TEACHING TO WRITE RIGHT : LOOKING AT THE "PROCESS"

การสอนให้เขียนถูกต้อง : ดูที่กระบวนการ

Dr. J.A. Foley

บทคัดย่อ

ดร.พลอย ได้สรุปผลการวิจัยที่หมิ่นขาวยาลัยอังสุขัย ซึ่งกลุ่มผู้ทดลองเป็นนักศึกษาชั้นปีที่ 1 จำนวน 600 คน แต่ส่วนเขียนจำานวน 72 ข้อ จากนักศึกษา 12 คน โดยใช้เวลาในการทดลอง 14 สัปดาห์ เพื่อ
เปรียบเทียบผลการในการเขียนของนักศึกษาเหล่านี้กระบวนการวิจัยจะเน้นที่ รายละเอียดในการใช้สื่อจาก
คำาเพื่อให้นักศึกษาสื่อความหมายจากภาพที่เลือกโดยวิเคราะหว่างเขียนอย่างละเอียด

ห่างนี้เนื่องจากความหมายที่สื่อออกมาจะถูกกำหนดโดยรูปแบบใบภาษาที่ใช้ในการดึงความจากสื่อที่มี
ความขัดแย้งทำให้นักศึกษาสามารถสื่อความหมายได้อย่างมีประสิทธิภาพ

การวิจัยนี้จึงเน้นในส่วนแรกของโครงการที่เกี่ยวข้องกับกระบวนการในการเขียนของนักศึกษาในการเล่าเรื่อง
การบรรยายและการอภิปรายเนื้อความที่เขียน ประเด็นที่นำเสนอ คือ ขั้นจำกัดในการใช้งานของนักศึกษาจะ
ปรากฏให้เห็นจากการขาดเท่าทอรี่ความสามารถในการใช้คำาหลักอย่างเหมาะสมของนักศึกษา

เหล่านี้จะมีแนวโน้มในการใช้สื่อประโยชน์ต่อในการเขียนดังนี้การใช้งานภาพเป็นสื่อจะทำให้นักศึกษา
มีตัวช่วยในการคิดอย่างสร้างสรรค์และจะช่วยพัฒนาทักษะการเขียนได้แม่นในช่วงระยะเวลาเพียง 14 สัปดาห์
ผลการทดลองพบว่า การใช้สื่อเป็นมีประสิทธิภาพเป็นตัวกำหนดแนวทางการเขียนของนักศึกษา จะทำให้
นักศึกษาเข้าใจสิ่งที่เป็นเรื่องราวและการหายที่ใช้ในชีวิตประจำวันได้อย่างเหมาะสมเชิญว่าการใช้สื่อ
กล่าวจะเป็นประโยชน์ต่อครูผู้สอนการเขียนภาษาอังกฤษของนักศึกษาต่อโดยผู้วิจัยได้ดำเนินการตามขั้นตอนที่
เตรียมมาย่างเป็นระบบตามเหตุการณ์การสอนของ ใบกิตต์เกียร์ (Vygotskian : 1962) ที่เชื่อว่าการเรียนรู้
จากการมีปฏิสัมพันธ์ในบริบทที่กำหนดและผลการบันทึกการณ์เหตุการณ์ได้ระบุสถานการณ์ให้ผู้
เรียนเลือกใช้โครงสร้างภาษาที่จำเป็นในการสื่อสารในรูปแบบต่างๆ จะเป็นวิธีที่ส่งผลที่ดีที่สุด

คำสำคัญ การเขียน การเลือกใช้คำาหลักใบภาษากรณ์ ประเภท ภาพ ตัวกระชุน
Abstract

This study investigated the language choices in the writing of freshmen students at an English medium university in Thailand in response to visual stimuli. The study involved identifying the genres and the lexico-grammatical features associated with such genres.

600 samples of writing were collected but only 72 were randomly selected from 12 students in order to compare their progress over a period of 14 weeks (one semester).

The framework for the analysis of the students’ writing was based on a detailed approach to these texts as semantic units. But since meanings are realized through the lexico-grammatical system, it was felt that this was the most effective way of making an explicit interpretation of the texts that had some objectivity. This study focuses on the first part of a two part project involving first of all the ‘process’, then a later study dealt with the ‘product’. The paper will discuss the development of the Nominal Group (NG) in the students’ writing in THEME position as this was felt to be a major issue in the dominantly Descriptive, Recount and Narrative genres which it was hoped they would produce.

The resulting analysis showed that the students had a limited knowledge of the different genres and used an equally limited range of lexico-grammatical choices. No discernible improvement was observed over the period of study. Possible reasons for this were, firstly the lack of awareness of the role and importance that genres play in their academic studies and secondly, an approach to teaching which did not include a grammar that was functionally based. Possible alternative ways of teaching are suggested.

Key words Writing, lexico-grammatical choices, genres, visual, stimuli.

Introduction

The rationale for this study was to see how a group of students were developing their network of choices in their written English. Visual stimuli were used as prompts as according to Gardner (1983) Multiple Intelligence (MI), using pictures shows the capacity to move from the non-verbal (visual) to the verbal and vice-versa. Such a procedure would, in principle, stimulate the students to use their imagination as well as giving the freedom to express their ideas through their writing.

The form of textual analysis used in this study is based on Systemic-functional grammar (SFG) as it is concerned with the choices the students are able to make given their language ability (Halliday; & Hasan. 1976). These choices are assumed to be meaningful and related to the writer’s purpose which will be influenced by the context and culture.
SFG presents a view of language in terms of both the structure (grammar) and the lexis. The term lexico-grammar is used to underline the fact that these traditional viewed aspects of language are actually one. Meaning in SFG is seen from three points of view, the ideational, interpersonal and textual (Halliday. 1994).
The ideational view is how the writer represents experience, ideas and ways of seeing the world. In terms of the form this is expressed through the clause structure (ng+vg+[advg]). The adverbial group is optional.

The interpersonal function concerns how language is used to interact between participants in the exchange of meaning. The finite part of the verb indicates the time frame as seen by the writer. The speech functions and modality indicate the relationship between the participants, while appraisal indicates the kinds of attitudes that are negotiated in the text.

The textual function weaves the ideational and interpersonal meanings together. Martin (1999) sees this function as the information flow management, involving the organization of the text relevant to the context. The important element to understand the textual meaning in the clause is the THEME. The theme serves as the starting point for the message to be conveyed and gives a signal to the reader how to follow the logic of the discourse in the text.

In terms of the structure of the theme, there are four possible functions: Topical, Marked Topical, Interpersonal and Textual. The Topical theme functions as the subject of the clause (Eggins. 2004). Marked Topical Theme can be circumstantial elements (adverbial) or participants that are not the subject of the clause. Marked themes are often used to signal a new phase in the discourse. The Textual Theme relates the clause to its context and can be any combination of continuatives (yes, no, now, then); conjunctions (and, because) and conjunctive adjuncts (for instance, in addition, likewise). The logical use of Textual themes plays an important role in producing a cohesive text. Interpersonal themes are related to modal or mood markings and vocatives (Hey, Oh, Yep). Consequently, interpersonal themes are found more often in spoken discourse rather than written, except in direct speech.

The Nominal Group.

The nominal group (NG) is the grammatical unit which has the most variety at the rank of groups and this would allow the widest range of meanings to be expressed (Thompson. 2000). There are three structures pertaining to the NG: Premodifier, Head and Postmodifier. The ability to construct a complex NG is considered an indicator of developing control in a language. Children rarely use complex NG in subject position (Foley, 1991). EFL learners also tend to employ short NGs depending on how much control they have of the target language. Also, the NG is constructed differently in Thai where there is no premodification as in ‘nungseu see daang’ (book color red) or ‘sorong see fah sorng peun’ (sarongs light blue two) and if a classifier is required it comes after the color. The categorization of the nominal group in English tends to pre-modify and post-modify. The following is a table of the basic categories of the NG in English.
### Single Noun & Noun with Premodifier

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Single noun</th>
<th>a Noun/ Pronoun</th>
<th>e.g. you, it, he</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>With Premodifier</td>
<td>D+H</td>
<td>e.g. a gift, my friend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>With Premodifier</td>
<td>N+H</td>
<td>e.g. some game</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>With Premodifier</td>
<td>E+H</td>
<td>e.g. new e-mail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>With Premodifier</td>
<td>C+H</td>
<td>e.g. strawberry smoothie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>With Premodifier</td>
<td>D+N+H</td>
<td>e.g. the first alley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>With Premodifier</td>
<td>D+E+H</td>
<td>e.g. a big seal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>With Premodifier</td>
<td>D+C+H</td>
<td>e.g. Clash’s music video</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>With Premodifier</td>
<td>N+E+H</td>
<td>e.g. many big leaves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>With Premodifier</td>
<td>N+C+H</td>
<td>e.g. many water activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>With Premodifier</td>
<td>E+C+H</td>
<td>e.g. pink nail polish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>With Premodifier</td>
<td>D+N+E+H</td>
<td>e.g. these three remote controls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>With Premodifier</td>
<td>D+N+C+H</td>
<td>e.g. the first pine tree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>With Premodifier</td>
<td>D+E+C+H</td>
<td>e.g. the big sunglasses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>With Premodifier</td>
<td>N+E+C+H</td>
<td>e.g. two closed circuit cameras</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>With Premodifier</td>
<td>D+N+E+C+H</td>
<td>e.g. this first little baby boy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Noun with Postmodifier

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>With Postmodifier</th>
<th>preposition phrase</th>
<th>e.g. the colour [of the word]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
<td>[pp+ng]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>With Postmodifier</th>
<th>relative clause</th>
<th>e.g. My friend who stands next Max call me</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>With Postmodifier</th>
<th>reduced relative clause</th>
<th>e.g. You just press the Talk button, located at the middle top</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lexical strings (NGs)

A lexical string (NG) is a list of lexical items that occur in a text that can be related to a prior NG. It is an important tool for revealing the cohesion of a text as well as exposing the repetition of the lexical items being used.

Genre Theory

The term ‘genre’ is used in this study to refer to the different types of texts that enact various types of social contexts. Since patterns of meaning are relatively consistent for each genre, we can learn to predict how each situation is likely to unfold. In this study the visual stimuli would normally lend themselves to descriptive genres, mainly observation, recount and narrative.

Proto-typical genres

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Genre</th>
<th>Main Genre Structure Used in School Settings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Observation/Comment</td>
<td>Orientation (^)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Description (*)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Comment (^)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recount</td>
<td>Orientation (^)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Event (*)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Re-orientation (^)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrative</td>
<td>Orientation (^)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Complication (*)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Resolution(*)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coda (^)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report</td>
<td>General Classification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not necessarily in this order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Description—parts [and their functions]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>qualities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>habits/behavior/uses</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Main Genre | Main Genre Structure Used in School Settings
--- | ---
Procedure | Goal
 | Steps (*)
 | Diagram (^)
Explanation | General statement
 | Sequenced explanation (*)
 | Final state of being or thing produced
Persuasion | Thesis
 | Preview Position
 | Argument (*)
 | Point Elaboration
 | Reiteration of Thesis
argument | Issue
 | Argument (*) --- for /against
 | Recommendation (^)

(^) optional element, (*) recursive (Foley. 2011: 195)

**Observation/Description**

The purpose of the observation/descriptive text is to create an image of a particular person, place of thing in detail. Observations/descriptions can appear in various genres or in mixed genres (Derewianka. 1992). Typically the generic structure in terms of language features would include:

- Use of specific NG
- A variety of verb processes [relational to provide information; mental to express the writer's view]
- Time frame normal present tense
- Complex NGs to provide information about the subject or situation.

**Recount**

The purpose of recount is to retell events for as information or entertainment. The pattern is normally

- Orientation
- Events
- Re-orientation
Language features would include:
* Past tense to locate events in relation to the time of writing
* NGs to identify people and things
* Material processes to express action of the participants
* Time markers
* Adverbials indicating time and place or sequence of events.

Narrative

The purpose of a narrative text is often to entertain typically in the form of ‘story telling’. Narrative is different from recount in that it involves some kind of problem and resolution.

The generic structure follows the basic pattern of
* Orientation
* Complication
* Resolution
* Coda [optional]

The typical language features may include:
* Focusing on specific and individualized participants
* Past tense, although the present tense can be used to create the sense of immediacy
* A variety of verb process can be used and would include material processes to indicate action; verbal and mental processes to show the characters’ feelings, thinking and saying.
* Complex NGs to describe the settings and the participants in the story
* Temporal conjunctions and time connectives to sequence the events in a time frame.
* Adverbial groups are added to locate the events and places.

Visuals

In this study visuals are used as stimuli in order to engage the students in the writing activities. According to Kress; & Leewen (2006), the visual mode offers semiotic and cognitive resources which allow the students to create meanings through their own interpretation of what they see. Obviously the ‘type’ of visual stimuli will affect the genre of writing (White. 1987). A single frame is likely to generate a descriptive text while a sequence of pictures might lend itself to narrative.
This present study

As previously indicated this study focused on the development of the nominal group in the students’ writing over a period of 14 weeks. The argument is that the limited language ability of the students would be manifest in their lack of elaboration or expansion of the head noun and the tendency to use short independent clauses. Visual stimuli were used as prompts to engage the students’ creativity in their writing and it was hoped that over the period of time of the study, the students would improve on their descriptive skills mainly though using more complex nominal groups.

Different instructors taught each class but the instructions given to the students were standardized in that the pictures were in black and white and were the basis for a 200-250 word essay. The data collected over a fourteen-week period approximated to 600 samples of students’ writing and 76 texts from 12 students were taken at random for analysis. The initial part of this research was undertaken by Minwong (2012) in terms of the experiential function as expressed through transitivity or the verb processes and the tense choices related to the text-type or genre. The part of the study described here focused on the development of the nominal group as this is a major problem for Thai students as well as being an indicator for the development of the target language in developing writing skills.

The samples that follow show the writing of the same student in the first and fourteenth week. The choices of NGs in THEME position are then compared and commented upon.

*Figure 2* presents samples of the visual stimuli as used for all students in week one and week fourteen.

![Picture 1 (Week One)](image1)

![Picture 7 (Week Fourteen)](image2)
Key

I = independent clause; D = dependent clause

**Marked** = topical marked theme; **bold** = topical theme; **interpersonal** = interpersonal, **Italics** = textual theme;

underlining = process; E = existential, Me = mental, B = behavioral, M = material, V = verbal, R = relational

| = clause boundary; embedded clause = [ [ ] ]
past = past tense; pre = present simple tense; future = future tense
double underlining = reference; dotted underlining = substitution; ^^ = ellipsis; waved underlining = conjunction; Dashed underlining = lexical cohesion

Student G

Analytical from Writing 1 (week 1):

```
11  In the picture, I see one mother and one son. || 12  They love each other so much. || 13  They have a good relationship. || 14  And Their family is in the family [(that be very happy.)] || 15  And in the picture may be in morning. || 15.1 the boy future will go to school. || 16  They have a breakfast. || 17  Breakfast have some milk, a cup of coffee, bread and other. || 18  The mother is pouring some milk into glass for her son. ||

19  And the boy feels bored. || 20  because he must drink milk everyday. ||

21  He wants to eat other breakfast [(that not be milk, bread.)] || 21.1 But he must eats. it. ||

22  because it is only one [(that easy to eat.)] || 23  And the boy is waiting to go to school. || 23.1 but he most waits his father send him to school. || 24  But his father isn't getting dressed. || 24.1 He bored to wait. ||

25  He want to play with his friends. || 26  And he is thinking to play the games with his friends. || 27  And He is thinking about his girl friend. || 28  He is thinking about [(what should he buy anything [(that the best gift to his girl friend.)]]

29  Because tomorrow is his girl friend's birthday. || 30  And he is thinking. [(how to surprise to his girl friend.)] || 31  He is having a poppy love. ||
```
Findings 1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of clauses</th>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Independent clause</td>
<td></td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependent clause</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embedded clause</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Topical marked theme</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topical theme</td>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal theme</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textual theme</td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relational</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existential</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material</td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Tenses</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Past</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present</td>
<td></td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cohesion</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reference</td>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substitution</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellipsis</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lexical String 1:

1 son
2 they
3 They
4
5
6.1 the boy
6 They
7
8 her son
9 the boy
9.1 he
10 He
11 he
11.1
12 the boy
12.1 he – him
13
14 He
14.1 he
15 He
16 he
17 He
18 He
18.1 he
19
20 he
20.1
21 He
2 school
2 school
2 school
2 school
2 girl friend
2 girl friend
2 girl friend
2 girl friend
2 girl friend

Comments

* The majority of the NGs in Topical theme position are pronouns (I, They, He) or single nouns (Breakfast).

* D+H (Their family, the boy) are less frequent

* Marked topical themes are used as pp+ng [adv] (In the picture) or single word adverbial (tomorrow).

* In complement position H+post-m [relative clause] is used but often the structure is incorrect: (that be very happy*, that not be milk.bread*, that easy to eat*, that the best gift to his girl friend*).

* The text structure is a description with little structure, very repetitive and limited use of complex nominal groups showing limited control over the target language.
Analytical from Writing 7 (week 14):

1. There are many people in this picture. Every one looks hurry to go to works. In this picture is in morning. They will go to work by BTS. They are waiting for BTS. There are two line of BTS. One of BTS are going to final station and another BTS will go back the first station. Two man who are waiting for BTS which arrived already. A man who is wearing hat holding bag and put his suit on his arm. He just lived in Bangkok 2 day ago for work. He is going to work in first day. He do not know the way to go to office which he works. So He go to ask with another man for some way that he can go to work by BTS. Another man tell him how to go to there.

but a man who is wearing hat do not understand. Therefore A man who is not wearing hat ask him. What office that he work. When a man answered. A man who is not wearing a hat know that a man who is talking with him work in same office. So he tell a man who is wearing hat very happy. That he has new friend in new office already. A man who is not wearing hat also ask him about his home. When a man who is wearing hat know that their homes are nearly. Since that time, they will go to work and go back home together and they become close friend.
Findings 7:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of clauses</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Independent clause</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependent clause</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embedded clause</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Topical marked theme</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topical theme</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal theme</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textual theme</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relational</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existential</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Tenses</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Past</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cohesion</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reference</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substitution</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellipsis</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conjunction</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lexical String 7:

1
2
3
4  BTS
5  BTS
6  BTS
7  BTS
7.1 BTS
8  BTS
9  BTS
10  wearing a hat  A man
10.1  
10.2  he
11  He
11.1  he
12  BTS  He-he  another man
13  him  another man
13.1  
13.2  wearing hat  a man
14  wearing hat  him  a man
14.1  he
15  a man
15.1  wearing a hat  a man
15.2  a man
16  wearing a hat  a man  he
16.1  |  he
16.2  wearing hat  a man
16.3  |  he
17  wearing hat  him  A man
18  wearing hat  a man
18.1  
19  
19.1  
19.2  

46  TEACHING TO WRITE RIGHT: LOOKING AT THE "PROCESS"
Comments

* Again the majority of NGs in Topical theme position are pronouns (There, They) or single nouns H or D+H (another BTS, Another man) or N+H (One of BTS).

* D+H+post-m (relative clause) is used extensively:
  A man who is wearing a hat.
  A man who is not wearing a hat.
  A man who is talking with him.

* N+H + post-m (relative clause + relative clause)
  Two men who are waiting for BTS which not arrived yet.

* NG are used in complement position
  N+H +post-m (relative clause)
  There is one BTS which arrived already.

* H+post-m (relative clause)
  office which he works.

* Again the text structure is a description with little structure, very repetitive and limited use of complex nominal groups. The use of the relative clause as embedded post modifier simply increases the repetitive effect.

What steps can be taken to improve the students’ writing?

The features that we have been considering are features that we identified through a lexico-grammatical analysis of the text, clause by clause. The significance of such an analysis is to show how the meaning of the text derives from the way the clauses and thematic structures are woven together.

Texts in general should display cohesive chains or as in this particular study, lexical chains of reference of which some repetition can be a feature. From the visual stimuli the chains would be expected to develop around the interpretation of the images. But the effectiveness of this inter-chaining will depend on the textual structure and in particular on the organization of the Topical and Marked Topical themes. The evidence from the analysis indicates that the writer’s ability is well below the level expected of freshmen year university students.
Given the visual stimuli some form of description would be expected mainly using *Relational* and *Material processes* as Minwong’s part of the study shows. While the time frame is that of the present, rather than the past. This would be typical of an immature writer as it represents the writer simply writing down their observations as they see it in the present.

However, both texts from week one and week fourteen turned out to be simply ‘observation’. The dominant characteristic in the lexical strings of repetition of the same lexical item in *Topical theme* position is an indicator of the limited choices available to the student. Even where H+post-m (relative clause) is used; it is both mechanical and repetitive. From the detailed analysis of the text, there is no obvious improvement in terms of writing over the period of the fourteen weeks. Contextually, the reference to BTS (the overhead train that runs through the center of metropolitan Bangkok) shows some attempt at local color. However, the student rarely used *Marked Topical* themes to vary the writing and the limited use of the range of NGs available in English is a serious drawback for any form of descriptive writing. From the 76 texts that were analyzed in terms of the nominal group in *Topical Theme* position they ranged from 1 to 9 on the categorization of nominal groups, in other words, H to N+E+H. Where, embedded relative clauses were used, the structure was either incorrect or simply repetition as indicated in the sample: *A man who is wearing a hat. A man who is not wearing a hat.*

The next stage in this research is to set up procedures to improve the writing of the freshmen students. This is at present being undertaken in the second semester of 14 weeks. Learning a second language means gaining progressive control over the systems of options in the new language, learning which options to select to make meanings in which contexts (Lock. 1996). Beginning learners have very limited options (a few structures, some lexical items and some unanalyzed ‘chunks’ of language. More advanced learners will have developed a greater range of options and are able to make delicate distinction of meanings appropriate for different contexts. The ability to use different text-types or genres is seen as extending the learners making- meaning potential.

The genre pedagogy as presented here is based on a Vygotskian (1962) approach to learning. Language is learned through guidance and interaction in the context of shared experience. The teacher inducts learners into the linguistic demands of these genres that are important to participate in academic life and the wider community. Gradually responsibility is shifted to the learners as they gain control of the genre. However, before developing a genre- based program, the teacher or institution
will need to conduct an analysis of the teaching/learning context. At its broadest level, this should take in account the culture, history and tradition of the educational setting as well as the constraints posed by access to materials, English proficiency, learner expectations and assessment requirements.

- **Preparing the Context**
  Locate sample texts in the chosen genre to use for modeling.
  If the students demonstrate quite different levels of proficiency, it is a good idea to work in groups.

- **Developing the Context**
  Discuss the purposes for which we use this type of text in society (e.g. the purpose of Recount is to tell what happened as in the first pages of a newspaper).
  It is a good idea to give each group a copy of the model text with its stages clearly marked.
  Discuss the function of each stage. (For instance, the function of the orientation of a Recount is to let the reader know who was involved, when and where the events took place, and any other information necessary to understand the events which follow.)

- **Modeling**
  Assessing progress as some students may be keen to try to write an independent text, while others may need more modeling: flexibility is a key factor here. Rather than restricting creativity and copying someone else’s work, students need to find out what the valued, accepted and successful norm of a particular kind of writing looks like. In other words, how meaning is constructed and communicated in the particular section of society for which the students are writing. Once they are familiar with the norm, they can start adapting creatively with it to enhance their particular purpose.

- **Teacher-led Construction**
  Before the students write independent texts, they should participate in group writing in the chosen genre. The type of writing will depend on the genre we plan to use with the teacher acting as guide while the students contribute information and ideas.
  Students (possibly with the teacher’s guidance), choose a topic already modeled then they write their drafts based on the model.
  Students can consult with the teacher and peers, receiving comments and suggestions for change to help the text achieve its purpose more effectively.
  However, at this stage the teacher may find that conferencing about drafts reveals a need for more modeling and joint construction.
- **Student-led Construction**
  At this stage, the students independently construct texts of their own similar to the model. It is important that the teacher asks the students to write texts in the same genre and does not require them to write in a different way.
  While students are working on their texts they could be conferencing with other students or the teacher for guidance on both the content and language to be used in the writing.

- **Assessment**
  The primary aim of this procedure is to present clearly the language conventions students need to master in terms of English. In the example presented in this study, the emphasis would be on developing the nominal group in describing. Once the students have absorbed these language features, they can be used as reference points in the formal assessment of the students’ writing in English.

- **Extending**
  As well as allowing for separate skills development, an extended teaching/learning cycle also allows multiple opportunities to build up the students’ knowledge.
  Editing and publishing the texts are a final step to be kept in a portfolio of the students’ work.
  (adapted from Sharpe and Thompson, 1998: see Foley, 2012).
References


