A review of EFL writing research studies in Thailand
In the past 10 years
บทความทบทวนงานศึกษาวิจัยทางด้านการเขียนภาษาอังกฤษในฐานะภาษาต่างประเทศ
ในประเทศไทยในช่วง 10 ปีที่ผ่านมา

ยุทธศักดิ์ ชื่นใจชน
Yutthasak Chuenchaichon

Abstract
This paper reviews EFL writing research studies that were conducted in Thailand during 2004-2013. It starts with a discussion on writing in EFL contexts and recent research studies from other EFL contexts. It is then followed by a discussion on EFL writing research studies in Thailand and the direction of them in the past 10 years by categorizing them into different research areas (e.g. writing errors, writing assessment, online writing/new technology and writing, and genre-based writing instruction). Doing this helps us understand the overall picture of EFL writing research and also the direction of the research areas conducted in Thailand. From the review of this paper, it was found that there have been a wide variety of areas of EFL writing research conducted in Thailand since 2004. Importantly, the significant increase of the EFL writing research in Thailand has taken place since 2010, particularly 2012 and 2013. The direction/future of EFL writing research studies in Thailand is also discussed.

Keywords: English as a foreign language (EFL) Second language (L2) writing EFL writing research Thailand

บทคัดย่อ
บทความชิ้นนี้ต้องการที่จะทบทวนการศึกษาวิจัยการเขียนภาษาอังกฤษในฐานะภาษาต่างประเทศที่จัดทำขึ้นในประเทศไทยช่วงปี พ.ศ. 2547-2556 โดยผู้เขียนได้เริ่มจากการอภิปรายถึงการเขียนภาษาอังกฤษและงานวิจัยทางด้านนี้ที่ได้จัดทำขึ้นในกลุ่มประเทศต่าง ๆ ที่ใช้ภาษาอังกฤษในฐานะภาษาต่างประเทศ จากนั้นผู้เขียนได้อภิปรายถึงงานวิจัยการเขียนภาษาอังกฤษในประเทศไทยตลอดจนทิศทางของงานวิจัยในช่วง 10 ปีที่ผ่านมา โดยได้ทำการจัดกลุ่มขอบเขตของงานวิจัยไว้หลายขอบเขต เช่น ข้อผิดพลาดในการเขียน การประเมินผลการเขียน การเขียนทางไกล (ออนไลน์)/เทคโนโลยีกับการเขียน และการสอนการเขียนแบบออนไลน์ การแบ่งขอบเขตนี้ช่วยให้เราได้เข้าใจภาพรวมของการศึกษาวิจัยทางด้านการเขียนและทิศทางของขอบเขตของงานวิจัยการเขียนภาษาอังกฤษในประเทศไทยได้เป็นอย่างดี จากบทความชิ้นนี้ผู้เขียนได้ค้นพบว่าเขตการวิจัยทางด้านการเขียนภาษาอังกฤษในประเทศไทยมีความหลากหลายมากตั้งแต่ปี พ.ศ. 2547สิ้นที่สำคัญคือมีปริมาณงานวิจัยทางด้านนี้เพิ่มขึ้นอย่างมากตั้งแต่ปี พ.ศ. 2553 โดยเฉพาะอย่างยิ่งในปี พ.ศ. 2555-พ.ศ. 2556 ในส่วนท้ายของบทความชิ้นนี้ผู้เขียนยังได้อภิปรายถึงทิศทางและอนาคตของการศึกษาวิจัยทางด้านการเขียนภาษาอังกฤษในฐานะภาษาต่างประเทศ

คําสั่งยอน: ภาษาอังกฤษในฐานะภาษาต่างประเทศ การเขียนภาษาที่สอง งานวิจัยทางด้านการเขียนภาษาอังกฤษ
ในฐานะภาษาต่างประเทศ ประเทศไทย
Introduction

English language is a global language that is used internationally for various purposes (e.g., academic purposes, business purposes, and professional purposes). Writing is claimed by a number of scholars/linguists (e.g., Cumming, 1995; Hyland, 2003; Kroll, 2003; Matsuda, 2003; Silva & Matsuda, 2001) as one of the most important skills in learning English. Hyland (2003) indicates that second language (L2) writing is unique and requires learners to use strategies in the process of writing, namely planning, translating, and reviewing (Flower & Hayes, 1981), in order to meet the demands of particular writing contexts.

Regarding English writing contexts, they are generally divided into English as a second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language (EFL) contexts. The difference between these two contexts is that ESL contexts are those in which English language is normally used in everyday life activities and in local communities. The examples of ESL contexts are the United Kingdom, Singapore, and India. Unlike ESL contexts, EFL contexts are those in which English language is not widely used in everyday life activities and in local communities, for example, Japan, China, and many European countries (Hyland, 2003). This difference directly influences how English writing instruction is taught by writing teachers and how it is learned by L2 writing learners.

Thailand is an EFL context where English language is mainly used in academic settings (e.g., schools, colleges, and universities) and in the workplace. Thai EFL writing learners, however, have a number of writing problems/difficulties that need to be improved, as shown in numerous research studies (e.g., Bennui, 2008; Chiravate, 2011; Kaweera, 2013; Sattayatham & Ratanapinyowong, 2008; Sersen, 2011; Watcharapunyawong & Usaha, 2013). These studies aim to explore Thai students’ writing problems in various areas (e.g. L1 lexical interference, L1 negative transfer, grammatical and lexical inaccuracy) and ways to improve their writing abilities. Importantly, in order to prepare Thai students for the coming of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) in 2015 in which English writing will absolutely be required for effective communication among Asian countries, it is important to review research in this field of study and the direction/future of it. This will be beneficial to writing teachers and course developers to consider the importance of EFL writing, and also motivate researchers to conduct more research studies on EFL writing in Thailand.

This paper aims to present and discuss research studies and the direction of EFL writing research conducted in Thailand in the past 10 years. It firstly discusses writing in EFL contexts in general. It is then followed by the presentation and the discussion of EFL writing research in Thailand from 2004 to 2013. Finally, this paper discusses the direction/future of EFL writing research studies in Thailand.
Writing in EFL contexts

Since the late 1990s, the demand of L2 writing has expanded to EFL contexts (e.g. Japan, China, and some European countries) (Manchón, 2009). This is because “FL contexts show their own idiosyncrasy regarding the role that writing plays (or can play) in the lives of students and teachers. In this respect, some groups of FL writers must learn to write for professional or academic reasons” (Manchón, 2009, p. 2).

In addition, Rinnert and Kobayashi (2009, p. 23) point out that

An English as a foreign language (EFL) setting epitomizes the situated nature of writing. The writing of EFL students is affected not only by their first language (L1), but also by the educational context where they learn to write. This socially and culturally characterized context provides metaknowledge about writing (i.e. view of audience and goals of writing) as well as linguistic and textual knowledge, affecting the ways in which students process and produce writing.

As a result, there is a need for research on EFL writing aiming to improve writing abilities of EFL writing learners in various writing contexts in order to meet the demands of each particular writing context. Recently, there have been a number of research studies that have been conducted in various areas and types of writing. They aim mainly to find ways to improve writing abilities of EFL writing learners. Examples of these research studies are a study by Zaid (2011) who focuses on opinion essays by looking at web-based learning, pre-writing activities, and multimedia-based concept mapping with Saudi Arabian students. Similarly to Zaid (2011), Yoshimura (2009) also studies opinion essay writing of Japanese students, but the focus is on the relationship between reading and writing and the use of checklists to improve students’ writing abilities. Moreover, there is a study by Yasuda (2011) who focuses on genre-based approaches and Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) in teaching writing of Japanese students by using emails as a teaching tool. Similarly, Zhao (2010) studies teaching writing in Thailand by focusing on a genre-based approach and a SFL approach, but the focus is on writing journals.

Furthermore, Qin and Karabacak (2010) explore argumentative essay writing of English major university students in southwestern China by drawing on the Toulmin (1958, 2003) model of argument structure. Like Qin and Karabacak (2010), Ong and Zhang (2010) study argumentative essay writing with Chinese students, but the main focus is on task complexity, lexical complexity, and cognitive processing. In addition, Manchón, Roca de Larios, and Murphy (2009) investigate argumentative and narrative essay writing of Spanish students who are different in terms of their L2 proficiency and educational background by looking at writing processes. Rahimi and Qannadzadeh (2010) study EFL writing in terms of logical connectors, Linguistic intelligence, and multiple intelligence by focusing on descriptive and argumentative essay writing of English major students in Iran. Moreover, there are also some research studies on portfolio writing and student’s perception (Aydin, 2010) and
summary writing by focusing on lexical proficiency and incorporating reading into writing classroom (Baba, 2009).

On the whole, these mentioned research studies shed some light on writing in EFL contexts and encourage writing teachers and course developers to realize the importance of EFL writing and how to vary writing activities and instruction to suit their EFL writing learners who have different needs and individual differences.

EFL writing in Thailand

To understand the direction of L2 writing, the importance of EFL writing, and the influence of EFL writing on teaching and researching in Thailand, it is important to examine EFL writing research that has been recently conducted in Thailand. This will be beneficial to writing teachers and course developers to prepare their writing programs and improve their students’ writing abilities for the demands of educational and professional requirements for English writing in the future.

Table 1 below is a list of EFL writing research studies and their research areas conducted during 2004-2013. It should be noted that the research studies presented in this table are mainly gathered from journal articles published in Thailand during 2004-2013. They are drawn mainly from the database of Naresuen University library, Scopus, Google Scholar, and ScienceDirect, under the main search keyword “EFL writing in Thailand”. Theses and proceedings of the conferences are excluded in this paper. In this paper, the areas of research studies are divided into nine areas: L2 writing errors, writing assessment, writing feedback, coherence in writing, online writing/new technology and writing, genre-based writing instruction, approaches to teaching writing, written discourse analysis, and learning strategies. It should be noted that some research studies explore more than one research area; for example, some research studies explore both writing assessment and writing feedback, some study both writing assessment and coherence in writing, and some examine both genre-based writing instruction and written discourse analysis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Author / Year</th>
<th>Research areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Kaweera (2013)</td>
<td>L2 writing errors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Puengpipattrakul (2013)</td>
<td>Writing assessment / Writing feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Author / Year</td>
<td>Research areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Iyer (2013)</td>
<td>Online writing / new technology and writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Amnuai &amp; Wannaruk (2013)</td>
<td>Genre-based writing instruction / Written discourse analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Chamcharatsri (2013)</td>
<td>Approaches to teaching writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Suthiwartnarueput &amp; Wasanasomsithi (2012b)</td>
<td>Online writing / new technology and writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Klibthong (2012)</td>
<td>Approaches to teaching writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Suthiwartnarueput &amp; Wasanasomsithi (2012a)</td>
<td>Approaches to teaching writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>Srichanyachon (2011)</td>
<td>Writing feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27.</td>
<td>Humphries (2010)</td>
<td>L2 writing errors / Written discourse analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.</td>
<td>Wichadec (2010)</td>
<td>Online writing / new technology and writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31.</td>
<td>Chaisiri (2010b)</td>
<td>Genre-based writing instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32.</td>
<td>Chaisiri (2010a)</td>
<td>Genre-based writing instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33.</td>
<td>Suwantarathip &amp; Wichadec (2010)</td>
<td>Approaches to teaching writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Author / Year</td>
<td>Research areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34.</td>
<td>Chamcharatsri (2010)</td>
<td>Approaches to teaching writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35.</td>
<td>Yang (2010)</td>
<td>Approaches to teaching writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39.</td>
<td>Tangpermpoon (2008)</td>
<td>Genre-based approach / Approaches to teaching writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40.</td>
<td>Melendy (2008)</td>
<td>Approaches to teaching writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42.</td>
<td>Furneaux, Paran, &amp; Fairfax (2007)</td>
<td>Writing feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43.</td>
<td>Todd, Khongput, &amp; Darasawang (2007)</td>
<td>Writing assessment / Coherence in writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44.</td>
<td>Kongpetch (2006)</td>
<td>Genre-based writing instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45.</td>
<td>Rubdy (2005)</td>
<td>Genre-based approach / Approaches to teaching writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46.</td>
<td>Watthaolarm (2005)</td>
<td>Written discourse analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47.</td>
<td>Todd, Thienpermpool, &amp; Keyuravong (2004)</td>
<td>Writing assessment / Coherence in writing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: *A summary of academic journals on EFL writing conducted in Thailand from 2004-2013*

To understand more clearly, Figure 1 below shows a summary and direction of research areas on EFL writing conducted in Thailand from 2004-2013.
Figure 1: A summary of areas of research on EFL writing conducted in Thailand in the past 10 years
The above chart clearly shows the movement of research studies and areas of research on EFL writing from 2004-2013. As can be seen, there had been a few studies (e.g., Baker & Boonkit, 2004; Kongpetch, 2006; Watkhaolarm, 2005) conducted during 2004-2006. However, the number of studies started increasing in various research areas in 2007, for example, L2 writing errors (Sattayatham & Honsa Jr, 2007), writing feedback (Furneaux et al., 2007), writing assessment, and coherence in writing (Todd et al., 2007). In 2008, the main research areas were writing errors (Bennui, 2008; Sattayatham & Ratanapinyowong, 2008) and approaches to teaching writing (Melendy, 2008; Tangpermpoon, 2008). Then, there was a sharp decline; only one research by Glass was conducted in 2009. The focus of his study was on written discourse analysis.

As shown in the chart, there has been a significant increase in EFL writing research studies in Thailand from 2010, particularly 2012 and 2013. Interestingly, since 2010-2013, there have been a number of research studies from various areas of studies conducted during these four years, and this increase will be the main discussion here.

In 2010, the research area of approaches to teaching writing was conducted the most. Yang (2010) investigated a method of teaching English writing to develop creative thinking skills for high school students. Various methods (i.e. writing poems, brainstorming, describing pictures, games, working in groups and pairs, and drill and practice) were utilized. The results showed that brainstorming, working in groups and pairs, and drill and practice were always used in teaching English writing to students at this level. Suwantarathip and Wichadee (2010) examined the impact of cooperative learning activities (i.e. Think-Pair-Share, Numbered Heads Together, and Peer Review) on anxiety and proficiency of Thai sophomore students. It was found that these activities reduced students’ anxiety and increase language proficiency. The students had positive attitudes toward these activities, and this resulted in writing improvement of the students. Moreover, Chamcharatsri (2010) explained teaching English writing in Thailand from various academic settings (i.e. high school, college, university) during a long period of time, based on his teaching experiences. It can be said that this article allows us to understand more about the teaching English writing in Thailand through the view of this author.

Apart from the above three studies, two research studies on genre-based writing instruction were conducted by Chaisiri (2010a, 2010b). The main focus was on using a Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) approach, which is providing students with sample texts and examining their situational and cultural contexts. It was found that this genre-based writing classroom showed positive results in both teachers’ and students’ perceptions, and it was recommended to use in teaching writing in university contexts.

Interestingly, in 2010, it was the first time that the research studies on online writing/new technology and writing were found. There were two studies in this area. A first study was by Noytim (2010) who investigated the use of Weblogs to enhance writing skills of university students. The other study was by Wichadee (2010) who studied using online learning (i.e. Wikis) to improve summary writing abilities of university students. Both studies found that this web-based writing instruction showed the positive impacts on students’ writing skill improvement, critical thinking, social interaction, and language learning.

In this year, 2010, there were two studies that focused on written discourse analysis. The first study was by Humphries (2010) who investigated the use of the English phrase “according to” of Thai students. An error analysis was used in this study. Humphries tried to explain and discuss whether Thai students use the phrase “according
to” incorrectly and also tried to explain possible sources of errors which were mainly caused by L1 interference or cross-linguistic influence. The other study was by Tangkiengsirisin (2010). He analyzed written texts and examined a teaching method to enhance cohesion of expository essay writing for Thai graduate students. He drew mainly on the theory of cohesion in English prosed by Halliday and Hasan (1976). It was found that the teaching method employed in this study was useful for developing coherence or flow in students’ writing.

In 2011, the area of L2 writing errors and written discourse analysis were conducted the most. Teixeira da Silva (2011) examined writing a scientific paper for an international journal in terms of weaknesses and strengths in publishing. The findings of this study are useful to Thai scientists who are about to publish their own papers. In addition, Chiravate (2011) examined the acquisition of English tense-aspect morphology influenced by narrative structure of Thai EFL learners. The findings of this study revealed writing difficulties in developing L2 grammatical competence of Thai EFL learners. Similarly, Sersen (2011) studies L2 writing errors made by Thai university students, resulting from L1 negative transfer. Ten types of L1 to L2 transfer (e.g., avoidance of use of “be”, avoidance of indefinite articles, and misuse of possessive and reflexive pronouns) were identified. This study aimed to improve writing skills of Thai EFL students by recognizing writing errors that might result from L1 negative transfer.

In addition, Biber et al. (2011) studied how to measure grammatical complexity in L2 writing development in which T-units and clausal subordination are usually assessed. This study challenged this practice and proved that most clausal subordination measures are commonly used in English conversation rather than being used in academic writing. This suggested that study on new approaches for measuring grammatical complexity in L2 writing development is required.

Variously, Srichanyachon (2011) explored revision methods in improving EFL writing of Thai university students. In this study, wiring errors were identified by students and teachers. Then, the feedback in three different revision stages (i.e. self-revision, peer revision, and teacher revision) were given and compared. The results showed that each feedback plays different roles in revising writing. It was also revealed that these learners had positive perceptions toward teacher revision and peer revision. That is, learners found teacher comments more effective than peer comments in terms of acquisition of linguistic forms, whereas peer comments were perceived more positively by learners than other revisions in terms of motivation and language skills.

Lastly, Dujisik and Cai (2011) studied how to incorporate weblogs into the writing classroom and students’ attitude towards blogging. The findings revealed the positive impacts that weblogs can have on L2 writing improvement, and students had positive perceptions toward this teaching method in terms of the improvement of their English language, technology skills, and networking.

In 2012, online writing/new technology and writing was conducted the most. Suthiwartnarueput and Wasanasomsithi (2012b) explored the effects of using Facebook as a medium for grammar and writing discussion of low-intermediate Thai EFL students. In addition, Kitchakarn (2012) explored using blogs to improve summary writing of Thai university students. Boonmoh (2012) investigated the use of pocket electronic dictionaries (PEDs) to improve students’ summary writing abilities. This study pointed out lookup behavior and factors using PEDs that leads to successful lookup and promotes writing abilities. On the whole, these three studies support the use of online writing/new technology and writing.
new technology and writing in EFL writing classroom, and it was claimed that these new technologies could develop students’ writing abilities in terms of grammatical accuracy, language learning, and summary writing.

In this year, Buripakdi (2012a, 2012b) conducted two studies on written discourse analysis. The focus of the studies was on analyzing and describing positions of Thai professional writers (i.e. Thai fiction writers, textbook writers, and journalists) on their English. This study reflected the reality of World Englishes, an identity in a language, and relationship between Thai English and Standard English.

There were two studies on approaches to teaching writing: a study by Klibthong (2012) and a study by Suthiwartnarueput and Wasanasomsithi (2012a). Klibthong (2012) focused on the role of interpersonal interaction in early literacy development of Thai public preschool students by focusing on the nature of interpersonal interaction and collaborative activities used by the teachers. This study suggested that interpersonal interaction is crucial and the teachers need to professionally pay attention to their activities for teaching literacy to children. The other study was by Suthiwartnarueput and Wasanasomsithi (2012a) who studied the effects of teaching a language through content matters for teaching grammar and structures, namely theme-based grammar instruction, on writing improvement of Thai EFL undergraduate students. The results of the study revealed positive writing improvement in terms of the reduction of students’ grammatical errors and lexical and other writing errors. The students’ perceptions toward this teaching method were also positive in terms of their grammatical knowledge and writing ability improvement.

Moreover, two research studies on writing feedback were conducted in this year. Hamidun et al. (2012) studied how to enhance students’ motivation by providing feedback on writing. The investigation was on providing immediate feedback to the writers. It was found that this kind of feedback increased motivation to write and produced good writing. The other study was by Srichanyachon (2012) who investigated Thai university students’ attitudes toward peer and teacher feedback. Teacher feedback was found to be more effective and preferable than peer feedback. However, peer feedback was found to be useful in terms of increasing students’ awareness of critical thinking and successful writing.

Finally, Kansopon (2012) conducted a research study on writing assessment by investigating the validity and reliability of the writing tests (e.g. essay exam and writing prompt test) used at the Institute of International Studies, Ramkhamhaeng University, Thailand. It was found that such writing tests were valid and reliable and helped students change their learning strategies to meet the criteria of the writing courses. The findings of this study also encourage EFL writing teachers to recognize the importance of valid and reliable writing tests they are using. Importantly, it should be pointed out that the writing test needs to be able to assess what is taught and learned in that particular writing course.

In 2013, the varieties of research areas are equal. That is, there are studies on L2 writing errors (Kaweera, 2013; Watcharapunyawong & Usaha, 2013), writing assessment (Puengpipattrakul, 2013), writing feedback (Kitchakarn, 2013; Puengpipattrakul, 2013), coherence in writing (Kaewcha, 2013; Liangprayoon et al., 2013), online writing/new technology and writing (Iyer, 2013; Kitchakarn, 2013), genre-based writing instruction (Ammuai & Wannaruk, 2013; Foley, 2013), approaches to teaching writing (Chamcharatsri, 2013), and written discourse analysis (Ammuai & Wannaruk, 2013). The discussion of these studies is as follows.
Kaweera (2013) reviewed the theoretical concepts of interlingual and intralingual interference of L1 (i.e. Thai) transfer to L2 (i.e. English) in Thai student writing. This paper identified errors normally found in Thai student writing which are influenced by interlingual interference. This interference is lexical, syntactic and discourse interference. Furthermore, this paper also identified intralingual interference, which are false analogy, misanalysis, incomplete rule application, exploiting redundancy, overlooking cooccurrence restrictions, hypercorrection and overgeneralization. Similarly to Kaweera (2013), Watcharapunyawong & Usaha (2013) also analyzed writing errors, mainly influenced by Thai language of Thai university students. In this study, writing errors were divided into 16 categories (e.g., verb tense, word choice, fragment, transition). Three genres of paragraph writing, narration, description, and comparison/contrast, were the main focus. Interestingly, the results showed that a genre affects student writing in terms of frequency and types of errors. That is, the number and types of errors were found to be different in different text types.

Puengpipattrakul (2013) conducted a study on writing assessment and writing feedback. This study employed the teacher integrated feedback (TIF) as a teaching tool to improve writing competence of Thai undergraduates. TIF consists of both direct feedback (i.e. the identification of an error and a provision of the correct form) and indirect feedback (i.e. a provision of feedback codes or symbols for students’ errors). It was found that there were the positive effects of this teaching method in both students’ writing abilities and their perceptions. However, there were also other factors that influence students’ writing improvement, for example, socio-psychological and educational variations. Similarly, Kitchakarn (2013) also investigated writing feedback, but the main focus was on peer feedback and the use of blogs as a tool to improve students’ writing abilities. It was revealed that using peer online feedback contributed to the development of students’ writing abilities and other skills (e.g., critical thinking and autonomous learning) and also encouraged students to become active learners.

Variously, Iyer (2013) explored the effects of collaborative blogging on communicative skills in writing of Thai university students. The participants needed to write in their own blogs and make comments on other participants’ blogs. The feedback was also given in the comments section on Blogger. The findings revealed that students’ communicative skills in terms of creativity, critical thinking, voice, comments and contributions improved. It was recommended that blogs could be merged with Facebook since this would be more convenient and improve communication among participants.

In this year, there were two studies on coherence in writing. The first study was by Kaewcha (2013) who addressed some common problems with coherence in writing, for example, no topic sentence, illogical organization, and incorrect use of transitional words. In addition, the paper also provided some examples of text analysis, and some recommendations to improve coherence in writing. The other study was by Liangprayoon et al. (2013). This study focused on the effects of using Topical Structure Analysis (TSA) instruction to improve textual coherence and quality of university students’ writing. The findings showed the positive effect of using TSA instruction in improving coherence in writing since it raised students’ awareness of importance of textual coherence, and this resulted in raising the quality of students’ writing.

In addition, two research studies on genre-based writing instruction were also conducted in this year. Firstly, Amnuai and Wannaruk (2013) investigated the rhetorical move structure of English applied linguistics research articles that were published in Thai and international journals. This study drew mainly on the move model proposed by Yang
and Allison (2003) which identified move into 7 steps: background information, reporting results, summarizing results, commenting on results, summarizing the study, evaluating the study, and deductions from the research. This study revealed the better understanding of the rhetorical structure of research article and this was beneficial to novice non-native writers in this field of study. The other study was by Foley (2013) who studied the development of academic business English writing of Thai university students by using a genre-based approach to writing. This genre-based writing approach emphasized the development of the nominal group (i.e. a group of words expressing an entity), Theme (i.e. a topic of discourse) position, and Rheme (i.e. clauses associated with the topic) position in the students’ writing. After exposure to this writing approach, the academic business English writing of these students had improved. This result encouraged writing teachers and students to recognize the importance of genre-based writing instruction and the development of writing in academic business English.

Finally, Chamcharatsri (2013) tried to expand thinking on L2 writing by exploring how Thai EFL writing learners express the emotion of fear through narrative writing both in Thai language and English language. The students were assigned to write an essay in both Thai and English about the most fearful events that they have witnessed or experienced. Then, the students’ written texts were analyzed and compared. The results of this study suggested that, by using this approach to teaching writing, it could help students to become aware of linguistic and cultural aspects of their native Thai language and English language. As a result, they could express ideas in their writing linguistically, culturally, and emotionally.

To summarize, from the review, there had not been many EFL writing research during 2004-2009. The significant increase of the EFL writing research in Thailand was from 2010. As can be seen, the research studies on L2 writing errors and written discourse analysis have been conducted since 2005. This reflects that Thai EFL writing learners still have writing problems/difficulties. This suggests that there is still a need for research studies in these areas. In addition, from the review, the interest in incorporating new technology into the writing classroom has increased since 2010. Interestingly, the increase in research studies from 2010-2013 is significant. This shows our understanding of the importance of EFL writing in Thailand, and there has been a preparation for educational and professional purposes of Thai EFL writing learners and the coming of AEC in 2015 in which Thai students need to be prepared for the competitive worlds of education, businesses, and changes. It can be noted that writing is one of the language skills required in many aspects of education and businesses, for example, essay writing, report and research writing, online writing, and business correspondence. This paper obviously shows that writing teachers and researchers have realized the importance of EFL writing and are striving to find the ways to improve L2 writing abilities of Thai EFL writing learners.

The direction/future of EFL writing research in Thailand

Concerning the coming of the AEC in 2015, Thai EFL writing learners need to be prepared and ready for the demands of English writing in each particular writing context (e.g. university, college, and international workplace). As mentioned at the beginning of this paper, English writing is absolutely required for effective communication among Asian countries. To meet this requirement, the research areas on online writing/new technology and writing and genre-based writing instruction will be salient areas for research in the future. As can be seen, these two research areas are obviously reflected in the review of this paper showing the direction/movement of the research in these areas since 2010.
As we know, Thai students have been showered with new technologies, so the use of this technology should be recognized to be used for language learning and EFL writing improvement for both academic and professional purposes. In addition, genre-based writing plays an important role in EFL writing these days since writing in English is conducted everywhere in the world (e.g., schools, universities, workplace, international companies) with various types of writing (e.g., report, academic journals, email, business correspondence, international commercial contracts) in which they require particular writing abilities for different text types. Therefore, the requirements of Thai EFL writers to meet this demand are crucial, and these two research areas are likely to be conducted in Thailand in order to find ways to improve Thai EFL learners’ writing abilities and support these learners to pursue success in their academic and professional endeavors.
References


