

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This study investigated the extent of the writing strategies for English writing skill employed by students in the United Rajabhat Institutes of Buddha Chinnaraj. The method employed was be a survey using self-administered questionnaires as the research device. A pilot study was first conducted to obtain prerequisite information relevant to the design of the final questionnaire. Chapter Three explains the procedures that were used in the study. It includes information on the respondents, the construction, development, distribution and collection of the questionnaires, the analysis of data and statistical procedures and the validity and reliability of the study.

Description of Respondents

The subjects selected for this study were the fourth year English major students currently attending Rajabhat Institutions in four provinces: Phitsanulok, Nakhon Sawan, Kamphaeng Phet and Phetchaboon. The sample of students were classified and placed into two groups, good and poor learners, according to their scores on the writing examination. The top 27% and the bottom 27% were chosen to answer the questionnaire about learning strategies for writing, according to Chung Teh Fan technique (stated in Luan and

Unkana 1988: 186-187). In all 91 students were asked to answer the questionnaire. The male and female groups were distributed as follows: (Table 1)

Table 1

Number of Subjects

Institutions	Male	Female	Total
Phitsanulok	4	20	24
Nakhon Sawan	-	25	25
Kamphaeng Phet	3	19	22
Phetchabun	4	16	20
Total	11	80	91

Writing Examination

To identify the good and poor writers, the writing examination from Writing Skill for the TOFEL (King and Stanley 136-296) was given to the subjects prior to their completing the writing strategies questionnaire (See Appendix C).

The writing examination was based on the ten point checklist of the problem areas below:

1. Check for subject and verb(both present; neither repeated)
2. Check verb agreement, tense, and form
3. Check for full subordination
4. Check the verbal
5. Check pronoun form, agreement, and reference
6. Check word form
7. Check word order
8. Check for parallel structure
9. Check for unnecessary repetition
10. Check for correct usage

(Nipitkul, 1995, p.31-32)

The writing examination was given to the Rajabhat Institute's students at Uttaradit to ascertain the reliability of the examination. The alpha reliability coefficients was .65.

Construction and Development of the Questionnaire

To identify writing strategies, data on specific learning techniques employed by the subjects were needed. Quite a number of specific learning processes were unobservable and so a learner reporting technique, a questionnaire, was used to collect data.

The questionnaire was based on the purposes of the study in order to obtain the answers for specific questions. Its contents were based mainly on the information concerning the learning strategies obtained from the preliminary survey. In addition,

questionnaires already used in previous research studies in learning strategies were taken into consideration. The procedures for the construction of the questionnaire are as follows:

1. Study the questionnaires already used in topic-related research.
2. Construct a draft questionnaire.
 - 2.1 Base its contents on the purposes of the study and information from the preliminary survey of learning strategies for English writing.
 - 2.2 Write the questionnaire items, corresponding to the research questions.
3. Consult experts or authorities in order to ascertain the appropriateness and validity of the questionnaire.
4. Conduct a pilot study using the questionnaire in order to improve the effectiveness and appropriateness of the questionnaires. Ambiguity was eliminated at this stage.
5. Work with experts in order to revise and improve the piloted questionnaire.

Structure of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire used in the present study consists of three parts. Part one is intended to collect information on the learners' personal backgrounds: name and surname, sex, and institute. Part Two is a four point scale of writing strategies.

Learners were asked to rate their language learning strategies according to these criteria:

4 = very often use

3 = often use

2 = rarely use

1 = never use

Mean scores derived from this scale were interpreted on the criteria above.

The last part of the questionnaire is an open-ended section about other learning strategies that the respondents use to improve their writing.

The Use of the Questionnaire Items

The questionnaire is the only research tool used in this study. All research questions were answered by the data collected from the questionnaires, using statistical interpretation. To classify learners into good and poor learners, the information obtained from Part One and scores on the result of the writing examination was used. The first research question, which aims to obtain information about good learners' strategies, is answered using part two of the questionnaire. The second research question is answered by the questionnaire items in Part Two. Part three of the questionnaire is used to reveal other techniques that the students use to improve their writing skill.

Administration of the Questionnaires

Two questionnaires were used in the study. One was for the pilot study; the other, the main study. The final questionnaire is the revised and improved version of the pilot questionnaire. The questionnaire was administered according to the following procedures.

Pilot Study

A pilot study using a preliminary questionnaire as a research device was designed to obtain information relevant to the final questionnaire. This questionnaire was used as a pretest of the effectiveness of the questionnaire itself. The questionnaire was administered to 35 fourth year students currently attending the Rajabhat Institute in Uttaradit. These students were asked to answer the questionnaire, to express opinions concerning the present study in general, and to evaluate the questionnaire with respect to content, ambiguity of items, sequence of terms, and arrangement. From the information obtained, a tentative questionnaire was developed.

The revision of the tentative questionnaire was based on suggestions and the assistance of experts and the thesis advisors. Amendments were made to items which were based poorly or ambiguously phrased.

The Final Questionnaire and Collection of Data

1. The researcher made a request for an official letter introducing the study and asking for co-operation. The purpose was to ask coordinators of the Departments of English to give the test and questionnaires to the English instructor, and request their co-operation in distributing the questionnaires to the subjects of this study in their class. (See appendix A and B)

2. The researcher herself submitted those letters to the 4 Rajabhat Institutes.

3. The questionnaires and writing test were given to the students by the English instructors including the researcher herself toward the end of the second semester. A few days later the researcher collected these questionnaires from the instructors.

Validity and Reliability of the Questionnaires

This study investigated, by means of questionnaires, the factors relevant to undergraduate students' language learning strategies. Face validity is the justification for relying on self-report questionnaires since all questions were directed at the students behaviors in writing in English. That is to say, the information desired is the extent of the use of writing strategies and the questionnaires asked respondents to identify these strategies. To ascertain the reliability of the questionnaires, the alpha reliability coefficients was calculated

for the items which use the four point scale. The alpha reliability score was .90.

Analysis of Data and Statistical Procedures

After receipt of the completed questionnaires, data was categorized, tabulated and interpreted. All data analyses was completed by means of the statistical Package for Social Sciences.

The following statistical procedures were employed in the study.

1. Four point scale

A four point scale was used to determine the extent of the students' learning strategies. The scale used for scoring is:

The extent of using learning strategies for writing

very often use	=	4
often use	=	3
rarely use	=	2
never use	=	1

2. Arithmetic mean

The arithmetic mean was used to provide a single summary of the average levels of learning strategies employed by the fourth year students.

3. T-test of the difference between two dependent means

A t-test of the difference between two dependent means was employed to discover whether there was a significant difference between the good/poor and male/female learners in relation to their writing strategies.

