

การวิเคราะห์การเขียนเรียงความภาษาอังกฤษของนักเรียนชั้นมัธยมศึกษาปีที่ 6: กรณีศึกษา โรงเรียนมัธยมศึกษาในเขตอำเภอวัง จังหวัดลำปาง

An Analysis of English Essay Writing of Matthayom 6 Students: A Case Study in High Schools at Ngao District, Lampang Province

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บทคัดย่อ

การศึกษาครั้งนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อวิเคราะห์การเขียนเรียงความภาษาอังกฤษของนักเรียนชั้นมัธยมศึกษาปีที่ 6 : กรณีศึกษา โรงเรียนมัธยมศึกษาในเขตอำเภอวัง จังหวัดลำปาง โดยการวิเคราะห์องค์ประกอบของเรียงความและความผิดพลาดในการใช้ภาษา กลุ่มตัวอย่าง คือ นักเรียนที่ศึกษาอยู่ในโรงเรียนมัธยมศึกษาในอำเภอวัง จังหวัดลำปาง สังกัด สำนักงานเขตพื้นที่การศึกษามัธยมศึกษา เขต 35 ภาคเรียนที่ 2 ปีการศึกษา 2557 จำนวน 30 คน เก็บรวบรวมข้อมูลจากการเขียนเรียงความภาษาอังกฤษและสังเกตนักเรียนกลุ่มตัวอย่าง วิเคราะห์ข้อมูล จัดประเภท นำข้อมูลมาสรุปและรายงานผล ผลการศึกษา พบว่า ด้านองค์ประกอบที่พบมากที่สุด ได้แก่ Coherence รองลงมา คือ Order, Unity และ Completeness ตามลำดับ และด้านความผิดพลาดในการใช้ภาษาที่พบมากที่สุดตามลำดับ ได้แก่ fragments and run-on sentences รองลงมา คือ verb forms, sequences of tenses, countable/uncountable nouns and corresponding quantity terms, subject-verb agreement, prepositions and idiomatic expressions, adjective clauses, agreement of determiner conditional, adverb clauses, present perfect verb form, passive/ active voice, articles, reported speech, modal auxiliaries, และ progressive verb forms

คำสำคัญ : การเขียนเรียงความภาษาอังกฤษ, องค์ประกอบของเรียงความ, ความผิดพลาดในการใช้ภาษา

Abstract

The study aimed to analyze the English essay writing of Matthayom 6 students in High Schools at Ngao district, Lampang province. The research is based on components in the essays and the analysis of identified errors. The samples were taken from 30 students who studied in Matthayom six at high schools in the Ngao district, Lampang Province, under the Secondary Educational Service Area Office 35, in the 2nd semester, academic year 2014. Data were analyzed and explained with summary and report. The findings of the study were as follows: The essay components were sorted from the highest to the lowest percentage which were: Coherence, Order, Unity and Completeness. In the analysis of errors, the analysis indicated that the error types in students' essay writings sorted from the highest to the lowest percentages were: fragments run-on sentences, verb forms, sequences of tenses, countable/uncountable nouns and corresponding quantity terms, subject-verb agreement, prepositions and idiomatic expressions, adjective clauses, agreement

of determiner, conditional, adverb clauses, present perfect verb form, passive/active voice, articles, reported speech, modal auxiliaries, and progressive verb forms.

Keywords : English essay writing, essay components, analysis of errors

Rationale and Significance of the Problem

Today, writing is very important and an essential part of the daily life for all people. It is used to communicate with other people from different parts of the world and enhances English language acquisition, development of critical thinking and is helpful to learners, enabling them to express as freely as they do in their mother tongue while using English for communicative purpose (Harizaj. 2011). According to the learning area for foreign languages in the Basic Education Core Curriculum B.E.2551 (2008 : 265-269) in Strand one: Language for communication, Standard F1.2 and F1.3, indicator M.4-6/1 is related to the writing abilities of the students which requires students to be able to express opinions about activities, experiences and incidents in the local area, society and the world, as well as to prepare students for Ordinary National Educational Testing (O-NET) in Thailand.

However, students have the writing problem, especially, essay writings as verified in the study of Thongnak (2010 : 2). Thongnak (2010:2) divided essays into five patterns: Chronological Order, Description, Compare-Contrast, Problem-Solution and Cause-Effect Pattern which caused the significant problem in writing essays for high school students. And also in the Basic Education Core Curriculum (2008 : 265-269) stated in the learning area for foreign languages, the secondary students should study only the Personal Experience Essay. So, essay writing is important, yet difficult for Thai students, especially at secondary education level.

This study has exposed the problem areas of writing skills in an English subject for the teachers and students in high schools, Matthayom six students,

who had to take an Ordinary National Educational Test (O-NET). The English O-NET score every year has shown that the average O-NET score in English was under 50 from 100 marks, especially in Standard F1.2 and F1.3 which focused on writing ability of students in Thailand. It is similar to all parts of Thailand, Ngao district, Lampang province, has encountered with this problem also. In academic year 2013, the National Institute of Educational Testing Service (2013: 2) reported that the average English O-NET scores in two high schools in Ngao district, Lampang province, under the Secondary Educational Service Area Office 35 were lower than 30 in Strand one: English for communication, especially writing ability, Standard F1.2 and F1.3.

The problem of English writing, especially in Matthayom six which is the highest level of educational system in Thailand had become clear that English teachers, the key component in the teaching strategy of English, were not prompted and not adequately prepared to develop students writing abilities, especially in English essay writing which is significant for Thai students. Therefore, these conclusions have inspired the researcher to attempt to address this lack of knowledge by analyzing the English essay writing of Matthayom six students in high schools at Ngao district, Lampang province based on Leki (1992). The results of the study shed the lights for improving students' writing ability and equipping teachers of English to be more effective.

Objective of the study

To analyze the English essay writing of Matthayom six students in high schools at Ngao district, Lampang province.

Significance of the study

1. This study can help students improve the methods of writing and will be suggested for students' acquisition of writing English essay, finding solutions to the problems.

2. The results of this study are expected to help the students to increase their awareness of rhetorical components of essay structure, and remind textbooks designers and instructors.

3. To be useful for teachers to improve their teaching of the English essay writing skills and through the identification, weaknesses of these students will also be revealed.

Scope of the study

The scope of the study was divided into content and study sources as follows:

1. Content: This study was based on the analysis of essays components, consisting of unity, order, coherence and completeness and error analysis based on Leki (1992).

2. Study Sources: The essay writings included 30 high school students who were studying in Matthayom six at two high schools in Ngao district, Lampang province, under the Secondary Educational Service Area Office 35, in the 2nd semester, academic year 2014.

Methodology

The population included 378 Matthayom six students from the two high schools in Ngao district, Lampang province, under the Secondary Educational Service Area Office 35 in the 2nd semester, academic year 2014.

The samples selected were 30 Matthayom six students in the two high schools, which the average O-NET score in English was lower than 30, espe-

cially in the writing ability, in Strand one: 1.2 and F1.3), using purposive random sampling to select 30 samples from the three groups of students ranking from; excellent, average and weak groupings related to a Grade Point Average (GPA) in the 1st semester, academic year 2014. The students were taught how to write essays related to their own background knowledge.

Data collection and instruments in for data analysis in the study was informed by linguistic analysis focused on essay components and error analysis of the target group's writing essays, while observing and interviewing students in the target group. The data were 30 written English essays related to the surveyed topics from the target groups. The samples were assigned to write essays, selecting from six topics which were: Myself, My school, My free-time activities My dream, My family and My hometown, and had to finished within two hours of English studying at school.

The data in this study were analyzed and divided into two parts, consisting of the linguistic features appearing in the students' essay writings relating to essay components: coherence, order, unity and completeness and error analysis, analyzed by using linguistic analysis based on Leki (1992)'s theory. The researcher categorized into groups and analyzed the types using frequency and percentage, as found in the students' written essays. After interpreting of the results, discussion and recommendation were reported.

Summary and Discussion

The result of the study can be summarized as follows:

1. Essay Components

In this study, the essay components appeared in the written English essays writings of Matthayom six students. The data identified in the essays were

sorted from the highest percentage to the lowest percentage: Coherence (30.30%), Order (25.76%), Unity (24.24%) and Completeness (19.10%).

The examples of the coherence which was the most frequent were of two types: transitional words, and pronoun reference as shown in example 1-2 below:

The example of transitional words: addition was shown in example 1.

Example 1

“... In my free time, I like playing volleyball with my sister or my brother, but sometime I play with my friend because she like playing volleyball It very much. She says that volleyball is a fashionable sport for young people or adult people. Besides playing sports, I also like going for a walk with my sister. We usually go for a ride to remote villages to get fresh air and wonderful views in the countryside.....”

The example of pronoun reference : place was shown in example 2.

Example 2

“...The school has 4 classes, there are buildings, library, Hall for various sports, such as volleyball, field, football field, takraw field and basketball field is about more than 1000 students who have top junior secondary and high school plant... A society where everyone is together in the school the brethren help each other...”

In this study, the example of the Order was shown in example 3 below:

Example 3

“...A hobby like that first one. Like watching television, why we like it because it is relaxing. Knowledge and information that we do not know. We have knowingly events.

The second is novel because it makes us happy and vegetable plants vegetables do. If I was doing, so I do not push in the San. Do not think too much and exercise one another. Third, I like very much is the sport. This is a sport that I love to play

volleyball, badminton, table tennis and a muzzle because the sport is good, useful, and it is what makes the youth away from drugs...” (Order sequentially)

The example of Unity and Completeness component with topic sentence was shown in example 4 below:

Example 4

“...In the past I dream about many professions such as nurse, doctor, teacher, police officer, but when I was studying in high school, and Learn chemistry. My dream was changed because to learn chemistry experiments and research new things always. Makes I love and want to work on the subjects. (Unity and Completeness with topic sentence)

2. Analysis of errors

The error types in the essay of Matthayom six students in the high schools were analyzed based on Leki's model (1992). After analyzing the data from the 30 target group papers, the researcher found that there were 16 main error types sorted from the highest to the lowest percentage were: fragments and run-on sentences (37.25%), verb forms (10.61%), sequences of tenses (7.22%), countable/uncountable nouns and corresponding quantity terms (7.22), subject-verb agreement (5.87), prepositions and idiomatic expressions (5.87%) , adjective clauses (4.97%), agreement of noun determiner (2.26%), conditional (3.39%), adverb clauses (2.93%), present perfect verb form (2.26), passive / active voice (2.26%), articles (2.26%), reported speech (1.58%), modal auxiliaries (1.35%), and progressive verb forms (0.23%), while adjectives acting as nouns was not found in this study.

The examples of the top six main errors were : fragments and run-on sentences, verb forms, sequences of tenses and countable/uncountable nouns, subject-verb agreement, prepositions and idiomatic expressions, adjective clauses and agreement of noun determiner as shown in example 5 - 12 below:

The example of fragments and run-on sentences were shown as follows:

Example 5

“...And the reason that all can confirm that I like chemistry very. So first I dream of is to their chemistry is that researchers (So, my first dream is to be a chemistry researcher), which is the highest dream of my life. My dream is the second and (My second dream is to) study at the Faculty of Science in Chemistry at the University of Chiang Mai...”

The example of verb forms was shown as follows:

Example 6

“...I would like to support patient have a symptoms or illness and then make a better health and health promotion to personal healthy. Help (Helping) people who are sick to come back again and enjoyed (enjoy) in life style...”

The example of sequences of tenses was shown as follows:

Example 7

“...Pracharatthumkhun school is a large school district. located in Ngao District of Lampang province. before I came here I heard rumors (Before I came here, I had heard a lot rumors) that the high school...”

The example of countable/uncountable nouns as follows:

Example 8

“...This place has a great abundance and are (is) the most common is it to have the water is green, fishs (fish) which was very big fishs (fish)...”

The example of subject-verb agreement was shown as follows:

Example 9

“...Everyone may have their dream but maybe dream will different with each other. Someone want (wants) to be a doctor, engineer, teacher , dentist , nurse , police, peasants, merchants, business researchers, farmer etc...”

The example of preposition and Idiomatic expressions was shown as follows:

Example 10

“...I learned at Pracharatthumkhun school, Ngao, Lampang. I graduated in (from) Dochaiwittaya school District: Nago Province Lampang Grade Point Average (GPA) 3.39 (with Grade Point Average (GPA) of 3.39).

The example of adjective clauses was as follows:

Example 11

“...My school is located not far from my house, more. There is a tree as a symbol of the school is the tamarind and teak plant lined, shaded by along the futbat corridor in the school. which is surrounded by tamarind and teak plant lined ...”

The example of noun determiner was as follows:

Example 12

“...In the village, there is far from city, there have the tree, there have the farm and there have the little people (there are the tree, the farm and little people). My family live in here, we have the wood house, the wood house are tall and small. In My family, I have four people, Father, Mother, Sister and Me (my parents, my sister and me...”

Discussion

In this study, the main component frequently noted in the students' writing was Coherence. In this study, the researcher analyzed the coherence using criteria emphasized on the nine transitional expressions which were; addition, sequence, comparison, contrast, giving example, indicating place, indicating time, showing cause and effect and summary, including a pronoun reference. According to Petchprasert (2013 : 19 - 33), conducted a comparative analysis of frequency rates of cohesive markers used in Thai and English written texts of Thai students in order to determine specific differences and similarities in the

uses of cohesive markers in the essays. It was found that preponderance of cohesive markers used in L2 texts reflected to the writers' attempts to construct ideas flow with the limitations of syntactic and lexical range. In addition, Yusheng (2015 : 95 - 97) Hongsahan (2011: 54 - 66) and Soepriatmadji and Janah (2014 : 82 - 94) studied the students' abilities of essay writing using four main criteria: Unity, Completeness, Coherence and Sentence skill. The research results indicated that students were at the low level of writing abilities and their writing abilities concerned Sentence skill mostly Coherence, Unity and Completeness respectively.

In conclusion, the four essay components: Unity, Completeness, Coherence and Sentence skill, were crucial when one would like to write his or her essay. Sometimes it is from background knowledge of the student, usually through reading or writing that fulfills the process and experiences in writing. To be competent in a language as well as the fundamental or basic knowledge of essay components are essential to enable the use of the language to be relative to contexts. Without this basic knowledge, there will not be pragmatic competence. This is why it is very important for teachers to, first of all set up a context for a conversation and secondly allow students to practice the language in that context and being able to recognize the differences between the reading and writing with the parties involved in that main idea in the context. Only with enhancing pragmatic knowledge teaching when passing on language knowledge are students helped to improve their pragmatic competence.

The error types found in the essay writings of Matthayom six students in the high schools were analyzed based on Leki (1992), after analyzing the data from the 30 target subject papers, the researcher found that there were 16 main error types sorted from the highest to the lowest percentage which were; fragments and run-on sentences, verb forms,

sequences of tenses, countable/uncountable nouns, and corresponding quantity terms. subject-verb agreement, prepositions and idiomatic expressions, adjective clauses, agreement of noun determiner, conditional, adverb clauses, present perfect verb form, passive / active voice, articles, reported speech, modal auxiliaries, and progressive verb forms, while adjectives acting as nouns was a noticeable omission in this study.

According to Boonsamritphol (2011: 93-97), Sawalmeh (2013), Bootchuy (2008 : 86-92), and Iamsiu (2014: 30-35) investigated the error types based on Leki's model (1992:105-120). The results presented that there were types of grammatical errors ranging from word to sentence level. It can be seen that types of errors occurred most frequently in Chinese and Thai students' essays. And the error in full stop is not usually found in Thai essay writing. The results was suggested and some pedagogical implications which might assist ESL/EFL teachers with some helpful suggestions and teaching strategies should be introduced and that will help reduce future problems regarding writing English essays among Thai learners.

As a result, we can conclude that the errors made by the students are both from the interlanguage and mother tongue interference. The errors may result from inadequate learning as well as the complexity of English language structure which native speakers do not have.

Moreover, English teachers and key personnel within education, have to find the best way to improve learners' competency as the curriculum aims at integrating five key competencies: communication capacity, Thinking capacity, problem-solving capacity, capacity for applying life skills and for technology application. Learning management systems enable learners to attain the quality prescribed in the curriculum goals.

In conclusion, it is important for Thai teachers to analyze the writing skill of individual learners. Developing methods to stimulate and challenge the learners' capacities through setting achievable targets towards the higher levels of knowledge, skills, principles, conceptualization processes, relationship as desirable characteristics. This will involve designing and organizing learning responsiveness to individual differences and different levels of brain development through writing process bringing this into classroom and inspire the students to practice, prepare and utilize media that is suitable to the activities organized, using appropriate strategies to assess the students' progress through a variety approaches in order to suit the nature of the subjects and the students' ability and improve teaching-learning methods and activities related to Basic Core Curriculum B.E.2551.

Recommendation

Recommendation for Application

1. The results of this study can be of benefit to English teachers and help improve their ability in recognizing errors in writing by high school students. It can be a guideline in teaching grammar and structure of English language.

2. The teacher could apply the methodology in evaluating their students about the writing ability especially in essay writing.

3. In writing class, the teacher should provide more writing exercises to the students in order to improve their writing skills, preparing for the national test.

Recommendation for Further study

1. Further research on English essay writing was suggested to investigate the in-depth coherence used in students writing.

2. Further research on errors in English essay writing were suggested to analyze the fragment and run-on sentences.

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