

# Sample Masters Thesis Editing

Linguistics (National Chiayi University - Taiwan)

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

With the paradigm shift from the traditional product-oriented approach to the process-oriented writing approach in both first language (L1) (Sasaki, 2000) and second language (L2) **writing instruction** (Zamel, 1983; Ferris, 1995), process writing has been widely acknowledged and practiced among writing teachers (Reyes, 1991). Process writing approaches focus on the writing process throughout the stages of prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing (Tompkins, 2004). Writers experience the whole process through activities including brainstorming, discussion, and self/peer evaluations to improve their writing and to **produce efficient** products.

Writing teachers, as **a-facilitators** help writers compose their writings not only by correcting their grammatical/linguistical errors but also **by inspiring** their thoughts. In addition, teachers with the process-oriented belief provide **feedbacks** in both oral and written forms whenever needed.

**Comment [SM1]: CHECK:**  
“efficient” is unclear;  
suggest something like “to produce successful writing pieces”

However, writing instructors in EFL settings generally prefer to use a product-oriented writing approach instead of the process approach in their teaching. Taiwanese teachers of the English language apply numerous sentence-level writing practices to their students. High school students memorize large amounts of vocabulary and put them into sentence patterns practice within countless mechanical drills; however, their writing performance is still awfully low in writing tests. Recent results in the English writing component of the scores of College Entrance Examination (CEE) in Taiwan, from the years of 2004 to 2006, show that approximately fifty percent of examinees get below five points out of a possible twenty in the English writing section, which is worth 20% of the English test (Appendixes 1, 2, and 3). This result evidently reveals the problem that senior high school students are generally poor in English writing ability. The poor English writing performances reported by the College Entrance Examination Center (CEEC) during recent years were due to the a number of following key issues, as follows.

The incoherent English writing curriculum design is one of the

**Comment [SM2]: CHECK:** ‘awfully’ is rather colloquial, and quite strong. You could consider: “very”, “notably” or “extremely”.

**Comment [SM3]: CHECK:** I’ve guessed this. Points do not necessary equate to percentages unless the exam scores are out of a total of 100

**Comment [SM4]: CHECK:** This word is quite a strong criticism. Perhaps consider a more neutral term, e.g. “Incompletely articulated”

major educational problems in Taiwan. Although students start to learn English in the third -year of primary school and English has been ~~as~~ a core subject in the nine-year compulsory educational curriculum, formal English writing instruction remains ignored in junior high education (Lee, 2006). According to the senior high school English curriculum guidelines from ~~the~~ English Education Resource Center of the Ministry of Education of Taiwan, English writing instruction is ~~merely~~ officially designed ~~merely~~ as a selective course ~~of the~~in senior high education (Appendix 4) and the class periods are only two hours per week. In other words, students do not receive any formal and regular English writing ~~courses—~~schooling during the period of compulsory education, and even in the following three years of senior high school, they hardly have any formal training ~~of~~or English writing practice. However, senior high students with limited English writing experiences and practices still have to face the challenge of the English writing examination of ~~the~~ CEE. Due to the lack of sufficient English writing training and practice, ~~s of senior high school students,~~ not surprisingly, ~~senior high school students~~ ~~they~~ encounter various difficulties in composition and therefore get low scores in the English

writing section of the CEE.

In addition, ~~the~~ downplaying ~~the~~ importance of English writing instruction in senior high schools is common in Taiwan's educational settings. Many ~~writing~~ teachers of ~~English~~ English writing hold ~~the~~ belief ~~in~~ a teacher-centered and product-oriented pedagogical approach to their teaching, ~~due to the fact that~~ because they are under the pressure of insufficient time to catch up with term schedules and are inevitably under ~~the~~ a heavy burden from the CEE. ~~Although the~~ Despite ~~constraint of~~ teaching time constraints, more than 80% of teachers express the need for as well as willingness to ~~undertake~~, ~~have~~ further study or training ~~in~~ writing instruction (Lee, 2006). To receive the latest information about English teaching, teachers tend to attend certain TESOL-related conferences, which also provide them the ~~access~~ chance to examine their instruction from different perspectives. In brief, English writing is a long-term learning process; however, with the limited instructional periods and the lack of ~~ing~~ teaching training for English teachers, ~~they are~~ it is difficult to enhance ~~better the~~ writing quality of their students' writing simply by enlarging their ~~amount of~~ vocabulary and knowledge of ~~and~~

grammar rules.

Furthermore, insufficient English writing instruction leads to learners having a ~~the~~ lack of writing practices ~~of learners~~. ~~P~~The problems ~~with~~~~of~~ word-choice and essay structures emerge in their ~~process of writing~~ writing process (Wu, 2003). Students, especially senior high school novice writers, do not know how to appropriately express their thinking in their English essays or how to compose an organized piece. To make the matter worse, many novice writers usually do not know how to generate ideas in composition. The above situations are considered to be factors contributing to the low writing scores of CEE of senior high school students.

In fact, many English teachers are unwilling to make efforts in the instruction of English writing on account of the ~~previous~~ ~~above~~ reasons, particularly in the senior high schools of Taiwan. However, a private senior high school ~~was~~ chosen in this study ~~to be~~ ~~as~~ a model case of teaching prewriting as a process in an EFL context. This study attempts to explore how ~~the~~ outstanding English achievements ~~were reached by~~ ~~of their~~ students who learned to ~~write through~~ ~~use~~ prewriting strategies in an ~~effective~~ ~~icient~~ writing program ~~of their~~ ~~a~~

private senior high school. In other words, this study attempts to investigate (a) how the English teachers practiced ~~with~~-prewriting strategies in the classroom and to see (b) how the students viewed their roles while engaging in these ~~writing~~-activities ~~for~~-of thinking development and writing improvement.

In addition to ~~the~~ social issues ~~of~~ English writing, ~~the~~ theoretical rationale further accounts for the motivation of this study. Since the 1970<sup>2</sup>s, writing has been defined as a process of prewriting, planning, generating ideas, problem solving, editing multiple drafts in a cyclical (Badger & White, 2000), nonlinear, exploratory, and generative ~~manner~~~~process~~ (Zamel, 1983). ~~The~~ ~~p~~Process writing approach has been extensively put into practice in the L1 educational settings of ~~the~~-English native-speaking countries. ~~For~~-~~Demonstrating~~ the value of the process writing approach, Gallego de Blibeche (1993) and Kern and Schultz (1992) revealed ~~the~~-promising results in their studies concerning the relationship between explicit teaching of the process writing approach and gains in writing proficiency ~~e~~for L2 learners. In ~~an~~ ESL context, Leki (1992) pointed out that process writing approaches prevailed in the ESL classrooms, but the main

**Comment [SM5]:** CHECK:  
The phrasing here is very general and you do not seem to explain what these issues are, so it is not effective.

focus still remained on the mechanical drills of vocabulary, and sentence patterns. Thus, ~~there~~ seemed to ~~have-be~~ a disparity between ideal and actual English writing teaching in the ESL context.

As for EFL settings in Taiwan, plenty of mechanical drills ~~ar~~ were also applied in English writing instruction ~~here~~. Lee (2006) found that many teachers spend much time in mechanical drills of sentence writing practice. ~~However,~~ ~~s~~Students do not know how to stimulate their thoughts and ~~then to express~~ ~~put~~ them logically ~~in~~ their drafts. Even if they are able to write grammatical sentences, they are not capable of putting their ideas into coherent and comprehensible compositions. Thus, the lack of ~~training in~~ prewriting techniques ~~associated with~~ ~~training-of-the~~ process writing, leads to low motivation among novice writers. Donald Murray (1982) claimed that 70% or more of writing time should be spent in prewriting, which is the most neglected stage in the writing process; ~~however,~~ ~~it~~ ~~and~~ ~~which~~ -is as crucial to writers as a warm-up is to athletes. Therefore, despite the importance of ~~the~~ ~~correcting~~ ~~ons~~ of linguistic forms as well as ~~the~~ training ~~in~~ ~~of~~ test-taking skills, the significance of developing thoughts ~~of~~ ~~in~~ writers should not be de-emphasized (You, 2004).

Recent studies concerning ~~the~~-FL writing instruction put

**Comment [SM6]:** CHECK: should this be EFL?

increasingly stress on the significance of the effects of a particular teaching pedagogy and of learners' reactions toward it (Lee, 2006).

Few researchers investigate how the teacher as a designer or implementer perceives and develops a teaching measure (Lee, 2006).

Moreover, relatively few studies have paid attention to (a) how the

instruction scaffolds students' learning in writing through oral and

written discourse (Warwick & Maloch, 2003), and (b) and how the

novice writers view themselves as writers applying with-the mediating

tools in the prewriting activities.

**Comment [SM7]:** CHECK:

This appears to be the first mention of this central term. I suggest you define it. If for example you got the term from Warwick and Maloch, perhaps quote their own definition of the term, or else use it from some other source.

Thus, to fill these gaps, this study adopts long-term observations

and in-depth interviews in a private senior high school which was

selected for the high average higher-English proficiency of their

students and the-an instructional emphasis on prewriting. The

purpose of this study is to investigate how the English writing teachers

of a senior high school provided scaffolding to their students via

rewriting techniques and how the EFL learners saw themselves as

writers in the prewriting classroom. It is hoped to shed some light on

English writing teaching and learning in the-EFL senior high school s

**Comment [SM8]:** CHECK:

see previous comment. This phrasing for example is not especially clear to the average reader, until you have defined the term.

settings, ~~such as~~ **in relation to** teaching methods, activities, materials preparation, and **to afford a** better understanding of students' roles in ~~the~~ learning **the** process of English writing. The two research questions that guided the study are as follows:

1. How ~~do~~ **a** teachers of English view pre-writing as process and practice ~~it~~ in a writing class of senior high school students in a **context where** English **as-is** a foreign language (EFL) ~~context~~?

2. How ~~do~~ ~~the~~ EFL senior high school learners view their roles and **how do they** apply mediating tools in ~~the~~ scaffolded prewriting activities?

**Comment [SM9]: CHECK:**  
A reminder that any changes made to these 2 research questions should also be reflected in any later repetitions of the research questions

**Comment [SM10]: CHECK:**  
I wonder why you are writing “scaffolded” rather than “scaffolding”? This latter form would serve to emphasise what these activities DO for the students, rather than (as in the present form) the nature of the activities. You might consider changing the terminology here and elsewhere.