A STRATEGICAL APPROACH TO WRITING DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

This study applied a strategical approach integrating the researcher's own teaching style with some prominently claimed successful approaches, such as task-based and content-based learning to develop the participants 'writing skills. The aims were to find out: 1) how reading can impact the participants' writing development and 2) in what way can the strategical approach help the participants improve their writing skills. The instruments used for collecting data consisted of the participants' writing assignments, a questionnaire with a 5-point Likert scale, and open-ended questions for suggestions and recommendations. The findings showed that both intensive and extensive reading helped improve the participants' writing skills as well as enhance their other related skills- listening and speaking. They have also increased their vocabulary and used discourse markers appropriately to make their communication flow.

Keywords: writing, communication, teachers, English, Thailand

กลยุทธิการพัฒนาวิธีการเขียน

การศึกษาครั้งนี้ใช้กลยุทธิวิธีการบูรณารูปแบบการสอนของผู้วิจัยกับวิธีการสอนแบบต่างๆที่ประสบ

ความสำเร็จอย่างเด่นชัด เช่นการสอนโดยการให้ทำงานและการสอนโดยอิงเนื้อหา ในการพัฒนาทักษะการ

เขียนของผู้ร่วมงานวิจัย โดยมีจุดมุ่งหมายที่จะ าคำตอบสำหรับคำถามดังต่อไปนี้: 1) วิธีการอ่านสามารถ

ส่งผลกระทบต่อการพัฒนาการเขียนอย่างไรและ 2) วิธี การใช้กลยุทธิ สามารถช่วยผู้เข้าร่วมวิจัยปรับปรุง

ทักษะการเขียนอย่างไร เครื่องมือที่ใช้ในการเก็บรวบรวมข้อมูลประกอบด้วยงานเขียนของผู้เข้าร่วมการ

วิจัย แบบสอบ   ามที่ใช้ 5-point Linkert scale และคำถามปลายเปิดสำหรับคำแนะนำและ
ข้อเสนอแนะต่างๆ ผลการวิจัยแสดงให้เห็นว่าทั้งการอ่านที่มากและกว้างช่วยปรับปรุงทักษะการเขียนของ
ผู้เข้าร่วมงานวิจัย รวมทั้งเพิ่มทักษะอื่น ๆ ที่เกี่ยวข้องเช่นทักษะการฟังและการพูด ทั้งยังได้เพิ่มคำศัพท์ และ
การใช้เครื่องหมายวาทกรรมที่เหมาะสมเพื่อให้เกิดการคล่องตัวในการสื่อสาร

คำสำคัญ: การเขียน การสื่อสาร ภาษาอังกฤษของครู ประเทศไทย

The significant role of English as a medium for communication in the world today is obvious. Sanchez (2004:40) makes interesting remarks that the need for communication among people of different cultures and languages, triggered by traveling and globalization, puts pressure on people to learn languages more quickly and efficiently. However, teaching English, especially in a high school level, still poses a lot of problems to Thai teachers. Among the four skills, writing is considered the most difficult. This may be due to the fact that Thai teachers hardly write in English. Whatever the excuses are, writing skill is very important for many reasons. Nunan (2007:125) interestingly pinpoints that:

> At a very general level, written language serves the same function as spoken language: these are the transactional, interpersonal and esthetic functions :
>
> Transactional: Public signs in the street, product labels on canned and bottled goods, instruction manuals, maps, television programs, checks, newspapers and magazines, advertisements, dictionaries, encyclopedias, post-it notes and Interpersonal: Letters , emails, postcards, diaries . Aesthetic: Novels, comic, movie/play scripts, poems, computer games. In comparison with speaking, writing is more demanding.

Davies & Pearse (2000:100) concludes that:

> While spoken communication is supported by tone of voice, gesture, and context, a written text has to communicate through language alone. This usually

means more carefully constructed sentences and a
greater range of vocabulary and grammar.
As a consequence, writing may often be more
complex than speech.

The ability to write professionally involves understanding of many
aspects of language features at work to avoid grammatical errors and
inconsistencies. There have been many attempts to enhance writing skills by
means of error analysis to distinguish between errors, which are systematic,
and mistakes, which are not. Error analysis was an approach influenced by
behaviorism through which applied linguists sought to use the formal
distinctions between the learners' first and second languages to predict errors.
A key finding of error analysis has been that many learner errors are
produced by learners making wrong inferences about the rule of the target
language. With reference to Corder (1974:25), 'a learner's errors provide
evidence of the system of the language that he/she is using at a particular
point of the course'. This research then involves an experiment with a
strategical approach to writing development of twenty senior high school
teachers in the belief that they can quickly develop their writing skills if
approached strategically with an emphasis on the process procedures, and
problem solving, hoping that with a careful lesson-plan, and materials
presentation, the participants will improve their writing, and consequently
develop their teaching techniques. As experienced English teachers, they have
more advantages than their senior high school students in terms of grammar
and vocabulary. Trends in language teaching pedagogies keep changing.
Sanchez (2004:40) argues that two main trends in language teaching
methodology: the 'grammatical' and the 'conversational' approach have been
in tension with each other and are representative of a dichotomy that seems
to reappear again and again in different ways and formats. Research after
research has shown that language skills cannot be singled out as completely
separate units. The researcher is well-aware that writing skills are also
interconnected with other skills, especially reading. Therefore, the researcher
will make use of a lot of selected authentic reading materials, including
extracts from the great classics to inspire the participants to enjoy learning
and enhance their writing skills as well as help them improve their
grammatical accuracy In "What to Do with Grammar", Weaver (1979: 88)
makes an interesting remark that " the most common reason for teaching
grammar has been the assumption that it will have a positive effect upon
students' ability to use the language." Richards in his preface to Graham

Lock's *Functional English Grammar* (1996: ix) stated that "The emphasis of functional grammar is on how the purpose for which language is used and the contexts in which it appears affect the choices speakers and writers make." Thus the importance of grammar cannot be ignored. Consequently, the researcher corrected the participants' grammatical errors beyond just sheer corrections, but also gave them feedbacks as reinforced learning tools. Viewed in light of teaching experience, there is no single theory or teaching method that can guarantee success, and if the teacher wants to become professional, he/she will have to come up with his/her own teaching approach that will work and make learning successful. This project is; therefore, an attempt to inspire those seeking professional excellence to come up with their own approach to make teaching and learning English a rewarding and worth-while experience. Prabhu (cited in Sanchez 2004) made the comment:

> ...a strongly felt pedagogic intuition, arising from experience generally but made concrete in the course of professional debate in India. This was that the development of competence in second language requires no systematization of language inputs or maximization of planned practice, but rather the creation of conditions in which learners engage in an effort to cope with communication.

Rationale and Significance of the Study

As technology is advancing so rapidly, we have discovered new ways to help our students become more competent in English. Teaching a foreign language is now a challenge, especially teaching English to non-native speakers. As English has a vital role in international communication, we must educate our students to communicate successfully. Therefore, it is important to develop the teachers' competency in English so that they can further develop our young students' English proficiency to catch up with the world of communication today. The purposes and uses of foreign languages are as diverse as the students who study them. Some students study another language in hopes of finding a rewarding career in the international marketplaces or government service. Others are interested in the intellectual challenge and cognitive benefits that accrue to those who master multiple

languages. Still others seek greater understanding of other people and other cultures. Many approach foreign language study, as they do other courses, simply to fulfill a graduation requirement. Regardless of the reason for study, foreign languages have something to offer everyone. It is with this philosophy in mind that in the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning: Preparing for the 21st Century* (1993) the American government has set standards for foreign language learning in areas that encompass: Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities.

Obviously communication is at the heart of language study. In a face-to-face communication, of course, one needs speaking and listening skills, but writing and reading skills are also required to gain knowledge and understanding and to develop proficiency in the four skills. Although writing is the most complex and difficult skill, students can improve their writing through reading. Many researchers have found that reading and writing skills are interconnected. Brown, et al. (1991.viii) maintain that "writing is not the act of planning everything you want to communicate ahead of time and then putting it on paper. Writing is a means for thinking, a method of developing ideas and of fleshing out arguments. Recent research in writing suggests that students write more freely and creatively when their writing emerges gradually from a number of sources of insight such as reading material, class discussions, and a teacher's individual attention." Davies & Pearse (2000:96) also remarks that writing is probably the linguistic skill that is least used by most people in their native language. Even in the most 'advanced' societies a significant percentage of the adult population writes with difficulty. Good writing skills usually develop from extensive reading, some specific training, and a good deal of practice. A good rhetoric is not only a good read, but can be a usage style source or a writing model for the learner.

Srisermbhok (2010) in her action research entitled "Exploitation of IT to Enhance Students' Extensive Reading Skills" revealed that extensive reading can effect students' writing ability as reflected by their writing journals. Although not all the participants were able to write, most of those with moderate ability had improved their writing. They were able to use correct tenses. The ones with good ability had improved their writing style adopted from their reading. Writing also involves other related sub-skills, such as spelling, choosing the right vocabulary, using grammar correctly, including necessary mechanisms. Although students make a lot of mistakes in grammar, they can still communicate. Ur (1988) comments that there is no

doubt that a knowledge-implicit or explicit - of grammatical rules is essential for the mastery of a language, : you cannot use words unless you know how they should be put together.

In sum, writing is the most difficult skill that can be improved through integration of other skills, especially reading that can enrich students' ideas and imagination required for good writing.

As reading can help students improve their writing skill, there is also an advantage to implement extracts from good literature to enhance students' proficiency. Strong, (1996).in "Using Literature for Language Teaching in ESOL" explains that in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), there is renewed interest in the use of literature in the communicative classroom. Literature may be part of a communicative pedagogy in three ways: (1) by providing a context in which to develop students' reading strategies and knowledge of non-fiction and literary texts; (2) by being the basis of an extensive reading program, with attendant acquisition of new vocabulary and grammatical forms; (3) by offering the opportunity to explore cross-cultural values. One reading strategy found useful for encouraging reading is the exploration of story grammar, which provides common terms of reference and a direction for group discussion. As students learn about story grammar and understand how to apply it to stories they are reading, an extensive reading program should be undertaken, with students selecting their own reading materials from a classroom shelf or from a self-access area in the library. Related classroom activities include discussions, book reports, teacher book presentations, small-group book sharing, and sustained silent reading periods. Book content, including cultural and thematic information, can be used for a variety of language and cultural learning activities (such as cloze procedures), timeline construction, and response to specific passages or events.

From what has been discussed above, it is apparent that students' reading competence can enhance their writing skills. In Thailand reading is to be encouraged as many reports have confirmed that Thais do not like reading. In order to do so, it is practical to begin with English teachers to acquaint them with reading techniques as a stepping stone to improve their writing ability.

Objectives of the Study

The study aims to:

1. Employ a strategical approach to develop the participants' writing skills.

2. Use reading as reinforcement to improve the participants' writing competence

3. Motivate the participants to apply what they have learned to develop their teaching at their schools.

Research Questions:

1. How can reading impact the participants' writing development?

2. In what way does the strategical approach help develop. the participants' skills?

Definition of Terms:

1. Participants in this study refer to twenty senior high school teachers from Education District I and II who were selected by the Directors of twenty schools in Pathumthani Province Thailand.

2. Strategical approach in this research refers to the techniques the research employed integrating theory and practice interactively to motivate the participants for cooperative learning so as to improve their writing skills.

Methods

The methodology includes the data about the population, data about their writing, and data analysis. The research instruments consist of the participants' writing errors reflected from the pretest, and writing assignments.

Description of Population and Procedures:

The Population

The population in this research consisted of twenty senior high school teachers selected from Pathumthani Education District I&II. There were 16 females and 4 males. Their age was different starting from 25 to over 50. Their teaching experiences varied starting from three to over twelve years. All together there were 19 Thai teachers and one Filipino.

The Procedures

This study investigated how the researcher's strategical approach helped develop the participants' language competence, especially writing. The project started on September 28, 2009 and ended on October 2, 2009, with a total number of 30 hours for intensive language learning. In this study, the researcher made use of reading materials to impact the participants' writing improvement. That means using the contents from authentic sources to educate and inspire the participants to learn English. The authentic reading materials served as models for real language use. The contents covered: Interpersonal Communication Theory, Mapping Communication Space, Personal Communication Styles, Word Power, Parts of Sentences and Parts of Speech, Reading Techniques, selections relevant to global issues, Denotation and Connotation, selected poems and extracts from great fiction/non- fiction, online articles on "Cultivating Global Literacy through English as an International Language, Learning English as a Mother Tongue, New Ways of Studying English , Standard for Foreign Language Learning, and the Future of Englishes." All the materials were given to the participants on the first day with the detail of the workshop course syllabus so that the participants could prepare their study ahead of time.

Method of Data Collection

The main research instruments were the participants' written assignments based on the topics given in class. Their writings were evaluated based on Jacobs. et. al . (1981) criteria for writing standard: organization, topic sentence, supporting detail and conclusion, including the use of structures, choice of words, spelling and mechanisms. Each assignment was always

corrected with feedback and returned to the participants on the following meeting. Individual feedback was also arranged so that the weaker participants would understand their limitations and were able to improve their other writing assignments. All together there were 80 essays on four topics, including 20 Haiku poems. Each corrected assignment was copied as data collection for analyses. At the end of the workshop, the participants presented their overall communication mapping activities to the class and then gave their written evaluation and feedback on the workshop.

Findings

The findings include other related data about the participants' writing errors and writing improvements. Their feedback on the workshop was also analyzed and presented in tables. For clarity, the researcher has divided the findings into three parts: Part I: Personal information of the participants, Part II: The participants' writing errors, and Part III: The participants' writing improvement.

Part I: Personal Information of the Participants

Personal information of the participants was obtained from the evaluation form in Part 1. It was found that the ages of the participants ranged from 25 to over 50. However, 14 participants were the majority, aged over 41. There were 3 males and 17 females. Their teaching experiences varied from the minimum of 3 years to over 12 years. These participants also had experience in attending a short-term workshop for professional development on different topics, such as Critical Thinking Workshop, Lesson Planning, and Testing. Eight participants obtained Master's degrees, and the rest had Bachelor's degrees.

Part II: The Participants' Writing Errors in the Pretest

The types of participants' errors found in the pres-test consist of various grammatical errors. Obviously those with little writing skills, made a lot of grammatical mistakes from the very basic to more complex levels, such as the misuse of articles, modifiers, subject/verb agreements, parts of speech,

parts of sentences, and mechanisms. Other errors include organization of the subject matter and spelling.

The researcher adopted Jacobs' scales in evaluating the participants' writing ranging from Level 4 to Level 1, using the scores as the criteria for classification of the participants' writing skills. Level 4 is considered good, getting the scores from 75 – 100, Level 3 is considered fair .with the scores from 65-74, Level 2 is rather poor with the scores from 45 – 64, while Level 1 is considered very poor with the scores from 0 – 44.The data from the pretest on "Myself" were not evaluated, but used to underpin the participants' grammatical background. These data were helpful for the researcher to pay more attention to the participants who need more advice on how to use some grammatical structures to improve their writing. Since the participants were keen to develop their language skills, they were cooperative and alert to even simple mistakes. Hence teaching and learning was rewarding for both the participants and the researcher.

The grammatical errors found among the participants in the pre-test included all types of errors .Findings from all the participants 'pretest shows 239 mistakes which can be classified and ranked from the least frequent mistakes to the most frequent mistakes in percentage in TableI.as follows:

TableI. Grammatical Errors in the Pretest

Types of Grammatical Mistakes	Frequency of Occurrence	Percentage
Gerund	4	1.67%
Parallel of adjectives/verbs/nouns	6	2.50%
Run-on	6	2.50%
Word-order	7	2.92%
Connective verbs	8	3.35%
Passive voice	12	5.02%
Pronounce references	13	5.44%
Subject/verb agreements	14	5.87%
Fragments	15	6.28%
Infinitives	16	6.69%
Modifiers	18	7.53%
Prepositions	27	11.30%
Articles	27	11.30%

Tenses	32	13.39%
Verbals*	34	14.24%
*(ability to use appropriate words)		
Total	239	100%

The data from Table I reveals that prepositions, articles, tenses and verbals are serious problems for the participants. Prepositions and articles may seem easy, but in practice these two grammatical features still pose a lot of problems in use, even among those who have extensive experience studying English. In comparison to all the grammatical mistakes, verbals were considered the most serious problems. This may be due to the fact that Thais do not read much, including teachers, therefore, their use of vocabulary is limited .That is why this workshop focuses on reading as a tool to enhance the participants' writing skills.

Part III: The Participants' Writing Improvements

After the pretest, the participants were assigned to write in prose and poetry. There were essays on three topics: "*How a Strange Thing Happened to Me*" "*The Moment I Got Enlightened*", "*The Most Important Thing in My Life*" and twenty Haiku poems. Evaluation of the essays was adapted from Jacob's evaluation scales of evaluation as mentioned earlier, looking at content and organization in the traditional essay writing style:

- Introduction
- Topic sentence
- Adequate detail
- Order of ideas
- Relevant detail
- Conclusion
- Coherence
- Logic

In terms of language, the followings are considered: vocabulary, form and usage, and mechanisms. The findings showed that most of the participants have improved their writing. These essays were quite well-written with reference to the topics given, providing appropriate discussion

with specific detail. In terms of organization, the essays provided clear supporting details in logical orders. However, there were some grammatical mistakes. There were 45 essays evaluated in Level 4, and 15 essays in Level 3. Interestingly, the nature of grammatical mistakes, and misuse of mechanisms found among the essays classified in Level 4 differ remarkably as presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Types of Grammatical and Mechanical Errors of Level 4 Essays

Types of Grammatical Mistakes	Frequency of Occurrence	Percentage
Fragments	2	2.59%
Modifiers	2	2.59%
Spellings	2	2.59%
Run-ons	2	2.59%
Pronouns reference	2	2.50%
Connections	4	5.19%
Subject/verb agreements	5	6.49%
Comma splices	7	9.09%
Passive voice	8	10.38%
Prepositions	9	11.68%
Articles	10	12.98%
Verbals	10	12.98%
Tenses	14	18.18%
Total	**77**	**100%**

The findings reveal that the mistakes found in this category are exceedingly less than those found in the pretest .However, the serious problems lie in the same grammatical features: prepositions, articles, verbals and tenses. With regard to tenses, although 14 mistakes in the use of tense may seem a lot, it is rather low in comparison to the total number of essays. (45 essays at this level). In terms of verbals the mistakes are caused by translation or limited knowledge on vocabulary as these teachers still need to read more to become competent. One barrier not to be over-looked is the mother-tongue interference, which can be considered one of the great barriers among Thais learning English as the structure of the Thai language and English is different. In Thai there are no marking of tenses such as

inflection of the verb. The speaker can add a particle like the word แล้ว (Laew) in the Thai to mark the past action. In fact, most of the mistakes found were the mixture of the present, past, and perfect tenses although the number of occurrences can be considered low. However, when mistakes occur, they are not isolated. That means there are mixtures of incorrect usage of tenses, prepositions, articles and verbals, inclusive of mechanisms, even among those who seem to have mastered a certain level of language competence as classified in Level 4 .The findings in Table 2 also reveal an interesting discovery about English language learning among Thai participants. That means the most serious barrier is the interference of the Thai mother tongue that causes ineffective communication although the sentence may be grammatically correct, but can create confusion as can be exemplified below in some of the sentences found in the writing assignments of the participants classified in Level 4.

The original sentence: He ordered me by pointing with his toe; I can't bear any more.

Corrections: 1. When he gave me an order, pointing me with his toe, I could no longer bear it.

2. As soon as he pointed at me, using his toe, I quit my job.

The original sentence: I wish I will be a good teacher. I will teach them to be polite to the others.

Corrections: 1. I wish I were a teacher to teach my students to be polite to others.

2 . Because of that, I want to be a teacher to teach my students to treat people politely.

Level 3. Types of Grammatical and Mechanical Errors

There were 15 essays classified in level 3.These essays show moderate understanding of the topic with limited supporting details .The essays were wordy as the writers tried to use many words to explain. Although the writers demonstrated some understanding of the vocabulary used, they got confused with various parts of speech. In addition, there were some spelling mistakes. In general the subject matter or the message conveyed was

understandable. The types of mistakes found in this level are shown in Table 3:

Table 3.Types of Grammatical and Mechanical Errors of Level 3 Essays

Types of Grammatical Mistakes	Frequency of Occurrence	Percentage
Fragments	2	3.25%
Run-ons	3	3.37
Gerunds	4	4.49
Comma splices	4	4.49
Passive voice	4	4.49
Subject/verb agreements	6	6.74
Spellings	7	7.87
Modifiers	7	7.87
Pronoun references	7	7.87
Prepositions	7	7.87
Tenses	8	8.99
Articles	13	14.60
Verbals	14	15.73
Total	**89**	**100%**

The findings from Table 3 show that tenses, articles, and verbals are the types of errors that occur more than the other types of grammatical mistakes. However, it is still interesting to discover that these are the most common errors among all writing assignments although the number of mistakes has decreased significantly. In this category, the incorrect tenses are a mixture between the use of the past, the present and perfect tenses. With regard to articles, the writers got confused between a definite (the) and indefinite articles(a/an). This may be due to their carelessness or lack of understanding on how to use these two articles in practice although they may seem to understand the rule. Another factor may be that the participants do not write often enough to use these articles correctly. When analyzed carefully, it is not astonishing to find that the main barrier is the mother tongue interference, or the writers translating their thoughts in Thai first before writing them in English .In addition, the participants' misuse of correct or appropriate words is caused by inadequate practice or not enough reading to broaden their vocabulary. Here are some examples of the mistakes in verbals:

The original sentence: In young I had thought why did not I have a comfortable life.

Corrections: I.   Since I was young, I often wondered why my life was uncomfortable.

2. I used to wonder, during my youth, why life was so difficult for me.

The original sentence: Whoever did not believe in spirit, I did not mind.

Corrections :   I. I believed in a spirit, and did not mind if others didn't.

2. I did not mind if other people were not superstitious like I.

The original sentence: Before I received the phone, my right eye had been blinking many times.

Corrections: I. My right eye had blinked many times before I answered the phone.

2 .My right eye kept blinking before I answered the phone.

Comparison of Participants' Writing Improvement

The findings illustrated in TableI, Table.2, and Table 3 significantly reveal the participants' writing improvement from the beginning until the end of the workshop. The intensive workshop has provided the participants with a communicative environment that encourages them to use English in and outside the classroom. The fact that they have to read the authentic materials both intensively and extensively have some impacts on their language improvement in the four skill. They have also developed their writing, which is considered the most difficult skill, in both the form and content. To a certain extent, the participant's knowledge of grammar has improved remarkably as can be shown in the Table 4 below.

Table 4. Decrease in Grammatical Mistakes Reflected in the Participants' Writing

Grammatical Mistakes	Frequency	Percentage
Found in the Pretest	239	59%
Found in level 3	89	22%
Found in level 4	77	19%
Total	405	100%

When illustrating the mistakes found in all writings during the workshop in a chart, it is interesting to see the reduction of the grammatical mistakes that correspond to the participants' writing improvement as is shown in Figure I below.

FigureI
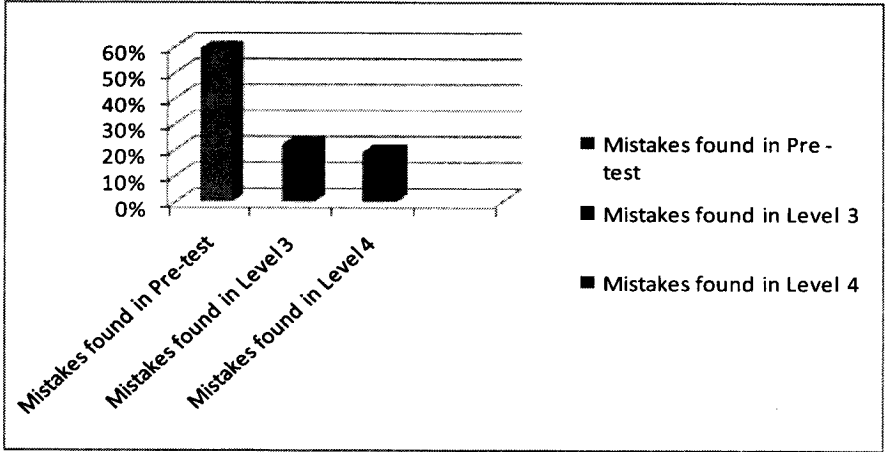
Participants' Improvements in Using Discourse Markers

The findings presented in Tables 1,2,3,4 and Figure I indicate that the participants have improved their traditional essay writings with reliable criteria of essay evaluation. In addition to the decrease in grammatical mistakes, the participants have improved the use of discourse markers in their expository writings. Below are some examples of the participants' ability to use discourse markers in different contexts:

Contrastive Markers

When the participants want to signal contrast in ideas, they use different discourse markers apart from 'but', by replacing it with *although, on the other hand, or on the contrary.*

Inferential Markers

When the participants want to make a conclusion based on what they have stated, they develop their conclusion, with some other words, instead of just the word 'so : of *course, as a result, because of this, or then.*

More Elaborative Markers

When the participants want to extend additional detail for their statements, they have developed skills in using more elaborative discourse markers such as, *above all, also, besides, furthermore, in addition, moreover,* and *too.*

Signal Words Providing a Reason

When providing a reason for their argument or explanation, the participants have used different discourse markers apart from 'because' as found in the following signal words: *since, for, after all, or that's why.* The participants' awareness of the importance of signal words or discourse markers shows that they have improved their communicative skills, especially in writing to make their communication flow and become natural.

Participants' Writing Improvement Reflected in Their Haiku Poems

As mentioned earlier, the researcher employed different strategies to encourage the participants to enjoy writing. Apart from the writing assignments assigned in their expository writing, the participants were encouraged o develop their language skills through poetry on the last day of the workshop after they had been exposed to different ways to use figurative languages. After they have got enough background to analyze the selected poems, they were assigned to write Haiku poems expressing their own ideas on anything that interested them. The ideas may be concrete or abstract. The participants really enjoyed writing Haiku poems, which echoed their ideas or sense of value impressively. Since the poems consist of only three verses, each of which has different syllables (5:7:5), there were hardly any grammatical errors. It is interesting to find that most participants wrote their Haiku very well.

Conclusions and Implications

This descriptive research explored the positive outcomes of the researcher's strategical approach to writing development of 20 senior high school teachers during the intensive workshop with the aim of answering two research questions:

Research Question I: How can reading impact the participants' writing development?

The data from both the participants' writing assignments and feedback to the questionnaire revealed that both intensive and extensive reading assignments have positive impact on their writing development, and language learning in general. The participants felt that they had improved their vocabulary and felt more confident in communicating with their friends. By reading extensively, they have advanced their knowledge. At the same time they have developed their language proficiency, especially writing. This indicated that if the writing tasks were relevant to what they had read, they would appropriately employ the structures and vocabulary in real communication. Moreover, they felt that they could read faster and gained more confidence in using the language. This is reassured by the improvement in their writing assignments towards the end of the workshop. As obvious in the pretest, there were more grammatical mistakes, especially for those with little practice in writing. Most of the grammatical mistakes varied starting from connective verbs, passive voice, pronoun references, subject/verb agreements, fragments, infinitives, modifiers, prepositions, articles, tenses and verbals. However, after the participants became acquainted with the reading texts and absorbed the way the language was used in both academic and natural settings, they improved their writing and other skills. Consequently, they made less mistakes and even though there were some insignificant mistakes, such as on prepositions and articles, their writings were still understandable. Interestingly, the same types of mistakes appeared, but were less in frequency of occurrences and the types of mistakes were less than those found in the pretest. One barrier not to be overlooked is the mother-tongue interference, which is considered one of the barriers for Thai learners of English.

One conclusion from this study is the importance of integrating the four skills in language teaching. There are many ways the teacher can enhance the learners' four skills in the classroom, such as by integrating reading with other related classroom activities. Group work is really useful to encourage interactions in class. Therefore, small group discussion, oral presentation, role-play, questions and answers by peers, including cultural learning activities aspired by selected literary works are strongly recommended. The impact of reading on writing improvement is significant. The participants learned to communicate effectively with the improvement in using different

discourse markers: contrastive markers, inferential markers, more elaborative markers, including appropriate signal words in providing reasons to make their communication flow and become more natural.

Research Question 2:.In what way does the strategical approach help develop the participants' writing skills?

Output from the participants' feedback revealed that the learners learned best when the instructor has the following qualities: a sound knowledge of the subject matter, and was well-qualified for teaching, with good preparation and lesson-planning, and rapport with the class. The instructor's teaching style is important in engaging the learners to learn. As experienced in this workshop, the participants felt rewarded and satisfied with their language improvement, especially writing. As the teacher has a very important role in the class, it is recommended that he/she is always well-prepared , active and lively.

The outcomes of the workshop not only indicated that the researcher's strategical approach was successful in developing the participants' writing skills, but made them more enthusiastic about improving the qualities of their teaching in the future. As reflected by the feedback, the participants had shown interests in many ways, such as in improving their teaching strategy, lesson-planning, using media and technology in class, enhancing their knowledge about linguistics, literature, culture and knowledge about themselves as communicators. This is very important as all the participants were senior high school teachers of English; their enthusiasm to keep on developing themselves and apply what they have learned to improve their teaching would, it is hoped, be beneficial to their students in the long run.

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