Utilizing Dictation Techniques in Process Writing Instruction: Improving Undergraduate Students' English Writing Performance

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Abstract

The study employed a pre-experimental research design involving a one-group pre-test-post-test with a combination of quantitative and qualitative data. The purposes were to (1) develop and test the efficiency of the instructional materials utilizing dictation techniques in process writing instruction for a university writing course, (2) determine whether the instructional materials could help increase students' writing ability, and (3) explore students' reactions towards the instructional materials. The entire instruction covered eight weeks, including the pre-test and post-test writing assignments. The students' learning logs reflected students' learning, preferences, and difficulties. Forty-seven pieces of students' pre-test and forty-seven pieces of students' post-test writing

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assignments were analyzed for evidence improvement of their English writing skills. This study highlights the positive impact on the utilization of dictation techniques in the process of writing instruction. Students could produce a sound paragraph, notice their spelling mistakes, and gain awareness of using correct phrases and grammar in their writing. Students expressed their positive attitudes towards the instructional materials and their activities. The difficulties of the students' learning are reported.

Keywords: Dictation Techniques; Process Writing; Writing a Paragraph

การใช้เทคนิคเขียนตามคำบอกในการสอนเขียน
ที่เน้นกระบวนการเพื่อพัฒนาความสามารถ
ด้านการเขียนภาษาอังกฤษของนิสิตปริญญาตรี

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บทคัดย่อ

การวิจัยครั้งนี้เป็นการวิจัยเชิงทดลอง (Pre-experimental Research) แบบกลุ่มเดียวสอบก่อน-สอบหลัง (one-group pre-test-post-test) มีการเก็บข้อมูลแบบผสมผสานเชิงปริมาณและเชิงคุณภาพ โดยมีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อ 1) พัฒนาและทดสอบประสิทธิภาพของสื่อการสอนที่ใช้เทคนิคเขียนตามคำบอกในการสอนเขียนที่เน้นกระบวนการ 2) เปรียบเทียบความสามารถการเขียนภาษาอังกฤษของนิสิตก่อนเรียนและหลังเรียนด้วยเทคนิคเขียนตามคำบอก 3) ศึกษาความคิดเห็นของนิสิตที่มีต่อเทคนิคเขียนตามคำบอกในการสอนเขียนที่เน้นกระบวนการ กลุ่มตัวอย่างในงานวิจัยคือ นิสิตปริญญาตรีที่ลงทะเบียนเรียนในรายวิชาการเขียนภาษาอังกฤษเบื้องต้นจำนวน 47 คน เครื่องมือที่ใช้ในการเก็บข้อมูลได้แก่ สื่อการสอนที่ใช้เทคนิคเขียนตามคำบอกในการสอนเขียนที่เน้นกระบวนการ จำนวน 8 สัปดาห์ ข้อสอบวัดความสามารถการเขียนภาษาอังกฤษระดับย่อหน้า และแบบ

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บันทึกระหว่างเรียนและหลังเรียนของนิสิต การวิเคราะห์ข้อมูลเชิงปริมาณและ
คุณภาพ ประกอบด้วย t-test ค่าร้อยละ ค่าเฉลี่ย ค่าส่วนเบี่ยงเบนมาตรฐาน และ
สหสัมพันธ์แบบเพียร์สัน (Pearson's Product Moment Correlation) และการ
วิเคราะห์เนื้อหา ผลการวิจัยพบว่าการใช้เทคนิคเขียนตามคำบอกในการสอนเขียน
ที่เน้นกระบวนการช่วยให้นิสิตพัฒนาทักษะการเขียนภาษาอังกฤษระดับย่อหน้า
นิสิตสามารถแก้ไขข้อบกพร่องทางภาษา การสะกดคำ และโครงสร้างประโยคตาม
หลักการเขียน นิสิตมีเจตคติที่ดีต่อการเขียนภาษาอังกฤษ และรายงานปัญหาและ
อุปสรรคการเขียนภาษาอังกฤษของตน

คำสำคัญ   เทคนิคเขียนตามคำบอก; การสอนเขียนที่เน้นกระบวนการ;
          การเขียนระดับย่อหน้า

1. Introduction

Communicating in English can connect people to the world in different ways; writing e-mails, texting, posting on Facebook, writing a blog, and tweeting. With the non-stop technology advancement, some human jobs that people fear may replace by Artificial Intelligence (AI) but not human skills. According to Marr (2018), the essential skills the robot cannot do are communication, critical thinking, creativity, strategy, imagination, and vision. These necessary skills are closely related to language writing skills, which are complex and require lots of energy and expertise to express ideas, thought, vision, and imagination and rhetorical devices (Heaton, 1975) that robot cannot master. Because in writing skills, writers need to acquire some degree of vocabulary knowledge and several grammatical rules of the language system to performed sentences. Those qualities come from human cognitive skills (Harmer, 2007); that is a reason that writing skills should be developed in Thai schools to prepare students for future workplace requirements with the rise of AI automation (Talerngsri, 2019). In addition, writing skills should be taught effectively in schools so that students' writing strategies, content knowledge, sentence construction, and paragraph structure could develop. Consequently, those strategy of writing can benefit students' long-term memory.

Regarding teaching writing in Thailand, it can be referred to in an EFL context as students learn to write in an academic setting such as schools, colleges, and universities, but not in an everyday use. Writing instruction is taught by English writing instructors. According to Padgate

(2 0 0 8), students' writing practices are not developed appreciably in Thai schools, either in the Thai language or the English language, and English writing especially has been ignored by educators and teachers. Writing skills are taught less than other skills, namely listening and speaking skills in Thai schools (Rungwaraphong, 2 0 1 4). Students have not much practice writing. Since writing skills are not tested in the University Entrance Exam, it could be the reason why writing has not been taken seriously by Thai students.

Writing skills can reflect not only English proficiency but also reflect the writer's thinking process. When students enter a university, they have to submit a great deal of writing to complete their learning tasks in Thai and English language courses, for example, term papers, assignments, and portfolios, but receive some grade of a pass or fail based on their writing performance.

Many research studies reported on Thai students' problems related to English writing abilities. Boonpattanaporn (2008) found that students have difficulties in writing essays at all levels of background knowledge in English. This finding is similar to those of many other researchers (Pawapatcharaudom, 2 0 0 7 ; Kobkuerkul, 2 0 0 9 ; and Kansopon, 2 0 1 2). The major problems with students' writing were listed as follows: the inability to apply grammatical knowledge and, vocabulary knowledge in their English writing, lack of coherence, inability to organize an appropriate structure for the writing content, failure to express their ideas in writing effectively, and the inability to support or justify their statements. Other factors affected students' writing abilities have been reported: students' proficiency levels and, students' negative attitudes towards English writing. To solve problems of students' writing, Raimes (1978) stated that students should receive practice in writing

more often to gain fluency in their writing, writing words, spelling, and sentences. Students need practice more frequently in composing simple sentences, copying simple sentences to complex sentences and paragraphs, doing grammar exercises, asking questions from the assigned reading passage. These activities would help them memorize language patterns for long-term use. These meaningful activities can engage students in English writing. Therefore, teachers would probably be the keys to direct teaching and learning for learners' academic success. Knowing their writing problems in particular areas may help teachers create an environment that encourages and supports students' writing development in the educational setting. This study attempted to improve English writing performance for undergraduate EFL students in the writing course.

2. Literature Review

Concerning writing instruction, two approaches are familiar to EFL writing instructors, a product-based approach, and a process-based writing approach. Based on Raimes, 1983; Brown, 2000), a product-based approach moves from controlled writing to free writing. It allows learners to copy from the model of a sentence or paragraph, including dictation, guided writing, and then free writing. The focus of the product approach is on grammar, sentence structure, and mechanical accuracy rather than fluency. Learners are free to choose the topics to write on. Teachers give feedback at the end. However, since the 1970s, writing instruction has transformed into the process-based

approach (Susser, 1994; Alghizzi, 2017). Students carried out the writing tasks from the beginning to the end of a process of learning. The process-based approach to writing instruction concentrates on the writer, a producer of the text, and is widely used for EFL writing instruction to enhance students' writing development (Hyland, 2004; Alodwan &Ibnian, 2014; Dokchandra, 2018).

Many good writers use the writing process to keep the readers interested in their writing, unlike the product-based approach, which gives little attention to readers (Tangpermpoon, 2005). To finish a paper, the writer uses several steps of the writing process, including pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. This process allows students to write from their own experience and knowledge before finishing their writing. This writing is not a neat linear sequence, but recursive; all finished papers can be reviewed, edited, and revised. The steps in the process can be forward or backward before publishing (Hyland, 2004). Stated above are the two approaches to teaching EFL writing currently used by many writing instructors. However, the writing process-based approach is the most widely accepted among second language writing teachers. In applying this, Hyland (2004) suggested that the writing process teaching theories alone cannot help teachers equip students to write confidently. The process writing approach gives learners the learning steps of producing good writing quality on paper but less attention to linguistic knowledge (Badger and White, 2000). There is little evidence showing that a single approach may lead to success in writers. Students need the learning techniques on how to write. At the same time, students need to understand how texts are shaped by topic, audience, purpose, and cultural background (Hyland, 2002).

For some instances, many English writing handbooks in the past recommend controlled writing and the correction of form to teach elementary to advanced learners (Susser, 1 9 9 4) as it works for some reasons in EFL context. One of the controlled writing techniques that many English writing instructors still use today is dictation. Dictation is a traditional way of teaching language that may have many benefits for learners. In writing, dictation entails learners writing from a recording or any spoken form. When they hear words, sentences or a paragraph, they have to concentrate on those excerpts and write them correctly. Dictation is a controlled writing technique that is probably suitable for the Thai EFL context, as a writing teacher is likely a non-native speaker of English (Fongpaiboon, Praprurkit & Paisad, 2 0 1 1). Previous research studies related to the use of dictation in English language class (Krashen, 2 0 0 9 ; Hoare & Tanner, 2 0 0 8 ; Fongpaiboon, Praprurkit & Paisad, 2 0 1 1 ; Tang, 2 0 1 2 ; Adel & Hashemian, 2 0 1 5 ; Purnawati, 2 0 1 7 ; Arcon, Klein, & Dombroski, 2017; Nabei, 2018; Nurdianingsih1& Rahmawati, 2 0 1 8) have found the benefits of utilizing dictation techniques for the EFL learners to be as follows: (1) improves language skills as it is such controlled writing; (2) may be proper methods for learners of all ages; (3) prepares the learners well with ideas, language items, and text organization; (4) reduces anxiety of learners when producing text to be more interesting and motivating; and (5) provides learners' opportunities to create language use and increases students' language accuracy.

The aforementioned studies show the effectiveness of using dictation techniques in improving writing skills. Dictation techniques can improve students' writing, memorizing, communicating cooperatively with their group, and creativity during the learning process.

Numbers of scholars have asserted the roles of English writing instructors as facilitators (Nunan, 2003; Gammill, 2006; Padgate, 2008; Adel & Hashemian, 2015, (Sermsook, Liamnimitr, & Pochakorn, 2017). The writing instructor should provide students meaningful writing contexts that are suitable for the students' proficiency level. Also, they should guide students in engaging in the thinking process, understand the strategies of writing texts, and select a suitable method to teach them so that the students will be interested in the writing class. In short, the instructors' role in teaching writing is crucial to direct students to gain success or failure. Before teaching writing, instructors should know the students' needs to plan the lessons effectively. Moreover, instructors need to understand the writing theories and principles, create appropriate lessons, and teaching materials to support students' writing.

With the benefits of process writing instruction and dictation techniques in teaching writing skills mentioned above, the researcher was motivated to bring them both to the writing class to improve the methods of teaching as well as to develop students' writing abilities. The researcher has taught the basic writing course at the university level for more than two years and found that one of the problems of students' writing was that students' English writing abilities were different. From observing students' writing in class, students seemed to have difficulties in composing the paragraphs. It was hard to get thoughts and ideas for paragraph development when asked to write an assignment. They had to exert much effort and try hard to finish their writing assignment in the time set up, and they had a negative attitude when being given a writing task.

Throughout the literature review, it was found that dictation techniques can be a useful tool to improve students' English writing abilities. More precisely, the researcher hypothesized that dictation could be integrated as a step of process writing instruction to give students a more accurate picture when composing a descriptive paragraph and to familiarize themselves with vocabulary, sentences, and the organization of a well-paragraph written. Few research studies have proven conclusive about the most effective techniques and few research studies have applied dictation in the writing process instruction for Thai learners. Therefore, the researcher proposed the development of the instructional materials utilizing dictation techniques in process writing instruction. The content materials which contained adequate language features for writing practices should bring students' writing ability, make students in the course confident, and foster a positive attitude towards English writing.

3. Research Objectives

This study has a general goal of determining whether the integration of dictation techniques in a process writing approach can help improve students' English writing performance. The general goal holds within three specific objectives;

1) To develop and test the efficiency of the instructional materials utilizing dictation techniques in process writing instruction.

2) To explore whether the utilization of the dictation techniques in process writing instruction improves students' English writing performance.

3) To investigate students' reactions towards learning with the instructional materials utilizing dictation techniques in process writing instruction.

4. Research Questions

1) What is the effectiveness of the instructional materials utilizing dictation techniques in process writing instruction?

2) To what extent do the instructional materials utilizing dictation techniques in process writing instruction improve students' English writing performance?

3) What are the students' reactions towards learning with the instructional materials utilizing dictation techniques in process writing instruction?

5. Research Hypotheses

1) The instructional materials utilizing dictation techniques in process writing instruction will be effective.

2) English writing performance of students utilizing dictation techniques in process writing instruction will increase.

3) The students will have positive reactions towards learning with the instructional materials utilizing dictation techniques in process writing instruction.

6. Methods of the study

This study employed pre-experimental research by using the one-group pre-test-post-test design for educational purposes with a combination of quantitative and qualitative data. It should be noted that this research study did not make any comparison among groups. The study attempted to develop and test the instructional materials for the writing instruction utilizing dictation techniques in process writing instruction to improve students' paragraph writing performance. The instructional materials were administered with students in the writing course in the second semester of the 2019 academic year. The entire period of these instructional materials covered eight weeks, including the first week of orientation and a pre-test writing assignment, six weeks of instruction, and a one-week of post-test writing assignment. Students in the class were provided with instructional materials, received classroom teaching, and provided guidance in keeping students' learning logs during and after lessons. First, the pre-test writing assignments were designed to measure the students' writing performance before the teaching, and the post-test the possible knowledge and writing skills gain after the instruction. Next, the instructional materials for the students' writing class were developed based on the efficiency index of the 80/80 standards (E_1/E_2) by Brahmawong (2013). The instructional materials were first piloted during

the 2017- 2018 academic year. Finally, the learning logs were used to reflect students' thoughts and give rise to questions that might relate to the writing exercises or learning activities from the classroom.

7. Population and Sample

The population was 47 undergraduate students from different majors at Kasetsart University Kamphaeng Saen Campus. These students included engineering, agriculture, management, and marketing majors, who enrolled in the Fundamental English Writing course in the second semester of the 2019 academic year. The entire group of students in the class was the research target in this study for several reasons. All the students have had a similar background in English language learning since they passed the three pre-requisite Fundamental English I-III courses. Importantly, these students were the real learners of English writing for the semester; they came from the class with mixed English abilities and different content-areas of study.

8. Research Context

Undergraduate students at Kasetsart University must obtain at least 12 credits or four courses in English language. Fundamental English I & II focuses on developing of the four language skills; listening, speaking,

reading, and writing. The emphasis is on communicative competence from a basic to a higher level. At the same time, Fundamental English III focuses on practicing of language skills in discussion and presentation in academic contexts. When students pass all three fundamental English courses, they must choose the fourth course in a category that is offered by the university. Fundamental English Writing is one of the writing courses offered to students every year. In this course, students develop their writing from models using appropriate language structures and vocabulary. This course is based on a commercial book. The course length is fifteen weeks totaling 45 hours of instruction two 90-minute sessions per week. Students who enroll in writing courses come from different majors, including engineering, agriculture, management, marketing, hotel, and tourism management. Those students are mostly in their third or fourth year of study, but some students are in the second year, fifth or sixth year of study.

9. Research Instruments

1) Design and Development of Instructional Materials

In this study, the instructional materials utilizing dictation techniques in process writing instruction were developed by the researcher and tested for efficiency of index 80/80. The instructional materials for this study were in house materials. The dictation techniques integrated in writing instruction were new in the writing course. The design and development of the instructional materials package for this study included three units of writing

instruction based on the practice session of writing a descriptive paragraph, the pre-test-post-test writing assignments, and the scoring rubric used in the English writing class for eight weeks and 24 hours of teaching. The package of course materials was validated by the three experts in the field of English language teaching. Revisions were made according to the experts' advice during the development process. An initial tryout process of one-on-one and a small group test of the instructional materials took place with students in the 2017 academic year; field testing was in the 2018 academic year and conducted the main study in the 2019 academic year. Descriptive statistics were used to determine the efficiency index for the process (E_1) and the product (E_2) of the instructional materials package. The pair-sample test was used to compare the students' scores before and after learning with the treatment.

Sucharitrak (2010) gives the guidelines in material design and development that have been followed in this research study. This development consisted of four steps: (1) identify the teaching goals and objectives; (2) define the content scope and language learning skills; (3) select and develop the content materials, and (4) specify the instructional design and activities. The details of lesson design and development were as follows.

Identify teaching goals and objectives. The instructional materials used were the in-house ones for Fundamental English writing course. The course description was to develop students' English writing from models using appropriate structure and vocabulary. In the study, the objectives were to develop students' ability to write a simple paragraph from a descriptive paragraph model utilizing dictation techniques in process writing approach.

The dictation techniques used contained the specific vocabulary and structure needed for composing a description. At the end of the instructional hours of teaching, students should be able to write a well-organized, descriptive paragraph of not fewer than 150 words to describe people, things, and places.

Define the content scope and language learning skills. The factors to be considered for the content learning and language aspects were teachers, students, and contextual variables (Richard, 2005). In this study, the content centered on a descriptive writing paragraph that gives readers details about a person, place, or thing so that they can visualize the topic. In this descriptive writing paragraph, students need enough language ability to develop and produce simple, functional texts. The language skills should include simple, compound and complex sentences, language form and structure, and descriptive words for organizing a good paragraph.

Select and develop content materials. Based on Kitao and Kitao (1997), in selecting materials for the utilization of dictation techniques in process writing instruction, the students' background knowledge and their levels of English language ability should be considered. According to Westwood (2004), the selected materials should be authentic and ease students' learning. The combined resources were employed based on the needs of students' writing and their English proficiency level. The researcher inspected well-written models of paragraphs from various textbooks, articles, magazines, internet websites, brochures, and other accessible content to develop the entire set of lessons. The paragraph writing model in the materials comprises a topic, statement of the main idea, and supporting details. The three units were as follows: unit 1: describing people, unit 2:

describing things, and unit 3: describing places. These units would take six weeks of instructions, and 18 hours of class practice.

Specify the instructional design and activities. Through the three units of learning, the design of learning activities was aligned to the principle concept of the process-based approach to writing instruction of Hyland (2004) and the dictation techniques were integrated into the process model. The writing instruction comprised four learning steps: (1) pre-writing, (2) writing a rough draft, (3) focusing on language, and (4) practicing—the utilizing of dictation techniques was inserted into the first three steps of each unit to control writing. The four main learning steps of each unit contained learning activities and exercises that connected to each writing process, and the steps could be recursive, as shown in Figure 1.
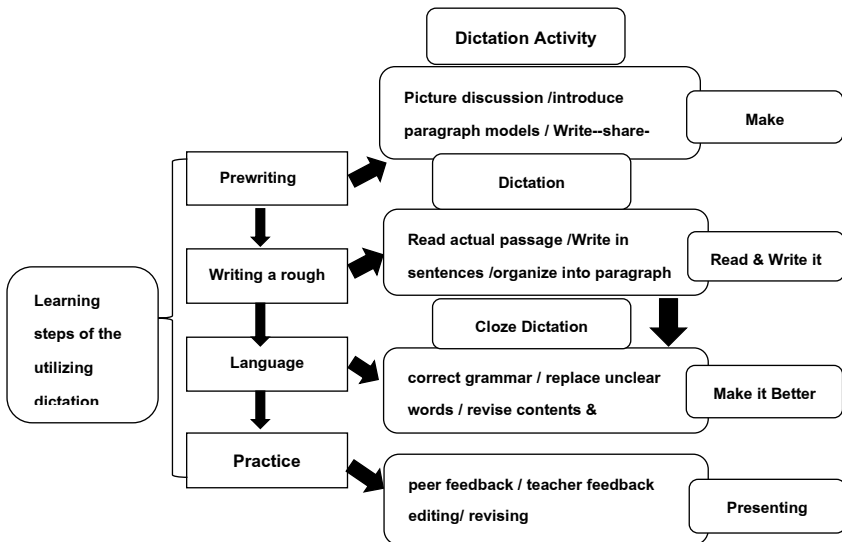

Figure 1. The learning steps of the instructional materials in each unit

Pre-writing stage Pre-writing is a vital step to give adequate language input to the finished piece of writing. First, the class would discuss the ideas of what to write about with questions from the picture. Then the instructor would introduce the descriptive paragraph model and lead-dictation activities with 100-word paragraphs with the necessary vocabulary that had been presented to students at the beginning of the lessons. The teacher would familiarize students with the language forms by having them listen to a paragraph she dictated. Students would write down what they hear in sentences; after finishing writing, the teacher would ask them to compare their texts to those of friends, and then check with the original version to determine if their written transcription is correct. Later, the teacher would review vocabulary and structure from the paragraph model.

Writing a rough draft This stage involves the reading of writing exercises to ensure students have observed good organization and elements of a paragraph before writing. The features of descriptive text stories, and reorganizing a section of sentences are emphasized this step. Finally, students start to rewrite their paragraph from the model. In this step, the practice of the dicto-comp (dictation composition) technique is used to help students generate their understanding and encourage them to rewrite the story from the model.

Language focus For accuracy of language use, several language exercises related to error corrections were presented. To help students realize how to use language appropriately this stage, focuses on form and meaning. Students had to share their writing for a peer check in words, language structures, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization to make

paragraphs more correct. Also, cloze dictation activities are employed in this step.

Practice stage In the last step, students share their writing with other students to read and give class feedback. To do this, students go through the idea and organization of the paragraph, whether there is a topic sentence and supporting details tied to the topic. The teacher's role is to give feedback, and students make final corrections and then submit their written work.

Dictation activities The dictation in this study refers to the written modes of words, simple sentences, compound sentences, complex sentences, and paragraphs that teachers read two-three times while students are engaged in listening, transcribing, and writing the words on paper. The readings can be part or full sentences. Three types of dictations have been inserted into the learning activities of the current process writing instruction; standard dictation in the pre-writing step, dicto-comp while writing a rough draft; and cloze dictation in the language focus. After finishing each dictation technique, students checked the master sentences or a paragraph on the spelling, punctuation, grammar, and corrected them individually, in pairs, or in a group. Then they reread the master text and talked about the content of the paragraph, how it was organized, why its vocabulary was appropriate, and how the language had been used for descriptive writing.

2) The Pre-test and Post-test writing assignments

The pre-test and post-test were employed before and after being taught the descriptive units utilizing dictation techniques in the writing process

approach. The tests were designed based on the course's objectives, focusing on the ability to write a good paragraph from a descriptive paragraph model. In these writing tests, the students were required to compose a paragraph of 150 words to describe people, places, or things from a picture provided within the 50-minutes. The students' writing tests (pre and post) were measured by three different raters of English language teaching to reduce the subjectivity of scoring. The raters were informed of the scoring rubrics and trained before evaluating the tests. The data from the three raters were compared and analyzed. Inter-rater reliability was established to examine the stability of the test scores. The paired samples test was used to calculate the difference between the pre-test and the post-test scores of students' English writing.

3) Scoring the writing tests and scoring consistency

When evaluating the piece of writing, several skills were involved in assessing students' writing performance; the accuracy of the language forms, vocabulary, grammar, punctuation, and spelling, as well as how the writers conveyed their message, incorporated ideas, and organized the paragraph. To assess writing skills, teachers need a rubric as guidance to keep track of and prevent subjectivity and inconsistency. In this study, three raters who were experienced teaching English writing examined the consistency and accuracy of the scoring, with researcher one of the three. Based on Ghanbari, Barati, and Moinzadeh (2012), when the instrument for evaluating L2 writing is considered, the rubrics by Jacobs et al. (1981) are the most appropriate for evaluating the written text as this scale is widely used and accepted among raters of L2 composition. The rubric is comprised of 100

points, with the five analytical areas of writing, including content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics. For evaluation, each student's writing test (pre-test & post-test) was scored by the three raters; each rater scored using the same 1 0 0 points scale. The criteria and levels were from very poor, poor to fair, average to good and very good to excellent. The result of the scores from each rater was combined to see the connections and to draw conclusions regarding the average level of students' writing performance as a whole and in each writing domain. Before implementing this rubric, the three raters established agreement and were trained to evaluate the writing assignments. In case, of scoring mismatch, the three raters consults and the scores were adjusted once they reached consensus. Pearson's Correlation Coefficient was used to measure the consistency of the pre-test and post-test scores of three raters.

4) Students' Learning logs

The students' learning logs were a reflective journal used to investigate the students' learning experience. Students were asked to reflect on their feelings towards learning with the instructional materials during and after the class. Three specific questions were asked: 1) what did you learn from this unit? 2) what part of writing lesson did you like most, and why? 3) what part of the writing lessons do you find the most difficult, and why? The students could write in either Thai or English to express their feelings clearly and accurately. The learning logs were taken from the students after each unit so that the researcher could read and gain personal perceptions of the instructional materials. The themes were categorized and discussed.

10. Results of the study

1) Research Question 1: What is the effectiveness of the instructional materials utilizing dictation techniques in process writing instruction?

The effectiveness of adding dictation activities in process writing instruction was measured through the tryout process before implementing the sample in the main study. The tryout process consisted of one-on-one testing, group testing, and field study testing and based on the $80/80$ (E_1/E_2 formula). E_1 refers to the efficiency index for the learning process, which was calculated from the writing exercise scores. E_2 represented the efficiency index for the learning products, which was derived from the end-of-unit assignment scores. The trails employed with the students at different levels of English learning proficiency: high, moderate, and low achievers to ensure the instructional materials could serve all individual students' English proficiency levels. In these trails, students were asked to take a writing pre-test and then studied the instructional materials. After that, a writing post-test was administered, and the students were asked to give feedback about the lessons. In each step of the tryout process, instructional materials were adjusted, and the fallacies of materials identified and noted to improve the materials more suitable and sufficient. The scores of the pre-test, post-test, and writing exercises were combined and calculated. The three trials indicated the development of the instructional materials of dictation activities in process writing from the first to the last trail. As shown, the result of the final tryout process was over 80%, (one-on-one testing, $E_1=78.61$, $E_2=77.67$; small group testing, $E_1=81.32$; $E_2=80.92$; field study testing, $E_1=82.22$,

$E_2 = 81.97$) which met the efficiency index at $80/80$. Therefore, the three steps of the development testing can ensure the effectiveness of the instructional materials. In other words, the instructional materials utilizing dictation techniques in process writing instruction were sufficient for the research study—the results of the tryout process are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

The Results of the Three Steps of the Tryout Process

Tryout steps	E1 (process scores)	E2 (product scores)	Participants	Hours
One-on-one Testing	78.61	77.67	3	9
Small-Group Testing	81.32	80.92	12	12
Field Study Testing	82.22	81.97	30	16

In the research study, the utilization of dictation techniques in process writing instruction was administrated with 47 undergraduate students in real classroom conditions for Fundamental English writing. The students' scores showed a similar pattern to the students' writing performance in the field of study testing. The efficiency index for the learning process (E_1) was 83.17, and the product (E_2) was 81.20, which met the proposed $80/80$ standards. Therefore, the learning process scores were somewhat higher than the learning product scores. It meant that the students could perform better in the learning exercises rather than in the end-of-lesson tests. The results showed that the instructional materials for utilizing dictation activities in process writing were effective for implementation.

2) Research Question 2 : To what extent do the instructional materials utilizing dictation techniques in process writing instruction improve students' English writing performance?

2 . 1) Regarding the results of the pre-test and post-test writing assignments, Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r >.75) was used to estimate the scoring consistency among the three raters. The relationship between the pre-test and post-test scores given by three raters is reported in Table 2.

Table 2

Relationship of Scores Awarded by Three raters in the Pre-test and Post-test writing

Raters	Pre-test			Raters	Post-test		
	Rater 1	**Rater 2**	**Rater 3**		**Rater 1**	**Rater 2**	**Rater 3**
Rater 1	-	0.976*	0.968*	Rater 1	-	0.972*	0.973*
Rater 2		-	0.974*	Rater 2		-	0.984*
Rater 3			-	Rater 3			-

* p < .01 (2-tailed)

The table showed the direction of the linear relationship of scoring among the three raters. The correlation coefficients (r) for the pre-test ranged from .9 6 - .9 7 , while the post-test was from .9 7 - .9 8 . This direction demonstrated a strong correlation to the three raters' scores at an acceptable level of inter-rater reliability. As a result, the raters' scoring was reliable and consistent and can be used to interpret the students' writing abilities in the writing tests.

2.2) The results of the pre-test and post-test were employed to examine the students' writing performance before and after implementing the dictation techniques in process writing. The pre-test ($\bar{X}$=39.51) and the post-test of writing ($\bar{X}$=71.79) were compared to calculate the difference. The findings revealed that the mean score of the post-test writing assignments was higher than the pre-test. Table 3 contains the descriptive statistics of pre-test and post-test scores of students' writing.

Table 3

Pre-test and Post-test Scores of the students' writing performance

Tests	Total score	$\bar{X}$	S.D.
Pre-test writing assignments	100	39.51	5.94
Post-test writing assignments	100	71.79	5.46

N=47

The pre-test and post-test writing scores were calculated for statistical differences to examine the students' English language writing performance. As shown, the scores increased significance value. The descriptive statistics are illustrated in Table 4.

Table 4

Comparison of Pre-test Scores and Post-test Scores of the writing assignments

	Paired Differences							
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the difference		t	df	Sig. (1-tailed)
				Lower	Upper			
Pre-test Post-test	32.27	8.03	1.17219	29.91	34.63	27.53	46	.000

*p<.05

   Table 4 report the differences between the paired samples test, Confidence Interval of the Difference of the 95%, the t value, the df, and the one-tailed p-value. It has found that the value of the t-test is 27.53. For the p-value shows a significance of .000. These statistics indicate that the students improved significantly in writing a descriptive paragraph after learning with the instructional materials utilizing dictation techniques in process writing instruction.

   To examine the details of the students' language writing performance on a descriptive paragraph, the students' mean scores after learning with the instructional materials were analyzed to see the overall results of students' writing scores in each domain. The mean scores ($\bar{x}$) of each area from the test are introduced in Table 5.

Table 5

The Results of the Pre-test and Post-test Scores of writing performance in each domain.

	Pre-test ($\bar{x}$)	Criteria	Post-test ($\bar{x}$)	Criteria
1. Content	13.86	Very poor	18.01	Fair to poor
2. Organization	7.02	Very poor	16.20	Good to average
3. Vocabulary	8.34	Very poor	14.55	Good to average
4. Language use	8.50	Very poor	18.70	Good to average
5. Mechanics	1.79	Very poor	4.32	Good to average

Table 5 indicates the mean scores of the students' pre-test and post-test in each domain. As can be seen above, the mean scores in the post-test in each writing domain were higher than on the pre-test. The students' post-test mean scores of each area are as follows: content ($\bar{x}$ =18.01), organization ($\bar{x}$ =16.20), language use ($\bar{x}$ =14.55), vocabulary ($\bar{x}$ =18.70), and mechanics ($\bar{x}$ =4.32). The results supported Hypothesis two, as we can say that the instructional materials using dictation in the writing process can enhance students' writing performance in the accuracy of the language forms, vocabulary, grammar, and, at the same time, improving the content and organization of a paragraph writing.

3) Research question 3 : What are the students' reactions towards utilizing dictation techniques in process writing instruction?

From the total number of 141 pieces of writing made by 47 students in this study, only 3 0 pieces by ten students were randomly selected for content analysis. The obtained data from students' learning logs were reviewed to reflect the students' reactions towards utilizing dictation techniques in process writing instruction—the themes and patterns collected from specific questions that students were asked to respond to after every three lessons. The guided questions followed the main structure of the data presented.

What did the students learn from the lessons?

The students' reflections on what they learned can be grouped into three categories. Firstly, most students commented that they learned the descriptive words from each unit, which they could use to compose their writing tasks. Four students wrote that they gained vocabulary to describe people's character and physical appearances. Other students said that they could use the adjectives, verbs, and nouns to describe the places and things that made the paragraph longer. Secondly, all the students mentioned that during the learning steps, dictation activities help them be aware of their spelling. Two students stated that they had to check every word spelling carefully in their writing before they handed their first draft to friends for review. Finally, half of the students found that introducing an example of good paragraph models in each unit was very helpful. Two students wrote that they got an idea to write a description of things from the picture. Others

mentioned that having an example of the written text type was useful for focusing on the organizational patterns.

What part of writing lessons did students like the most, and why?

The instructional materials were composed of three-unit lessons of descriptive writing, describing people, describing things, and describing places. The learning steps began with pre-writing, writing a rough draft, focusing on language, and practicing. The data from the students' learning logs specified their preferences of the lessons in two main areas; 1) the learning steps; based on the records, most students expressed positive feelings towards the learning steps and writing exercises. The reason was that the writing activities were constructive and easy to follow. Students mentioned specific aspects of the learning steps that involved the writing activities from the paragraph models, such as dictation activities. These practices helped them have ideas of descriptive paragraph writing. They said that they could complete each unit with confidence to write; 2) working with a peer; most students were satisfied with learning in pairs or groups in the writing class, mainly when they helped to check the first draft. Students pointed out that they could interact with each other to come up with ideas to write instead of working by themselves so that they could learn and get feedback from their peers.

What part of the writing lessons do you find the most difficult, and why?

From the logs, a few students gave negative responses to the lessons. Students expressed their negative feelings towards the revising and editing when they finished the first draft in the learning step of language focus

(third step). Because in this step, students had to share their writing for a peer check to determine if there were any errors found in words, language structures, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization, as well as the content idea, which they then had to correct to make the writing better. One student said that "this was boring and tiring step I hated it the most." Other negative feelings students expressed were that they found a hard time in translating words from the Thai to the English version when they had to write individual exercises. He said they had limited vocabulary knowledge, and that took them a long time to complete their writing tasks.

11. Discussion

1) The effectiveness of the instructional materials

The implementation of the instructional materials utilizing the dictation techniques to process writing instruction demonstrated an efficiency index at 83.17 (E_1) / 81.20 (E_2). The number was slightly higher than the proposed efficiency index of 80/80 standards. The reasons might be as follows. First, the development of the instructional materials for this writing class strictly followed on the materials process development, which involved several steps, validated by the experts and tested for efficiency through the three phases of the tryout process. The data derived at the stages of the tryout process helped the researcher discover the strengths and weaknesses of the instructional materials for writing to make it better to implement it in the main study. The second reason might be that the students received

practice of the writing activities in each learning step of process writing, which allows them to learn the words spelling, vocabulary, the writing errors while dictated the paragraph model. These may have helped students gain language input to complete the writing tasks and the exercise scores. The third reason could be that dictation activities and writing exercises allow them to work in pairs or groups. When they wrote together, they checked and revised to make the written text better, and that improved the exercise scores. The fourth reason could be that the content materials and language features were carefully tailored based on the authenticity and suitability for students' particular levels in the basic English writing course so that students may feel more comfortable learning. For these and perhaps other reasons, students' scores in the learning process were slightly higher in the post-test.

2) Students' writing performance

Regarding the mean scores of the tests, the results showed that the students learning with the dictation techniques in process writing approach had a higher average post-test score ($\bar{x}$ =71.79) than the average pre-test score ($\bar{x}$ =39.51). The fact that the students' writing performance was significantly higher than the pre-test may be due to the development of the instructional materials of utilizing dictation techniques in process writing, which set goals and objectives. The explicit goal for student learning has a measurable impact on students' achievement (Marzano, 2003). Based on each unit, the learning steps from the pre-writing to the practice step were connected.

The **pre-writing stage** encouraged students to think about the ideas or content of the writing. Students were asked to discuss the pictures to get an idea or content to emphasize. The dictation provided students with a paragraph model, which familiarized them with the vocabulary and language forms before planning their writing. Students listened to a short paragraph that the teacher read; they wrote it down what they heard in sentences, compared their text to their friends, and then checked with the original version to determine if their written transcriptions were correct. Later, they used the vocabulary and structure of the paragraph model. Hence, with the pre-writing stage, the instructor could introduce students to the writing skills and make them notice their writing mistakes.

In **writing a rough draft**, students were provided the reading passage for reading and observing the good organization and elements of a well-written paragraph with writing exercises of reorganizing the sections. The dictation composition technique was employed; the target paragraph model was read two or three times by the instructor, while students listened and rewrote it from memory. Then they compared their writing in pairs and last checked their version with the original text. In this step, students gained experience composing paragraphs with controlled writing, and students could produce their first draft.

For the **language focus**, the learning activities were language exercises related to error corrections. Cloze dictation was employed for practicing in this stage by having the incomplete written paragraph and having students fill in the words missing to make them aware of the accuracy

and form. More writing exercises of replacing words, and revising irrelevant content added. Students could review their writing in this stage.

The last step was **the practice**; each student presented their writing by sharing it with other students to read and give feedback. Students would go through the paragraph's organization to make sure the topic sentence and supporting details were tied to the topic. The peer feedback was good practice for students to reduce their writing errors before submitting their work to the instructor.

Regarding the result of the students' writing overall scores, each domain regarding the scoring rubric indicated significant differences between the mean values of the pre-test and the post-test scores in the content domain, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics domain. This indicates that students might have made their improvement in writing performance from the practices and learning activities provided in class. The findings of this study are in accord with the investigations of Roonghirun, 2007; Kuyyogsuy, 2019).

In the pre-test, the overall mean score of students' writing was 39.51. The interpretation of the students' scores levels in each domain showed that students' writing abilities were 'very poor". Based on the evidence of the pre-test evaluation, students' writing could not be evaluated in any further detail for English vocabulary knowledge, and word forms because of the lack of quantity and paragraph organization. However, the errors in sentence construction, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and paragraphing were counted and showed that most students had problems in writing at the beginning of the class before being taught with dictation techniques. The possible reasons may help to identify the issues.

The students' lack of writing ability maybe because the class had mixed grade levels of English language ability and ranged in students' areas of study; even though these students had already passed all three basic English courses. Hence, instructors could not assure their English writing ability until they tested the students. Another possible reason that students' mean scores were low was that some students had not focused on English language learning for years before their enrollment in this course. Consequently, they likely had fewer chances to use English in everyday use. Observation of these students' writing the pre-test, they could not finish writing in the test's time limit. Some of their paragraphs were rather short and did not meet the paragraph length criteria of the test. This brevity maybe because of the students' difficulty in getting ideas, words connected into sentences, or some other aspects of writing skills. By lacking language abilities mentioned, the students' mean scores of the pre-test were low.

In contrast, the post-test results demonstrated the development of the students' writing in every category. The student's scores gradually increased to "Good to average" in four areas; organization ($16.20/20$), the vocabulary ($14.55/20$), language use ($18.70/25$), and mechanics ($4.32/5$) with only the area of content ($18.01/30$) rated as "Fair to poor." The reasons students' scores increased might be that students had gained knowledge of composing a paragraph from the practices of writing through three units of using dictation techniques and the process of writing instruction. The scores indicated that students could use an adequate range of words in writing a paragraph, apply practical, simple sentence construction, word order, spelling, capitalization, and paragraphing. However, the scores in content were only somewhat improved. This last finding means that students' ability

of content knowledge was still lacking, with limited understanding of the topic to describe and ideas to develop paragraphs. The lack of content knowledge of writing may come from less reading of the writers. Wickman (2019) stated that reading through many pages helps people craft ideal writing and become a better writer. In short, students' English writing ability gradually improves upon their reading practices, more likely reading more help one absorb more content knowledge from the writer.

3) Students' learning logs

The results from students' logs demonstrated the students' perception of learning benefits of class activities utilizing dictation, and how they contributed to their learning. The student's reactions to their learning, preference, and difficulties were summarized and reported.

Students' Perception of Learning in Writing Lessons

The students expressed that dictation activities learned, were very useful for writing development skills. Students could gain the benefits of words presented in each unit that could be used to complete the writing tasks. Students could use the word forms such as adjectives, verbs, and nouns, which describe people's characters, physical appearances, and these words could expand the sentence length and word length of their paragraph. Furthermore, students could apply the techniques of dictation to the spelling of their words and learn from picture description and a paragraph model at the beginning stage of writing. These activities were instrumental in getting a clear concept of the writing practice. The students had a positive perception of the lessons, maybe because the learning activities were engaging to them.

Students' Preference in Writing Lessons

The learning logs shed light on the students' preference towards the learning steps and writing exercises in the writing lessons. The learning steps could give them confidence for writing to the end of the task. Another learning activity students liked was pair work and group work in the writing class. Students enjoyed working with friends to interact, share, and come up with ideas, they could learn from their peers to compose successful tasks. Students could see the advantages of working in pairs or groups instead of working individually because it enabled them to focus on the tasks and exchange their ideas. This benefit is in lines with the research study of Kaweera, Yawiloeng, and Tachom (2019), which found that students were satisfied working in pairs and groups to lower their anxiety and that learning pairs, and groups can foster student self-confidence when completing tasks. Pair or group work offers teachers great benefits in teaching writing.

Students' Difficulty in Learning with the Writing Instruction

Students expressed negative feelings towards revising and editing, with the reason that they had to put an effort in the correction of their writing in the first and second drafts of their own and friends' work to make their paper better. According to Reynolds (2012), revision and editing in writing are tedious tasks but required of professionals to publish a well-written text. Another problem was that students found it hard to translate words from Thai to English when they had to write. These students might have limited English vocabulary, and translation took time to complete in their writing tasks. This difficulty of attempting to translate from their Thai to English version may relate to their English vocabulary knowledge.

12. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the instructional materials utilizing dictation techniques in the learning steps of process writing instruction are practical for the course. Based on the result of the study, dictation could enhance students' English writing performance. This kind of instructional material is beneficial, not only to encourage students to be better writers in the course but also to equip Thai EFL students with content and linguistic knowledge and confidence.

This study showed that the learning activities during the learning steps with peers, such as sharing, checking, correcting the writing tasks, were useful as they could work together, and they felt confident in their work. Findings suggest that additional training of writing skills with pair work and group work is constructive for the writing course, especially the basic writing course. The pair work or group work can build students' confidence to share and learn from each other's paper and also produce good written paper.

The study found students' difficulty in writing English due to their English language ability. Therefore, teaching materials appropriate to students' English proficiency levels for the exercises are also necessary to upgrade their English language ability. Some students need more hours of class time practice than others. Students' English proficiency levels and learning hours should be considered in future materials development.

This study was conducted with undergraduate students, which was a mixed group of students in terms of their English ability and their writing performance increased after learning with the instructional materials of

dictation techniques in process writing instruction. Thus, the study results may not be generalized to all Thai EFL university students because of the small sample size. However, the findings might be beneficial to instructors, researchers, or language educators as references to improve other writing courses.

13. Recommendation for further study

The results of this study lead to recommendations for further studies, which are as follows.

1) This study focused on utilizing dictation techniques to improve writing skills, and the results show that dictation activities in writing instruction were productive and practical. Students became aware of their writing mistakes. It is recommended in further studies that dictation techniques should be integrated into the principles of teaching other skills than writing to strengthen students' English language skills.

2) The learning logs' results show the preference of students for working in pairs or groups in the writing class, where they can share ideas and check their writing. It is suggested that further studies should be conducted to explore the impact of pairs or groups' work on students' motivation in writing skills.

3) This study integrated dictation activities into the learning steps based on the process writing approach to improve students' writing paragraphs by dictating a paragraph. It would be worth studying vocabulary

learning by dictation practice that might affect learners' longer vocabulary retention.

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