

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

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## **Abstrak**

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

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

## Abstract

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

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

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## **List of Abbreviations**

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

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

**L1** - First Language

**L2** - Second Language

**NES** – Native English Speaker

**WU** – Walailak University

**PSU** – Prince of Songkla University

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

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

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



English. In addition, the regular class instructions coupled with my self-study gradually helped me to improve not just my writing but reading, speaking and listening skills as well. Eventually, I passed the course at a satisfactory level.

Reflecting on my own experience, I was better exposed than other Thai students who learn English in Thailand. This was probably the main reason that I developed my English language skills faster than my friends who enrolled in the same course back home in the country (Thailand). They did not have much opportunity to use English or for some of them, never used the language outside class contexts. My curiosity started to develop out of my own willingness to understand whether undergraduate students in Thailand are taught English writing skills at all, how do they go about learning to write in English? What kind of input do they receive to support their writing development? How do formal instruction and environment influence the learning of writing? The purpose of this study is to explore the process of writing skill development of seven English majors at two universities in Thailand using a grounded theory approach.

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

Writing is a skill which occupies a special status within the communicative framework of language teaching (Williams, 2005). Good writers must possess the skill of conveying variety of messages near and far and to known and unknown readers. According to Williams (2005), writing skills are not naturally acquired, they are usually learned or culturally transmitted as a set of practices in formal instructional settings or other environments. Though there is a biological basis for writing in the brain of humans (Kellogg, 2008) as processes of planning, generating texts and reviewing them involve their cognitive system, in order to be able to write

successfully, one must practise and learn through writing experiences. These experiences will provide them a chance to be adventurous with the language, to go beyond what they have already learned. Arguably, writing needs to be meaningful and not mere practice (drills). Thereby, it enhances their competency in the target language.

When dealing with current trends in development of English writing skills, one should appreciate the review on writing research of the 21<sup>st</sup> century by Juzwik, Curcic, Wolbers, Moxley, Dimling and Shankland (2006) which indicates that among other English language skills, EFL writing skill development deserves to be given much attention. Most of research studies of EFL writing in their review can be grouped into four different issues. The first issue is related to general problems that have been investigated by writing researchers. Secondly, the issue has been the choice of population in writing research, and thirdly is the relationship between age group and problems in question. Then, the issue of what kind of methodologies is being used in research on writing is also of popular interest. Among the most actively studied problems during this time had been social context and writing practices, bilingualism or multilingualism and writing and writing instruction.

As far as the age group is concerned, undergraduate, adults and post secondary populations were the most prominent in writing research (Juzwik et al. 2006). In addition, Juzwik et al. (2006) found that process writing research on college-aged students dominated composition studies in the mid 1980s though contextual studies of writing were scarce. The review by Juzwik et al. (2006) also addressed three interrelated social cultural review of writing research: how literacy functions in each varied communities, composing process, and writing development. Besides, writing

researchers of this period also addressed writing difficulties faced by ESL learners as well as cultural and linguistic minorities.

Juzwik et al. (2006)'s study revealed that there is a gap in age of population chosen in past writing studies as adults or undergraduate students were prevailing. This maybe because writing skill was not introduced in pre-university education in most countries especially where English is considered a second or foreign language such as Thailand. With the increasing emphasis on the importance of research in writing as mentioned earlier, more studies on writing should be done in Thai contexts in order to understand more about the nature of EFL writing development. Therefore, this study focuses on understanding the nature of writing development process in Thai EFL settings.

Dealing with the concept of writing skill development, it is appropriate to clarify here what is meant by "writing." Given that one has to define the word, he or she may either think of the composing product itself or the act of composing. It is this issue that gives rise to the two major paradigms of writing pedagogy: the product approach and the process approach. The former focuses on the end product of writing process with its emphasis on surface level mechanics. The latter emphasizes on how the product is produced, with its major concern on processing ideas, content and organization throughout the writing activity. The traditional classrooms of writing in Thailand have given so much emphasis on product: forms, structures and grammar. Thai students are usually taught to write sentences or complete sentences without any aims for communication. As a result, a vast majority of Thai university graduates cannot write in English (Glass, 2008). Glass (2008) further reports that writing instruction in Thailand does not prepare Thai students to write at post graduate levels. This problem is probably caused by a large majority of Thai EFL

teachers who encountered English writing difficulties and thus hardly publish their written work in any international journals (Glass, 2008). This suggests that Thai EFL writing classrooms needed to be reviewed in terms of teaching and learning approach towards writing. Obviously, it is necessary to trace the process in which students go about to develop themselves as EFL writers in their own contexts. Consequently, this study examined the process approach towards writing skill development in EFL contexts, specifically the Thai learning contexts. This is not to mention that the final product should be totally ignored but the major emphasis should be given more towards means of learning to master English language writing skills which is referred to as “writing process” throughout this study.

Before discussing in details on the concept of process approach towards writing in relation to students’ writing skill development, it is worth to mention basic knowledge all writers should have in order to master writing skills. This includes general linguistic knowledge of the target language being acquired as well as strategic knowledge. There are two kinds of linguistic ability: organizational and pragmatic (Hedge, 2005). As for the linguistic ability, students must have basic knowledge of lexicon, morphology, syntax, phonology and orthography. While pragmatic ability includes ability and knowledge to use the language appropriately in different sociolinguistic contexts (register, code, figures of speech), strategic knowledge refers to students’ awareness and ability to manage and produce a good piece of writing which learners must undergo through various stages in the writing process.

Though both linguistic knowledge and strategic knowledge are interrelated and important in producing a good piece of writing, these two types of knowledge are from within the learners themselves. Those who believe in this knowledge alone will

emphasise on writing rules or imitation of writing work from experts in their teaching activities rather than using such knowledge for real purpose (Liu & Matthews, 2005). In fact, learning to write involves more than just cognitive engagement. Writing skills cannot be acquired independently from learners' environment (Meng, 2007). Factors of cultural, educational and social contexts which students come into contact with will definitely influence their language learning development, and writing is part of language learning. These factors play important roles in providing their writing inputs. Therefore, each learning context is unique in itself which in turn affects the degree of its learners' writing competency. Thus, the main concern of this study is to discover the Thai EFL students' development process in learning to write in English as a foreign language from a broader conceptual level (i.e. beyond what is happening in students' heads). The results of this study should be able to explain the nature of their EFL writing skill development from a broader perspective and not just examining students' cognitive activities alone but also their interactions with surrounding environment such as with their teachers or other writing facilitators.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The fact that English is important to this era of globalization and that it will be used as a medium of communication for Asian community poses challenges to Thai educators as English language teaching in Thailand has not prepared Thais to work with members of ASEAN countries (Wiriyachitra, 2002; & Noom-ura, 2013). Wiriyachitra (2002) and Noom-ura (2013) point out that Thais' level of English proficiency is considered low in comparison with other developing countries in South East Asia such as Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Myanmar and the Philippines. Wiriyachitra (2002) and Noom-ura (2013) further report that the needs

for English in the workplace are currently unmet by the English curriculum in Thai universities. Over a decade ago, the director of science and technology mentioned that Thais have high proficiency in science and technology, but cannot make much progress because of their incompetence in English which is the domain of information exchange (Wiriyachitra, 2002). Likewise, the director of the Academic Training Section of the Tourist Authority of Thailand highlighted that in spite of the fact that tourism is the main source of income of Thailand, the tourism industry is composed of Thais with poor command of the English language (Wiriyachitra, 2002). Until now, English language teaching in Thailand has been static despite the high demand of English language skills in global competition. Recently, a former secretary general of the Office of Higher Education Commission in Thailand has also highlighted that so far the entrepreneurs in Thailand have not been satisfied with Thai graduates due to their incompetence in English language skills which is necessary at work (Daily News, September 6, 2011). They are especially poor in productive skills i.e. both speaking and writing skills (Noom-ura, 2013). This is not surprising since Thailand was ranked 55<sup>th</sup> out of sixty countries in the most recent Education First English Proficiency Index (EF EPI, 2013). The report shows that Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, and Vietnam were ranked eleventh, twelfth, twenty fifth, and twenty eighth respectively. This can be inferred that Thailand will continue to lag behind in the competitive world of business, education, science and technology if no improvement is made on English language teaching and learning.

These problems arise as a result of typical English language instructions in Thailand which often emphasize rote learning and memorization (Foley, 2005). Noom-ura (2013) states that Thai students do not have enough exposure to English, lack of interest to study it in their own time and thus lack the confidence to use the language.

This is the major problem which caused Thailand to suffer from its economic and financial crisis in 1997 due to lack of qualified graduates (The National Educational Act, 1999). Therefore, a new education reform law was introduced to the country in 1997 which enforces teachers to employ the learner-centred approach in language classrooms and abandon the traditional teacher-centred one. Even with changes made to Thai educational reform on curriculum related to English language teaching and learning in public schools, the curriculum includes little or no writing activities (Glass, 2008). It is most likely that students who graduate from high school have never experienced any writing practice in English. Even at tertiary level, students who do not major in English will not be taught on how to compose in English. This is to mention that Thai students who do not have a chance to go to private tutors or extra courses outside classrooms will not understand the idea of writing in English at all. Only those who major in English are required to enroll in writing courses but this practice is just to fulfill the requirement of the programme at this level. Nevertheless, the kind of writing taught to these students is less creative and structure oriented (Glass, 2008).

Students' learning context undoubtedly influences how fast they learn a foreign language (Meng, 2007). By providing a vivid description of English language teaching and learning in Thai context, one can be sensitive to and understand how challenging it is to learn English here (the degree of toughness of learning English writing skill in the context). However, it is not the purpose of this study to foresee Thai English major students' problems of writing skills but rather to explore how they attempt to master the skills in their specific context. Such exploration would yield more comprehensive findings which in turn will be beneficial for future development in terms of teaching methodology and trainings relevant to the field.

Thai students' writing skills can be developed provided that their educational authorities are aware of recent trends in teaching writing which emphasize the importance of incorporating a process approach. ESL researchers including Silvia and Mutsuda (2001), Flower and Hayes (1981), and Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987), Baruca (2010), Yuknis (2010), Spencer (2012) and enthusiastic ESL specialists are constantly trying to find satisfactory answers on the effectiveness of writing process approach in the teaching of writing which has been overlooked in many writing classrooms. However, these researchers were very much concerned with writing by students of other than South East Asian language nations, though their studies were related to the current ESL/EFL teaching writing methodology.

The fact is that language learning varies from one context to another and writing is part of language learning. Therefore, the conclusions derived from these well-known researchers or other writing scholars elsewhere in the West may not be applicable in Asian contexts, specifically Thai EFL context. For example, the context of EFL learners who learn to write in English in the United States is undoubtedly very resourceful. There, everyone uses English and is thus supportive to their learning. However, those who learn to write in English in a non-English speaking country will not have this privilege. They may need special attention from the part of writing educators compared to those who are more privileged. Though there are a number of research studies done in Thailand related to the teaching of English writing skills of Thai undergraduate students both inside and outside classroom settings such as those done by Patarapongpaisan (1996), Toh (2000), Jarantawatchai (2001), Chaisuriya (2003), Pataraporn (2006), Dhamarattigannon (2008) and Glass (2008), none of these studies have ever discussed the influence of Thai writing teachers have on students' writing skill development, Thai students' cognitive process while



producing their EFL academic written texts and the nature of Thai writing classroom as well as their social contexts. Specifically, these researchers merely focused on Thai students' attitudes towards process writing approach (Patarapongpaisan, 1996 & Dhamarattigannon, 2008), teachers' perceptions on their students' writing problems (Toh, 2000), the use of peer collaboration in technical writing (Chaisuriya, 2003), strategies employed while writing (Jarunthawatchai, 2001), and the applicability of Thai graduates' writing skills after completing their undergraduate programme (Glass, 2008).

Interestingly, these past studies could not solve Thai students' writing problems better as evident in Glass's (2008) study. This may be because these researchers tend to focus on only one aspect of writing at a time such as types of strategies used, the advantage of using process approach or students' attitudes towards writing. There must be more complex explanation on this problem due to the fact that writing is a skill that is not acquired but learned (Williams, 2005). This implies that environment where students live in and interact with also plays crucial role in contributing their writing skill development. The process of learning to write therefore involves more than just learning but also teaching, interacting and experiencing with others in order to master the skills. Unfortunately, currently there is no research that explains the multidimensional process of EFL students especially in Thai contexts. As a result, further research is needed to explore the whole process of writing development of EFL learners both inside and outside classroom situations. Such research findings would give some insights on what is lacking in the process of learning to write by Thai students, curriculum planning, teachers' development in relation to the teaching of writing skills in Thai context as well as pedagogical implications for future design of appropriate writing instructional methodologies.

The present study was therefore, aimed at exploring and recognizing how complex process of learning to write in a new language (English) among Thai EFL students. The researcher is interested to understand the holistic approach on how Thai EFL students undergo their writing experiences, their cognitive, social behaviours, their psychological response towards writing, their teachers' backgrounds of learning and teaching writing and instructional practices through the research participants' own voice. Subsequently, the researcher could identify, develop and relate possible factors occur in the process based on the information that is grounded in the collected data. Consequently, this study should make considerable contribution to the understanding of the nature of Thai students' writing process which leads to pedagogical development in English writing skills for future Thai EFL learners.

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

The present study employs a qualitative case study by using a grounded theory approach in trying to understand the multidimensional process of how Thai English majors develop as EFL writers. The researcher collected the data through non-participant observation, students' and teachers' interviews, students' writing samples and think-aloud protocols, their course syllabi, textbook, drafts, and assignments. The grounded theory was systematically developed in the way that it can explain the process of learning to write in English by the Thai English majors. To be more specific, the objectives of the present study are to:

- understand the process of English writing skill development of seven English majors at two universities in Thailand: three participants from Walailak University, Nakhorn Si Thammarat, and four from Prince of Songkla University, Pattani, Thailand.

- explore the phenomena which have led these students to begin writing.
- explore the contextual factors which influence these students' writing skill development.
- describe how instructional practices influence their learning behaviours and writing strategies.
- describe the consequences of this development process.

#### **1.4 Research Questions**

The gap in writing research which has been raised earlier justifies the choice of qualitative method for this study. The method is suitable since the aim is to understand the phenomenon of interest from a small number of participants. The use of purposeful sampling allowed the researcher to collect the data from those who could provide relevant information needed for the study. To add more variations and dimensions to the data, the two famous universities in the south of Thailand were selected. Thus, this study attempts to explain the process of learning to write in English as a foreign language of seven Thai English majors at two universities in Thailand in a systematic way using grounded theory in the qualitative approach. The researcher has explored the multidimensional process in which Thai EFL students experienced in order to develop their writing skills both inside and outside classroom contexts. This involves an exploration on the process of teaching and learning writing skills, students' construction of knowledge through their interaction with environment as well as the influence of educational and motivational factors on their process of learning writing skills. Therefore, this study has been guided by one research question with its five sub-questions as stated below:

1. How do the seven Thai EFL English majors develop their writing skills?
  - a. What inspire them to write in English?
  - b. How does the context they live in influence their writing development?
  - c. How does writing instruction in Thai contexts influence their development of writing expertise?
  - d. How do these Thai EFL English majors compose in English?
  - e. What are the outcomes of this development process?

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

There are many reasons why there is a need to conduct current research study. First, the new national curriculum policy of Thailand and the reviewed literature, all point toward an increasing emphasis on and need for English language development of Thai EFL students with writing skill is no exception (Sitthitikul, 2010). This study will contribute to English language development in Thailand particularly writing skills of university English majors. Also, the current trend in teaching and learning EFL writing indicates that writing instruction should focus more on the different stages process of writing rather than just waiting to see the finished product and evaluate according to its look and length. To ensure that writing instruction to undergraduate EFL students in Thailand is in tandem with the current trend, this study therefore, is conducted so that more explanation can be gained. Next, it is reported that writing skill has often been neglected in English education in Thailand while there is a real need for students, scholars and researchers to master the skill. By examining the process of learning and teaching writing of those who learn to write in the Thai context, one can understand the holistic structure of the process.

Subsequently, the findings could offer useful information on how writing is best learned especially for other students who live in similar contexts.

In addition, this study has allowed the researcher to have a clearer picture and be able to explain the current EFL writing practices especially at two universities in Thailand. This includes understanding of the nature of Thai EFL writing instructors, their pedagogical approach and roles in developing students' writing skills, students' perceptions towards their instructional methodologies and of course the writing process in which their students engaged when learning to write in English. This exploration consists of aspects of what should be taken into consideration as a whole when dealing with writing skill development which were absent in previous studies conducted in Thailand. Consequently, the results of this study will inform Thai English educators, curriculum designers, developers and planners as well as writing researchers so that some changes and development to current English language teaching policy and practices can be done appropriately in Thai contexts in order to achieve expected learning outcomes at both individual and national levels. Besides, findings and discussions of this study will also contribute to the body of knowledge in the field of ESL/EFL teaching and learning development.

### **1.6 Scope of the Study**

This study employs a qualitative case study using grounded theory to explore the process of English language writing skill development of Thai EFL learners at two universities in Thailand, namely: Walailak University (WU), Nakhon Si Thammarat; and Prince of Songkla University (PSU), semester 1, academic year 2011/2012. The participants involved seven English majors: three from WU, and four from PSU. The PSU participants were taking the second and last writing course

required while the WU were taking their third and fourth writing course in the programme at their respective university. The two writing teachers who were in charge of teaching EFL writing to these seven students in this particular semester, one from each university was interviewed so that rich data was made available for the researcher to understand the teaching and learning system as a whole and not just from students' perspective. The generation of a new paradigm model that explains the process of Thai EFL students learning to write in this study was based on data collected through classroom observation, the student participants' interview, the questionnaire, two writing teachers' interview, students' writing sample, students' verbal report while engaging in writing, and documentary data for their writing class which included class notes, course outline, course materials, tests and assignments. The analysis of data involved consideration of several factors including students' learning behaviours in the classrooms and their interaction with social, educational and cultural environment in order to develop their writing skills. All these related factors were subsequently displayed in the form of a paradigm model as required in the systematic design in grounded theory.

### **1.7 Definition of Terms**

**Writing process** – “The process of writing which emphasizes what happens before the final draft” (Williams, 2005, p. 32).

**Grounded Theory** – “The theory that is derived from the data, systematically gathered and analysed through the research process” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 12).

**Social Constructivism** - An approach to first and second language acquisition which is associated with the dynamic nature of the interaction between learners and their peers, with teachers and others (Brown, 2000, p. 287).

## **1.8 Organization of the Thesis**

This thesis is organized into five chapters. The contents of each chapter are outlined below.

In Chapter One, there is an introduction to this study including statements of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, definition of terms, organization of the thesis and summary of the chapter.

In Chapter Two, the researcher provides detailed information on the research context in terms of the role that English plays and the influence of culture on ELT in Thailand. Then, related literature on theories and approaches of second language learning in relation to writing, models of teaching writing as a process, similarities between L1 and L2 writing, and the role of technology in L2 writing are reviewed. The chapter ends with a discussion of past research related to writing skill development both in Thailand and abroad and summary of the chapter respectively.

Chapter Three of this thesis begins with research design of this study, designs of grounded theory, strengths and limitations of grounded theory as well as justification for using grounded theory in this study; respectively. Later in the chapter, the research presents research settings, the participants and how they are selected, data collection and analysis followed by summary of the chapter.

Chapter Four presents results of the study and a paradigm model of the new theory developed with detailed descriptions of each of its component are given. The model consists of five factors of analysis: factors influence the process of learning to write of Thai EFL students (causal condition); actions or strategies used in the process of writing development (strategies); specific factors which influence their strategies

(contextual conditions); cultural or general factors which influence their strategies (intervening conditions); and the results of using those strategies (consequences). After that, the researcher compares the new theory developed in this study with those of others in the existing literature. Towards the end, ethical consideration throughout the process of conducting this study is also reported, evaluation of the findings is discussed then the researcher summarise the chapter.

The last chapter of this thesis (Chapter Five) begins with a summary of the new grounded theory developed in this study and discussing the major findings. Later, it offers practical implications to the field of writing instruction, highlights the strengths of the study as well as its limitations. The chapter concludes by offering suggestions for further research.

### **1.9 Summary of the Chapter**

In this chapter, I have presented the background of the study which addressed the importance of conducting research in EFL writing in Thailand. There is still a mismatch between how students experience writing and their need to master the skill. Then, the statement of problem has also been discussed followed by an illustration of the main purposes of this study along with the research questions. Next, the significance of the study has also been addressed. In brief, this study provides better explanation on the process of learning to write in English of Thai EFL students both inside and outside classroom contexts. Consequently, the results of this study will inform Thai English educators, curriculum designers, developers and planners as well as writing researchers so that some changes and development to current English language teaching policy and practices can be done appropriately in Thai contexts. Finally, I have also provided terminology used throughout this study



as well as the organization of the research. The next chapter will review related literature in the area of foreign language writing research as well as relevant studies which have been done in relation to writing skill development.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Chapter One introduces general background of the study, research objectives as well as research questions which have guided the researcher throughout this study. This chapter presents detailed explanation of English language teaching in Thailand, the context where this study is conducted followed by L2 language learning theories and approaches in relation to writing. In the next section, it discusses other related factors necessary for teaching and learning EFL writing such as teachers' role, characteristics of good and poor writers, and the influence of native language in EFL writing. In the last section, related research studies in ESL and EFL writing are also reviewed.

#### **2.1 The Role of English and ELT in Thailand**

Thailand is a country which has never been colonized and thus Thai people are very proud of using their Thai language which is the only official language of the country. In a formal setting however, English does not have an official function in Thailand. Thai is the only official language used across the board. There is no other second or official language. For legal purposes, if a non-Thai is directly involved in the process, all the paper work must be translated into Thai. For example, marriage certificate, employment contracts, documents related to visa and work permit applications will be legally processed after they are being translated to Thai (Glass, 2008).

English has long been associated with symbolic functions of education, wealth and prestige of the family. This idea suggests that being proficient in English is an

indicator of high education received, high economic or social status (Hayes, 2008). Since Thailand has never been a colonized nation, it is placed in Kachru's (2005) "expanding circle" where English is not relevant and used by most people in the country. It is regarded as a foreign rather than a second language for them (Hayes, 2008). Nevertheless, there are certain contexts where English is widely used among people who live in Thailand. These contexts include tertiary education, tourism, international law, scientific publication, technology transfer, and internet communication (Foley, 2005). All of which require writing proficiency in order to achieve targeted goals in each context.

The function of English in Thai educational contexts such as at Walailak and Prince of Songkla Universities is not different from other government offices in the country. Though the students' degree certificates are written in English, all other important paperwork and forms that have to do with external governmental offices must be in Thai.

The emergence of historical background of English education in Thailand began after the reign of King Rama III (1824-1851), the time in which the country was called Siam (Foley, 2005). After a short period of time, there was a high demand of English to be used for trading, religious and colonial agendas among higher court officials and administrators. The first Thai person who was English literate was the King Rama IV (1851-1868). Besides, he also required his family members to learn English by arranging classes for them with a group of native speakers such as Christian missionaries, British as well as Americans tutors. In the time of the King Rama V, Thailand was open to Western influence. He founded a school to teach English and other subjects to royal children but not limited to nobility (Toh, 2000). English was also used among business people, educational officers, and country

leaders. Subsequently, in 1921, English was also made compulsory in public schools for students after grade 4 in the reign of King Rama VI.

In terms of educational goals, the ELT in Thailand of such periods was aimed to serve two functions i.e. to produce modern thinkers of the country and to produce children with English ability in which the language is to be used in language classrooms. The English teachers only used two prominent teaching methods of these early periods which are rote memorization and grammar translation (Aksornkul, 1980).

The situation changed when the Ministry of Education made English compulsory for all primary school children from the first grade onwards in 1996. The formation of curriculum emphasized more on English for international communication, acquisition of knowledge, use of English in higher education and career prospects. The new method of teaching which was known as audio-lingual method was introduced with the aim to replace the two traditional rote learning and grammar translation. However, the new method could not be applied successfully as rote-memorization had been the norm for Thai educational culture for years (Foley, 2005). The first group of students who already graduated in 2008 followed this curriculum which is to complete the full 12 years of English curriculum starting from their primary school (6 years) to secondary school (6 years).

In 1997, Thailand encountered economic and financial downfall as a result of lacking qualified graduates with analytical thought (The National Educational Act, 1999). Hence, the national educational reform law was endorsed with the aim to change education and learning process of the country. This reform mandates teachers and educators to give highest importance to learners. The education should promote

critical thinking to individuals and foster life-long learning. Educational institutions at all levels in Thailand are obliged to implement learner-centred approach. The old system of teacher-centred approach was rejected and no more valued.

In spite of the fact that Thai educational policy has changed towards international oriented, there is still a question of quality of English instruction. Thailand does not have enough graduates with the right qualifications to plan, develop and teach English in such a way that students can learn and use the language successfully. The low quality English teachers in Thai schools result in Thai students' failure in the English proficiency test of Switzerland-based Education First's global index as reported recently (EF EPI, 2013).

## **2.2 The Influence of Culture on English Language Education in Thailand**

Thai culture is recognized as hierarchical and authoritative (Dhanarattigannon, 2008). The young people should obey and respect their elders especially their parents and grandparents. Also, juniors are expected not to argue with seniors and this practice has been the norm in the Thai society. Therefore, Thai people have three levels of language formality. One is used for the king royal family, one for monks or priests, and the other is for ordinary people.

In education, this culture influences how students relate to their teachers in classroom settings. Teachers are often perceived as knowledgeable and a representative of moral goodness. Therefore students need to believe in what they say. This teacher authority is much likely to promote teacher-centered classrooms (Deveney, 2005 & Dhanarattigannon 2008). As a result, it is hard to get Thai students who like to express their ideas without being asked. Deveney (2005) and Dhanarattigannon (2008) further explain that Thai students are very passive

especially in the presence of their authority individuals. Students often expect top-down process of learning which is very dependent on teachers who are assumed to represent power in classrooms. They are used to wait for teachers to transfer knowledge to them and instruct them what to do. They seldom participate in any activities to promote critical thinking necessary in learning process. With this in mind, it is difficult to judge whether academic failure of Thai students is a result of poor effort or learning disability. However, Littlewood (1999) provides some evidence which confirms the relationship of Thai students' failure with lack of effort. Littlewood (ibid) believes that unlike Asian students, the cause of academic failure experienced by students in the west is shortage of ability.

One other important aspect of the Thai culture is the element of collectivism. According to Dimmock (as cited in Deveney, 2005, p.156), Thailand is ranked as the fourth highest collectivist society after Hong Kong, Singapore and Malaysia. Some among their common collectivist behaviours include group priority over individuals, deferring to authority and respect the group tradition (Hayes, 2008). One distinctive feature unique to Thais out of this collectivism is reflected in their feeling of "kreng jai" or in English is equivalent to "being considerate." Thais give high value on social relationship and promote reputation of the group. Every interaction with their seniors must be careful and aimed at seeking harmony and avoid conflicts. This idea of "kreng jai" may have an impact on learning a language too. A good example would be a report from a study conducted by Thongrin (2002) on peer feedback in learning to write in English. She found that her Thai participants were afraid to give sincere feedback because they felt "kreng jai." Since they did not want their friends to get upset, the feedback was written in short, general and positive. Later, when they

understood the purpose of peer response, they began to write longer and more specific comments on the writing tasks.

Thai students with unusual deferent behaviours towards their seniors and the feeling of “kreng jai” will also influence the way they approach their teachers when learning to write in English. Writing requires learners to express ideas throughout different stages particularly when the class incorporates the process approach. The lack of confidence in students may result in unwillingness to participate in writing activities which will only make their classroom remains teacher-centred.

When dealing with education, understanding the minds of teachers is as equally important as understanding their students’ patterns. Until now, one might have a few questions in mind as to whether or not Thai teachers share similar cultural experiences with their students? Do they act according to what they are perceived by the students when they interact with each other be it inside or outside the classroom? Out of her curiosity, Methitham (2009) conducted a study to examine Thai teachers’ perceptions towards the role of English and English language teaching in Thailand. The data collected from a questionnaire and an email interview indicated that the four elements which are related to colonialism did exist in the minds of these teachers, namely: scholarship, linguistic, cultural, and economic. The Thai native speakers who were English teachers perceived themselves as inferior to those of people from the inner circle (Methitham, 2009). All of them agreed that by conforming to language patterns and cultural norms of English speakers in the inner circle, Thai students will improve English language skills. In terms of the economic element, they reported that English native speakers are preferred to be paid better than Thai teachers. Many school managers prefer to employ English native speakers or white Westerners just because they are white even though without prior

experience in teacher training. The school managers think that people with white skin can speak good English (Methitham (2009). In many cases, the Thai employers could not identify whether the English used by some of these westerners is of the standard variety or not. Thus, by just looking at the look and the skin colour, Thai people may not choose the right candidates for their institutions.

Methitham's (2009) study implies that the feeling of inferiority among the Thai teachers to English native speakers stems from their cultural experiences. They might think that people who know more about the language have more power than them. It is similar when Thai students perceive their teachers who know better will only have the power to control the class. However, the results obtained in Methitham's study should not be generalized to many English language learning and teaching contexts in Thailand. One of the reasons is that in many cases at high school level, the Thai teachers may not be qualified to teach English which is the issue of shortage of effective human capital. Of course, if they are unable to communicate adequately in English, they will feel inferior not just to their native speaker counterparts but also to their Thai qualified colleagues.

Knowing the role and functions of English language in Thailand can provide the researcher good background knowledge regarding the context used for this study. Given that English is not commonly used either in most public or private settings, one may wonder how Thais can successfully learn the language, English writing in particular. Thus, it is important to review the existing theories of ESL/EFL learning and followed by theories of writing.



### **2.3 Learning Theories in Relation to L2 Writing**

It is worthy to note some basic principles of L2 learning before exploring what involves in the process of writing. This is because learning to write in L2 is also part of learning a second language. What follows are two among the important basic principles of second language learning that are closely related to L2 writing (Williams, 2005). First, learning to write well requires both linguistic competence and writing skills. These two aspects of L2 proficiency develop concurrently in L2 learners but in different ways. Writing skill is not the skill that develops automatically. A native speaker for instance, may be competent in his or her language, yet his or her ability to write is questionable. Next, second language learning is a long process, and for many L2 students the process never ends.

Learning a second language is different from acquiring a first language in many perspectives. Children quickly learn their first language because they live in rich environment that is filled with abundant of language inputs and examples. Besides, they also need to use the language in their daily lives which is not always the case for L2 learners. In addition, students do not always learn what is taught (Williams, 2005). They need time to process and explore the new language by themselves as they learn. Writing skill in particular, has its own rules and conventions, and it is difficult to learn in a short period of time. Though L2 writers have mastered some words and structures of the target language, they are still somewhere in the course of their learning process of adding new knowledge and becoming more fluent in that knowledge. Therefore, the instruction of L2 writing must serve two goals: to enhance the language acquisition process and to develop learners improve their effectiveness in written expressions (Williams, 2005).

Most research concerning second language writing is based on first language theories, insights and techniques. Over the last three decades, researchers working in various disciplines such as sociology, psychology, linguistics and education have contributed much in the field of second language acquisition research (Juzwick et al. (2006). Since the 1980s, there have been a number of models used to ground the research on teaching writing to culturally diverse learners. One cannot ignore theories of second language learning when dealing with teaching and learning in L2 writing. Furthermore, L2 writing researchers still have to depend on L1 writing theories (Leki, 1995; Larios, Manchon & Murphy, 2006; Van Weijen, Van den Bergh, Rijalaarsdam & Sanders, 2008). As a result, this case study's framework integrated several learning theories. In the first part of this chapter, theories that are relevant to L2 teaching and writing activities will be discussed from general to specific namely: Krashen's theory of second language acquisition, theoretical approaches to teaching of native English writing, and approaches to teaching ESL writing, accordingly.

### **2.3.1 Krashen's L2 Acquisition Theory**

Stephen Krashen, a highly acclaimed researcher, linguist and activist, is best known for his contributions to the field of second language acquisition (SLA). Krashen (1982) agrees that language acquisition does not require extensive use of conscious grammatical rules as well as tedious drill. Krashen developed a widely acknowledged and well known second language acquisition theory consisting of five main hypotheses: the acquisition learning, the monitor, the natural order, the input, and the affective filter. Since the 1980s, this theory has had a strong impact in all perspectives of second language research and teaching. A brief discussion of Krashen's hypotheses is as follows.

### **a) The Acquisition Learning Hypothesis**

According to Ellis (1986), the acquisition learning hypothesis is the essential component to Krashen's theory. In this hypothesis, Krashen distinguishes between the term "acquisition" and "learning." According to Krashen (1982), there are two independent systems of second language performance: the acquired system and the learned system. The term "acquisition" is the result of a subconscious process which is much the same as the process by which children undertake when they acquire their first language. It requires meaningful contact and natural communication. Once a child hears the language from the environment he or she lives in, the child unconsciously produces correct grammatical structures. Therefore, language is not deliberately learned, rather it comes naturally. The focus of this hypothesis is not on learners' utterances not but in the communicative act. Thus, acquisition, the effortless process, occurs in communicative situations in natural settings.

Learning on the other hand, is a result of formal instruction and procedures employed in most traditional classrooms. This formal training involves a conscious process in which "learners attend to form, figure out rules, and are generally aware of their own process" (Brown, 2000, p.278). Learning also involves efforts specifically aimed at examining the target language for example learning of grammar rules. Learning or mastering a language therefore, comes after the language has been acquired in natural settings, and thus learning is less important than acquisition (Krashen, 1982). In other words, Krashen argued that language cannot be learned and that fluency in a second language or foreign language is due to what a language learner has acquired of the target language, not what she/he has learned. Nevertheless, learning monitors the grammatical use of acquiring a target language.

Krashen's hypothesis of acquisition and learning may be plausible in first language learning where learners can always benefit from their surrounding environment. However, the opposite may be true to those who learn a second or foreign language. In most cases, EFL students do not have much opportunity to hear the target language in real contexts or interact with English speakers except in regular classroom environment. Ellis (1993) also disagrees with the two Krashen's terms that create a distinction between language acquisition and learning. While Krashen assumes that language cannot be learned without acquiring it naturally, Ellis strongly argues that language can be mastered through formal practice until learners are able to internalize all the language rules that lead to the ability to employ those rules automatically. Ellis proposes that there are two kinds of knowledge that learners internalize in their system: explicit and implicit. Explicit knowledge refers to knowledge of language items, rules that can be analysed, described and classified. This knowledge is considered abstract because it rests in the learner's mind, not the actual production of spoken and written language. Whereas implicit knowledge is what learners know to produce utterances naturally and often unconsciously. It consists of two types: formulaic and rule-based. The formulaic knowledge refers to whole language forms or patterns which are represented automatically in learners' minds. Rule-based knowledge is about knowing rules and structures which have been internalized through formal practices of explicit knowledge. The implicit knowledge is manifested only in actual language performance. One of the concrete examples of this is that native speakers know rules and produce sentences without conscious effort (Ellis, 1993).

The distinction that Krashen (1981) makes between "acquisition" and "learning" a language seems to be problematic since it is not properly defined and the distinction

cannot be empirically supported by research data. Krashen's (1981) explanation of acquisition and learning in terms of subconscious and conscious processes needs more detailed information about what he really meant by subconscious and conscious. Another critique about this hypothesis is that there are learners who learn second languages in formal settings only without interacting with the people of target language. Last but not least, Krashen has not provided any evidence that learning and acquiring were two different systems (Gass & Selinker, 2001). Both learning and acquisition require cognitive engagement either consciously or unconsciously. The learners need to attend to either language forms or meanings in both cases. This study does not differentiate whether the participants learn or acquire their writing skills but consider the two systems together to discern factors related to their learning process as they were trying to improve their writing skills.

#### **b) The Monitor Hypothesis**

The monitor Hypothesis of Krashen's (1982) theory suggests that there is a monitor which functions to help second language learners filter their target language. This monitor acts when learners plan, edit, or correct what they have already learned such as choices of verb tenses and part of speech. The monitor is a result of learned grammar. Krashen (1994) explains that in order to use a monitor, three factors must be met: time, focus on form and knowledge of the rules. However, all language learners do not necessarily use monitor in the same way (Krashen, 1994). There are three categories of monitor use among language learners. They are (1) "over-users" (those who use monitor all the time), (2) "under-users" (those who have not learned how to use the monitor or who prefer not to use their conscious knowledge) and (3) optimal users (those who use monitor properly).

A criticism of this hypothesis is that it claims that the monitor only exists in the learned system. McLaughlin (1987) states that the monitor hypothesis is not falsifiable. It is impossible to determine how the monitor works or prove if it works at all. It is hard, if it is not impossible, for anyone to prove if a learner produces a correct form in the target language, what caused those forms to produce, and what produce them- the acquired system or the learning system. This suggests that second language learners only monitor themselves when they produce language, but not when they are trying to understand it. Gass and Selinker (2001, p. 204) also disagree with Krashen (1981) by suggesting that even though learners do monitor themselves, it is “not necessarily exclusive to learned knowledge.” In the context of English as a foreign language, students do not have much access to natural English speaking environment, which according to this monitor theory, it is impossible that these students will master the language. More often than not they are taught formally in the classrooms and not from learning from outside environment as how native speakers do. The confusion between the use of monitor in the acquired system and the learned system in this hypothesis provides some ideas for the researcher to carefully watch how EFL Thai learners use their monitors to plan, edit and correct their writing tasks.

### **c) The Natural Order Hypothesis**

The Natural Order Hypothesis is based on research findings (Dulay & Burt, 1972; Fathman, 1975; Makino, 1980). This hypothesis suggests that the acquisition of grammatical structures follows a natural order in a predictable way, i.e certain items are learned before others (Krashen, 1988, 1994). This order seems to be independent of the learners’ age, language background as well as conditions of exposure to second language (L2).

There are two major critiques for this hypothesis. First, it oversimplifies the cognitive processes of learning, making a hard line distinction between acquisition and learning. Second, the main foundation of this hypothesis is merely an observation of learners acquiring an L2 that is generally used in the surrounding environment.

#### **d) The Input Hypothesis**

In the Input Hypothesis, Krashen (1982) explains how learners acquire a second language in which Krashen argues that the Input Hypothesis relates to acquisition and not learning (p.21). The acquisition of a language takes place when one receives comprehensible input through reading or hearing language structures that slightly exceed their current ability. The learner then improves and processes along the natural order when input is given just a little beyond his or her current linguistic competence. For example, if a learner is at a stage 'i' then the acquisition takes place when the learner is exposed to Comprehensible Input that belongs to level 'i+1' which represents the potential language development. According to this hypothesis, the learner is unable to reach the 'i+1' stage without the assistance of others. Also, because language learners vary in their linguistic competence, the syllabus design should take the natural communicative input approach into account. Consequently, each learner can have an opportunity to receive some 'i+1' that is suitable for his/her own current linguistic competence.

The key element to this hypothesis is that language is acquired and not learned by having the learner receiving comprehensible input that has arrangements or structures just beyond the learner's current level of mastery 'i+1'. The problem with this view is that it is not easy for us to determine a learner's current language level

and what is above their level in order to give them the comprehensible input. Another problem is that the comprehensible input cannot be defined, and that the input may vary from one learner to another. Therefore, the hypothesis in this regard cannot be clearly explained (Brown, 2000).

#### **e) The Affective Filter Hypothesis**

The Affective Filter Hypothesis states that second language learners' emotions work as adjustable filters that permit or hinder input required for acquisition. These emotions include motivation, anxiety and self confidence. Krashen (1994) claims that learners with high motivation, self confidence, good self-image, and low level of anxiety are more likely to succeed in acquiring a second language. On the contrary, learners with low motivation, low self-esteem, and high anxiety will have a higher affective filter that does not provide the learner with as many "subconscious language acquisition" (Krashen, 1994, p. 58). Therefore, Krashen (1994) believes that periods of adolescence and puberty are the least productive in second language acquisition because the affective filter arises out of self conscious reluctance to reveal oneself and feeling of vulnerability. This hypothesis has been supported by many ESL/EFL instructors because it helps them to understand the appropriate environments in which second language learners acquire a second language. It also encourages ESL/EFL instructors to minimize learners' stress and anxiety and creates relaxing classroom atmosphere. McLaughlin (1987) argues that there is no evidence how the affective filter hypothesis works as it lacks explanation of why a motivated learner, whose affective filter should be low, could still have trouble learning a language.



The critique on Krashen's hypotheses of second language acquisition proposed by Krashen (1994) helps the researcher influence her background knowledge in understanding issues related to second and foreign language learning and acquisition, and writing in a foreign language is no exception. To be more specific, the first Krashen's hypothesis informs the researcher that second language learners will master the target language in both formal and informal settings or sometimes referred to as conscious and subconscious learning. This study attempts to understand how Thai students acquire and learn English and writing skills in particular both inside and outside classrooms. The monitor hypothesis provides the researcher some ideas that learners need effective writing instructions to monitor their linguistic competence through the use of metacognitive strategies such as planning, editing, revising and rewriting while they are producing written texts. The input hypothesis however, stresses on the importance of getting adequate input through reading or hearing from various sources which develop one's language learning. The current study considers this aspect when analyzing data collected from the participants. The participants were asked to answer on questions about their input sources in order to gain better understanding regarding their learning activities and behaviours. The last type of Krashen's (1994) hypotheses has been affective filter which has much influence on learning a new language. Krashen points out that different types of emotions such as motivation, anxiety and self confidence can facilitate or inhibit one's learning. Therefore, this study has identified elements related to emotion of these particular participants which hinder or facilitate their learning to write in English.

### **2.3.2 Theoretical Approaches to Teaching Writing to Native English Speakers (NES)**

The previous section has dealt with general theories of second language learning and that learning to write in English by Thais is also part of learning a second language. Nevertheless, the review of literature on ESL/EFL writing research uncovers that most studies have neglected Krashen's hypothesis of language learning. Instead, L2 writing researchers have linked their studies with L1 writing acquisition as mentioned earlier elsewhere in this chapter (see 2.3). This is because there is no fixed theoretical framework for ESL/EFL writing. The three major L1 writing theories are the expressivist, the cognitivist, and social-constructivist approaches. Ignoring Krashen's theories of learning is like choosing to analyse part of the data collected because the researcher may be too overwhelmed with the only L1 writing theories. Therefore, reviewing Krashen's hypothesis and theoretical approaches that have been previously used by other ESL/EFL researchers (e.g. Van Weijen, 2008; Wenyu & Yang, 2008; He, 2009; Baruca, 2012) to explain teaching writing for NES can provide the researcher the ground pertinent to EFL writing research. Moreover, due to its exploratory nature of this study, the first and foremost priority was on the data that emerged and not on choosing which theories to apply in the context being studied. Below are details of the three theoretical approaches to teaching writing to NES.

#### **2.3.2.1 The Expressivist Approach**

The expressivist approach of writing focuses on the writer's voice. The expressivists, such as Elbow (1973, 1981) and Murray (1985), view writing as a process of discovery and expression. Berlin (1988) argues that writing is an art, a creative act in

which the process-the discovery of the true self-is as important as the product. Based on expressive view, teachers emphasize and promote students' voice, choice and self expression. The focus in composition classrooms under this approach turns away from the final product, grammar correction, and structuring of essays to free writing which concentrates on self discovery and self expression (Reid, 1993). The classrooms of this approach also tend to centralise on activities that are designed to promote writing fluency such as journal writing whereby students are empowered to choose their own topic.

The researcher thinks that the expressivist approach is very subjective in nature because it focuses on students' self discovery and expression in promoting writing fluency. Prior to the onset of data collection, the researcher assumed that she would not take this approach into her main consideration when analyzing the data since her concern was not writing fluency but the process towards it. Another reason for thinking that this approach was trivial before obtaining the data was that the researcher thought it was more suitable to elicit advanced learners' language choice and styles in writing as they may have read and learned more advanced vocabulary words thereby able to express most of their ideas into the target language. This study used students who have just experienced their third writing course in their university program and probably the only exposure they had about writing in English. Therefore, the researcher was more interested to seek understanding on how they struggle to master their English writing skills but not so much on their language choices, tones and expression. However, this belief was changed as the researcher began to immerse herself into the data. The elucidation on the importance of applying the expressivist approach in writing instruction is further explained in the discussion section.

### **2.3.2.2 The Cognitivist Approach**

Cognitivists see writing as “a thinking and problem-solving process” (Reid, 1993, p.260). Since the cognitivists began to investigate the writing process and process teaching, they have been interested in a model of writing process (Flower & Hayes, 1997). The two cognitive researchers, Flower and Hayes (1997) have studied how writers approach tasks. Based on such research, they have employed a model explaining the process of writing by problem-solving. This model influences classroom activities by emphasizing on the three main parts of composition: planning, translating and reviewing. In addition, teachers of this model provide intervention through a variety of pre-writing techniques, including brainstorming, free writing, outlining and mapping. The students are trained to develop their image of the audience, the situation and the goal of writing (Reid, 1993). In a writing class, they begin to define a rhetorical problem, explore its parts, generate alternate solutions, draw a conclusion, and then convert their ideas to written texts.

Earlier in this chapter, the researcher has explained that there are two kinds of knowledge that students must possess in order to develop their foreign language writing skills: linguistic and strategic. Though the cognitivists emphasize the importance of mental activities while completing writing tasks, students cannot develop their writing skills without having two kinds of linguistic knowledge: organizational and pragmatic (Hedge, 2005). These include knowledge of lexicon, morphology, syntax, phonology and orthography (organizational) and how to use this knowledge in real contexts (pragmatic). The cognitive perspective towards writing skill development is of strategic which help learners to think, plan and solve problems related to writing tasks. This approach is commonly found in English for

Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Specific Purposes (ESP) classrooms (Williams, 2005).

### **2.3.2.3 The Social Constructivist Approach**

The preceding theory of Krashen's input hypothesis and the cognitive approach in second language learning focus considerably on the individual learners. The social constructivist approach on the other hand, is centred around the view that second language learning does not rest at learners alone but also their culture and social contexts. The social constructionist theory or sometimes is referred to as social constructivism in language teaching and learning has emerged from the work of psychologists and educators such as Vygotsky (1978) and Gredler (1997). Gredler (1997) claims that knowledge is a human product gained through interaction and environment. Learning a language is part of acquiring knowledge. Hence, learners' language development will also depend on their dynamic interplay with their social and cultural contexts.

In more recent years, Meng (2007) also develops a teaching approach based on what was proposed by Vygotsky (1978) and Gredler (1997) earlier. Meng points out that observation and explanation of second language learning should be given to the interpersonal context in which a learner operates. In social constructivist classrooms, teachers should create a context for learning in which students can become engaged in interesting activities that encourages and facilitates learning. The teacher does not simply stand by to watch how students explore and discover. Instead, the teacher may often interact, guide students as they approach problems, encourage them to work in groups to think about issues and questions, and support them with encouragement and advice as they tackle problems, adventures, and challenges that

are rooted in real life situations that are both interesting to the students and satisfying in terms of the result of their work (Meng, 2007). Teachers thus facilitate cognitive growth and learning as do peers and other members of the learners' community.

In terms of writing development process, Vygotsky (1978) proposes that it is considered higher mental development which lies beyond both cognitive and individual levels. What Vygotsky means by this is that writing comes from internalization and transformation of social interaction. It is also considered a social act that takes place within a social context for a specific purpose, and that the construction of knowledge is the result of communication. Similarly, Bakhtin (1973) considers the skills of speaking and writing as socially constructed. Students also learn a pragmatic view of composing: sharing their goals and expectations of different discourse communities which help to shape their writing.

Today, technology is also considered part of culture which is crucial for language development. With the advance of technology, teachers and learners can work towards the goals of social constructivism. For example, emails and internet enable students to interact among themselves and with their teachers instantly regarding their assigned tasks, feedback and comments. Besides, technology provides students access to abundant of information resources they need to complete the tasks. There are also writing skill softwares which allow students to engage in collaborative writing, thereby students have opportunities to write to real audiences who respond instantly.

Considering the main concern of Social Constructivism is on interpersonal context operated by the learners, the researcher focused her attention to classroom activities as well as additional activities done outside writing class to improve students'

writing. These include writing teachers' creation of dynamic classrooms, their interactions with the students, students' interactions among themselves or with others after class hours. In revising stage of the writing activities, the Social Constructivist concern undertook by the researcher was on how the instructors gave feedback to the writing tasks, how students responded to the comments, how do they work with peers or professionals (if any), and how do they make use of available technology to improve their writing skills.

### **Summary**

This study was in fact guided by the three approaches towards the teaching of writing namely: the expressivism, cognitivism and social constructivism, though the first among them was later found to be crucial for the study. The expressivism emphasized teaching of writing as an art, self discovery whereby students were given freedom to choose their own topic of interest. The cognitivist approach was chosen because the act of writing is closely linked to one's thinking process and cognitive activities as explained earlier in this section. Such activities included the mental processes of learners generated while trying to accomplish writing tasks such as planning, translating, drafting and reviewing. This study has also examined this cognitive process of the target participants while they are writing. Besides, the social constructivist approach helped the researcher to understand how participants' interactions with other members in the community to improve their writing skills.

### **2.4 Approaches to Teaching ESL/EFL Writing**

In general, the progress of ESL composition theory and approaches has been influenced by theories of L1 composition. There are many approaches or methods that have been applied in the teaching of ESL writing (Reid, 1993; Hyland, 2003;

Williams, 2005; Kellogg, 2008; Tangpermpoon, 2008; Chaisiri, 2010). In this section, the four approaches of ESL writing are discussed: the controlled composition approach, the current-traditional rhetoric approach, the communicative approach and the process approach (Reid, 1993).

#### **2.4.1 The Controlled Composition Approach**

The philosophy of controlled writing was rooted in the Audio-Lingual Method (ALM), which is based on the behaviourist's principle of stimulus response. There are three major assumptions underlying the ALM (Reid, 1993). The first is called "positive reinforcement" which is considered an effective method when students are not allowed to make errors in writing. Second, habituation of language is a basis of fluency, so drills are used for practicing language. Third, oral language is important for success, whereas writing is only a support skill. Therefore, writing is taught as a supplementary to oral language and as exercises for practicing language structures and language use. In the actual classrooms, teachers focus on forms of writing, specifically at sentence level, on the teaching of grammatical structures and on error correction.

Controlled writing became less popular as later research in writing showed that emphasis on grammatical correction and sentence level structure can block the composing process and reduce students' motivation (Perl, 1979; Silva, 1990). Although there have been some concerns about this method of teaching writing, the controlled writing approach is still practised in ESL classrooms among other current practices (Silva, 1990; Hyland, 2003).

In Thailand, writing is usually neglected in schools due to its difficulties and lack of qualified teachers especially when they are located in the countryside. If there are



any writing activities, they are usually taught separately from speaking skills. In addition, the kind of writing they teach is about how to construct sentences while composition is not taught. Therefore, it is common to find exercises that require students to reorganize words or fill in blanks to make sentences. Then, the teacher corrects their mistakes.

#### **2.4.2 The Current-Traditional Rhetoric Approach**

The current-traditional rhetoric approach or what is sometime referred to as functional approach (Hyland, 2003, p. 6) is a combination of basic principles of first language writing instruction and the Kaplan's concept of contrastive rhetoric (Silva, 1990). Instead of focusing only on sentence level structure and error correction, this approach emphasizes more on discourse structure and stylistic features of writing. Kaplan's (1966) research found that ESL writing was influenced by the students' first language, more specifically, cross linguistic and rhetorical transfer.

Based on contrastive rhetoric, ESL teachers can predict difficulties and possible sources of errors that students will experience when they learn to write in English. In ESL classrooms, teachers point out the differences of the pattern of English writing and that of other languages in order to make students aware of these differences when they write in English. The current-traditional rhetoric approach focuses on fitting sentences and paragraphs into appropriate patterns. Guided writing and five paragraph essay styles are commonly used to learn about discourse structure.

Most Thai students are not taught writing skills. Thus, they may not have the opportunity to understand what writing in English is like. The current- traditional rhetoric approach requires that students learn discourse structure and writing patterns of the new language through comparison with their L1 writing patterns. However,

this approach is not applicable in most English classrooms in Thailand because there is no writing for them.

### **2.4.3 The Communicative Approach**

The communicative approach is based on the premise of learner-centered teaching. This approach stresses the meaningful purpose of writing and the audience (Raimes, 1983). In this approach, writing is seen as a way to communicate rather than practicing of grammatical structures. Students are encouraged to write with an authentic purpose and with an authentic audience in mind (Reid, 1993). Meaningful writing tasks are thus created in order to let the students practice writing for a given purpose and a given audience. Situation initiated activities such as writing letters to a pen pal from an English speaking country or writing complaint letters are used for practicing writing. Teachers of communicative classrooms do not focus on error correction. Instead, they act as readers and give useful feedback to help the students rewrite. According to Reid (1993, p.39), communicative classes make use of:

- students' writing sample and peer review for the students to learn from authentic responses.
- purposeful assignments with an emphasis on students' needs.
- the integration of skills including reading and writing connection.

### **2.4.4 The Process Approach**

Since the 1970s, the teaching of writing has shifted away from the focus on the written product to a concentration on the writer and on the process of writing (Silva, 1990; Reid, 1993). ESL research on process writing follows the research on process writing with native English speakers, and the researchers have focused on how

writers compose and understand writing as a process of discovery and self expression (Zamel, 1976, 1982). For example, Flower and Hayes (1981) studied college students' writing and discovered that their composition process was recursive rather than linear as they write. This approach is based on theories such as expressivism, cognitivism (Kroll, 1990) and social constructivism. Its focus is on the process of composing, self expression, thinking process (Kroll, 1990), and collaborative learning.

In the process approach, instructional activities are designed to help the students express themselves fluently, to help them think and organize their ideas before writing and to help them revise drafts. In the classroom, teachers promote collaborative learning through group work such as peer responses. Also, the teaching premise in this classroom is learner-centered. The teachers reduce their authority and play a less controlling role by allowing the students to explore a variety of topics or to choose a topic on their own. In the mean time, teachers allow students to work at their own pace. Students have more time to write, to explore their topic and to revise their work. The sense of audience is also seen as one of the important features in this classroom. Students in process writing classes are encouraged to have their voice in their writing, while simultaneously learning to listen to the audience's voice in order to help them improve their writing.

## **2.5 The Shift from Product to Process Approach in ESL/EFL Writing**

### **Instruction**

From the above discussion on approaches towards ESL/EFL writing, the evolution of writing pedagogy begins from product-oriented (i.e. the controlled composition approach and the current-traditional rhetoric approach) to a process-oriented

approach. As the title indicates, a product-oriented approach focuses on the end results of learning process. This means that through the evaluation of written texts, the learner is expected to be a fluent and competent user of the language. Process approaches on the other hand, focus more on various classroom activities that are believed to promote the development of skilled language use. It is the process approach that shifts the direction to concentrate on writers and their writing process rather than on the product itself. Moreover, the concept of expressivism, cognitivism and social-constructivism are embedded in it. Therefore, this study considered the process approach as a guide in analyzing the way Thai EFL writers underwent in the process of writing because of its comprehensive integration of the three theoretical frameworks. The analysis began from looking at interrelated factors which included their educational background and instructional contexts which influenced their thinking and discovery process, self expressions, learning behaviours and strategies, interactions with others, the role of feedback and audience in assisting their writing development.

In the product-oriented classroom, learners involved in imitating, copying and transforming models of correct language. This usually occurs at the sentence level. Nunan (1991) points out that the materials used for teaching during the years 1960s and 1970s were based on the belief that students must understand the language structure at sentence level before writing a coherent paragraph. Therefore, the writing instructions of those days devoted so much on basic language formation and grammar practices.

The product-oriented approaches share the same view with the structuralist linguistics and the bottom-up approach to language processing and production (Nunan, 1991). Nevertheless, it was not really compatible with the contemporary

views of language and learning which concentrated more on a higher level of discourse. Also, writing instructors became much more interested in the processes the writers go through in composing their texts rather than looking at the finished product. Nunan (1991) explains that skilled writers do not produce final texts at their first attempt, but that writing is a long and painful process, in which the final product comes from multiples drafts. For L2 learners, they need time to generate and think through their ideas, to try them out, delete them and revise them as needed during the process of their writing.

Pedagogically, these ideas turn to value the importance of teaching writing as a process. The process-oriented approach is in contrast to the product-oriented one. The process approaches focus first on quantity rather than quality of writing. Writers are first encouraged to write down their ideas on paper in any shape without giving too much attention on grammar. Besides, the process-oriented approach also promotes collaborative group work between learners as a way to enhance students' motivation and positive attitudes towards writing.

By describing the processes involved in second language writing, a number of studies are also concerned to learn more about the activation and control of writing processes in real time (Ransdell & Barbier, 2002; Larios et al., 2006; Van Weijen et al., 2008; Wenyu & Yang, 2008). This includes the use of think aloud protocols for the purpose of asking the writer to generate thoughts aloud during writing.

After the birth of the process-oriented approach, a number of interesting classroom techniques emerged such as conferencing and linking reading to writing to provide keeping portfolios and using peer and teacher feedback between drafts. The feedback usually focuses on content and organization rather than simply on language forms.

Writers are expected to actively and thoughtfully revise content and organization based on this feedback, not just adding sentences or changing words.

Although there are many different teaching techniques of process-oriented approaches being incorporated into L2 writing, they all share the same characteristics (Williams, 2005). These characteristics aim to help L2 writers to become:

- a) aware and focused of writing process rather than the end products.
- b) critical thinkers in the process of writing.
- c) interaction with peers in the process of writing.
- d) interested in the issues of planning, audience, purpose and author's voice.
- e) reader-writers rather than on literary themes (Williams, 2005; p. 33).

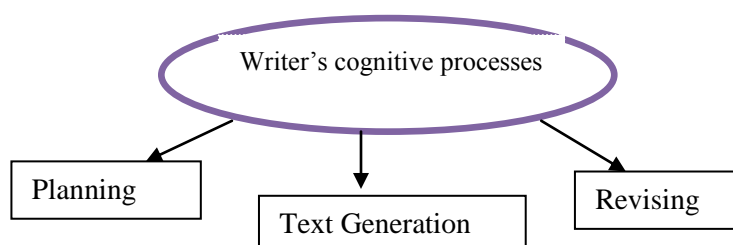
## **2.6 Models of Teaching Writing as a Process**

Since 1980s, studies in L2 writing process approach have been based on two distinct theoretical perspectives: L1 writing theories and theoretical constructs in the field of second language acquisition research related to literacy transfer (Ransdell & Barbier, 2002). These studies consider L2 writing from a psycholinguistic perspective which attempt to describe the specific skills required for L2 writing and to determine the role of background knowledge transfer from L1 to L2 writing process. Consequently, several findings have extensively opened the door for researchers to create effective models for the writing process. Educators and researchers agree that writing is not just production of text. It necessitates activation and specific control of writing processes: planning, transcription, reviewing during production in order to achieve writing goals as in L1 (Ransdell & Barbier, 2002).

The followings are five models of writing as process that are widely used for pedagogical application and in conducting foreign language writing research.

### 2.6.1 Flower and Hayes' Model

Flower and Hayes's (1981) model views composing as a goal-directed activity. The focus of this model is on what writers do when they compose, how they conceptualize the task and set up different goals in order to produce it successfully. Flower and Hayes (1981) suggested that there are basically three cognitive writing processes (see Figure 2.1): planning (deciding what to say and how to say), text generation (turning plan to written text), and revision (improving existing text). It takes into consideration the key feature of writing including making sense of audiences the effect the writers want to have on them, how the writers present themselves, and the creation of the coherence of ideas presented in their text.



*Figure 2.1: Flower & Hayes's Model*

The Flower and Hayes' model focuses mainly on two factors of L2 writing achievement namely the use of linguistic knowledge and writing expertise (Ransdell & Barbier, 2002). The strength of this model is that it encourages L2 writers to set goals in writing which helps them to be more focused to tasks when composing. However, the model is too vague for teachers and students to understand what kinds of activities needed to be done in each of the category in the model. Moreover, it is difficult to decide which activities are more effective than the others in the process.

This model rather aims at accomplishing goal (the text) which is not much different from the product-oriented approach.

### **2.6.2 Bereiter and Scardamalia's Model**

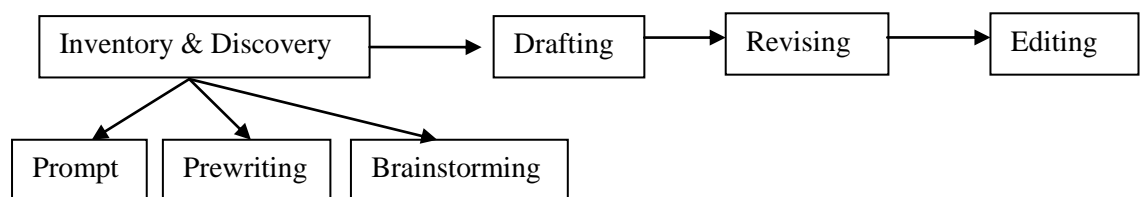
Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) propose a model that considers reasons for differences in writing ability between expert and novice writers. They describe two models of composing process: knowledge-telling and knowledge transforming. The knowledge-telling model is basically a technique in which the novice writer simply retrieves ideas of writing spontaneously from memory and translates them directly to the text. The knowledge transforming model involves more reflective problem-solving analysis, where expert writers develop a highly structured set of goals and generate ideas to accomplish these goals. The knowledge-transforming or intentional writing model is different from knowledge-telling in that it involves setting of goals that are to be achieved through the composing process, does not depend on memories and emotions and on external assistance for its direction. It also allows writers to be more autonomous in the process of writing. In this model, writers are not seen as performing the same process with different degrees of efficiency, as would be the case in Flower and Hayes' model but carrying out two different kinds of qualitative process.

This model is appropriate to be used to identify expert from novice writers. It gives us some understanding on general information of composing behaviours of these two groups of writers. According to this model, expert writers are more autonomous than their novice counterparts. However, one of the limitations in using this model is that it does not explain the kinds of activities to be done in each step in the writing process which is not suitable for less skilled writers.



### 2.6.3 Williams' Model

Williams (2005) views writing as a naturally recursive process rather than a linear, predetermined set of activities. This process emphasizes the overlapping stages of writing, such as prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing. For L2 learners, they need to spend much time to reconsider and rewrite their drafts in the process of writing. He suggests four stages in the process: invention and discovery, creating the first draft, revising and editing (see Figure 2.2). He states that at the early stages of composing or what he refers to as inventory and discovery, some L2 writers have trouble generating and developing ideas for writing. In order to assist them, Williams suggests three strategies that the students may use to generate and develop their ideas: prewriting, prompt, and brainstorming. At the stage of drafting, students will have to begin to create a draft and prepare an introductory paragraph. Their paragraph must include the topic and a thesis statement. In the stage of revising, students have to reconsider the entire piece of writing and rework it if necessary. The last stage, editing, focuses on the final shaping of the text: sharpening word choices and correcting structural errors.



*Figure 2.2: Williams' Model of Writing*

Compared to the previous two models presented earlier, Williams' model is more practical to be applied in teaching writing for students at all levels. The model is explicitly defined so that it is easy for students to follow in each of the category within the model. Nevertheless, the model fails to explain the social aspects of

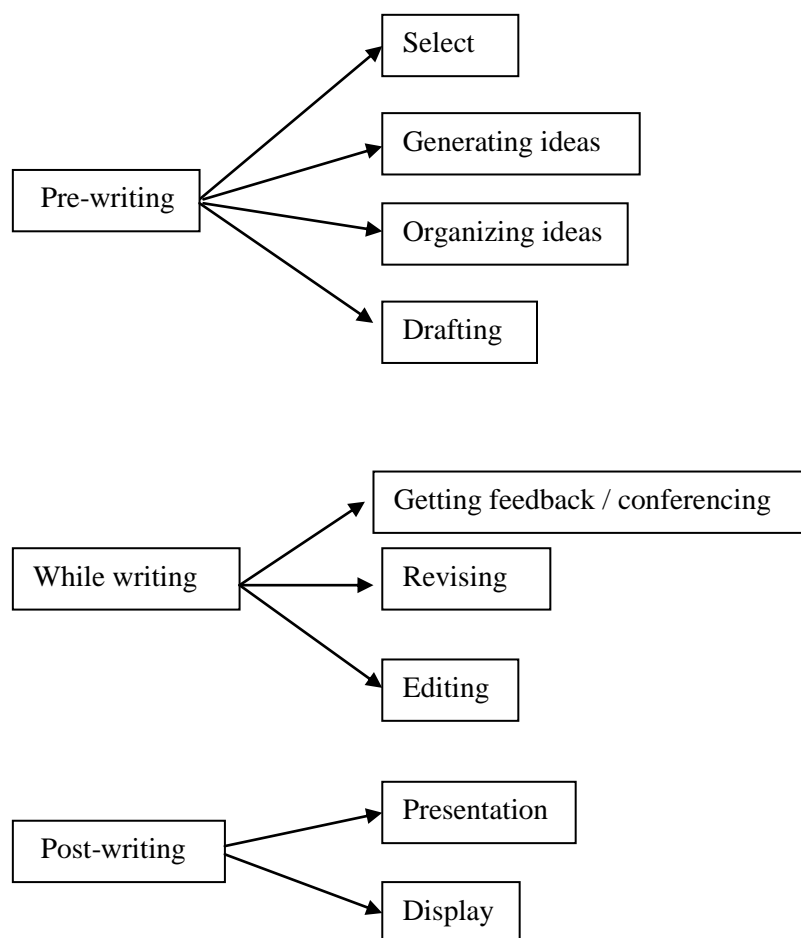
teacher and peer interaction necessary during composing process. Like the previous two models, Williams (2005) focuses mainly on the cognitive activities students get involved while writing but not on the individual writers themselves which also influence the quality of writing. To illustrate, all students may have gone through the same writing stages in the model, yet their writing skills varied. Therefore, when teaching writing, the three important complementary factors of individual students, writing actions as well as social contexts of learning should be taken into consideration.

#### **2.6.4 Mohamed Nor and Abd Samad's Model**

Similar to Williams' (2005) model, Mohamed Nor and Abd Samad (2006) propose three categories of writing process: pre-writing, while writing and post-writing as shown in Figure 2.3. At pre-writing stage, students encounter preliminary steps in preparing to write. At this stage, students are encouraged to work through imaginative exploration, discovering what interests them about the topic. The steps in prewriting include thinking systematically about the topic, gathering information, and sketching out a possible structure of the essay. Using pair or group discussion can also help students to develop, clarify or enrich original ideas and refine their thinking. They may use various resources available such as pictures, charts, articles, photographs, slides, maps and newspapers for more interesting ideas. A number of techniques that can be used to encourage students to generate their ideas include free writing, questioning, brainstorming, mapping and clustering and preparing a scratch outline. Students will have to decide a thesis, developing and organizing evidence and write a rough version of the essay at drafting stage. The model also suggests that drafting can only begin once students have done all the research and reading information related to their topic.

While writing, conferencing is very important in the development of writing process as the nature of writing is social and interactive. Through conferencing, students get feedback, comments and guidance from peers and instructors which lead to the improvement of their writing. Once the students receive comments they can start to revise in which the process involves the change of content and organization in order to create a communicative text. When revising, students might find some errors in grammar, punctuation and spelling. It is their next step to check and correct the errors at the stage of editing. A number of writing researchers such as Peyton, Jones, Vincent and Greenblatt (1994) have urged the inclusion of revising as part of teaching writing. They propose that revision can be encouraged through revisiting the work, reading it over, taking audience's feedback and rewriting. In many classrooms, revision is the most difficult and neglected aspect of writing instruction as the emphasis was given more on formal correctness. In some cases, students find it painful to revise their work after they have struggled to produce it. They need time, patience, modeling and repetition. However, another alternative to make students feel less painful is that they can use computers to facilitate revision because they can move, cut, paste and change texts as they want easily.

What makes this model of writing unique is that it includes the stage of publishing and presentation in the process of writing. According to Mohamed Nor and Abd Samad (2006), the final product should be displayed on the bulletin board or published in the university's newsletter to reinforce the concept of audience.



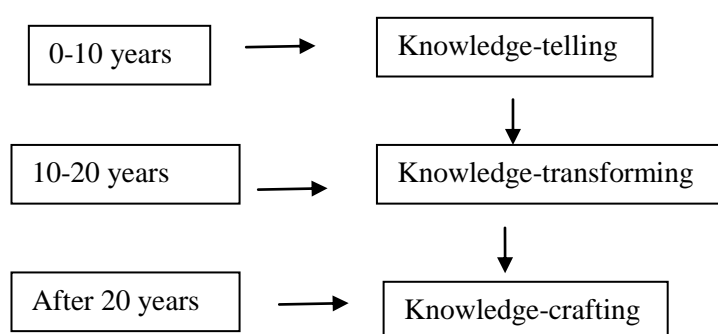
*Figure 2.3: Processes in L2 Writing (Mohamed Nor & Abd Samad, 2006, p. 58)*

Over time we see clearer picture regarding the model of teaching and learning to write in a foreign language. Muhamed Nor and Abd Samad (2006) are among the earlier groups of those who can provide a complete set of model in writing. They fulfill what seems to be lacking in the Williams' model. The model promotes students to go through activities in each major step of writing namely: pre-writing, while writing and post writing.

### **2.6.5 Kellogg's Model**

Kellogg (2008) develops a new model of writing process. His construct is an addition to the two traditional models proposed by Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987). According to Kellogg, writing skills develop across three stages. The stages which

he refers to: knowledge-telling, knowledge-transforming, and knowledge-crafting. In his model, Kellogg highlights that it takes at least 20 years of maturation, instruction, and training to advance from 1) the beginner's stage of using writing to tell what one knows, to 2) the intermediate stage of transforming what one knows for the author's benefit, and to 3) the final stage of crafting what one knows for the reader's benefit. In other words, the continuum of skill development in learning how to write across these stages begins as the child matures through late adolescence and into early adulthood. The three cognitive writing skill development stages are shown in Figure 2.4 below.



*Figure 2.4: The Cognitive Development of Writing Skill*

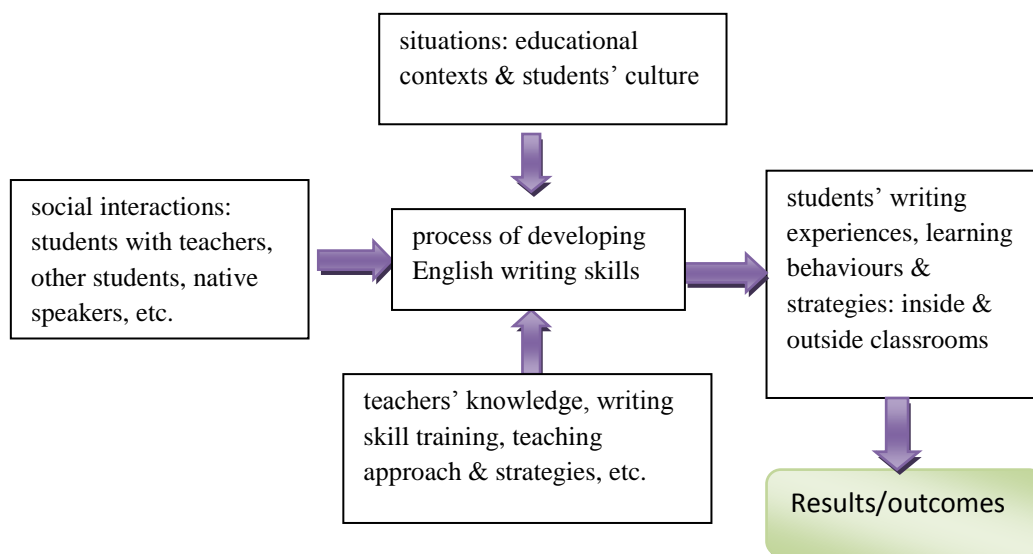
The strength of Kellogg's model is that it clearly identifies writing skills of learners through three stages. Williams (2005) also agrees that mastering writing skills takes a long time. Students need to be apprenticed in order to be effective writers. The shortcoming of the model is that it is not suitable to be used in EFL writing classrooms. It just provides general explanation of how writing skills of oneself develop over time. Similar to Bereiter and Scardamalia's model, this model does not clearly explain composing behaviours in writing to learn of foreign language writers, rather the concern is about timeline of mastery certain level of writing proficiency. In addition, it may not be fully applicable in a foreign language context where English

instruction is limited to few hours per week which is different from those of native speakers or of countries where English is used officially. Also, in practice, students do not always compose the same way as their peers even if they are in the same classrooms. Specifically, the ways proficient writers compose differ from those of their non-proficient counterparts. Moreover, not only approaches that students employ matter but their linguistic background also influences how they write.

Writing is a means of communication. Thus, the teaching of writing should ensure that students have opportunities to convey their messages to real audiences. This idea is already embedded in Mohamed Nor and Abd Samad's (2006) model. Thus, I opt to use their model of L2 writing process in my study. The adoption however, just provided the researcher a theoretical guidance to explore the writing process in real time by EFL students. As I decided to use interpretive approach, some other themes or what are sometimes called categories had also been derived from the data in addition to the writing process approach models outlined above.

#### **2.6.6 Factors Involved in Writing Development**

It is important to note that this study used a qualitative approach to generate a new paradigm model that could explain how (process) the Thai English majors develop themselves as writers. It is not to confuse with the *process writing* which is an approach in teaching and learning writing activities. It examined several other possible factors which were beyond writing activities in the classroom context. Figure 2.5 below demonstrates those factors which are interdependent in the process of their writing skill development.



*Figure 2.5: Factors of Writing Development*

## 2.7 Teachers' Role in Writing Instruction

One common belief in humanistic tradition is that language teaching should be subservient to language learning thereby learner-centred approach can be developed (Nunan, 1991). According to Nunan, appropriate language teaching methodologies do not rest just at learners' linguistic concern but also to consider their affective and emotional factors. Nunan (1991) claims that successful language learning will occur as teachers are able to encourage learners to adopt the right attitudes, interests, motivation in the target language and culture as well as in their learning environment. These affective factors should be made central to selection of classroom content, materials and language learning activities. Effective language learning outcomes therefore, depend largely on how teachers define their classroom roles. Stevick (as cited in Nunan, 1991, p.90) suggests five major roles teachers play in language classrooms. First, teachers are expected to be a knowledge resource for their students about the target language and culture. Second, students usually expect

teachers to be good classroom managers. This involves time management for classroom activities and experience in using teaching materials and varied teaching techniques. Third, teachers should act as drivers for students to achieve their language learning goals. Fourth, teachers are also expected to be class controllers. Among other responsibilities is that teachers should set the tone or interpersonal classroom climate using their knowledge and expertise. Finally, teachers are expected to guard against negative feelings and bring in positive energy to language classrooms such as warmth and enthusiasm.

EFL students often feel uncomfortable, bored and show lack of interest in learning a new language especially when they know they will not use the language being learnt in the future. The humanistic approach to this solution as outlined above helps EFL language teachers and learners work towards each other's need in order to achieve expected language learning outcomes. This also applies to writing classrooms as learning to write is also part of language learning. In the following sections, more detailed explanations on how to teach writing skills using the process approach as to foster EFL students' critical thinking skills and learning independence as well as incorporating the idea of humanistic approach in the classrooms is discussed.

The writing process models have served as the theoretical basis for EFL instructors in using the process approach in their writing classrooms (Scott & Vitale, 2003; Graham & Harris, 2005). Their main emphasis is on what writers do as they write throughout the process. Moreover, they incorporate pre-writing activities such as giving students freedom to choose topics of their own interests, collaborative brainstorming, planning, and generating ideas. Later in the process, they allow students to go through different stages of composing, drafting, revising, and editing, multiple draft and peer group editing. Thus, attention on writing process stresses



more of a workshop approach to instruction which fosters classroom interaction, and engages students in analyzing and commenting on a variety of texts. Teachers therefore, play a crucial role in modeling, guiding, directing and giving feedback to students (Scott & Vitale, 2003).

In an investigation of the effectiveness of using process approach in teaching writing to ESL students in the US, Peyton et al. (1994) collected data from 16 writing teachers who participated in a writing workshop. These teachers were divided into four focus groups. They were asked to answer opened questions which were used to discuss again in the meetings afterwards. Some of these participants were interviewed along with reviewing their published articles. In order to see students' writing behaviour in the real settings, Peyton and his colleagues (1994) also observed their writing classes. They found that by attending the writing workshop, students changed their attitudes towards writing, was not afraid of writing and was more confident, ready to revise and interact more with others during the writing process.

Lienemann, Graham, Janssen and Reid (2006) suggest a number of instructional practices for young beginning writers. These writers include students who are at risk for writing difficulties as well as students with special needs. They claim that early writing intervention provided by instructors yield positive impact on writing skills. In addition, writing skills can be developed by connecting reading and writing instruction together. Also, teachers should model the composing process of planning, reviewing and revising. The teaching of writing should emphasize on three aspects: strategic knowledge, domain-specific knowledge, and learners' motivation. Graham and Harris (2005) investigated an instructional approach called "Self-Regulated Strategy Development (SRSD)." Through this approach teachers provide explicit

teaching to students on strategies to accomplish writing tasks. The approach emphasize on students' learning skills by fostering the sense of independent learning. Students are given opportunities to learn regulation procedures which eventually enhance their motivation.

Research on ESL/EFL writing has emphasized so much on writing process instruction and intervention as to help students who are in need of writing skill development. This is especially true in studies done during the last decade of the twentieth century. A good example of these would be what is found in Li and Hamel's (2003) synthesis of the literature published from 1990-2000 on college students with learning disabilities and writing difficulties. Out of the 38 journal articles, book chapters, on-line resources and professional presentation reviewed, 22 dealt with instructional support to college students with writing disabilities and writing difficulties. Specifically, these reviewed articles have stressed the important instructional strategies involved in the different writing stages, professional, peer tutorial, and peer collaboration to enhance writing process approach.

Li and Hamel (2003) define the different writing stages as prewriting (rehearsal), writing (drafting) and rewriting (revision or editing). They propose some instructional strategies to these various stages of writing in order to help students with writing difficulties. In the prewriting stage, a self instructional strategy can be employed in writing classrooms in order to help college students to overcome writing obstacles. This strategy needs teachers to show their students how to find information from reading materials, and group information together in a meaningful and cohesive piece of writing. Directed conversation or writing conferences is another useful instructional strategy to help college students with writing difficulties. By using this strategy, students develop plans with questions related to audience,

purpose, background knowledge and ways to organize ideas thereby are able to handle subtasks involved in writing. In addition, writing conferences allow students to discuss the plans with their teachers. Neff (1994) agrees that directed conversation or writing conferences are more encouraging and effective than free writing. Neff argues that because of its unstructured manner, free writing can be devastating as it does not provide explicit ideas for students of what to write.

Since students with writing difficulties find it difficult to generate ideas and plan their writing tasks because they are not aware of the information already stored in their memory as well as their difficulty in retrieving such information (Li & Hamel, 2003). Therefore the role of the teacher is to guide questions related to writing topics and model topic selection and initial planning (Gould, 1991). This might include clarifying general and specific points, adding and organizing ideas which are the basis that all writers should have in order to develop their critical thinking.

In the writing stage Li and Hamel (2003) suggest that teachers need to reteach the strategies used in the prewriting stage. The stage which requires writers to think and rehearse what they had in the prewriting stage as well as to plan and organize what they will write next. In the final stage of revision and editing, Li and Hamel (2003) propose that group revision conferences are very crucial to writers with difficulties. Through the conferences, students read their text out loud, peers ask questions about unclear statements and provide positive comments where appropriate.

Researchers of the contemporary period such as Scott and Vitale (2003) also address instructional methodology to EFL students. They categorise that there are two kinds of writing problems among students with learning abilities. The first is called mechanical which includes problems of spelling, capitalization and punctuation. The

other is the problem of cognitive and metacognitive skills. To help this group of students, Scott and Vitale (2003) propose what they term a “writing wheel” which incorporates 5 interrelated stages of writing process: planning, drafting, revising, editing and publishing. With this writing wheel, students can focus on a few tasks at a time, thereby fosters students to be effective writers.

Scott and Vitale (2003) suggest that prewriting stage provides students with rich experiences and assist them in generating ideas which eventually can help them to structure the content. At this stage in their writing wheel, students have three steps to follow. They can begin by planning to stimulate the flow of ideas, collecting information (brainstorming, clustering, listing, etc.) and organizing the ideas. In the next stage, drafting, students develop ideas and thought into meaningful words, sentences and paragraphs. They were not so much encouraged to attend to grammatical mistakes at this stage. In the revising stage, students examine and react to the meaning of what they have written. They can also exchange drafts with their peers before giving to teachers for comments and suggestions to improve their text clarity and quality. In the fourth stage of the writing wheel, editing, students identify and correct structural errors. In the last stage of the wheel, publication, students should be encouraged to share their writing work with others in order to instill pride of authorship rather than just learning writing skills.

In the same vein, Peyton et al. (1994), Hedge (2005) and Raimes (1985) suggest that in writing classroom, teachers should make sure that their writing instructions follow all these processes: model writing for students, drafting, conference and sharing, revising, redrafting, editing, publishing and celebrating. Moreover, students must be encouraged to do a lot of reading and be given freedom to choose their own topics. Writing activities should also reflect goals of enabling students to write whole texts

which form connected, contextualized and appropriate pieces of communication. Hedge (2005) points out that students need time in the classroom for writing (good writing requires abundant and extensive reading). Therefore, teachers should write with and for the students. Marking or error correction should be changed to reviewing and revising, a process of improving (Raime, 1985). In addition, writing teachers should encourage students' extensive writing outside the classroom which will help them to develop their EFL writing competence and confidence.

During conferences and sharing, teachers must model their students on the new attitudes and behaviour towards sharing and giving feedback to their peers' written work consistently and over time (Peyton et al., 1994). The information received from interaction with peers helps the writers to expand, focus, and revise their pieces, give motivation, develop oral and written competence. Moreover, through sharing, students have opportunity to give useful response to their peers about writing. Peyton et al. (1994) find out that students need two kinds of response to their writing: 1) response to the need of the writers and response to develop recognition. Students must be encouraged to share their writing before handing their texts for teachers' feedback. This will reduce the time for marking from the teachers' part. Lee and Schallert (2008); and Carroll, Blake, Camalo and Messer (1996) agree that the use of written comments helps connect teacher and students on an individual level which in turn affect students' writing and their attitudes. They used a caring perspective to strengthen the relationship between teacher and students through giving feedback to students' drafts in the process of teaching and learning to write.

Though conference and sharing are very important in developing students' writing competence, it is not easy to implement the idea in writing classrooms. One of the problems that students encountered is that the question of comments and feedback

value. More often than not, students do not have experience or expertise to offer valuable feedback (Peyton et al., 1994). They are not sure if they can see themselves as writers or to response to other students' writing appropriately. Some think that they have nothing valuable to offer, only teachers can give feedback or because of their low level of proficiency. Therefore, there is no surprise that their comments to their peers' writing are at superficial level.

Apart from providing opportunities for students to receive feedback and comments in classrooms, teachers must also introduce them to sources of help for writing such as professional tutors (Hedge, 2005). Among the 22 articles of the twentieth century reviewed by Li and Hamel (2003), there were also research studies on the effectiveness of professional and peer tutorial service which aimed to help students with writing difficulties. Li and Hamel (2003) define that professional tutors are writing specialists whereas peer tutors are upper-level graduate students enrolled in education programs. Professional tutors help students to develop cognitive strategies in writing such as identifying sub-goals of writing tasks, planning and writing the text. The specialist and student work together to organize and write a longer text, whereas peer tutor can help students in modeling how to read a paragraph in the text, ask questions and paraphrase the ideas. The students replicate the procedures. The tutor and students go through each stage in the writing process and the tutors are responsible for eliciting high level questions to develop critical thinking skills necessary for writing (Hedge, 2005).

In addition to professional and peer tutorial service, peer collaborations, evaluation, and reflective portfolios can also enhance students' writing process. Peers can help students improve their writing and receive constructive corrections and advice. Students can also benefit from reflective portfolios by the opportunities to be

examined by their teachers over time through their reflective writings (Li & Hamel, 2003).

## **2.8 Differences between Good and Poor Writers**

Identifying the differences between good and poor writers provides information which can be applied in teaching L2 writing practice. There are three major factors which differentiate the good from poor writers. First, they show differences in terms of their writing purpose and audience. Good writers consider purpose and audience while poor writers do not. This is because poor writers are less able to anticipate the likely problem of a reader. They tend to focus on mechanics of writing which is influenced by their concern on grammatical correctness (Nunan, 1991) thereby they are less concerned with the real purpose of writing (Raimes, 1985; Sasaki, 2002). Second, the characteristics of individual L2 writers can also determine their writing proficiency. Good writers are said to have a close link with high proficiency in L2 and ability to write in L1 (Williams, 2005). Third, writing strategies or what are always referred to as “writing process” in which students undergo while producing their texts is another factor to distinguish good writers from their poor counterparts. Good writers use more cognitive strategies. They are much more aware of writing as a recursive activity involving revisions of successive drafts of their texts, during which their ideas might change. They move back and forth in a continuum of discovering analyzing and synthesizing ideas (Raimes, 1985). Unskilled writers on the other hand, tend to limit themselves to teacher-generated rules and modification of lexis.

Similar findings are reported by Lapp (as cited in Nunan, 1991, p. 90) which are also strongly supported by Sasaki (2002). They differentiate the use of metacognitive

strategies at the prewriting stage of skilled and unskilled writers. Skilled writers spend longer time planning the task, while unskilled writers spend little time planning and consequently, they are confused when they begin. At the drafting stage, skilled writers use more effective cognitive strategies than their unskilled counterparts. They write quickly and fluently, spend time reviewing what they write and do most of their reviewing at the sentence and paragraph level. Unskilled writers spend little time reviewing what they have written, review only short segments of text, and are concerned principally with vocabulary and sentence formation. Finally, at the revision stage, skilled writers revise at all level of lexis, sentence and discourse. This revision occurs throughout the composing process in order to clarify their text meaning. Unskilled writers do not make major revisions in the direction or focus of the text, make most revisions only during the first draft and focus primarily on the mechanics of grammar, spelling, punctuation and vocabulary (Raimes, 1985; Nunan, 1991).

## **2.9 Similarities and Differences in L1 and L2 Writing Process**

This section describes the extent to which EFL students' L1 writing process influences their learning to write in a new language. A number of language experts (e.g. Silva, 1993; Hinkle, 2006) have explored similarities and differences in the writing process of both languages. In the case where L1 writing is similar to that of L2, (in this case English) it can bring positive contribution to such learning. In contrast, when the two writing systems are different from one another, then special attention must be given to these learners.

Several studies have been done to analyse similarities in the composing strategies used by L1 and L2 writers (Larios, Murphy & Marin, 2002). The results have shown



that L2 writers used similar writing strategies with L1 writers. These strategies include flexible construction of working goals, overall writing patterns, planning and revision processes. Among similarities related to planning behaviors are topic selection time, prior awareness of text, editing, amount of text to be written, use of title, choice of genre, and audience awareness. Besides, both L1 and L2 writers made revision at the surface level of their written texts.

Although second or foreign language writing is linguistically, strategically, and rhetorically different in many ways from L1 writing, L1 model has a tremendous impact on L2 writing instruction. Students' perceptions and thoughts about their writing skill development have confirmed the existence of differences between their L1 and L2 writing ability. A number of current studies (Larios et al., 2006; Hinkle, 2006; Van Weijen et al., 2008; Wenyu & Yang, 2008) have addressed that the process of L2 writing is in many ways different from that of L1 writing. For example, Larios et al. (2006) found that their ESL participants spent twice as much time in dealing with formulation problems in the L2 as in the L1 task. This is in covenant with Silvia (1993)'s report who also highlighted that L2 learners paid more attention to generating materials in L2 than in L1, content generation in L2 was more difficult and less successful, and much of the materials generated in L2 were not used in the students' written texts. Silva also observed that these writers did less planning at both global (dealing with the topic from variety of perspectives) and local (dealing with grammar and structure) levels. In addition, they did less goal setting and had more difficulty organizing generated material (the same writers did not have this problem in L1). Hinkle (2006) points out that L2 writers have special needs which are different from L1 writers even if they have been trained for certain

period of time. As a result, writing pedagogy needs to consider cultural, rhetorical, and linguistic differences between L1 and L2 (Hinkle, 2006).

Considering that Thai is not a cognate language of English, Thai EFL learners might encounter many difficulties in learning to write in English. The first important aspect of all, the two languages are orthographically and linguistically different. This includes differences in linguistic rules as well as sentence constructions. Second, writing skills are not generally taught in Thailand even in Thai language itself. It is common to find Thais who perceive writing as putting the ideas down on paper as much as possible. There are no elements of writing process such as planning, drafting and revising ever taught in Thai language education as asserted by Dhanarattigannon (2008). Thus, learning to write in English is in most cases, also their first experience. This is a challenging situation that has been faced by Thai EFL learners especially in learning writing skills. Thus, it is interesting to explore how they go about to develop their writing skills in a foreign language (English) so that appropriate interventions can be offered to other EFL learners in Thailand.

## **2.10 The Role of Technology in L2 Writing**

Along with the discussion on methodological shift from product to process approach in helping second language writers, the availability of technological resources and tools also deserves special attention in order to maximize students' learning potentials. It is important to note that L2 writing research has indicated that writing difficulties encountered by L2 learners are associated with their lack of composing competence rather than linguistic competence (Kuo, 2008). Kou (2008) further suggests that students need supports in the process of writing to make them feel less constrained and less difficult when composing in a new language. Studies indicated

that technology has a profound impact on L2 writing process, students' final products and their attitudes towards writing in a foreign language. For example, Stapleton and Radia (2010) reported that L2 writers can improve their writing at both structural and content levels. Technology allows students to make use of conventional tools through the Internet search engines for searching information needed. Some of these engines include Web of Science, Scopus and Google Scholar which are very helpful to confine their search to academic sources. Hyland (2003) claimed that the use of technology in writing class can improve L2 students' motivation, attitudes and confidence about writing.

The types of technology used to assist L2 writing can be categorized into two features: self-contained software packages and network-based activities (Williams, 2005). Among the programmes included in the packages include word processing, spelling and grammar checkers, concordances, and text analyzers. Word processing provides students with ease writing process through red and green underlines for instance, assist students in spelling and grammar check. Besides, electronic thesaurus can also be accessed to check synonyms of desired words instantly while writing (Stapleton & Radia, 2010; Williams, 2005). Concordances on the other hand offer information which is not available in textbooks or even in dictionaries (Kuo, 2008). Students will find concordances very useful in choosing appropriate register when writing through a display list on how words are used in context, how they pattern with other words and with specific grammatical structures as well as how they are used in different kinds of writing. Student writers may also need help with information and activities via technology in prewriting, drafting revision and editing throughout the composing process. Text analyzers can assist students in this area through the popular programme called the Daedalus Integrated Writing Environment

(DIWE) to generate ideas and plans, offer interactive features which allow students to communicate with teachers about their developing text which can be recorded, stored and reviewed.

While the self-contained software packages focus on the cognitive aspect, network-based learning activities focus more on social interaction while learning to write in a second language. Emails and discussion boards provide opportunities for L2 writers to have collaborative brainstorming and receiving feedback from their teachers and peers synchronously.

Even though there is some evidence that technology can assist students to write in a second or foreign language in many ways, in practice the technological tools may not be appropriate in all circumstances of writing practice for some reasons (Stapleton & Radia, 2010; Williams, 2005). First, not all students can have access to the Internet at all time, and some even lack keyboard experience. Second, there are certain occasions where computers have problems with malfunctions which may lead to loss of documents. Third, some programmes among these tools require advanced language skills in order to be able to use them effectively, therefore, non-proficient learners might have difficulties to follow as they are not familiar with new words displayed. However, by being aware of the shortcomings, it can help teachers to be critical with introduction of technology to students, manage and plan writing activities in the way that can benefit students as much as possible.

When teachers can model and explain the use of technological tools and their students are familiar with some complicated features of the programmes introduced, then these tools are highly recommended to be employed in a process-oriented

writing classroom. Consequently, students can acquire composing skills as well as enhance peer interaction and collaboration during writing process.

Looking at technology from another perspective, the emergence of information age makes plagiarism in ESF/EFL writing merits serious concern. As writing is a complex task, it takes times for students to develop the skill in order to produce a good piece of writing. Some students may be discouraged if they are assigned unfamiliar tasks. The ease of obtaining hypertext through the Internet makes e-cheating easy, cheap and quick, and therefore, tempting. Students will engage in plagiarism as a survival strategy in learning another language. Flowerdew and Li (2008) claimed that there are certain factors which are considered to be associated with students' plagiarism. First, some students believe that copying language of certain degree from other texts is acceptable. Second, many ESL students are still acquiring a new writing convention of the target language. They may experience deficiency in linguistic knowledge necessary to produce a piece of writing valued by target readers. Third, because writing is the most difficult skill to learn, students have some pressure of getting passing grades which may link with fear of punishment upon failure of the course. With this issue in mind, ESL teachers must implement anti-plagiarism pedagogy. They have to make sure that texts are digested by learners rather than just regurgitated in a thoughtless way.

Though most technological tools require that users understand English, Thai students seem to overlook the importance of these tools in assisting their English language learning development. Only English majors were taught writing skills while students of other programmes may not be able to type in English. Therefore, writing software packages may not be known to most of them. Even if they use email or social network links such as Facebook, they prefer to use the Thai version or interact using

Thai instead of practicing writing skills. It is thus worth to explore how English majors in Thailand make use of technology to facilitate their learning.

## **2.11 Past Studies of English Writing in Thailand**

Though writing skill has not been given so much attention in English education in Thailand, a number of researchers have shown their interests in examining and exploring the teaching of writing to Thai EFL undergraduates. The followings are some research findings found in the research studies in Thailand over time.

Patarapongpaisan (1996) did an experimental study on the effectiveness of process approach in teaching writing to English majors in Bangkok. The purpose of the study was to compare English writing ability of two groups of students taught through process versus product approach. A pre-test and a post-test were administered before and after the instruction in order to evaluate the students' learning effect in each case. She found that the class with the process approach treatment showed some improvement in writing. They could write better than the group which was taught using solely product approach.

There is a shortcoming in Patarapongpaisan's (1996) study of EFL writing development. Patarapongpaisan only used his participants' scores on the pretest and the post-test as indicators to determine their improvement in writing skills which is not the essence of applying a process approach in EFL writing. Some writing is very subjective in nature, to conclude whether or not the process approach yields positive results to the participants, one must carefully observe and describe their writing behaviours throughout the process of writing from the beginning to the end.

Few years later, Tonthong (1999) did a qualitative study to explore the impact of dialogue journals as a supplementary writing activity had on an EFL writing classroom. She used fourteen Thai undergraduate students of four majors: economics, engineering, humanities and science. The participants were asked to write and respond to their peers and teacher as well as to write dialogue journals and describe past writing experience. She also observed the writing class, interviewed the students and their teacher. Tonthong concluded that dialogue journals helped the students to develop collaboration in the classroom which in turn promoted their reading and writing skills.

It seems that Tonthong (1999) was a pioneer on incorporating the process approach by asking students to write and talk about the work in such a writing classroom. Nevertheless, her study merely spotted the benefits of interactions among learners and their writing teacher in order to discuss grammatical errors they made in the given tasks and thus very product-oriented.

Upon the realization of ineffectiveness of overemphasis on a product approach in teaching writing to Thai EFL learners, Toh (2000) was keen to investigate further pedagogical approach applied by English teachers in Thailand. He then conducted a study in order to examine teachers' perceptions on students' writing problems. He organized a writing workshop for Thai teachers in a rural area. The teacher participants were given three genres of writing texts: description, anecdote and news item as to guide teachers to analyse texts at a discourse level. Data gained from the teachers' response suggest that language was viewed as form and structure. To them, students could not write because they did not master grammatical knowledge.

Considering the process approach from a different angle, Chaisuriya (2003) incorporated a social-constructivist approach in teaching technical writing to thirty sophomore science students. His syllabus included collaborative writing, writing as a process, peer review, technical student' writing conferences, and peer evaluation. Observation, interviews and artifacts were used as means to collect the data in his study. The findings indicated that students improved their writing skills after reading peers' writing as well as after receiving peers' comments. The results of Chaisuriya's study however, may not be generalized to academic writing as it is more complex and students need time to develop such skills. Students need more critical thinking skills in academic writing because their imagination, memories, real life experiences and knowledge from reading are crucial, whereas in technical writing, they just write to communicate facts for a defined purpose (Finkelstein, 2000).

Exploring further on strategies and techniques employed by Thai students in writing process, Jarunthawatchai (2001) conducted a qualitative study using a focused group interview and documentation to eight third year English majors who enrolled in a third writing course in the second semester, academic year 1998-1999, Chiang Mai University, Thailand. He found that both skilled and less skilled Thai writers used variety of strategies including metacognitive, social, affective and compensation strategies, and these strategies did not vary among the group.

It should be noted here that at the time of Jarunthawatchai's study, the legislation of the Thai education reform law has not yet been put into practice. It is very unlikely to see a kind of learning which is based on a learner-centred approach which fosters critical thinking in the process of learning. This is clear in his finding even at a drafting stage, students were concerned about grammar and structure. Further studies



should try to understand the nature of Thai students of writing process in real learning contexts of this decade.

Half a decade later, Pataraporn (2006) did a case study to explore four Thai university students' awareness and application of cognitive and metacognitive strategies in writing at Kasetsart University in 2005. The analysis of data collected from transcripts of the students' pair discussion, think-aloud protocols, interviews, students' texts, a pretest and a posttest showed that strategy knowledge enhances students' writing performance.

Later, Dhanarattigannon (2008) conducted a qualitative study to explore Thai students' experience as well as their perceptions towards learning to write in English in one classroom of 41 student participants. The class was taught by a Thai teacher who graduated from the United States, and the process approach was used in his class. This approach was new to students as opposed to the traditional approach. The data were collected through classroom observation, interviews, documents and artifacts. The idea of culture was also taken into consideration when analyzing the data. Dhanarattiganon claimed that students felt comfortable as they went through the writing process. They felt more relaxed and hence willing to be more expressive and interactive with their peers in class. The change of their attitude from being negative to positive towards writing allows growth in their writing. Culturally, the students felt frustrated when they were first introduced the process approach. This was because the focus of learning would also change from teacher to learner-centred classroom.

While studies mentioned above seeking to understand English language teaching and learning activities in classrooms, Glass (2008) was interested to investigate the

success of language teaching particularly writing skills after students graduated from a university. Particularly, Glass (2008) examined writing habits of these BA graduates from Mahasarakam University, Thailand. This university only offers three writing courses as a partial fulfillment of an undergraduate English language programme namely, 1) English structure and usage, 2) paragraph writing and 3) narrative and descriptive composition. In his study, Glass (2008) used an online survey to collect the data from graduates of this university during 2000-2005, and interviewed teachers of an English program with their former students. It was found that Thais used English regularly both during and after work hours to communicate electronically with their friends. Glass's (2008) findings also indicate that even students who major in the English language programme feel that the writing skills they have learned at the university are inadequate. They reported that they are unprepared to more advanced kinds of writing such as research and report writing which are necessary for higher levels of education i.e. at postgraduate level.

There is also some evidence of writing research conducted in Thailand that indicates an emphasis on the product-oriented approach rather than the process-oriented one. For example, Bennui (2008)'s and Watcharapunyawong (2013)'s interests are on textual problems in writing due to learners' first language (Thai) interference. Both of these researchers merely listed writing errors found in their studies as a result of writing incompetency rather than promoting students to take risks in making errors in the process of writing. This is simply because they view writing as a product rather than a process. In addition to that, Tangkiengsirisin (2010) was also concerned with linguistic accuracy as evident in his study. Tangkiengsirisin (2010) studied the use of cohesive devices in Thai postgraduate students' expository writing. The study revealed that there was an improvement in the use of cohesive devices after

receiving writing interventions through teachers' written feedback and students' revision.

It is important to note that Tangkiengsirisin's (2010) focal concern was on linguistic property (product) rather than development of ideas (process) or writing proficiency (goal of writing). One has to review the work of Dueraman (2006) if he/she is dealing with cohesive devices in Thai students' written work. Dueraman (2006) has confirmed that there was no link between the amount of cohesive devices used in English language writing and writing proficiency of the Thai EFL learners in her study. Therefore, what seems to lack in Tangkiengsirisin's study is that the essence of writing itself i.e. the goal of writing which is the core concern of writing activities.

There is also a study conducted in Thailand which focuses on teachers' view of their teaching methods by Chasiri (2010). Chaisiri (2010) examined writing teachers' perceptions towards the genre-based approach and the effectiveness in applying it in a writing classroom which is composed of forty Thai English majors. Chaisiri (2010) introduced different stages of writing activities to the class namely: building knowledge of the field, modeling, joint construction, and independent construction. The students were required to jointly construct sentences and then to write on their own. Later, they performed self and peer editing. The data obtained from the questionnaire and interviews and writing samples revealed that there was clear improvement in the students' writing after implementing the genre-based approach though peer editing is less effective as students would only search for errors in the text.

The issue of errors in writing has continued to gain interest among Thai researchers in spite the shift in teaching approach from product to process which has started to

spread in writing classroom in Thailand. Some classrooms have introduced revising activities as a stage in writing process. Alas, revising means picking errors from students' pieces. The study done by Srichanyachon (2011) fits this description well. Srichanyachon (2011) conducted a study to identify formal or linguistic errors in English written work by Thai students during three stages of revisions: self revision, peer revision and teacher's revision. Srichanyachon found that most comments made by peers are considered ineffective because they could not find errors in the text. Therefore, they only trust teacher's revision.

In contrast, studies done by Chaisiri (2010) and Srichanyachon (2011), on revising process of giving and receiving feedback by students or teachers focuses more on errors in writing rather than on semantic or textual advice. Another thing is that usually the kind of interactions for feedback received is usually from one direction (either from one student or teacher) and not dynamic as in any natural conversation. These studies have also shown that students prefer teachers' comment to their peers. Students think they lack linguistic knowledge and confidence in giving comments and suggestions and cannot find errors in the texts, and thus their comments are considered ineffective (Chaisiri, 2010; & Srichanyachon, 2011). Interestingly, writing teachers in Thailand also reported that Thai students cannot write due to limited grammatical knowledge (Toh, 2000). In addition, when they are asked to edit or revise either their own or peers' written work, they only check linguistic use and this does not allow them to develop critical thinking skills as good writers must possess. Thus, only teachers' feedback is said to bring notable improvement in their writing (Chaisiri, 2010; & Srichanyachon, 2011).

## **2.12 Past Studies of English Writing outside Thailand**

As theoretical approaches towards the teaching of ESL/EFL writing skills evolve over time, studies in the field were also developed accordingly. In other words, writing research has developed gradually from just examining the product to the cognitive engagement of the writer, to writer's sensitivity on the reader, and then to understand the whole process of learning writing skills in various contexts. This section reviews writing research which has been done in order to find appropriate solutions to EFL learners outside Thailand. Past writing studies conducted in Thailand are also reviewed in the subsequent section.

As early researchers who supported the process approach in teaching and learning writing activities, Goldstein and Conrad (1990) conducted a study to understand the degree to which teacher-student conferences and the role of negotiation of meaning during revision process impacted the three students who enrolled in an advanced EFL composition course. The conferences were taped and selected to how they influenced the students' subsequent revision of work. Goldstein and Conrad found that only those who negotiated for meaning made revision to improve their texts while those who did not only made mechanical changes to the texts.

Leki (1995) claimed that in order to understand what writing life is like for ESL students, we need to take a closer look not just at activities in writing classes but also at individual students and their lives as they go through higher education. Leki therefore, conducted a naturalistic study on ESL visa students' lives in ESL writing classrooms in the USA and on the strategies they bring to their writing tasks across the curriculum. The participants were three graduate students and two undergraduates. Each of them came from different backgrounds i.e. home country,

years in school and academic subject areas. However, all of them had a TOEFL scores above 525. At the time of the study, they enrolled in classes which required a significant amount of writing. Leki interviewed them and their professors and observed their class as well as examined all of their written materials. Analysis of the data showed that these students employed numerous and diverse strategies which were subsumed under one of the ten categories with each student relied on these strategies in different degrees. The ten strategies were: 1) clarifying strategies; 2) focusing strategies; 3) relying on past writing experiences; 4) taking advantage of first language or culture; 5) using current experience or feedback; 6) looking for models; 7) employing current or past ESL writing training; 8) working to please teachers; 9) resisting to complete the task; and 10) managing academic and life demands.

Some writing researchers assume that L1 writing may somehow affect EFL writing behaviours (Silva, 1993; Van Weijen, Van den Bergh, Rijlaarsdam & Sanders, 2008). Thus, they attempted to find out similarities and differences between L1 and L2 composing process. Silva (1993) for example, examined seventy-two reports of empirical research comparing L1 and L2 writing. Of these, forty-one involved ESL and NES comparisons, twenty-one compared L1 and L2 writing; and four were those which had been done to compare both types. The subjects used in the study were predominantly undergraduate college students. With regards to writing tasks, most studies called for expository essays followed by argumentative and narrative respectively. The time allotted for the subjects to complete the tasks ranging from 20 minutes to as much time they chose to complete the tasks, though most studies allowed 30-60 minutes. A number of these studies reported that composing process

patterns of L2 were similar to L1. However, L2 writing was more difficult and less effective in terms of planning, transcribing and reviewing.

Silva (1993) concluded that L2 writers did less planning at both global and local levels instead they devoted more attention to generating materials. However, the generation part was more difficult and less successful, resulting in having difficulty in organizing those materials. Since producing written texts in L2 is more labourous, less fluent and less productive, L2 writers spent more time referring to outlines, consulting dictionaries, were more concerned with vocabulary difficulty, made frequent pauses, needed more writing time and wrote at a slower rate. Furthermore, there was some evidence that L2 writers did less reviewing and if they did the focus was more on grammar revision.

Lavelle and Zuercher (2001) were interested to determine how individual variation affects writers when they engage in academic tasks. The writing approach paradigm from merely writing as process of planning, translating and revising was linked to writers' intentions and beliefs about functions of writing and situations related to writing processes and outcomes. They introduced the two new approaches in writing: deep and surface approaches. In the deep approach, learners saw the task as a whole and had full engagement in learning, whereas in the surface approach, the learning was mainly based on knowledge telling and memorization. For example, when students just want to finish the task assigned, they will involve low level of cognitive engagement, write what they have in their memory, a surface approach. In contrast, if they are eager to learn as they write, the focus is at higher cognitive engagement, a deep approach.

In order to confirm their assumption whether motivational factors have connection with students' learning strategies and their level of focus on the task, Lavelle and Zuercher (2001) conducted a quantitative study to examine thirty university students' writing approaches in relation to their beliefs about the nature of writing. The data were collected by using Lavelle's (1993) questionnaire called "the Inventory of Processes in College Composition" and a semi-structured interview. The results indicate that all students in the category of a deep approach were comfortable in fully articulating their writing processes which were not the case for students scoring high on surface approach. In other words, the students of the surface approach reported that they dislike writing. Lavelle and Zuercher suggested that the teaching of writing should include deep tasks, emphasis on revision and meaning, and instructors should provide meaningful feedback.

Larios, Manchon and Murphy (2006) conducted a cross-sectional study to investigate the composing time to problem-solving formulation processes using two independent variables: the language of composition and the writers' L2 proficiency. Their subjects included the ESL writers of 6, 9 and 12 years of English learning experience with seven selected participants from each category. The Oxford Placement Test was used as a tool for this selection. The subjects were given a questionnaire to provide information about their previous writing instruction, two writing tasks (L1 & L2) on argumentative essays and the think-aloud protocol while performing the tasks. Students were given chance to practice think-aloud before they were recorded in actual writing. During the composing sessions, all the participants in a group were tape-recorded concurrently in a language lab. The results showed that the participants devoted twice as much time to dealing with formulation



problems in the L2 as in the L1 task. In addition, the amount of time allocated to problem-solving in the L2 did not depend on proficiency.

Wenyu and Yang (2008) conducted a study on the writing strategies of 60 Chinese EFL university writers which are composed of junior English majors, freshman English majors; and sophomore non-English majors. The study was aimed at analyzing the relationships among writing proficiency, writing strategies and writing scores. They used a combination of quantitative (questionnaire) and qualitative (Stimulated Recall Protocol) instrument. The subjects were asked to come to the room individually and write English articles in a quiet atmosphere. They were video-taped and monitored. The time points and length of the pauses in the writing process were recorded. The results showed that there was a significant difference in strategy use between English major and non-English major writers when composing in English.

Other researchers such as Van Weijen et al. (2008) studied the L1 use during L2 writing. They examined the time point where writers use their L1 to do conceptual activities, and whether the use of L1 varies between writers and tasks, or whether it is related to L1 writing skills, L2 proficiency and text quality. Twenty first-year BA English majors were asked to write four short argumentative essays in L1 (Dutch) and four in L2 (English) under think-aloud conditions. Results indicated that all participants used their L1 while writing in L2 to some extent and the use varies between activities and tasks. For most activities, the use of L1 did not correlate with L1 writing skills and L2 proficiency. Furthermore, there was no relationship between the use of L1 during L2 writing and the text quality. This implies that L1 use does not necessarily have to be discouraged for all writers or under all circumstances.

Sun and Feng (2009) did an experimental study on the process approach to teaching writing skills to two groups of students. One was the group with good writing skills and the other was of average writing skills. The two groups were designed in the way that students could go through different stages of writing process: pre-writing, brainstorming, drafting, revising, editing and evaluation. The first group was asked to write news reports and the second group a cause and effect essay. Sun and Feng (2009) concluded that all the subjects were making significant progress in their writing skills.

Another study on the use of process approach in EFL writing is the work of He (2009). He conducted a case study with his participants at a Chinese university. In order to seek students' attitudes with new method of writing pedagogy (the process approach), He decided to conduct a workshop for EFL writing classes outside regular English curriculum. The five elements of Silva's ESL writing model (1990) were used in He's study. These elements are: 1) the role of EFL writers, 2) the native English reader, 3) EFL written text, 4) the context of EFL writing, and 5) the interaction of all these factors. He found that the process approach can encourage students' self expression, emphasize writing for real purposes, audiences and contexts.

He (2009)'s study however, failed to describe how students actually experience in their normal writing classrooms. He just explained the benefit of having additional writing workshops outside English curriculum. In some learning contexts students may not have these opportunities to join such workshops due to shortage of teacher resources. Therefore, He (2009)'s study can only be applicable to those students who have resources available. In Thailand, where writing skills are mainly taught only in a university, there is a need to have a closer look at how students learn to write in

their writing classrooms and not in writing workshops. This can help the researcher to have better understanding of the nature of Thai students' writing experience in their normal contexts and not the made up ones such as workshops.

Three years ago, Yuknis (2010) conducted a naturalistic study to explore the process that eight high school children who were deaf went through in order to construct and revise meaning in writing using a grounded theory approach. Yuknis used multiple sources of data in her study including students' writing sample, interviews with the students and their two writing teachers on how they would approach revising their essays, and class observation to elicit how they wrote essays from the beginning to the end as well as how they interacted among themselves and with the teachers. Yuknis developed a grounded theory of navigating the process of writing texts and revising of her participants. The theory consists of three aspects of writing and revising a text which she called "knowing, experiencing and doing."

By knowing, Yuknis (2010) referred to the degree to which the participants' understand English vocabulary words as they write as well as how much the text written made sense to them. In the experiencing category, they used three different types of interactions: with text, self, and instruction. In the process of interacting with text, they named the writing and revision purpose and were asked to apply what they have learned in revising. When they interacted with themselves, Yuknis reported that they acted as a self reviser, built self confidence by making their draft sound perfect. Moreover, they interacted with the instruction in order to seek for assistance but over depending on the teacher in the revising process. This means that they only constructed the texts and engaged in related activities when asked by the teachers. The last aspect of Yuknis' theory is "doing." Yuknis illustrated that in this stage, they focus on error corrections which she called "fixing wrong." They did not

regard their work as real until they came to work on the final draft. Their emphasis on the writing product corresponded with the teaching approach which stressed the importance of local concern in writing rather than the global one.

Modern writing researchers such as Spencer (2012) and Nihlawi (2011) view writing skill development in a broader perspective. They believe that other important factors in the learners' own context together contribute to their writing development. Spencer (2012) explored how a young adult who is a native speaker of English learned to write well from the mother at home but without formal instructions in composition classes. Spencer used a grounded theory design in order to formulate a new theory about elements which contributed to writing development of this young adult in his own context. He conducted interviews with the child and his mother, collected journals, diaries, lesson plans which the mother used to help the child writing development, and an online curriculum as sources of data in this study. The new theory generated by Spencer was called "Personal Integration" which encompassed three stages of writing development: immersion, process and development. In the first stage, the child was immersed in a great deal of literature, reading and writing books, the mother instilled a love for reading in the child and modeled a reading atmosphere and culture. Later, the child processed what he read consciously and unconsciously. After that the child expressed what he had learned through creative plays, oral and written language. Spencer (2012)'s findings suggest that environment plays an important role to provide writing inputs and that learners can only process writing knowledge after a great deal of interactions with reading texts. Nevertheless, Spencer (2012) merely informs us the writing development of an English native speaker not ESL/EFL learners. To determine whether they learn writing skill in the same way as a native English speaker, another grounded theory

*Table 2.1: Synopsis of Past Writing Research in ESL/EFL*

Researcher	Objectives	Methods of study	Findings
<b>Research on Writing Skill Development outside Thailand (in chronological order)</b>			
Leki (1995)	- Qualitative study - examined writing strategies students developed in their regular courses across curriculum	- used 5 participants - naturalistic study - interviewed students & their professors - observations of classes - documents: class materials, students' notes, teachers' feedback	- Many strategies were employed to accomplish tasks in non-English classrooms across curriculum such as clarifying strategies, focusing strategies, relying on past experience, take advantage of L1, use current experience, looking for models, accommodating and resisting teachers' demands.
Lavelle & Zuercher (2001)	- investigated how students' intentions & beliefs about functions of writing influence their writing process and outcomes	- used 30 university students - questionnaire - semi-structured interview	- The subjects who viewed the task as a whole were comfortable in fully committed throughout their writing processes than those who merely thought they did writing as to complete the task assigned by their teacher.
Larios, Manchon & Murphy (2006)	- investigated the composing time to problem-solving formulation processes in L1 & L2 of ESL writers with different proficiency levels	- 7 participants from each of these groups: 6, 9 & 12 years of English instruction - questionnaire - wrote argumentative essays on L1 & L2 - record verbal report while performing tasks	- The participants spent twice as much time in dealing with formulation problems in the L2 as in the L1 task. - L2 proficiency did not influence the time allotted to problem-solving in L2.
Van Weijen, Van den Bergh, Rijlaarsdam & Sanders, (2008)	- examined L1 use during L2 writing & its relationship with individual differences, tasks, L1 writing skills, L2 proficiency & text quality	- 20 subjects wrote 4 argumentative essays in L1 & 4 in L2 under think aloud conditions	- all participants used L1 in L2 writing - negative correlation found between the amount of L1 use & L1 writing skills, L2 proficiency; and between L1 use & L2 text quality
Wenyu & Yang (2008)	- study the relationship among writing proficiency, writing strategies & writing scores of 60 Chinese university writers	- compared between English & non-English majors - used questionnaire & qualitative instrument (Stimulated Recall Protocol) - students wrote English articles individually in a quiet atmosphere, were video-taped &	There was a significant difference in writing strategy use between English major & non-English major writers.

		monitored	
He (2009)	- investigated students' attitudes towards process approach in writing	- experimental study - conducted a workshop for EFL writing classes outside regular curriculum	- Process approach encourages Chinese student participants' self expression and help students consider their audience, purpose and contexts when writing.
Yuknis (2010)	- studied the process of writing construction and revision of deaf children using a grounded theory	- used 8 students - students' writing samples - interviewed with students and their writing teachers - class observation	- The resulting theory encompasses 3 aspects of writing and revising text: Knowing, experiencing & Doing.
Spencer (2012)	- explored the writing process of a young adult who learned to write from the parent at home.	- used 1 student & his mother - interviewed the student & the mother - collected documentary data: journals, diaries, lesson plan, the syllabus	- The generated theory of "Personal Integration" describes 3 stages of development: immersion, process and expression
<b>Research on Writing Skill Development Conducted in Thailand (in chronological order)</b>			
Pattarapongpaisan (1996)	- investigated the effectiveness of process approach in teaching writing to English majors in Bangkok - compared English writing ability of students taught through process versus product approach	- did experiment on the two classes of writing - administered pre-test & post-test before and after the instruction	- The class with the process approach showed improvement in writing.
Tonthong (1999)	- explored the extent to which dialogue journals help students to improve their writing development	- used 14 students - write texts & respond to peers and teacher - wrote dialogue journals - described past writing experiences	- dialogue journals helped students to learn through collaboration and in turn improved their reading and writing skills
Toh (2000)	- examined Thai English teachers' perceptions on students' writing problems	- organized a writing workshop - 3 genres of writing texts (description, anecdote & news items) were given to guide teachers to look at texts at a discourse level	- The teacher participants viewed that students can't write because they don't master grammatical knowledge.
Jarunthawatchai (2001)	- explored writing strategies and techniques employed by Thai English majors enrolled a third writing course	- qualitative study - used 8 participants - focused interview - documentation	- Both skilled and unskilled writers used variety of strategies namely; metacognitive, social, affective and compensation strategies. - The use of these strategies didn't vary among the group.

Chaisuriya (2003)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- incorporated social-constructionist approach in teaching technical writing to 30 sophomore science students</li> <li>- included collaborative writing, writing as process, peer review, technical students' writing conferences, and peer evaluation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- qualitative study</li> <li>- observation</li> <li>- interviews</li> <li>- artifacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students' writing skills improve after reading their peer writing and receiving their comments.</li> </ul>
Pataraporn (2006)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- explored the 4 Thai university students' awareness and application of cognitive and metacognitive strategies in writing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- mixed method study</li> <li>- used scripts of students' pair discussion</li> <li>- think-aloud protocols</li> <li>- interviews</li> <li>- students' texts</li> <li>- pretest and posttest</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strategy knowledge enhances students' writing performance.</li> </ul>
Dhanarattigan-non (2008)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- explored Thai students' experience and perceptions towards learning to write in English</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- qualitative study</li> <li>- used one classroom of 41 students participants</li> <li>- The class was taught by a Thai teacher using process approach</li> <li>- classroom observation</li> <li>- interviews</li> <li>- documents and artifacts</li> <li>- consider the participants' culture when analyzing the data</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students gradually felt comfort as they went through the writing process.</li> <li>- Culturally, the participants felt frustrated when they were first introduced the new writing approach of learner-centred because they were used to the traditional approach of learning.</li> </ul>
Bennui (2008)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- studied L1 interference in English writing in 3 aspects: word, sentence, discourse</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- quantitative study</li> <li>- used 28 third year students minor in English</li> <li>- They wrote a paragraph.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The L1 interferences included literal translation, error in structural ordering.</li> </ul>
Glass (2008)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- investigated writing habits of Thai English graduates</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- used online survey to Thai graduates during the years 2000-2005</li> <li>- interviewed teachers of English programs and their former students</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Thai English graduates write in English to communicate with their friends electronically.</li> <li>- The graduates feel that writing skills they acquired from the university are inadequate, unprepared for more advanced writing necessary for further educational pursuits.</li> </ul>
Tangkiengsirisin (2010)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- studied the effects of teachers' written feedback &amp; students' revision on the use of cohesive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- quantitative study</li> <li>- 60 Thai MA students (30 experiment group &amp; 30 control) enrolled in English writing skill</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students improve the use of cohesive devices: referential, conjunctive &amp; lexical cohesive ties.</li> </ul>

	devices in expository writing: cause/effect & compare/contrast	development. - compare the scores of using cohesive devices in pre-test & post-test essays	
Baruca (2010)	- studied strategies L2 students used to overcome writing difficulties in a mainstream composition class	- qualitative study - interviewed 7 students, all of each student' s teacher (4) - used students reflection in their writing and surveys to support the interview	- Students are prepared to put a lot of effort in their writing and that they develop different strategies to overcome difficulties.
Chaisiri (2010)	- studied writing teachers' perception towards genre-based approach & the consequences of implementing the approach in writing class	- mixed method - used questionnaire & interviews - used 10 writing teachers as subjects - implemented genre approach in one writing classroom	- The genre-based approach helps improve students' writing.
Srichanyachon (2011)	-studied errors identified by students & teachers in 3 revision stages: self, peer, teacher's revision	- quantitative study - used 10 students enrolled in advanced English course - counted errors in students' writing	- Students focused more on linguistic errors instead of semantic ones when revising.
Watcharapunya- Pong (2013)	- studied writing errors caused by L1 interference	- quantitative study - used 40 second year English majors - each student wrote 3 essays: narration, description & compare/contrast	- The errors were categorized into 16 categories e.g. verb tense, word choice, sentence structure, gerund, and other linguistic mistakes.



study is needed to be conducted with EFL learners. A synopsis of past studies related to ESL/EFL writing research can be referred to Table 2.1. As stated earlier, L2 writing research still needs to depend on L1 writing theories especially those of cognitivism and social constructivism. As a result, such theoretical frameworks have been incorporated into L2 writing pedagogy. Among researchers who support the idea of cognitivism which views writing as mental activities include Silva (1993), Larios, Manchon and Murphy (2006), Wenyu and Young (2008), Van Weijen et al. (2008), Pattaraporn (2006), and Sun and Feng (2009). Their concerns were on students' strategy knowledge, their individual thinking and problem-solving process during the act of writing. This process usually deals with task planning, generating materials, reviewing as well as time and level of difficulty engaging in the activities. To get deeper understanding on students' cognitive pattern, these researchers have tried to compare L1 writing process with that of L2.

The critique of cognitivism is that it overemphasizes on abstract mental process in the course of writing which can be uninteresting and tedious for L2 learners. Writing is already hard to learn. By taking students to a more abstract level of conceptual activities alone may demotivate them and reduce their willingness to experience the joy of writing. In addition, the concerns of most reviewed studies have been given to ESL or EFL learners alone neglecting the importance of other factors that are considered as equally important than just merely focus students' learning behaviours. Learning a foreign language involves the dual process of teaching and learning inside classrooms, teachers' educational background and training, the methods and styles of teachers, the personalities, attitudes of students, their educational background and training, learning processes, cultural and social contexts and the relationship among these components (Zamel, 1987). If the only problem of EFL

writing has been students' lack of strategy knowledge or students' personality alone, then previous research studies should have solved this problem at least a decade ago. Though we have seen several studies mentioned earlier are based on cognitivism have been done to improve L2 writing skills, they are still small in numbers when compared to those that are based on social constructivism or a combination of cognitivism and social constructivism.

More researchers are interested in not merely observing L2 writers' cognitive behaviours but their interactions with other valuable resources too (e.g. Goldstein & Conrad, 1990; Leki, 1995; Tonthong, 1999; Jarunthawatchai, 2001; Lavelle & Zuercher, 2001; Li & Hamel, 2003; Scott & Vitale 2003; Chaisuriya, 2003; Hedge, 2005; Dhanarattigannon, 2008; Tangpermpoon; 2008; He, 2009; Chaisiri, 2010; Yuknis, 2010; Srichanyachon, 2011; & Spencer, 2012). They argue that students will develop their cognitive ability better provided that they have enough interactions for writing inputs with others. Interactions with members of the group can also change their attitudes towards writing from negative to positive (Lee & Schallert, 2008; Carroll, Blake, Camalo & Messer, 1996; & Chaisiri, 2010; Srichanyachon, 2011). The emphases of those who favour either cognitivism or its combination with that of social-constructivism in the literature reviewed were on teaching rather than learning. Thus, they stress on the importance of instructional strategies which involve different writing stages (prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, publishing), teacher-student conference, collaborative writing, and negotiations in L2 writing process.

The cognitivist and social-constructivist researchers' propositions can be linked with what is suggested by Nunan (1991) who claims that appropriate teaching methodologies do not just rest at learners' linguistic concern but also to consider

their affective and emotional factors. The only difference is that cognitivist and social-constructivist researchers are more concerned with cognitive performance and classroom interactions much more than their students' feelings.

As for the expressivism, very few EFL writing researchers make use of it probably because of its emphasis is more on students' autonomy as they have to write or express in order to discover themselves. For almost all the studies reviewed in this chapter, we see learners were more dependent on teachers thus making more difficult to observe elements of expressivism in them.

There are still gaps in previous research studies related to writing skill development either done by those that follow the cognitivism or social-constructivism. Those who favour cognitivism only concentrate on what is happening inside the writer while the latter conditionally considers interactions with peers and teachers in classroom contexts. Their studies are conditional because the interactions occurred in the studies are sometimes prompted or required to be done by the researchers themselves. In order to understand the contexts in the real situations regarding students' writing, one needs to take a naturalistic approach to the problem concerned. No interventions should be given. When this is secured, then rich, real and accurate, data can be obtained from the participants.

In terms of the methodological approach applied in the reviewed past studies related to writing skills, they are done either qualitatively and quantitatively or using a mixed method. However, the qualitative method was most preferred especially in the areas that are related to writing process (Yuknis, 2010; Spencer, 2012; Larios, Manchon, Murphy, 2006), peer and teacher feedback (Chaisuriya, 2003), writing strategies (Leki, 1995; Jaranthawatchai, 2001; Pataraporn, 2006, Baruca, 2010),

students and teachers' perceptions on writing process (Toh, 2000; Dhanarattigannon, 2008, He, 2009), students' beliefs and intentions about writing (Lavelle & Zuercher, 2001). In terms of the quantitative approach, it was applied when the researchers were concerned about the relationship between writing proficiency and writing strategies, the differences between product versus process approach instructions (Pattarapongpaisan, 1996) and types of revision methods (Chaisiri, 2010).

With regards to research instruments, most of these reviewed studies used more than one type of data collection methods. The most frequent used instruments include questionnaires, interviews, class observation and documentary data such as students' written texts, dialogue journals, diaries, lesson plans and syllabus. Think-aloud protocols (TAP) were also used as the means of collecting data especially when the researchers were solely concerned with students' cognitive activities during writing (Larios, Manchon, & Murphy, 2006; Van Weijen, Van den Bergh, Rijlaarsdam, & Sanders, 2008). Larios, Manchon and Murphy (2006) used TAP to investigate the time used in problem-solving formulation process of ESL students while composing texts. In the same vein, Van Weijen, Van den Bergh, Rijlaarsdam and Sanders (2008) utilized TAP to study the L1 use during L2 writing. It is important to note that the use of TAP in both cases was meant to understand their minds that are context independent. It does not matter whether students spend shorter or longer time in generating ideas. If time is really an issue, then we will just have to allow students to have more time to write and it solves the problem. As for the case of L1 use during L2 writing, Van Weijen et al. (2008) conclude that there is no relationship between its use and writing performance. Thus, the use of TAP for the purpose of time and L1 inquiries is not considered in this study. Rather TAP was employed in

order to elicit participants' thinking behaviours pertinent to stages in the writing process.

The review of studies on writing skill development conducted in Thailand also have informed the researcher that only university students were chosen as participants. Furthermore, almost all studies reviewed except one dealt with English majors. Surprisingly, all of these participants were struggling to write at the very basic level i.e. either writing paragraphs or essays. This clearly indicates that there must be no writing courses in pre-university education. Thus, one needs to explore further the phenomenon by selecting a group of university students and determine what their English experience was like prior to joining university programs. The results in this inquiry can provide useful insights for English language education in the country.

Even though some past writing studies conducted outside Thailand overlap with those that were done inside the country in their areas of concern such as writing strategies, students' perceptions towards process writing and the influence of L1 in L2 writing do not always share common features. Geographically, writing studies conducted abroad are different from those that were found in Thailand. First, those that were conducted abroad (Silva, 1993; Larios et al., 2006; Lee & Schallert, 2008; Wenyu & Yang, 2008; Van Weijen et al., 2008; Sun & Feng, 2009; He, 2009) have developed their interests from a very narrow perspective to a broader one. To illustrate, writing researchers began to focus their attentions on a single aspect of writing such as on students' writing strategies, their composing time, their use of L1 during writing, or attitudes towards the process writing. It was only after the beginning of this decade, writing researchers have widen their areas of concern as they viewed writing as an action that takes place in its contexts. To explain this

further, special attention should be given to Yukni (2010)'s, Spencer (2012)'s and Nihlawi (2011)'s studies which explored the learning process in specific contexts and thus justify the appropriateness in the employment of a grounded theory. These studies gave attention to related *factors* in the process of learning rather than just limit their queries to *what* students did when they wrote. Their endeavours sound logical in the sense that writing is an action or a process which involves participants in the process. To describe these actions (writing behaviours) on their own without considering the contexts is thus incomplete as if we are dealing with concepts but have no ideas of when and where the concepts are being applied.

The three grounded theory researchers above however, explored the writing development process of students who were native speakers of English. Foreign language writing is strategically, rhetorically and linguistically different in important ways from L1. Therefore, there is a need to look beyond L1 theories to better describe the unique nature of L2 writing by looking at potential sources such as cognitive, social, cultural, educational and linguistic factors of this uniqueness. Future research should make L2 writing tasks under which are done more realistic.

In addition, unlike those done abroad, most of the reviewed past writing studies conducted in Thailand are more product-oriented (e.g. Bennui, 2008; Tangkiengsirisin, 2010; Srichayachon, 2011; Watcharapunyapong, 2013). This means that their emphases are on elements of students' written texts and thus neglecting the importance of writing to learn and learning to write. Though the concept of process writing approach is evident in some writing studies in Thailand (e.g. Thonthong, 1999; Chaisuriya, 2003; Chaisiri, 2010), such an approach has been introduced by the researchers themselves at the onset of their data collection as it is not available in their natural settings. Moreover, its application in these studies is

very superficial. For example, Thonthong (1999) uses dialogue journals in her study as a medium of communication between teachers and students regarding a writing class in general but not about the act or contents of writing. This warrants a need to explore the natural phenomenon of how writing is learned in Thai contexts without any interference from researchers. As a result, rich data could be gained for deeper understanding on how EFL Thais struggle to write in their structural contexts. Consequently, effective solutions to recurring issues on writing could be solved in relation to the contexts. In other words, the present study attempts to understand the multidimensional process that writing involves in order to gain a better explanation of EFL writing development in Thai context. As a result, a grounded theory design is suitable for this study. Neff (as cited in Creswell, 2008, p.432) agrees that grounded theory is especially appropriate when there is a need to study some process of actions such as how students develop as writers. The use of grounded theory and its comprehensive discussion on its characteristics and justification of its selection can be found in the next chapter.

## **2.13 Summary of the Chapter**

This chapter contains thirteen subsections. The first two sections (2.1-2.2) deal with the role and functions of English language in Thailand as well as factors of Thai educational policy which shape the way Thais receive English language education and writing skills. Then, section 2.3 discusses L2 learning theories in relation to L2 writing. In particular, it reviews Krashen's theories on second language acquisition which assume that language cannot be learned but acquired in natural environment. According to him, formal learning only monitors rules so that learners will be able to understand appropriate forms and structures of language. This part also includes the

discussion on the three main approaches towards writing in a second language learning namely: the expressivist, the cognitivist and the social constructivist.

The expressivists view that in order to be able to write fluently, the learners must express themselves freely through writing, thereby increases their writing fluency. The cognitivist approach stands on the opposite view with those of Krashen's natural ability to learn a new language. The cognitivists argue that only through considerable formal practice (explicit knowledge), students can master the language and be able to use that language automatically (implicit knowledge). The social constructivists on the other hand, stress the importance of interactions between learners and others in their own cultural and social environment in order to construct their new knowledge, and knowledge of writing skills is no exception. Because this study aims to explain Thai EFL students' writing development process by deriving a theory grounded in the data, the researcher has been aware of all these theories with particular attention to the cognitive and social constructivist approaches in collecting and analyzing the data.

Section 2.4 addressed four different approaches to teaching ESL writing namely: the controlled composition approach, the current-traditional rhetoric approach, the communication approach, and the process approach. These approaches are ordered according to their chronological importance. The evolution of ESL writing teaching approach first starts with the emphasis on product and then followed by the process of writing. In many of the contemporary research studies on ESL/EFL writing, the process approach has been the main focus. This section also highlighted the different models of writing as process. The common characteristics which all these models have in common are the classification of different steps in writing is divided into three parts: prewriting, while writing and post writing.



This study has helped the researcher to examine what is happening in the participants' process when learning to write at all these three phases through different data collection methods which are thoroughly explained in Chapter Three. Then, other issues related to factors which contribute to EFL writing skill development are reviewed. These include the importance of teachers' knowledge, educational background, attitudes, teaching methodology and training, the influence of students' linguistic background and the availability of technology as a new form of communication which can assist students' writing skills. The discussion ends with the careful examination of English language teaching in Thailand and then the factors of Thai history, culture and educational policy which form the foundation of Thais receive English language education and writing skills. The discussion ends with reviews of past writing studies that have been conducted abroad and in Thailand followed by their synthesis in terms of theoretical, thematic and methodological approaches.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

In the previous chapter, the review of literature has provided the researcher some background knowledge related to the topic of this study. This chapter presents rationales of applying qualitative research and selecting a grounded theory design. Later in the chapter, it provides general information about the research settings followed by a description of the participants used in this study, data collection, and data analysis, establishing trustworthiness and summary of the chapter.

The present study aims at exploring the process of learning to master writing skills of Thai English majors in Thailand. The researcher is particularly interested in exploring how Thai students begin to instill the writing knowledge and skills, contextual and instructional factors which have influenced their learning behaviours. Subsequently, the researcher would be able to explain the dynamic of this development process in a logical sequence.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

This study employs a qualitative method for four reasons. First, it attempts to explore a naturalistic process of human behaviours, and descriptive features of actions or events which correspond with the features that are suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1998) inductively. To be specific, it explores abstract phenomena which explain Thai students' experiences in learning to write in a foreign language, their learning strategies as well as interactions occurred in the process of learning. Second, the method is suitable with the research questions of the study. To explain further, the ongoing process related to students' writing behaviors, writing process, elements

found in their interactions with peers and teachers could not be counted quantitatively but could be comprehensively described through the use of a qualitative method. Third, the research questions used are not framed by operationalizing variables as in quantitative research but are formulated to explore the complex process of writing development in Thai context. Fourth, the researcher does not begin the study with specific hypotheses to test but develops her focus after the onset of her data collection and thus allowing her to understand the learning behaviours from the informant's own frame of reference (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

### **3.2 Characteristics of Qualitative Research**

There are five features of qualitative research. Qualitative research exhibits certain degrees of these five features even though in some qualitative studies lack in one or more of these (Gay & Airasian, 2003; Bogdan & Biklen, 2007).

a) **Naturalistic:** Qualitative researchers enter and spend considerable time in actual settings as their direct source of data. They do this because they are more interested with contexts in questions. They feel that action can be best understood when it is observed in the setting in which it occurs. This study utilizes class observation as one of the methods of data collection whereby the researcher does some observation of classroom dynamics.

b) **Descriptive data:** Qualitative research is descriptive in nature because the data collected are in the form of words or picture rather than numbers. The data include interview transcripts, field notes, photographs, videotapes, personal documents, memos and other official records. In their analyses, qualitative researchers extract some of the data to illustrate and substantiate the presentation of written results.

They consider that everything in the data is important to understand the phenomena in questions comprehensively.

c) **Concern with process and outcome:** Gay and Airasian (2003) claim that qualitative research emphasizes a holistic approach which focuses on the processes and outcomes. The emphasis on process includes exploring, observing or trying to understand how daily activities, procedures and interactions are richly portrayed.

d) **Inductive:** Qualitative researchers analyse their data collected inductively. They group the data collected together based on interconnected ideas then develop a new theory that is grounded in the data. Therefore, there are no assumptions made before having evidence from the data collected.

e) **Meaning:** Qualitative researchers in education develop strategies and procedures in order to discover what they are experiencing, how they interpret their experiences and how they themselves structure the social world in which they live from informants' perspectives and not from the researchers themselves.

This study has exhibited all these five features of qualitative research, namely: naturalistic, descriptive, holistic, inductive and respondents' meaning oriented throughout data collection and interpretation which has allowed the researcher to derive a new theory grounded in the data. As a result, the researcher believes that a grounded theory design was suitable in this type of inquiry. As a type of qualitative research, the design is discussed in the following section.

### **3.3 Grounded Theory Design**

Grounded theory is developed by Glaser, Strauss, Corbin and their co-workers with the aim to describe the phenomenon being studied and to develop substantial

theoretical conceptualizations of findings (Brand & Anderson, 1999). The concept was first applied in illness and dying research by Glaser and Strauss who later developed grounded theory procedures, written in their book “The Discovery of Grounded Theory” (1967). Glaser and Strauss’ contribution to the field began to shift from the traditional scientific method to gathering data through systematic methodological procedures and developing theories from research that is grounded in the data.

Grounded theory emerged from two schools of thought; positivism and pragmatism. Glaser’s beliefs of induction and empiricism emphasised the generation of theory from the viewpoint of the participants, whereas Strauss’ interpretive beliefs influenced the fieldwork and the participant-focused side of grounded theory. Combining these two schools of thought, Glaser and Strauss suggested some ideas for qualitative research, such as: simultaneous data collection and analysis, coding and creating categories for data, comparative analysis of data, theory development during data collection and analysis, detailed categories, establish properties for categories, identify relationships between categories, theoretical sampling to make research more robust, and literature review written after data analysis.

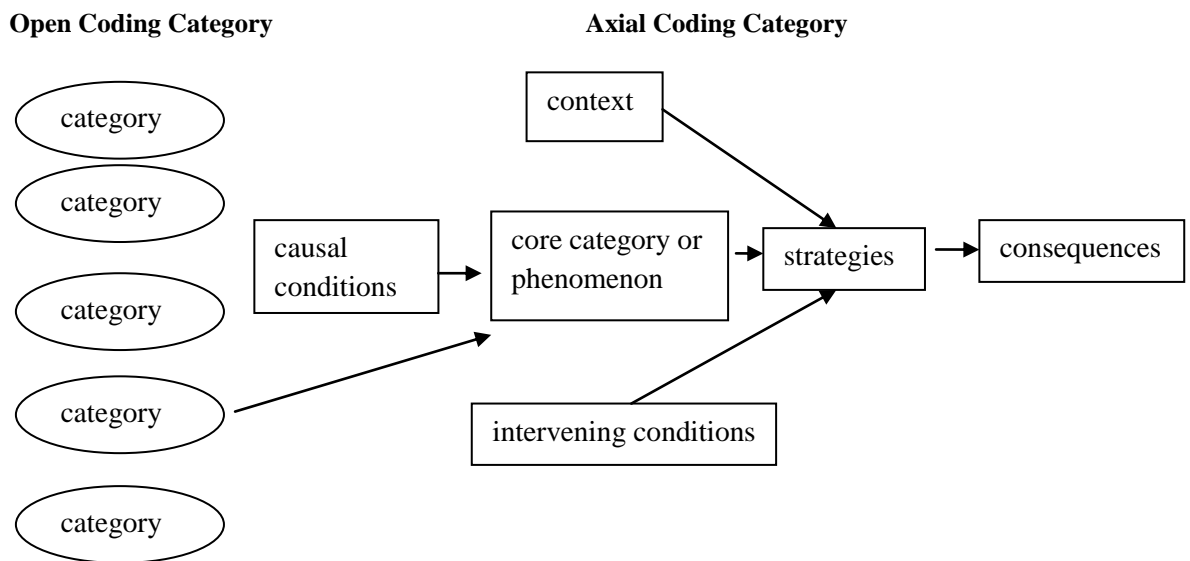
Glaser and Strauss’ suggestions enable qualitative research to become an explanatory theoretical framework. In the 1990s, Strauss joined Corbin to take grounded theory in another direction, to include predetermined categories for data and acknowledge problems with validity and reliability. Few years later, Charmaz (2006) felt that grounded theory needed to have a more interpretive approach towards its research design, hence calling her method the “constructivist” grounded theory model. She suggested that such a model of research be more flexible in structure, stress the

importance of the meaning participants' apply to events, recognise the role of the researcher and the participants and develop a philosophical approach to the research.

Grounded theory design is therefore defined as “a systematic and qualitative procedure used to generate a theory that explains, at a broad conceptual level, a process, an action, or an interaction about a substantive topic” (Creswell, 2008, p.432). Creswell (2008) believes that researchers in education use grounded theory whenever there is a need to explain an educational process of events, activities, actions and interactions that occur overtime. Grounded theorists follow systematic procedures of data collection and data analysis to identify categories in order to form a theory that best explains the process being studied. There are three dominant designs of grounded theory: the systematic design, the emerging design, and the constructivist design. Each of these is elaborated below.

The systematic design used in this study is also widely employed by educational researchers. As the name suggests, grounded theorists of a systematic design follow systematic techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory. They emphasize the three phases of data analysis: open, axial and selective coding (Creswell, 2008). Grounded theorists begin to form open coding by developing categories and subcategories of the information in all data collected in the study such as interviews, observations, field notes or documents. Then, in axial coding, the grounded theorists select one open coding category, position it at the centre of the process being studied (as the core phenomenon), and then link other categories to the process in question. This link involves drawing a diagram called “a coding paradigm.” The diagram therefore, exhibits interrelationship between the core phenomenon and other categories that are:

- a) causal conditions – factors influence the core category
- b) strategies – actions or interactions as consequences of the core category
- c) contextual conditions – specific factors which influence strategies
- d) intervening conditions – general factors which influence strategies
- e) consequences – the outcomes of employing the strategies



*Figure 3.1: Grounded Theory Coding from Open Coding to Axial Coding Paradigm (Creswell, 2008, p. 437)*

In the last phase, selective coding, grounded theorists begin to write a theory from the interrelationship of the categories in the axial coding model. They begin with abstract explanation for the process being studied and then write out the story line that interconnects the categories in order to integrate and refine the theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

The second dominant design in grounded theory is called emerging design developed by Glaser (1992). Glaser disagrees with Strauss and Corbin's approach which he

referred to as overly emphasized rules and procedures, a preconceived framework and categories, and theory verification instead of theory generation (Creswell, 2008). Glaser (1992) views that grounded theorists should explain a basic social process which involves constant comparative coding procedures of comparing incident to incident, incident to category, and category to category. The emphasis is therefore on connecting categories and emerging theory, not on simply describing categories with reference to a specific diagram as found in the systematic design. There are three key features found in grounded theory research based on Glaser's (1992) more flexible and less prescribed perspectives. First, the research deals with more abstract level of data analysis when compared to that of systematic design which depends solely on visual presentation of a paradigm model. Second, researchers of emerging design believe that a theory is grounded in the data, and is unnecessary to be placed into categories. Third, the research contains four elements which are said to be central to grounded theory in this design: fit, work, relevance, and modifiability. To illustrate, the theory must be carefully induced from the data collected which also fits the participants' and researcher's perspectives. When the theory works in the sense that it can explain participants' behaviours, it also has relevance and could be modified later.

The well-known grounded theorist of the constructivist design is Kathy Chamaz (2006). Chamaz (2006) believes in the importance of meanings individuals attribute to the focus of the study. The emphasis is therefore to examine the participants' thoughts, feelings, stances, view points, assertions of individuals rather than gathering facts and describing acts. Chamaz proposes an "active code" such as recasting life to capture human experiences. The information gained from participants based on these perspectives is placed into categories during the data



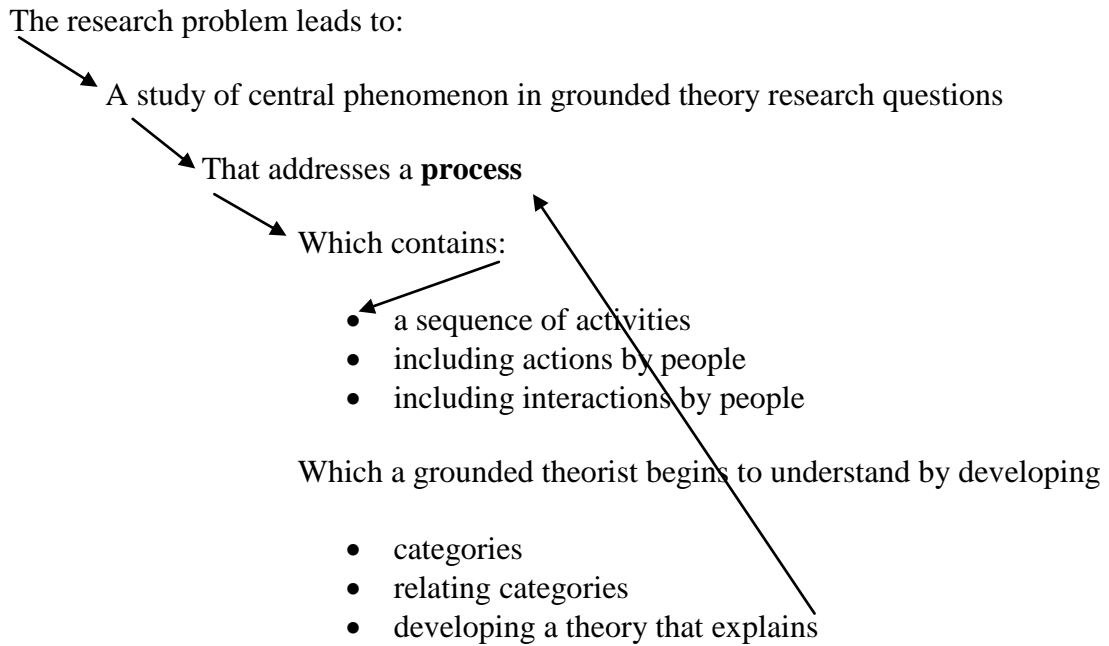
collection. Furthermore, this technique allows the researcher to bring some of their own views, beliefs, feelings and questions to the data throughout the process (Creswell, 2008). Similarly, Pidgeon and Henwood (2004) has commented that a constructivist revision of grounded theory stresses the combination of systematic rigour of analysis with the essentially creative and dynamic character of the interpretive research process. The process between data and the researcher's conceptualization indicates that data then should guide but not limit theorizing. This design also requires that researchers must be able to retain their disciplinary knowledge as well as to utilize their theoretical sensitivities necessary in hermeneutic and constructivist practices (Chamaz, 2006). Pidgeon and Henwood (2004) suggest that hermeneutic and constructivist researchers believe that knowing always involves seeing or hearing from individuals of particular institutions or socio-cultural contexts.

Thus, the present study has utilized the systematic design instead of the emerging or constructivist design in grounded theory for some reasons. First, the systematic design is suitable for a beginning researcher because of its clearly identified procedures which help the researcher go through each step easily and relate the categories in a specified model. Second, the present study mainly focuses on describing and critically analyzing facts and behaviours of Thai English majors pertaining to their writing development process from their own perspectives with minimal if any researcher's values, experiences and priorities. Therefore, the constructivist design is not suitable to be applied in this present study.

### 3.4 Characteristics of Grounded Theory Research

Whether the researcher incorporates a systematic, emerging, or constructivist design in grounded theory, the six characteristics which are common to this type of research are: process approach, theoretical sampling, constant comparative data analysis, a core category, theory generation, and memos (Creswell, 2008). This study employed all of these elements throughout the study.

**a) Process approach:** Process approach is the sequence of or steps taken, through activities or interactions with participants or events, which relate to the study. Grounded theorists often generate an understanding of a process of their research questions instead of explore one single idea because human behaviours are socially interrelated (Creswell, 2008). These researchers isolate and identify actions and interactions among people which are referred to as “categories” in grounded theory in their respective studies. In other words, categories are themes of basic information derived by the researcher from the data in order to understand the process. Creswell (2008, p. 441) is able to show clearer picture of the flow of activities in grounded theory as follows:



*Figure 3.2: A process and categories within the flow of research in grounded theory (Creswell, 2008, P. 441)*

To explore the sequence or steps of interrelated activities in the process of writing skill development of Thai EFL student participants involved in this study, the researcher grouped the data according to categories and themes that emerged. Then those themes were related to develop a new theory.

**b) Theoretical sampling:** Sampling is purposeful and directed to generating a theory. The researcher selected data collection methods that yield information useful to the generation of a theory. Observation, interviews, questionnaires, writing task and think-aloud were implemented to seven English majors plus interviews with two writing instructors from the two universities in Thailand.

**c) Constant comparative data analysis:** In the process of analyzing the data obtained via the selected methods, the researcher compared and connected categories in the data with other categories, allowing the categories to be grounded in the data.

**c) A core category:** The core category which is most representative to the theory generated in this study was derived from all the emerged categories that had evolved during data analysis. Its characteristics and concepts had appeared most frequently in the data, had many relationships with other categories, and immediate saturation and had propositions to the development of the theory.

**d) Theory generation:** The new theory of developing writing expertise was generated through digging of categories and concepts grounded in the data. The theory helps explain or better understand the process which the seven Thai EFL students develop themselves as writers.

**e) Memos:** During the data collection and analysis, the researcher produced notes to detail and discuss aspects of the data and the coded categories. This allowed the researcher to reflect on the research, ask further questions, seek new ideas for data, focus on new areas and others.

### **3.5 Strengths and Limitations of Grounded Theory**

Grounded theory approach has been adopted by researchers in different disciplines for investigations of many topics (Brand & Anderson, 1999) such as in sciences and humanities. There are a number of strengths of grounded theory. First, it provides rigorous, systematic and specific procedures (such as coding and memo writing) that help guarantee the development of theory that starts with and remains close to as well as fits the qualitative data that are being collected. The theory also allows researchers to make their analysis traceable whereby he/she can easily check, refine and develop their ideas, insights and intuitions about their findings as the data are collected. As the theory proposes a rigorous process, reliability and validity of the

study increase. Besides, this design requires experienced and open-minded researchers.

Though grounded theory is favoured by numerous qualitative researchers, it also carries few limitations. First, the application of the theory in terms of its process and coding restricts an interpretive approach in data analysis and is time consuming. Moreover, grounded theory researchers must be able to think abstractly, flexible and open to helpful criticism. This includes the ability to incorporate their existing knowledge with the new information derived from the data collected in the study. In addition, researchers of grounded theory often face challenges of how to define their concepts along with new theories that have been generated. Brand and Anderson (1999) indicate that most grounded theory works stop before creating rich and conceptual understanding of specific live human experiences because hypotheses can be developed and later tested.

Upon realization of all these limitations in the application of grounded theory, the researcher of the current study managed her time wisely and systematically especially during data collection and analysis as well as she was fully dedicated to the work process. Also, the researcher considers herself critical enough to analyse situations and sensitive enough towards and actions of the target respondents which necessary for a grounded theorist (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). As the current study attempted to derive a new theory in order to give holistic descriptions of how Thai EFL undergraduate students develop their English writing skills both in and outside classroom contexts, a careful analysis of teaching and learning dynamics using grounded theory was the most suitable choice for a study not done through a set of predetermined hypotheses.

### **3.6 Rationale for Using Grounded Theory**

Before justifying the selection of grounded theory in the present study, it is important to present here the research question with its sub-questions which have guided the current exploration. They are:

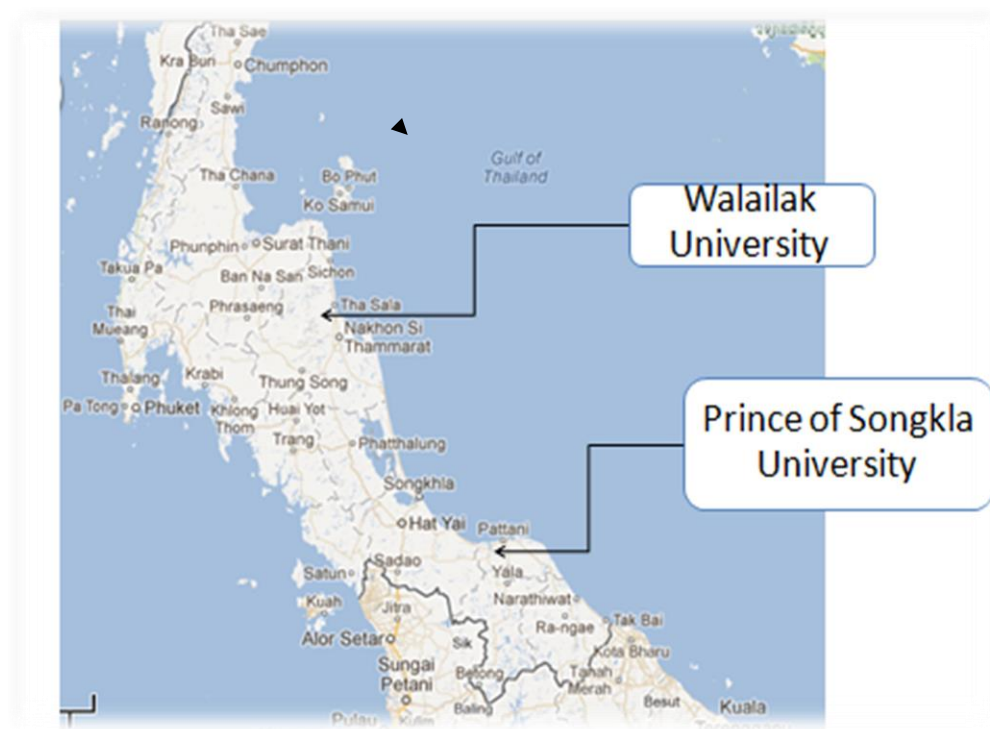
1. How do the seven Thai EFL English majors develop their writing skills?
  - a. What inspire them to write in English?
  - b. How does the context they live in influence their writing development?
  - c. How does formal instruction in Thai contexts influence their development of writing expertise?
  - d. How do these Thai EFL English majors manage to complete their writing task?
  - e. What are the outcomes of this development process?

The study has considered a holistic stance of understanding the overall context of teaching and learning to write in the Thai EFL classrooms, specifically, the role of ESL teachers, the teaching methodologies used, the role of students, the writing process and strategies used to accomplish EFL writing tasks of the three Thai English majors at Walailuk University, Nakhorn Si Thammarat Thailand, and four Thai English majors at Prince of Songkla University, Pattani, Thailand.

The researcher employed the grounded theory design in data collection and analysis because it was suitable for the researcher to explore the process of how the seven Thai EFL English majors develop as writers in their context from their own perspectives (Creswell, 2008). The researcher therefore, considers grounded theory in qualitative approach is most suitable for this study. In addition, the literature

reviewed related to this research indicates that several studies employed other designs in qualitative approach to discern students' cognitive and interactional behaviours when writing in English such as Raimes (1985), Zamel (1983), and Tapinta (2006) but they could not explain the multidimensional process of learning writing skills. Therefore, the application of a grounded theory design in deriving a new theory of how EFL students develop their writing skills in this study was conducted to explain the process better than just focus on one aspect of writing process done in the past studies. The systematic design of grounded theory was employed in data collection and analysis in order to be able to explain each phenomenon in questions clearly step by step with the presentation of a coding paradigm mentioned earlier in the previous section. This qualitative study eventually enables the researcher to produce a holistic description of understanding the multidimensional process of learning to write English as a foreign language by Thai learners. In other words, the design allowed the researcher to explore factors which instigated their need to learn writing skills, teacher factor, learner factor, the teaching-learning process, students' cognitive, social behaviours as well as structural and contextual conditions which influence the way they learn rather than merely examining its cause and effect in a linear pattern.

### 3.7 Research Settings



*Figure 3.3: Location of Research Sites*

The researcher selected two famous universities in the south of Thailand: Walailak University (WU), Nakhorn Si Thammarat and Prince of Songkla University (PSU), Pattani Campus, Thailand (see Figure 3.3) as the settings of this study. The selection was based on the idea that in other regions of the country, students have greater exposure to the English speaking environment where they can meet and contact people from other countries much more often than students who live in the south. Therefore, this study aims to explain the learning behaviours during writing process of students who have little exposure to English language use outside classroom environment in order to find appropriate ways to improve their English language proficiency especially their writing skills.



### **3.7.1 General Background of the English Programme at Walailak University, Nakhorn Si Thammarat, Thailand**

The English language department at Walailak University, Nakhorn Si Thammarat is under the supervision of Faculty of Liberal Arts. The English programme for undergraduates offers numerous English language courses throughout four years of study. A number of English writing courses are included under the categories of core courses and elective courses. The students are given freedom to choose the minimum of fifteen courses out of the total thirty core courses offered. Among these, there are five writing courses: writing strategies, college composition, introduction to creative writing, introduction to professional writing and writing research proposal. However, in the core elective category, only two writing courses are offered out of the total thirty courses namely: topics in writing and advanced composition. Students are required to enroll in at least twelve courses in the core elective category.

From the design of the English curriculum for English majors mentioned above, we can infer that the students might scatter in registering the courses differently. Probably, some want to study few writing courses while some want to do more on other skills. The researcher has also considered this when analyzing data. This allows the researcher to have a more holistic explanation of language learning context of these particular participants.

### **3.7.2 General Background of the English Programme at Prince of Songkla University, Pattani Campus, Thailand**

The Department of English at Prince of Songkla University, Pattani Campus requires that undergraduate English majors enroll in the two English writing classes of all the core courses offered. These two courses are called “Paragraph Writing” and

“Composition Writing.” Besides, students are also given opportunities to choose other two available writing courses in the core elective category which are: “Writing Argumentative Essay” and “Academic Writing.” However, as writing is not an easy skill to learn especially writing in a foreign language, it is more likely that most students would not take writing as their core electives. In other words, students in this programme would only take two writing courses if they are not interested to study additional writing courses as their elective core courses.

### **3.7.3 Gaining Entry and Seeking Participants**

The procedures for gaining entry and seeking participants at the two universities differed in terms of the way the researcher approached them. This was because they did not share the same academic calendar. There are two semesters in each academic year at PSU while WU offers three semesters in its calendar. This caused the lecture and vacation periods of the universities differed greatly. For instance, at the beginning of data collection, it was a semester vacation at WU and a lecture period at PSU. Therefore, the researcher began her first data collection at PSU prior to the other university.

In order to get access to the setting, the researcher had the following approval process. First, the researcher met an English writing instructor at PSU to discuss the data collection plan and to gain her support. The researcher also asked about the current English writing courses offered. There were two writing courses being taught at the time: “Paragraph Writing” and “Composition Writing.” Since the more advanced course is preferred to be selected for this study, then the PSU instructor suggested the “Composition Writing” course.

After the agreement had been made between the researcher and the writing instructor at PSU, the researcher sent a letter asking for permission to get access to the English department for the data collection to the dean, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. When the permission was granted, the researcher had a meeting with the writing instructor who voluntarily chose the best English students in a writing class to participate in the study. Subsequently, the informed consent form (see Appendix A, page 270) was given to the instructor and four students to warrant the ethical consideration of the study. Apart from the informed consent form, the participants were also assured of their identities and privacy protection to be kept at the highest confidentiality. They were told that the data obtained as a result of their participation will only be used for the purpose of this study. They had the right to choose whether to participate or withdraw at any time during the data collection.

As for gaining access to WU began during its semester break, the researcher visited the university with a friend who was doing her PhD at the site. The researcher and her friend discussed with one teacher in the English Department who was initially expected to be a gatekeeper for the researcher. It was suggested that a letter of permission be sent directly to the Dean of Faculty of Liberal Arts who could later appoint a key person to help the researcher with her data collection. About a week later, an English lecturer from the English Department contacted the researcher to ask for the research plan, objectives, and methods of data collection. The researcher then made more clarification to the lecturer as requested. In her explanation via email, the researcher briefly explained that this study will use five methods of data collection namely; observation, interview, audio recording while trying to accomplish a writing task, answering questions on questionnaire, and their documentary data. When she understood that the data collection of this research

needed to use students in a writing class, she immediately sent the list of writing courses to be offered in the next coming semester to the researcher. Those courses included “Writing Strategies, Topics in Writing, and Introduction to Professional Writing.” The instructor who was in charge of each of these writing classes was also indicated so that the researcher could contact them whenever it is needed.

Considering the main purpose of the current study is to explore the process of developing writing expertise in Thai EFL students, the participants must be those who had had some writing experience in the past and could produce an acceptable piece of writing. By reviewing all the three courses at WU, a selection of the most suitable for the current research was made. Then, the key lecturer was required to send a contact address of all writing instructors so that their course syllabus will be made available. After having all the addresses of writing instructors, a request was made that the course syllabus of their writing class be sent to the researcher. Once the syllabi were read and analysed carefully. From the reading, the researcher thought that “Writing Strategies” is a very basic course while the other two are more advanced. The “Introduction to Professional Writing” was a course that introduced students to use writing as a means of communication. The students in this class had to write professional letters, short articles, and office memo writing, whereas the “Topics in Writing” was meant to encourage students’ independent learning on producing a piece of writing that taking into account the ideas of genre and audience. The class emphasized more on the process of writing throughout the semester and not so much on the end product. Students were required to report their writing progress four times during the semester in the form of class presentation. As a result, the researcher chose and utilized “Topics in Writing” course in her data collection as it matched the objectives of her current study.

### **3.8 Theoretical Sampling of Research Participants**

In qualitative research, sampling is not executed in order to achieve a representation of a population (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In particular, the purpose of sampling in grounded theory is to increase the variability of the participants in an effort to develop the categories more fully and to achieve saturation. This kind of sampling begins after concepts and categories start to emerge from the data and that the researcher feels they should be explored to the greatest extent possible (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). This study applied a theoretical sampling after engaging in data coding from the PSU participants, properties and dimensional variations were added through additional data collection at WU in order to increase differences. The researcher did the sampling along the lines of properties and dimensions in varying conditions (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). For instance, when the researcher first developed a category of “instructional practices” based on the PSU students’ data, she strived for more data related to it from WU participants to add variations in terms of types of learning conditions, teacher’s role, writing approaches, degree of students’ autonomy, and number of writing courses given. Another variation is that the instructional approaches used by writing teacher of students at each setting which had great impacts on their students’ learning strategies and activities. This kind of sampling was done until the categories were fully developed and no new information can be added, and thus saturation was achieved.

### **3.9 Selection of Participants**

Since this study focused on the process of writing development of Thai students, the participants must be those who are involved in the process of writing as asserted by Creswell (1998). Because teaching of writing is often ignored in most schools in Thailand as it is the most difficult skill to teach and learn as mentioned in the earlier

section, the skill is taught to English majors only. Therefore, the researcher decided to use university students who were majoring in English as the participants of this study as they had to enroll in writing classes. Thus, seven English majors who were enrolling in a writing class at WU and PSU were selected through the use of purposeful sampling. These participants shared common characteristics in many ways. First, they had at least ten years of English language learning experience. Second, they all pursued the same goal of learning the language which is to be able to communicate effectively. Third, they live in a non-speaking English environment. Of these, four students were taking the “Composition Writing” course at PSU; and the other three were taking the “Topics in Writing” course at WU. The course at PSU was taught during the second semester (November – March) of academic year 2011/2012 at the university. The course at WU was taught in a short semester from January-March, 2012. As teaching and learning thus is a dual and shared process, there is no teaching without students and no learning without interacting with others (teachers, peers, materials, texts, and environment). To gain better understanding on dynamic interactions between the students and their writing instructor in the process of learning, one writing instructor of the students from each site was invited to participate in the study. By doing so, it provided the researcher with data on the features of contextual variation.

### **3.10 Data Sources**

Qualitative data usually derived from observations, interviews, field notes, questionnaires, transcripts, and documents (McDonough & McDonough, 1997). This study utilized five data collection methods: classroom observation, interviews, writing sample and think-aloud protocols, and documentary data such as collecting students’ writing samples, course syllabus, supplementary exercises, and the

textbook. The different data collection methods were used to strengthen the study in terms of data triangulation (Creswell, 2008). The observations provided insights for the classroom context, the teaching instruction, and the students' engagement in activities and interaction with peers and with the teacher. Formal interviews which were semi-structured served as a tool to explore the students' response and perception to this writing class particularly the activities they engaged and as a cross checking for observation and data interpretation. Artifacts such as students' writing exercises served as evidence of the students' writing development, while the textbook, course syllabus and supplementary exercises provided a background of the context of this writing class. The other archival research data, such as the researcher's journals and memos helped to document and guide her data collection and analysis process.

### **3.10.1 Classroom Observation and Field Notes**

According to Creswell (2008, p. 221), "observation is the process of gathering firsthand information about people and places in a research site." Observation allowed the researcher to record participants' actual behaviours in their real settings. The researcher took the role of a non-participant observer by observing and recording the writing classroom dynamics from the back of the classroom of each setting. The reason for choosing this role was that the researcher did not want to take part in any process as the emphasis was on understanding the natural environment without altering or manipulating it as a result of the researcher's presence. However, at certain point during the observations, she was asked to participate in the class when appropriate. For example, she changed her role to a participant observer when she was asked to explain the meaning of "in spite of" for the class at PSU. The researcher could grasp additional understanding of students'

need and problems in writing through such participation. Thus, interactional processes of how students interact with peers, teachers or the researcher in relation to writing or their emotional reactions towards the class were recorded. To illustrate this, Gay and Airasian (2003) explain that descriptive field notes describe what the researcher sees or hears such as the classroom environment, instructor, students, teaching and learning process (emic data), whereas reflective field notes provided the researcher's personal thought and reactions about what she was experiencing (etic data).

### **3.10.2 Interview and Open-ended Questions on Questionnaire**

To obtain rich data to establish a new theory that describe a setting or explain a phenomenon, interviews with students and their writer instructors were chosen as one source of data collection methods (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). The implementation of the interviews was intended to bring forth vivid descriptions of specific experiences from the participants by paying attention to what and how the participants said pertaining to the research questions (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). In other words, through the interviews, the researcher could seek to understand the process of learning to write of Thai English majors in their own context from both students and teachers' own voice (Creswell, 2008).

Since the researcher wanted to elicit a thick description of a general and specific contextual structure in the participants' process of writing development, she used specific words to probe them in the interview questions such as "describe, how, what" rather than simply asking for a cause and effect relationship (see Appendices B & C, pages 272-273).

The interview questions were made into two different versions: one was for student respondents and the other was for the writing instructor respondents. The questions



for teachers elicited information about their teaching experience, challenges, strengths and weaknesses, teaching writing approaches, strategies, methods and evaluation of students' writing performance. The interview questions for students on the other hand, elicited students' learning experience in English writing, their perception about the way they were taught English and how they are going to use writing skills after they graduate.

The open-ended questionnaire was also used in order to elicit more information regarding the participants' English language learning and writing experience which was difficult to obtain through interviews. Moreover, using the questionnaire allowed them to have more time to reflect and think about the questions carefully when compared to interviews resulting in getting more detailed data. There are two types of questions in the questionnaire: closed-ended and open-ended response (see Appendix D, page 274). The closed-ended response helped the researcher to get information which can support data and information related to the students' background experience in writing and its learning context. The open-ended responses on the other hand, allowed the researcher to better understand reasons for the closed-ended responses and identify personal comments and points of view that participants might have beyond the responses to the closed-ended questions (Creswell, 2008; McDonough & McDonough, 1997). In addition, the open-ended questionnaire allowed them to voice out their current writing experience as well as their beliefs about writing.

There were two parts in the questionnaire. The first part elicited respondents' factual questions: personal backgrounds, years of studying English, their reading habits on materials in English. The second part elicited respondents' English writing

experience, problems encountered when writing in English, their opinion on what is a good writing and their writing process.

### **3.10.3 Students' Writing Samples and Their Think-aloud Protocols**

One of the purposes of this study is to understand EFL Thai English majors' writing behaviours in their real settings as they write. These behaviours include their cognitive activities and thinking process at the time of their writing. One way to get to know the processes in their minds as they begin to write to the end is by using an introspective method, a technique used to get learners reveal their thought process while or shortly after performing language tasks by saying what they are thinking out loud. The information obtained from this verbal report is called think-aloud protocols. Verbal reports are especially useful for analyzing classroom behaviours or in combination with classroom observation in order to support the researcher's interpretation of data from different sources (McDonough & McDonough, 1997). Though many researchers prefer to use retrospective method because it is less intrusive, the data gained is considered incomplete as not all information involved in performing task enters short term memory (Raimes, 1985). Plus, the favour of using introspective over the other underlines the thinking that when asked, participants tend to satisfy the researcher which might lead to deviation from the real performance. There is also no evidence that think-aloud protocols change the course or the structure of the participants' task being studied (Ericsson & Simon, 1980). However, an introspective method is not always suitable to discern students' cognitive process while performing a task especially when they have to spend much time to accomplish the same task. Due to the differences in contextual conditions of the two settings used in this study, both introspection and retrospection methods were employed each depending on the feasibility in its implementation at each

setting. The decision however, did not affect the researcher in gaining access to rich data regarding the participants' thinking behaviours including strategies used to overcome their writing task. Besides, the threat to validity of think-aloud data was minimized because the researcher targeted the information that well described the participants' cognitive activities when they engaged in writing such as those that they did while planning, writing, and revising. The information about time for each cognitive activity and frequency of pauses in the introspective data was also disregarded as the time of composing by students at PSU was much shorter than those from WU. By doing this, it can minimize the imbalance of composing time they spent.

Initially, it was planned that students' writing samples to be used as data could be one of the participants' writing assignments of the courses being studied. However, the nature of courses, instructors' preferences, teaching techniques and course assignments at each setting differed considerably. As a result, the type and collection of writing samples from the participants at one university differed from the other. At PSU, the participants were enrolling in a "Composition Writing" course with its focus was not so much on essay writing but on how to develop a writing piece beginning from sentences to paragraph with little weight on essay writing. As a result, there was only one essay writing assignment given during the last week before the final examination. The collection of writing sample at the site was two weeks after the mid semester exam. This means that they were in week ten of fifteen. The students had not been asked to write an essay for the course except that some practices on how to write a paragraph. The participants therefore were requested to write an essay on any topic of their own interest. This essay was used as a writing sample of each participant at PSU. They were also recording their verbal report

while composing the essays. Once the participants completed writing the assignment, they submitted both their written texts and verbal reports to the researcher.

Though the writing samples from WU participants were from the topics of their own interest as in the case of PSU's, they were part of the course assignment. Students were asked to produce a piece of writing which they called "masterpiece" by incorporating writing skills and strategies in the writing process throughout the semester. The long process of writing by this group made the collection of their verbal report while composing the whole text impossible. Therefore, the researcher asked the WU participants to provide retrospective report after they have completed the masterpiece. The researcher was aware that recording their thought at certain point of time during writing production could not provide sufficient data for her to see the whole cognitive process of these participants. Nevertheless, they were told to record their thoughts while doing part of writing activities. Only one participant submitted the introspective think-aloud while the other two did not. However, all the participants described their cognitive engagement while writing through retrospective report shortly after the submission of masterpiece to their instructors.

#### **3.10.4 Documentary Data**

In order to understand how these students develop their writing skills in a larger context as well as throughout the semester of taking the course, it is necessary for the researcher to examine the English curriculum, course syllabus, a text book, writing assignments with teacher's feedback in order to support other types of data collected in the study. This allowed the researcher to see fully a broader structure of their learning contexts and how they influenced the learning activities not just from the

beginning of the semester but from the first year when they enrolled as English majors.

The documentary data collected from PSU participants included the undergraduate English curriculum, the course syllabus, students' assignments with the instructor's feedback, and the textbook used for the course. However, the additional documents collected from WU participants were course syllabus, students' drafts, and writing notes.

Though triangulation was achieved through collection of these documentary data, each type of such data also served particular purposes for the study. The curricula provided information related to the depth of the writing contents introduced to the students, their past writing experience and trends in future writing skill development. The course syllabus enabled the researcher to gain information related to the instructional practices at each setting which included writing goals, teaching approaches and strategies, course contents and writing evaluation. The students' drafts offered information on the steps towards writing development throughout the course. The text book was used to analysed whether it matched with the course curriculum and the nature of the course. In addition, it gave additional information on a dimensional variation in terms of the depth of the course. Finally, the teacher's feedback shown on the returned assignments provided information on types of feedback received by the students. All these documents served as supplementary data to other methods of collection namely; class observation, interview, questionnaire, writing samples, think-aloud protocols to discern the participants' learning behaviours in order to excel in English writing.

### **3.11 Data Collection Procedures**

Since the current study adopts the qualitative design which means that the researcher is the instrument. The interview questions and observation areas were developed by the researcher based on concepts that derived from literature and the researcher's own experiences as asserted by Strauss and Corbin, (1998) about how she, as a Thai went through the process of writing development. Therefore, the researcher considered that it was not necessary for the researcher to pilot test the instrument as what normally is in quantitative research. This is clearly evident in past grounded theory research studies such as those that done by Grosskopf (2009), Yuknis (2010), and Spencer (2012). Grosskopf (2009) only used interview as a means to collect data in his grounded theory study to explore the pre-service teachers' learning motivation. The interview questions were given to a qualitative research consultant and an experienced qualitative researcher to review but were not piloted elsewhere. Yuknis (2010) on the other hand, used three data collection methods: writing sample, interviews with teachers and students, and class observation, to develop a grounded theory of writing development of deaf children. Yuknis (2010) too, did not pilot her instruments. In the same vein, Spencer (2012) did not pilot his instruments as he suggested that grounded theory researchers begins with somewhat a blank state because they heavily rely on their personal and professional knowledge related to the study. Though the interview questions and observation areas were not piloted by the researcher, they were reviewed by two of her colleagues who had experience in teaching English writing to Thai EFL learners.

The data collection of this study was simultaneously conducted with data analysis and it continued until a new theory derived from the data is saturated. The data

collection from the participants at PSU was conducted before those of WU. What follows are procedures of data collection employed in this study.

After securing access, the researcher visited both universities and met with writing teachers to get schedules of all the needed activities for the data collection. The researcher planned that each data collection method: observation, interview and open-ended questionnaire, think-aloud, was scheduled appropriately at each setting.

### 3.11.1 Data Collection at Prince of Songkla University

To begin her data collection at PSU, the researcher went to visit the university to get familiarity with the setting and with the gatekeeper. In this case, the gatekeeper was the writing instructor who helped the researcher to arrange all the dates of data collection. The gatekeeper was informed that the researcher wanted to observe the most advanced writing course offered in the semester. The researcher was given one group of “Composition Writing” course for observation purpose on Tuesday, January 10, 2012 from 13:00 – 15: 00 pm. On the observation day, she entered the classroom before its scheduled time to observe and get a general sense of the classroom environment before paying attention fully on how the class started, how students and their teachers entered the classroom. The researcher selected a seat at the back of the classroom as a non-participant observer to avoid being obtrusive to the class as shown in Table 3.1 below.

*Table 3.1: Organization of PSU Classroom*

Chalk Board									
Computer Table									
T									
S	S	S	S		S	S	S	S	
S	S	S	S		S	S	S	S	
	S	S			S	S	S	S	
				O					

T= teacher, S = student, O = observer

During the observation, the researcher wrote descriptive notes on physical setting of the classrooms, classroom activities, teaching approach, methods, writing activities, teachers' roles, student' roles, interactions between teacher and students, and students with students on the observation form (see Appendix F, page 278). Reflective field notes were also obtained from the researcher's own reflections or personal reactions of the setting. The observation lasted two hours which was as long as the class time for each session. At the end of the class, the researcher politely thanked the instructor and the students. They were told about the purpose of the data recorded which will be made available to those who are interested upon completion of the study.

After the observation, the researcher, the course instructor and the four volunteered students met briefly to talk about the researcher's next plan. The discussion included making a decision on schedules of other types of data collection, namely: interviews, writing samples and think-aloud protocols and the submission of the required documentary data. All agreed to have a writing test, interview and answer the questionnaire after a week from the observation day which was at 2:30 pm. on Wednesday, January 18, 2012 (see Table 3.2).

*Table 3.2: Sequence of Data Collection at Prince of Songkla University*

No.	Data Collection Sources	Year 2012	
1.	Class observation	Jan 10	
2.	Interviews (4 students)	Jan 18	
3.	Open-ended questionnaire	Jan 18	
4.	Interview (1 instructor)	Jan 18	
5.	Writing samples	Jan 18	
6.	Think -aloud protocols	Jan 18	
7.	Students' assignments, course syllabus & textbook		Jan 20

To familiarise students with think-aloud activity, each participant was trained on how to give verbal reports on their thinking process while performing a writing task



shortly after the discussion. Prior to the training, they were assured of privacy protection for the data obtained. This helped them to feel at ease to speak out loud. the researcher made sure that they sit in a quiet environment so that they could completely focus on the task. Later, an instruction was given which written “Please write on how you prepare for an examination, and try to say everything that goes to your mind out loud.” McDonough and McDonough (1997) proposed that the training of think-aloud should be simple and irrelevant to the task being studied as the researcher should not prepare them what to say in the actual think-aloud report. During the training, the researcher prompted when the subject stopped talking by saying “keep on talking.” Their verbal reports were audio-taped for later checking whether they were performed properly.

On the day of collecting writing samples along with their verbal reports and interviews, the researcher first informed each participant the general purpose of the study, the amount of time to complete all the activities, the use of results after the interview as well as the availability of the summary of the study when the researcher completes the project. Then, they were asked to choose a topic of their interest and write an essay on it. The four participants were then placed in a room with partitions and were given two hours to write an essay on their own topic of interest. Each student was given a digital voice recorder and was asked to think-aloud while writing from the beginning to the end. Their think-aloud verbal reports were later transcribed for analysis.

Subsequently, the student who finished their writing early was asked to see the researcher for the interview first as well as to complete the open-ended questionnaire. The type of interview was on one to one basis using the interview questions. Both questions and responses from the participants were audio-taped

using an audiotape device. Occasionally, brief notes on something which could not be audio recorded such as physical expressions and emotions were also taken during the interview to remind the researcher later during data analysis. Each student participant was interviewed individually right after the submission of the essay. Each interview lasted from 7-15 minutes and the questionnaire was also completed. Two days later the researcher collected all documentary data necessary for her analysis.

According to the planned schedule, the PSU instructor had to be interviewed on the same day of her students' interview. However, she was very busy then with two faculty meetings and thus was not convenient to be interviewed. She then suggested that the researcher gave her the interview questions and she wanted to audio record her response after the meeting and send the file to the researcher immediately by post. The researcher agreed and gave her the questions and the researcher received a CD from the instructor by post a day later. Her responses were then transcribed and to ensure that the interview process is verified, the researcher contacted the instructor for further clarifications on several points during transcription and data analysis. For example, she was asked to explain more about her approach in teaching writing.

### **3.11.2 Data Collection at Walailak University**

Approximately two weeks after the data collection at PSU, it was the beginning of a new semester at WU when the course used for this study was offered. As stated previously, the researcher chose "Topics in Writing" course which began from January-March 2012. Prior to commencing of the course, the researcher and the course instructor interacted via emails for a number of times to decide the suitable date to match the researcher's need. When reviewing the course syllabus, it seemed that the course content taught in the second week would offer useful information pertaining to the class development on writing skills which serve the researcher's

objective. The researcher then informed the instructor on her schedule for the class observation on the second week of the course which was on Monday, January 20, 2012.

On the day of the observation, the researcher went to the classroom early as the class started from 08:00 – 10:00 am. It was the day when the students were asked to present their outline of what they were going to write for the semester. To ensure smooth observation and to gain a good rapport with the students, the researcher introduced herself to the class and informed the purpose of her presence before the class started. The researcher decided to sit at the back of the class and took a non-participant observer as she did as PSU. The class continued in the form of students' presentations individually five minutes each. After each student's presentation, the instructor gave feedback and comments. The researcher was also encouraged to help comment on the students' performance after each presentation. The researcher did as requested and the class appreciated what she had contributed. Some of them questioned her on what they were not clear about. The researcher then felt that she was being part of the class and so did they. This could be due to their warm smiles and questions being posed to the researcher about their presentation. Therefore, the researcher could create a friendly and relaxed environment whereby her presence to the class was completely unobtrusive. After one presentation, the researcher was invited to sit in the front as the instructor felt it was better and easier for the class to see and listen to feedback and comments given by the researcher about the students' presentation. At the end of the class, the researcher thanked the class for giving her the observation opportunity and for their cooperation.

The role of the researcher as an observer at two universities may be slightly different due to the amount of participation she has contributed to the class as requested by the

instructors. Thus, as a class moved on, she changed her role from a non-participant observer to a participant observer. However, the researcher did not alter the class natural climate because the students in both classes demonstrated satisfaction and welcoming remarks through further lively interactions and questions with her.

After the class, the instructor informed the researcher about the three volunteers who wanted to participate in this study. All the students were those who had performed well in previous English classes according to the instructor which also met the researcher's requirement. Then, the researcher explained to them about the general purpose of the study, the activities to be done which required their cooperation. A schedule of data collection at the site was made as shown in the table below.

*Table 3.3: Sequence of Data Collection at WU*

No.	Data Sources	Date of Collection				
		Year 2011	Year 2012			
1.	Course syllabus	Dec 20				
2.	Class observation		Jan 20			
3.	Interviews (3 students)		Jan 20			
5.	Open-ended questionnaire		Jan 24			
6.	Interview (1instructor)		Jan 24			
7.	Students' drafts & notes			Feb 24		
8	Writing samples				March 28	
9.	Retrospective reports					April 1

Subsequently, the three volunteers were asked to sign on the consent form. The interviews and an open-ended questionnaire were also administered after the observation (i.e. after the class). Before commencing the interview, the students were told that they could choose to answer in either Thai or English as to allow them to freely express their ideas and opinions. All preferred to be interviewed in English. Then the researcher interviewed each of them herself individually in a room opposite their writing class. All responses were audio taped and transcribed later for analysis.

Next, each student participant was given a questionnaire by the researcher. The instruction on how to answer the questions were briefly explained before students began to complete the questionnaire. Again, they were given options that they could write the answers in either Thai or English. Unfortunately, the students said that it was not convenient for them to complete it after the interview as they had to go to the next class. They were allowed to take the questionnaire with them and required to return it to the researcher by post within the same week. To minimize threat to validity of the data, the researcher followed up each of the three participants and inquired them how far they have completed the questionnaire. This allowed the researcher to listen to their views about the questions briefly and was assured that they were doing the task themselves. Nevertheless, the delay however, did not affect or alter the findings of the study as it mainly elicited their writing experience and opinions about writing. All the participants returned their questionnaires within one week. All the answers in the returned questionnaires were written in English.

Four days later, at 11:00 a.m. of January 24, the researcher went to interview the instructor in her office as scheduled. Prior to the interview session, the interview questions were given to the instructor for ten minutes in order for her to have a short glance at them and increase confidence when answering the questions. Their responses were audio taped and transcribed for later analysis.

The collection of writing samples at WU was different than that of PSU. Unlike the PSU course, the one at WU required that each student wrote on one topic throughout the semester. The students were given freedom to write on any topic and genre of their interest. They were required to report their writing progress through class presentations which were made three times in the semester. How these students experienced the writing course and learned to master writing skills in particular were

the key concerns of the present study. The researcher therefore, decided that the WU students' assignment should be used as writing samples for the study. The researcher was interested to see how they developed as EFL writers from the beginning to the end of their writing. The data obtained from the WU group provided better explanation on the learners' writing behaviours when compared to those of PSU. This was because writing process can be best explained when longer time is given to complete the task. At PSU, the students were assigned to write under the time constraint while the WU cases had one semester to complete just one assignment. This assignment was later used as a writing sample produced by each of the three participants at WU. It appeared that all of them chose to write a short story for the course. Therefore, the writing samples of WU participants were three short stories.

As stated previously, the data on the PSU participants' think-aloud were obtained while they were trying to complete their essays for about two hours. In contrast, the WU students were given one semester to write. Thus, it was not possible for the participants or the researcher to audio-tape their thought aloud from when they started to write to the end of the semester (three months). In this case the retrospective think-aloud was used with the WU participants instead of introspective method. To illustrate, the WU participants were asked to reveal their thought process when they engaged in accomplishing the written task either in written or verbal form at any points in time or shortly after they had completed the task. One of them submitted her verbal report in both forms while the other two only wrote and sent their retrospective report to the researcher via emails.

The researcher transcribed the verbal report of one WU student and combined all the written retrospective recalls of all the three. Subsequently, the reports were referred to as WU participants' think-aloud protocols and used for later analysis.

### **3.12 Data Analysis**

The analysis of data obtained from different collection methods: observation, interviews, writing sample and think-aloud protocols and documentary data was based on qualitative approach. The data generated through observation, such as the researcher's journal, field notes were analysed to discern the process of teaching and learning EFL writing among Thai English majors in Thailand. The audio recordings from the teachers and students' interview were transcribed and analysed by the researcher as a combination to the data collected through observation. Samples of the students' and teachers' interview scripts from both universities are provided in Appendices G, H, I, and J, pages 279-292, respectively.

The PSU students' verbal reports (think-aloud) while performing writing task were transcribed by the researcher in order to understand the participants' cognitive processes and strategies in the real situation (see Appendices K & L, pages 293-296). The researcher was aware of think-aloud researchers, Van Weijen et al. (2008, p. 143) who used Hayes and Flower's (1980) coding scheme as a model to analyse their L2 writers' think-aloud protocols. In their study, Van Weijen et al. (2008) used the coding scheme of eleven categories to analyse think-aloud protocols. These categories include reading and rereading the assignment, planning (self-instruction, goal setting, structuring), generating ideas, metacomments, pausing, formulating, rereading own text, evaluating own text, and revising own text. They divided each protocol into segments depending on their participants' writing behaviours. In the present study however, the researcher did not begin to analysis the protocols with these categories instead, they were analysed holistically depending on the emerging themes or categories grounded in the protocols to discern the participants' thought

process while performing the writing task. The analysis of both introspective and retrospective reports was used to support observation notes and interview transcripts.

Although the main focus of this study was on the process of learning to master writing skills and not so much on the finished product, the researcher needed to explore the extent to which their thinking process and learning behaviours influence the students' writing proficiency. Thus the writing samples should be marked to obtain the scores. Fortunately, the WU students' writing samples were part of their course assignment, thus they were rated by their instructor. However, the PSU students' writing samples were not included as part of their course assignment. As a result, they were read and assessed by two raters using the holistic scoring guide proposed by Bailey (1998) as shown in Appendix E, page 275. One of the rater was the researcher herself and the other was a native English speaker who holds a PhD and is an experienced English instructor at an undergraduate level in Thailand. The two raters discussed on how to mark the students' writing samples using the scoring guide. To ensure reliability, after marking the writing samples, the inter-rater reliability was calculated using SPSS software. The reliability coefficient was 0.73 which means that the reliability in the marking of the two raters was relatively high.

### **3.12.1 Data Analysis Procedures**

As this study used a grounded theory approach, the researcher carefully developed a new theory by following the three analysis phases suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1998): open coding, axial coding and selective coding. The major data sources regarding the participants' process of developing their writing skills included the observation notes, transcripts of their interviews, writing samples and introspective think-aloud protocols, and retrospective reports. Other documents (e.g. course



syllabus, textbook, class assignments, and drafts) were used as the supplementary sources.

To start the analysis, the researcher opened up, read and reread closely examined data at hand, separate them into discrete parts in order to name and develop concepts, and thus open coding, the first phase in the systematic design was generated. The constant comparative method was used to compare data from one or more sources with data in other sources in order to feature similarities and differences (Charmaz, 2006). In the cases where similar and related concepts or categories were found for instance, they were subsequently grouped in terms of their property and dimensions (see Table 3.4 & 3.5).

At the stage of axial coding, the second level of analysis in grounded theory, categories become more connected to their subcategories with their properties and dimensions. The researcher looked for answers to questions related to the students' development in English writing such as why or how come, where, when, how, and with what results, and in doing so uncover relationships among categories" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 127). At this point, the researcher grouped and placed the resulted categories from the open coding into the new grounded theory model of developing writing skills. The phase where the researcher selected "*the process of writing skill development*" as the central category of the study then related categories of causal conditions, contextual conditions, intervening conditions as well as consequences to form a clear structure of the development process (see Figures 3.4 and 3.5, pages 146-147).

In selective coding, the researcher integrated and refined the categories until saturation was achieved whereby properties, dimensions, and variations of the categories were well developed. Any additional data gathering and analysis will

yield little or no new information to the conceptualization (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 263). Then, the researcher explained and described the theory developing writing expertise in narratives which is the very characteristic of the last process in the grounded theory.

Some of the data obtained from the participants were analysed during the time of data collection. This was because analysing data while still in the process of collecting them can show the researcher information she had already obtained, the things she needed to inquire more, and points that were unclear. Upon having all the information, the researcher knew what to plan as her next steps.

The following is an excerpt from Miss Jasmine's interview:

“Teaching an English Major student, it's good to *bear with them* you know, *they can catch up following what we are trying to say*, try to convey if compare to normal or non-English major students ‘you know’ I can say that they can be what they dream for at least they try to strive, try their best *after we push them so hard*. Later at least somehow at the end of the day, *they know what we want, they know what we need*, they know *what we trying to do to them* and then they try to *put their heart, their best to follow what we have told them*.”

Table 3.4: Sample of Open Coding

Raw Data	Codes	Concepts	Category
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It's good to bear with them.</li> <li>• They can catch up following what we are trying to say.</li> <li>• They try their best after we push them so hard.</li> <li>• They know what we want, they know what we need, they know what we are trying to do with them.</li> <li>• Then they try to put their heart, their best to follow what we have told them</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Degree of tolerance, tough experience</li> <li>• Spoon feeding, dependent learning</li> <li>• Modeling, imitating the expert</li> <li>• Top-down learning, the teacher as a knowledge Provider who controls what to learn and what to do</li> <li>• Memorization and follow the authority</li> <li>• Critical thinking is not encourage, lack of learning independence</li> <li>• The emphasis was on right or wrong according to the teacher's ideas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deferring to authority</li> <li>• Power distance</li> <li>• Teacher-Centred Learning</li> <li>• Dependent VS autonomous learning</li> </ul>	Instructional Practices

Table 3.5: Coding of Composite Data

Raw data/ source	Open coding	concepts	categories
<b>Course Syllabi</b> <b>WU: Topics in writing</b> <b>Scoring criteria:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- depth &amp; breadth of the content</li> <li>- relevance of ideas</li> <li>- paraphrasing skills</li> <li>- analytical skills</li> <li>- creativity</li> <li>- integration of process, strategy &amp; grammar knowledge</li> <li>- organization</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- independent study, reading &amp; writing integration, consultation, presentation, submission with portfolio</li> <li>- Ss make use of their reading &amp; writing ability</li> <li>- sharing with other members of the class</li> <li>- lecture ---- guidelines for Ss to accomplish the task</li> <li>- cultivating independent &amp; autonomous learning</li> <li>- reader appeal/process evaluation criteria</li> <li>- integration of process &amp; linguistic &amp; strategy knowledge in students</li> <li>- advanced writing skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Process-oriented</li> <li>- self discovery</li> <li>- learning autonomy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- teaching approaches</li> <li>- learning behaviours</li> </ul>
<b>PSU: Composition writing</b> <b>Course objectives:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- write with minimal errors in grammar, spelling &amp; punctuations</li> <li>- deals with sentence writing/ grammar for 4 weeks</li> <li>- knowing about essay structure, writing thesis statement, outlining an essay, introduction &amp; conclusion, unity &amp; coherence --- week 5-14</li> <li>- writing an essay --- week 15-16</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- focus on structural elements/structure of compositions</li> <li>- mismatch between the course title &amp; the syllabus</li> <li>- the course focused more on reading rather than the act of writing itself</li> <li>- have students to produce an essay only in the last 2 weeks</li> <li>- basic writing skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- product-oriented</li> <li>- less creative &amp; analytical skills</li> <li>- Ss lack strategy knowledge</li> </ul>	
BA/MA (Teaching English), (IWT, L5) If I have experience, I have it all for the four skills ... but not specifically for writing. (IWT, L96-97)  PT's int. For my Bachelor degree, I did English Language & Literature (IPT, L 4) My master degree, I complete the Teaching English as a Second Language (IPT, L4-5)  As a Thai English teacher, we've to teach fundamental courses. So, I choose translation. (IWT, L17-18) I've good experience in teaching translation. (IWT, L13) After graduate I start teaching ... 26 years. (IWT, L22-23)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- educational background: MA graduates</li> <li>- Never had writing training experience</li> </ul>	<b>Conditions</b>  - The writing instructors	Contextual Conditions: Limited exposure
	- different in number of years of teaching experience:	Teaching experience	

<p>I've been teaching paragraph &amp; essay writing, ... college composition, .... topics in writing which's the most difficult. (IWT, L46-49) ... teach fundamental courses ... (IPT, L12) has 6 years of teaching English experience (IPT, L19-20)</p> <p>Teaching's the feeling that you can teach others to make them achieve something. That's our happiness as a teacher. (IWT, L43-44) My motivation is that I want to go abroad. (IWT, L7) I really want to be a T of English language. (IWT, L7) The most precious experience's my patience, yes my patience. (IWT, L24-25) The strength ... is my patience. I think I'm diligent to hard work. (IWT, L30) So it's difficult for me to teach others. .. but when I keep teaching, I feel enjoy, I see the value of teaching others by experiencing. (IWT, L39-42) by working with my students, I see that really I'll like to help them (IWT, L42) I'm patient &amp; kind to them... When they have problem about homework or assignment... they can negotiate ... I'm quite flexible... I want them to be happy to learn... after being happy, they can work better &amp; do something great (IWT, L72-76)</p> <p>My personality you know like friendly, easy going ... students 'd love to come and talk to me easily (IPT, L104-106)</p>	<p>26 &amp; 6 - experience in teaching basic English language courses and translation, teaching writing</p> <p>- have motivation, likeness - being committed to the job - happiness comes after helping others to achieve something - personality traits needed: communication skills, kind, flexible, negotiable - expertise developed through experiencing - appreciate teaching others and working with students, willing to help them</p> <p>- PT thinks that Ss're normally afraid of the teachers unless she behaves the way they like</p>	<p>Positive attitude, feeling, open-minded</p> <p>- Assumptions about teacher's characteristics - Teacher's perception</p>	<p>T's personality</p>
<p>We start to encourage them (Ss). (IWT, L29) When I teach, I try to see the weakness of my students first, what they like in terms of writing. You know they need some basic knowledge about writing sentences for example. (IWT, L31-32) start ... with writing sentences ... get them write anything they want, write about their experience</p>	<p>- establish writing knowledge before start classes - good introduction to writing activities - Providing sufficient practices - T used feedback as guidelines for the lesson - analyzing &amp; giving feedback to Ss' practice - T develops her teaching professional through</p>	<p>- Process-oriented: planning, drafting, sharing, giving feedback - T motivates Ss not forcing</p>	<p>Strategies/actions / interaction</p>

<p>(IWT, L34-35) Then I get their work back &amp; then analyse &amp; I can see their weaknesses, their strengths &amp; what I've to teach them. (IWT, L35-37) She try to teach me about learning strategy. She motivate me to practice myself to write... about writing strategy. (WS2, L31-32)</p> <p>I don't know the strategies that I use, you know I love them to understand, study on their own (IPT, L80-81) I try to make them into pairs, some work own, groups Sometime we discuss on facebook which I post something on the wall and they have to run and go in place (IPT, L77-79) I can facilitate them and then be frank with them not to be a commander or teacher (IPT, L81-82) I can say that they love this type of doing (IPT, L79-80)</p>	<p>her own experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- allow Ss to meet T regarding homework &amp; assignment</li> <li>- positive feeling leads to learning success</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Repeat the lesson before moving to next steps</li> <li>- practicing /keep on</li> <li>- speaking English leads to negative reactions &amp; communication breakdown</li> <li>- use facebook not for sharing and discussion about writing but for announcement or information</li> <li>- use Thai most of the time esp. in writing class</li> <li>- create friendly learning environ → increase Ss' motivation</li> <li>- T thinks she creates activities that meet Ss' likeness</li> <li>- forcing</li> <li>- T controls Ss , give the best, try hard</li> <li>- create variety of activities/interesting classes</li> <li>- use internet as a platform for class announcement or appointment</li> </ul>	
<p>I get them search from the Internet, find examples of expository writing, ... descriptive writing ... try to see the components, try to analyse ... (IWT, L51-53) I ask them to choose topic of their interest, they come in front of the class and present their plan. (IWT, L60-62) I'll put students who write the same style together ... then they share their knowledge. (IWT, L62-63)</p> <p>He teach with step, first you clear your brain, he likes not worry. (IPS2, L31) Most of the times, when I try to convey my message, I happen to speak Thai (IPT, L35-36) I try to use Thai as much as possible (IPT, L107) If I happen to see their eyes, their body gestures reveal</p>	<p>- focus on learning independence</p> <p>- search from the Internet about types of writing</p> <p>- Ss choose topic, share with class, write, present, rewrite, submit</p> <p>- evaluation</p> <p>- Only 1 assignment per sem.</p> <p>- T checks drafts, progress, set time</p> <p>- request that students clear their mind before writing</p> <p>- use Thai in writing class</p> <p>- T feels that Ss like her to use Thai in class, not enthusiastic</p> <p>- taught that she uses different teaching approaches</p> <p>- It seems that the T doesn't have good understanding</p>	<p>Intervening conditions</p> <p>Writing class (T)</p>

<p>That they cannot follow what I'm saying, so I easily quit speaking in English and I switch to speak Thai (IPT, L37-38)</p> <p>I think the way and the approach that I use for my students are variety (IPT, L43-44)</p> <p>... non-English major students ... try their best after we push them so hard ... later they know what we want, they know what we need, they know what we are trying to do to them, then they try to put their heart, their best to follow what we have told them (IPT, L51-55)</p> <p>Teaching an English major, it's good to bear with them, they can catch up following what we're trying to say, try to convey (IPT, L49-50)</p> <p>There are 3 criteria in writing: the contents, the language, and the organization ... (IPT, L134-135)</p> <p>From the 1<sup>st</sup> draft that I commented and then they rewrite. T checked them again and then the 3<sup>rd</sup> draft I evaluate them (IPT, L139-140)</p>	<p>about what it means by writing approaches.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- focus on content, language &amp; organization</li> <li>- push, bear with the Sts --- hardship, negative</li> </ul> <p>Implies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- forcing energy VS freedom in managing one's learning</li> <li>- 3 criteria for marking written work: content, language &amp; org</li> <li>- check 1<sup>st</sup> draft, 2<sup>nd</sup> draft, Ss rewrite then T evaluate the 3<sup>rd</sup> draft</li> </ul>	
<p>From their development... they are brave to participate, eager to share ideas, are not shy (IWT, L77-78)</p> <p>They really want to express what they think. Sometime, they just want to be different from their friends you know they just want to show their opinions (IWT, L79-81)</p> <p>For English majors, we rarely see that problem, but for general education, they don't like English (IWT, L81-82)</p> <p>I think my students love me for that and I can do whatever (IPT, L47-48)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- state of learning progress</li> <li>- empowering Ss to write is useful &amp; Ss enjoy the activities</li> <li>- differences in learning behaviours between English majors &amp; non-majors</li> </ul>	Writing class (Ss)
<p>It's hard to teach writing because even in Thai, Thai Ss rarely write in their daily lives. That's why they Don't know the importance of writing (IWT, L27-28)</p> <p>They tend to forget what they've learned...(IPT,L23)</p> <p>Some challenges 're the errors &amp; mistakes. (IPT, L26)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Thai Ss rarely write in daily life</li> <li>- the difficulty of teaching writing</li> <li>- Ss are not aware of English writing value</li> <li>- emphasize traditional way of teaching: errors, mistakes, lack</li> <li>- limited exposure to English</li> </ul>	Issues/problems
<p>English's important language in terms of writing, reading, listening &amp; speaking. (IWS2, L24-25)</p> <p>It's not hard to learn. We've to practice. (IWS2, L26)</p> <p>I think writing's the most difficult skill in English because we</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- important language</li> <li>- not hard, believe that it can be learned</li> <li>- writing's the most difficult skills to learn</li> </ul>	Attitudes towards English learning/writing

<p>need to know about part of speech, we need to learn much about grammar to write and make it clear. (IWS1, L3-4)</p> <p>I like to write more than talk. There are many courses that I register such as writing strategy, from sentence to paragraph, persuasive writing, and this' s my fourth. (IWS3, L39-40)</p> <p>My problem's about grammar. (IWS3, L53)</p> <p>It's not very difficult but It's not very easy ... if we've the skill we can do. (IPS1, L3)</p> <p>I think it's neither difficult nor easy... it has to be learned (IPS4, L56)</p> <p>I poor of writing because I lack of vocabularies and grammatical ... (IPS2, L26)</p> <p>For writing, I think it's less important than speaking. In daily life, I use speaking more than writing (IPS3, L40-41)</p> <p>I don't like to write. (IPS3, L44)</p> <p>Writing is about putting down your ideas in words on a piece of paper which is similar to speaking. (IPS4, L61-62)</p> <p>In fact, writing 's not a difficult skill, if we can speak, we can write. (IPS4, L63-64)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- need to know language functions, part of speech, grammar to write clearly</li> <li>- not hard to learn/need practice</li> <li>- prefer writing to talking ---register many writing courses</li> <li>- neutral stand</li> <li>- positive believe that it can be learned</li> <li>- the current course improves writing skills</li> <li>- less important than speaking in daily life,</li> <li>- don't like to write</li> <li>- when the time comes, you can write/force</li> <li>- assimilate writing with speaking skills</li> <li>- assumption/believe: can't write well if have limited vocab</li> </ul>	
<p>write resume, application (IWS1, L18)</p> <p>Maybe I want to work in magazines to write something in there such as to make a book ... (IWS2, L34-35)</p> <p>I want to own my masterpiece. (IWS3, L54)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- future job</li> <li>- write to magazine, books</li> </ul>	Benefits of writing
<p>I want to be a person who work about English ... we need to type in English ...to communicate ... (IPS1, l22-24)</p> <p>It's important to for interview to get a scholarship to study MA. (IPS2, L35)</p> <p>No, I'm a translator but I'll try to use it. (IPS3, L51)</p> <p>I'll continue my study in India, people use English there and writing skill is of course must be important. (IPS4, L67-68)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- international relations</li> <li>- asset to further study</li> <li>- won't use it, translator</li> </ul>	
<p>The way of teaching English of Thai or foreign teacher's different. (WS1, L11)</p> <p>Thai teachers only teach much about grammar and the foreign teacher is about listening &amp; speaking.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- differences between Thai &amp; foreign teachers</li> <li>- Thais: grammar, others: communication</li> <li>- prefer Thai to other to learn grammar</li> <li>- like/love all</li> </ul>	Attitudes towards English teachers



<p>(IWS1, L11-13) I prefer to study with Thai teachers because English grammar's not easy to understand. We can ask Thai teacher to explain more information in Thai. (IWS1, L14-15) Whatever they taught us is very important. So, I try to remember and obey them. (IWS3, L45-46)</p> <p>I like them to teach by English language but they don't. Some of them do but not all. As we are English majors, I need the teacher to talk in English &amp; it helps students. (IPS3, L45-47) She tries to emphasize the importance of writing. (IPS4, L65-66)</p>	<p>- stick to what they said/obey</p> <p>- like the current teacher, learn how to write - not satisfied because they don't speak English in class --- discrepancy between T &amp; S's perception about language use in class</p>	
<p>When I come here at my first year, I need to register the course writing strategy ... (IWS1, L6-7) I just begin here, first learn writing here (IWS3, L42) I begin from writing diary when I was in M4 or 5 ... but I think that time my writing was not true or always incorrect ... I think now my writing is better. (IPS1, L5-7) First experience that I write is in 1<sup>st</sup> year in English. (IPS2, L28) Just when my teacher asks me to write essay in Thai like writing for father's day. (IPS1, L10) I used to write Thai composition when the teacher asked. (IPS2, L30) Since I was a 1<sup>st</sup> year student, I used to write in German language. (IPS3, L42) I had a chance to participate in a student exchange in America ... We had to write journals &amp; reports. I didn't have much vocab knowledge then but when the time came I could produce. (IPS\$, L58-61)</p>	<p>- learn English writing at undergraduate level - at school, wrote short sentences - wrote diary - felt inadequate because lack of vocab &amp; grammar - began to write English in first year - had experience abroad, wrote weekly journals/ reports as part of class assignment - never wrote in L1 too except once a year if asked</p> <p>- had a chance to live abroad for a course in high school</p>	<p>Past English writing experience</p> <p>- The beginning of writing - factors caused writing - types of writing</p>
<p>I'll ask my foreign teacher or my friend on emails. (IWS1, L16) ... and they (Thai students) got the same problem. (IWS1, L17) I need to revise, review everything about the way of writing to make better on my writing skills. (IWS1, L18-20)</p> <p>When the teacher asks me to write, I think I don't have to spend much time to do because I know what I need to do first</p>	<p>- talk &amp; discuss about all things related to study - seek help from teachers, senior friends, foreign friends - don't ask friends/seniors because we share the same problem - managing one's own learning</p> <p>- Past: writing upon request by teacher - think less time spent is better</p>	<p>Learning strategies</p>

& do step by step so it saves my time. (IPS1, L14-15)			
<p>There's my teacher or my senior, sometimes my friends and my foreign friends ... (IWS3, L49)</p> <p>Last term I've an opportunity to meet with all of students from UPM Malaysia... It's good time for me for our students ... to practice our English skills. (IWS3, L50-52)</p> <p>My teachers in the high school but right now I rarely come to see my advisor or my lecturer. Sometime I consult with my seniors. (IPS1, L16-17)</p> <p>They check which is wrong, they will correct for me ... (IPS1, L20)</p> <p>I always give them to check my writing, grammar, anything not related to the topic they'll tell me. (IPS1, L18-19)</p> <p>Sometimes they give advice, correct my writing, and share many ideas. (IPS2, L34)</p> <p>I like to visit library &amp; learn by myself but sometimes I ask friends or senior students to advice me and sometimes teachers. (IPS3, L48-49)</p> <p>Through suggestions because in my homework, I like to do it by myself. (IPS3, L50)</p>	<p>- from teacher, seniors, friends</p> <p>- advice, correction, share ideas</p> <p>- in the past, high school teacher, now seniors occasionally teachers</p> <p>- ask teachers/ friends</p> <p>- library, self-dependent, senior, teacher</p> <p>- friends: grammar, ideas/form corrections</p> <p>- get advice from friends but not often</p> <p>- checking the products but not learning through interactions or meaning making</p>	<p>- language input</p> <p>- Types of feedback</p>	<p>Learning sources</p>
<p><b>Writing sample</b></p> <p>So, I always happy &amp; fun when I created this piece of work (TWS2, p22)</p> <p>To be a student in English major at Walailak University is my dream that already came true. To own my masterpiece is one of my dreams that I just completed. (TWS3, pi)</p> <p>... I love English and I want to continue to improve it next.</p> <p>... I hope to be English student in the school of foreign language. I have learned not only the registered courses also I have learned the real experience about how to live life in the post of a university student and how to control myself to learn without forcing. (TWS1, p30)</p>	<p>Enjoyment VS stressful</p> <p>- dream to achieve writing skills</p> <p>- the text's an achievement</p> <p>- have interest to develop the skills</p> <p>- freedom and learning independence lead to life-long learning</p>	<p>- motivation &amp; learn</p> <p>- achievement</p>	<p><b>Consequences</b></p> <p>Physical &amp; psychological achievement</p>

**\* The Meanings of Coded Symbols are presented in the next page**

**Meaning of Codes:**

IWT – interview with WU teacher

IWS – interview with WU student

TWS – written text by WU student

IPT – interview with PSU teacher

IPS – interview with PSU student

TPS – written text by PSU student

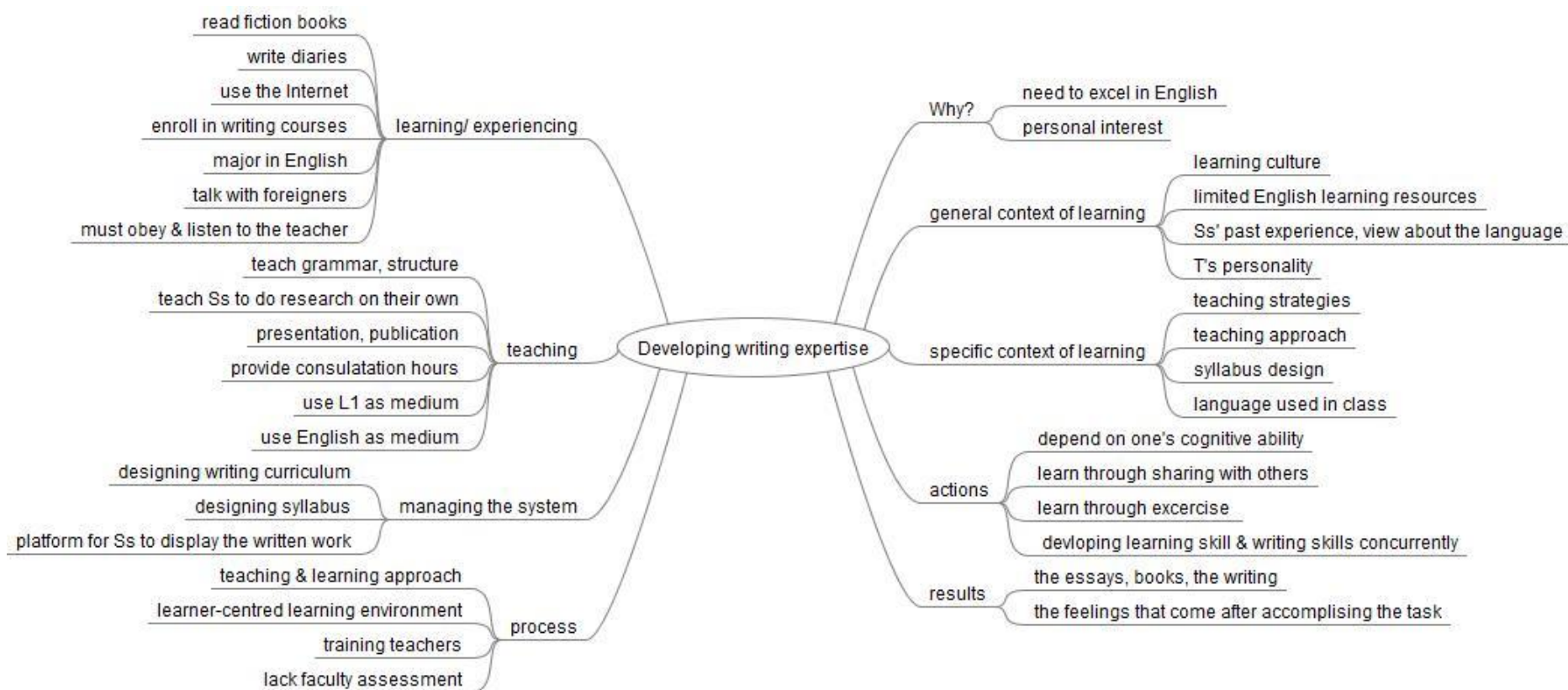


Figure 3.4: Sample of Open Coding Cross Data

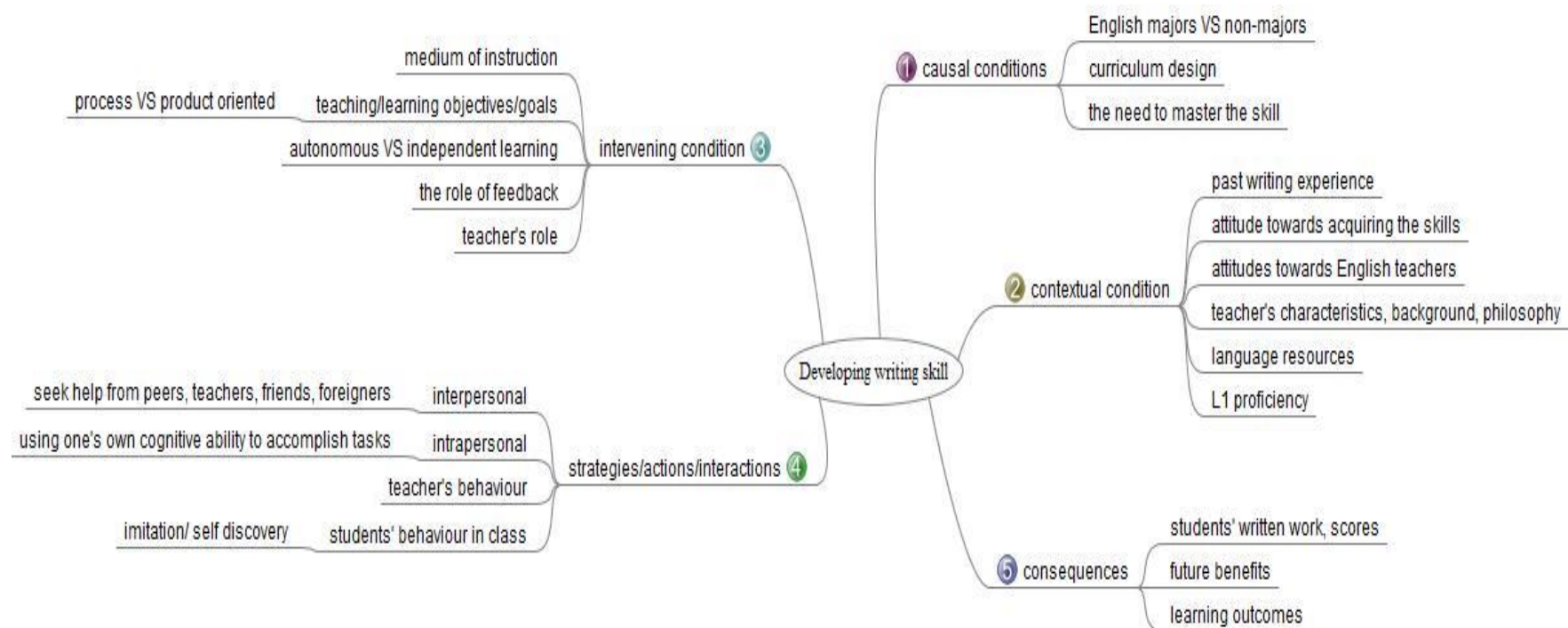


Figure 3.5: Sample of Axial Coding

### **3.12.2 Tools for Analysis**

Even though some modern qualitative researchers preferred software packages such as Atlas, Nvivo 8, or Nvivo 9 as tools in assisting them while coding their data, the researcher finds that such software packages are not practical for the present study due to two reasons. First, this study only used a small database “which is less than 500 pages of the transcripts or field notes” (Creswell, 2008, p. 246) which allowed the researcher to experience the data without interruption from the software. Second, the software is very costly and thus not accessible for everyone especially when additional trainings on how to use the software are required. Therefore, the researcher analysed her data manually using colour pens, paper, and the mind map software. By doing this, it benefited the researcher because she could spend plenty times to read, think, organize, group and relate what emerged from the data.

### **3.13 Ethical Considerations**

The researcher observed and engaged in several ethical practices as raised by Creswell (2008) throughout her study. These include respecting the rights of participants, honouring the research sites, and reporting the study fully and honestly. All the participants were informed about the purpose, aims of the study and how the results will be used before they decided to participate in the study. In addition, they were also assured of their identities and privacy protection to be kept at the highest confidentiality. Moreover, they were told that they have the rights to refuse to participate in the study or to withdraw themselves at any time. To gain access to the research sites as a mark of respect and honouring the authority, a formal letter was sent to both universities prior to the data collection. Finally, the researcher also respects those audiences who will read and use information from this study by

reporting what was found in the study fully and honestly without altering or changing the findings to satisfy anyone's predictions or interests.

### **3.14 Establishing Trustworthiness**

Several qualitative researchers have addressed the importance of evaluating the accuracy and credibility of the findings in qualitative studies (Creswell, 2008; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Lincoln and Guba (1985) referred to this activity as establishing trustworthiness. It is a way of explaining details of the analytical process with readers as well as showing them how interpretations of the findings are rigorous and appropriate. This process is similar to assessing validity and reliability in quantitative studies. In qualitative study however, these two terms are inappropriate to be employed (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Lincoln and Guba (1985) offer criteria to establish trustworthiness in qualitative research namely: credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and authenticity. Corbin and Strauss (2008) argued that these criteria lack sensitivity to qualitative researchers' state of art in terms of their creativity and sensitivity to the data being studied. Subsequently, Corbin and Strauss (2008) suggest ten criteria to assess the credibility of grounded theory studies. These criteria are fit, applicability, concepts, contextualization of concepts, logic, depth, variation, creativity, sensitivity, and evidence of memos. Likewise, this study also followed the Corbin and Strauss (2008)'s ten criteria to assess its credibility which is elaborated in Chapter Four (4.5).

### **3.15 Summary of the Chapter**

This chapter described research design of the present study which encompassed selection of research sites, gaining entry and seeking the participants, data collection methods and its procedures, and data analysis using a grounded theory approach. It also demonstrated how the data obtained from class observation, students' interview, teachers' interview, writing samples, think-aloud protocol, and documentary data were systematically analysed through open coding, axial coding and selective coding. Thus, concepts and categories which were grounded in the data allowed the researcher to gradually generate a new theory of developing writing expertise as the core concern of the present inquiry. Towards the end of the chapter, the researcher outlined criteria that were used to demonstrate accuracy and credibility of this study. Next chapter of this dissertation illustrates a resulting theory newly developed through the systematic approach in a grounded theory design.



## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**

The research design of this study has been discussed and explained in chapter three. This chapter presents results in relation to the research questions which have guided the present study:

1. How do the seven Thai EFL English majors develop their writing skills?
  - a. What inspire them to write in English?
  - b. How does the context they live in influence their writing development?
  - c. How does writing instruction in Thai contexts influence their development of writing expertise?
  - d. How do these Thai EFL English majors compose in English?
  - e. What are the outcomes of this development process?

The first part of the chapter presents findings in relation to the participants' demographic information. The concepts that derived from systematic analyses of writing class observation, questionnaire responses, interviews, writing samples, think-aloud protocols and course materials of seven English majors and interviews with two writing instructors (through the use of open and axial coding) eventually became organized into a process that I consider a grounded theory of developing writing expertise which will be described in detail in the rest of this chapter.

#### **4.1 Participants' Demographic Information**

Before a theory of Thai EFL students' writing skill development is explained, it is important for the researcher to present each participant' demographic information whose data were collected through an open-ended questionnaire, interviews, writing

samples and related documents. This study used three student participants from WU, and four from PSU. In addition, one teacher from each setting was also included as additional participants. In order to obtain the students' personal information, the researcher used an open-ended questionnaire as a tool by asking them to complete it after the interview. As for the instructors, the researcher did not use the questionnaire but interview instead. The followings are results in relation to the students' demographic information obtained from the questionnaire. However, results related to personal information of the instructors, the researcher obtained from their interviews. In the next section, demographic information of the WU and PSU participants will be presented.

#### **4.1.1 Student Participants**

The participants in this study consisted of seven English majors: three students were from WU and four from PSU. They were given pseudonyms which will be referred to throughout this study. Anny, Tida, Wafa enrolled in the "Topics in Writing" course at WU while Amana, Sofia, Ikram and Jack were in the "Composition Writing" course at PSU. This section presents details of each of these participants. It began with the demographic information of the WU participants then followed by that of the PSU.

##### **4.1.1.1 Demographic Information of WU Students**

The three students at WU (Anny, Tida and Wafa) were bilingual and thus were able to communicate in Thai and English. However, they differed in their years of study as English majors at the university. Anny was in her fourth year and in fact doing her last semester when she participated in the study. Tida and Wafa on the other hand, were in their third year. They had some writing experiences from the previous writing courses at the university before the onset of the data collection. Specifically,

Anny, Tida, and Wafa had enrolled in two, three and five writing courses; respectively before participating in this study. Each of their additional information is elaborated below.

### **Anny**

Anny's exposure to English has been about fifteen years. She was found to be an active learner of English as she used to write short essays about herself before enrolling in the English programme. This practice is not common among Thai students because writing was not taught at school and that writing is not an easy task. Her ambition to excel in English made her decide to join an English debate once. Apart from doing regular English class assignment, she managed to read English novels once a week.

### **Tida**

Like Anny, Tida has been exposed to English language learning for about fifteen years since from her school age. She is a joyful person and was positive towards English language learning. She enjoyed learning and reading English materials such as short stories, novels, news and articles during her free time. She had enrolled in three writing courses in the programme namely: "Writing Strategies, College Composition, and Writing in Business Context" before taking "Topics in Writing" course. She obtained very good grades from those courses and she also loves to write in English though she said "*I am not perfect.*" Being an active learner of English, she once worked as a tour guide for her friends at WU under the exchange programme from another country. Sometimes, she taught English to elementary school children who need helps about English. On campus, she became a tutor for those who need help with their English homework and assignments too. It is also interesting to find

that before pursuing her Bachelor's degree, Tida also had writing English composition and poem experiences. This is not common among Thai undergraduates. So, Tida is considered as one of the enthusiastic and ardent English learners in this context.

### **Wafa**

Unlike the first two participants at WU, Wafa has been studying English for about ten years. Though she never attended English classes outside school, she still loves to read English novels and stories in her free time. She never had writing experiences prior to her university life. However, her interest in acquiring English writing skills throughout her years of being an English major was clearly shown. She chose to enroll in various writing courses such as "Writing Strategies, From Sentence to Paragraph, Persuasive Writing, College Composition, and Writing in Business Context" in her previous semesters.

From the description on the WU participants' demographics mentioned above, we notice some similarities and differences among them (See Table 4.1).

*Table 4.1: Demographic Information of WU Participants*

No.	Questions/ items	Anny (WS1)	Tida (WS2)	Wafa (WS3)
	<b>Part I: Personal information</b>			
1.	number of languages speak	(2), Thai & English	(2), Thai & English	(2), Thai & English
2.	previous writing course enrolled in this programme & grade obtained	1) Writing Strategies, C+ 2) College Composition, B+ 3) Topics in Writing, A	1) Writing in Business Context, A 2) Writing Strategies, B+ 3) College Composition, B+	- Writing Strategies, 1 <sup>st</sup> yr - Persuasive Writing, 2 <sup>nd</sup> yr - From Sentence to Paragraph, 3 <sup>rd</sup> yr - College Composition, 3 <sup>rd</sup> yr - Writing in Business Context, 2 <sup>nd</sup> yr
3.	number of years of studying English	15	15	10
4.	attend special class outside school?	Participated in debate	Yes, tour guide for exchange students; teach English for elementary school students; tutoring English for friends	No
5.	like to read in English?	Yes	Yes	sometimes
6.	kind of books you like to read	Novels	Short stories, novels, news & articles	Novels, stories
7.	Frequency of reading on your own	once a week	in free time beside regular study	Sometimes when free or is persuaded
	<b>Part II: Writing experiences</b>			
8.	English writing experience before undergraduate level	Yes	Yes	No
9.	kind of texts you write	A short essay about herself	Poems & compositions	-
10.	difficulties encountered when writing In English	- The rule of grammar - the functions of words - the tone of writing in each genre	- must write carefully with grammatically correct, - professionalism - doesn't care about grammar when writing diary or chat - though not a perfect writer but loves writing	"Words in my brain are not variety, so my writing is simple & not variety"
11.	Perception of good writing	an article / essay	A good writing can serve the writer's purpose and make the readers enjoy reading the whole text.	A good writing gives benefit to audiences.

In terms of similarities, they were all bilingual speakers, active learners of English and liked to read non-fiction books in their free time. Though they all reported that they like to learn English, the levels of writing experience differed as manifested through their number of writing courses taken in the earlier semester at the university. Wafa who never had an experience in writing at school in fact had enrolled in five writing courses since she joined the English programme, the most among them. Tida and Anny on the other hand, sometimes wrote in English on their own during school lives but they only registered in three and two writing courses; respectively at WU before participating in this study. Despite the differences in number of writing courses taken, their writing skills and behaviours are not necessary different from one another. This situation will be further discussed in the **Strategy** section.

#### **4.1.1.2 Demographic Information of PSU Students**

There were four second year English majors from PSU who participated in this study. Their names were Amana, Sofia, Ikram, and Jack. They were more homogeneous as compared to WU participants. All of them had completed a writing course called “Paragraph Writing” in the previous semester. They were enrolling in “Composition Writing” class with Miss Jasmine during the data collection. The student participants’ demographic information elicited via the questionnaire is as follows.

##### **Amana**

Amana is a multilingual student who is able to communicate in three languages: Thai, English and Malay. She has been studying English for about fifteen years. Though she never attended special English course outside school, she was an A

student in her previous writing course. The English materials she liked to read were her textbooks. However, sometimes she enjoyed reading English magazines too. Before enrolling in the English programme, Amana had some writing experiences such as writing her own diary and short paragraphs. However, such writing was based on her interest and done without receiving guidance from any writing experts like teachers or any other peer tutorials. Thus, it was not certain whether her writing in the diary those days was understandable according to English writing convention.

### **Sofia**

Sofia is also a multilingual student who is fluent in three languages: Thai, English, Malay, and understands basic Arabic. Sofia started to learn English twelve years ago and she never attended special English class outside her normal classrooms. However, she performed well in her previous writing class though she was considered as an introvert kind of person, quite conservative, quiet, and calm. Therefore, she preferred to use solitary activities to improve her English language skills such as reading novels. In terms of writing skills, she said she only had experience in writing diaries.

### **Ikram**

Ikram is a very special student of the English programme at PSU. He can speak Thai, Malay, English, German, some Spanish and Arabic. This indicates that he loves learning languages and has been studying English for twelve years. Since he is a hard-working and diligent student, his academic performance reflects his attitudes and learning behaviours. For example, he obtained an “A” grade from the previous writing course. Though he had never joined any special English course after regular classes, he enjoyed reading all types of books every day. Besides, he could also

manage to practice his foreign languages with friends on the Internet often. His writing experience before university life was about producing essays.

### **Jack**

Among the participants at PSU group, Jack is the only student who is Thai and English bilingual. Similar to Ikram, Jack was also an A student in his previous writing class. He has been studying English for about fourteen years and he used to have extra classes with a teacher from his former school. He is talkative and social and likes to read but he could only read once a month in his free time. His exposure to English might be more practical when compared to other friends in the group. He had the opportunity to spend sometimes in an English speaking country (USA). However, Jack's experience in writing was only writing activities which were related to assignments and weekly journals as part of his school work then. For ease of understanding, the demographic information of the PSU student participants is shown in Table 4.2.

#### **4.1.1.3 Summary of the Students' Demographic Information**

The results on the demographic information revealed some features of similarities and differences between the WU and PSU students. All the students are considered active learners of English because they spent sometimes reading English materials during their free time which is not common in the Thai context. Though they had the experience of learning English for over ten years since their high school years but never enrolled in a writing course in their pre-university lives. However, only one among them, Jack, a PSU student had been abroad for a short course during his high school period which required him to produce weekly journals and assignments to his instructor. With regards to the language spoken, all the WU students and one student



Table 4.2: Demographic Information of PSU Participants

No.	Questions/ items	Amana (PS1)	Sofia (PS2)	Ikram (PS3)	Jack (PS4)
	<b>Part I: Personal information</b>				
1.	number of languages speak	(4), Thai, English Local Melayu & Malay	(4), Thai, English Malay & Arabic	(6), Thai, English Malay, Arabic German & some Spanish	(2) Thai & English
2.	previous writing course enrolled in this programme & grade obtained	Paragraph & Writing Grade A	Paragraph & Writing Grade B+	Paragraph & Writing Grade B	Paragraph & Writing Grade A
3.	number of years of studying English	15	12	12	14
4.	attend special class outside school?	No	No	No	Yes, with teacher from old school
5.	Do you like to read in English?	Sometimes	Yes	Yes	yes
6.	kind of books you like to read	textbooks & magazines	Novel e.g. Sherlock Holmes Harry Potter & Percy Jacson	Novels, biographies, grammar books, all books	Novel & encyclopedia
7.	Frequency of reading on your own	-	Sometimes	everyday	Once a month
	<b>Part II: Writing experiences</b>				
8.	English writing experience before undergraduate level	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
9.	Kind of texts you write	Diary & short paragraph	Diary	Essay	Weekly journal (school work)
10.	Difficulties encountered when writing In English	Lack of ideas & grammar	Poor vocabulary & grammar: important for me	Grammar because "I don't like it. It drives me crazy. It's less influence when speaking."	Know few words, "My writing is very simple & grammar is not strong too."
11.	Perception of good writing	Gather ideas & process information we are going to write. "I feel excited & I really like to gather new information."	"Good writing's important to be clear like topic, main ideas & supporting ideas need to be relevant to the topic."	"A good writing provides main idea & supporting details need to relate to the topic. The language used isn't difficult to understand."	"Writing is one way to communicate. Good writing must be able to pass all the writer purposes to the readers."

from the PSU (Jack) are bilingual while the rest of the PSU students are multilingual (Thai, English, Malay). All of these features will influence the way they develop themselves as writers which is discussed later in this chapter.

#### **4.1.2 Instructor Participants**

There were two writing instructors who participated in the interview in this study. They were chosen on the criterion that they were in charge of the student participants' writing classes which were used in this study. Thus the researcher could collect her data from one instructor from the WU group and one from the PSU. Though both of them were teaching writing to Thai English majors, their educational backgrounds and writing experiences differed.

##### **4.1.2.1 Ms. Lucy's Educational Background and Writing Experience**

Miss Lucy is the instructor in charge of the "Topics in Writing" class of the student participants. Miss Lucy obtained her Bachelor's in English Language Teaching from Prince of Songkla University. For her Master's degree, she also studied the same programme from Chulalongkorn University which was the best Thai university then. She has a strong passion of being a teacher and I observed that she has a very pleasant personality and thus she is very active, kind and helpful to her students. She had 26 years of English teaching experience. She was once a secondary school teacher in another province for about ten years before joining WU. She was given several fundamental subjects such as "Basic Grammar, Basic Reading," other English skills, and "Translation" while she was with the school. Though she had attended general English language workshops several times, she said that she never attended any special writing training.

#### **4.1.2 Ms. Jasmine's Educational Background and Writing Experience**

Miss Jasmine is a very young energetic English instructor at PSU. She had both her first and second degrees at International Islamic University Malaysia. She did her Masters in teaching English as a second language. She personally loves being a teacher and her father wanted her to work as a teacher too. She has been teaching English for about six years to undergraduate students. She was usually assigned to teach fundamental courses such as: English 1, English 2, and English conversation. To teach writing is not a usual activity for her since she has never joined any writing training. In fact, she was not sure if there are writing skill trainings available in Thailand. It can be inferred that writing skill training has not been given much attention in Thailand.

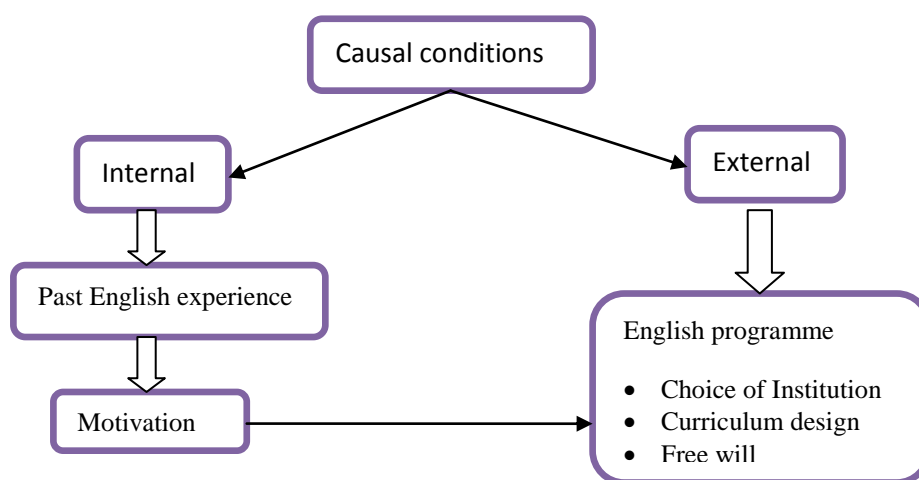
#### **4.2 Paradigm Model of the Grounded Theory**

The paradigm model of the writing skill development using Strauss and Corbin's (1998) systematic design in the grounded theory was developed within the present inquiry. The central phenomenon is a reflection of the findings relative to the research questions that instigated the study. It is the central idea, event, happening, about which a set of strategies (actions/interactions) is directed at managing or handling, or to which the set is related. Such a phenomenon was established through asking questions as suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1998) such as "What is the data all about? What is the action/interaction all about? All other categories and their properties were grouped together with their subcategories. The codes and categories were sorted, compared, and contrasted across all the participants until no further categories could be identified, and no further relationships or what is called "saturation." What remained after this process was a grounded theory paradigm model.

### 4.2.1 Conditions Leading to Students' Development of Writing Skills

Through the process of breaking down and coding the data from the interview, open-ended questionnaire, and classroom observation into categories and concepts, two causal phenomena/conditions which influenced the starting point of internalizing writing expertise among Thai students were identified. These conditions are internal and external to the students (see Figure 4.1).

Factors of past English experience and their motivation to explore more about the language are referred to as conditions which are internal to the Thai English majors. Data obtained from the questionnaire indicated that these students like to read English in their free time. This shows that they were positive about the language since in their early school years. For instance, one student informed that “for me, I have good English background from my old school” (PS4, lines 55-56). It is also reported that throughout the school years, they maintained a good relationship with their former English teachers whereby they could talk about English subjects freely after class hours. For some others who wanted to spend more time



*Figure 4.1: Conditions Leading to Development of Writing Skills in Students*

engaging in English activities, writing diaries was their best options though they admitted that they never called it a real writing at school. They thought that their written diaries were not understood by others except themselves and that they were not properly taught how to write at school. Nevertheless, they enjoyed experiencing the language in their own way. Their motivation towards learning and exploring the language thus developed. When they were asked to answer in the questionnaire whether they like to read in English in their free time, they reported that they do. As a consequence, they tried every way they could to be able to enroll as English majors later in a university so that they could excel in the language. This is evident in the writing work of the three WU students who said that being English majors were one of their dreams that they desired for long.

The external condition which was the main factor that resulted in Thai students' willingness to master English writing skills was the nature of the English programme itself. The extent to which these students started to develop themselves to become writers depended greatly on the institution, the curriculum design and their own willingness to enroll in more writing courses. This phenomenon was supported by data on the description of English curricula which were obtained as documentary data from the two universities selected for this study. The WU curriculum offered eight writing courses for the students to select while at the PSU, students were required to enroll in only two writing courses though they could choose to enroll in other three writing courses as their electives. At the time of data collection, the three WU participants had experienced five, three and two writing courses, respectively. All PSU students however only had the experience of enrolling in one writing class in the earlier semester before the data collection. The number of writing courses offered at each institution caused all the student participants to register and learn

writing skills. Moreover, the type of curriculum design from each setting also influenced the way they approached writing tasks while in the process of learning which is thoroughly discussed later in this chapter.

#### **4.2.2 The Central Phenomenon**

As indicated in the paradigm model earlier, the central phenomenon which influenced all other categories or conditions was termed as “the process of writing skill development.” The following sections describe the contexts, intervening conditions which influenced students’ strategies of internalizing writing expertise and consequences of such strategies, respectively.

#### **4.2.3 The Contexts which Influenced Students’ Learning Strategies**

##### **4.2.3.1 Educational Context**

The educational context of these student participants which influenced their learning behaviours and strategies of internalising their writing expertise can be explained in terms of English language requirement at each setting from general to specific. Such a requirement was developed from institution to department and eventually to the writing class. The detailed explanation of each of these is as follows.

##### **4.2.3.1.1 Fundamental English Language Course Requirement for English Majors and Non-majors**

All undergraduate students in Thailand are required to register fundamental English language courses offered by their respective universities unless exempted. Usually, the minimum requirement for such courses will account for 12 credits or three courses depending on the design of curriculum at each university. Very often that English majors and non- majors were placed together in one classroom. This creates

problems for both instructors and English majors because they are teaching students of mixed motivation and ability. Students' beliefs and attitudes towards such requirement vary depending on their interests. The data obtained through interviews with both WU and PSU English instructors revealed that the non-majors took the course as to fulfill the university's requirement while the English majors expect that they could build a strong basis before entering the programme. Some non-English majors complained of being forced to study English as they perceived the language is not relevant in their future lives. Therefore, it is common to hear students asking questions like "Can we be excused from these English courses?" This shows that some of them were not willing to study English at all. In many cases, the instructors who had to teach such fundamental courses were also in charge of major courses in English programme. This element was explicitly revealed in the data when the instructors at both WU and PSU said that they noted the differences between teaching these two groups. The PSU instructor said that she had to "*push*" (IPT, line 56) the non-English majors to learn and focus on the learning tasks.

On the contrary, the students who chose to major in English were those who like and love the language as reported in the questionnaire. They were eager and willing to develop in terms of language skills and ability to their best potentials. It is however, with limited learning resources and non-English speaking environment, how far can these students grow and develop as an English language learner with good writing skills? It is the purpose of this chapter to explain several other conditions and processes in which the Thai English majors underwent to develop their English writing expertise.

#### **4.2.3.1.2 Curricula of English Programme at WU and PSU**

Though both Walailak University (WU) and Prince of Songkla University (PSU) are located in the South which are about 350 kilometres apart, the curriculum designed for English majors in each setting is significantly different from one another. In the earlier section, the general description of the curriculum in each of these two universities were addressed. It is however worth to mention again in this section that the WU students were given nine writing courses to select in the programme. To illustrate, all WU English majors were entitled to enroll in any of these courses namely; Writing Strategies, College Composition, Introduction to Professional Writing, Writing Research Proposal, Intermediate Composition, Topics in Writing, Seminar in Professional Writing, Writing in Business Context, and Seminar in Creative Writing. The students at PSU on the other hand were not provided as many as those of WU since there were only five writing courses listed in the curriculum. These courses included Paragraph Writing, Composition Writing, Writing Argumentative Essays, Academic Writing, and Writing in Business. Only the first two of these five were mandatory for all English majors while the other three were subsumed under elective core courses.

#### **4.2.3.1.3 Writing Class at WU**

The students at WU at the time of data collection were enrolled in “Topics in Writing” course in a short semester from January – March, 2012. The class was scheduled on every Monday and Friday, two hours each day which lasted one semester of twelve weeks. It was an open topic course which aimed at promoting students’ independence on taking charge for their own learning and of course writing skills. The course was also designed on the basis of a process writing approach



whereby students had to work independently through different stages of writing namely: pre-writing, while-writing, and post-writing.

The students were given freedom to choose their own topic of interest, do research, present it to the class, write about it and make it their masterpiece. In the pre-writing stage, the instructor encouraged her students to use different writing strategies such as brainstorming, information searching, outlining, note taking, summarizing and paraphrasing. On the next stage of writing, they were expected to organize their ideas generated from the previous stage. In the post-writing stage, they had to edit, revise and display their written works. The criteria for assessment and evaluation of this class included depth and breadth of contents, relevance, paraphrasing skill, analytical skill, creativity, integration of knowledge about writing process and strategies, text coherence, and the value of the text. They were assessed through different stages in the writing process. For example, their plan of writing, the four presentations of initial ideas, work progress 1, 2 and 3, the portfolio, the drafts, the contents and ideas, the presentation, and the text value. Considering the steps (planning, drafting, revising, editing) taken by this group of participants in the writing process, it seems that they have the potential to grow as professional writers provided that they spend more time on writing practices.

#### **4.2.3.1.4 Writing Class at PSU**

The students at PSU registered for in “Composition Writing” class which was also taught by a Thai instructor. It was their second writing course at the university and the course syllabus was designed in such a way that students were introduced elements and structure of composition writing with the emphasis on description and exposition. The organization of the course content was heavily form focused. The

course lasted for 16 weeks or one semester. In the first half of the semester, the students were taught about complex sentences, common grammatical errors, essay structure, writing a thesis statement, and outlining an essay, respectively. Then they had their mid-semester examination based on what was taught earlier. In week 11-14, they were taught how to write an introduction and a conclusion, then unity and coherence. In the last two weeks of the semester, they learned about how to write an essay. One week before examination, the instructor revised the lesson. When analyzing the course syllabus at PSU, one would think of teaching writing to non-English majors because of its shallow contents. Only in the last two weeks that students learnt about writing an essay. The rest of the class was given to structural emphasis.

It is important to note here that the PSU students already enrolled in the “Paragraph Writing Course” prior to participating in this study. We expected that they were introduced a higher level of writing skills and practices in the current course (i.e. Composition Writing) such as writing different types of essays. Nevertheless, the course exposed them to the lessons on how to construct sentences using conjunctions, writing a paragraph, and forming a thesis statement. Only towards the end of the semester they had to write an essay (as shown in the syllabus), the only essay required by the course which was not suitable with the name of the course itself. They should practise writing sentences in their earlier course while writing more essays on the current one.

#### **4.2.3.2 Students' Perceptions towards Writing**

##### **4.2.3.2.1 WU Students' Perception towards Writing**

###### **Anny**

Anny was aware that among other English language skills, writing is the most difficult skill to learn. She also reported that Thai teachers' teaching styles and techniques differed from foreign teachers when they taught English. For most English classes, the Thai teachers would teach more on grammar while the others focus on listening and speaking. Anny said that she preferred Thai teachers to foreigners because she thought that grammar is a complex subject and needed Thais to explain it in her first language in details. Like most English majors, Anny began to develop her writing skill at in her first year at the university. Anny's intrinsic motivation inspired her to improve the skill over time. At the beginning when she learned about writing a paragraph she thought to herself "*I need to have practice and continue to write a short essay*" (IWS1, line 10). Anny believes that at university, only her teachers could help her with writing problems. She would not ask help from Thai friends because she thought that they also shared the same problem with her. Therefore, she would consult her foreign teachers or friends whenever she encountered difficulties related to writing.

Two points can be made from Anny's opinion on seeking help from her foreign teachers or friends as she said "*I will ask my foreign teacher or my foreign friend on emails* (WS1, line 16)." First, it shows that the student was aware of her Thai friends' limited ability in terms of English writing skills which is worth to explore further. Second, if there is any interaction made between her and any foreigners to

whom she could use English to communicate with, it helps to develop not just her writing skills but also her English language proficiency in general.

### **Tida**

Tida showed her true interest in English language as she said English is very important. She believed that English is not hard and can be learned through extensive practice. She started to learn the language since her primary school years and never got to write seriously until she enrolled writing courses at the university. When asked of her attitude towards the English teachers, Tida reported that she was happy with the writing teachers. Her motivation to write in English and on writing practices came from these teachers as she informed that *“The most teacher have many styles of learning. She try to teach me about learning strategy. She motivate me to practice myself to write...about writing strategy”* (IWS2, lines 31-32). She was proud to report that at WU, she was taught learning and writing strategies which were very helpful to her writing skill development. The constant support from her teachers coupled with the belief that writing can be learned had driven Tida to continue to develop and hope that she could be a proficient writer in the future. Tida told the researcher that her ambition is to work for a magazine or write books after graduation.

### **Wafa**

Wafa was highly motivated to develop her writing skill by her own personality. She preferred writing to talking and thus she registered several writing course available in the programme such as “Writing Strategies, From Sentence to Paragraph, Persuasive Writing, and Topics in Writing.” She loves all her English teachers and strictly followed their instructions as she said: *“Whatever they taught us is very*

*important. So, I try to remember and obey them*” (IWS3, lines 45-46). Wafa felt that she and her friends in the same programme still had a very limited opportunity to develop and use English in real lives. She wanted English majors to expose themselves to English speaking environment so that they can have a good time to practice the language. Fortunately, there were a number of foreign students who participated in an exchange programme at the university which allowed her and friends to interact with them in English after class. Sometimes, she also sought help about writing from them. Wafa wanted to use her writing skills in the future as she wanted to be an English teacher.

#### **4.2.3.2.2 PSU Students’ Perception towards Writing**

##### **Amana**

Amana said that English writing is neither easy nor difficult as she said *“I think if try if we have the skills we can do, it depends on we will try to practice it or not”* (IPS1, lines 3-4). She believes that writing is a skill which can be learned. She also regarded herself as a keen English learner as she said *“I can develop my writing also this semester”* (IPS1, line 7). Though Amana had an experience of writing a diary and short paragraph in her high school years, she thought her writing then was *“not true or always incorrect”* (IPS1, line 6) Here she thought what she wrote then was not considered real writing at all. She thought that knowledge about the topic and grammatical correctness could help a person to be a good writer. As a result, when asked about difficulties she encountered in learning to write in English, her answer was problems of lack of ideas and grammar. Whenever the problems arose, she consulted her seniors in three major areas namely; *“check grammar, ..... check what is wrong ....., and tell reasons”* (IPS1, lines 19-21). She rarely went to consult her

lecturer and supervisor. Her strong commitment towards learning to write was driven by her dream to use English writing to communicate with people in the future. Thus, with this intrinsic motivation, Amana might develop her English writing skill better and faster than many of her friends in the same programme as manifested through her result of the previous writing course taken.

### **Sofia**

Though Sofia was neutral about learning to develop her English writing skills, she did not regard herself as a good writer because of her “*lack of vocabulary and grammatical*” (IPS2, lines 26-27) knowledge. She said it is important for her to learn more English words and grammar rules so that she could write better. Like Amana, Sofia trusted her friends to give her advice related English writing assignments with occasionally seeking helps from her teacher. The things that she benefited from her friends were about grammatical editing and sharing of ideas related to her work. Probably, her strong desire to be proficient in writing was a result of her ambition to pursue education further after completion of the study at undergraduate level. Consequently, she became more motivated and was willing to learn and develop her writing skills as much as she could in order to reach her goal.

### **Ikram**

Ikram’s perception on his writing skill acquisition was very different from the first two PSU participants and indeed from all others in this study. He believed that writing “*is less important than speaking*” (IPS3, line 39). He preferred to improve his speaking skills to writing. Nevertheless, he was still willing to learn writing with the hope that he may use it in the future. Ikram was not quite happy with some of the English teachers who used Thai in English class. His constructive comment on this

was that English majors needed to listen to English speaking to help them improve the language skills. Ikram mentioned that when he had problems about writing, he went to the library or consult friends, seniors and sometimes teachers. Even though he is a good student writer as a second year English major in Thailand, he reported that he would not use writing in his future career because he wants to be a translator.

From the researcher's own observation on Ikram's English language speaking ability, he is the most fluent English speakers among all the student participants who involved in this study. This corresponds to his statement above that he liked speaking and that speaking is more important to him than writing. However, considering his ambition to be a translator in the future, he needs to be a good writer too while he himself was not aware of this importance. To be a good translator, one has to understand the writers' intended meaning through their linguistic expressions, which requires good reading and writing skills. Ikram's perception towards the benefits of writing can be changed to more positive if he really understands what writing is as well as what a translator should know.

### **Jack**

Jack viewed writing as neither difficult nor easy. He knew that writing is a skill which needs to be learned and developed. This awareness may be a result of his experience in taking few courses in the US once in his high school years. There he used to be asked to write weekly journals, reports, homework and assignments in English. His experience however did not help him to grasp a correct understanding about what writing is. He assimilated writing with speaking skills as he said: "*if we can speak, we can write*" (IPS4, line 63). He thought that a person who could speak English would also have the ability to write and compose in English. This student

tried to explain that the one who can speak the language must have many vocabulary words in mind and thus he can also write. His understanding about writing is simply about knowing words and putting ideas down to paper. Jack felt that those who have inadequate English vocabulary words in minds would not be able to speak and write. Nevertheless, he was aware of the importance of writing for his future need. He said that he planned to pursue his education to a higher level abroad after completing his first degree.

There are several similarities and differences between the WU and PSU students' perceptions towards learning writing skills. In terms of similarities, first, they all believe that writing can be learned through frequent practices. Second, they thought that grammar is an important aspect in writing and thus revision of writing means to check grammatical mistakes and overlook other important aspects of writing especially among the PSU group. However, their views differed in terms of how peers and teachers could benefit their writing development. The WU group trusted teachers more than their Thai peers in giving feedback while the PSU group preferred their peers or seniors to the teacher to comment their work. While one WU student wanted the Thai teacher to explain grammar in Thai, one PSU student preferred the writing teacher to use English in writing class. Their views in turn affected their learning behaviours and how they develop themselves as writers.

#### **4.2.3.3 Students' Perception of Good Writing**

The data obtained from the questionnaire showed that the PSU writers perceived good writing as a piece of a linguistic product which is written in an introduction-body-conclusion format. For example, Amana reported that she felt "*excited to gather new ideas and information*" (QPS1) when she has to write. To her, gathering



ideas and processing information as much as she could, guarantees good writing. Whereas two other PSU student writers viewed that clarity of main ideas and supporting details which are relevant to the topic is crucial to the quality of writing. As for the other writer among the group, writing is perceived as a way of communication. This student realized the importance of writing for meaning as he said “*good writing must be able to pass the writer’s message to the reader*” (PS4). This definition of what a good writing should be, is also similar to those of two WU student participants. One of them reported that a good writing must “*serve the writer’s purpose and make the readers enjoy reading the whole text*” (WS2). However, the other said: “*a good writing must benefit the audience*” (WS3).

The concept of writing experience in relation to the students’ definition of good writing also emerged from data. All the students who viewed writing as a dual aspect of writer-reader had longer writing experience than those who did not. They understood that writing is meaning making and not just a transcription of words into texts. By longer experience, I mean they had enrolled in at least two writing courses prior to the time of data collection. Incidentally, the participants from WU fit this description of experienced writers while the PSU, less experienced as they all only enrolled in one writing course before the onset of the data collection. The less experienced writers on the other hand, viewed writing as a solitary task of the writer him/herself. It is also a very demanding task where they must use specific cognitive activities such as processing information and put it into words. To them, writing was about understanding the topic, clearing the mind, structure the text in an introduction, body and conclusion format. As a result, it is not surprising to find that students who had less experience in learning writing skills in this study were formal and rule rather than meaning and audience focused which is further explained later in

the chapter. Thus, the students' perceptions about what they thought about good writing can be explained in terms of less experienced and experienced writers which eventually influenced their learning and writing strategies.

#### **4.2.3.4 Teachers' Personality and Perception towards Teaching Writing**

Teachers' personality and perceptions towards the teaching of writing play a crucial role in shaping and designing their writing classrooms. These perceptions in turn act as a driver of their students' learning strategies and behaviours. The WU teacher's personality and views towards the teaching of writing differed from that of the PSU one as described below.

##### **4.2.3.4.1 Miss Lucy (WU Instructor)**

From the class observation and data obtained via interview with Miss Lucy, WU instructor, it is interesting to find that she has a very pleasant personality. She is kind, patient and open to her students. She admitted that her challenge in teaching writing was that the difficulty of acquiring and teaching writing skills. She said that *"Thai students rarely write in daily lives"* (IWT, line 27). Some still do not see the importance of writing as they are from the environment where no English writing is used. Miss Lucy however, could win her students' interest in learning the skill by emphasizing two points at the beginning of the course. First, she told her class that *"writing is a place where you can express yourself freely, so just write what you want, except for academic writing that you need more practice"* (IWT, lines 67-69). Second, she also reminded them that *"if you want to get a better job, writing is a must"* (IWT, line 70). In spite the difficulty in teaching the skill, Miss Lucy never stopped trying to promote their writing development and she realised that this was her strength. She values the teaching job and thus felt happy as she helped and taught

others (her students). She explained that a good writing student should have positive personality, be willing to learn, share their ideas with friends, develop, and show high commitment to the task.

#### **4.2.3.4.2 Miss Jasmine (PSU Instructor)**

Unlike the WU instructor, the PSU instructor, Miss Jasmine was very authoritative in her writing class. She thought that the teacher is a knowledge giver and students are receivers. She wanted her students to be calm, happy so that “*they can learn what I teach them*” (IPT, lines 74-75). In addition to this belief, she wanted them to strictly listen, follow, and act according to what she instructed in class. This is evident in her repetition when answering the interview questions. For example, she told what she did in class was “*try your (teacher) best to give whatever knowledge, to share with them, to make them understand, to become better*” (IPT, lines 67-69). In one occasion she said students “*must pay fully attention to what the teacher says*” (IPT, lines 125-126). She could have full control over her lessons and thus students were not given opportunity to make decisions about what they were going to learn as found in the case of WU participants.

Her perception towards experience in teaching writing can be explained in terms of types of her students being taught which she mentioned English majors and non-majors. She confirmed that the English major group were more willing to learn and thus could follow what “*we (teacher) after pushing them so hard*” (IPT, line 52). She directed the class to her wants and needs not to her students’ interest. This is especially true when she reported in the interview saying that at the beginning of the class, students did not understand the teacher’s wants and needs. Later on when she pushed them, she knew that “*they know what we (teachers) want, they know what we*

(teachers) *need, they know what we (teachers) are trying to do with them, then they try to put their hearts, their best to follow what we (teachers) have told them*" (IPT, lines 53-55).

Miss Jasmine reported that she had a "*bitter experience*" (IPT, line 56) when dealing with non-English majors. She knew that they were not willing to learn English though they were not required to enroll in any writing course. However, when teaching English majors, she tried to create a lively writing classroom as she wanted them to be happy. She thought that whether students' willing to learn or not depended so much on how motivated the teacher was. She strongly believes that in class, we should "*get students to like you, they will do what you ask*" (IPT, lines 47-48). Thus, it is not surprising to know that she regarded herself as the main factor or model to the learning or internalizing writing expertise in these students. She thought that when the teacher was interesting enough then students could learn something or else there was no development in them.

It is clear that the two instructors have different personalities and views towards teaching writing. Miss Lucy stressed on the importance of knowing the students before starting the class, motivating them to learn through sharing and informing them the benefits of writing for their future. Miss Jamine on the other hand, wanted the students to be calm and quiet so that they can listen and follow whatever the teacher gave them. It seems that writing knowledge was constructed through only one dimension at PSU (i.e. through teacher) which is unlike at WU where students were encouraged to share with the friends and teacher in the course of learning. This also affects students' strategies or interactions with other individuals at each setting in the process of writing development.

#### 4.2.3.5 Target Language Resources

In spite of the fact that Thailand is known as a country in the outer circle, the data obtained via the open-ended questionnaire and general observation showed that the participants were trying their best to access to the target language input. The participants had established their own English reading culture. All like to read English texts though two of them reported that they liked to do it sometimes. The PSU students said they read, textbooks, grammar books, biographies, novels and an encyclopedia with the frequency ranging from everyday, once a month and sometimes. All WU participants reported that they read novels in their free time or when persuaded to read. Only one WU student liked to read English stories, articles, and news while the others preferred to read stories in addition to novels.

In terms of their exposure to English materials for writing support, students' accessibility to both printed and human resources was very limited. Despite the fact that there were plenty of English language materials related to writing skill development available in their respective libraries, these students did not report on making use of those materials in the process of internalizing writing expertise. Only one exceptional case among them told that when he had problems about writing assignment, he might go to the library. When the situation did not promote the students to utilize the available resources provided by their respective libraries, they relied more on tapping knowledge from their writing class. The less experienced writers waited for their teachers to tell them what to do as confirmed by their instructor who had to *push* them so hard so that they understood what she presented to them during her lectures. One of the more experienced group told that she had to strictly obey and listen to what the teacher said to be a good student writer. These writers did not have extra writing courses apart from their regular classes.

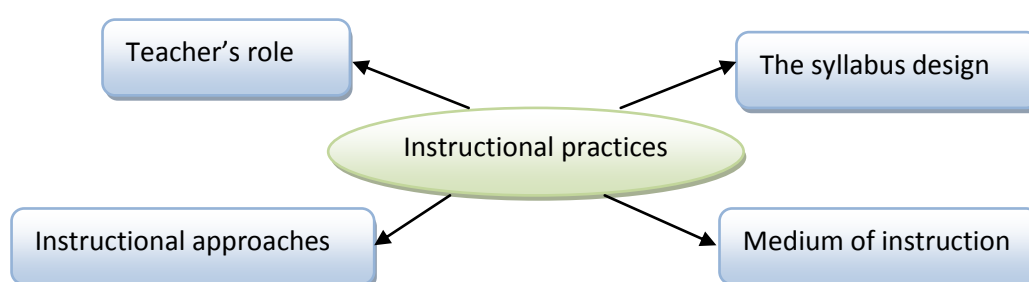
With the development of technology in the modern days, students could benefit from it in different ways including assisting their language learning development. We did not see whether the PSU students were directed to make use of technology as to assist their writing skill development. However, we know that there were no online interactive activities or conferences done between the teacher and students to discuss writing issues. On the contrary, the findings related to technology application of WU students in their writing course differed from those at PSU. In an analysis of the WU students' notes and the data from an interview with the teacher at WU, we see that at planning stage, all students went through search engines to find out more on definition of genre and sample of writing on the genre of their choice. In addition, they made use of the word processing available in the computer when they typed the work. They could write, rewrite, delete and revise which help them lessen the burden on typing mistakes. At a revision stage, they used the software to include songs, photographs, and artwork in the work before printing the masterpiece.

In terms of English language use, this study found that the less experienced writers did not have the opportunity to use English in their lives though one reported that he had just joined a translation network. The more experienced writers on the other hand, were more privileged as they could seize the opportunity to use English to interact with foreign students on campus. In addition, their university has organized a student exchange programme with other universities in Southeast Asia for interested English majors.

In short, the participants' exposure to English language resources is still inadequate especially for the less-experienced writers who had less opportunity to practice writing, get access to writing software packages, or use the language outside class contacts. This can result in slow development in mastering the writing skill as well.

#### 4.2.4 Intervening Conditions Affecting Students' Learning Strategies

The intervening conditions which affected strategies and actions to internalize writing expertise were those that were associated with instructional practices. The five categories that were subsumed under writing instruction were the teacher's role, instructional approaches, syllabus design, and medium of instruction (see Figure 4.2).



*Figure 4.2: The Intervening Conditions Which Affected the Students' Strategies to Develop Their Writing Skills*

##### 4.2.4.1 Teacher's Role

Teachers are the most important factor to contribute to foreign language learners' development especially in a non- English speaking environment. This study proved that teacher's role is the core component in developing her students to the right direction. Even though both instructors from Walailak and Prince of Songkla University have not been given special writing skill training, they exhibited different teaching beliefs, styles and strategies. The students' learning behaviours and strategies to internalize writing expertise in this study clearly reflected the role their instructor played. The data revealed that the WU instructor acted as a class and course facilitator and supporter than just "pouring down" writing knowledge to her class. She believed that once students have tried and were assured of their ability to

achieve writing improvement, they would love to take risks in learning. These students in turn felt more confident and had willingness to spend more time on thinking about their writing tasks which gradually improved their writing skills. In contrast, the PSU instructor conceived that in teaching and learning activities, the teacher has the best of knowledge than her pupils in class. Thus, she tried to give *what* (contents) she could to her students rather than guiding them *how* to internalize the skills. The students then were not sufficiently encouraged to be autonomous in their own learning because they only studied and reviewed what was taught in class. No other extra learning activities related to writing development among the PSU group apart from doing homework on their textbook. As a result, students who were taught by the WU instructor exhibited different learning behaviours from those who were taught by the PSU one which is thoroughly discussed in the later part on **Strategies**. Below is a section to elaborate further the instructional approach and strategies of the writing instructor in two different universities in Thailand.

#### **4.2.4.2 Miss Lucy's Instructional Approach and Strategies**

Data from the interview uncovered that WU instructor's style of teaching writing was very processed oriented. The central concern was so much on the students' interest. At the beginning of the class, Miss Lucy required that they write about anything they like and submit the work to her which she later identified their writing skill level and started to think her next steps in class as she said then "*I can see ... what to teach them*" (IWT, lines-36-37). She further reported that "*I try to see the weakness of my students first, what they like in terms of writing*" (IWT, lines 31-32). Some students need more basic knowledge before she begins the course so she gave a brief revision as needed.



Miss Lucy had emphasized the importance of process writing approach in the writing course as reflected in her teaching strategies. In the class, she must understand the need of her students so that it could help her to manage the course lessons for the whole semester. She had incorporated the main writing strategies necessary for writers such as planning, drafting, revising, editing and publishing. Early in the semester, each student was given full freedom to write about a topic of his/her interest throughout the semester. The students were divided into groups (five members in each) based on type of topic or genre chosen. For example, the students who chose to write a short story will have to be in the team of short story writers. Members of the group were asked to talk, work together and discuss their topics throughout the writing process. During planning stage, the students must search for the information related to the topic, style of writing, components of writing, and writing samples before they can start to complete their assignment on the selected genre. The teacher did not teach them much until they came to the class and presented what was found. In the second week, the students must present their writing plan to the whole class. Then, comments and feedback from the instructor as well as from peers were given to them right after the presentation. The class helped clarify and explain on unclear points when necessary. Later, the students went back to work on their own and present their progress to the class as scheduled. All together, the students had presented their worked three times throughout the semester. They were required to see the instructor before and after class for extra help. At the end of the semester, the student submitted only one piece of their work which is the final draft of their writing.

With regards to the course evaluation or assessment, Miss Lucy said that her evaluation on students' writing skill was not on grammar and formal rules but more

on their development as learners and writers. Thus, she marked their progress from time to time based on their improvement, expression, expansion and elaboration of ideas, drafts and writing development. Students had opportunity to develop, revise, rewrite to make their drafts better throughout the semester. The students were very happy that they could work freely without having to worry about time constraint.

#### **4.2.4.3 Ms. Jasmine's Instructional Approach and Strategies**

While the Walailak instructor emphasized on the process writing approach, the instructor from PSU, Ms. Jasmine was product oriented. Her focus was more on sentence construction and formal accuracy in her students' writing. The data obtained from class observation and an interview with the instructor clearly uncovered what was going on in the class at PSU as teacher-centered. To illustrate, the PSU teacher had full control over the class. The teaching and learning was like modeling and imitating with the teacher was the model and her students imitate. The students were not introduced the process approach clearly as in the case of WU's. It seems that both teacher and students were not aware of the importance of stages in writing production: planning, drafting, revising, and rewriting.

When asked about the approach she used in her writing class, Ms. Jasmine claimed that she used a variety of approaches. By approaches, she meant her style and presentation to the class. For example, by speaking Thai, creating friendly, pleasant and peaceful environment, she thought it helped the students to listen to the lecture. Nevertheless, she was worried that they would "*forget*" what was being taught in the previous lesson. She wanted to make sure that they remember and memorise the contents of the lesson. So, she must review it before moving to the next points. Besides, she considered students' errors and mistakes in writing as one major issue.

She explained that this was because students had a poor background in English. Thus, she must “*push them*” to understand her explanation and do it correctly.

The PSU students did not take part in making any decision on what to learn as opposed to those at WU. They were either being “*pushed, asked, told, taught, or given*” as described by the instructor. They were trained to be passive not active in learning of writing.

The writing course evaluation of Miss Jasmine was based on three criteria: language, content and organization. This clearly indicates the emphasis on product over process in writing instruction of the PSU instructor. There were no marking criteria such as planning, drafting or presentation on their writing progress. This is confirmed by the data gained from the students’ homework assignment whereby the teacher’s feedback was only on grammatical or lexical errors. The students were not assessed on their writing development stage rather they were punished on each grammatical mistake committed (see Appendix M, page 297).

#### **4.2.4.4 Syllabus Design**

Apart from the teachers’ role and their instructional approaches to writing, the syllabus design of the writing courses is equally critical to influence students’ learning strategies in order to develop their writing expertise. Due to the different writing courses participants enrolled at each setting in this study, the researcher first carefully analysed and coded elements in the course syllabus (see Appendices N & O, pages 298-303) that belonged to each group then compared the two syllabi not in terms of their degree of content difficulty but on elements associated with writing process.

After having a close look at the syllabi from PSU and WU writing classes, it was found that they were completely different in their design with regards to approaches to teaching writing skills. The PSU course syllabus (Composition Writing) was more product-oriented than the other. Its focus was on language structure and components of English composition. The course aimed at teaching students to write with minimal errors in grammar, spelling and punctuation. Thus, it is not surprised to know that students were taught contents on grammar and sentence formation in the first four out of fifteen weeks. The remaining weeks were on elements of a paragraph such as thesis statement, topic sentence, and supporting details. Students were not provided with opportunities to write essays except on one topic in the last week before final examination as stated in the course syllabus.

The syllabus for “Topics in Writing” course at WU employed an integrated approach towards teaching of writing. It explicitly sequenced the process in writing practice from building linguistic knowledge, managing learning strategies, processing the knowledge, interacting and exchanging with others, reviewing, editing to presentation and publication. At the beginning of the course, the students were required to select a topic of their own interest then work on it for the whole semester. The teacher just guided them to use whatever strategies they could to accomplish the assignment. Students needed to search information from the Internet to understand the task and had to present their plan for writing to the class a week after selecting a topic. Students were given full freedom to manage their own learning, making use of their free time in order to produce the best they can or what they called masterpiece. Probably the best aspect of the WU syllabus was its part on the course assessment criteria. These criteria included depth and breadth of the contents, relevance of ideas,

paraphrasing skills, analytical skills, creativity, integration of process knowledge, strategy knowledge and grammar knowledge, and organization.

The differences in the syllabus design resulted in different ways students behaved to develop their writing expertise. This will be elaborated further in the **Strategies** section.

#### **4.2.4.5 Medium of Instruction**

The medium used for writing instruction also influenced the way students learned to develop their writing expertise. Data from class observation revealed that not all English majors in Thailand were taught using English as a medium of communication between the instructors and learners in class. The instructor participants differed in their beliefs and decision in their choice of language as a medium of instruction. The WU instructor mainly used English in her classes but would occasionally switch to Thai when she had to explain abstract concepts or avoid using long explanation in English. The students appreciated that she used English in class as they felt living in an English environment while learning English.

At PSU, the instructor only used Thai in her writing class to communicate with students. She thought that students felt uncomfortable and did not understand if she used English as a medium instead of L1. She reported that in one class, there were students of mixed abilities. Some students did not understand English making her choose to “*use L1 as much as possible*” (IPT, line 107) when teaching writing as evident in her report through the interview. Her belief contradicted with that of one of her students who participated in this study. In fact, the data from students’ interview showed that they expected that the English class should be taught using English. One reported that though he does not like writing, he preferred his teacher

to use English not Thai. Because this student likes to speak but not to write, he was willing to improve and practice speaking English in a writing class too.

The limited exposure to English experience of these student writers was obvious. Outside class, they did not have the opportunity to use English, inside class, the instructor used L1 who also made the whole class used L1. As a result, the class still maintained the traditional flavour of translation and understanding of written texts as appeared on the textbook rather than thinking activities necessary for writing practices. This caused them to have limited language input as they did not have chances to hear how the language is used in real context at least in their classroom.

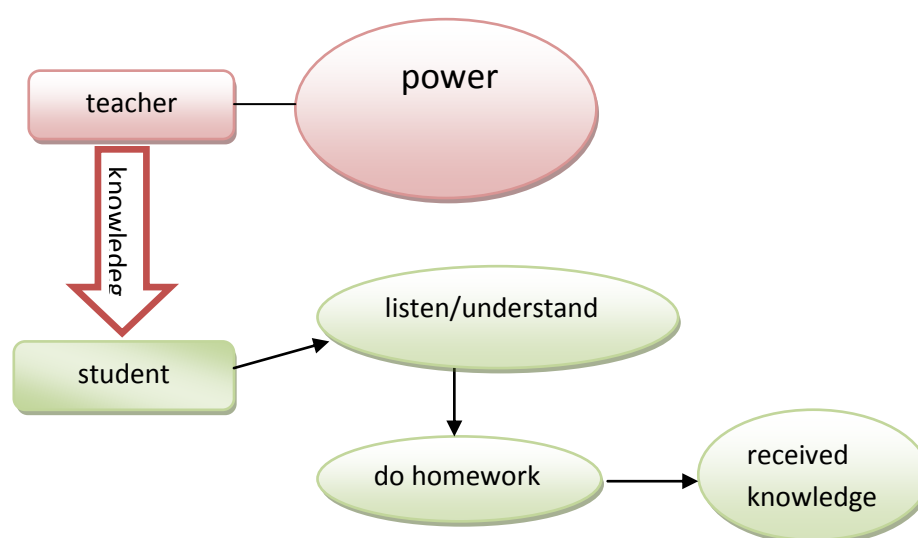
#### **4.2.5 Strategies for Construction of Writing Knowledge**

The context and intervening conditions mentioned in the earlier sections influenced strategies for constructing writing knowledge of these students which manifested through their learning behaviours. The categories that emerged from the data in the axial coding indicated that these students engaged in four types of strategies: intrapersonal construction of writing knowledge, interpersonal construction of knowledge, text production and integration of writing knowledge and learning skills. It is important to note however that their use of the strategies varied in degree. This section explains how Thai English majors constructed their writing knowledge through these strategies.

##### **4.2.5.1 Intrapersonal Construction of Writing Knowledge**

The intrapersonal construction of writing knowledge means that the students used their own cognitive ability to work with the language in order to master the writing skills. An analysis of the data collected through class observation, interviews with

students and their teachers uncovered that some students employed intrapersonal strategies as a means to construct their writing knowledge. These strategies were used differently depending on the class context. The students from PSU demonstrated clearly in their use of intrapersonal strategies which occurred mostly in class. The main strategies which recurred throughout the semester of learning writing course included three major actions: listen, understand, and do homework as shown in Figure 4.3.



*Figure 4.3: Intrapersonal Construction of Writing Knowledge*

The students in a writing class at PSU felt that the teacher has the most power and knowledge and they have to obey and listen to what she instructed. Similarly, their teacher also claimed that she attempted to make her students to follow what she taught, do what she wanted and needed. The teacher was therefore very authoritative that she could have fully control what and how much the student learned. In the class, students listened to the teacher in Thai passively. Only when they were asked to answer certain questions, they would do. On the class observation day, the teacher taught about cohesion, coherence and unity of the text. The teacher simply explained

and gave examples on the topics. Students would not talk and interact with their peers or teachers until they were being asked to do so. Most students still felt shy to speak as also confirmed by the teacher in the interview. They were afraid of making mistakes in front of the class.

Once the students understood on what had been presented by their teacher at PSU, they were required to complete writing exercises in the textbook with occasionally additional homework on how to write a thesis statement with good topic sentences. The process of learning writing skills of this group was very intrapersonal in the way that they depended merely on their cognitive process in trying to accomplish the writing tasks. This process linked to forms and solitary language construction and exercises rather than composing as expressing ideas or meaning making through discussion and peer review. Surprisingly, when asked to describe how they sequenced their writing process, all PSU students reported that they must construct a thesis statement right after knowing what topic to write. In their think-aloud data, they tried to construct a thesis statement before brainstorming ideas about the topic. This implies that they were taught to prioritize forms and product structure rather than writing to express ideas in a meaningful way.

Since there was not explicit teaching on process approach in writing, the PSU students were not encouraged to share their work and learn through peer review and feedback. Even though they were given comments on the work submitted, it was a top-down feedback where students' linguistic mistakes were highlighted. The two assessment criteria used to determine whether or not they were good writers were what the teacher called *ideas* and *grammar*, both at equal weight. They were punished for each grammatical error made such as the missing of the verb to be, choices of tense, spelling and the use of pronouns by point deduction e.g. minus



point two five for each mistake (see Appendix I, p. 277). Consequently, this strictness on formal correction led them to perceive grammar as the most important aspect of writing. The teacher also emphasized that they should be careful when writing and must try to avoid such mistakes in their future assignments.

The intrapersonal construction of knowledge of PSU students was probably the main form of learning to master writing skills. Their writing knowledge development depended on personal, individual and solitary activities with minimal or no interactions with other writing resources except limited number of contact hours with the teacher. The writing lesson was considered understood and complete after the homework was returned. They had to remember and learn the mistakes with the hope that they would not make similar mistakes again. The next lesson began in the same pattern of listen, understand, and do homework till the end of the semester. There were no elements of critical thinking practices and learning to write through interactions with environment surrounding them.

#### **4.2.5.2 Interpersonal Construction of Writing Knowledge**

Interpersonal construction of writing knowledge can be defined as a set of activities or interactions among the members of the academic community in order to learn and develop their writing skills. The categories derived from the data in relation to interpersonal construction of writing knowledge by these students reflected in three forms: knowledge construction through interactions with the teacher, texts and peers. These interactions between learner writers and external language resources in order to accomplish their written tasks were found among the WU participants, the more experienced writers when compared to those of the PSU. The students first interacted with the teacher in class to understand the written task assigned. They were

encouraged to work with their peers. They had to form groups with other students who chose to write the same genre in class. Then, they worked on the internet to search for information related to their genre and topic of choice. They read, analysed, and interacted with the retrieved English texts extensively for more details on the topic. They were given a week to prepare for the presentation on their writing plan. On the first presentation, outline had to be presented to the class. In the presentation, they had to inform the class their rough outlines such as topic, writing purpose, the audience, and subtopics. Right after the presentation, the whole class commented and discussed for better improvement. Certainly, the class was very lively through the exchanging of ideas and interactions among members of the class and their instructor.

After class hours, the students revised and worked on the comments received from class which at the same time, developed their writing skills. Multiple drafts were written before they could share the next progress with class. They first began the writing and brainstorming the ideas and contents in Thai then translated the text into English for later elaboration. Only one student at WU did not use Thai in her drafts. At a drafting stage, they could find time to talk and discuss with the teacher and among friends about their writing.

Apart from interactions with teacher and peers as to support their writing skill development, the students at WU were more privileged with better environment which allowed them to have an opportunity to interact with foreign friends in the campus. Sometimes, they talked about writing work and sought advice from those friends. One student mentioned that she preferred to seek help from foreign friends rather than Thais as she thought that Thai students shared the same writing problems

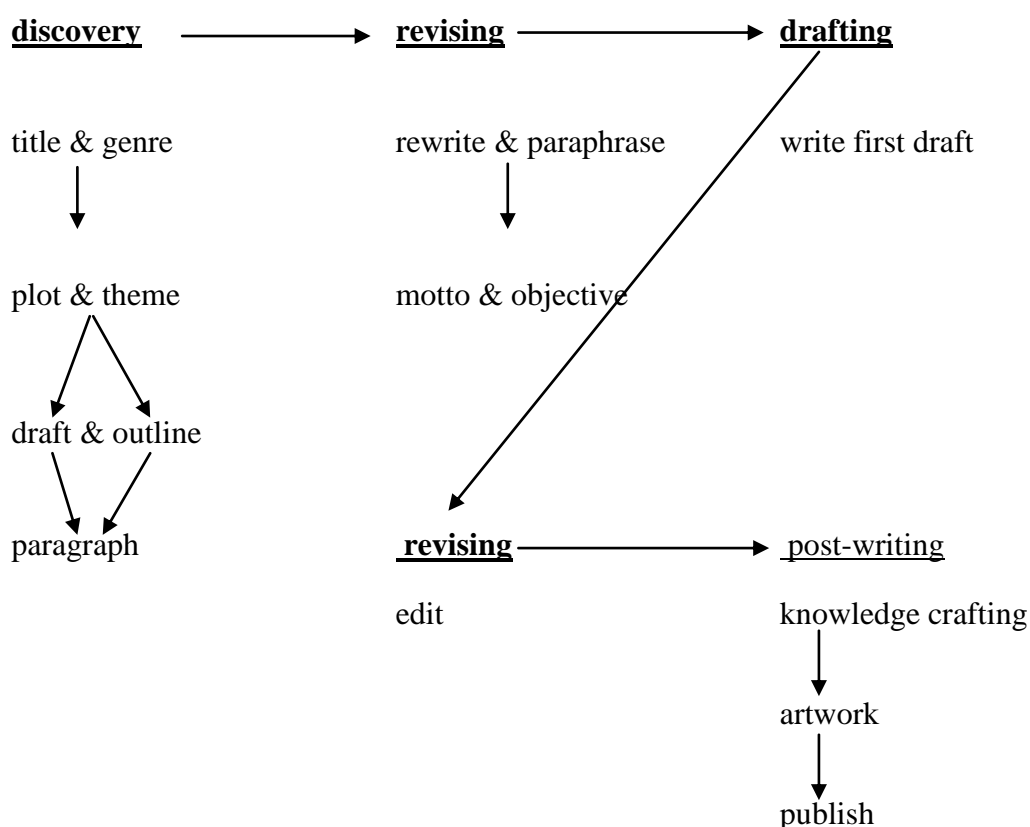
with her. The WU students reported that such interactions were very useful to contribute their English language learning and writing skills.

#### **4.2.5.3 Text Production Process**

Both intrapersonal and interpersonal strategies of constructing writing knowledge explained how the students managed to know and learn to internalize writing expertise. Writing is considered a productive skill, it is of no use if students understand and learn all the strategies without knowing how to produce written texts. It is therefore, important to take a close look at how and what they do while they compose in English. Due to differences in contextual and instructional interventions imposed on the student participants at the two universities in this study, their use of strategies to accomplish a writing task also differed. The differences in their writing production process are detailed below.

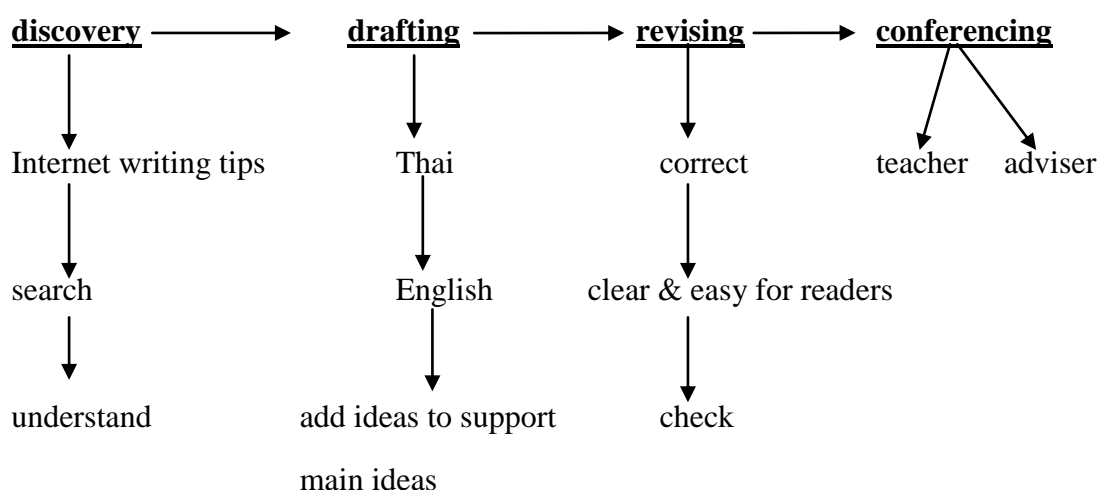
##### **4.2.5.3.1 WU Students' Writing Production Process**

The results obtained through the questionnaire and think-aloud protocols revealed that there were three models of writing process of the WU students. The first student writer, Anny began with a discovery phase including determining of a title and genre onward to determining of a plot and themes, making a draft and outline and the first paragraph. Then, the student experienced the revising stage, rewrote and paraphrased the information creating a motto and objective for the piece. Subsequently, the student entered the drafting stage and wrote the first draft. Next, the student revised and edited the work and finally this student had a post-writing experience similar to that noted by Mohamed Nor and Abd Samad (2006) of the cognitive development of writing skills whereby the student began to include artwork and made a significant consideration for publishing the work (see Figure 4.4).



*Figure 4.4: Anny's Production Process*

Next is the production process of the second WU writer which was consistent to what was earlier claimed by Williams (2005). This student began with a discovery phase then sought information situationally via the Internet writing tips continued searching until obtaining understanding. Later, the student moved on to a drafting stage, beginning in Thai then into English and adding ideas to support the main ideas. Then, the student entered a revising stage, correct the writing, mindful of being clear and easy for readers, checking again and moving onto a conferencing stage with the teacher or the advisor (see Figure 4.5).



*Figure 4.5: Tida's Production Phase*

In the next model by the third WU writer, Wafa, we again see the process writing approach with a very active discovery. The student began with a social-constructionist approach, thinking of the benefit of writing to oneself and to reader. Then, the student selected the genre and the topic that she likes. It is noteworthy here that it is pleasant experience to write which is also a characteristic of being in a flow state. The student explored and learned from other's writing, brainstorming, searching for information, facts and creating an outline. Next, the student in the drafting stage had a big concentration and feeling of success when using technology and a computer for a quick experience in writing that included grammar check and essay editing capability. This student had immediate feedback about her progress by using the grammar check and could therefore, easily edit. The student then went on to paraphrase facts entered into a conferencing stage in which she would confirm that audiences understand her. She would consult friends, her teacher, and her advisor. The student then went on to revise, edit, evaluate, rewrite, evaluate, edit, make a final draft and evaluate again (see Figure 4.6). In this process, the student lost

her self-reflective consciousness as she was concentrating mainly on the audience's needs.

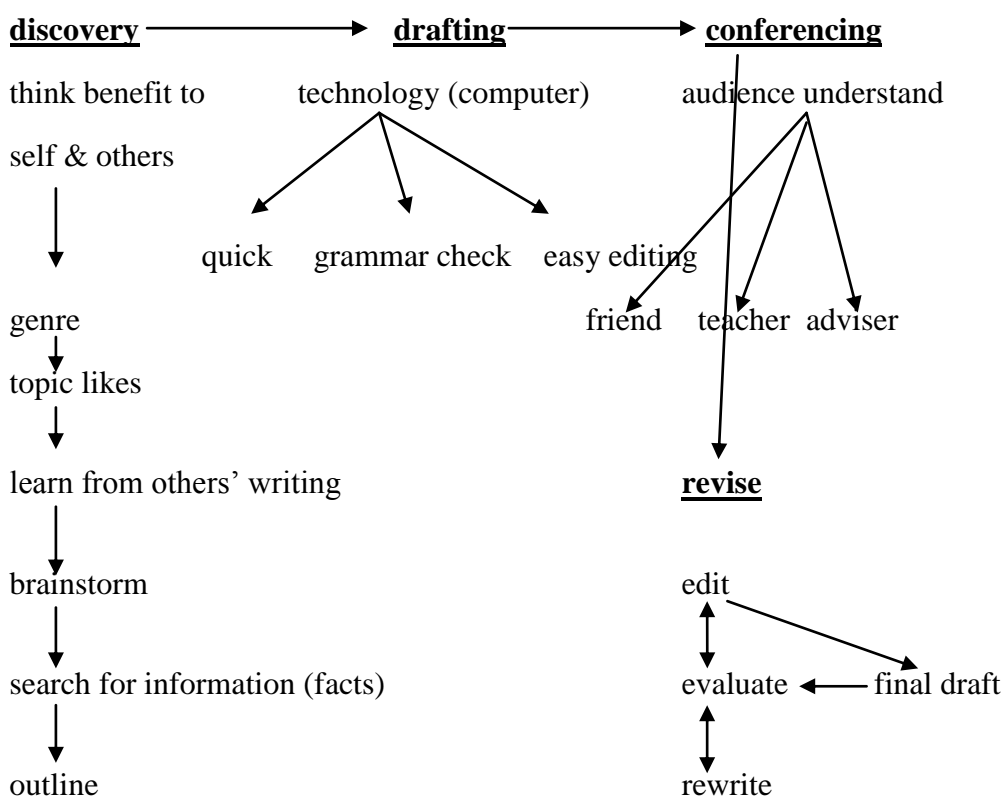


Figure 4.6: Wafa's Production Process

#### 4.2.5.3.2 PSU Students' Production Process

The writing behaviour of PSU writers can be explained in the form of four models. These models revealed various categories which arose from the students' language themselves and began to indicate one among the major phenomena found in this research namely, product writing approach.

After creating the models, the researcher then consulted the theoretical literature, integrated and revised the models using appropriate scholarly language. Thus, we see an analysis of the first PSU writer's model, Amana (see Figure 4.7). This model indicates clearly the writer's cognitive processes of planning, drafting and revising.

The student in the discovery phase began with a topic leading to a thesis statement followed by an outline and search for information. In the drafting phase, the student began using an introduction which included the thesis statement followed by the body, expansion of the body and end with a conclusion. Last, this student noted reading of the text, rechecking, editing, and rechecking again under the revising stage of the writer's cognitive process. This student systematically worked through a writing experience which was consistent with the teacher constructed in the classroom.

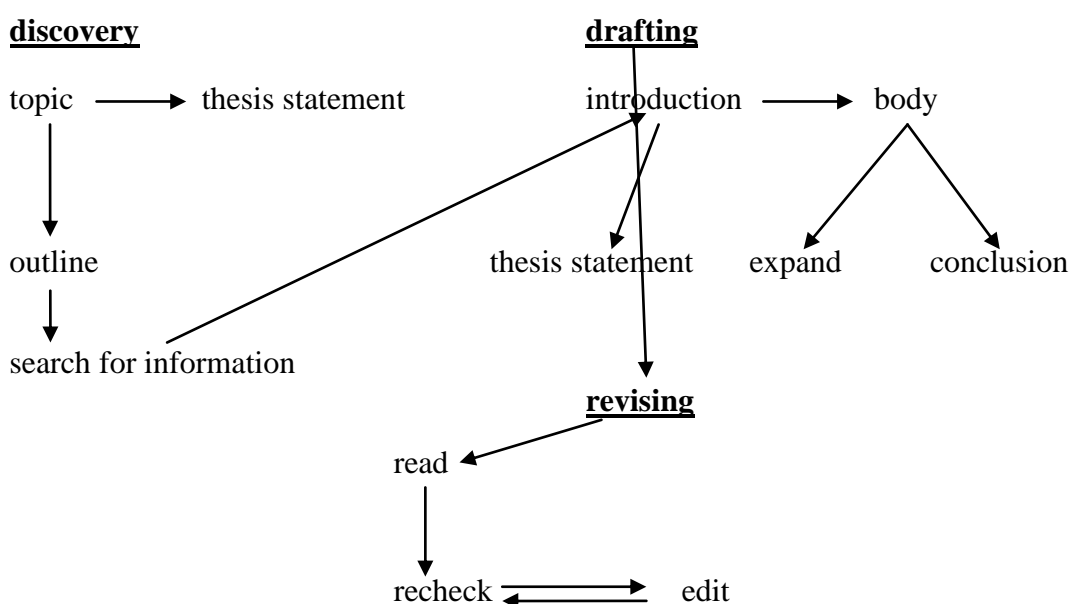


Figure 4.7: Amana's Production Process

In the next PSU writer's model by Sofia, we see a very active discovery phase (Figure 4.8). The model shows the student determines the topic, and then focuses on the task which she refers to as "*clear the mind*" from other distractions which can affect brainstorming. Among the writers' characteristics as outlined by Williams (2005) which include gather ideas, engage in non-stop or free-writing, check the writing, and write the outline and then continue to the drafting stage. Then the student immersed in the work simply write the essay. Next, the student revised it,

checked added and revised it again. It's worthy of note in the analysis of this student's writing process that the student simply wrote the essay.

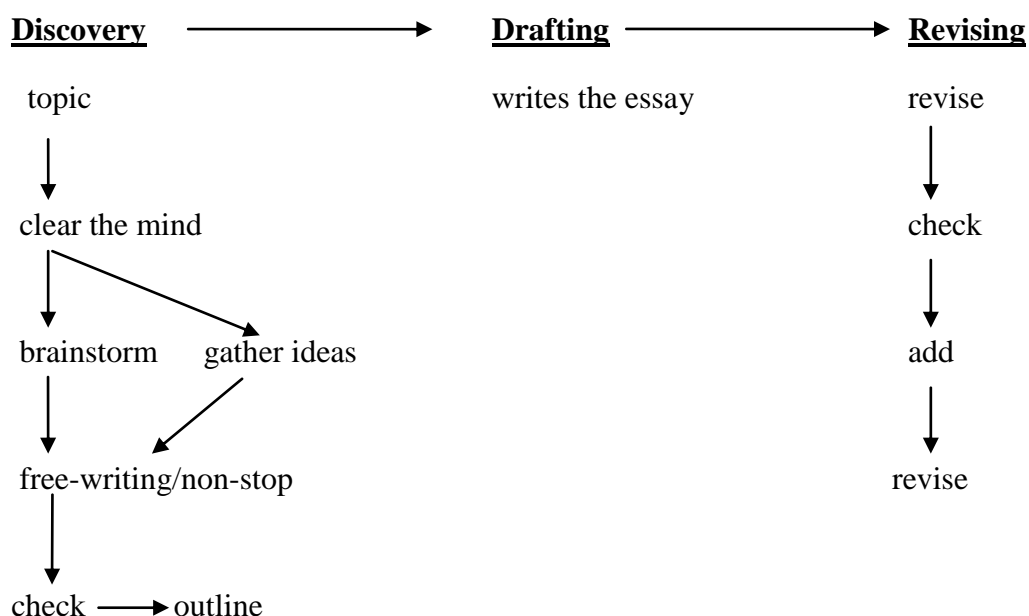


Figure 4.8: Sofia's Production Process

The next model of a PSU writer, Ikram, is more process-oriented when compared with the previous two models. Similar to the last models, the student was very focused on the outcome of the writing (Figure 4.9). He began with the social influence of being required to which he said "*we should*" perform certain steps in the writing process: selecting a topic, gathering ideas and listing information. After that, the student began the drafting phase including body and conclusion. Subsequently, the student entered a revising stage of checking the writing. Then, the student moved continued with the conference stage of reading a text aloud and sharing ideas with others and again returning to a revising stage. Among the novice writers, he was the only student who was aware of the importance of social interaction and negotiation for meaning during text production which is crucial in writing development (Goldstein & Conrad, 1990). This experience could be considered in a social



constructivist model of acquiring writing skills whereby the school setting, the collective individuals within the social context and the historical culture setting of this student were significantly motivating his learning strategies.

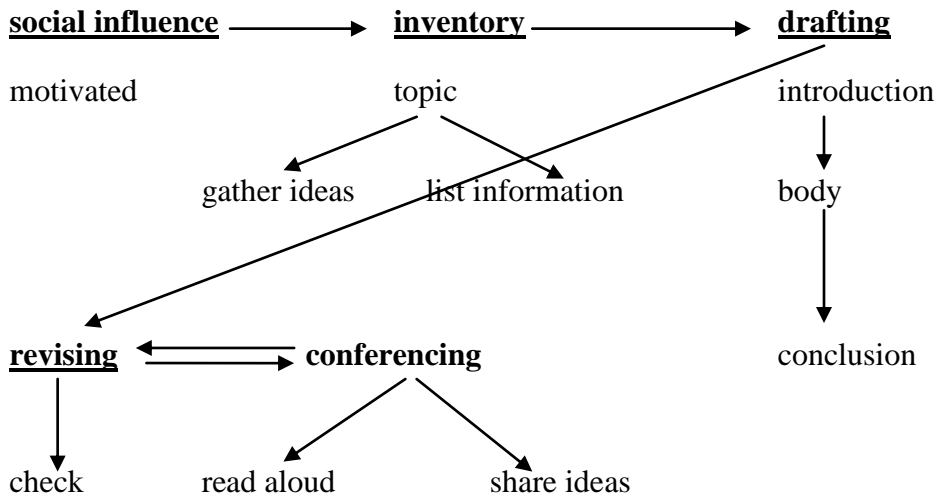
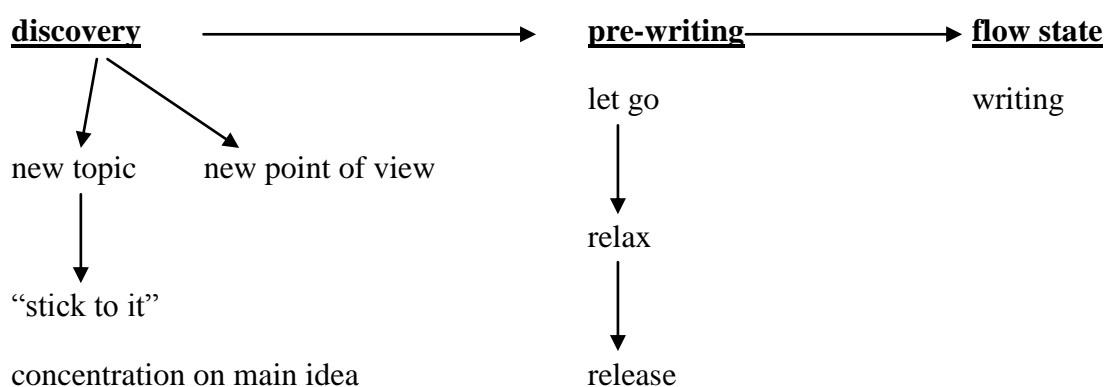


Figure 4.9: Ikram's Production Process

The fourth PSU writer, Jack who participated in this study had a very interesting discovery phase of determining a new topic or a new point of view on an interesting topic given, followed by sticking to the topic, concentrating on it deeply on the main idea. Then, in a pre-writing stage, this student “*let go,*” “*relaxed*” and “*released*” (Figure 4.10). This is a very characteristic of a flow state experience in which a person matched the challenge at hand so that the student neither experience anxiety nor boredom in the process of writing and has a clear attainable goal. This student then went on to the flow state and simply wrote not mentioning anything of further stage. The word “flow” seen in the model is in fact the word used by the student.



*Figure 4.10: Jack's Production Process*

#### 4.2.5.4 Integration of Writing Knowledge and Learning Skills

Integration of knowledge especially in writing a foreign language requires special talents from the learners because it involves more than just knowing a language. To write well, one needs to have problem-solving skills, self-learning management skills, willing to take risks in learning and trying novel experiences, and the most important of all, is the passion to learn. In some circumstances, knowledge and comments gained via discussions and reflections from peer and teacher's also requires special attention from the part of learners. All these characteristics fall under strategic knowledge, knowing "how." This type of knowledge is necessary to promote their life-long learning.

The students who were given comments at a superficial level such as grammar and vocabulary choices will not have to use all these skills. In contrast, students who were taught using process approach in writing often received comments that allow students to generate their new ideas and thinking skills. The student participants of this study are in both of these two categories. In particular, the PSU ones were struggling to form sentences till they could make a paragraph with its complete components: introduction, thesis statement, topic sentence, details and supporting

sentences, and conclusion. Though the data showed that one PSU student could explain the essence of writing as communication, other students were more concerned with linguistic accuracy. Besides, the type of comments received from their instructor were on grammatical correctness and thus did not need further deep thinking activities. This phenomenon will eventually affect their learning outcomes which are discussed in the next section.

Unlike the PSU students' learning strategies and experiences in writing, the WU students went through more challenging experiences in the course of writing development. From the very beginning of the course, they were asked to think and make decisions regarding their topic and genre of interest. As they engaged in the writing task, they develop other skills such as writing from a reader's perspective, discourse skills, presentation skills, organizational skills, and strategic skills concurrently. Thus, an integration of writing knowledge and other learning skills took place. Likewise, the nature of the course syllabus promoted their learning autonomy in such a way that they were responsible for both "what" and "how" to write their masterpiece. This is especially true when considering the course evaluation criteria as it stated that students' writing performance will be assessed in terms of their ability to integrate linguistic and strategic skills. The WU students thus were taught writing as well as other important skills which are inseparable with writing activities.

#### **4.2.6 Sense of Accomplishment as Consequences of the Strategies employed**

The consequences of the participants' strategies either through intrapersonal, interpersonal or writing production behaviours as described in the above section led to their feeling of accomplishment. The subcategories which were derived from the

data obtained indicated that these students had two types of accomplishment: material and psychological achievement.

#### **4.2.6.1 Material Achievement**

The first and probably the most wanted consequence of all endeavours that these students had while trying to develop their writing expertise was their accomplishment in terms of tangible materials. Their texts produced and grades obtained at the end of the semester were regarded as material achievement. However, due to differences in factors related to contexts, intervening conditions, and strategies of the two groups of the participants, their texts also varied between the groups. The WU participants who were also considered as more experienced writers, intervened with the process writing approach, could produce a short story as their masterpiece. The story contained approximately 33-40 pages in length with interesting topic, chapters and artwork. Among the three participants, one of them wrote a story called “Various Views,” the other wrote “The Beautiful Revolution,” and the third story entitled “The Present of the Present.” Each printed her own masterpiece in a form of book (short story) to keep for herself, submit to the teacher, offer to the researcher and some of her friends.

Another proof indicating that the materials they produced meant a lot to them was what reported by one WU participant in a preface section of her story book: *“This is what I want to show, many articles are written to share opinions about love and life”* (WS3, p.2). Certainly, this student did not just write to complete her course assignment or to obtain a passing grade, but she wrote with a clear purpose: *“to share opinions”* with the audience/readers.

On the contrary, the PSU participants who were less experienced writers and were taught mainly through product approach did not enjoy similar achievement as those from WU. The approach which made them to concentrate on the finished product but overlook the importance of activities while engaging in writing. Despite they had achieved the written products, they were done to complete the course requirement only (i.e. to finish the task assigned and to obtain a good grade). There was no other purpose of writing the text and not considering the reader or audiences. As a result, the students only had texts written for homework and class exercises. There was no other additional written works attempted by the PSU group except upon request.

With regards to the text length, the PSU students in their composition writing class, were practicing writing short sentences, combining sentences using cohesive devices, and forming a paragraph in their composition class. They did the same exercise as instructed by the teacher. Once before the data collection, they were asked to write an essay outline on one topic in an introduction, body and conclusion format. They had submitted the outline to the teacher and it was returned. However, they had never been asked to write an essay prior to the onset of the data collection. Therefore, the essay they wrote as a writing sample in this study was their first essay of the class. Surprisingly, they could write a good essay though we have noticed their concern on structural and linguistic formation throughout the writing process.

Initially, the researcher wanted to select one essay from the participants' course assignments as data on writing samples so that she would not have to intervene to get the samples. Nonetheless, the course did not require them to produce such an essay except probably the last week of the course. The researcher then, had to ask them to write an essay to be used as writing samples in this study. Thinking that they had not

experienced writing an English essay, the PSU participants were given freedom to choose any topic they like and write about it.

Unlike the writing samples received from WU students, the sentences, paragraphs and essays produced by the PSU group were ones that were written under time constraint. The students may not feel that they wrote to learn as much as the other group. In other word, they wrote to complete the task as being asked and to please the researcher. The PSU students may have the feeling of material achievement as that they could accomplish the tasks while the WU students' feeling was more on their ability to share what they wrote with others.

#### **4.2.6.2 Psychological Achievement**

As for the psychological achievement of the Thai students after using the strategies, it was found that their feeling of success was beyond verbal explanation. They experienced a true sense of pride which reflected in their writing as appeared in the preface section in a short story written by one WU student:

*“To be a student in English major at Walailak University is my dream that already came true. To own my masterpiece is one of my dreams that I just completed. “The Present of the Present” have been written to prove my diligence for improving my English skill and completing my dream. But “The Present of the Present” has been thought for YOU, my dear audiences”*  
(WS3, p.i)

This student voiced out her feeling to the world that to be a successful English language learner in Thailand requires special efforts. Most Thais do not like English because they think it is very difficult. As a result, the students who could enroll as

English majors especially at a recognized university felt proud of their special ability and talent. From the excerpt presented above, the student had two big dreams: to be an English major at WU and to own a masterpiece which she could achieve through her writing course in such contexts, with certain interventions and use of suitable strategies. Moreover, she confirmed that the task played a crucial role in the contribution of her English skill development as well as to fulfill her dreams. Nevertheless, she did not forget the social purpose of her writing as that has benefits to her audiences.

Another student from WU also informed that she enjoyed the current writing course because she learned a lot from the class. She wrote in one chapter of her story book: *“I have learned not only the registered courses but also I have learned the real experience about how to live life in the post of university student and how to control myself to learn without forcing”* (WS1, p. 30). This student believed that her university life at WU had encouraged her learning autonomy and independence whereby she could make decisions and manage her own learning without being forced. Besides, she appreciated that real learning experience she grasped through enrolling in the university courses could inspire life-long learning in her which can be used in her post-university life.

#### **4.3 The Grounded Theory of Thai English Majors’ Writing Skill Development**

Figure 4.11 below is the paradigm model of the present study which is the result of coding process as described above. In the model, two phenomena (categories) that **caused** the phenomenon of interest, “process of writing skill development” as the core phenomenon of this study, are factors that were internal and external to the participants. The **contextual conditions** covered four core categories: 1) educational

context, 2) students' characteristics, 3) teacher factor and 4) target language resources. The **intervening conditions** were instructional practices of the instructors which influenced actions or strategies to develop writing skills (the core phenomenon of this study) included: 1) teacher's role, 2) instructional approaches, 3) syllabus design, and 4) medium of instruction. The **strategies** the students used were termed "construction of writing knowledge which resulted from intervening conditions and context included: 1) intrapersonal construction, 2) interpersonal construction, 3) text production process, and 4) integration of writing knowledge and learning skills. In the next section, each of these major categories is elaborated extensively. The **consequences** of these strategies were their sense of



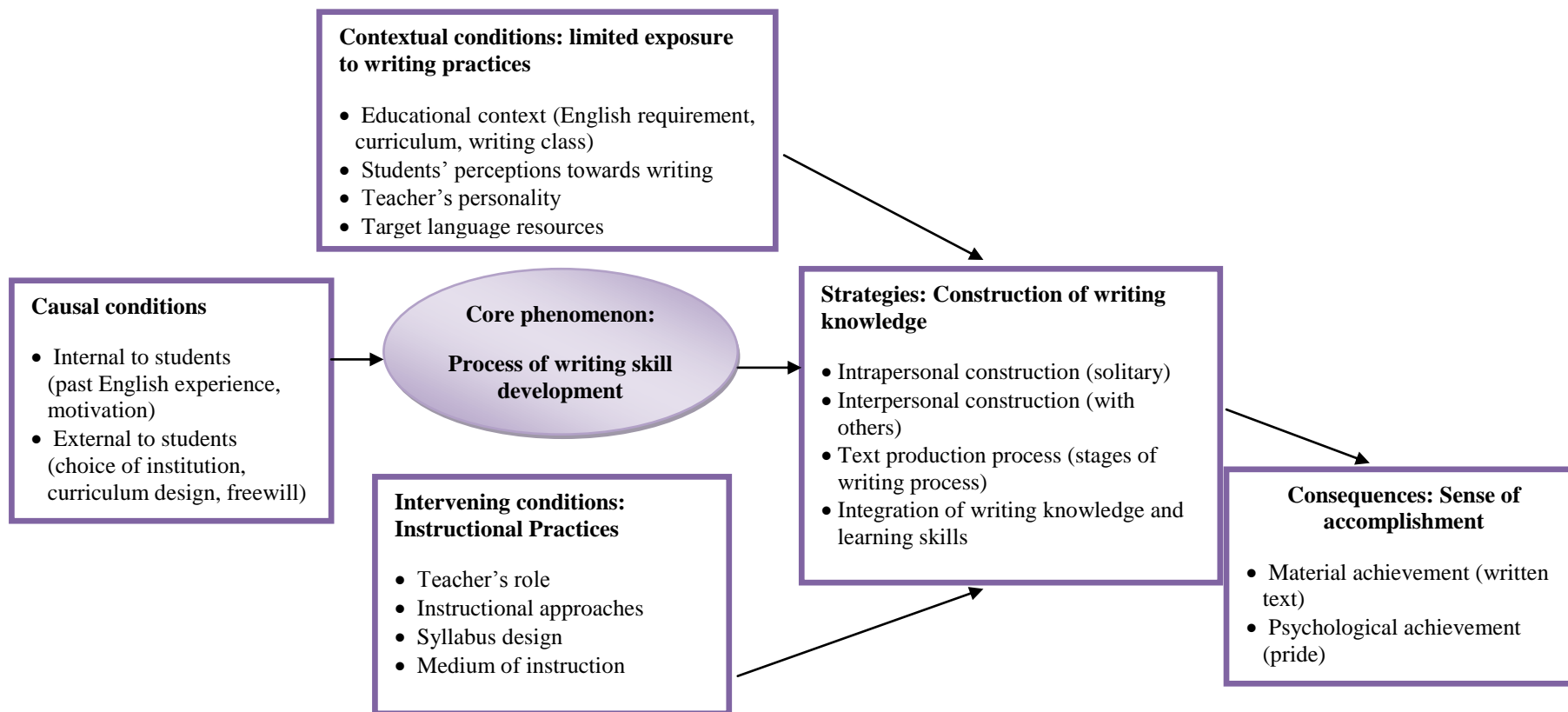


Figure 4.11: Grounded Theory of Thai English Majors' Writing Skill Development

accomplishment which included material and psychological achievement.

#### **4.4 The New Paradigm Model of Grounded Theory in Comparison with Existing Literature**

Table 4.3 (the Grounded Theory on the process of developing students' writing skills) presented earlier in this chapter demonstrates that much contribution from the part of the researcher in relation to the teaching of writing skills. This is because the existing literature merely deals with two major factors presented in the model as marked by "E" Expressivism, "C" for Cognitivism and "SC" for Social Constructivism in **intervening conditions** and **strategies**. The contributions by these three schools of thoughts however, are not in the form of interconnection among major factors as shown in the table but as one independent issue. For example, the Cognitivist-oriented researchers may only focus on intrapersonal construction at a time in conducting a writing study. Another example is that those who support the Social Constructivist theory may be only concerned about interactions between teacher and students in a writing classroom while neglecting other relevant issues which influence such interactions. Therefore, the link among five major factors: the causal conditions, the contextual conditions, the intervening conditions, the strategies, as well as the consequences which influence the process of Thai English majors' writing skill development together as a whole, is a new innovation as a result of this study.

#### **4.5 Reflections of the Findings**

As stated earlier in Chapter Three, this study employed Corbin and Strauss (2008)'s ten criteria to establish trustworthiness. These criteria include fit, applicability, concepts, contextualization of concepts, logic, depth, variation, creativity, sensitivity, and evidence of memo. The findings presented in the

previous sections meet all of these criteria. First, the findings of the present study are certainly fit because they reflect a description of the seven English majors who participated in the study (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Fit was also enhanced through triangulation and the use of multiple data sources which helped the researcher to present the analysis that was truly grounded in the data. To further test for fit, the researcher consulted one graduate student from PSU who used to be an English major at the university who said that the paradigm model was true and fit the context in which she had also experienced. Second, the applicability of the findings is enhanced when the new insights and explanations can be put into practice and policy (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). This study offers several new insights and clear explanations to English curriculum designers as well as English writing instructors at an undergraduate level in Thailand. Third, evaluating the theory from the “concepts” perspective includes assessing whether the concepts were developed in terms of their properties and dimensions so that there is a density and variation. The concepts emerged in this study were fully developed in terms of their properties and dimensions. For instance, the concept of “*learning*” in this study was developed in terms of its property of “*students’ commitment*” whereby its dimensions included *autonomous learning*, *dependent learning*, and others. Fourth, the quality of the findings is also enhanced by contextualization of concepts in this study which is evident in the category of contextual conditions presented in the paradigm model. Fifth, the findings were logical to the participants and to the researcher in such a way that there are several conditions which come into play in the process of writing development of Thai students. Moreover, variation in structural context also influences the strategies and outcome of leaning activities or strategies.

The sixth criterion to judge whether the findings are sound is the “depth” of the study. The detail and richness in the description of each category presented with their properties and dimensional variations in the result section was the core concern of a grounded theory was provided by the researcher (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Seven, the constant comparisons made by the researcher among the data obtained from the participants and two instructors lent some degree of variations in the findings. Eight, the findings exhibit high creativity because they offer new perspectives on understanding the Thai students’ writing skill development process which considered both individual endeavours as well as social and contextual supports. Ninth, during the data analysis, the researcher demonstrated her sensitivity to the participants as well as to the data at hand. In fact, in courtesy of her sensitivity, she was able to code, identify concepts and add variations to the categories without which no comprehensive relationships in the category could be developed. Finally, there is evidence in the creation of memos and diagrams to facilitate the researcher’s coding process (see Appendices P & Q, pages 304-305). Therefore, the findings of this study contain significant contribution. To a certain extent, this study incorporated all the ten elements mentioned above as many other grounded theory researchers do.

#### **4.6 Summary of the Chapter**

This chapter discussed results of the current study using grounded theory design. It began by presenting the demographic information of the participants. Later, the interrelated factors which contribute to the participants’ development of writing skills were explained. The **core phenomenon** of the study was process of writing skill development. The **conditions** which **caused** Thai students to initiate and then develop their writing skills included past learning experience, motivation (internal) and the nature of curriculum and English courses enrolled (external). These students

lived in a **context** where they had a very limited exposure to English language resources as well as writing activities. The specific contexts which were also referred to as **intervening conditions** were those related to instructional practices. Both context and instructional intervention influenced the students' strategies in their construction of writing knowledge. These strategies encompassed intrapersonal, interpersonal, text production process, as well as integration of writing knowledge and learning skills. Later in the chapter, the **outcomes** of using such strategies in two forms of accomplishment: material and psychological were presented. Towards the end of the chapter, the researcher provided reasons for why the findings of this study are significant by evaluating them using the ten criteria proposed by Corbin and Strauss (2008).

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This chapter is organized into the following sections: the aims of the study and a brief summary of the new generated theory of “Internalizing Writing Expertise” as it has been thoroughly discussed in Chapter Five, discussions on the main findings, conclusion, practical implications for the field of language education, strengths of the study, limitations of the study, and recommendations for future research.

This study aims at deriving a new theory on how Thai English majors develop their English writing expertise. Most studies done on the area of writing research have focused mainly on what and how students do in their writing classrooms (He, 2009; Dhanarattigannon, 2008; Tonthong, 1999). This study examined writing skill development in a more broader sense as learning the skill can occur at all times which does not limit to classroom settings only. Hence, it considers many other factors involved in the process of learning beyond classroom contexts. In courtesy of the grounded theory approach, the researcher was able to dig information in the data obtained in order to answer the following research questions which guided the present study:

1. How do the seven Thai EFL English majors develop their writing skills?
  - a. What inspire them to write in English?
  - b. How does the context they live in influence their writing development?
  - c. How does writing instruction in Thai contexts influence their development of writing expertise?
  - d. How do these Thai EFL English majors compose in English?

e. What are the outcomes of this development process?

### 5.1 Summary of the Theory of the Process of Writing Skill Development

This study has utilized a grounded theory methodology to describe the process of writing skill development of English majors in Thailand. Seven students and two writing instructors participated in the study. Among the group, four students and their writing instructor were from PSU. The other three students and their writing instructor were from WU. Five types of data were collected: classroom observation, student and teacher interviews, and written samples, think-aloud protocols, and course related materials. All of the data were analyzed, and a paradigm model or what is also called “a grounded theory” that describes the process of developing writing skill development was generated as presented earlier in Figure 4.11. The model shows causal and structural conditions which influenced the students’ learning behaviours and strategies in order to achieve the core phenomenon (category) of the study: process of developing writing skills. The consequences of using such strategies were also displayed in the model.

Two factors that urged the seven Thai English majors to begin their writing were internal and external to them. The internal factors included their strong motivation to explore more about the language and their past English learning experience. In contrast, the external factor was the English programme chosen by students to enroll at the tertiary level which was a significant driving force to allow these Thai students to begin writing. The **context** which influenced the students’ learning behaviours included their educational context, perceptions towards writing, their teachers’ personality and the availability of English language resources, all of which were subsumed under *limited exposure to writing practices*. The **intervening** conditions were those related to instructional practices which encompassed the teacher’s role,

instructional approaches, syllabus design and the medium of instruction. The development of writing skills as the **central** phenomenon was manifested through their actions and interactions which were called *construction of writing knowledge*. The construction was in four different forms: intrapersonal, interpersonal, production process, and integration of writing knowledge and other learning skills. The main consequences of this phenomenon were students' sense of accomplishment which expressed through material and psychological achievement.

When analysing the theory further, it was found that writing development patterns of seven Thai students differed greatly according to their educational and instructional contexts. In other words, the conditions which WU participants had experienced in the process of writing development differed from that of PSU participants. It was found that the WU cases were more experienced writers than the PSU ones due to several conditions which have been discussed in Chapter Four. The remaining part of this chapter discusses further how these participants with different degree of writing experiences went through the journey of writing development phases.

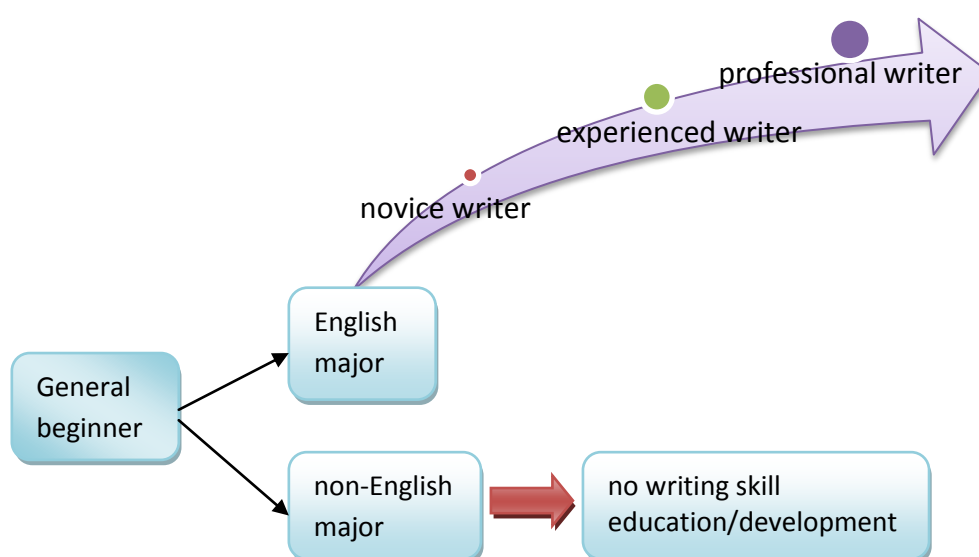
## **5.2 Discussion of the Findings**

This study attempts to answer one major research question that is: how do the seven Thai English majors develop their writing skills? Though its main concern was on the process of writing skill development which includes actions and interactions between and among the participants involved, it is illogical to just report the process of such development without mentioning its contexts and other relevant elements emerged in the process. The discussion on each sub-question under the one research question, though written separately, may overlap as it progresses depending on aspects of categories described.



### 5.2.1 Thai Students' Development in Writing Skills

Thai students' growth and development in writing skills can be explained in terms of writing skill development continuum. On the one end of the continuum indicates the time when learners begin to study English as beginners while on the other indicates time when students become professional writers. However, at certain points in the continuum, students may move from being beginners to be novice writers, to be experienced writers and then to be professional writers respectively provided that certain conditions are involved (see Figure 5.1). This means that such a process may cease or evolve as the contexts in which students live in change. The structural conditions in which each of these groups interacted vary accordingly.



*Figure 5.1: Writing Skill Development Continuum*

The English beginners in Thailand can be defined as those who just begin to learn or have learned English for a number of years but still have difficulties to communicate

in the language. The new generation of Thai students is introduced to English early in their life, at about six or seven. Then they continue to learn English throughout their years in primary up to higher educational level. Nevertheless, the way of English being taught to them is so much about grammar-translation or the traditional method. This is consistent with what has been reported earlier by Foley (2005) many years ago. It may be because Thai teachers, who in the past were once taught through this method would probably teach their students the same way. Students were not provided much opportunity to explore and learn to use language in real life situations. The contents of teaching were mainly about reading English texts and translate them to Thai or teaching grammar rules. As a consequence, the vast majority of Thai graduates did not know how to use the language in their careers. In fact, after the latest education reformation, English teachers and instructors in all educational levels are encouraged to change their teaching styles and strategies from a traditional approach to a more productive one. It is however, with limited number of teaching professionals and skilled teachers in the country making the English language teaching in Thailand continues to be less effective. Therefore, it is not a surprise to consider some university undergraduates in Thailand as “English beginners.”

Why is it so important for the researcher to mention and present these beginners’ characteristics while the central issue here is about knowing how Thai students develop as writers? It is because Thai students who have become either novice or experienced writers as shown in the continuum were once beginners of the language for at least twelve years. However, it was not the factor of time that these beginners will change their status to the next stage in the continuum. There are internal and external factors (**causal condition**) which contributed to Thai students’ English

language development from beginners to a more advanced level called “novice writers.” These factors will be discussed below.

#### **5.2.1.1 Motivation**

Students who showed positive interest in learning and discovering more about English will think of ways to increase their knowledge in this aspect. In Thailand, there are not many opportunities for students to choose. Most tutorials and extra English classes offered outside formal classes mainly focus on either grammar or conversation. The contents are very often taught in these classes were similar to those students who have been taught at school several years ago. Thus, students who possess strong passions for the language will decide to explore it more by enrolling in English programme after graduating from high schools. In contrast, students who have negative attitudes towards the language are more likely to remain at the beginner level. Even if they are required to register some English foundation courses at a university level, they do it unwillingly. In other words, when students do not like English, they will think that the external circumstance forces them to learn in order for them to graduate. This will also affect the way they behave in their English classes as well as their performances. Krashen (1982) would explain that these students experience high affective filter whereby they develop low motivation and self-esteem which resulting in slow language learning development.

#### **5.2.1.2 English Programme**

The findings revealed that all the participants in this study started to know writing after being required to enroll in a specific number of writing courses offered in their field of study (English). In Thailand, students who enrolled in English programme must be those who did well in academics and were very serious about English. On

the other hand, other undergraduate programmes offered at the universities did not require students to write at all. Thus, when students are in the English programme, it also means that they get the opportunities to know what writing is all about. The English majors in this study were provided a study plan by the faculty with a list of courses to register in each semester throughout their years at the university. They registered their first writing course in the second year at the university as guided by the faculty. However, this writing class could not begin with any types of academic texts, rather it began from sentence construction and combination as it was their first experience in the writing world.

### **5.2.2 Group Differences**

Even though all the student participants had a very limited exposure to writing resources in their own learning context, the results showed that the students from two different universities exhibited different patterns of learning behaviours and construction of writing knowledge between them i.e. between the two university groups. The PSU students who were just enrolling their second writing course at the university were regarded as novice writers in this study. The three WU student participants on the other hand, were enrolling in their third, fourth and fifth writing course, respectively, were regarded as the more experienced writers. The terms “novice” and “(more) experienced” writers were mentioned recurrently throughout this chapter. Some other researchers differentiate their participants as skilled and unskilled writers (Zamel, 1983), good and poor writers (Sasaki & Hirose, 1996), or novice and expert writers (McCutchen, 2011).

Referring to the new theory generated in this study as presented in the earlier chapter, this study found that the novice and experienced writers’ construction of

writing knowledge (**Strategies**) was strongly influenced by their limited exposure to writing as well as instructional practices (**Intervening condition**). Group differences became obvious especially in terms of writing input and production throughout the process of their development. It seems that in many aspects of what accounts for good writers, the WU students as who were more experienced were better privileged than the other group. This may be because the kind of instructional interventions they received at WU were more useful and practical to writing apprenticeship than the ones the novices received at PSU. Consequently, these instructional practices resulted in variation in the participants' endeavours to develop writing expertise. What follows are further discussions on characteristics of novice and experienced writers based on the findings related to their construction of writing knowledge (**Strategies**).

### **5.2.3 Novice Writers: Input Phase**

In the course of learning to write, the novices were influenced by four factors which determined the type of input received. These factors include the role of L1 in learning writing skills, knowledge and power versus obedience and inferiority, the course and writing development, and social construction of writing knowledge of the novices. Each of the factors is described below.

#### **5.2.3.1 The Role of L1 in Learning Writing Skills**

Two points can be made in terms of the novice's L1 interaction with their English writing development: L1 writing proficiency and L1 use to accomplish writing tasks. These students exhibited a satisfactory level of writing ability in spite of their lack of L1 writing experience. The findings are thus consistent with the study done by Zamel (1983) who found that ESL students' writing was neither influenced by their

linguistic proficiency nor L1. However, the findings did not support Sasaki and Hirose's (1996) study who reported that L1 writing ability of the research participants influenced their L2 writing ability. Nevertheless, it is not certain that such improvement was also a result of factors other than the L1 too. This is because L1 is not the only factor to contribute to students' writing development.

In terms of L1 use in the course of writing development, it can be concluded that Thai language played a crucial role in the writing class of these novice writers. Their instructor used English in her entire lesson. She believed that the students felt uncomfortable and did not understand if she used English as a medium instead of L1 in writing class. The limited exposure to English experience of these novice writers was obvious. Outside class, they did not have the opportunity to use English, but inside class, the instructor used L1 who also made the whole class used L1. As a result, these novice writers received limited English language input inside the classroom which might slow their language learning development in a long run.

#### **5.2.3.2 Knowledge and Power vs. Obedience and Inferiority**

The novice writers and their instructor in this study held the belief that the instructor is the one who has the most knowledge. This limits students' learning independence which they should be in control and be responsible for their own learning. Through class observation, the researcher can infer that these novice writers were not very active in their writing class. The idea is strongly supported by an interview with their instructor who was also responsible for making her students continue to be more passive learners. She absolutely controlled the class power and acted as a knowledge provider to her students. This authoritative power is evident in the interview when she defined a language learner as: *the one who should acquire knowledge to be*

*successful, be well-prepared, pay full attention of what the teacher said then go back to revise and practice.*” There are two important points to be noted here. First, the phrase “*pay full attention to what the teacher said*” suggests the pattern of knowledge transformation from the teacher to her learners. The teacher had full responsibility on what and how much students will receive in terms of language input. She expected that the students were obedient to her. This also means that students were not given full freedom to share, argue, and express their opinions about everything related to the class. She was probably the only source of writing knowledge for these students. Furthermore, throughout all types of data, the researcher did not notice other writing resources that students used to improve the skills. Even the student who had an experience of being an exchange student in the USA, he did not mention better learning resources to help his writing apart from the teacher. Second, the phrase also imposed students’ obligation to pay full attention to the teacher or else learning probably could not occur. Looking further at the other words after the phrase in the same sentence: “*then go back to revise and practice,*” we see a unique input pattern as listen (pay full attention), try to understand what she said in class (go back to revise) and imitate (practice) it.

The findings indicated that elements of collectivist behaviours such as respecting seniors, deferring to authority as well as respecting the group tradition as found in studies done by Denevey (2005), Dhanarattiganon (2008) and Hayes (2008) still persist in the present classrooms in Thailand. This phenomenon may lead to students’ slow progress in writing skill development as they may not be willing to express ideas freely and confidently throughout the learning process.

### 5.2.3.3 Writing Course and Writing Development

Writing course is very crucial to contribute to writing development of all novice writers. Though learners autonomy should be promoted in all contexts, the formal class should equip them with writing skills and strategies to not only be able to complete the tasks assigned in the classroom but also to maintain strategies which promote lifelong learning. This study found that novice writers did not have adequate chances to develop their writing ability. The writing course in which they experienced was form and structure-oriented. They were not required to write an essay until during the last two weeks of the semester. This makes them believe that grammar and forms must come before one can write. It is therefore, not surprising to know that the data obtained from the questionnaire confirmed this belief. When asked about problems in writing, these novice writers mentioned that they encountered grammatical problems and followed by vocabulary inadequacy. McCutchen (2011) also reported that novice writers in his study are still learning to control their linguistic production and gave little or no attention to global concern in writing.

Another interesting finding of this study was that one respondent assimilated speaking with writing skills. He mentioned that “*Writing is like speaking, if we can speak, we can write.*” This student certainly thought that writing is simply put the ideas down on the paper while in fact, it is a far more complex activity.

As for the training of writing skills, the novice writers in this study were not trained to be critical thinkers. The way they were taught did not promote problem-solving skills. They did not need to make much effort to acquire more language input apart from what being assigned by the instructor. Even though the tasks assigned were in



the form of individual, pair or group works, they were all about trying to understand the contents in/of each lesson. There were no other extra or independent efforts by these writers on acquiring writing skills beyond classroom contexts.

#### **5.2.3.4 The Social Construction of Writing Knowledge**

The social construction of writing knowledge of these novice writers was very limited. To them, writing involves merely the cognitive process on trying to accomplish the task at hand by themselves as guided by the instructor. The results of the study revealed that students did not have opportunities to discuss or solve writing problems with peers or writing professionals. Though they sought help from the instructor while occasionally from peers, it was merely about what related to grammar not things to develop them as writers. Even though they were given two hours a week to meet their instructor after class, these students did not show their willingness to talk about writing problems with their instructor. Moreover, other resources around them such as library books and technology could not help to improve their writing skills. Even when the teacher said that she used an online social network such as Facebook to assist their interaction, it was only used between her and the students to instruct; or as a means of communication but not to assist their writing skills.

#### **5.2.4 Writing Strategies Employed by the Novices: Production Phase**

Results pertaining to the participants' writing behaviors, strategies, and production process as well as figures to illustrate stages in which each participant's went through while trying to accomplish a writing assignment were described in the last chapter. From the findings through interview with students who were later categorized as novice writers, we notice that they were not aware of the importance

of using appropriate strategies in writing process. They were not taught strategies for a good writing and thus they did not know the important stages necessary in writing production such as planning, drafting, revising, editing and display. Although we see instances of these stages in their production process, they did not have right understanding of what should be done in each of these stages. For example, at a planning stage, the students started the task by thinking that their essay must have three parts: introduction, body, and conclusion and then think what information relevant for each of the category. Another example is that the strategies employed by Jack who defined planning as gathering and selection of information or contents which were subsequently put into a written format and that planning should come before writing. To him, a perfect planning before writing justifies a good writing. This linear process in writing production is common among less skilled writers as confirmed by Raimes (1985).

It is true that in public speaking for example, we need to plan and that to relax before deliver our speech because it is quite impossible to revise and edit while/after speaking. Therefore, planning is important prior to the oral presentation. As a result, it is not surprising that Jack thought after planning we could write well and with flow. The finding on necessitating a well and complete plan before starting to write is consistent with what was found in Zamel's (1983) least skill writer participant. Zamel documented that the least skilled writer in his study worried about her inability to make a plan which according to her, could result in inability to write well. The overemphasis on the planning stage of the fourth novice writer of this study was therefore prevented him to exhibit other activities during production process such as drafting, revising, editing, paying attention to the content, audience and text organization throughout the entire process. The activities are proven crucial

in writing process and are the practices of expert writers (Hirose & Sasaki, 1994; Zamel, 1984; Kamimura, 2000).

### **5.2.5 Role of Feedback on the Novice Writers' Development**

The right and appropriate feedback and comments gained from peer, teachers, and professionals can enhance students' writing skills (Goldstein & Conrad, 1990; Peyton et al., 1994; Carroll et al., 1996; Li & Hamel, 2003; Tricia, 2005; Schallert, 2008). As mentioned earlier in this section, these novice writers did not have the chances to present and share their works with others except their course instructor. Unfortunately, the instructor stressed so much on the product approach of teaching writing. The end products were evaluated instead of their learning process and strategies to accomplish the assigned tasks. Even though the instructor asked them to submit the two drafts before the final one, her two comments and examination criteria on those drafts were ideas and grammar matters. This means that knowledge-telling and form correctness was the central issue in her writing class. Thus, these novice writers were punished for each grammatical mistake through mark deduction. Therefore, they did not learn the essence of writing at this phase.

It seems that the instructor of these novice writers may not be aware on the importance of the process writing approach in writing instruction and thus overlook the importance of peer and teacher conferences for feedback. Even though she claimed that she never experienced writing training, Peyton et al. (1994) suggest that she should study writing theory and practices, work on her own writing as well as with other peer teachers and get access to resources. In addition, she should understand that in writing class, students need two kinds of responses: response to their needs in writing and response to develop recognition (Peyton et al., 1994).

Subsequently, she could improve her teaching approach which eventually affects her students' learning strategies and writing performance.

In the last two sections, the researcher presented general characteristics of Thai beginners of English which is considered the first step which can influence their decisions to whether or not become a good English writer. Next, the discussions on how these beginners reached to a more advanced level of writing proficiency were thoroughly discussed. In the next section, the researcher will explain conditions which account for Thai students' further development in writing skills to a stage called "more experienced writers."

#### **5.2.6 Becoming More Experienced Writers**

This study found that there were two conditions where Thai English majors can upgrade themselves to be experienced writers. First, the type of university they chose to enroll English programme was one factor to contribute to their potentiality of writing development. To be more specific, the curriculum design of an English programme in each university in Thailand was very different from one another. In some universities, there were not many English writing courses offered apart from paragraph writing and composition writing courses. While in some others, several writing courses among other language skills, were listed either as core or elective courses for their students to select. This is not to say that all English majors at a university where they were given options to many writing courses were experienced writers. The next condition which allowed these English majors to move to the next step as experienced writers also depended on whether the students chose writing courses as well as the number of courses taken. Some English majors who disliked writing would not enroll in many writing courses, and thus were not experienced

writers. On the contrary, they could become more experienced after enrolling in three or more writing courses in the programme. The learning behaviours of these experienced writers will be discussed below.

#### **5.2.6.1 Experienced Writers: Input Phase**

The role of input is crucial in the development of Thai student writers (Ellis, 1985). The writing inputs of the more experienced writers in this study were from various sources. First, these experienced writers had taken at least three important writing courses before joining the “Topics in Writing” course. For example, they had studied courses like “Writing Strategies,” “From Sentence to Paragraph,” and “College Composition.” All of these courses have provided them a good basis for writing proficiency. The students already understood English sentence constructions, techniques and strategies of writing before enrolling the current course. Second, compared to those novice writers, the experienced writers were more privileged with a better course syllabus design to immerse themselves in writing experiences for the real audience and purposes. The course promoted them to be independent learners whereby they had to be responsible for their own learning. They began from choosing a topic and genre of interest, to generating ideas, search for information, solving-writing problems, presenting their ideas and preparing drafts for the class to the submitting of their masterpieces and portfolios. The class activities revolved around the process of accomplishing the written task and not so much on the final product. In fact, the full marks allotted for the end product were only fifteen percent out of the total course assessment scores. This certainly allowed them to learn and improve their writing proficiency throughout the process.

Third, this study revealed that published English materials of different genres including short stories, autobiographies, magazines, the Internet and technology played crucial role in assisting these experienced writers in many ways. For example, students can use the Internet to search for information, try to understand the meaning of genres and their purposes, and the writing conventions of each genre. Fourth, compared to the novice writers found in this study, the experienced writers lived in a better environment where they had more opportunities to use the target language not just in the class with their teachers. Sometimes they could talk to foreign teachers and friends after class which could also help them to improve their use of language in real life situations. Next, the role of peer and teacher feedback was the most important source of input to enhance their writing skills. These students benefited more from comments and feedback acquired through collaboration with peers and class presentation. Further discussion on types of feedback these students received is placed under the following category of social construction of writing skill development below.

#### **5.2.6.2 Social Construction of Writing Skill Development**

The social environment and interactions were found to be significant in language learning and development (Bakhtin, 1973; Gredler, 1997). The findings of this study indicated that such interactions also contributed to the development of writing skills of the experienced writers in this research. These interactions took several forms. First, these writers had experienced studying English writing courses with instructors who were native speakers of English and with a PhD holder who were experts in writing which was not the case for the novice writers. Students' interaction with their teacher or what is sometimes referred to as student – teacher conference has proven beneficial in writing pedagogy (Goldstein & Conrad, 1990; Gredler, 1997; Meng,

2007). The kind of interactions with writing professionals which includes negotiation for meaning can result in the students' writing performance either directly or indirectly. Second, unlike the novice writers, these students had opportunities to discuss their work with peers, and foreigners apart from their teachers.

During the topic selection stage, they discussed the idea of genres with friends prior to decide a topic. Then they were given five minutes to present their writing plans to the class. Everyone listened to the presentation then the class (including the instructor) gave comments and suggestions about the plan. Later, the students made some changes according to the class comments. Since there were four presentations of writing progress during the semester, this means that the class fostered students' interaction with people around them to establish solid writing knowledge and skills. The students did not limit their thinking about writing activities within themselves but with other peers and the instructor. The data in this study did not show this kind of interaction in the case of novice writers. Besides, the interaction between the students and the text they read in order to understand the task assigned was also considered useful in the process of writing development. As they read, they needed to understand the text and the purpose of writing from both the writer and reader's perspective in order for them to be able to produce their own texts.

The findings on social interactions as to construct writing knowledge in the process of writing development were also discussed in Yuknis's (2010) study. She found that students will only make revisions after being requested by their teacher. However, it is important to note that Yuknis constructed the teaching scenario where teachers were asked to provide feedback to the students and thus not purely naturalistic. On the other hand, the dynamic interactions among members of the academic community in the students' learning environment found in the present study were

from a natural setting without any prior intervention regarding the teaching activities. This helps the instructors, researchers and educators to reflect on what is going on in the process of teaching writing to Thai students in the country. Consequently, they can provide appropriate assistance and support to improve the students learning outcomes in the future.

#### **5.2.6.3 Experienced Writers: Production Phase**

Writing is known as a productive skill which requires frequent practices, and this practice too can act as valuable inputs for EFL learners. The experienced writers in this study were those who had some experiences in learning to compose English texts and had enrolled in more than two writing courses. The findings in relation to the process of writing uncovered that the production phase of the three experienced writers in this study are process-oriented learners. They experienced all the stages of writing process: planning, drafting, revising and editing in a recursive manner and then publication. The stages which great researchers and educators confirm to be important and effective strategies in achieving writing goals (Ransdell & Barbier, 2002; Flower & Hayes, 1981; Williams, 2005).

These writers were more privileged as they were taught writing strategies, paragraph writing, and writing several texts before enrolling in the semester when conducting the data collection. They learned not only linguistic knowledge but also other relevant knowledge necessary for writing expertise. They match McCutchen's (2011) descriptions on the characteristics of good writers in the process of development of their writing expertise. McCutchen claims that there are two components inherent in them during this process: fluent language generation process; and extensive knowledge relevant to writing. The latter include topic knowledge and



genre knowledge. All of these writing components were found in the experienced writers of the present study.

The English writing discourse community such as peer sharing, collaboration, presentation, interactions with peers and the teacher was established and made available throughout the writing process until they could publish their masterpiece. As they began to write at the planning stage, they thought about the purpose and the audience and how to convey thoughts to the reader successfully. At the drafting stage, they wrote on multiple drafts before they could produce the final text. Two of these writers first drafted in L1 then translated it to English. This means that they thought in their L1 and would not write in L2 until they were sure that they had got all the main components of writing appropriate to their selected genres. They also made use of modern media and printed materials around them to support their writing. These students felt they are writing for themselves and their prospective readers more than just for the course. Thus, they were more motivated to do the task and tried to offer the best they could. For more detailed explanation on how participants who were labeled as experienced writers compose their texts can be referred to in Chapter Five, on the WU students' production process.

The social constructivist features (Gredler, 1997) were also found in the strategies of these experienced writers as they were interacting in the social milieu of the Internet with their friends, and instructors, used search engines to find writing and read writing of authors of related to their subject of interest as well as search practical tips on how to write. Their dynamic interplays with the technology stimulated their discovery phase experiences. They showed significant social constructivist approach in the writing as they were very focused on the purpose of their writing and their audience (Kamimura, 2000). They also exhibited a recursive process of writing with

editing activities throughout the writing process. They did in fact used multiple strategies in their writing process and were concerned about the audience. During the writing phase, the role of technology for these EFL students for one in particular was quite active with the self-contained software packages which include grammar checking, word processing, spell checking and text analysis. These tools are significant to meeting their feeling of being in control during the writing process.

#### **5.2.6.4 Flow State Experience in the Act of Writing**

The researcher has discovered a new phenomenon which was not explicitly explained by early researchers in the field of language instruction and writing process in particular. This phenomenon is called “flow state experience” coming naturally within the learners themselves while trying to accomplish the written task. Most of us are familiar with two production components which distinguish expert writers from poor ones such as what is claimed by McCutchen (2011). These components are fluent language generation process and possess relevant knowledge to writing. The first entails text production skills which include content selection, lexical retrieval, and syntactic process. The latter is about one’s knowledge of genre and writing skills. Some other scholars may refer to them as linguistic and strategic knowledge.

This study revealed that in the production process, the experienced writers to some extent, engaged in flow state experiences. The flow state is a state like positive capacity of human being that can be cultivated. It is longer lasting than momentary positive feeling or present mood (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997). It is a state like experience that many scientists, painters, computer programmers experience during their peak moment as well as Olympic athletes during their peak performances. This flow state experience can be cultivated by having a quiet environment for the

student, closing the telephone and distracting factors creating a safe and pleasant environment for the student in which he or she may immerse himself in the experience and have a self motivation in the writing process.

Students who were not focused on the surface structure of their written text but were more process oriented, will feel engaged in an experience of flow state whereby they are neither bored nor stressed by the experience of writing. They will have an intense concentration focused on what they are doing in the moment. It may be a free-writing or an emergent and complete writing of experience. They immersed completely with what they were doing and “lost their self consciousness,” absorbing and immersing into the experience and their inner feeling in the state of control. The flow experience was obvious in Wafa who had a great state feeling of being in control when using technology and computer for the quick response, the grammar check and the other easy things. During this state, the student may have an experience of time or temporal distortion such as they feel they wrote it so quickly or it took a very long time and then realized that in fact it was not a very long time.

The flow state experience indicates one’s expertise in trying to complete the task at hand. For expert writers, the state arises when they are able to execute the production process with little thought or less time consumed because their working memories have become routinised and automatised (Swain, 1985). When it becomes routine, the skills necessary are always available to be used any time. The experienced writers in this study seemed to understand the higher level of writing skills such as paying attention to content, audience and organization as writing experts do (Kamimura, 2000). This attention was however not always available at all time during the production process. This is evident in their revision stage when they did

not revise at their discourse level but checking grammar and sentence structures instead before submitting the final draft.

The experienced writers in this study demonstrated certain level of flow experience which was being inculcated in students who later felt intrinsically rewarded. This is evident as noted in the syllabus of WU whereby the teacher called the final product a masterpiece, encouraging the students to completely immerse themselves through entire semester to produce one major piece of writing, concentrating deeply on the audience which requires much self-reflection and self consciousness. The students who engaged in a flow state during the writing process and the active discovery phase often were being influenced by the situation of seeking and discovering of information via the Internet which is the modern phenomenon for L2 writers or clearing the mind and brainstorming followed by free-writing or finding a new point of view. Later, they concentrated deeply or thought about the benefit to oneself and others, enjoyed the selection of the topic, sought and learnt actively from others' writing and followed by brainstorming and further searching for information. The students certainly showed curiosity as well as consistency and a low self-centeredness during the experience. This means that they were deeply immersed in the experience of writing. For example, they felt engaged in the more active discovery process and the post-writing process for presentation and display. In addition, they attempted to envision how their writing can be integrated into the mainstream of English writing. Finally, they had a sense of achievement as they completed their work.

### 5.2.7 Professional Writers

Professional writers are those who take writing as their professions. These people may include journalists, editors, and academics. The writing experts shape the contents and text presentation by taking into account the potential readers fully in their minds. This phenomenon is commonly observed in the experienced writers in this study that they frequently mentioned about the use and benefits of their writing. However, it was their first experience in trying to anticipate readers when writing a text and this awareness was not available to them at all times in the process. Thus, they were not yet considered professional. As a result, the data in this study did not show any participants who were in the category of professional writers. Nevertheless, these experienced writers have the potential to develop themselves to become professionals as they seemed to understand the concept of writing. They grasped the idea of three major components involved in the minds of expert writers: author, text, and reader representation (Kellogg, 2008) even though it was not always available in their working memory throughout their writing production.

A summary of the development phases of Thai English majors' writing skills is shown in Table 5.1 below.

*Table 5.1: The Characteristics of Writing Development Phases of Thai English Majors*

No.	Development phases	Characteristics	Factors contribute to the next level
1.	General English beginners	- study English mostly on reading, Vocabulary, grammar and translation to L1 - no writing course	- motivation to learn English - major in English at a university
2.	Novice writers	- had enrolled in less than two writing courses at the university, new writers <b>Input:</b> - studied in the class that the teacher used L1 as a medium of instruction - experienced high power distance in class - linguistic focus	- type of university enrolled as an English major, and curriculum design - number of writing courses taken

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- product-oriented</li> <li>- less opportunity to receive peer and teacher review</li> </ul> <b>Output:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- unfamiliar with writing strategies or writing as process</li> <li>- only wait for teacher's feedback</li> </ul>	
3.	Experienced writers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- had a writing experience from at least three writing courses at the university</li> </ul> <b>Input:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the nature of syllabus design: empowering students to become independent and introduce them writing as process and to a writing discourse community</li> <li>- incorporated modern media and printed materials to assist learning and writing skills</li> <li>- better exposure to the environment where the target language is used: inside &amp; outside class contexts</li> <li>- process-oriented</li> <li>- use social interactions to construct writing knowledge and development such as interactions with teachers, peers, foreigners to talk and discuss about writing</li> <li>- had opportunity to study with teachers who were more experienced than that of the novice</li> </ul> <b>Output:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- experienced flow state in writing production</li> <li>- possessed higher level of writing skills: paying attention to contents, organization, audience and presentation of the product to public or display as experts do</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- continue to practice</li> <li>- pursue higher education that needs extensive writing</li> </ul>
4.	Professional writers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- write with flow</li> <li>- work with printed media organizations</li> </ul> <p><i>None of the participants were grouped in this category</i></p>	

### 5.2.8 Writing Instruction: Strategies and Practices

The next major finding of this research is regarding instructional strategies in influencing the students' learning. The WU teacher incorporated process writing approach as recommended by a large number of past writing researchers (e.g. Goldstein & Conrad, 1990; Leki, 1995; Tonthong, 1999; Jarunthawatchai, 2001; Lavelle & Zuercher, 2001; Li & Hamel, 2003; Scott & Vitale 2003; Chaisuriya, 2003; Hedge, 2005; Dhanarattigannon, 2008; Tangpermpoon, 2008; He, 2009; Chaisiri, 2010; Yuknis, 2010; Srichanyachon, 2011; & Spencer, 2012) in her class.

This teacher extensively encouraged the students to engage in the experience of writing and considering the audience deeply. They were specifically taught the technique of paraphrasing which is very useful as it reduces plagiarism or e-cheating which occurred in many university settings. All students indicated their enhancement of and improved language acquisition processes as well as effectiveness in written expressions. She was creating many pre-requisites for flow state experiences. She emphasized many types of activities from lectures and independent study, consultation and presentation. Presentation is an important process for EFL learners as noted by Mohamed Nor and Abd Samad (2006) in their last stage of writing process. Thus, the instructor from WU was preparing them for making achievement and success through the writing process.

The PSU instructor's teaching style on the other hand, was still influenced by the traditional or pre-process writing approaches which emphasize sentence and discourse structures of writing such as the Controlled Composition and the Current-Traditional Rhetoric approaches (Reid, 1993 & Hyland, 2003) as outlined earlier in Chapter Two. She was more systematic towards writing by emphasizing introduction-body-conclusion. This is to be noted that the course at PSU was aimed at essay writing. This instructor emphasized extensively thesis statement development, outlining and revision. It was a more systematic product-oriented approach yet if the students immerse themselves in the process, they too could have a flow or positive experience in writing.

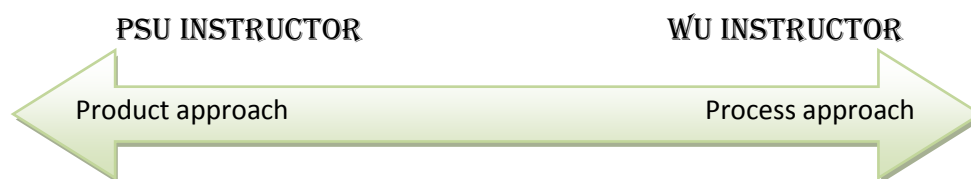
Krashen's (1982) claims that L2 language learners' emotions were adjustable filter that permits or hinder the input acquired. It is clear that both instructors were using the Affective-Filter Hypothesis (Krashen, 1982) to motivate their students and reduce their anxiety as well as increase their self-confidence. The PSU instructor

worked to keep a calm classroom environment. Eighty per cent of the students felt comfortable and pleased with the environment. The WU instructor provided the setting for self confident development as the students created their masterpieces and raised high motivation to offering a feedback. In addition, as the students made their selection of the topic, they cultivated a good self-image and they did many expressionistic feature of writing. These students have low level of anxiety as they were achieving their L2 learning objectives. Thus, the instructors in this study minimized their stress and anxiety and created a relaxed learning atmosphere.

With regards to the expressivist approach (Berlin, 1988), the WU instructor engaged writing as an art and creative act with the discovery of the true self as an important product. This is indicated in the writing themes of these students in their masterpieces which included topic of intend to add interest of young adults such as writing on the topic of love, or the meaning of life as well as reflections on their childhood or relationship with their friends. All of these topics generally provide opportunity for students to have discovery of their true self. Thus, their writing practices are encouraged. While it may be considered that this is an approach that is suitable or appropriate for more advanced writers, it worked very well in the context of undergraduate students. While this research inherently determined to describe how students were struggling to achieve their writing skills in English, it was a very interesting finding to know that some of the students in fact were not expressing themselves as quite happily. For some of the students mainly from PSU, there was a cognitivist approach of thinking and problem-solving.

The extent to which each instructor positioned herself in a range of writing instructional methodology differed as shown in Figure 5.2.





*Figure 5.2: Position of Writing Instructors in the Range of Writing Instructional Methodology*

The instructor of PSU used primarily a product writing approach while the instructor of WU or of the experienced writers in this study, employed primarily a process writing approach. The students at the WU class had a more positive response and higher success in their writing experience when compared to the students at PSU English course. Indeed, there was at times a fifty percent failure rate among the students even though the teacher was working to create a positive learning experience. The process-oriented English majors were active in the discovery phase. Many entered into flowing experience during the writing phase and then having an active revising phase. It can be noted that the educational context through workshopping and role modeling at WU had a positive influence on the English students' writing skill' development. In contrast, the PSU instructor had a lack positive impact on the student in the social context because of the general feeling could be English majors as "*pushing them*" and non-English majors as "*bearing them.*" While the instructor at WU had a more easygoing approach to the experience, it could be possible that the WU writing class in comparison to the PSU one differed and that influenced the teacher's feelings: feeling during the teaching process and feeling about the students during the teaching process.

One interesting observation that is inherent in the findings of the study is about the depth and breadth of knowledge offered by the English programme in Thailand. Most of the courses were designed in such a way that students just begin to develop their English language skills in four areas: reading, writing, listening and speaking skills. As a consequence, it is common to see fundamental language courses like Reading Skills, Listening Comprehension, English Speaking and Listening, Applied Grammar, Paragraph Writing, and Composition Writing were included in the programme. The writing class at PSU selected for this study was part of this. In contrast, courses offered in an English programme found in the neighboring countries focused more on the study of language itself with little or no extra courses on basic language skills. As the students are still learning on how to construct sentences, and paragraph, it is unlikely that they could take notes in an English lecture. Apparently, they do not write in other courses in the programme as well. This demands the need of establishing students' basic language skills before they could enter the programme so that they can immerse themselves more the field of English. Consequently, Thai universities will produce good graduates who are always ready to meet and work with other ASEAN members. The curriculum designers may also consider increasing the body of knowledge of language teaching and learning activities so that it will not create a far gap between Thai English graduates and graduates of other neighboring countries.

### **5.3 Comparison of the Present Grounded Theory with Previous Research**

This section describes similarities and differences between the present findings of grounded theory of Thai English majors' writing skill development with other grounded theory research on writing. Two grounded theory studies have been done in the field namely: Yuknis (2010) and Spencer (2012). Therefore, the researcher

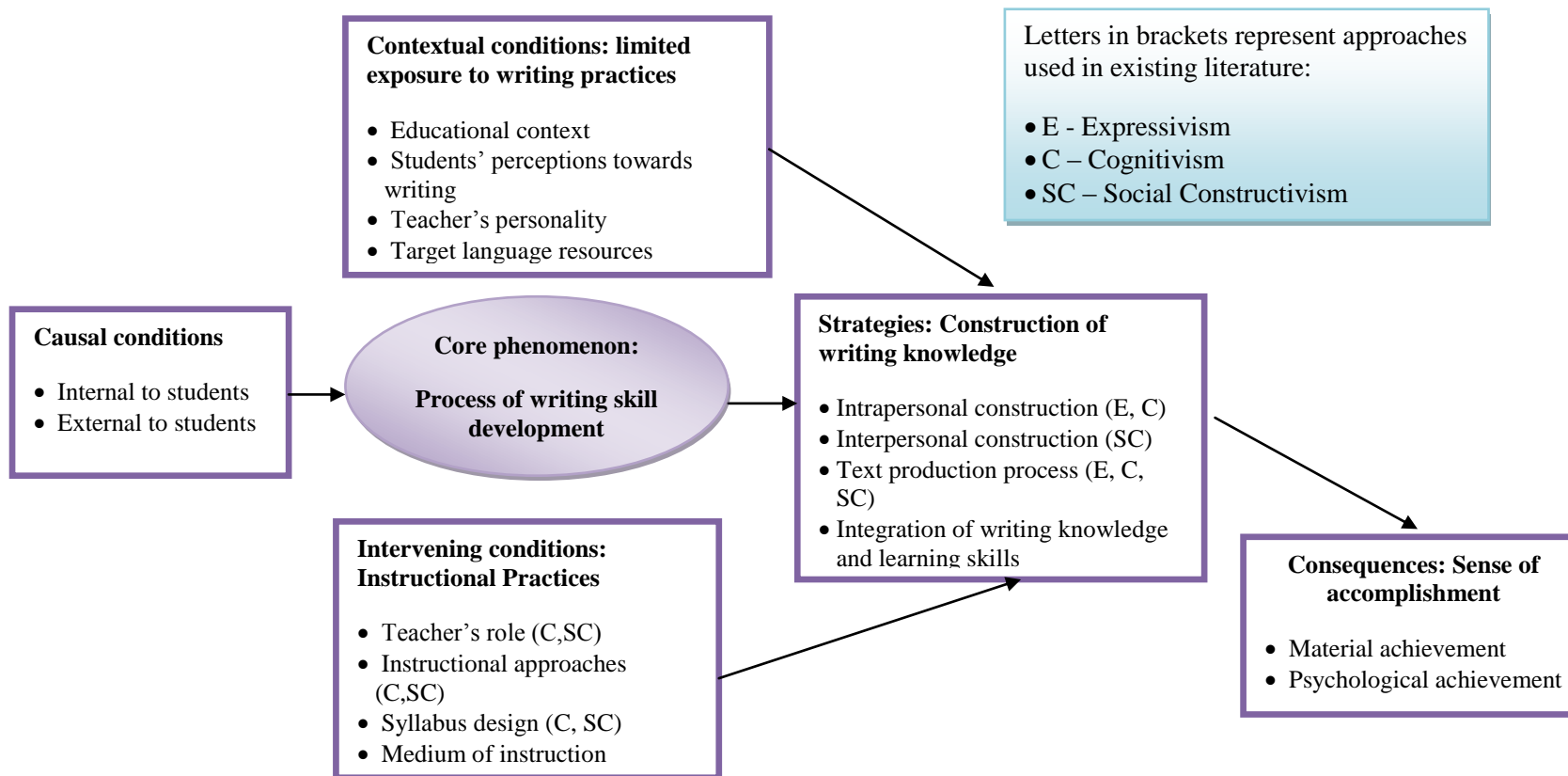
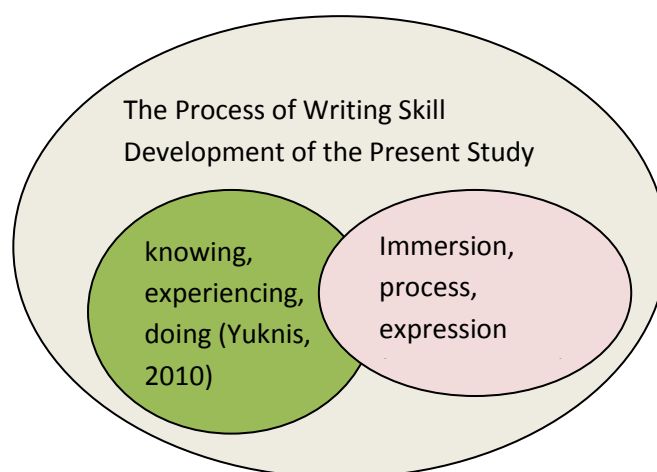


Figure 5.3: Grounded Theory of Thai English Majors' Writing Skill Development

compares her findings with the two in great length and some slight focus on other kind of writing studies. It is important to present the current findings again here (Figure 5.3) before getting into the discussion on how they support or refute the past ones. Referring to the two grounded theory studies by Yuknis (2010) and Spencer (2012), the new paradigm model developed in this study is unique and more comprehensive in its holistic explanation especially for those who are trying to learn English as a foreign language (see Figure 5.4). One reason for this difference is that both Yuknis (2010) and Spencer (2012) conducted their studies for native English speakers and developed their new theory of writing development in a linear pattern. Yuknis (2010) called her three-stage theory “knowing, experiencing, and doing.” Spencer (2012) on the other hand, termed her theory as “personal integration” which encompasses three stages of writing development namely: immersion, process and expression. The present study could trace the phenomena related to the process of developing writing skills from the learners’ own context, general structures which influence the process, the actions taken in the process as well as the consequences of those actions. The present findings share similar characteristics with those of Yuknis (2010)’s and Spencer (2012)’s in terms of the strategies which are referred to as “construction of writing knowledge.” However, Yuknis (2010) called the strategies of struggling to write as “knowing” and experiencing” and “doing” while Spencer referred to these actions as “process” and “expression.”



*Figure 5.4: The Present Theoretical Model in Comparison with the Previous Grounded Theory Models of Writing Skill Development*

In terms of “immersion” in Spencer (2012)’s findings, it is related to the present study in the aspect of target language resources as contextual condition which influenced the learners’ actions to develop their writing. Nevertheless, the degree to which the learners are exposed to target language resources in both cases differed considerably. In the present study, learners’ exposure to English language was very limited while in Spencer (2012)’s study, the child (a native speaker) was given all sorts of books, novels, reading texts and other relevant materials and thus they could immerse himself in a rich reading culture in his own language (English). Therefore, the term “immersion” in Spencer (2012)’s study could not explain that learners of English in a foreign language context.

In terms of findings in relation to L1 use during English language writing, this study proved that Thai students’ L1 did not influence their writing ability as reported by Van Weijen, et al. (2008). As a result, when students want to plan or brainstorm their ideas, L1 should not be strictly discouraged. Some students never get used to think in English thus and they need to do it in their own language before they can really write down English expression as found among the WU participants.

Finally, the findings of this study are in congruent with those of Pattarapongpaisan (1996), Dhanarattigannon (2008), and He (2009) who claimed that students who were taught using process approach would exhibit impressive writing performance compared to those who were not. Thus, writing teachers should employ the process approach and ignore the traditional style of teaching writing. They should also try to integrate the theoretical concept proposed by the social constructivists to maximize students' learning outcomes.

#### **5.4 Conclusion**

The present study aimed at deriving a new theory on how Thai English majors develop their English writing expertise. Most studies done on the area of writing research have focused mainly on what and how students do in their writing classrooms (He, 2009; Dhanarattigannon, 2008; Tonthong, 1999). This study examined the writing skill development in a broader sense as learning the skill can occur at all times which does not limit to classroom settings only. Hence, the present study has considered many other factors involved in the process of learning beyond classroom contexts. In courtesy of the grounded theory approach, the researcher was able to systematically analyse the rich data obtained in order to answer the following research questions:

1. How do the seven Thai EFL English majors develop their writing skills?
  - a. What inspire them to write in English?
  - b. How does the context they live in influence their writing development?
  - c. How does writing instruction in Thai contexts influence their development of writing expertise?
  - d. How do these Thai EFL English majors compose their writing task?

e. What are the outcomes of this development process?

The core findings of this study were presented in a paradigm model as framed by Strauss and Corbin (1998), the pioneers of systematic design in grounded theory (Figure 5.1). Thus, the new theory of *developing writing skills* (the core phenomenon of the study) was explicitly illustrated. There were five interrelated phenomena which influenced Thai English majors' process of developing their writing expertise. They were causal conditions, limited exposure to writing practices, instructional practices, their strategies to construct writing knowledge, and the consequence of these activities as reflected through their sense of accomplishment.

It is interesting that writing skills of these Thai students just began to develop in their adult lives. They never experienced real writing in their pre-university lives. They admitted that even though they wrote in their high school but the writing was merely at sentence level. One student reported that he used to write reports as part of class assignment few times in his high school year while engaging in a programme abroad. However, this student still did not grasp an idea of what good writing is as he assimilated writing skill with speaking ability. This student thought that when a person can speak English, he or she can write too. The factors which contribute to drive Thai students from being simply English beginners to become novice writers were their intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to enroll as English majors at a university.

The participants' strong intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to explore the language further had become "positive drivers" which allowed them to experience and develop writing skills despite having been exposed to a very limited number of writing resources and practices. The findings also revealed that different educational

contexts which encompass their choice of university, programme, type of writing instructors, instructional approaches and strategies, influence their use of strategies during the process of internalizing the writing expertise. Resulting from an analysis of their writing experiences, two major groups of the participants emerged in this study: the novice writers and (more) experienced writers. Those who had enrolled in less than two courses at the university were grouped under novice, and those who had registered in at least three writing courses at the university were referred to experienced writers. All participants from PSU represented the first category while those of WU, the latter. The novice and experienced writers demonstrated different writing strategies, actions and interactions throughout the development process which can be explained in terms of input and production phases.

The strategies which the novice and experienced Thai writers used to construct their writing knowledge were thoroughly described in the discussion section presented earlier in the form of development continuum. The continuum demonstrates how Thais developed their English writing skills over time with the influence of some other factors around them. On the one end of the continuum, they began from being just general language learners without focusing on writing skills but vocabulary, translation of reading texts and grammar. On the other end, it showed their future potentials in developing writing skills fully until they become expert writers.

This study found that the construction of writing knowledge (strategies) manifested through actions of the novice writers differed than that of the experienced ones due to the differences in their learning environment. In other words, factors such as teachers' personality, their perceptions towards writing, choice of university, and instructional practices were highly related with their choice of strategies to accomplish writing tasks. The novices' writing class was established on a



hierarchical community where teacher was considered as superior and expert and the students, inferior. As a result, students were not encouraged and trained to learn from each other except to wait for whatever knowledge given by the teacher. Such phenomenon was not compatible with the process-approach to writing. Thus, the process-approach was not introduced but they were taught using the product approach instead. Therefore, they did not know how to apply effective writing strategies such as planning, drafting and revising effectively. Although some of these elements were found among these writers, they were not aware of what they were doing about the strategies. Their main concern was solely at the local level of writing i.e. grammar and structure of the text while neglecting sense of reader while producing a text. As a consequence, they only felt they had done the course assignment at the end as required by their instructor and no other sense of rewards.

These novice writers can improve their status to become more experienced in writing if they enroll in a university that offered more writing courses or if they registered more writing courses available in the programme. As they increase the number of courses, their writing skills will also increase. However, this also depends on their interest to be better writers. There were no other external factors which strongly influenced their own willingness to improve the skill as much as their intrinsic motivation.

Unlike the novice writers, the experienced writers in this study were privileged with a better design of writing course syllabi provided by the faculty. In the “Topics for Writing” class for example, they were encouraged and introduced the idea of the process-oriented approach towards learning and teaching writing skills. The course taught them to consider writing task globally and not just on the syntactic errors. These students therefore, had set a clear goal, identifying and thinking about writing

purpose and audience throughout the work. Their writing performance was assessed through different stages of writing process: planning, drafting, revising, giving feedback, and displaying. By doing this, the class had better opportunity to interact and talk over writing tasks and problems encountered in the process thereby promoted student-centred learning. The students were fully engaged in the writing experience and managed their own learning activities without being forced but with high motivation. Eventually, they felt proud of what they had accomplished especially after publishing their work.

#### **5.4 Implications for Practice**

This study offers several practical implications in the field of teaching and learning English writing skills especially to those who learn English as a foreign language. First, the results showed that Thai students began to develop writing skills in their adult life and that only English majors were taught in the university. Thus, the first practical implication of this research is for English educators and policy makers to include writing instruction in high school before students enter higher educational level. Moreover, the skills should also be taught to undergraduates majoring in programmes other than English. This is to widen their horizon in seeking knowledge and be prepared to cope with all kinds of communication channels especially when Thailand interact with ASEAN community in the next two years which otherwise only English majors could communicate literally.

The present study has also shown that Thai students can excel in writing skills when appropriate instructional interventions are given. The English instructors in Thailand therefore should study and learn what kind of interventions are best suit in their own contexts to maximize the students' learning outcomes. For example, students who

confined their learning activities solely on their own cognitive ability to write and those who learn through social interactions with relevant texts for more information, peers and instructors, yielded different learning outcomes. The second group outperformed the first amazingly in all aspects of writing tasks such as text length, creativity, good writing style, reader sensitivity, figurative use of language as well as organization of chapters. This indicates that Thai students have potentials to grow in their writing skills. Therefore, writing teachers should incorporate both cognitive and social construction approach towards writing.

This research also implies that writing teachers should be able to distinguish between teaching writing or composing. Williams (2005) proposes that writing is simply putting one's ideas down on paper. Composing on the other hand, deals with meaning making of the writer to convey messages intelligible to readers (Williams, 2005). Composing cannot be done at once and it has many different stages before the final draft is finished. The emphasis given to the PSU students was more on writing and not composing. They were not clearly introduced the idea of writing as process but rather on linguistic competence (*what* to write, not *how* to write).

Such linguistic emphasis which ignores the process of writing to learn as well as learning to write, may result in inefficiency in the teaching and learning of writing skills to the novices. As a result, the writing classroom in Thailand should exhibit and emphasize all elements of the process approach towards writing such as planning, goal setting, reading and searching for information, sharing with friends, drafting, revising, rewriting, editing, and publishing. In addition, the students should be taught the four important components of writing proficiency as the following: 1) grammatical competence involves competence in using the grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics of a language; 2) sociolinguistic competence enables students to vary

their use of the language with respect to a number of variables, including topic, genre, audience and purpose; 3) discourse competence enables students to organize their texts cohesively and coherently; 4) strategic competence enables students to use strategies to stretch their competence to write effectively (Canale and Swain, 1980). This is especially necessary when students do not have much opportunity to use English with native speakers in their environment.

The results revealed that there was a power distance in writing classrooms which inhibited students' learning independence and self discovery of knowledge. To illustrate, the type of English classrooms found in this study was similar to most classrooms in the Thailand whereby students were not encouraged to express their opinions in class (Tonthong, 1999). The students would rather expect to follow their teacher's instructions as they thought the teacher was superior and has the most knowledge. This type of class will slow the students' learning development as it did not foster students' thinking and learning through interactions necessary to establish a good writing skill in students. The teacher should therefore, be aware of this and try to encourage them to learn and develop the skill by thinking, interacting, asking and doing tasks that can contribute to mastery of writing skills. Moreover, Thai university students were not adequately exposed to English reading culture as they only read fiction books sometimes but not frequently. The teacher should guide them and assign tasks whereby students must spend most of their time researching, reading, interacting and analysing academic texts because reading is a key source of input for the acquisition of writing proficiency (Krashen, 1982).

Another important implication of this study is for writing teachers to be sensitive to their students' learning motivation and interests. Sometimes, there can be a mismatch between writing instructor' beliefs and her students' about learning and

teaching a language. This study revealed that the PSU instructor underestimated her students' ability in writing as she used Thai as a medium of instruction. However, one student argued that in teaching a language and English writing class is no exception, the teacher should use English and not Thai. He said that the teacher should offer them better learning experience as to improve and develop their understanding and use of the language. Hence, writing instructors should allow their students to take part in making decisions about learning in classrooms and not based on what they feel alone. This in turn will promote learner-centred approach in the class and thus motivating students to learn and develop faster.

Students' motivation in writing can be raised when they were given freedom to choose a topic of interest, complete and present one assignment for the whole semester. They engaged in the work more seriously and felt proud to share what they had done for the semester with others. It is therefore important that students be given freedom in the choice of writing topics as well as time to do research on the topic and other related tasks so that they could be able to produce work that does not just meet their teacher's requirement but their own and audience expectations too. Furthermore, presentation and display of students' work should be made as part of the learning process which the students could try to present the best of their ability.

Finally, the results of the study indicated that appropriate training for writing instructors did not exist in Thailand. Therefore, higher education policy makers, administrators and professionals should organize writing training for them so that they understand current theories and practices in the field of teaching and learning writing. Moreover, by attending the training, they can also maintain the same standard of teaching activities across the board.

### **5.5 Strengths of the Study**

This study has a number of strengths. First, it achieves the highest originality whereby it explains how Thai EFL learners develop themselves as English writers over time. It considers many other factors in their own learning environment which influenced the way they acquired the skills. Second, the use of multiple sources of data does not only allow the researcher to triangulate across the data obtained but also to get as much as possible information which could add variations and dimensions in formulating the theory. Third, by using the grounded theory approach, the researcher had full freedom to carefully analyse what was grounded in the data, asked questions and made constant comparisons within and across the participants so that a new theory was gradually and systematically developed. Third, the results of this study will make significant contributions to guide teachers and educators involved in language teaching and learning activities both in Thailand and in countries where students were not adequately exposed to English language use especially outside formal class contexts.

### **5.6 Limitations of the Study**

Though the strengths of this study have contributed to its uniqueness in the field of writing research, there are also some limitations. While in the process of deriving the theory of writing development process and analysing the data by asking questions and constant comparisons within and across the data obtained, the researcher needs to be very sensitive to all information at hand. Another limitation of the research is that there was only a small number of participants (seven students and two teachers) selected from the two universities in the south of Thailand who involved in the study and thus it cannot be generalized to a larger context. In addition, the study only

focused on what writers do in order to establish their writing proficiency but not so much on how proficient these writers were. Next, there was not an equal comparison of the two participants groups involved in this study. The PSU group which were taking a class in “Composition Writing” while the WU group were taking a class: “Topics in Writing.” While the study was not a comparative study, the researcher in fact had compared the PSU students in “Composition Writing” class with a course in “Writing Strategies” or “Sentence to Paragraph” or “Persuasive Writing” from the WU curriculum. It would have been a more equal comparison. It thus seems that students at PSU were taught less, fewer indepth writing courses.

### **5.7 Recommendations for Future Research**

In terms of future research, EFL researchers will benefit from continuing the research frontier on the benefit of self-contained software packages which inherently enhance students’ mastery of English language, confidence development, making a positive experience for the students. Research in this area with the use of spell check, dictionary, grammar check, and thesaurus would be a significant contribution. This would also forward the research frontier of persons such as Rebecca (2010) and Williams (2005). The second area of future research is about training for writing teachers. Research in this area is worthy as it can raise their awareness on writing strategies in order to provide the students appropriate instructional practices. The third area of future research is on comparing between the writing process development of low and high achievers. This comparison will be helpful for writing educators to recognise the differences and needs of the low achievers so that appropriate interventions could be given. Further research should also be done on the writing development process of successful EFL writers in other contexts. The benefits of such inquiry will be for researchers and educators to understand further

the exemplary patterns of those writers. Subsequently, the results can be implemented with other novice EFL writers.

The other area of future research is that of cultivating positive state like capacity of students namely, cultivating students' ability to have hope, efficacy, resilience and optimism. These are the positive psychological capital of human beings. When these state likes are enhanced, students will have greater effectiveness in learning a language. In addition, continuing research on the frontier of the Berlin (1988), Elbow (1973), and Murray (1985) would in fact help L2 learners to discover their true selves in the act of creative writing. Future research in this area will be beneficial.

It is recommended that there should be future research in the area of cognitivist approach of thinking and problem solving regarding the writing process as well as considering learners' contexts as identified by Reid (1993). This is because focusing on learners cognitive activities alone will in fact channel them into the right or wrong experience which then lead to lower their self-esteem inherently, as they are not the owner of the language. So, flow state writing experience and expressivist approach would in fact allows EFL/L2 learners to increase their self discovery and improve their communication, reading and writing in English.

Contrary to my neutral belief regarding the expressivism, I believe that at this time, the findings of this research indicate that further study in the area of expressivism would in fact help students as adolescents and young adults who often suffer from the low self-esteem. By having an opportunity to express themselves, express their feeling about life, they could untie some of psychological knots which would then raise their self confidence and allow them to have better writing experiences. This is



supported by the findings of the WU student who wrote about things such as love, the meaning of life, young adult relationship and reflections from their childhood.

Finally, I strongly believe that this study is considered unique because it examined learning and teaching phenomena as a social process which required explanations without decontextualising the process. Thus, the researcher could develop a comprehensive grounded theory based on what is observed and reported in the participants' own context. The findings of this study could contribute to the body of knowledge in terms of English language teaching and learning in Thailand, in writing skills in particular.

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