Teaching EFL writing: Understanding and Re-thinking the Thai Experience

Bayatee Dueraman, Southern College of Technology, Thailand

Abstract: *Compared to other skills, writing is the most difficult skill to learn. Contemporary research theories on how to effectively teach EFL writing such as those of cognitivists and social constructionists based their approaches mainly on L1 writing. The cognitivists view writing as an activity regulated in the mind of each individual as the person is writing particularly the activity which involves thinking and problem-solving process. The social constructionists on the other hand, claim that learning to write does not confine to just what is happening in the writer' s state of mind, but social interaction is also a key to learn how to write successfully. Do learners need to base on one approach and abandon the other? Because EFL writing theories were derived from theories on writing in L1 and writing by students in the West, the application of these theories in Asian contexts is yet to be explored particularly in Thai EFL contexts. To ensure that the teaching of EFL writing is going to the right direction, English teachers and educators must be aware of recent EFL writing theories and practices. This paper reviews theories of EFL writing, describes essential components of EFL writing system, analyzes current practices of EFL writing in Thailand, and difficulties encountered by English educators with some recommendations to boost effort to developing Thai students writing skills for national and global benefits.*

Keywords: EFL writing, cognitivist approach, social constructionist approach, integrated approach, writing process

1. Introduction

The fact that English will be used as a medium of communication in ASEAN countries starting from the year 2015 poses threats to Thai educators as English language teaching in Thailand hasn't prepared Thais to work with members of. Thais' level of proficiency is low in comparison with other developing countries e.g. Malaysia, Singapore and the Philippines (Wiriyachitra, 2002). In addition, Wiriyachitra (2002) states that researchers on the topics of needs and

wants of English in work places have also suggested that the English curriculum in Thai universities can't meet the demand for English use in the workplace. Until now, the English language teaching in Thailand doesn't move to the direction of the changing world. Thailand will continue to lag behind in the competitive world of business, education, science and technology if there is no improvement is made on English language teaching and learning. Hiranyapruen in Wiriyachitra (2002) reports that Thais have high proficiency in science and technology, but they can't make much progress because of their incompetence in English which is the domain in information technology. Likewise, the director of the Academic Training Section of the Tourist Authority of Thailand said that in spite of the fact that tourism is the main source of income of Thailand, the tourism industry composes of Thais with poor command of English (Wiriyachitra, 2002).

The purpose of this paper is to argue that EFL teaching and learning in Thailand can be enriched by incorporating the two major EFL writing theories: the cognitivist approach and the social constructionist approach with the nature of foreign language development in Thai context. Specifically, the first part of this paper deals with a brief overview of the cognitivist and social constructionist theories of EFL writing. Getting into the EFL writing classroom settings, in the next section, this paper presents the five interrelated components of EFL writing instruction system. Then, the nature of English language teaching and learning in Thailand is introduced. In the last section, the paper focuses on the authours' careful examination and analysis of challenges of using the contemporary writing process approach in Thai contexts and recommendations with the hope of improving the plight of EFL teaching in Thailand and in developing general English language proficiency of university students.

2. Theories of EFL writing

2.1 The Cognitivist Approach

Bayatee Dueraman, Southern College of Technology, Thailand

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 process of writing (Flower & Hayes, 1997). The two cognitive researchers, Flower & 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 provide intervention through a variety of pre-writing techniques, including brainstorming, free writing, outlining and mapping. The students of this approach are trained to develop their image of the audience, the situation and the goal of writing (Reid, 1993). In writing class, they begin to define a rhetorical problem, explore its parts, generate alternate solutions, come up with a conclusion, and then convert their ideas to written texts. Learners become active participants in learning process (see Figure 1). Instructional materials, illustrative examples, corrective feedback should provide a useful model for students to follow. This approach is commonly found in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Specific Purposes (ESP) classrooms.

**Figure 1**: The Cognitivist model of acquiring writing skills
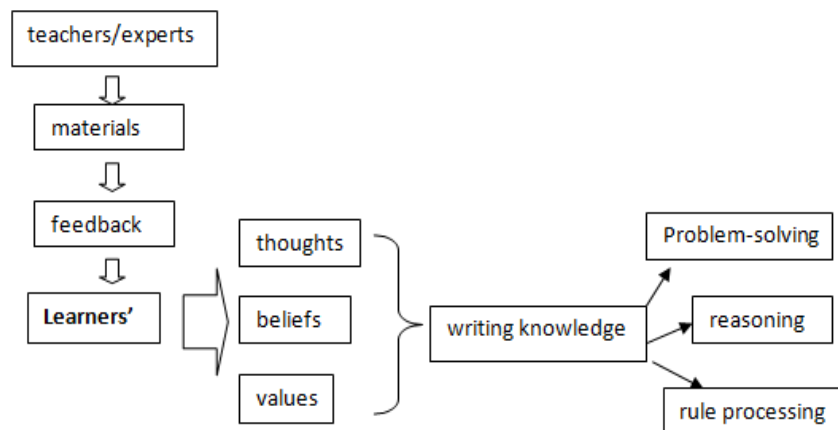
There have been several criticisms on the cognitivist approach of teaching writing due to its exclusive emphasis on the intrapersonal knowledge construction. According to this approach, the activation of mental process within the learners' own heads through imitation from the experts is the primary goal of writing education (Liu & Matthews, 2005). In other words, the cognitivists overlook the social nature of language. They focus on knowing sets of rules and conceptions rather than learning to use those rules through collaborative interactions (Vygotsky, 1978). As a result, learning activities are independent from the learners' social contacts. Consequently, this kind of knowledge alone does not give them the skills to apply what they have learned in a complex social environment which determines how and when the concepts should be used.

2.2 The Social Constructionist Approach

Social constructionists view writing as a social act that takes place within a social context for a specific purpose, and that the construction of knowledge is the result of social interaction. According to Vygotsky (1978), the writing process which is considered higher mental development lies beyond both cognitive and individual levels. What Vygotsky means by this is that writing comes from internalization and transformation of social interaction. Similarly, Bakhtin (1973) considers the skills of speaking and writing as socially constructed. In other words, the interactional activities involved with people, peer, teachers, and native speakers will increase writing knowledge in students. Figure 2 below is a summary of the social constructionist model of writing knowledge construction.

Figure 2: The Social Constructionist model of acquiring writing skills
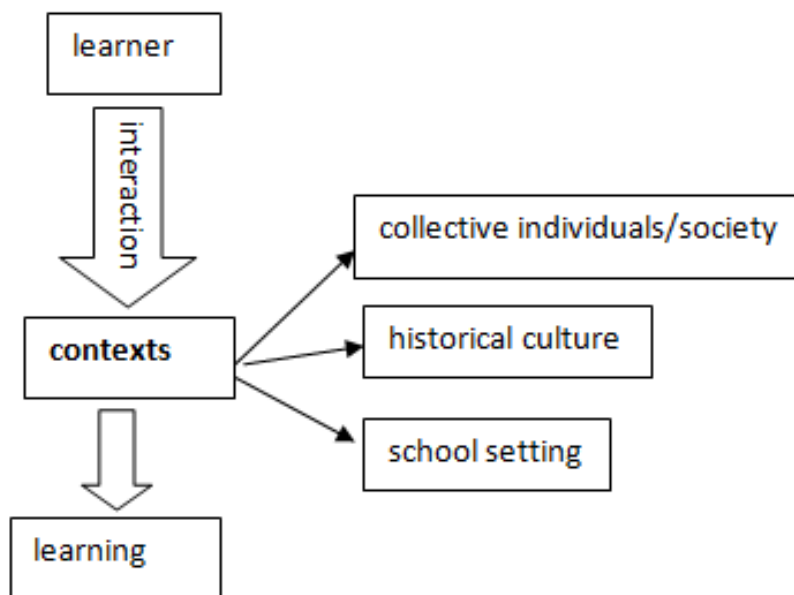
As discussed in the earlier section, the basic tenet of the cognitivists in writing is that it purely concerns on the act of personal expressions through imitating masters or experts. Social constructionists however argue that this model of writing is inadequate in current composition theory (Anderson & Holt, 1990). They explain that the central feature of writing process is the act of social interaction thereby the emphasis should be on interpersonal rather than intrapersonal act. The cognitivists regard learners as passive recipients whose primary goal of learning is to understand their mental process. The social constructionists on the other hand, hold that learners are active knowledge constructors within their contexts. Nevertheless, the social constructionist approach has also been criticized by many. For example, the theory fails to explain clearly when knowledge is constructed in the minds of the learners once they interact with the environment (Liu & Matthews, 2005). Also, there is a question of what type of contexts should be useful especially to learners of each level of writing ability and types of skills learned from interaction.

2.3 The Integrated Approach

Though each approach reviewed in the last section seems to have its own shortcoming, an integration of their strengths will help writing educators to understand appropriate teaching approaches and methodologies suitable to be used in their own contexts. In EFL contexts where students still need help with vocabulary building and text modeling by teachers, then the cognitivist approach may be applied at the beginning of each lesson. Later, the students may be asked to work in groups for collaborations and discussion on questions and problems related to the tasks as proposed by social constructivists. The integration of these two writing approaches has been proven positive learning outcomes in EFL writing classes in Thailand (Chaisiri, 2010 & Tangpermpoon, 2008). Tangpermpoon (2008) proposes that the integrated approach is suitable for Thai student writers. The cognitive approach is useful to raise students' awareness on the importance of each step in the writing process: planning, writing, revising. The approach also encourages teachers to provide a model for students which may work best for beginning student writers. Then, the social constructionist approach may be used through allowing students to interact with others to talk about writing tasks in the process of learning. Tangpermpoon's contribution on the social constructionist aspect is similar to that of Anderson and Holt's (1990) over two decades ago. Anderson & Holt (1990) created a writing course by designing their class discussions and writing assignments sequentially based on the concept of writing as social act. The class went through discussions and sharing activities with teachers and students. Half of their class time was devoted to group work.

The other study related to Thai EFL writing by Chaisiri (2010) on the other hand, introduces four stages of activities in teaching and learning writing skill cycle: building knowledge on the topic, modeling texts, helping students to construct texts, and allowing students to construct their own texts. Chaisiri could see clear improvement in his participants' written texts after using the model. Nevertheless, most features in Chaisiri's (2010) model are cognitivist-oriented. Therefore, students who are taught through the use of his model may still be passive writers as

the key player in the first three of these stages is the teacher not the students. Consequently, the writing classroom will become teacher-centred because students are given limited freedom to express their ideas by means of rich interactions until after rules and structures are introduced. The integrated approach will be effective if the teachers know how to balance between activation of students' intrapersonal and interpersonal interactions in the context of learning.

3. What Involved in the System of Learning to Write in EFL?

Learning to write in a new language takes a lot of effort. Whether the approach is of the cognitivist or social constructionist, they both require careful consideration on five major components which all together combined make a complete system of learning writing skills. These components are EFL instructors, EFL writers, resources, appropriate writing instruction and practice. What follows are detailed description of each of these components within the purview of cognitivists as well as social constructionists in teaching EFL writing skills.

3.1 EFL Instructors

The role of EFL instructors is very crucial to the development of students' writing practices and performance (Perry, 1998). Instructors must provide directions of which students should go about when writing in a new language. Good instructors should be properly trained on how to write and teach EFL writing to maximize effective learning supports. Peyton et al. (1994) suggests that teachers must spend their time to study about writing theory and practice, work on their own writing, discuss with other colleagues and get feedback from them. Like their students, teachers need to get access to resources available such as printed materials, electronic sources, peers, English teachers, or English native speakers. Silva (1997) emphasizes that ESL instructors also need to consider ethical issues in the teaching of writing skills. For example, they should understand the nature of their students, place them in

suitable learning contexts, provide them appropriate instruction, and evaluate their written work fairly. The cognitivists differentiate the role of instructors from that of their social constructionist counterpart. Their instructors should act as masters, teachers and experts in the classroom. Learning activities will rely so much on imitating how these experts process their minds. Instructors of the social constructionist on the other hand, will act as facilitators in learning process, helping learners whenever there is a need. Of course, instructors should be flexible enough to adapt their approach in order to meet the need of their learners.

3.2 EFL Writers

Whether or not the teaching of EFL writing is effective or successful, students' performance is an only indicator for such success. While the cognitivist's primary goal is on what learners should know (knowledge), the social constructionist's is on what these learners can do (performance). These two views therefore should be complementary to each other. For teachers to ignore one of these approaches especially in EFL contexts may result in students' lack of appropriate knowledge or failure to apply what they know in real situations. The cognitivists point out that to be able to write, learners need two kinds of knowledge: linguistic and strategic. Linguistic knowledge includes knowledge of vocabulary, words, sentence structure and genre of English. Strategic knowledge on the other hand, refers to efforts that these students made to overcome their writing difficulties. It is sometimes referred to as writing process, the way writers do to get their pieces of writing tasks done. The five interrelated stages in the writing process are: planning, drafting, revising, editing and publishing (Scott & Michael, 2003). Some other useful strategies employed by EFL writers while writing are managing time effectively, asking for help and feedback or clarification, translation from native language and using external resources (Baruca, 2010). These two aspects of L2 proficiency develop concurrently in L2 learners but in different ways. It is because writing skill is not the skill that develops automatically. A native speaker for instance, may

be competent in his/her language, yet his/her ability to write is questionable.

Students' motivation is said to strongly relate to how learners go about acquiring writing knowledge. Lavelle & Zuercher (2001) explain that writer' intentions and beliefs about functions of writing and situations influence writing outcomes. Learners who see the   task as a whole are eager to learn and willing to engage in higher level of cognitive skills. Whereas those who just want to finish the task assigned, their learning strategies will be mainly based on knowledge telling and memorization (Lavelle & Zuercher, 2001).

The social constructionists emphasize learners active interactions with the environment in which they live in, thereby writing skills can be constructed (Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky explains that all cognitive functions originated in learners through integration into a knowledge community not simply through assimilation of new knowledge. Therefore, learners should go beyond manipulating within their own mental process because language cannot be separated from contexts. Vygotsky (1978) further argues that learners are partially motivated by external rewards. However, their internal drive to achieve good writing skills is also crucial because they are active participants in learning process.

3.3 Resources

Learning resources is important in providing rich input for student writers. Among useful resources that students can get access are materials in the university library such as books and periodicals, self access center, journal online, writing software to help students edit their work in terms of vocabulary choice and grammar. It is also suggested that peers and teachers are crucial to the development of students' writing performance because through interaction, students get feedback and comments which foster problem solving skills necessary in writing.

3.4 Appropriate Writing Instruction

What is meant by appropriate instruction? Considerable research studies in EFL writing have invested a great deal to find out suitable instructional support as confirmed by Li and Hamel (2003). Appropriate writing instruction should be the one which meets the needs of students with writing difficulties and helps them to improve writing performance (Lienemann, Graham, Janssen & Reid, 2006). Both cognitivist and social constructionist approaches were incorporated in writing instructions found in published materials reviewed by Li and Hamel (2003). Among the instructional supports for teaching EFL writing include the teaching of strategies involved in different writing stages: prewriting (rehearsal), writing (drafting) and rewriting: revising and editing (Li & Hamel, 2003).

In prewriting stage, teachers may need to show their students how to find information from reading materials, group information together in a meaningful way, and questions concerning writing topics and initial planning. (Goldstein & Conrad, 1994) add that communication and exchanging ideas with peers and teachers at this stage helps students to 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 the writing stage Li & 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 & Hamel explain 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. Learners should also seek help from professional tutors as well as peer tutors. Professional tutors can help students to develop cognitive strategy in writing such as identifying subgoals of writing tasks, planning and writing the text (Li & Hamel, 2003). 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. In addition, peer collaborations, evaluation, and reflective portfolios can also enhance students' writing process. Peers can help students improve their writing and receiving 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).

EFL writing teachers should also ensure that students receive extensive language input both inside and outside classrooms which will facilitate their writing development. One way to provide students with adequate input is through the use of reading in writing classrooms. According to Lienemann, Graham, Janssen & Reid (2006), writing skills can be developed by connecting reading and writing instruction together. By reading, students have opportunity to interact with texts thereby learn writing conventions when rich discussion is created from the reading. Kucer (1987; cited in xiao, 2008) propose that there are four processing universals that both readers and writers share: they both use their prior knowledge to construct text meaning; share similar act of schema activation and evaluation; have a unified understanding of how written language operates; and possess common processing behaviour patterns when generating meaning from texts.

3.5 Training and Practice

Because second or foreign language learning takes a long process, for many L2 students the process never ends (Williams, 2005). 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 are 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. On the top of that, students do not always learn what is taught (Williams, 2005). Williams explains that students 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, students should be provided with opportunities to practice writing both inside and outside classroom contexts.

4. Understanding EFL Writing in Thai Contexts: An analysis from pedagogical perspective

Thailand is a country which has never been colonized. Thai people are very proud of using their Thai language which is the only official language of the country. The role of English in Thailand has its special status and functions. Some Thais view English as irrelevant to them, yet some others keep learning the language for years but still unable to use it effectively. Specifically, Thai students are not prepared to more advanced levels of English language writing (Glass, 2008). What could be the reasons for such situation? Is the language something new to them? Is it so difficult for some Thais to learn the language? Or is it connected with inappropriate language teaching approach? This section covers an overview of the position of Thailand in the circles of English users around the world, presents history of English language teaching in Thailand, the influence of culture in English language education, the functions of English in Thai society and followed by the teaching of writing skills and reviews of literature related to research on writing in Thailand.

4.1 The Positions of English in Thailand

A decade ago, Thai perceived English as 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 (1992) "expanding circle" where English are 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 contexts. In 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 (Glass, 2008).

4.2 Thai Students' Writing Experience and its Consequences

In spite of the fact that Thai educational reform made changes to curriculum related to English language teaching and learning in public schools, yet the curriculum includes little or no writing (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. For the students who major in English, writing courses will be required to enroll just at this level. In addition, the kind of writing taught to these students is less creative and structure oriented (Glass, 2008).

It is also important to point out that English writing education at tertiary level in Thailand does not prepare students to write at postgraduate levels (Glass, 2008). In workplace, most Thai EFL teachers find problems in producing academic writing such as research paper and academic writing reports. As a consequence, it's very hard to find research reports done by Thai EFL teachers published

on international journals as part of their interest except they are required to do so.

4.3 The Influence of Culture in Thai Writing Classroom

Thai culture is recognized as hierarchical and authoritative. The young people should obey and respect their elders especially their parents and grandparents. Also, juniors are expected not to argue with seniors. This practice has been the norm in the Thai society. Because culture and language are interrelated, Thai culture is hierarchical and so is the language. This culture will somehow influence the way 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's hard to get Thai students who like to express their ideas without being asked. Deveney & Dhanarattigannon further explained 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 get 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's difficult to judge whether academic failure of Thai students is a result of poor effort or learning disability. However, there is evident which confirms the relationship of Thai students' failure with lack of effort at least a study done by Wood (1998). Wood made a comparison 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 worth to be mentioned here is the element of collectivism. According to Dimmock (2000; cited in Deveney, 2005), Thailand is ranked as the fourth highest collectivist society after Hong Kong, Singapore and Malaysia. Some common collectivist

behaviours include group priority over individual and respect for authority and group tradition (Hayes, 2008). The distinctive feature manifested out of this collectivist society among Thai people is known as "kreng jai" or in English equivalent "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 the report from a study conducted by Thongrin (2002; cited in Dhanarattiganon, 2008) 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." They didn't want their friends to get upset. The feedback was written 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.

These 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. As writing is about expressing one's ideas throughout the different stages particularly when the class is incorporated the process approach. The lack of confidence in students may result in unwilling to participate in writing activities which will only make their classroom remains teacher-centred.

5. The Challenges of Applying Writing Process Approach in Thai EFL Classrooms and Considerations for Classroom Application

Though it has been shown that writing process approach yields positive writing outcomes for many ESL and EFL contexts, its application in Thai EFL writing contexts poses a number of challenges to language educators. What follows are possible challenges that EFL instructors encounter and considerations when teaching writing to Thai EFL learners especially at higher level of education.

5.1 Lack of teachers with high level of writing proficiency

First, though there are many good English instructors in some famous universities in Thailand, Thailand still needs more trained writing teachers to EFL students throughout the country. Teachers with good English writing proficiency are also needed at primary and secondary levels before students can master the more advanced writing skills later in higher education. However, it seems that what is really happening is the opposite. Almost all skilled and talented English teachers will not like to work at any academic institutions lower than university level. This also causes problems in the early writing development for students in their school lives. Consequently, there is lack of skilled English teachers in lower level of education, writing teachers in particular. It is also common that in writing classrooms teachers just play the role of examiners, which causes students to have less opportunities to write. On top of that some teachers do not even have English degree but still have to teach English because of the scarcity of good English teachers in Thailand. Therefore, it's not uncommon that Thai students never learn how to write in English even they already finish their master level of education if they are not of English majors. Though English majors at undergraduate level are required to take writing courses in their program, only three writing courses are taught. Yet, the way these students learn how to write is questionable and therefore, worth to explore in order to explain whether these courses can guarantee students writing performance as they finish their education.

5.2 The role of English use in the country

As mention earlier on this paper, English in Thailand is not widely used as Thai is the only formal language. For many, English becomes irrelevant to them after they finish education. This results in students' lack of interest to writing in English because it is the most difficult skill to be acquired. The development of tourism industry in Thailand drives students to master only speaking skills because they

hope to work as tour guides or with tourist agencies which mainly require good command of English speaking with foreigners.

5.3 Lack available writing resources

Though there are many English printed materials and online learning resources where Thai students can get access to, there is limited number of writing resources and if there is any, it has not been really used by the students due to several reasons. First, many English books available in university libraries are mainly about grammar, vocabulary and reading. There may be instances where writing books are ordered but after they have been put on the shelves, they will remain untouched because they are not needed. As it is known that the majority of Thai students do not like to read apart what they are being asked. Writing instruction therefore, should take into account this problem by assigning students tasks that they are going to use available writing resources.

Though today students can choose relevant software according to what they need, in practice some Thai students find difficulties in getting access to it as only few students have access to computers. Most students do not have their own computers. Even those who have computers, find difficulties in getting access to the internet. Therefore, it is not easy for them to use available online programs such as concordances to help their writing practice especially in terms of vocabulary choice which is very useful, time saving and much more convenient than working without the software.

5.4 The transformation of writing knowledge from teachers to learners is questionable

The current Thai EFL teachers were once EFL students years ago. The way these teachers were taught about writing in English will very much influence the way they are teaching their students now. When teachers get used to traditional instructional strategies of learning and teaching writing which focus mainly on superficial level such as

grammar and sentence structure of writing, it is very unlikely that they will value the process approach and incorporate it into their writing classrooms. Siithitikul (2010) confirms that most Thai teachers use traditional methods in teaching activities. Teachers take authoritative as opposed to supporting role in most language classrooms. They tend to teach solely on contents in language but ignore the importance of guiding their students' study skills. As a result, the students are not given adequate opportunities to exercise critical thinking and problem-solving skills which are crucial to foster independent learning. Consequently, this may affect Thai students' writing performance. Look at Chaisiri's (2010) participants' pre-intervention writing samples for example, students' contributions to the topic given were very short and misleading. Only after the intervention on a new writing approach, each student could produce a much better text. This indicates that Thai students need to be guided with necessary study skills. Moreover, Chaisiri's study has proved that Thai students have potentials to master good English writing skills provided that right teaching methodologies are given.

5.5 No feedback from peers though receive occasionally from teachers

In the recent composition theory and practice, students are asked to keep writing journals, brainstorm their ideas before writing, do free writing and respond to peer's writing (Raimes, 1985 & Peyton et al., 1994). Recently, a number writing educators in Thailand have attempted to encourage peer and teachers' feedback in revision of students' writing (e.g. Tangpermpoon, 2008; Chaisiri, 2010; & Srichanyachon, 2011). It has been revealed that Thai EFL learners perceive peer feedback is ineffective to help improve their writing skills. The students often think that they don't have experience and expertise to offer valuable feedback, and that only teachers can give valuable comments (Peyton et al, 1994). Even if there are students who can give feedback to their peers, what is given by students often focuses more on formal correctness such as spelling and grammar and so on (Srichanyachon, 2011 & Peyton et al., 1994). Srichanyachon's (2011) pioneer in of trying to examine the

nature of Thai teachers' comments on students' written texts has proven useful to the students. However, the kind of feedback given by teachers in her study was merely counting of formal and structural errors instead of semantic and contextual ones. As a result, writing educators should be aware of whether the revision methods offered (if there are any) to Thai students are adequate to help improve their students' written texts.

It is not the choice of theories alone that guarantees success of teaching and learning writing skills to students in each context, but teachers' practices, students' approach towards learning, the usefulness of available resources, and time devoted to leaning, together account for students' writing outcomes.

References

Anderson, L. & Holt, M. (1990). Teaching writing in Sociology: A Social Constructionist Approach. *Teaching Sociology, 18*(2), 179-184.

Bakhtin, M. M. (1973). *Marxism and the philosophy of language.* (L. Matejka & I. R. Titunik, Trans.). New York: Seminar Press.

Baruca, P.J. (2010). *Coping strategies of L2 writers during the writing process: Case studies of Non-English dominant students in mainstream English composition courses.* MA Thesis, University of Texas-Pan American. UMI Dissertation Publishing.

Chaisiri, T. (2010). Implementing a genre pedagogy to the teaching of writing in a university context in Thailand. *Language Education in Asia, 1*(1), 181-199.

Deveney, B. (2005). An investigation into aspects of Thai culture and its impact on Thai students in an

international school in Thailand. *Journal of Research in International Education, 4*(2), 153-171.

Dhanarattigannon, J. (2008). *Thai college students' response to non-traditional writing instruction in a Thai university.* PhD dissertation, University of Florida.

Flower. L. & Hayes, J. R. (1997). A cognitive process theory of writing. In J. Victor Villanueva (Ed*.), Cross-talk in composition theory* (pp. 251-275). Urbana, Illinois: NCTE.

Foley, J. A. (2005). English in Thailand. *Regional Language Centre Journal, 36*(2), 223-234.

Glass, T. E. (2008). *The nature of English writing done by graduates of a university in Thailand.* Ph. D dissertation, Indiana: Purdue University.

Gleason, J. B. (1988). *You can take it with you: Helping students maintaining foreign language skills beyon the classroom.* New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc.

Goldstein, L. M. & Conrad, S. M. (1990). Student input and negotiation of meaning in ESL writing conferences. TESOL Quarterly, *24*(3), 443-460.

Graham, S., Harris, K. R. & Mason, L. H. (2005). Improving the writing performance, knowledge, and self-efficacy of struggling young writers: The effects of self-regulated strategy development. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 30*, 207-241.

Hayes. D. (2008). Becoming a teacher of English in Thailand. *Language Teaching Research, 12*(4), 471-494.

Kachru, Y. (2005). *Teaching and learning the world Englishes* in P. Methitham (2009). *An exploration of culturally-based assumptions guiding ELT practice in Thailand, a non colonized nation.* Ph. D Dissertation, Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

Lavelle, E. & Zuercher, N. (2001). The writing approaches of university students. *Higher Education, 42*(3), 373-391.

Li, H. & Hamel, C. M. (2003). Writing issues in college students with learning disabilities: A synthesis of the literature from 1990-2000. *Learning Disability Quarterly, 26*(1), 29-46.

Lienemann, T. O., Graham, S., Janssen, B. L. & Reid, R. (2006). Improving the writing performance of struggling writers in second grade. *The Journal of Special Education, 40*(2), 67-78.

Liu, C. H. & Matthews, R. (2005). Vygotsky's philosophy: constructivism and its criticism examined. *International Education Journal*, 6(3), 386-399.

Srichanyachon, N. (2011). A comparative study of three revision methods in EFL writing, *Journal of college teaching and learning*, 8(9), 1-8.

Perry, N. E. (1998). Young children's self-regulated learning and contexts that support it. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 90*, 715-729.

Peyton, J. K., Jones, C., Vincent, A. & Greenblatt, L. (1994). Implementing writing workshop with ESOL students: Visions and realities. *TESOL Quarterly, 28*(3), 469-487.

Raimes, A. (1985). What unskilled ESL students do as they write: A classroom study of composing. *TESOL Quarterly, 19*(2), 229-258.

Reid, J. M. (1993). *Teaching ESL writing.* Eaglewood cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall Regents.

Scott B. J. & Michael, V. R. (2003). Teaching the writing process to students with LD. Intervention in School and Clinic, *38*(4), 220-224.

Silva, T. (1997). On the ethical treatment of ESL writers. *TESOL Quarterly, 31*(2), 359-363.

Sitthitikul, P. (2010). Curriculum context analysis to support meaningful EFL reading in Thailand. *Journal of English Studies, 5*, 56-69.

Tangpermpoon, T. (2008). Integrated approach to improve students' writing skills for English major students, *ABAC Journal, 28*(2), 1-9.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes.* MA: Harvard University Press.

Williams, J. (2005). *Teaching writing in second and foreign language classrooms.* USA: McGraw Hill.

Wiriyachitra, A. (2002). *Report on the reform of university foundation curriculum.*

Xiao, Y. (2008). Building formal schemata with ESL student writers: Linking schema theory to contrastive rhetoric. *Asian EFL Journal, 32*(2).