course.

Another benefit found was that personal writing had helped them write better in other courses.

Additionally, they maintained that every English course should require students to practise writing continually, starting from the first year.

In short, the control group stated that if they had practise personal writing prior to academic writing, they would have become accustomed to writing. The experimental group said that they had gained more knowledge of vocabulary and

grammar as well as confidence. They added they could do writing assignments in other courses better as a result of practising personal writing.

Observation from the researcher

In conducting the research, various circumstances occurring in the experimental and the control groups were observed by the researcher. This observation included topics affecting writers on generating content, grammar and content corrections, inadequate knowledge of vocabulary, rhetorical organisation, and atmosphere in the two classrooms.

Concerning the quality of writing, the participants of both groups performed differently, both academically and emotionally, to the different academic topics assigned, for example, *What a Person Should Do to Stay Healthy* and *Disadvantages of Living in Big Cities*. When both groups were writing about the former topic, the participants looked relaxed and worked with less tension than when they were writing about the latter, when they appeared gloomy and serious. Emotionally, they performed the former task with relaxation. Academically, when the scores of both essays were compared, 98.92% of them received higher scores in the former than the latter (see Appendix N). The researcher assumed that this was concerned with the topics they were assigned to write about. When the two topics are compared, it seems that the first engaged the interest of the writers more fully than the second one did. This observation indicates that the closer the topic is to the writers, the better they perform.

The next topic is concerned with grammar. The researcher observed that all the participants of both groups showed relief when they were informed at the beginning of the term that focusing on the content of the essays was a priority in

relation to grammar. However, they gradually developed anxiety after learning that their grammar knowledge was insufficient to produce a reasonably effective piece of writing and to receive a good grade. As revealed in the interview and observed by the researcher, the participants valued error correction because it helped review their grammar knowledge and ensure the existing knowledge they had was correct. Apart from that, revision—of both content and grammar—is another essential aspect of writing instruction, since it assists the students to be better aware of their patterns of error. To revise, the students are inevitably led to reread through their writing, and in so doing, they learn their shortcomings. In the next step, they seek ways with which to correct their problems. This process promotes cognitive enhancement since it makes them think and retrieve their background knowledge, and then systematically arrange the information they have to produce, or revise the subsequent drafts. Had there been longer period of time, the participants' syntax might have displayed statistical significance.

Consequently, using the topics related to the participants' experiences enabled them to focus better on the content of writing. It was observed that when the experimental group was assigned to write the first personal writing, *The Best Day I Ever Spent with My Parents*, they could not focus on the content. Their content was not consistent with the topic given. They were then assigned to revise the content. However, in the second personal topic, *What Do You Like Most about Yourself?* and the later topics they apparently improved. They learned rather quickly to generate ideas in accordance with the topics given. With the second topic there were only a few participants who still needed advice and had to revise their first draft regarding the content.

When compared with the control group who were introduced to the organisation of academic writing before the experimental group, the former seemed to be confused and slower to understand than the latter when they had to apply the knowledge of writing organisation in their writing. They still needed to be guided and explained in subsequent assignments.

In the same respect, it can be concluded that the experimental group could do better than the control group in this regard probably because they started writing about the stories they had in mind. It is easier to generate ideas derived from one's own knowledge than from unfamiliar subjects, which is consistent with Allen (2000) and Moran (2004)'s findings in that their students could produce a variety of ideas from the topics assigned. On the other hand, writing about unknown topics causes difficulties for the writers, particularly when they have never practised writing previously.

The further observation is about applying the knowledge of academic writing organisation in writing. It was noticeable that apart from generating consistent ideas from the topics provided, the personal writing group learned to follow the academic writing organisation rather quickly, for example, understanding how to support the controlling idea, when to indent, what transition to use, more quickly than the academic writing group. In the former's first academic writing, they performed better than the latter although the latter had been introduced to the writing organisation before.

In regard to vocabulary, this research also supports that adequate knowledge of vocabulary is essential to the production of a piece of communicable writing. Not having adequate vocabulary knowledge will be problematic to student writers both emotionally and academically. For instance, one of the participants of this research

would have used the English word “generosity” if she had known it, but instead she wrote “water heart,” which is the Thai equivalent. She explained that she had written it that way because she really believed it was normally written in English that way. She kept writing many more words translating directly from English into Thai or the other way round. Although she declared in the interview that practising personal writing eventually enhanced her vocabulary knowledge, she was still frustrated realising that her vocabulary knowledge was seriously inadequate.

Another observation is about applying knowledge of academic writing organisation in writing. It was noticeable that, apart from generating consistent ideas with the topics provided, the personal writing group learned to follow the academic writing organization more quickly than the academic writing group. In the former’s first academic writing, they performed better than the latter although the latter had been introduced to the writing organisation before.

The last aspect of observation is about the atmosphere in the classrooms. As a matter of fact, students are well aware that writing is difficult, particularly writing in other languages. However, it was noticeable that the atmosphere of the personal writing group and the academic writing group was different. The former felt relaxed and lively whereas the latter often felt indifferent and sometimes dispirited. The researcher herself—as their teacher—sometimes felt distressed as a result.

In the case of the personal writing group, their being enthusiastic is plausibly a result of personal writing. They felt more relaxed than when they wrote academically. They practically learned that writing about their own experience was valuable and gradually increased their confidence, because having done so, they could write more fluently and better than before. As a result, they felt secure and looked more relaxed than the academic writing group.

As for the academic writing group, they often looked worried. As revealed in the interview interpretation, they said they had to struggle hard to understand the unknown topics and to find appropriate details to support the controlling ideas. It was a serious burden since they had not practised adequately previously. They worried they would not be able to write well enough to receive good grades.

This confirmed that personal writing helps ease the students' burden in writing English either academically or emotionally. Regarding the academic aspect, personal writing bridges students to writing academically. Practising extensively, students will gradually learn to write and become familiarised with writing, generating ideas, and producing correct content.

Suggestions

This part offers suggestions in accordance with the findings of the research in respect of overall writing quality, syntactic and vocabulary development, as well as attitudes towards writing instruction as follows:

1. Regarding overall writing quality, it is suggested that personal writing should be implemented in not only the writing courses but also other parts of the English programme. Moreover, students should start practising from a lower class level than is currently the case in Thai schools. English language learning for Thai students—as foreign language learners—has almost always seemed alienating, particularly when the participants are required to write. Having opportunities to write regularly and extensively will gradually help lessen their fears in encountering English writing because the more often students write, the better they become both academically and mentally (Allen, 2000; Mlynarczyk, 2006; Moran, 2004, Pennebaker, 1990).

2. Where syntactic and vocabulary development are concerned, no statistical improvement was found either within groups or between groups. The most likely explanation for this is that—according to the information derived from both demography and the interviews—the participants had never sufficiently practised writing English prior to this writing course. The reality is that Thai students of upper secondary level study intensively and competitively to prepare themselves for the university entrance examination. English is one of the most competitive and demanding subjects they are faced with. Nevertheless, despite all the time and effort expended, and the knowledge of English grammar instilled, the failure to adequately apply the knowledge gained results in the students having a very low level of ability to write.

The findings suggest that students should be assisted to acquire both vocabulary and grammar knowledge, because enlarging the size of L2 academic vocabulary and providing a greater understanding of grammar in particular, promote the quality of L2 academic writing (Hinkel, 2004). Moreover, since the knowledge of vocabulary and grammar are equally important, and as essential keys enable students to do well in other courses—for instance, in business, social science and humanities (Johnson, 1988)—they both should be developed simultaneously. Where grammar is learned in contextual lexicalised chunks and sentence stems, whole sentences and phrases, and recurrent patterned expansion, it can be seen that they are fundamental to both L1 and L2 learning and usage. Employing language chunks in instruction and learning is likely to be one of the useful means of enhancing L2 accuracy and fluency, which in turn leads to production and subsequent automisation (Ellis, 1994; Ellis, 1997; Nattinger & DeCarrico, 1992).

In addition to teaching grammar through contextual lexicalised chunks and sentence stems, this research also suggests that teaching grammar in the context of writing—rather than as a separate subject or a formal system—may be more useful and effective because understanding language structures in a conscious way assists the students to develop as writers. In fact, grammar teaching is hidden in the process of pre-writing, writing, drafting, revising and editing. For example, it is taught when there is discussion of coherence and transitions; when redundancy is pointed out; when a teacher assists the students to understand the effect of a particular word on the receptor; or when a teacher explains to an individual, a group, or a big class why a particular structure is misused (Kolln, 1996; Weaver, 1996). However, grammar points ought to be taught and re-taught. It is not likely that, taught once, the concept will be learned and applied consistently. Additionally, further guidance in understanding and actually applying what they have already learned is to be recommended (Weaver, 1996).

Where grammar knowledge is concerned—and although it is not the only indicator of good writing (Casanave, 1994; Polio, 1997)—grammar correctness is commended as important by Celce-Murcia (1991) and Kolln (1996). Celce-Murcia noted that for L2 learners, ability to use correct grammar is crucial to the achievement of educational and professional goals, and “the importance of a reasonable degree of grammar accuracy in academic or professional writing cannot be overstated” (p. 465). Moreover, she revealed that a high frequency of grammar errors in the academic writing of non-native students made their work incompatible with the standards required by the university. In other words, where students are not provided with the formal instruction and the opportunity to practice they need, they will not acquire the competence in writing their courses demand of them (Celce-Murcia & Hilles, 1988;

Ellis, 1994). Kolln stated, “Writing involves grammatical choices from beginning to end. If you have confidence in your language ability, perhaps that confidence will carry over into your writing. Confidence breeds enthusiasm. And every teacher knows – students know, too – the importance of enthusiasm to succeed in any venture” (p. 3).

This suggests that having students practise writing regularly assists them to make use of the grammar knowledge they have acquired before and leads to all- round improvement in their writing ability.

3. The results of both the questionnaire and interview suggest that personal writing should be implemented in both writing courses and general EFL classes, since it is useful in helping students become more confident and proficient in writing, enhancing their knowledge of vocabulary and grammar, as well as helping them perform better in other courses. In addition, students should be required to practise writing regularly and continually, starting as early as possible.

4. As the findings of this research revealed, students should practise writing as often as possible. They should begin writing about easy topics, particularly writing about their own experiences. Writing about their own experiences will help lessen their anxiety since at least they already have the ideas to write about in their mind. Personal writing should be included at every level of education and in either general or writing courses. Practising personal writing regularly will help students become accustomed to writing in terms of writing organisation. Apart from that, students will gain more confidence to write.

5. When assigning students to write, except where the major testing is concerned, the use of prompts is recommended because it helps alleviate students’ anxiety (Hamp-Lyons, 2003). The prompts or topics used should be suitable for each

level, starting from very easy ones at lower levels and gradually becoming less easy at higher levels.

6. This research studied the effectiveness of personal writing on overall writing quality, syntactic and vocabulary development, and inevitably involved feedback correction because it is considered a useful part of writing experiences (Leki, 2003). The results of this research—as revealed in the findings of the interview—suggest that comment and correction should be included in the writing classes. The participants stated that the whole process of the teacher's marking, giving comments, correcting, drafting, and editing, promoted the development of vocabulary and syntax. This indicates how feedback—either commentary or grammatical corrections—is integral to the writing classes. Feedback works as a type of input because it provides the evidence of the language used, either positive or negative (Gass & Selinker, 2001). It assists both teacher and students to learn the students' writing ability and their problems. As a result, both sides are able to find solutions to the various problems.

In the same respect, Fathman and Whalley (1990) and Shih (1998) stated that improvement of both content and grammar occurred when the two aspects were revised simultaneously in the process, whereas providing only content feedback resulted in more errors in subsequent drafts. Ferris (2003) also found that students' writing would improve if giving feedback took place in the process rather than at the end of it.

7. Another crucial factor in a writing class is having students do something with the error correction besides simply receiving it; in other words, they should revise it. When students incorporate the feedback in revision, even when receiving direction from the teacher, error feedback on writing is a way to draw attention to the

language form without distracting students from their original communicative intension. Doing this helps students notice a mismatch between their interlanguage and the target language, and may result in facilitating second language acquisition (Chandler, 2003).

8. The research findings—regarding vocabulary development— suggest that extensive reading should be provided for both native and non-native speaker learners to acquire vocabulary. Reading continually is the best way for students to achieve a large repertoire of vocabulary. The more reading students perform, the more familiarisation with vocabulary and various kinds of texts they will obtain. Reading extensively provides students with opportunities to repeatedly see words. In so doing, vocabulary recognition occurs (Day & Bamford, 1998; Huckin & Coady, 1999).

In conclusion, since reading and writing together can lead to effective learning, extensive reading over time will improve both writing ability and vocabulary knowledge. Provided with reading in the writing class, students will be exposed to various kinds of genres. As Musumeci (1997) proposed, “To ‘master the humanities’ a students needs to read extensively and to gain fluent written competence” (p. 43).

Recommendations for Further Research

The recommendations for further research are suggested as follows:

1. This research involves only a small number of participants. Future research should include more participants in order to gain more samples so that generalisations will be backed up by more relevant statistically-valid information.
2. Future research should make an attempt to study the effectiveness of personal writing on other aspects such as coherence and cohesion.

3. Future research should compare the effectiveness between these two variations: academic writing with personal writing and academic writing with journal entries. Where personal writing is concerned, it should be assigned with directive prompts or topics, whereas for the journal entries, students may write about anything that interests them. However, both types of writing should be provided with feedback.

4. Future research should make an effort to study the effectiveness of personal writing on any aspects over a longer period of time. The length of time spent on this research was only 15 weeks, so it may not be effective to generalise from, since acquiring any other language almost invariably takes a great deal of time, while studying the writing skills of foreign languages is particularly complicated.

5. Future research should investigate the effectiveness of the practice of combined reading and writing on the ability to write, and syntactic and vocabulary development between two groups in an academic writing course. One group should be assigned to write personal writing in combination with reading, while the other group should be writing personal writing only.

6. Future research should study the students' attitudes and opinions towards writing using questionnaires both before and after conducting the research to gain more insightful information which will be useful for writing instruction in the future.

7. Future research concerning personal writing should assess students' English proficiency in terms of grammatical competency, reading comprehension, and vocabulary knowledge, as well as writing ability both before and after conducting the research, to investigate the effectiveness of personal writing on these aspects.

Limitations of the Research

The limitations of this research include the following aspects:

1. Regarding the sampling, the student participants of this research were not randomly selected but purposively arranged by the English Department. It was not likely to control the plausible extraneous variable that could affect the process and the generalisation of the research, although the matched pair method had been employed to rank them.
2. In terms of the student participants, it could be assumed that the following factors might also account for the uncontrollable variables of the research: (1) they were from various major subjects, and (2) only a small number—three student participants—were involved in each subgroup. It was probable, therefore, that this might have some impact on the research. It was unlikely that it would yield satisfactory findings.
3. The time length of this research was one academic term—15 weeks. Leeds (2003) said that it took time to develop language competency. Studies conducted in longer periods of time may consequently yield more reliable results. As Musumeci (1997) said, “Language learning requires time; it is not something that can be accomplished hurriedly, in a rush to move on to more high-brow subjects” (p. 43).
4. The control group was not asked to offer their view on academic writing. This was an oversight. Had their opinions been asked about their introduction into academic writing without practising personal writing prior to the course, they might have offered some pertinent insights into their opinions on this score.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Primary Trait Scoring

Directions: Look carefully at the picture. These kids are having fun jumping on the overturned boat. Imagine you are one of the children in the picture. Or if you wish, imagine that you are someone standing nearby watching the children. Tell what is going on as he or she would tell it. Write as if you were telling this to a good friend, in a way that expresses strong feelings. Help your friend FEEL the experience too. Space is provided on the next three pages.

NAEP Scoring guide: Children on Boat

Background

Primary Trait. Imaginative Expression of Feeling through Inventive Elaboration of a *Point of View*.

Final Scoring Guide

ENTIRE EXERCISE

- 0 No response, sentence fragment
- 1 Scorable
- 2 Illegible or illiterate
- 3 Does not refer to the picture at all
- 4 I don't know

USE OF DIALOGUE

- 0 Does not use dialogue in the story.
- 1 Direct quote from one person in the story. The one person may talk more than once. When in doubt whether two statements are made by the same than once. When in doubt whether two statements are made by the same person or different people, code 1. A direct quote of a thought also counts. Can be in hypothetical tense.
- 2 Direct quote from two or more persons in the story.

POINT OF VIEW

- 0 Point of view cannot be determined, or does not control point of view.
- 1 Point of view is consistently one of the five children. Include "If I were one of the children..." and recalling participation as one of the children.
- 2 Point of view is consistently one of an observer. When an observer joins the children in the play, the point of view is still "2" because the observer makes sixth person playing. Include papers with minimal evidence even when difficult to tell which point of view is being taken.

TENSE

- 0 Cannot determine time, or does not control tense. (One wrong tense place the paper in this category, except drowned in the present.)
- 1 Present tense—past tense may also be present if not part of the “main line” of the story.
- 2 Past tense—If a past tense description is acceptable brought up to present, code as “past.” Sometimes the present is used to create a frame for past events, Code this as past, since the actual description is, in the past.
- 3 Hypothetical time—Papers written entirely in the “If I were on the boat” or “If I were there, I would.” These papers often include future references such as “when I get on the boat I will.” If part is hypothetical and rest past or present and tense is controlled, code present or past. If the introduction, up to two sentences, is only part in past or present then code hypothetical.

APPENDIX B

Analytical Scoring

ESL COMPOSITION PROFILE				
STUDENT		DATE		TOPIC
SCORE	LEVEL	CRITERIA		COMMENT
CONTENT	30-27	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: knowledgeable ● substantive ● thorough development of thesis ● relevant to assigned topic		
	26-22	GOOD TO AVERAGE: some knowledge of subject ● adequate range ● limited development of thesis ● mostly relevant to topic, but lacks detail		
	21-17	FAIR TO POOR: limited knowledge of subject ● little substance ● inadequate development of topic		
	16-13	VERY POOR: does not show knowledge of subject ● non-substantive ● not pertinent ● OR not enough to evaluate		
ORGANIZATION	20-18	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: fluent expression ● ideas clearly stated/ supported ● succinct ● well-organized ● logical sequencing ● cohesive		
	17-14	GOOD TO AVERAGE: somewhat choppy ● loosely organized but main ideas stand out ● limited support ● logical but incomplete sequencing		
	13-10	FAIR TO POOR: non-fluent ● ideas confused or disconnected ● lacks logical sequencing and development		
	9-7	VERY POOR: does not communicate ● no organization ● OR not enough to evaluate		
VOCABULARY	20-18	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: sophisticated range ● effective word/ idiom choice and usage ● word form mastery ● appropriate register		
	17-14	GOOD TO AVERAGE: adequate range ● occasional errors of word/ idiom form, choice, usage but meaning not obscured		
	13-10	FAIR TO POOR: limited range ● frequent errors of word/idiom form, choice, usage ● meaning confused or obscured		
	9-7	VERY POOR: essentially translation ● little knowledge of English vocabulary, idioms, word form ● OR not enough to evaluate		
LANGUAGE USE	25-22	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: effective complex constructions ● few errors of agreement, tense, number, word order/ function, articles, pronouns, prepositions		

	21-18	GOOD TO AVERAGE: effective but simple constructions ● minor problems in complex constructions ● several errors of agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, prepositions <i>but meaning seldom obscured</i>	
	17-11	FAIR TO POOR: major problems in simple; complex constructions ● frequent errors of negation, agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, prepositions and/or fragments, run-ons, deletions ● <i>meaning confused or obscured</i>	
	10-5	VERY POOR: virtually no mastery of sentence construction rules ● dominated by errors ● does to communicate ● OR not enough to evaluate	
MECHANICS	5	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: demonstrates mastery of conventions ● few errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing	
	4	GOOD TO AVERAGE: occasional errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing but meaning not obscured	
	3	FAIR TO POOR: frequent errors of spelling punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing ● poor handwriting ● <i>meaning confused or obscured</i>	
	2	VERY POOR: no mastery of conventions ● dominated by errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing ● handwriting illegible OR not enough to evaluate	
TOTAL SCORE		READER'S COMMENT	

APPENDIX C

Holistic Rubric Scoring

The following illustration is the holistic scoring criteria developed by The Educational Testing Service (ETS) in 1986, for scoring the Test of Written English (TWE).

- 6 An essay at this level
 - effectively addresses the writing task,
 - is well organized and well developed,
 - uses clearly appropriate details to support a thesis or illustrate ideas,
 - displays consistent facility in use of language demonstrates syntactic variety and appropriate word choice though it may have occasional errors.
- 5 An essay at this level
 - may address some parts of the task more effectively than others,
 - is generally well organized and developed,
 - uses details to support a thesis or illustrate an idea,
 - displays facility in the use of language,
 - demonstrates some syntactic variety and range of vocabulary, though it will probably have occasional errors.
- 4 An essay at this level
 - addresses the writing topic adequately but may slight parts of the task,
 - is adequately organized and developed,
 - uses some details to support a thesis or illustrate an idea,
 - demonstrates adequate but possibly inconsistent facility with syntax and usage,
 - may contain some errors that occasionally obscure meaning.
- 3 An essay at this level may reveal one or more of the following weaknesses:
 - inadequate organization or development,
 - inappropriate or insufficient details to support or illustrate generalizations,
 - a noticeably inappropriate choice of words or word forms,
 - an accumulation of errors in sentence structure and/or usage.
- 2 An essay at this level is seriously flawed by one or more of the following weaknesses:
 - serious disorganization or underdevelopment,
 - little or no detail, or irrelevant specifics,
 - serious and frequent errors in sentence structure or usage,
 - serious problems with focus.
- 1 An essay at this level
 - may be incoherent,
 - may be undeveloped,
 - may contain severe and persistent writing errors.
- 0 A paper is rated 0 if it contains no response, merely copies the topic, is off- topic, is written in a foreign language, or consists of only keystroke characters.

APPENDIX D

Code..... Section.....

Pretest & Posttest

English 001311: Read & Write I

Topic: *Watching Violence on TV: What Effects Does It Have on People?*

Instruction: Write a paper of 500 words explaining how violence on TV affects people's behaviour. Give examples of at least three negative effects. Be sure to use specific details to support each of the examples.

APPENDIX E

Code..... Section.....

English 001311: Read & Write I

Assignment 1

You are asked to write paragraphs on “*Positive Effects of Exercising*”. Develop your ideas and then write an **outline**.

Next, write your paragraphs making sure you have a good topic sentence with controlling idea, three main points to support your topic, and at least two relevant supporting details for each major point in your paragraphs. (20 points)

APPENDIX F

Code..... Section.....

English 001311: Read & Write I

Assignment 2

You are asked to write paragraphs on “*What a Person Should Do to Stay Healthy*”.
Develop your ideas and then write an **outline**.

Next, write your paragraphs making sure you have a good topic sentence with controlling idea, three main points to support your topic, and at least two relevant supporting details for each major point in your paragraphs. (20 points)

APPENDIX G

Code..... Section.....

English 001311: Read & Write I

Assignment 3

You are asked to write paragraphs on “*Disadvantages of Living in Big Cities*”.

Develop your ideas and then write an **outline**.

Next, write your paragraphs making sure you have a good topic sentence with controlling idea, three main points to support your topic, and at least two relevant supporting details for each major point in your paragraphs. (20 points)

APPENDIX H

Midterm & Final Examination

Topic of midterm examination: Benefits of Working Part-Time while Studying

Topic of final examination: Reasons Why Asian People are Staying Single

APPENDIX I

Questionnaire
(For the Control Group)

Explanation: Please fill in the blanks provided and answer the following questions honestly. Your answers will be used to improve the teaching and studying of English writing in Thailand. Your answers will be confidential and will not affect your scores in the course 001311 Reading & Writing 1.

Section 1: Demography

Instruction: Tick ✓ the appropriate box in 1-6 below and in the blanks in the items following.

1. Sex ☐ Female ☐ Male Telephone Number.....

2. Age.....

3. Year of study.....
 Major subject.....
 Minor subject.....

4. Finished secondary level from (Name of school).....
 Province

5. The latest English grades received when studying at the secondary level.....

6. How often did you practise writing when studying senior secondary level?
 ☐ Once a week ☐ Every two weeks
 ☐ Once a month ☐ Once a semester
 ☐ Never

7. Grades of prerequisite English at the university level.
 English 001103
 English 001104
 English 001203
 English 001206

Section 2: Information of students' English proficiency and students' own general problems.

Instruction: Please read the following and consider how much skill you have in English by ranking your answers and choosing from the following five categories given.

	English proficiency and students' own general problems	Very strongly 5	Strongly 4	Moderately 3	Weakly 2	Very weakly 1
1	Competence in listening					
2	Competence in speaking					
3	Competence in reading					
4	Competence in writing					
5	Having ability to use grammar structures at university level.					
6	Having ability to use vocabulary and expression at university level.					
7	Having ability to brainstorm to find supporting details and sub-supporting details.					
8	Having ability to generate the supporting details of each topic.					
9	Having ability to build up topic sentences. What do you think the problems found in writing when studying 001311 are caused by? 9.1 Lack of knowledge of vocabulary. 9.2 Lack of knowledge and confidence to use grammar structures. 9.3 Lack of experience in writing English.					

Section 3: Opinions about the writing course

	Opinions about the writing course	Very strongly 5	Strongly 4	Moderately 3	Weakly 2	Very weakly 1
1	At the conclusion of this course, you are satisfied with your writing ability in the course 001311.					
2	If you choose levels 1, 2, or 3 above, what did you do to improve your writing? 2.1 Read more English books to enlarge the knowledge of vocabulary and grammar. 2.2 Practise writing more by yourself. 2.3 Practise writing more with your 0001311 teacher. 2.4 Have special private English classes. 2.5 Others.....					
3	You followed the requirements of course 001311 by: 3.1 Submitting assignments punctually. 3.2 Correcting the mistakes and eliminating weaknesses after receiving advice from the teacher. 3.3 Reading English books for skill development. 3.4 Reading the handouts provided by the teacher 3.5 Practising writing more by yourself.					

Section 4 Opinions about writing

Instruction: Please read the following and indicate the degree of agreement.

	Opinions about writing	Very strongly 5	Strongly 4	Moderately 3	Weakly 2	Very weakly 1
1	A writing course should allow students to practise writing about what they know from their own experience regarding family, close friends, health, preoccupations, girlfriends, or boyfriends, until they become familiar with writing before writing about academic subjects.					
2	You think that practising personal writing will help you to gain more vocabulary.					
3	You think that practising personal writing will help review the knowledge of grammar structures and usage before practising academic writing.					
4	You think that practising personal writing before academic writing will help build up confidence and courage to write.					
5	You think that practising personal writing will help you perform the next writing assignments more easily because you have become more familiar with writing.					
6	You think that practising personal writing will help you write academic writing more effectively and consistently in accordance with the topic assigned.					

7. Others

.....

APPENDIX J

Questionnaire
(For the Experimental Group)

Explanation: Please fill in the blanks provided and answer the following questions honestly. Your answers will be used to improve the teaching and studying of English writing in Thailand. Your answers will be confidential and will not affect your scores in the course 001311 Reading & Writing 1.

Section 1: Demography

Instruction: Tick ✓ the appropriate box in 1-6 below and in the blanks in the items following.

1. Sex ☐ Female ☐ Male Telephone Number.....

2. Age.....

3. Year of study.....
 Major subject.....
 Minor subject.....

4. Finished secondary level from (Name of school).....
 Province

5. The latest English grades received when studying at the secondary level.....

6. How often did you practise writing when studying senior secondary level?
 ☐ Once a week ☐ Every two weeks
 ☐ Once a month ☐ Once a semester
 ☐ Never

7. Grades of prerequisite English at the university level.
 English 001103
 English 001104
 English 001203

English 001206

Section 2: Information of students' English proficiency and students' own general problems.

Instruction: Please read the following and consider how much skill you have in English by ranking your answers and choosing from the following five categories given.

	English proficiency and students' own general problems	Very strongly 5	Strongly 4	Moderately 3	Weakly 2	Very weakly 1
1	Competence in listening					
2	Competence in speaking					
3	Competence in reading					
4	Competence in writing					
5	Having ability to use grammar structures at university level.					
6	Having ability to use vocabulary and expression at university level.					
7	Having ability to brainstorm to find supporting details and sub-supporting details.					
8	Having ability to generate the supporting details of each topic.					
9	Having ability to build up topic sentences. What do you think the problems found in writing when studying 001311 are caused by? 9.1 Lack of knowledge of vocabulary. 9.2 Lack of knowledge and confidence to use grammar structures. 9.3 Lack of experience in writing English.					

Section 3: Opinions about the writing course

	Opinions about the writing course	Very strongly 5	Strongly 4	Moderately 3	Weakly 2	Very weakly 1
1	At the conclusion of this course, you are satisfied with your writing ability in the course 001311.					
2	If you choose levels 1, 2, or 3 above, what did you do to improve your writing?					
	2.1 Read more English books to enlarge the knowledge of vocabulary and grammar.					
	2.2 Practise writing more by yourself.					
	2.3 Practise writing more with your 0001311 teacher.					
	2.4 Have special private English classes.					
	2.5 Others.....					
3	You followed the requirements of course 001311 by:					
	3.1 Submitting assignments punctually.					
	3.2 Correcting the mistakes and eliminating weaknesses after receiving advice from the teacher.					
	3.3 Reading English books for skill development.					
	3.4 Reading the handouts provided by the teacher					
	3.5 Practising writing more by yourself.					

Section 4 (Experimental) Please say what you have gained from practising personal writing in the early weeks of your reading-writing course, prior to dealing with academic writing.

Instruction: Please give information by rating according to your assessment. After practising writing about the personal matters you were familiar with, i.e., family, close friends, health, things about yourself, preoccupations before practising academic writing, you found that it:

	Opinion about writing	Very strongly 5	Strongly 4	Moderately 3	Weakly 2	Very weakly 1
1.	helped you acquire more vocabulary					
2.	helped refresh your knowledge of grammar usage					
3.	helped you become more confident in your ability to write as a result of starting practising writing about familiar topics before academic writing					
4.	helped you write the later assignments more easily as a result of becoming familiar with writing					
5.	helped you write consistently following the topic assigned					
6.	helped you perform academic writing correctly in regard to grammar structures and vocabulary					

Others.....

APPENDIX K

Lesson Plans

The Control Group	The Experimental Group
Week 1 - Course Introduction - Pretest	Week 1 - Course Introduction - Pretest
Week 2 - Invention techniques - Rhetorical pattern - Journal entry 1	Week 2 - 1st personal writing “<i>The Best Day I ever Spent with My Parents</i>” - Read and respond to text 1 - Discuss the reading text 1
Week 3 - 1st academic essay writing “<i>Causes of Air Pollution in Chiang Mai</i>” - Journal entry 2	Week 3 - 2nd personal writing “<i>What Do You Like Most about Yourself?</i>” - Read and respond to text 2 - Discuss the reading text 2
Week 4 - Continuing writing from week 3 - Journal entry 3	Week 4 - 3rd personal writing “<i>My Best Friend</i>” - Read and respond to text 3 - Discuss the reading text 3
Week 5 - 2nd academic essay writing “<i>Effects of Coffee on Your Health</i>” - Journal entry 4	Week 5 - 4th personal writing “<i>How Do You Feel When You Do Something Wrong?</i>” - Read and respond to text 4 - Discuss the reading text 4
Week 6 - Continuing writing from week 5	Week 6 - Invention techniques - Rhetorical pattern
Week 7 - 3rd academic essay writing “<i>Positive Effects of Exercising</i>”	Week 7 - Academic essay writing “<i>Positive Effects of Exercising</i>”

The Control Group	The Experimental Group
Week 8 - Continuing writing from week 7	Week 8 - Continuing writing from week 7
Week 9 - Midterm examination	Week 9 - Midterm Examination
Week 10 - Midterm examination	Week 10 - Midterm examination
Week 11 - Academic essay writing “<i>What a Person Should Do to Stay Healthy</i>” - Read and respond to text 1 - Discuss the reading text 1	Week 11 - Personal writing “<i>What is Your Favourite Colour? Why?</i>” for 20 minutes - Academic essay writing “<i>What a Person Should Do to Stay Healthy</i>”
Week 12 - Continuing writing from week 11 - Read and respond to text 2 - Discuss the reading text 2	Week 12 - Personal writing “<i>What are the Rules You Have to Follow at Home?</i>” for 20 minutes - Continuing academic writing from week 11
Week 13 - Academic essay writing “<i>Disadvantages of Living in the Big City</i>” - Read and respond to text 3 - Discuss the reading text 3	Week 13 - Academic essay writing “<i>Disadvantages of Living in the Big City</i>” - Personal writing “<i>What is the Nutritious Food You Like? Why?</i>” for 20 minutes
Week 14 - Continuing academic writing from week 13 - Read and respond to text 4 - Discuss the reading text 4	Week 14 - Continuing academic writing from week 13 - Personal writing “<i>My Favourite Place</i>” for 20 minutes

The Control Group	The Experimental Group
Week 15 - Posttest - Interview - Questionnaire	Week 15 - Posttest - Interview - Questionnaire
Week 16 Final Examination	Week 16 Final Examination

APPENDIX L

Pretest & Posttest Raw Scores & Mean Scores

1. Control Group

Participant	Pretest					Posttest				
	Rater					Rater				
	1	2	3	$\bar{x}$	SD	1	2	3	$\bar{x}$	SD
Student 1	3.00	2.50	2.50	2.67	0.29	3.00	3.00	2.50	2.83	0.29
Student 2	2.00	2.50	2.00	2.17	0.29	3.00	3.00	2.50	2.83	0.29
Student 3	1.00	0.50	1.00	0.83	0.29	2.00	1.00	1.00	1.33	0.58
Student 4	2.00	2.00	1.00	1.67	0.58	1.50	1.50	1.00	1.33	0.29
Student 5	2.00	2.50	2.00	2.17	0.29	2.50	2.50	2.00	2.33	0.29
Student 6	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	2.50	2.50	2.00	2.33	0.29
Student 7	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	0.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	0.00
Student 8	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	0.00	3.00	2.50	3.00	2.83	0.29
Student 9	2.50	2.50	2.50	2.50	0.00	3.00	3.00	2.50	2.83	0.29
Student 10	3.00	3.50	3.00	3.17	0.29	5.00	4.00	5.50	4.83	0.76
Student 11	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	0.00	2.00	1.00	1.00	1.33	0.58
Student 12	2.00	2.50	2.00	2.17	0.29	4.00	4.00	3.00	3.67	0.58
Student 13	3.00	3.00	3.50	3.17	0.29	4.00	4.00	3.00	3.67	0.58
Student 14	1.50	2.00	2.00	1.83	0.29	2.00	1.50	2.50	2.00	0.50
Student 15	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	0.00	3.00	3.00	2.00	2.67	0.58
Student 16	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	0.00	4.00	4.00	3.00	3.67	0.58
Student 17	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	2.00	2.50	1.50	2.00	0.50
Student 18	2.00	2.50	2.00	2.17	0.29	2.50	2.00	2.00	2.17	0.29
Student 19	1.00	1.50	1.50	1.33	0.29	2.00	2.50	1.50	2.00	0.50
Student 20	2.50	2.00	2.00	2.17	0.29	3.00	3.00	3.50	3.17	0.29

Pretest & Posttest Raw Scores & Mean Scores

2. Experimental Group

Participant	Pretest					Posttest				
	Rater					Rater				
	1	2	3	$\bar{X}$	SD	1	2	3	$\bar{X}$	SD
Student 1	2.50	3.00	2.50	2.67	0.29	3.00	3.50	3.00	3.17	0.29
Student 2	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	0.00	3.00	3.00	3.50	3.17	0.29
Student 3	2.00	3.00	2.00	2.33	0.58	3.00	3.00	3.50	3.17	0.29
Student 4	2.00	3.00	2.00	2.33	0.58	4.00	4.00	3.50	3.83	0.29
Student 5	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	0.00	2.00	3.00	2.50	2.50	0.50
Student 6	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	0.00	3.00	3.00	3.50	3.17	0.29
Student 7	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	0.00	2.00	3.00	2.50	2.50	0.50
Student 8	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	0.00	2.00	3.00	2.00	2.33	0.58
Student 9	2.50	2.00	2.00	2.17	0.29	2.00	2.50	2.00	2.17	0.29
Student 10	1.50	2.00	2.00	1.83	0.29	2.00	3.00	2.00	2.33	0.58
Student 11	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	0.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	0.00
Student 12	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	0.00	2.00	3.00	2.00	2.33	0.58
Student 13	2.50	2.00	2.00	2.17	0.29	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	0.00
Student 14	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	0.00	2.00	2.50	3.00	2.50	0.50
Student 15	1.00	1.50	1.50	1.33	0.29	2.00	2.50	2.00	2.17	0.29
Student 16	2.00	2.00	2.50	2.17	0.29	2.00	3.00	2.50	2.50	0.50

Appendix M

Mean Scores of Difference between Pretest and Posttest

1. Control Group

Participant	Gain			$\bar{x}$	SD
	Rater 1	Rater 2	Rater 3		
Student 1	0.00	0.50	0.00	0.17	0.29
Student 2	1.00	0.50	0.50	0.67	0.29
Student 3	1.00	0.50	0.00	0.50	0.50
Student 4	-0.50	-0.50	0.00	-0.33	0.29
Student 5	0.50	0.00	0.00	0.17	0.29
Student 6	1.50	1.50	1.00	1.33	0.29
Student 7	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.00
Student 8	1.50	1.00	1.50	1.33	0.29
Student 9	0.50	0.50	0.00	0.33	0.29
Student 10	2.00	0.50	2.50	1.67	1.04
Student 11	0.00	-1.00	-1.00	-0.67	0.58
Student 12	2.00	1.50	1.00	1.50	0.50
Student 13	1.00	1.00	-0.50	0.50	0.87
Student 14	0.50	-0.50	0.50	0.17	0.58
Student 15	1.50	1.50	0.50	1.17	0.58
Student 16	2.00	2.00	1.00	1.67	0.58
Student 17	1.00	1.50	0.50	1.00	0.50
Student 18	0.50	-0.50	0.00	0.00	0.50
Student 19	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.67	0.58
Student 20	0.50	1.00	1.50	1.00	0.50

Gain = posttest-pretest

Mean Scores of Difference between Pretest and Posttest

2. Experimental Group

Participant	Gain			$\bar{x}$	SD
	Rater 1	Rater 2	Rater 3		
Student 1	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.00
Student 2	1.00	1.00	1.50	1.17	0.29
Student 3	1.00	0.00	1.50	0.83	0.76
Student 4	2.00	1.00	1.50	1.50	0.50
Student 5	0.00	1.00	0.50	0.50	0.50
Student 6	1.00	1.00	1.50	1.17	0.29
Student 7	0.00	1.00	0.50	0.50	0.50
Student 8	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.33	0.58
Student 9	-0.50	0.50	0.00	0.00	0.50
Student 10	0.50	1.00	0.00	0.50	0.50
Student 11	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.00
Student 12	0.50	1.50	0.50	0.83	0.58
Student 13	0.50	1.00	1.00	0.83	0.29
Student 14	0.50	1.00	1.50	1.00	0.50
Student 15	1.00	1.00	0.50	0.83	0.29
Student 16	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.33	0.58

Gain = posttest-pretest

APPENDIX N

Mean Scores of Assignments

1. Control Group

	Assignment 1			Midterm			Assignment 2			Assignment 3			Final				
	Rater			Rater			Rater			Rater			Rater				
Level	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	$\bar{X}$	SD
Good	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	2.5	2.5	3.0	4.0	4.0	3.0	3.5	3.0	3.10	0.43
	3.0	2.5	2.5	3.0	2.5	3.5	3.0	3.0	4.0	3.5	3.5	4.0	3.5	3.5	3.0	3.20	0.49
	2.5	2.5	2.0	3.0	2.5	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	1.5	1.0	1.0	2.5	2.0	2.0	2.30	0.70
Average	2.5	2.5	2.5	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	2.0	2.5	2.5	3.0	3.0	2.5	2.73	0.32
	2.5	2.5	2.0	3.0	3.0	2.5	3.0	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.0	2.0	3.0	2.0	2.0	2.47	0.40
	3.0	3.5	3.5	3.0	3.5	3.5	4.0	4.0	4.0	5.0	4.0	4.0	2.0	2.5	2.5	3.47	0.77
Weak	2.5	2.0	2.0	3.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	0.0	1.0	1.0	2.5	2.0	2.0	1.87	0.72
	2.0	2.0	2.0	3.0	2.5	2.5	3.0	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.0	2.0	2.0	1.5	1.5	2.23	0.46
	2.5	2.0	2.0	3.0	2.5	2.5	3.0	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.0	2.0	2.5	2.0	2.0	2.37	0.35

Mean Scores of Assignments

2. Experimental Group

Level	Assignment 1			Midterm			Assignment 2			Assignment 3			Final			$\bar{X}$	SD
	Rater			Rater			Rater			Rater			Rater				
	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3		
Good	3.0	3.5	3.5	4.5	5.0	6.0	3.0	4.0	4.0	2.5	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	4.0	3.67	0.94
	4.0	3.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.0	4.0	5.0	5.0	2.5	3.0	2.5	4.0	3.0	4.0	3.87	0.81
	3.0	3.5	3.5	4.0	4.0	4.5	5.0	5.0	5.5	4.0	4.5	4.0	5.0	5.0	4.0	4.30	0.70
Average	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	2.5	4.0	3.0	2.0	3.0	3.5	2.5	5.0	4.0	4.0	3.23	0.75
	3.0	3.5	3.0	5.0	4.5	4.5	4.0	5.0	4.0	3.0	4.0	4.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.77	0.75
	3.0	2.0	2.0	3.5	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	2.5	3.0	3.0	2.5	3.5	3.0	3.0	2.87	0.44
Weak	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.5	2.0	2.0	3.0	3.5	3.0	3.0	2.5	2.5	3.0	3.0	2.5	2.57	0.50
	3.5	3.5	3.0	4.0	5.0	4.5	3.0	3.5	3.5	3.0	3.0	3.0	4.0	3.5	3.5	3.57	0.59
	2.5	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	3.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	2.30	0.46

VITA

VITA

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