Collaboration for Liberation:
Using TIMET to Enhance EFL Students' Writing Skills

Saneh Thongrin

Abstract

It is difficult for EFL students to explore ideas and overcome cultural and language barriers when trying to improve their writing skills in English. Revisiting some of the old collectivist practices, I found value for today's teaching. Throughout a semester, I taught expository writing to 22 college students using what I call TIMET, a collaboration-enhanced-individual-writing model based on students' socio-cultural and cognitive backgrounds. Data analysis, through the students' learning processes and written products, in-depth interviews, students' learning journals and writing portfolio, and class observations, reveals their writing processes, written products, the use of L1 rhetorical conventions in L2 writing, and the attitudes toward learning to write through the invented model. With the implication of such findings, I discovered 'a writing ecology,' signifying some factors that contributed to L2 writing achievement. The findings suggest that teachers, with some accommodation, could make effective use of the students' local resources when teaching ESL/EFL writing.

Key Words: CIEW, TIMET, Thai collectivist conventions, EFL/ESL writing instruction, collaborative writing, Thai rhetorical conventions, L2 writing, locality in EFL/ESL writing

Collaboration for Liberation:
Using TIMET to Enhance EFL Students' Writing Skills

Saneh Thongrin

> One takes on a compulsive, repetitive activity
> as though to busy oneself, to distract oneself, to keep
> awareness at bay . . .repeating, repeating, to prevent
> one from "seeing." One does not "see" and awareness
> does not happen. One remains ignorant of the fact
> that one is afraid, and it is fear that holds one petrified,
> frozen in stone. If we cannot see the face of fear in the
> mirror then it cannot be there. The feeling is censored
> and erased before it registers in our consciousness
>
> (Anzaldua, 1987, p. 45).

INTRODUCTION

EFL writers often bring with them not only linguistic but also cultural backgrounds, some of which may cause their writing processes and products to differ from those written by their native English-speaking counterparts (Thongrin, 2000). A considerable number of researchers (e.g., Ferris, 1994; Hirose & Sasaki, 1994; Leki, 1995; Pennington & So, 1993; Silva, 1993 &1997; Uzawa, 1996; Whalen & Menard, 1995; Winer, 1992) assert that ESL/EFL students have encountered a variety of problems. First of all, the students' insufficient L2 linguistic proficiency was a cause for their "unacceptable" written products (Cumming, 1989; Pennington & So, 1993). Reichelt (1997) found that EFL

writers in her study expressed concerns in vocabulary and grammar while writing an examination essay. The students could not express their ideas precisely, thus using detailed explanation to describe the intended concepts. Then the non-native speakers in the study by Storch and Tapper (1997), when asked to write annotations of their essays before having a conference with the teacher, annotated most frequently on content, followed by grammar and organization of the essays.

The students' lack of linguistic proficiency probably results in another two related complications: delayed L2 development and lower quality texts. That the students' L1 and L2 are inter-dependent in terms of their cognitive/ academic domain (Wong, 1993) is likely viewed less helpful by some scholars. Kobayashi and Rinnert (1992), for example, comment that the use of L1 may delay the development of L2 writing fluency although planning in L1 and translating L1 texts to L2 are sometimes found useful for the students, such as the doctoral Japanese students in the study by Gosden's (1996) who first wrote an outline or a full paper in Japanese and then translated it into English when writing English research articles. Such L1-L2 interdependence could then cause the English texts produced by ESL/EFL students to be different from English readers' expectations (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996; Kaplan, 1966, 1988; Matsuda, 1997).

Such writing complications could be the consequence of their unique writing processes. Silva (1997) claims that ESL writers plan less, lack lexical resources and reread the text

less. Related to this writing process is the students' writing style. L2 students, continues Silva, use a simpler style, more coordination, less subordination, less noun modification, fewer passives, shorter words, less lexical variety and sophistication. Undoubtedly, their texts are considered simpler and less effective. However, Silva did not report in his article whether his claim was based on his own empirical research or solely simple observations. No matter what it is, I partly agree with such writing complications found in the students' writing processes and written products. This is because I always found in my research studies (Thongrin, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2006) that Thai EFL students, who have limited exposure to L2 texts which embody worldview, experiences and levels of discourse expertise, often have difficulty not only generating and organizing logical thoughts but also expressing such thoughts through appropriate choices of language.

These difficulties lead researchers to ceaselessly look for possible solutions to the problems. There lies the notion of language and culture. However, the research has tended to focus on second culture as an important entity for ESL/EFL instruction, but ignore the students' indigenous knowledge, which could also foster their learning achievement. Therefore, the main purpose of this study is to explore whether teachers could make effective use of students' locality to alleviate those problems in L2 writing. Specifically speaking, the primary focus of this study was on integrating group writing or collaborative writing—one of the collectivist concepts that, in a way, presents Thai collectivist culture—in EFL writing instruction. I believe the findings could shed

the greatest light on how we look at old things in a new way and make full use of cultural heritage in EFL contexts.

The Study

CIEW as a Conceptual Framework and TIMET as a Teaching Model

"A discovery is said to be an accident meeting a prepared mind." The statement well said by Albert Szent-Gyorgyi truly presents this inquiry which primarily started on 7 June 2006, the very first day of the course, when the students' pretest paper revealed a number of writing-related problems. "What teaching technique or class activities should I use in this class?" This question led me to create my own teaching model that should work well with the students who had severe problems.

To do so, I studied a number of related factors. Initially, I resorted to my own research experiences in L2 writing (Thongrin, 2000, 2001, 2007, in press), literature review embodying ESL/EFL writing instruction (Gere, 1987; Hairston, 1982; Hirvela, 1999; Raimes, 1985, 1991), and, most important, the students' socio-cultural and linguistic backgrounds drawn from their pretest paper. Given that the students' major was Thai Studies and that all of them had little exposure to English writing, I felt that I would create a simulation of a Thai affiliative society, where group relations could affect the directions of communication or transaction. From the theoretical background, Thai collectivist perspectives, which embrace the students' worldview,

thought patterns, cultural and language concepts, should shape the EFL writing community, where writing and other related skills, were expected. As a result, I created the framework with these connected ideas: collaborative writing that simulate a) Thai collectivist, affiliative society, where learners' classroom behaviors are shaped primarily on the basis of in-group norms (Hofstede, 1986, 2001) and b) Vygotsky's perspective (1962, 1978, 1981, 1986) that learning is socially justified.

With such integrated elements as socio-cultural, cognitive and affective domains, I constructed a model which I called collaboration-enriched individual writing (henceforth CEIW) as the primary conceptual framework as shown in Figure 1:

Socio-cultural dimensions, hierarchical
and authoritative orientation
Interdependence in interpersonal context,
self reliance in task context

Thai Collectivist Classroom behaviors
Students expect to learn how to do something.
Individual students will not speak up in large groups.
Individuals speak up only in class when called on personally by the teacher.
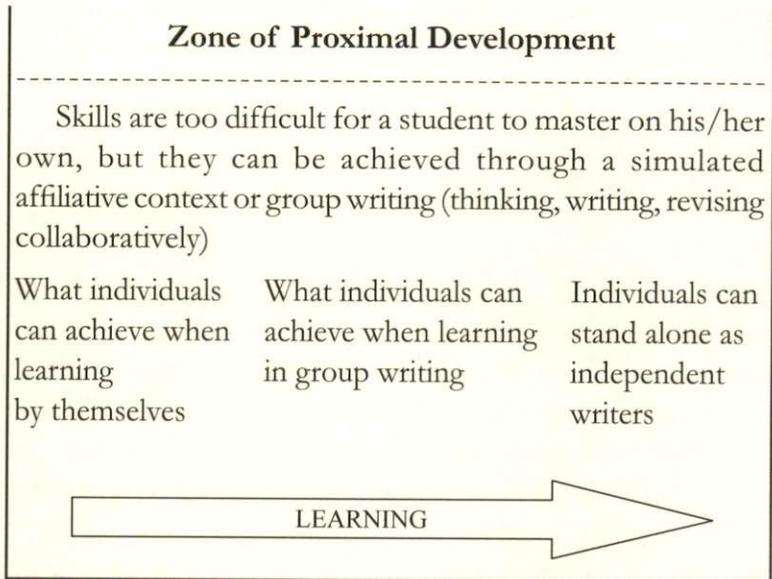In-group relationships are strong.

Zone of Proximal Development

Skills are too difficult for a student to master on his/her own, but they can be achieved through a simulated affiliative context or group writing (thinking, writing, revising collaboratively)

| What individuals can achieve when learning by themselves | What individuals can achieve when learning in group writing | Individuals can stand alone as independent writers |

LEARNING →

Fig. 1. General conceptual framework: Collaboration-Enriched Individual Writing (CEIW)

Behind every practice there should lie a theory. With CIEW, I then developed an instructional model underlined by two major elements: my teaching experience and Vygotsky's perspectives.

In creating the more concrete model, the teaching approach I personally used in writing classes came into play. Seeing that writing models, an important element of the product-oriented approach, primarily function as input in L2 acquisition, and that the process approach allows more room for students to revise multiple drafts, I normally taught writing through the product-process integration and constructed/tailored teaching materials. After having

analyzed rhetorical patterns and development, major ideas and supporting details, language and style of a variety of writing inputs or models that were, in my view, somewhat excessively provided to students, they induced knowledge and understood the rhetorical steps of such models, on which I often gave some tips. They, for instance, learned that the technique I called ToMEC, —a topic sentence, organizing bridge, meat of writing, examples of the meat, and conclusion—were the steps usually found in opinion paragraphs. The analysis of various writing samples written by professional writers, some explainable ideas or tricks and guidelines on English collocation helped them to capture the essence of each rhetorical pattern. I then adopted some ideas from the process approach, asking them to work in groups of three or four to think, write, revise and edit their work collaboratively. Teacher feedback on the rhetorical steps, idea development and language use helped refine their better work. This was partly required by the department curriculum and reflecting another feature of the product-oriented approach to writing instruction, that each student should write independently. I then integrated individual writing immediately after the students had finished their group writing activity, believing based on my experience that a lot of learned knowledge and skills derived from collaborative writing, to a greater extent, helped individuals to write independently.

This tailored approach to writing instruction seemed consistent with the Vygotskian perspectives (1981, 1986) considering writing as a social relation, development, inner speech and a dialogue as major premises for writing

instruction (Zebroski, 1994). To understand students' mental functions, we, first of all, need to consider their social relations as their social acts are related to and lead their cognition, which also constructs their social acts. To understand the students' higher mental functions and resources in such social relations, we need to understand that students' development is related to social development through social or emotional activities such as play, formal learning, interpersonal communication, and so on.

However, to understand the development of their higher mental functions and their related activities, we also need to understand the nature of their inner speech: a kind of self-talk enabling learners to direct and monitor their cognitive processing whose critical part is formed by meanings and senses. In this sense, writing seems to be a process of meaning discovery and skill mastery, and writing mistakes could be used as tools that help learners accomplish such goals. Finally, to understand the development of learners' inner speech and writing development, teachers need to look at writing dynamically. Vygotsky (1986) views language not only as a product of social relations and individuals but also as the instrument for transforming these two entities. As such, language is in change contextually and in dialogue, the basis of inner speech and the written speech (Zebroski, 1994). These premises suggest that the students' collective competence could enhance their private development. As a result, the designed model, where I positioned group writing followed by individual writing, reflected such Vygotskian views on these four premises of writing four-fold writing quite well.

The merit of inductive learning, the approach that supports students to learn through induced knowledge and skills, also played a significant role in the model configuration. Wanting individuals to see their learning progress during each learning stage, I placed individuals' free writing followed by group writing before the collaboration-individual writing-formal instruction model previously described. Such added elements were empirically found helpful for learners in that the former allowed each student to express his/her thought and creativity freely, while the latter encouraged the groups' risk taking and writing exploration before coming to the conclusion as a result of the teacher instruction. Finally, the model that I called TIMET was complete, as illustrated below.
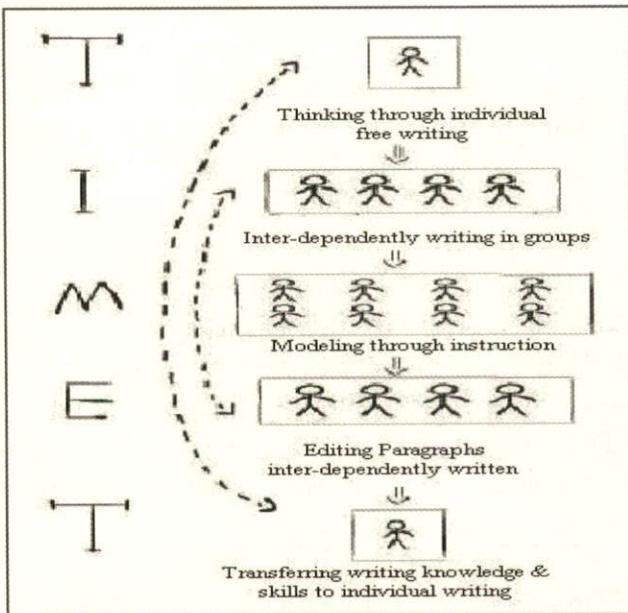

Fig. 2. TIMET model

The model contained 5-step instruction:

1. T: Thinking through individual freewriting

To express ideas freely and extensively, the students were asked to write a 10-minute freewriting, nonstop writing, about a chosen/assigned topic. All finished copies were collected for individual writing later.

2. I: Inter-dependently writing in groups

Given 40-50 minutes, they were asked to work in groups of four/five to write a paragraph collaboratively. Their works not imposed by rhetorical patterns were saved for another stage.

3. M: Modeling from teacher's instruction

Next, with two or three 90-minute periods, they were taught to write each rhetorical mode through workshop-oriented instruction.

4. E: Editing paragraphs inter-dependently written

The students were then returned with their group writing for collaborative revision.

5. T: Transferring writing skills to individual work

Finally, each student was returned with his/her freewritng, which s/he produced earliest.

The instruction through TIMET then served to answer the following research questions:

1. How did the CEIW framework shape the students' writing process?

2. How did the CEIW framework contribute to the students' writing development?

3. What role did the students' L1 rhetorical conventions play in their L2 writing?

4. What were the students' attitudes toward learning to write through TIMET?

METHOD

Study Context, the Course, and Participants

The teaching schedules in the English department are normally arranged by the quota committee. In semester 1of 2006, I were randomly assigned to teach 22 Thai-major undergraduates in EG. 231, the Paragraph Writing course, at Thammasat University. Having taken a few required English foundation courses, the students were required to take Reading for Information and Paragraph Writing courses, generally considered advanced and challenging for the students in this major. Most of them (77.30 %) obtained A, B+ and B on TH 161, a Thai foundation course, but some (59.10%) received these grades in EL 172, an English foundation course. Based on the criteria used in most examinations/tests of the university, students whose scores are over 70 and 80 per cent are considered good and excellent, below 70 and 60 per cent average and weak. As such, the students' grades in Thai and English foundation courses indicated that they were quite good at Thai but weak in English. I considered their levels of these courses as a factor for creating the model used in this study. Most of them were educated in non-Bangkok schools (72.70%) and had never been abroad (86.40%). This to an extent indicated their limited exposure to English.

Research Framework

As a problem-based inquiry, the study generally followed action research steps—identifying questions to guide the research, collecting information to answer the questions,

analyzing the information to answer the questions, intervening and observing, and sharing results with others—suggested by scholars in the field (e.g. Burns, 1999; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993; Kemmis & Mactaggart, 1988; Schon, 1983; Thongrin, 2004; Winter, 1987). To formulate a more practical framework, as shown in Figure 3, I put particularly together three inter-connected elements of inquiry, adapted from the groundwork by Creswell (2003) and Crotty (1998).
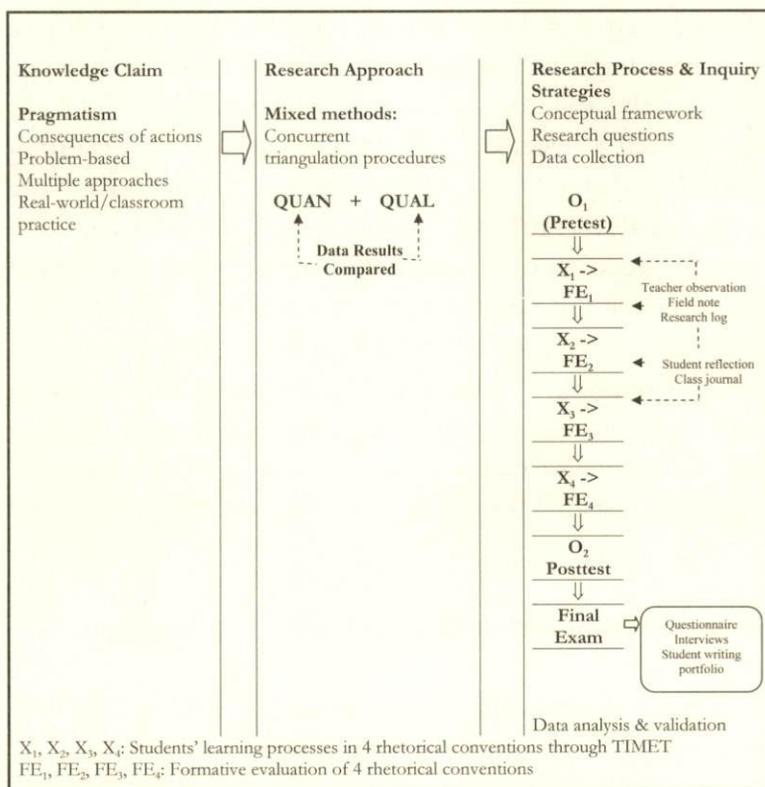
Knowledge Claim	Research Approach	Research Process & Inquiry Strategies
Pragmatism Consequences of actions Problem-based Multiple approaches Real-world/classroom practice	**Mixed methods:** Concurrent triangulation procedures	Conceptual framework Research questions Data collection

QUAN + QUAL

Data Results Compared

O_1 (Pretest)

$X_1 ->$
FE_1 — Teacher observation / Field note / Research log

$X_2 ->$
FE_2 — Student reflection / Class journal

$X_3 ->$
FE_3

$X_4 ->$
FE_4

O_2 Posttest

Final Exam — Questionnaire / Interviews / Student writing portfolio

Data analysis & validation

X_1, X_2, X_3, X_4: Students' learning processes in 4 rhetorical conventions through TIMET
FE_1, FE_2, FE_3, FE_4: Formative evaluation of 4 rhetorical conventions

Fig. 3. Research Framework

In the framework, the research epistemology, the knowledge to be claimed as a result of this study, used in this research is related to schools of pragmatism, where a knowledge claim results from solutions to problems (Patton, 1990). To understand the problem, which is the priority for the inquiry, researchers need to use multiple approaches to arrive such solutions (Creswell, 2003). This is because there is no absolute truth but a multiple reality (Cherryholmes, 1992). As a result, mixed research methods, the integration of quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis, are the best epistemological ways to derive such a knowledge claim or the solution to the problem (Creswell, 2003). In the research, I selected concurrent triangulation procedures, where I used quantitative and qualitative data selections at the same time during the study and integrated the information in the interpretation of the overall research findings. Reflected the mixed research approach, the research processes included a number of stages: forming conceptual framework and research questions, collecting data through the one group pretest-posttest design (O_1 X O_2), and analyzing/validating the data. The research framework underlines research approach, research procedures and data analysis as discussed below.

Research Approach and Data Collection Methods

This study was conducted in a classroom setting through an integration of quantitative-qualitative approaches. The students' learning achievement was evaluated by quantitative analysis; their learning processes and attitudes, qualitative interpretations. To triangulate the data, I collected the data

using multiple sources. First, the pretest/posttest, indicating their writing ability before and after the instruction, helped examine both the effectiveness of the teaching model and the students' writing improvement across the semester. Following a 90-minute period required by the English Department and wanting to encourage the students' critical thinking and awareness of the transition of Thai culture and society, I created a pre- writing test, comprising an opinion-based writing topic "Is premarital sex appropriate or inappropriate for Thai teenagers?." Having carefully considered the validity of the test with a colleague, I then used it as one of the research instruments. "Testing is more likely to be a threat when the time between testings is short" (Gay, 1996, p. 348). As a result, I prevented the pre-testing inference, which is a threat to internal validity, by not giving the result of pre writing test administered at the very beginning and by providing the posttest at the end of the semester. The four-month period was sufficient to ensure the reliability of the data derived from the pre-post testings.

I also conducted an attitude survey, which elicited the students' attitudes toward all elements of the course such as the teaching techniques, activities, their personal ability and improvement, mirrored their writing apprehension, language anxiety and attitudes toward learning English writing through the created model. To reinsure its clarity, I tried it out with another section of the students who were taking the same course. The survey and the pre/post test were significant tools essential for cognitive and affective learning domains that indicated the students' writing development and learning preference over time.

The students' written products of group and individual writing, all including freewriting, multiple drafts and revision, indicated their writing competence, while the data from class observations and the students' learning journals inductively indicated how they wrote English paragraphs. These sources deductively and inductively indicated the students' writing development.

While the students were on task, I also observed their learning behavior and noted any phenomena in the field notes and my research log covering teaching reflections, research problems and their would-be solutions. Any doubts were clarified by informal interviews conducted throughout the semester. Through observations, field notes/research log and interviews, I could adjust the focus of research very well.

In addition, the students' 24-entry learning journals written in English and four reflections written in Thai, when matched with my own observation and research logs, explained their writing performance and competence, their opinions about the instruction and general attitudes toward their learning. Without such learning journals and on-going reflections, their learning competence and writing performance could only have been evaluated at a more approximate level.

Last but equally important, the students' writing portfolio, a collection of all class works that contained not only all successive drafts of the final products but also some assignments of other courses, expanded the channels that helped me learn about their learning development thoroughly.

Put together, each of these data collection methods served to seek answers to the research questions of this study, as shown in Table 1:

Table 1. Techniques of Data Collection

Research Questions	Techniques of data collection				
	1	2	3	4	5
1. How did the CEIW framework shape the students' writing process?	X	X		X	X
2. How did the CEIW framework contribute to the students' writing development?	X		X	X	X
3. What role did the students' L1 rhetorical conventions play in their L2 writing?	X	X	X	X	X
4. What were the students' attitudes toward learning to write through TIMET?		X		X	X

Remarks:
1: Students' written products (freewriting of individuals and groups, successive drafts, revision, & portfolio)
2: Students' learning journals & reflections
3: Pre-post writing test
4: Attitude survey
5: Teacher observations, field notes/research log with interviews

Research Procedure

Assigned to teach a section of Paragraph Writing, I resorted to the one group pretest-posttest research design as a practical one, as shown in the Research Process column of Figure 3. To sort out the students' problems, I needed to identify the problems and looked for possibilities that would suit the participants' difficulties. After CEIW, the conceptual framework, and TIMET, the instruction model, were constructed as a means for workshop-based instruction also considered research treatment, I started the research. The pretest was administered before instruction, in which the participants were taught to write four-rhetoric English paragraphs—narrating events, describing people, describing places, and giving opinions—through TIMET throughout a semester. After the instruction of each writing rhetoric, the students' written products were formatively evaluated so they could see their writing ability in each pattern, become aware of, and improve their weaknesses before moving on to another subsequent rhetorical pattern. Also, in each rhetorical pattern, the students' writing processes and use of L1 rhetorical conventions in L2 writing were explored through their class journals written in English, unit reflections written in Thai, teacher observations and informal interviews. Their attitudes toward learning through the CEIW framework and TIMET were examined by a constructed questionnaire and their reflections. On-going analysis of the students' class journals and unit reflections were used for teaching adjustment through the course. As the semester ended, the posttest was given to evaluate their writing ability and examine the effectiveness of the CEIW framework and

TIMET. Finally, the research results were validated by a trained evaluator who rated the students' pre/post test and four pieces of writing tasks and by the students who co-interpreted their intended meanings during the interviews.

Methods of Analysis

The analysis of this research was quantitatively-qualitatively oriented. The data derived from the pre-post writing test were analyzed through a T-Test, those from the attitude survey and the students' written paragraphs and descriptive statistics. The analysis for the students' reflections, learning journals, and class observation, on the other hand, was qualitatively carried out through thick description, using the constant comparative method of Glaser and Strauss (1967), including (a) comparing incidents applicable to each category, (b) integrating categories and their properties, (c) delimiting the theory, and (d) writing the theory. This method was used to avoid imposing preconceived categories on the data and let naturalistic categories emerge. To protect the participants' identity, I reported and discussed qualitative data using pseudonyms to present their findings throughout the research report.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: How did the CEIW framework shape the students' writing process?

To examine the students' writing processes, I analyzed their learning behaviors through class observations, their

reflective journals, a self-reflected questionnaire, and unstructured interviews. The most distinctive feature is L1-L2 integrative use. A majority of the students (20 out of 22 students or 90.90%), while writing English paragraphs, resorted to Thai for most aspects of English writing most of the time. However, the skilled and unskilled writers apparently used their L1 in English paragraphs for different purposes. Those competent and intermediate learners apparently used Thai rhetorical conventions strategically for text planning, idea generating and organizing, style creating, lexical translating, and sentence restructuring. Shown below clearly demonstrates how the skilled writers made use of their own mother tongue.

> *I thought about the ideas for writing holistically and then details and examples of each writing part. Of course, I did these steps in Thai. Then, I looked for some strategies to interest my readers. I thought about words, idioms and sentences that could be used to express the ideas previously planned. At that stage, I was very careful about grammar. The sentences expressing any ideas must be grammatically correct (Chompoonoot, reflection 3).*

That the skilled writers made use of their L1 strategically while composing in L2 is well documented by some researchers (e.g. Wang, 2003; Wang & Wen, 2002). This finding suggests that EFL students' L1 may have positive effects on improving the quantity and quality of ideas generated for their writing when they used L1 as a tool to search for difficult word choice, and organize their L2 texts.

The students with low English proficiency, however, relied on literal translations throughout their composing processes. Before translations, they planned thoroughly with holistic ideas and development, created strategies for impression used in Thai composition, composed the paragraphs in Thai and finished the whole writing process by translating such Thai paragraphs into the English ones. Ratiya explained how she wrote in the course.

> *I planned with overall ideas and their development before capturing readers with impressive styles. I thought about some writing strategies from Thai composition such as using simile, metaphor or Thai proverbs. Then I thought about the ideas for introduction, a topic sentence by using what the teacher taught in the class. Next, I put together all details. Finally I wrote the paragraphs in Thai and translated the concepts, not sentence by sentence, to English (Ratiya, reflection 3).*

While planning for idea generation, paragraph development and tone/style creation and translating Thai paragraphs into English ones, the skilled and unskilled students automatically and 'commonly' switched to Thai from time to time until they got their work done in English. In this manner, switching to L1 functions as a mediating tool to initiate thinking episodes, browse writing landscape and transform such built-up development to English paragraphs. The students' writing processes with these behaviors are quite common for the competent and weak students in my study. Asked if they still made use of L1 composition in their revised English paragraphs, the students expressed the effective use

of their L1 in L2 composition even more. As a result, I couldn't agree more with some researchers stating that L2 writers use their L1 to plan for text generation (Cumming, 1989; Jones & Tetroe, 1987), transfer their L1 knowledge to L2 writing components (Edelsky, 1982; Friedlander, 1990), develop and organize ideas (Lay, 1982) and evaluate their texts (Cumming, 1989; Hall, 1990). In this research, L1 even functions as a life saver for very weak students to plan, organize, compose and translate paragraphs across two language systems. The key that the teachers should bear in mind is how EFL students integrate their L1 to achieving their intentions while composing in their L2.

A few learners, however, did not make use of the conventions of Thai and planned less with any writing elements such as relevance of generated ideas, development of paragraphs or reader-capturing strategies. They just wrote anything coming up to mind. Positively viewed, these problems, probably, lead the teachers to more lines of inquiry, if they see the problems as nothing but opportunities.

Writing processes in Thai and English: Similar or different?

To explore the convention of English and Thai compositions, I asked the participants to express how they wrote across the systems of two languages. Through their writing samples in these two languages and their reflective journals, some consistent patterns of the data were categorized.

1. Similar thinking process or idea generation, different rhetorical conventions

First and most obvious, most skilled writers perceived some commonality of the writing processes between L1 and L2. Many students asserted that how they generated and organized ideas, planned for paragraph development and captivated readers in L1 and L2 was similar. They extensively planned the paragraph focus and its development, and put together such elements stylistically. In so doing, they expressed some differences between rhetorical conventions across two language systems. This could be because I always gave the whole class feedback on English conventions any time they made culturally-oriented mistakes. Hence, they realized that the development of English compositions was linear. Below are their observations on thinking processes across languages:

> *Thinking process in English is similar to that in Thai. I first of all think about the plot or theme of what I want to write about. Then I try to find step-by-step sequences and details of the plot. After I have come up with the clear details, I think how to interest my readers with some strategies I used in Thai composition. For example, I try to find some attractive techniques to introduce the story, develop its theme and conclusion. Finally I start writing in English. Writing in English differs from Thai composition in that in Thai, we don't worry about details of writing much because we can add details as much as we want as long as they are relevant to the central theme. In English, however, we must be cautious*

about details. We must evaluate what is directly related to the theme and what seems to deviate from the central idea. We need to drop something redundant, while redundant ideas are somehow alright in Thai writing in terms of emotional appeal (Chompoonoot, reflection 4).

As a student in the Thai department, Chompoonoot, as well as many others, learned that such a linear development differed from Thai rhetorical conventions which accept a certain amount of elaboration.

2. Similar steps for planning

Some of the higher achievers put more weight on a planning stage which they worked out for well-rated pieces. Examining all drafts even their earlier notes, I saw the quality in their works that reflected their planning/writing processes.

Both Thai and English compositions need organizing ideas and planning for clear development, major details, impressive conclusion, and especially my own voice which is very important as one of the essences of the written piece. Such a voice reflected very well how much experience I had with the written topic. The more experience I had, the better I could write (Siriluk, reflection 4).

The extensive planning that these students expressed, of course, underlines the role played by metacognitive knowledge (Bracewell, 1983), strategic knowledge (Cumming, 1989; Whalen, 1993; cited in Whalen & Menard,

1995) and linguistic knowledge (Yau, 1991) in the development of writing competence. The finding is in contrast to that asserted by Silva (1993) *plainly* stating that ESL writers plan less, thus resulting in lower quality work. What Siriluk, as well as others, expressed apparently indicate the teacher modeling as a key that sheds the greatest light on the students' writing performance. I also learned from their learning journals and very rough drafts that each writing task took a great deal of time for the students to complete.

3. Struggles between different conventions and language

Some students, especially those with less English ability, stressed different rhetorical conventions between the two languages. They observed that the development of Thai composition allowed some room for either relevant or irrelevant explanation as one of the artistic features. The rhetorical move of English writing, on the contrary, required strict development with precise and concise explanation.

> *Writing processes of English compositions were different from those of Thai compositions. That is, the longer we wrote in Thai paragraphs, the more expressive the paragraphs appeared. In English paragraphs, such a long explanation, however, caused loose development and less effective paragraphs (Patumporn, reflection 4).*

While the students felt that beating around the bush resulted in an unacceptable organization, some improvers did not even notice the difference between the conventions

of two languages. They just struggled at word levels of English when translating Thai ideas into English writing.

> *Thinking processes of Thai compositions contain more details and sub-details. Enough knowledge in Thai compositions also helped me describe the stories more creatively. I was confident to create new words and put them together into sentences. I could generate ideas more and deeper although Thai compositions seem to be so various that I got sometimes confused. However, English compositions needed a clear focus with relevant development and details. My creativity was a bit limited with this development which needed precise and concise words and sentences (Wannapa, reflection 4).*

The problems for weak students included structures and word choices. They could spontaneously select words corresponding to the generated ideas in Thai compositions, but they could not do so with English writing.

Clearly, the writing processes that these learners used were not so complicated as those of the intermediate counterparts, as shown in previous categories. How such intermediate writers used meta-cognitive writing strategies to produce English texts indicates that the processes of L1 and L2 writing are similar. This is consistent with the studies by Hirose and Sasaki (1994), Pennington and So (1993), Wong (1993) and Uzawa (1996) who empirically found that the ESL writers in their studies used similar patterns when composing in L1 and L2. Some of the unskilled writers in my study, however, resorted to linguistic interdependence between English and Thai most of the time. Unfortunately, they placed

less emphasis on planning, organization and development of writing. As a result, they were still struggling at word levels instead of moving forward higher levels of various discourses.

Research Question 2: How did the CEIW framework contribute to the students' writing development?

Reflected in the students' writing processes, their development was examined through students' writing tasks, daily class journals, unit reflections, self evaluation and authentic class assessments. To demonstrate their improvement, I, together with another trained rater who was also teaching the course to another section, examined their scores derived as a result of the completion of 4 individual tasks and the scores from the pre/post writing test. This meant the students' writing ability was examined by both formative and summative evaluation. Consequently, descriptive statistics and T value were used to analyze their writing achievement. Their scores of the first draft (the draft developed from their individual free writing after group-writing participation and formal instruction) and the final draft were compared to examine the T value, which indicated the students' writing achievement, as shown in the following tables.

Table 2. A comparison of the writing achievement of task 1

Drafts	MEAN	S.D.	T Value	Two-tailed Prob.
First draft	4.77	.98	-10.94	.001
Final draft	7.59	.70		

N = 22

Table 3. A comparison of the writing achievement of task 2

Drafts	MEAN	S.D.	T Value	Two-tailed Prob.
First draft	4.95	.90	-14.28	.001
Final draft	7.97	.42		

N = 22

Table 4. A comparison of the writing achievement of task 3

Drafts	MEAN	S.D.	T Value	Two-tailed Prob.
First draft	5.64	.93	-9.54	.001
Final draft	7.93	.64		

N = 22

Table 5. A comparison of the writing achievement of task 4

Drafts	MEAN	S.D.	T Value	Two-tailed Prob.
First draft	5.68	.48	-21.57	.001
Final draft	8.52	.40		

N = 22

Table 6. A comparison of the writing achievement of the pre/post test

Drafts	MEAN	S.D.	T Value	Two-tailed Prob.
First draft	3.07	1.00	-18.69	.001
Final draft	7. 93	.70		

N = 22

An examination of the mean differences revealed the systematic pattern appearing in the tasks and the writing achievement. The differences between the first draft and the final draft in all tasks and the achievement test were found statistically significant at the 0.001 level of confidence. The scores as a whole significantly indicated that the students gained very markedly satisfactory writing development as a result of the created instructional model.

Their writing achievement could be created by their writing processes, already discussed in Research Question One. How the students expressed their thoughts in freewriting—the act

of idea generation without being preconceived by imposed organization, developed the first draft after participating in group writing and formal instruction, and revised successive drafts certainly explain such a high development of the students' skills. Take a weak student like Ratiya as an example. Her writing improvement demonstrated the benefits of learning to write through TIMET very well.

Ratiya's freewriting

> *My saddest is love with unhappy in the last with a man who is walk in my life when my heart is nobody. He is a man who is lovely, have a many charming. He is fun* ใจดี *and romantique. He study at Thammasat University and this year he is* จะรับปริญญา. *Our relationship is start at Supanburee in* ค่ายแห่งหนึ่ง *and one night which we talk together only two* ริมระเบียง. *This is a picture of my impressive and after that he telephone to me at first and after that we will talk together. In friendship,* ความผูกพันธ์. *that is the reason can me to love him and sensitive for this man. I know that he have a girlfriend because he and his girlfriend go* ค่าย *which I know him together but* ตอนนั้น *I don't think love him same this day. I think jus he is my brother. I know that he love his girlfriend every much and she is a woman who is stable for him everythings different from me that ... (177 words) (Ratiya's freewriting).*

Having participated in group writing where composing and revising were completed, Ratiya developed her individual writing quite well as shown below:

At night, there are cloudy sky, don't have a little bit of starlight is shining in the world, include that my world. The world that lonely in my heart. My heart is sad with about unhappy love. Love which begin from good friendship like brother and sister in a camp in Supanburee. We talked together in a beautiful natural, fresh air, a wood verandaside. In a night that I don't know it had the star or not, but I feel like that I saw the many shining star in the sky. It is a memory picture that I was most impression. Friendship in that night it full of innocent, sincere feeling like a green of field that in front of us.

After the end of the camp, he was calling me. We talked together until it begin had attachment in one heart and feel that other heart is feel like that. But sometimes, it will happen from forgetful heart of us. He had a girlfriend who is he love like I was a worthless girl. If compare, she was like the moon which is conspicuous, then I was only the star that a little. How can I will compare with she. If this is a fable or a tale, this story I wasn't a leading lady. I was just supporting role that leading actor was admire and fall in love with forgetful just a moment and for only helped a leading lady to more conspicuous. Oh! My life is always sad. Tonight…haven't the sound of talking, tease, haven't smile. Just have the sound of music, tear, have just the books, paper and pen which help me to relax and was will power to me for keep waking continually on this road. I can do just pray with a devil of darkness to help this star have the power of light that make it can pass this night. (317 words) (Ratiya, revised individual writing).

A lot of changes Ratiya made were significantly evident here. Although the revision still contained some revisable areas, it was greatly improved. This kind of development also appeared in other students who created impressive revisions of individual work after group writing completion. The students probably gradually built up their writing skills while working in collaborative writing.

Research Question 3: What role did the students' L1 rhetorical conventions play in their L2 writing?

Considering the students' study concentration, I examined their use of Thai rhetorical conventions in English paragraphs. Shown below is the broad scale information about the finding.

Table 7. The students' use of L1 rhetorical conventions

Your feelings toward techniques from Thai writing	Mean	S.D.
Benefits of the techniques from Thai writing		
I could use some techniques of Thai writing to activate my readers in the introduction.	4.14	0.351
I could use some techniques of Thai writing to activate my readers while developing the details of a paragraph.	4.14	0.468
I could use some techniques of Thai writing to activate my readers in the conclusion.	4.05	0.785
My thinking patterns in Thai could help me write English paragraphs more effectively.	3.41	1.054
Thai sentence patterns could help me write English paragraphs more effectively.	4.05	0.785
I felt happy with using the techniques from Thai writing in English paragraphs.	4.09	0.75
I felt that some techniques from Thai writing benefit me to write English paragraph effectively.	4.14	0.56
I liked the ways the teacher guided me to use the techniques from Thai writing in English paragraphs.	4.50	0.598
Some differences between Thai and English sentences patterns were not too difficult to learn.	4.05	0.844
Holistic interpretation of the students' attitudes toward the use of L1 rhetorical conventions in L2 writing	4.18	0.452

N= 22
5: Strongly favorable
4: Generally favorable
3: Uncertain
2: Generally unfavorable
1: Strongly unfavorable

As indicated in Table 7, the students stated a great amount of rhetorical use of their mother tongue. They often used Thai sentence patterns (4.05 from a five scale rating) and usually relied on Thai conventions when developing the topical focus (4.14) and writing introduction (4.14) and conclusion (4.05). They felt that the resources from Thai conventions could help them achieve in English writing (4.14) and be happy with the use of these resources (4.09). As common as it may seem, while writing in L2, they still had Thai thought patterns (3.82). On the whole, the students viewed the use of L1 rhetorical conventions helpful for their L2 writing (4.18).

To dig deeper into the same issue, I asked them about the elements of L1 rhetorical conventions. As a result, they revealed that L1 was a rich resource in generating ideas globally (64%), stylistically (20%) and grammatically (16%), as shown in the following figure:
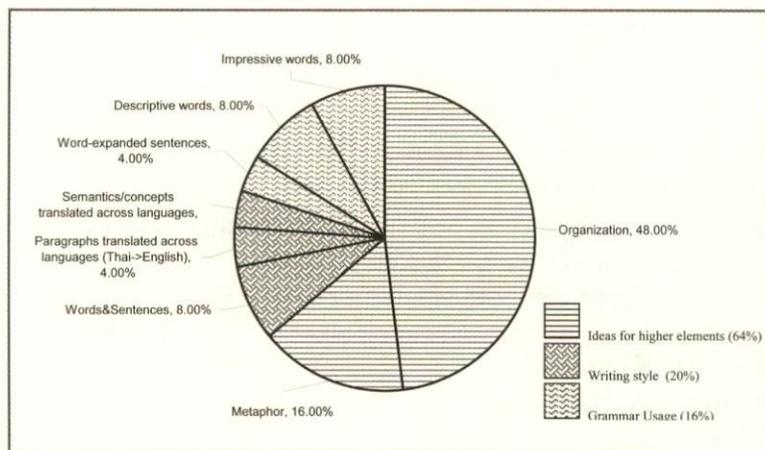

Fig. 4. Areas of L1-oriented use

As can be seen in Figure 4, the ideas at a global level covered those for paragraph organization (48%) and those for the metaphor that they wanted to express (16%). Below shows how some students adopted the strategy for idea generation across two languages.

The skills for idea organization that I have learned from Thai paragraphs help me organize English very well. In Thai compositions, we need introduction, main ideas with details and conclusion. The teacher's technique (ToMEC) is the same as the three elements for Thai compositions—unity, cohesion and emphasis (Worapong, reflection 4).

I used two techniques from Thai compositions. One is plot planning to help create the whole story plot and sequence the relevant details of the story. The second technique is the use of metaphor. In Thai compositions, we have many types of figurative language like personification, simile or metaphor. I used some of these to create colorful English paragraphs. I found that I could describe any writing pieces very well because of these techniques (Chompoonoot, reflection 4).

Some useful patterns from Thai compositions included using a few descriptive introductory sentences to attract readers to predict my focus, my development. Also, I created sentences with perceptive Thai thoughts and changed them to English sentences, where I was very cautious about the developments and patterns across languages. I found that this technique worked well for me (Saranya, reflection 4).

Moreover, students also relied on some of the styles normally used in Thai composition. How they used descriptive language in Thai writing could be quite helpful for English paragraphs (20%). Such description covered how to write the English not only the words that contained dramatic meaning (8%) and created picturesque feelings (8%) but also the key words or topic nouns that would be built up to construct sentences (4%).

In addition, the strategies adopted from Thai composition were related to language (16%), which included Thai-English direct translations at levels of semantics (4%), lexis and syntax (8%) and discourse (4%). A weak student, for instance, stated that "thinking in Thai and translating the thought into English helped me a lot. Without Thai thought, I would never have completed this course. I could not express meaning in English" (Duangporn, reflection 4). In short, such use of Thai rhetoric as organization, style, and grammar were of help to the EFL students of this study to write strategically in English.

Although the students could make use of some Thai rhetorical conventions, they still experienced some problematic characteristics of L1 implemented in L2 writing.

L1-inteference problems

The adverse effects of L1 incorporated into English paragraphs included two levels: paragraph development and translation across two languages, as shown in the following figure:
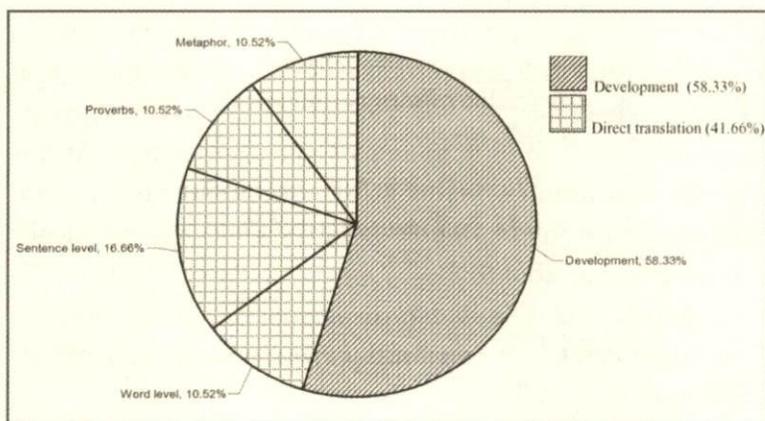

Fig. 5. L1 interference

Indicated in Figure 5, the most unpleasant aspect of L1 interference is the indirect approach, which is turning and turning in a widening, spiral circle and coming to the point at the end (58.33%). This approach is viewed a stylistically acceptable convention in Thai compositions, where writers usually introduced either primary or secondary relevant details to the main point throughout a writing piece. In English, a linear development, where each sentence contributes to the central thought throughout, is expected by the readers in their academic discourse community. As a result, the beat-around-the-bush approach implemented in Thai

compositions was found unhelpful or even unacceptable for English paragraphs.

Second, the students misused direct translation across Thai and English (41.66%) in three ways. First, they translated word-by-word Thai thoughts into English (10.52%). Thai-English bilingual dictionaries therefore became their resort of such direct translation. In addition to lexical translation, the students relied heavily on sentence translation (16.66%), where they, as usual, started with Thai constructions and translated such patterns into English sentences. At this level, I often found sentences like "Although she is a good person, but I don't like her." This mistake is grammatically correct in Thai construction, where the words 'although' and 'but' normally collocate in both spoken and written Thai sentences. Chompoonoot's case supports the syntactic translation very well.

> *I found that some Thai grammatical patterns did not work for English patterns. For example, we can omit agents in some Thai sentences, but in English we need to clarify all sentences components—the doers and their actions.*
> *"The students in room A are more clever than room B." This sentence sounded correct for Thai sentences, but became wrong in English, which I needed to revise as "The students in room A are more clever than those in room B." So I had to be careful with grammar between two languages (Chompoonoot, reflection 4).*

The most cognitively demanding translation for students is a semantic level (21.05%) of Thai proverbs and similes (10.52%) or metaphors (10.52%). They found that the thought patterns of Thai artistic ideas were sometimes compatible, but most of the time mismatched, with those of L2. "Thai proverbs when translated into Thai did not fit the meaning in English. English paragraphs could be less precise," said Ratiya in Reflection 4. Not surprisingly, the students themselves found some adversarial aspects of literal translation. Such reflections are, however, auspicious for English composition teachers to plan for EFL writing courses appropriately.

Research Question 4: What were the students' attitudes toward learning to write through collaboration-enhanced individual writing?

Collaborative writing in this study simulated Thai affiliative society, where people have inter-dependent relationships. To examine their attitudes toward learning to write through collaborative writing, I analyzed the data derived from the self-responded questionnaire, the students' reflective journals, class observation, groups' writing processes and written products. The data quantitatively derived from the questionnaire provided the holistic picture, as shown in Table 8.

Table 8. Students' opinions on benefits of collaborative writing

Your feelings toward group writing	Mean	S.D.
Group writing helped me see more differences of good ideas for writing.	**4.55**	0.51
Group writing helped me see more techniques of good writing from my group members.	**4.59**	0.50
Group writing helped me see how to organize ideas more interestingly.	**4.41**	0.50
Group writing helped me think more critically by the end of semester.	**4.18**	0.73
Group writing helped me think more creatively by the end of semester.	**4.27**	0.94
Group writing helped me write more effectively and interestingly by the end of semester.	**4.09**	0.75
Group writing helped me write more fluently by the end of semester.	**4.00**	0.69
Group writing helped me write more correctly by the end of semester.	3.95	0.79
I enjoyed group writing.		
I wrote eagerly or enthusiastically when writing with the group.	**4.32**	0.72
I liked more group writing than individual writing.	3.95	0.59
I did not have stress when writing in the group.	3.45	1.10
Different ideas derived from the group helped the group write better in terms of ideas for writing.	3.45	0.91
Holistic interpretation of the students' attitudes toward the benefits of collaborative writing	**4.50**	0.473

N= 22

5: Strongly favorable 4: Generally favorable 3: Uncertain

2: Generally unfavorable   1: Strongly unfavorable

Indicated in Table 8, the students generally considered collaborative writing a fruitful activity essential for their writing skills (4.08 from a five scale rating). The advantages of evaluated collaborative writing were categorized into three levels based on the interpreted scores. The most highly rated benefits were those in relation to ideas. Observing how the group wrote helped them see various techniques used in good writing (4.59); more diversity of ideas generated for well rated work (4.55) and better organization of such ideas (4.41). Many agreed that diverse opinions contributed to such different but helpful ideas (4.50). Obviously, the students, to a great extent, reaped those idea-related benefits from group writing as a great source of ideas to be further developed.

Moreover, collaborative-writing participation contributed to the students' cognitive growth, where they felt they could think more critically (4.18) and creatively (4.27) and write more fluently (4.00) and effectively (4.09) by the end of the semester. The finding suggests that collaborative writing could enhance the students' critical, creative thinking, resulting from the variety of observed techniques for generating and organizing ideas.

The third level of responses showed uncertainty about some factors. They were not sure about their own writing accuracy. This could be because the change they experienced may have lain on an interlanguage continuum at some point between their writing fluency and accuracy. Equally important, their uncertainty could relate to the group members' less credibility as the students could have considered their group members not-so-competent

coaches for them. For the students, the authority figure seems to be the teacher, rather than their classmates (Thongrin, 2002).

For a clearer picture, the students' gains were also qualitatively examined. The triangulating data fell into three categories. First, a number of students perceived benefits from group observation (36.36%), which included their strategies for mostly idea generation, followed by the writing strategies for any paragraph elements. Another category of benefits were related to self-oriented achievement (33.33%), where most students implemented the observed strategies into their writing in terms of idea generation, error correction, creative thinking and writing improvement. Lastly, the expressed benefits also included group-oriented achievement (30.30%) which signified group functions, group behaviors, and, most importantly, group benefits. To some students, the best effort of all the members constituted group achievement. Doing so helped the group obtain the final product with a variety of ideas and writing styles, as shown by the following students' opinions.

> *Working in writing groups help me develop the skills for idea generation. I learned how to share ideas to make further best efforts to create the best work of groups. While exchanging ideas with friends, I could learn their thinking-writing techniques at the same time. I learned that some had very interesting ideas (Saranya, reflection 3).*

I learned how and why friends created ideas for each assignment.
Finally, we came to the conclusion as how our work would look
like as the final product (Lugsamee, reflection 3).

The finding suggests that group cohesiveness does come into play as it is more critical because group members tie and harmonize the community cognitively and mentally through acceptance of group identity, role assignment to members, development of commitment and involvement, and determination of activity procedure (Ender & Newton, 2000). Group effectiveness can be achieved by group members who work together for individual benefits and success of the group (Argyris, 1992; Head, 2003). To implement collaborative work successfully, teachers therefore need to set goals at two levels: one for each individual's fulfillment, the other a group's achievement (Thongrin, in press).

Limitations of collaborative writing

To examine the reliability of the students' benefit-related response, I also asked if they perceived any limitations of collaborative writing. Such expressed benefits were confirmed by their responses indicating a few shortcomings unavoidably appearing in such collaboration-enriched individual writing, as shown in Table 9.

Table 9. Students' opinions on limitations of collaborative writing

Limitations of group writing	Mean	S.D.
I lost my ideas in the group's final decision.	3.77	0.92
I felt bored with group writing.	**4.00**	0.69
I had stress when writing in the group.	3.82	0.73
I did not like group writing because my ideas were better than my friends' ideas.	**4.41**	0.59
I did not like group writing because some of my group members were not attentive to create ideas for the group.	**4.14**	0.83
It was hard to manage the meeting time.	3.55	0.91
I did not trust my friends' ideas because they were not teachers.	**4.32**	0.72
In general, I did not like group writing.	**4.32**	0.65
Holistic interpretation of the students' attitudes toward the limitations of collaborative writing	**4.08**	0.473

N= 22

5: Strongly disagree (Strongly favorable)

4: Disagree (Generally favorable)

3: Undecided (Uncertain)

2: Agree (Generally unfavorable)

1: Strongly agree (Strongly unfavorable)

The data in Table 9 confirmed the benefits of collaborative writing stated in Table 8, revealing that the students disagreed with various negative notions of group writing, such as their own self-centric ideas (4.41), less credibility of the shared ideas (4.32), less group participation (4.14). They were, however, not certain about time management of group

tasks (3.55). The students did not seem stressed (3.82), which is supported by the holistic mean of the data in Table 8 and 9 (4.08), indicating that they viewed collaborative writing as an affective tool to enhance their writing skills. Consequently, the data explicitly point out that group writing was not detrimental for the students' learning. This, on the other hand, significantly supports the merit of group writing the students expressed.

Qualitative analysis also constructed the same direction. When interviewed, most students agreed that some aspects of group writing occasionally annoyed them. They expressed 3 levels of the perceived problems. First, some minor problems, commonly existing in any type of collaborative learning, merely included their schedule conflict, delayed written products, dubious quality work caused by off-task discussion.

Second, moderately severe problems consisted of it being time-consuming, delayed settled ideas, and silenced ideas for the group consensus. Some reasons stand behind: the silence of some expressed ideas: students' less creditability of knowledge, the *mai-pen-rai* attitude (contented, nothing really matters, whatever is alright), and the notion of face interpreted linguistically and culturally.

Third and probably most alarming, a few students expressed unfavorable attitudes to some aspects of collaborative writing. It was difficult for them to reach a single consensus especially when having a variety of ideas to conclude. Worapong, for instance, said:

My problem was how to make a conclusion from various ideas and how to make people agree with the final conclusion as a group's decision. It was difficult because everyone had their own reasons behind each idea (Worapong, reflection 3).

And further:

Working in the group, we should respect each other's idea. Of course, we can't put the whole self of ours for group discussion. We need to manage the shared space for the members' ideas. As a result, who I am working with really matters. Team members have many things to do with failure or success of the group. .....So my point is please let us choose our own destiny so that we produce very good final product and create very good feelings among us. We need happiness to complete our work! (Worapong, reflection 3).

Worapong's frustration seemed to support the notion of the strong in-group relationships of Thai collectivist culture, where students tend to form their group with their close friends who intentionally share the same classroom zone (Thongrin, in press a). Letting them work with their friends could yield positive results. Through these considerations, deep collaboration benefits all group members (Head, 2003). Not surprisingly, effective group writing needs deep collaboration rather than routine or loose collaboration. Deep collaboration reflects the fact that writing activities needs collective force intellectually, socially and emotionally.

However, all layers of the problem, compared with the perceived benefits the students gained from group writing, did not significantly affect the students' writing process. If invention is really the mother of necessity like Thorstein Veblen once said, these students' cries should give us some clues to manage collaborative writing more creatively.

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Writing Ecology: Implications of the research

With the findings of this research, I discovered a small but growing number of factors that contributed to L2 writing achievement, which I called "a writing ecology," which represented an EFL writing class. As instructional emphasis on a particular aspect of writing could affect the end products of the learners' writing (Mohan & Lo, 1985; Thongrin, 2000), any components of the writing ecology need to be in balance naturally. As such, this emerging, synthesized ecology served discussion and recommendation for this study.

The writing ecology, as I established in this study, signifies the inter-connected factors essential for the students' learning processes. In this ecology, the teacher, learners as writers and readers, as well as their backgrounds, and class environments are all important components holding some particular responsibility, as shown in Figure 6.
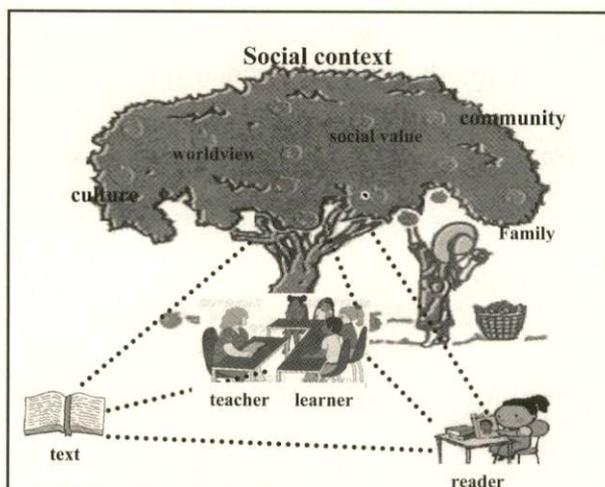
Fig. 6. Writing Ecology

Teachers

The most important entity for writing instruction is the teacher, the agent directing the quality of students' learning. The findings of this study suggest a number of pedagogical implications, most of which rest on the teacher's account- ability. First of all, the students' L1 rhetorical conventions were helpful for paragraph writing. They had a very appealing hook as an introductory sentence of the paragraphs. This finding is consistent with the study by several researchers. For example, Cumming (1989) found that the positive effect of L1 writing expertise on the quality of text produced in L2 has also recently been shown. L2 writers used their L1 to "get a strong impression and association of ideas for essays" and produce essays "of better quality in terms of ideas, organization and details" (Lay, 1982, p. 406) and to "meaningfully link image to word" (Spack, 1984, p. 664). They

also used their native language as "an important resource in their continual processes of decision making while writing" (Cumming, 1989, p. 128). In this view, the students' language transfer is viewed as a potential positive source of knowledge for the learners to draw on. The learners use their L1 knowledge to form hypotheses about the new writing system. As Friedlandeer (1990) reports, the Chinese and French students in his study benefited from the strategy of transfer. The students returned to their native language when they were asked to write about the topics that they learned in their first language. Those who switched to their L1 more often were able to produce better quality writing in terms of idea organization. For pedagogical implications, teachers can therefore make use of language transfer as a learning tool when the students acquire enough competence. The students can plan in their first language to realize how much they know about the topic and then translate those ideas. Requiring students to use and think in English since the very beginning in writing classes seems counterproductive as such forced or preconceived processes can constrain the production of ideas, which could then affect the rest of their writing processes.

Also, some writing strategies and knowledge of the second or any target language writing can explicitly be taught (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987; Fathman & Whalley, 1990; Spack, 1984). The teacher can make use of various authentic texts such as magazines, newspapers, the Internet, children's books, short stories or movie scripts by addressing the students to some striking strategies those professional writers use. I often observed the students' excitement when doing

so in paragraph writing classes or at more advanced writing levels.

Some researchers like Leki (1993) suggest that ESL students need more experience and practice with rhetorical conventions, vocabulary, grammatical structures, the print code, and reading and writing in general. I agree with this holistic suggestion; however, emphasis on some particular aspects like grammar might have negative effects. Truscott (1996), for instance, radically asserts that grammar correction does not work and should be abandoned in L2 writing classes. Learners may not learn from correction when they are not ready, and grammar correction could result in a superficial form of knowledge called "pseudolearning." For Thai learners, I found in a study of mine (Thongrin, 2001) that they kept repeating the same types of grammatical mistakes no matter how often I corrected them. In English classes, the students often showed their concerns about their insufficient grammar competence. However, they seemed relax more when I put more emphasis on creativity and organization of ideas before we refined ungrammatical structures. As a result, I certainly agree with Kaplan (1988) pointing that teaching grammar in a writing class may not be enough for the students to write well, given the fact that issues about frequency of use of structures, their distribution, and their pragmatic use are not taught.

Learners

As another important inhabitant in writing ecology, the students, as writers and readers, should be involved in

teaching-learning processes actively. On this point, I reverse what the teacher can do to what the students themselves need to do. Theoretically, the use of L1 should be of help for them to resort to while planning or even revising. Also, it is possible that ESL students are able to write topics in the second language because of exposure to the English-speaking environment (Friedlandeer, 1990; Matsuda, 1997). This suggests that the students can access English academic discourse communities through reading for pleasure. It is well documented that extensive reading over time results in better writing abilities (Elley, 1996; Krashen, 1984; Tsang, 1996; Wagner & Stanovich, 1996), in addition to experiences and world knowledge directly derived from reading. Researchers in this area assert that extensive reading creates various pieces of language knowledge such as vocabulary, sentence structure, semantic memory, linguistic awareness and especially world knowledge. Therefore, a major implication of the findings is that the students have extra reading corresponding to their interest. They can also observe the actual use of language such as collocations between two parts of speech, verb + noun (e.g., tell the truth), adjective + noun (e.g., heavy rain), verb + adverb (e.g., run fast) or adverb + adjective (e.g., terribly sorry). With such concrete guidelines, the students will, one way or another, be able to internalize a countless number of skills derived from reading.

Learners' Backgrounds

Closely related to the students' L2 writing competence are their reading habit, their personal backgrounds or

socio-cultural factors such as religious practices, the stories often told in their community, socialization from family/ friends and any other social values. These, of course, can be drawn upon in their writing classes. As Figure 6 demonstrates, the students bring to the writing classroom a whole set of a varied purposes, functions and goals (Connor, 1996). Each individual is influenced by the group of social values, beliefs, traditions, relationships, roles, organizations, and knowledge of a particular society. As a result, writing related to the students' world knowledge can be part of their ideas to be put together in writing. When asked to narrate their experiences, some Muslim students, for example, begged me to write about their God-related stories. I then found that all was well for those who were given choice of freedom to integrate their personal world into written pieces. As a result, the learners' cognitive, affective and socio-cultural backgrounds should be viewed as one of the greatest sources for teachers' methodological applications.

Class Environment

Classroom ambience does play another role in successful instruction. Group work has empirically been found to create a supportive environment, lessen students' affective filters and enhance cognitive competence. As Brown and Palinscar (1989) suggest, collaborative learning helps students work supportively, share responsibility for thinking, and learn different thinking strategies. Such interaction-based activities shape the students cognitively, socially and affectively. The activities were empirically found to increase the students' achievement, higher order thinking, motivation

or self esteem, and schooling preference (Jacobs & Ward, 2000; Oxford, 1997). Congruent with these studies, I also found that the majority of the students, though upset with some annoying members, were delighted with the advantages derived from collaboration.

While the students were on task, I observed their hilarious mood as a result of both task-related discussion and personal-stuff teasing. The quality of their group writing convinced me that their smiles and laughter while working in groups should not be underestimated. Viewing myself as a teacher discussing various stuff joyfully as a result of fun, mutual interactions among us, I always left the room happily. So did the students.

Final Remarks

"The fool who persists in his folly will become wise."
(William Blake)

Thai students often bring with them a number of problems in relation to writing. Any seriously ill cases might have one-to-one conferences with the teacher either in class or at the teacher's office. Such conferences are like the meetings between a physician and his/her patients. At hospital, once the meeting has been concluded, the treatment begins, and the patients' illness is gone. Paradoxically, the one-to-one conferences between the teacher and students never end. Nor do the students' writing problems. If their cured ills are gone, they tend to come back again and yet with

another kind of diseases. This repeated illness probably causes teachers to view students' writing difficulty as an ordinary occurrence. Are the students' problems common, and should they rationally be ignored? Do the students lack proficiency in English writing naturally or innately? Are such problems the consequences of the incomprehensible instruction? Should writing teachers look at some availability or look for more alternatives to cure the students' endless ills? Should we teachers just do our job as a daily basis or explore our beliefs to sort the students' learning problems out? These questions, then, changed how I taught English writing.

I had adopted the teaching approach prescribed in the textbook for a few years. And yet I found that my students still had serious problems in writing ranging from illogical ideas and less-sensible development to ungrammatical structures, word choice or countless numbers of incomprehensible language points. Instead of being prescribed by the step-by-step teaching procedures appearing in the course book, I let it lie on shelf quietly and tried out the workshop-oriented instruction with on-going adjustment through my teaching and researching experiences and grand theories in EFL writing instruction. Unsystematically, I sometimes tried out if freewriting helped the students generate ideas more spontaneously, or other time implemented group writing with weak students to examine their writing performance and learning attitudes. However, under such scattered pieces, an informally constructed 5-question attitude survey with very positive evaluation convinced me that the unsystematically but rationally explored techniques worked well and could often roll the class.

In 2006, when encountering the very "naïve" writers with similar but more writing complications than those I had years ago, I then realized that I needed to draw what used to work with weak students—freewriting and collaborative writing—to implement with them, but I needed to implement these ideas more systematically. Then, I set forth the invented model specially designed for the students with exposure greatest in Thai conventions but least in English ones.

Influenced by the notion that learning is socially constructed and aware that the Thai-major students, with some Thai collectivist backgrounds, brought with them a lot of serious linguistic problems, I created CEIW, the conceptual framework, so I had a clear basis of the instructional model that I called TIMET. Throughout the semester, I excited the students by throwing away the course book but following the steps theoretically and methodologically designed in this model. The class was like a game, where the students always stayed alert as having to act out all the time, either in groups or individually. Somewhere during the first half, the students actually got in the way of a ball that they were trying to score, and their consistent efforts were paid off as the other half ended. There, I could truly perceive their writing development. I empirically touch the skills of such novice, transitional and experienced writers. I believe the students love to write in their L2. As a teacher, I was very happy seeing that they made a big leap, compared to what they could do originally.

The two-year journey finally gives me a clear picture of another teaching technique that could work well with weak Thai students who are Thai collectivist oriented. In other

words, this study gives me another piece of knowledge. I vividly recall that I once experienced the value of teaching knowledge as a result of a study I conducted elsewhere (Thongrin, 2007):

There are moments when we look back our own lives, reflecting on the flow of lives over a period of time, and smile as we recognize our personal breakthrough. I now know what "necessity creates great inventions" means. The journey of my learning process does not simply give me data or information, knowledge or insight. Instead, it gives me wisdom (p. 34).

The students satisfactorily completed their writing course two years ago. And yet a Thai poem a student wrote to me still echoed in my mind.

นี่คือนาย _____	นามนั้นแล้วแต่เกิดพ่อเลือกสรร
ชื่อเล่น____ เกิด ___ กุมภาพันธ์	อารมณ์ขันเอกลักษณ์ประจำกาย
รูปร่างเล็กหรือจะเตี้ยตามแต่คิด	แต่มีจิตเมตตาต่อสหาย
มุขเด็จ ๆ สรรหาพาเพื่อนผ่อนคลาย	ฮากระจายเมื่อได้ร่ายมนต์วาจา
ได้มาเรียน EG 231	ถึงกับทึ่งโอ้วิชายากเหลือหลาย
เดี๋ยวก็ผิดเดี๋ยวก็แก้ดิ้นแทบตาย	งานมากมายสุมเท่าเขาพระสุเมรุ
แต่ยังดีที่มีอาจารย์สอน	ขจัดข้องหมองมัวให้ได้เห็น
จนเรานี้ยินดีที่เขียนจนเป็น	อาจารย์เข็นฉันขึ้นมาจนเห็นทาง
สุดท้ายนี้ขอคุณพระจงอำนวย	ให้พระช่วยป้องโพยภัยอย่าได้ขวาง
ให้ความสุขอยู่คู่ครูไม่จืดจาง	ให้สว่างในทุกสิ่งยิ่งดุรงค์
สุขภาพครูนั้นจงแข็งแรง	ไม่ขาดแล้วทุกสิ่งของต้องประสงค์
ทั้งสินทรัพย์จงอยู่คู่ดำรง	ขอครูจงเกษมสุขทุกเวลา
	(Rodsak)

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank Ross Taylor and an anonymous journal reviewer for their helpful comments on a draft of this article.

References

Anzaldua, G. (1987). *Borderlands/la frontera:* The New Mestiza (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Aunt Lute.

Argyris, C. (1992). On *Organizational Learning.* Oxford: Blackwell.

Bereiter, C & Scardamalia, M. (1987). *The Psychology of Written Composition.* Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Bracewell, R. (1983). Investigating the Control of Writing Skills. In P. Mosenthal, L. Tamor & S.A. Walmsley (Eds.), *Research on Writing: Principles and Methods* (pp. 177-205). Now York: Longman.

Brown, A.& Palinscar, A. (1989). Guided, Cooperative Learning and Individual Knowledge Acquisition. In L. Resnick (ed.). *Knowing, learning and instruction: Essays in Honor or Robert Glaser* (pp. 393-451). Hove, Sussex and Hillsdale, NJ: L. Erlbaum.

Burns, A. (1999). *Collaborative Action Research for English Language Teachers.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Cherryholmes, C. H. (1992). Notes on Pragmatism and Scientific Realism. *Educational Researcher,* 14, 13-17.

Cochran-Smith, M. & Lytle, S. (1993). Research on Teaching and Teacher Research: The Issues that Divide. *Educational Researcher,* 19(2), 2-11.

Connor, U. (1996). Writing as an Activity Embedded in a Culture. In Connor, U., *Contrastive Rhetoric: Cross-cultural Aspects of Second Language Writing.* New York, NY: Cambridge.

Creswell, J W. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Crotty, M. (1998). *The foundation of social research: Meaning and perspective in the Research process.* London: Sage.

Cumming, A. (1989). Writing Expertise and Second-Language Proficiency. *Language Learning,* 39(1), 81-141.

Edelsky, C. (1982). Writing in a Bilingual Program: The Relation of L1 and L2 Texts. *TESOL Quarterly,* 16, 211-228.

Elley, W. (1996). Using Book Floods to Raise Literacy Levels in Developing Countries. In V. Greaney (ed.), *Promoting Reading in Developing Countries* (pp. 148-162). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Ender, S. T., & Newton, F.B. (2000). *Students Helping Students: A Guide for Peer Educators on College Campuses.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Fathman, A. & Whalley, E. (1990). Teacher Response to Student Writing. Focus on Form vs Content. In B. Kroll (Ed.), *Second Language Writing: Research Insights for the Classroom* (pp. 178-190). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ferris, D. (1994). Rhetorical Strategies in Student Persuasive Writing: Differences between Native and Non-native English Speakers. *Research in the Teaching of English,* 28(1), 45-65.

Friedlandeer, A. (990). Composing in English: Effects of a First Language on Writing in English as a Second Language. *Journal of Second Language Writing,* 3, 203-229.

Gay, L.R. (1996). *Educational research: Competencies for analysis and application* (5th ed.) Upper Saddler River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Gere, A.R. (1987). *Writing Groups: History, Theory, and Implications.* Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.

Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, R. S. (1967). *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research.* Chicago: Aldine.

Gosden, H. (1996). Verbal Reports of Japanese Novices' Research Writing Practices in English. *Journal of Second Language Writing,* 5(2), 109-128.

Grabe, W., & Kaplan, R.B. (1996). *Theory and Practice of Writing: An Applied Linguistic Perspective*. London: Longman.

Hairston, M. (1982). The Wind of Change: Thomas Khun and the Revolution in the Teaching of Writing. *College Composition and Communication,* 33(1), 76-88.

Hall, C. (1990). Managing the Complexity of Revision across Lnguages. *TESOL Quarterly,* 24, 245-266.

Head, G. (2003). Effective Collaboration: Deep Collaboration as an Essential Element of the Learning Process, *Journal of Educational Enquiry,* 4(2), 47-62.

Hirose, K, & Sasaki, M. (1994). Explanatory Variables for Japanese Students' Expository Writing in English; An Explanatory Study. *Journal of Second Language Writing,* 3, 203-229.

Hirvela, A. (1999). Collaborative Writing Instruction and Communities of Readers and Writers. *TESOL Journal* 8(2): 7-12.

Hofstede, G. (1986). Cultural Differences in Teaching and Learning. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations,* 10, 301-320.

_____. (2001). *Culture's Consequences: Comparing Values, Behaviors, Institutions, and Organizations across Nations* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, Sage.

Jacobs, G.M, & Ward, C. (2000). *Analyzing Student-studentinteraction from Copperative Learning and Systematic Functional Perspectives.* ERIC Document Reproduction Service No ED 444 356.

Jones, C.S., & Tetroe, J. (1987). Composing in Second Language. In A. Matsuhashi (Ed.), *Writing in Real Time: Modeling the Productive Processes* (pp. 34-57). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Kaplan, R. B. (1966). Cultural Thought Patterns in Inter-cultural Education. *Language Learning,* 16, 1- 20.

_____. (1988). Contrastive Rhetoric and Second Language Learning: Notes toward a Theory of Contrastive Rhetoric. In Purves, A.C. (ed.). *Writing across Languages and Cultures: Issues in Contrastive Rhetoric.* (pp.275-304). Newbury Park, CA: Sage

Kemmis, S. & McTaggart, R. (1988). *The Action Research Planner.* Victoria, Australia: Deakin University Press.

Kobayashi, H. & Rinnert, C. (1992). Effects of First Language on Second Language Writing: Translation vs. Direct Composition. *Langue Learning,* 42, 183-215.

Krashen, S. (1984). *Writing: Research, Theory and Applications.* Oxford: Pergamon Institute of English.

Lay, N. (1982). Composing Processes of Adult ESL Learners. *TESOL Quarterly,* 16, 406.

Leki, I. (1993). Reciprocal Themes in ESL Reading and Writing. In J.G. Carson, & I Leki (eds.), *Reading in the Composition Classroom: Second Language Perspectives* (pp. 9-32). Boston: Heinle & Heinle.

_____. (1995). *Academic Writing: Exploring Processes and Strategies. A Guide for Teachers* (2nd) Ed.). New York: St. Martin's.

Matsuda, P. K. (1997). Contrastive Rhetoric in Context: a Dynamic Model of L2 Writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing,* 6, 45- 60.

Mohan, B.A., & Lo, W.A. (1985). Academic Writing and Chinese Students: Transfer and Development Factors. *TESOL Quarterly,* 19, 515-534.

Oxford, R.L. (1997). Cooperative Learning, Collaborative Learning, and Interaction: Three Communicative Strands in the Language Classroom. *The Modern Language Journal,* 81(4), 443-456.

Pennington, B.A. & So, W.A. (1993). Comparing Writing Process and Product across Languages: A Study of 6 Singaporean University Student Writers. *Journal of Second Language Writing,* 2, 41-63.

Raimes, A. (1985). What Unskilled ESL Writers do as They Write: A Classroom Study of Composing. *TESOL Quarterly, 19*(2), 229-258.

_____. (1991). Out of the Woods: Emerging Tradition in the Teaching of Writing. *TESOL Quarterly,* 25, 407-430.

Reichelt, M. (1997). Writing Instruction at the German Gymnasium: A 13th Grade English Class Write the Abitur. *Journal of Second Language Writing,* 6(3), 265-291.

Schon, D.A. (1983). *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action.* New York: Basic Books.

Silva, T. (1993). Toward an Understanding of the Distinct Nature of L2 Writing: the ESL Research and its Implications. *TESOL Quarterly,* 27, 657- 677.

_____. (1997). On the Ethical Treatment of ESL Writers. *TESOL Quarterly,* 31, 259- 363.

Spack, R. (1984). Invention Strategies and the ESL Composition Student. *TESOL Quarterly,* 18, 649-670.

Storch, N., & Tapper, J. (1997). Student Annotations: What NNS and NS University Say about Their Own Writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing,* 6(3), 245-264.

Thongrin, S. (2000). Growth in L2 Writing: A Case Study of an ESL Student Writer. *TESOL Bulletin,* 13(2), 35-46.

_____. (2001). The Effectiveness of Self, Peer and Teacher-corrected Writing on Writing Achievement of Undergraduate Political Science Students at Thammasat University, *Journal of Liberal Arts,* 1(2), 119-135.

_____. (2002). *Email and Peer Responses in Collectivist Thai Culture: Task, Social and Cultural Dimensions.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

_____. (2004). Action Research and Teacher Development. *Handout for Teacher Development, Department of English, Thammasat University & Krirk University,* April 2004.

_____. (2006). A Modified Model for Peer Response: An Alternative to EFL Writing Instruction. Research paper presented at Annual Academic International Conference, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand.

_____. (2007). When East Meets West: Implementing a Modified Model of Peer Response in EFL Writing Instruction. Paper presented at 5th Asian TEFL International Conference, June 2007, Kulalumpur, Malaysia.

_____. (in press). Peer Response in EFL Writing Instruction: Grounded Theories and Practical Directions for Collectivist Students. In Phan Le Ha and Bradley Baurian (Eds.), *Crossing Cultures: Journeys in ESL/EFL Writing.*

Truscott, J. (1996). The Case Against Grammar Correction in L2 Writing Classes. *Language Learning,* 46, 327-369.

Tsang, W.K. (1996). Comparing the Effects of Reading and Writing on Writing Proficiency. *Applied Linguistics,* 17, 210-233.

Uzawa, K. (1996). Second Language Learners' Processes of L1 Writing, L2 Writing, and Translation from L1 into L2. *Journal of Second Language Writing,* 5, 271- 294.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1962). *Thought and Language* (E. Hanfmann & G. Vakar, Trans.& Eds.). Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

_____. (1978). *Mind in Society. Cambridge,* MA: Havard University Press.

_____. (1981). The Genesis of Higher mental Functions. In J. Wertsch (ed.), *The Concept of Activity in Soviet Psychology* (pp.144-148). Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe.

_____. (1986). *Thought and Language* (Alex Kozulin, Trans.). Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Wagner, R. & Stanovich, K. (1996). Expertise in Reading. In K.A. Ericsson (ed.), *The Road to Excellence* (pp. 189-225). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Wang, L. (2003). Switching to First Language among Writers with Differing Second-Language Proficiency. *Journal of Second language Writing,* 12, 347-375.

Wang, W. & Wen, Q. (2002). L1 Use in the L2 Composing Process: An Exploratory Study of 16 Chinese EFL Writers. *Journal of Second language Writing,* 11, 225-246.

Whalen, K.& Menard, N. (1995). L1 and L2 Writers' Strategic and Linguistic Knowledge: A Model of Multiple-level Discourse Processing. *Language Learning,* 44(3), 381-418.

Winner, E. (1992). Equalizing Writing Assessment for Non-native Speakers of English in the Mainstream Classroom. Paper presented at the 43rd *Annual CCCC Meeting,* Cincinnati, OH.

Winter, R. (1987). *Action Research and the Nature of Social Inquiry: Professional and Education Work.* Averbury, England: Aldershot.

Wong, R.Y.L. (1993). Strategies for Construction of Meaning: Chinese Students in Singapore Witing in English and Chinese. *Language, Culture and Curriculum,* 6(3), 291-301.

Yau, M.S.S. (1991) The Role of Language Factors in Second Language Writing. In L. Malave' & G. Duquette (Eds.), *Language, Culture and Cognition: A Collection of Studies in First and Second Language Acquisition* (pp. 266-283). Clevedon, Avon: Multilingual Matters.

Zebroski, J.T. (1994). *Thinking through theory: Vygotskian perspectives on the teaching of writing.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.