

An Investigation into Conceptualization and Composition Strategies of Chinese EFL Undergraduate Students in Essay Writing

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Abstract

Essay writing is indeed a challenge for EFL learners because it requires the activation and coordination of conceptualization and composition strategies on particular issues. As a result, this study looked into how ten first-year Chinese EFL students conceptualized their essay outlines and used composing strategies in essay writing. Data elicitation and analysis were quantitatively and qualitatively drawn from task-based writing instructions, YouTube videos, composition strategy taxonomies, argumentative and non-argumentative essays, learner logs, questionnaires, interviews, and observation. The findings revealed that the subjects built their conceptualization upon and employed almost all composing strategies in the pre-existing instructions to think about their outline and write their essays. Practically, this study lends support to innovative approaches and skillsets for teaching Chinese EFL undergraduates in EFL contexts effectively and acceptably.

Keywords: conceptualization, composition of strategies, argumentative and non-argumentative, Essays, task-based learning, Chinese EFL undergraduates

Introduction

Writing academic works such as assignments, project papers, and essays is an integral part of the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) curriculum at tertiary level. Undergraduate students are required to write academic works, particularly essays, in order to display their understanding of the subject matter they study. However, conceptualization and composing essays into an acceptable form as expected by the academic community that they are in is indeed a challenge for the majority of EFL students because writing is a sophisticated and complex process that cognitively involves the activation of ideas and the coordination of semantics, syntax, spelling, and writing conventions. Writing, as Cumming (2001) points out, has micro and macro levels. The former involves the writers' attention to words and syntax, whereas the latter involves their attention to ideas and language. Both levels involved processes for planning and revising.

With the development of cognitive psychology, meta-cognitive and cognitive strategies provide a new approach for EFL writing that has attracted EFL researchers' attention. This present study therefore investigated how the strategies enhanced Chinese EFL undergraduate students' conceptualizing and composing their argumentative and non-argumentative essays on the particular issues they were writing about.

Numerous studies have shown evidence to support the strong effects of cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies on writing contents (Pitenoe, M. R., Modaberi, A., & Ardestani, E. M., 2017), promoting writing development (Hwang, M., & Lee, H. K., 2017), raising awareness of academic writing (Negretti, R., 2012) and English writing achievements

(Abdollahzadeh, E., 2010; Chien, S. C., 2012), especially EFL strategies (Sasaki, 2000; Mu 2005). The following are the English writing studies under the scope of cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies.

Prior Study on Conceptualization

Metacognitive strategies involve conceptualization (planning, evaluation, and monitoring), whereas cognitive strategies engage with these features: clarification (namely self-question, hypothesizing, defining terms and comparing), retrieval (namely rereading aloud or silently what had been written, writing in a lead-in word or expression, rereading the assigned question, self-questioning, writing till the idea would come, summarizing what had just been written in terms of content or rhetoric, and thinking in one's native language), resourcing (namely, asking the instructor and referring to the dictionary), and deferral, avoidance, and verification (Wenden, 1991). Metacognitive strategies and cognitive strategies called attention to L2 writing researchers (e.g., Nekoueizadeh, M., & Motamedi, A., 2013; Wei, X., & Zhang, W., 2020). The studies (e.g., Setiyadi, A., 2016; Maftoon, P., & Seyyedrezaei, S. H., 2012; Nekoueizadeh, M., & Motamedi, A., 2013) investigated how successful learners employ learning strategies for essay writing. Metacognitive strategies are also very useful for planning and monitoring advanced writing, especially argumentative writing (Wenden, A. L., 1998).

Prior Study on Composing Strategies

Composing strategies include the following: cognitive strategies (specifically, note-taking, elaboration, use of mother tongue knowledge and skills transfer from the native language or L1, making inference, drafting, revising, and editing); metacognitive strategies (specifically, assigning goals, planning, making and changing an outline); rationalizing appropriate formats (monitoring and evaluation, and appealing for clarifications); and social strategies (specifically, receiving feedback from others), search strategies (namely searching and using libraries), using guidelines and using other's writing as model (Riazi, 1997). In addition to meta-cognitive learning, social-cognitive strategies facilitate essay writing learning and text production (Riazi, A., 1997) for novice students (Green, S., 2013) in developing genre awareness, linguistic knowledge, writing competence (Yasuda, S., 2011), and the use of resources in writing socialization (Nam, M., & Beckett, G. H., 2011).

Prior Study on Efl Composing Strategies

EFL students' composing strategies include planning (specifically global planning, thematic planning, local planning, organizing, and conclusion), retrieving (specifically plan retrieving and information retrieving), generating ideas (specifically naturally generated and description generated), verbalizing (specifically verbalizing a proposition, rhetorical refining, mechanical refining, and making sense of readers), translating, rereading, evaluating (specifically ESL proficiency evaluation, local text evaluation and general text evaluation) and other strategies (specifically resting, questioning and impossible to categorize) (Sasaki, 2000).

Writing strategies include the following studies: an empirical model of EFL composing processes (Sasaki, M., 2000), writing strategies, writing apprehension, and writing achievement (Al Asmari, A., 2013), use of writing strategies in an electronic age (Stapleton, P., 2010), writing strategies of university students (Raofi, S., Chan, S. H., Mukundan, J., & Rashid, S. M., 2014), writing strategy use for students of different proficiency levels (De Silva, R., & Graham, S., 2015), writing strategy use of skilled and less skilled writers from a sociocultural perspective (Lei, X., 2016), a case study of L1/L2/L3 writing development of multicompetent writer (Kobayashi, H., & Rinnert, C., 2013), development and validation of

the English writing strategy inventory (Hwang, M., & Lee, H. K., 2017), implications of English writing instruction for second language writing curriculum and pedagogy (Naghdi-pour, B., 2016) and feedback, attitudes and preferences (Wanchid, R., 2015).

Prior Study on Composing Strategies and Sub-Strategies

EFL writing strategies as proposed by Mu (2005) involve these core strategies and sub-strategies: rhetorical strategies (namely organization, use of L1, formatting/modeling, and comparing); meta-cognitive strategies (namely planning, monitoring, and evaluating); cognitive strategies (namely generating ideas, revising, elaborating, clarifying, retrieval, rehearsing, and summarizing); communicative strategies (namely avoidance, reduction, and sense of readers); and social/affective strategies (namely resourcing, getting feedback, assigning goals, and rest/deferral). Prior study focuses on the effect of writing strategy instruction on EFL intermediate proficiency learners' writing performance (Mastan, M. E. B., Maarof, N., & Embi, M. A., 2017), writing strategies and writing proficiency of university students (Raofi, S., Binandeh, M., & Rahmani, S., 2017), ESL learners' self-efficacy beliefs and strategy use in expository writing (Mastan, M. E., & Maarof, N., 2014) and writing metacognitive awareness (Maftoon, P., Birjandi, P., & Farahian, M., 2014).

Summary of Prior Study

It is essential to note that the aforementioned investigations share several similar sub-strategies. As summarized by Nor, N. F. M., Hua, T. K., & Ibrahim, N. (2012), the shared types of writing strategies among them include these categories: 1) rhetorical strategies, 2) metacognitive strategies, 3) cognitive strategies, 4) social/affective strategies, and 5) communicative strategies.

Following are the details of the sub-strategies shared in each category. First, the shared sub-strategy in the rhetorical category is organizing (Sasaki, M, 2000). Second, the strategies shared in the metacognitive category involve planning (Riazi, A., 1997; Mu, C., 2005) and the organization of the generated ideas, including these sub-strategies: monitoring (Mu, C., 2005, Wenden, A. L., 1991), evaluating (Mu, C., 2005, Wenden, A. L., 1991) and rationalizing (Riazi, A., 1997). Third, cognitive strategies include generating ideas (Sasaki, M., 2000; Mu, C., 2005), taking notes (Riazi, A., 1997; Mu, C., 2005), elaborating (Riazi, A., 1997; Mu, C., 2005), clarifying by self-questioning (Wenden, A. L., 1991; Riazi, A., 1997), drafting (Riazi, A., 1997), rereading (Mu, C., 2005) revising (Mu, C., 2005), summarising (Sasaki, M, 2000), translating from L1 to L2 (Riazi, A.,1997), use of mother tongue knowledge and skill transfer from L1 (Wenden, A. L., 1991) and thinking in one's native language. Fourth, social/affective strategies engage in these activities: interacting with other persons (Riazi, 1997), searching for materials (Riazi, 1997), resourcing (Wenden, A. L., 1991; Mu, C., 2005), and getting feedback (Mu, C., 2005). Lastly, communicative strategies include verbalizing a proposition (Sasaki, M, 2000) and making sense of readers (Sasaki, M, 2000; Mu, C., 2005).

Collectively, drawing upon the aforementioned investigations, this present study integrated the strategies and sub-strategies in the five categories into the instructions to guide the subjects during their writing process. However, the researcher added five features to make this present study more meaningful in wider and more practical pedagogical perspectives, which incorporated a technology tool to help the students cognitively construct their knowledge on their own and develop their meaningful learning in a socially cognitive engagement that enhanced their writing process L2 more effectively and helped them produce more acceptable essay writing works.

The following were the features that distinguished the present study from prior studies: First, this study focused on two connected writing processes (namely, conceptualization and composition processes) concurrently because students at the undergraduate level are often uncertain of what to write and how to write and continue. Second, this study included two different writing conventions (namely, argumentative and non-argumentative essays). Prior studies pointed out that cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies are effective, especially for argumentative writing. It was therefore interesting to investigate whether the strategies are effective for non-argumentative writing, as both types of essay writing share similar structures: introduction, support, and conclusion. Third, YouTube videos to provide the contents related to the writing assignments were incorporated to draw the subjects' attention to ideas and language to enable them to write more effectively because undergraduate students do not know what to write. More importantly, English is the major means of communication in the videos, and this makes it the most useful tool for self-study and language learning development in this era as the tool offers a wide variety of contents that are always updated and provide the students with materials for essay writing and language learning. Lastly, cooperative learning was the major teaching approach with emphasis on the contents drawn from the YouTube videos and wider exposures to additional ideas and a variety of language discussed in pair work and group work, in which each student actively engages in the cooperative learning process and creates a socially active atmosphere to enhance cognitive writing.

Prior studies on YouTube and cooperative learning for EFL writing enhancement

Several studies (e.g., Sun, Y., 2014; Barbeau, M., 2010; Olasina, G., 2017) support the effectiveness of YouTube on writing through the evaluation of educational values of the tool for teaching academic writing (Fleck, B. K., Beckman, L. M., Sterns, J. L., & Hussey, H. D., 2014). It is very helpful for teaching in the classroom and can also be useful for blended learning (Wong, B. T. M., & Wong, B. Y. Y., 2018). In the age of technology, the use of multimedia technology and tools helps enhance the atmosphere of cognitively active learning.

In addition, to enhance learning to write more effectively, cooperative language learning was incorporated to promote socially cognitive learning. This approach has been proven to be both satisfying and effective for enhancing EFL writing skills among Saudi university students. (Mahmoud, M. M. A., 2014) if the instructor understands and can overcome resistance to cooperative learning (Shimazoe, J., & Aldrich, H., 2010), especially the strengths and weaknesses of cooperative learning in the views of students (Ghufron, M. A., & Ermawati, S., 2018), and the effects of embedded metacognitive instruction on writing development (Teng, F., 2016) through a writing process approach (Miftah, M. Z., 2015). Cooperative language learning was also effective for teaching project writing in the EFL Thai context (Sa-ngiamwibool, 2012).

Previous research on the use of YouTube and cooperative learning found that more successful writers have more exposure to ideas than less successful writers. As part of its investment, the presented study included both a technological tool and a vehicle for learning how to write argumentative and non-argumentative essays.

Research Questions

This study was primarily carried out to investigate how Chinese students conceptualized and composed their argumentative and non-argumentative essays in the planning and writing processes, with two specific research questions: (1) To what extent do

task-based instructions enhance ten Chinese EFL students' conceptualization during the essay planning process? (2)

What composing strategies do they employ during the essay-writing process?

Background to the Study

The pedagogy of international business programs at the tertiary level in Thailand emphasizes the use of the English language as a means of communication. Consequently, students at the undergraduate level are expected to be able to present their knowledge on certain issues in written and spoken English. However, students from China lack English communicative competence and did not meet acceptable levels of English proficiency on the TOEFL and IELTS. They never studied in English-speaking countries.

The researcher therefore administered a free writing essay, asking them to explain why they chose to study in Thailand. This writing assignment indicated that the majority of Chinese students really did not know what to do or how to continue. Also, the researcher conducted an interview to elicit data regarding the respondents' background information and their English learning problems. These students reported their problems with vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structure. Furthermore, they were not familiar with the use of the English language as a means of communication in a classroom. Also, they encounter difficulties producing academic tasks in English.

Ten Chinese undergraduates took part in this study. They were all in an international business program at a private university in Thailand, where English is spoken as a second language. The course being looked into was required for all first-year students, who had to take a different course before taking this one. Although there were some individual differences among them with respect to their ages, all samples came from China and exposed to English at high schools as shown in Table 1. Therefore, the number of samples was sufficient to meet the purposes of the study. This study referred to these students as Fu, Mah, Min, Lin, Ping, Ching, Yu, Yuan, Zhang and Wang.

Table 1 Respondent's personal information

Student	Age	Exposure to English	English Test	Study Abroad	Problems			
					Vocabulary	Grammar	Sentence Structure	Difficulties
1	18	At high school	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
2	19	At high school	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
3	18	At high school	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
4	18	At high school	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
5	20	At high school	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
6	19	At high school	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
7	21	At high school	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
8	19	At high school	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

9	22	At high school	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
10	19	At high school	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Major components of this course involved the assessment of argumentative and non-

Argumentative essay writing, which contributed 40% of the overall assessment components. The students were asked to write one non-argumentative essay and one argumentative essay on assigned topics. They were given the following information: 1) two task-based instructions, one on argumentative essay writing and the other on non-argumentative essay writing; 2) contents that gave them ideas or what to write about the assigned topics; 3) language focus to guide them on how to write; and 4) composition strategy taxonomies to give directions to planning and composing their essays. The vehicle to convey the guiding information was cooperative learning. The assessment of each composition consists of 20%, which was detailed as follows:

Non-Argumentative Essay Assessment

Relevance: Ability to understand the topic with an effective and concise title and directly answer the question (5 marks)

Evidence: Use of logical and appropriate supporting evidence, reasons, and Examples to support the topic sentence (5 marks)

Organization: Arrange materials into a well-formulated essay structure: introduction, body, and conclusion (3 marks)

Clear style: Clear sentence construction (3 marks)

Language: Use of own words and appropriate language (4 marks)

Argumentative Essay Assessment

Relevance: Ability to understand the argument, effective and concise title; and directly answer the question (5 marks)

Evidence: Use of logical and appropriate supporting evidence, reasons, and Examples of critical and independent thought to strengthen or weaken the argument (5 marks)

Organization: Arrange materials into a well-formulated argument structure: Introduction, argument and evidence, and conclusion (3 marks).

Clear style - clear sentence construction (3 marks)

Language - use of own words and appropriate language (4 marks)

Methodology

Research Design

This was a mixed-methods study. The data elicitation procedures began with a questionnaire to draw the subjects' background information, moved on to the non-argumentative essay instruction and the argumentative essay instruction, respectively, were then followed by two sets of questionnaires to draw the subjects' attitudes towards the two task-based instructions in essay writing enhancement and identification of the strategies used during the writing process, and ended up with in-depth interviews. Learner logs were assigned, and observation was conducted throughout the data elicitation procedures.

Research Instruments

The instruments for data elicitation were based on triangulation. Below are the details of each instrument.

- 1) *YouTube videos* were purposefully chosen for task-based writing instructions to provide ideas and contents for the assigned topics. The first three videos describe three cities (namely Bangkok, Pattaya, and Nan) generating ideas for a non-argumentative essay on the topic "The Best Place to Live in," while the fourth and last video is a talk, "Is smart tech making us dumb?" and generating an argument for an argumentative essay.
- 2) Task-based writing instructions *were purposefully* designed for conceptualization enhancement through a variety of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and cooperative approaches. Below are some sample instructions.

This task-based writing instruction aimed to facilitate the students' conceptualization of the ideas in the process of essay planning on a non-argumentative topic. The task entitled "Making a Case" engaged the students in a series of activities following CLT procedures: presentation, practice, and production (PPP) and incorporating cooperative learning: group work, role play, small group discussion, and class presentation.

To begin, the instructor showed a map of Thailand and pictures of three cities (namely, Bangkok, Pattaya, and Nan) and asked the class to locate each city on the map. Then, he surveyed which city they chose to live in. These activities aimed to generate the students' interest in the topic "The Best Place to Live in," which the instructor was going to lead them to make a case later on.

Next, the instructor led the students to work actively and cooperatively in groups. This stage comprised three steps. First, the instructor set up a situation by showing her sister's note, which asked for advice on the best place to live among these three choices (namely, Bangkok, the capital of Thailand; Pattaya, a seaside city in the east; and Nan, a mountainous town in the north). She then showed YouTube videos of each location to give the students an idea of what to expect and then asked the entire class to vote on the best place to live. Second, she led the class to the language focus as a formula for presenting the reasons to support the best place they chose. The language focus included three parts: beginning (e.g., first of all, above all), supporting (e.g., in addition, moreover, and furthermore), and concluding (e.g., lastly, in short, and to summarize). She asked a few students to be role models, using the language focus to support their choices. Third and finally, he asked the class to divide into two groups, each of which consisted of five students, to work to make a case. Each student in the group was given a card, assigning a role (two students as "the sister," who was to make a decision, and three students as "the advisers," each of whom supported each city). The advisers' cards were given a few reasons as examples to support the city. Each adviser added more reasons, drawing information from the videos. Then, each group started a discussion. In the group, "the sister" listened to each adviser and made a note of the reasons. After the group discussion, the two students, known as "the sister," discussed making a decision and reported their decision to the class.

Finally, after this conceptualizing process, the instructor presented the language focus for writing a non-argumentative essay: introduction, body, and conclusion. She asked a few students to be role models, using the language focus to present their essays, and assigned all to write a one-page essay stating the best place for them, using the language focus they had studied.

Figure 1: *Task-based writing instruction on a non-argumentative essay*

This task-based writing instruction aimed to facilitate the students' conceptualization of the ideas for an argumentative topic in the process of essay planning. The task entitled "Debate" also engaged the students to series of activities following CLT procedures and incorporating cooperative learning.

In the presentation stage, the instructor displayed different pictures of smart tech and asked the students to explain what each smart tech is used for. Then, she surveyed the smart tech the students owned. These activities aimed to generate the students' interest in the topic "Is smart tech making us dump?" that the instructor was going to lead them to debate later on.

The practice stage consisted of three steps. First, the instructor set up a debate, playing a YouTube video entitled "Is smart tech making us dump?" to give the students some ideas and asked the whole class to vote for or against the argument proposed in the video. Second, she led the class to the language focus as a formula to present their argument, including: beginning, strengthening/weakening, and concluding. She asked a few students to be role models, using the language focus, to strengthen or weaken the argument that smart tech makes people dump. Finally, she asked the ten students to work in a group of five to make a debate: one for the argument whereas the other against it.

After this conceptualizing process, the instructor presented the language focus for writing an argumentative essay: introduction, argument and conclusion. She asked a few students to be role models, using the language focus to present their essays, and assigned all to write one-page essay to strengthen or weaken the argument, using the language focus they had studied.

Figure 2: *Task-based writing instruction for an argumentative essay*

- 3) Composition strategy taxonomy instruction were given after the task-based writing instructions on a non-argumentative essay to provide composing *strategies* for the students to work on their own during the essay planning and writing process. The strategies drawn from prior studies fell into six categories and consisted of twenty-two sub categories: rhetorical strategies (organizing), meta cognitive strategies (planning), organization of the generated ideas involved (monitoring, evaluating, and rationalizing), cognitive strategies (generating ideas, note taking, elaborating, clarification/self-question, drafting, rereading, revising, summarizing, translating from L1 to L2, use of mother tongue knowledge and skill transfer from L1, and thinking in one's native language), social/affective strategies (interacting with other persons, search for materials, resourcing, and getting feedback) and communicative strategies (verbalizing a proposition and sense of readers).
- 4) *Argumentative and non-argumentative essays* on assigned topics were major pieces of written textual evidence to verify the effectiveness of cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies.
- 5) *Questionnaires* were designed for various purposes, including: 1) respondents' background information; 2) their attitudes towards the instructions in essay writing enhancement; and 3) identification of their strategies used during the writing process. (See Appendix 1.)
- 6) Learner logs were day-by-day recorded textual materials that reflected their social and affective learning as well as the composition strategies they used during the composition process. These logs were guided by these self-questions: What do I like or dislike about the tasks? How do they develop my writing?

- 7) *Interviews* aimed to elicit the respondents' compositional development after the conceptualization process. The interviews drew explanations, clarifications, preferences, and insights regarding the composing strategies and writing problems. (See Appendix 2.)
- 8) The observations emphasized group dynamics, interaction and negotiation in group Work, and social and affective learning aspects. The researcher recorded data as soon as each task was completed. The data were triangulated with the attitudes toward the instructions.

Procedures for Data Collection and Analysis

The data collection procedure followed these three phases: before, during, and after the instructions. To begin with, the respondents were given a questionnaire on their personal information a week before the instructions. During the two-instruction phase, the non-argumentative essay instruction and the composition strategy taxonomy instruction were given, followed by the argumentative essay instruction. Learner logs were also assigned during this phase. Finally, all students were given questionnaires about their attitudes toward instructions and strategy identification. The interviews were conducted in a group of five to reduce communication barriers. The data collection process lasted for three months.

The quantitative data from the questionnaires were statistically described by percent and means, while the data from other instruments were qualitatively analyzed. The results were qualitatively and quantitatively analyzed and triangulated to draw the conclusion of the study.

Findings

The data analysis and interpretation aimed at the discovery of the two research questions. The results are presented in Tables 2 and 3, respectively.

Table 2 Respondents' attitudes towards conceptualization

No	Items How much do you find....	Levels of satisfaction				
		5	4	3	2	1
1	The YouTube videos help you in the non-argumentative essay writing?	80 (n=8)	20 (n=2)	0 (n=0)	0 (n=0)	0 (n=0)
2	The YouTube videos help you in the argumentative essay writing?	80 (n=8)	20 (n=2)	0 (n=0)	0 (n=0)	0 (n=0)
3	The case-making instructions help you in the non-argumentative essay writing?	90 (n=9)	10 (n=1)	0 (n=0)	0 (n=0)	0 (n=0)
4	The debate instructions help you in the argumentative essay writing?	70 (n=7)	30 (n=3)	0 (n=0)	0 (n=0)	0 (n=0)
5	The group work helps?	80 (n=8)	20 (n=2)	0 (n=0)	0 (n=0)	0 (n=0)
6	The role play helps?	70 (n=7)	30 (n=3)	0 (n=0)	0 (n=0)	0 (n=0)
7	The small group discussion helps?	90 (n=9)	10 (n=1)	0 (n=0)	0 (n=0)	0 (n=0)
8	The class presentation helps?	70 (n=7)	30 (n=3)	0 (n=0)	0 (n=0)	0 (n=0)

9	The guided composing strategies help?	90 (n=9)	10 (n=1)	0 (n=0)	0 (n=0)	0 (n=0)
10	The overall task-based instructions help produce written texts?	80 (n=8)	20 (n=2)	0 (n=0)	0 (n=0)	0 (n=0)

Table 2 shows that all ten students' attitudes toward the effectiveness of the two task-based instructions were highly positive, and there were no negative responses in all items. They were satisfied with the helpfulness of YouTube videos, various CLT and cooperative activities (namely group work, role play, case-making, debate, small group discussion, and class presentation), and guided composition strategies. This finding indicates that the instructions were effective for enhancing Chinese EFL students' conceptualization in the planning of both argumentative and non-argumentative essays.

Table 3 Respondents' use of composing strategies

No*	Writing Strategies	Use of Strategies
1	Rhetorical strategies	100 (n=10)
2	Meta cognitive strategies	100
3	Organization of the generated ideas involved	0 (n=0)
		80 (n=8)
		80 (n=8)
		0 (n=0)
		80 (n=8)
		100 (n=10)
		100 (n=10)
		100 (n=10)
		100 (n=10)
		100 (n=10)
4	Cognitive strategies	100 (n=10)
		100 (n=10)
		100 (n=10)
		0 (n=0)
		100 (n=10)
		100 (n=10)
		100 (n=10)

	Interacting with other persons	100 (n=10)
5	Social/affective strategies	Search for materials 100 (n=10)
		Resourcing 0 (n=0)
		Getting feedback 70 (n=8)
		Verbalizing a proposition 80 (n=8)
6	Communicative strategies	Sense of readers 0 (n=0)

Table 3 shows the types of composition strategies they employed during their writing process. All ten students employed all six categories. However, they did not employ all twenty-two sub-categories. They employed these composing strategies: organizing, planning, elaborating, clarifying or self-questioning, drafting, rereading, revising, translating from L1 to L2, using mother tongue knowledge and skill transfer from L1, thinking in one's native language, interacting with other people, and searching for materials. The majority of students found that these strategies were useful: evaluating, rationalizing, taking notes, verbalizing a proposition, and getting feedback. However, no students employed these strategies: generating ideas, summarizing, resourcing, and making sense to readers. This finding points to a set of composition strategies that work well for Chinese EFL students.

Findings and Discussion on Conceptualization

The results of the questionnaire revealed that all ten subjects were highly satisfied with the helpfulness of YouTube videos and various activities in the conceptualization of their essay plans, and none showed negative attitudes towards the instructions. This finding was contradictory to what the researcher observed when they were asked to write an essay to explain why they chose to study in Thailand. At that time, the majority of the subjects showed their frustration and uncertainty. The writing they produced also proved their feelings because it showed that the subjects really did not know what to write about or how to continue.

However, this finding from the questionnaire was well supported by the results from the Interviews, the learner logs, and the researcher's observations in these two areas: cognitively and affectively. For cognitive learning, the two interview questions about what they did after the conceptualization process and whether the ideas they receive from the process help them or not, revealed that all subjects started planning their essays and searching for more ideas on YouTube on the assigned topics. This indicated that the tool had usefully generated some ideas to write about, as seen in some respondents' explanation below.

Fu: The videos are very useful. They gave me ideas for what to write, so I watched a Few more videos on the place I choose to live in I found interesting information to Add on my support.

Mah: I don't feel as worried about what to write as before because it is there on YouTube. With the information provided, I can start planning my essay much sooner than before. Wang: Planning and argumentative essay is very hard for me but I got a lot of ideas from Lin: I thought writing an essay was very hard. Before that, I had no ideas to write, and

how to write. Now, with the information provided through YouTube and the activities, I have ideas to write. I can start planning an essay immediately after the class.

Similarly, all reported that they learned useful ideas from group discussion, and the ideas made it easier to write an essay, as seen below.

Zhang: We found that the ideas from my classmates broadened my vision a lot. When we have ideas, we can write. Writing an essay is not as hard as before. Min:] My classmates taught me a lot of things. I chose the best for my case and add on to make it more convincing.

More interestingly, they noted that the classmates' ideas in group work were deeper and broader than the facts and information from YouTube because their classmates added their experience to that, which made the ideas more insightful and useful, as revealed in these logs.

Yu I'm curious why some of my classmates have so much technology experience. This made their argument to weaken the argument that technology make us dumb. I've never heard of those ideas before, but they're very thoughtful. The YouTube videos and group discussions also help develop their language learning. Lin and Ping: We had serious problems with vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structure and had never considered writing an essay. The videos and our classmates help solve our language problems. At least, they are not as serious as before.

Ching: I had difficulties in producing academic tasks in English. I don't have to express my thoughts. Luckily, YouTube videos give not only ideas but also but also a language in which I can express myself. Also, I learned new words from the videos and my classmates.

Min: When I compared my first draft after the instruction to my second draft after the instruction, watching the videos to find the right words again and again, third draft after watching the grammar videos, with fourth draft to see the overall, I was ecstatic to see how much my English had improved. I felt more confident now.

The finding that YouTube helps develop cognitive learning is consistent with the findings of prior studies (Sun, Y., 2014; Barbeau, M., 2010; Olasina, G., 2017). Like those studies, this present study found that YouTube helps students conceptualize writing (Fleck, B. K., Beckman, L. M., Sterns, J. L., & Hussey, H. D., 2014). In addition, a prior study discovered that the tool is very helpful for teaching in the classroom and useful for blended learning (Wong, B. T. M., & Wong, B. Y. Y., 2018). Similarly, this present study proved that the tool is useful for blended learning, which incorporates CLT and cooperative learning.

For affective learning, the instruction also enhances how to write an essay through socially cooperative language learning. All noted in their logs that cooperative language learning is enjoyable and not stressful.

Min, Lin, and Ping: It was fun to learn to do things with classmates. It was different from learning with an instructor in a classroom where I only listened to the instructor. We took turns to talk. It's more like a game than a study.

Learning how to write is a stressful process, but this method is unique. We love it!

The researcher's observation that looked into the thoughtful interaction and meaningful negotiation among students working within the group noted the following insight that might explain why the subjects were highly satisfied with the instruction.

Observer: Learning to write is more successful when roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and are open for negotiation. This method of Cooperation brings with it greater accountability, promotes a stronger Sense of inherent interdependence and provide students with opportunities To engage with one another in thoughtful interaction and meaningful Interdependence to support one another.
The "thoughtful interaction and meaningful interdependence" could be illustrated by Yu, Whose ideas are similar to Ping's?

Yu: Prior to this class, I mostly worked alone, so I was unaware of the Importance of group work that all members put all efforts to work for the Same goal. We all think about the goal, talk about it, and work toward it. Working in a group is more effective than working alone. I wish I could Change the way I learned things in the past because I lost more than I Gained from working alone.

Ping: Group work makes us connected. The more we discuss and negotiate, the Closer and more connected we are. This makes our communication more Meaningful. We depend on one another and respond to each other, and Learn from one another. This makes our learning more meaningful. I love This friendly learning atmosphere.

The findings of this present study support those of prior studies that cooperative learning enhances affective learning (how to write) if the instructor understands and can overcome resistance to cooperative learning (Shimazoe, J., & Aldrich, H., 2010), especially the strengths and weaknesses of cooperative learning in the views of students (Ghufron, M. A., & Ermawati, S., 2018). This present study was successful in overcoming resistance to cooperative learning by introducing problem-based learning (namely, case making and debate), in which all ten subjects were assigned roles to actively get involved in learning and assume a degree of responsibility for the construction of their own learning by creating their written texts. The finding of this present study was that consistent cooperative language learning was effective for teaching writing in the EFL Thai context (Sa-ngiamwibool, 2012).

Findings And Discussion On Composing Strategies

The findings from the questionnaire regarding the composition strategies they employed during their writing process revealed that all ten students used all six categories, but in varying degrees, including: organizing, planning, elaborating, clarifying or self-questioning, drafting, rereading, revising, translating from L1 to L2, using mother tongue knowledge and skill transfer from L1, interacting with other people, and searching for materials. This finding was supported by the findings from the interview. Below are examples of main strategies and sub-strategies the subjects used during their interviewing process. The researcher encouraged the subjects to work with their partner(s), and both or all were interviewed together.

Interviewer: What did you do after the conceptualization process?

Ping and Ching: We put the information I got from group work and the class presentation into the sequence and select three reasons for my own.

Main strategy: Rhetorical strategies

Sub-strategy: Organizing

Below is evidence of how they organized his ideas.

Step 1 Step 2 Step 3

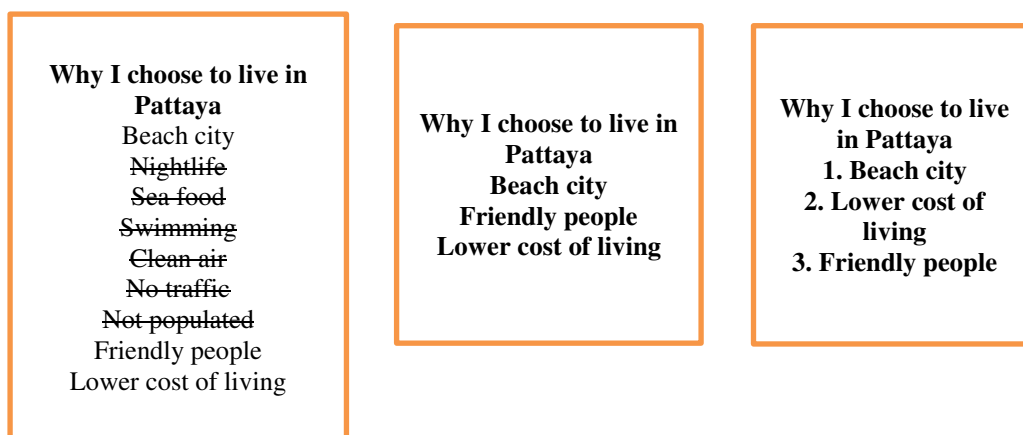


Figure 3 *Idea organization sample*

Interviewer: Did the ideas you receive from the conceptualization process help you Or not? How? Why?

Mah and Min: The ideas are very helpful. I could plan an outline of my essay, Starting with the most important points I learned from the language focus And then adding assistance by searching for additional information from The Internet and asking Min if she agreed with or supported my points. If she disagreed, I asked for her reasons. We discussed how to evaluate Our reasons from various angles. We ended our discussion when we Reached an agreement.

Main strategy: Meta-cognitive strategies

Sub-strategy: Planning

Below is evidence of Mah's outline for an essay after his discussion with Min.

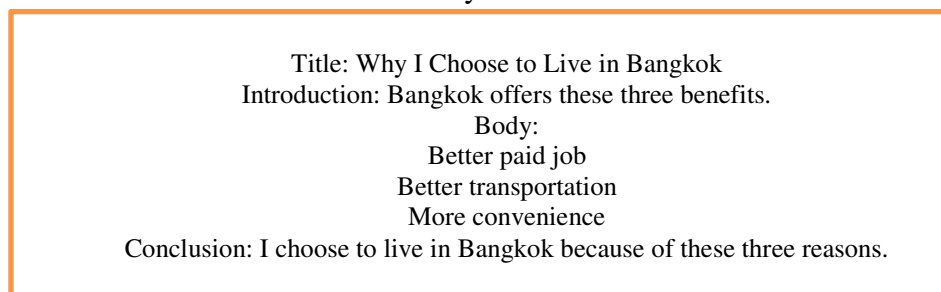


Figure 4 *Outline sample*

Min did not agree with Mah's major points and explained why. Both discussed and reached an agreement. Below is Mah's adjusted version.

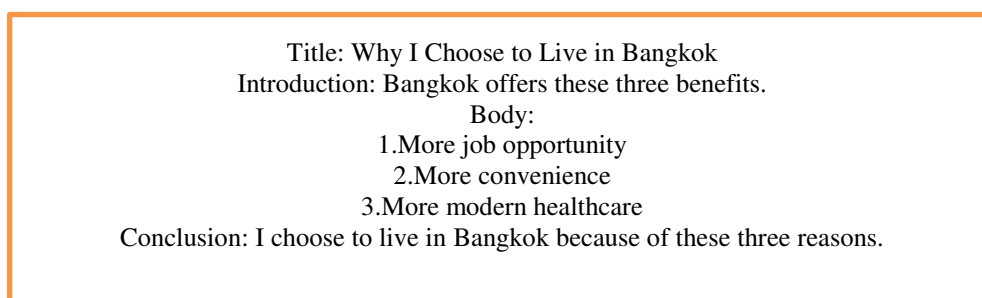


Figure 5 *Main point draft sample*

Then Min elaborated with minor supports as seen below.

Title: Why I Choose to Live in Bangkok
Introduction: Bangkok offers these three benefits.
Body:
1. More job opportunity
 1.1 Better paid job
 1.2 More job choices
2. More convenience
 2.1 Better transportation
 2.1 More facilities
3. More modern healthcare
 3.1 Better equipment
 3.2 More doctors and nurses
Conclusion: I choose to live in Bangkok because of these three reasons.

Figure 6 *Detailed redraft sample*

Interviewer: How did you draft the outline of your essay? How many times did you draft the outline? What did you do to add details to the outline?

Yuan: I started my outline with note-taking, listing keywords, and adding details.

To support them, and asking myself questions: Are these keywords? Are

These resources relevant to the topic? Do all the ideas make sense? After

That I drafted and reread my draft more than five times. I hoped to find the

Best reasons for my essays. I searched the Internet for reasons to add on

Supporting details. Every time I searched, I got new ideas, so I changed.

And revised my draft. I also compared my present draft with the previous

ones to choose the better ideas. This was one way I revised my draft.

Main strategy: Cognitive strategies

Sub-strategy: Note-taking, elaborating, clarifying or self-questioning, drafting, and

Rereading and revising

Below is evidence of Yuan's outline of an argumentative essay.

Argument: "Is smart tech making us dumb?"
My counterargument: Smart tech does not make us dumb.
Introduction: The argument that smart tech makes us dumb overlooks the following
advantages of smart tech.
Reasons to weaken the argument "Is smart tech making us dumb?"
Tool for education development
Tool for international communication
Tool for business drives

Figure 7 *Argumentative essay outline sample*

To find reasons to support his counterargument, Yuan listened to YouTube videos related to his counterargument and read for more information. Then, he took a note and listed keywords (namely, communication, economy, industry, education, and business). Then, he chose the three most important keywords to write about (namely, communication, education, and business) and organized the order of keywords from the most to the least important (namely, education, communication, and business). Next, he asked himself whether he should add details to make the keywords more relevant to the argument, so he added the word "tool" to all keywords (a tool for education, a tool for communication, and a tool for business).

Finally, he asked himself questions: Are these keywords relevant to the topic? Do all the ideas make sense? He found that he should add more details to make the keywords more relevant, so he got these elaborated keywords: "tool for education development," "tool for international communication," and "tool for business drives." Then he started drafting and redrafting several times. Below is his draft of an introduction.

The speaker's argument that smart tech makes people dumb overlooked some crucial advantages of smart tech. The smart tech like smart phone is a useful tool for education development, international communication and business drives. If the speaker considered these advantages of smart phone, his argument should have been more logical. In my discussion, I will present reasons to strengthen my counterargument that smart tech really makes us smart.

Figure 7 *Argumentative introduction sample*

As English is a foreign language for Chinese students, when they encountered semantic problems while composing essays, the findings of this study revealed that they sought help from technology tools and resources, as shown in the interviews below.

Interviewer: Did you use the translator while writing? Did you use a dictionary? Did you think in Chinese or English while you were writing the Essay?

Fu My English is poor. I'm not confident, so I use the translating tool when writing. Without it, I couldn't finish my writing.

Min and Lin: I think in Chinese, write in Chinese, and translate it. I wish I could think in English.

Ping, Ching, and Zhang: I didn't use a dictionary. I used the translating tool when writing. Mostly, I rely on the tool.

In addition to the use of a translating tool to facilitate their writing, the study also paid attention to other problems the students encountered in the writing process and solutions to the problems. All students had difficulty with vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structure.

Interviewer: What problems did you have in the writing process? How did you solve it?

Wang and Yuan: "I have problems with vocabulary, and I use a dictionary."

Yu and Lin I used a translation software.

Mah and Min I asked the instructor, my classmates, and a dictionary.

Yuan I first asked my partners to correct my grammar and sometimes asked the instructor for feedback on sentence structure.

Ping: I solicited feedback on my grammar from senior students.

Ching and Fu: I asked my classmates for feedback on grammatical errors.

Student 1 and 2: I read and corrected it myself.

The findings of this study were consistent with those of the prior study, which found that the composing strategies that all EFL Chinese first-year students employed in their writing process included the following: organizing (Sasaki, M, 2000), planning (Riazi, A.,1997; Mu, C., 2005), elaborating (Riazi, A.,1997; Mu, C., 2005), clarification through self-questioning (Wenden, A. L., 1991; Riazi, A.,1997), drafting (Riazi, A.,1997), rereading (Mu, C., 2005), revising (Mu, C., 2005), summarising (Sasaki, M, 2000), translating from L1 to L2 (Riazi, A.,1997), use of mother tongue knowledge and skill transfer from L1 (Wenden,

A. L., 1991), thinking in one's native language, interacting with other persons (Riazi, 1997), and search for materials (Riazi, 1997).

Conclusion

Two conclusions could be drawn from the findings of this present study. Above all, the task-based writing instruction incorporating CLT and cooperative

Learning is effective for enhancing Chinese EFL students' conceptualization in the essay planning process, both for argumentative and non-argumentative essays. They were satisfied with the helpfulness of YouTube videos, various CLT and cooperative learning activities, language focus, and guided composition strategy and taxonomy instruction. More specifically, the composing strategies that all students employed in their writing

process included the following: organizing, planning, elaborating, clarifying or self-questioning, drafting, rereading, revising, translating from L1 to L2, using mother tongue knowledge and skill transfer from L1, thinking in one's native language, interacting with other persons, and searching for materials. In addition, these strategies were useful for the majority of the students, consisting of evaluating, rationalizing, taking notes, verbalizing a proposition, and getting feedback.

In conclusion, both instructions and composing strategies are essential for enhancing Chinese EFL students' conceptualization in the essay planning and writing process.

Suggestion

The findings of this study could offer these three suggestions:

Practically, the writing enhancement skillsets that are most preferred by Chinese EFL students comprise organizing, planning, elaborating, clarifying or self-questioning, drafting, rereading, revising, translating from L1 to L2, using mother tongue knowledge and skill transfer from L1, thinking in one's native language, interacting with other persons, and searching for materials. Also, the less preferred skillsets include evaluating, rationalizing, taking notes, verbalizing a proposition, and getting feedback. Pedagogically, the task-based writing instructions in this study are effective for Chinese

EFL students. The instructions should be applied to other EFL students who share similar features.

In theory, because no students used some useful strategies (for example, generating ideas, summarizing, resourcing, and making sense of readers), The Chinese students heavily rely on some strategies that will have long-term negative effects on writing development (e.g., translating from L1 to L2, use of mother tongue knowledge and skill transfer from L1, and thinking in one's native language). Further inquiry should investigate these issues.

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Appendix 1

Questionnaires

Respondents' personal information

Tick (/) your answer. You can tick more than one.

How old are you? ____ years old

Where did you learn English?

At high school _____ At university _____

Which of these tests did you take?

TOEFL ____ IELTS ____ Others (Please specify) _____

Was English a means of communication in your classroom?

Yes ____ No ____

Did you study in an English-speaking country?

Yes _____ (Please specify) _____ No _____

Do you have problems with the following?

Vocabulary Grammar _____ Sentence structure _____

Do you encounter difficulties in producing academic tasks in English?

Yes ____ No ____

01324205 English Listening and Speaking 1

Lesson Plan Structure

Lecturer: Assistant Professor Dr. Amporn Sa-ngiamwibool

Course Description:

Listening for main ideas, specific details and tones of the speakers by making use of both linguistic and paralinguistic knowledge, expressing opinions related to the listening extracts, short talks on assigned topics

Course Aim:

Live and learn for today and the future through listening-speaking practice and teamwork skills

Course Objectives:

Students will be able to identify main ideas, specific details and tones of the speakers and make use of both linguistic and paralinguistic knowledge in the listening texts.

Students will be able to express opinions fluently and appropriately to the listening topics or assignments.

Specific Objectives:

Students will be able to work in team according to their assigned role in various problem-based simulations.

Students will be able to assess their own strengths and weaknesses in listening and speaking.

Students will be able to develop their listening and speaking skills for advanced levels.

Course Evaluation:

A	=	80-100
B+	=	75-79
B	=	70-74
C+	=	65-69
C	=	60-64
D+	=	55-59
D	=	50-54
F	=	0-49

Details of evaluation

Virtues	5	Percent (Weeks: 3,6,8,11,13)
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Respondents' attitudes toward the two task-based learning instructions in essay writing enhancement

Please rate the following based on your opinion. Tick (/) your answer.

5 = very much, 4 = much, 3 = neutral, 2 = not much, and 1 = not very much

Table 2 *Respondents' attitudes towards conceptualization*

No	Items How much do you find....	Levels of satisfaction				
		5	4	3	2	1
1	The YouTube videos help you in the non-argumentative essay writing?					
2	The YouTube videos help you in the argumentative essay writing?					
3	The case-making instructions help you in the non-argumentative essay writing?					
4	The debate instructions help you in the argumentative essay writing?					
5	The group work helps?					
6	The role play helps?					
7	The small group discussion helps?					
8	The class presentation helps?					
9	The guided composing strategies help?					
10	The overall task-based instructions help produce written texts?					

Respondents' use of writing strategies

Which of these strategies did you use while writing essays? You can tick (/) More than one strategy.

Table 3 *Respondents' use of composing strategies*

No	Writing Strategies	Use of Strategies	
		Yes	No
1	Rhetorical strategies		
2	Meta cognitive strategies		
3	Organization of the generated ideas involved		
4	Cognitive strategies		
		Organizing	
		Planning	
		Monitoring	
		Evaluating	
		Rationalizing	
		Generating ideas	
		Note taking	
		Elaborating	
		Clarification/Self-question	
5	Social/affective strategies		
		Drafting	
		Rereading	
		Revising	
		Summarizing	
		Translating from L1 to L2	
		Use of mother tongue knowledge and skill transfer from L1	
		Thinking in one's native language	
		Interacting with other persons	
		Search for materials	
6	Communicative strategies		
		Resourcing	
		Getting feedback	
		Verbalizing a proposition	
		Sense of readers	

Appendix 2

Interview

Questions for Interview

1. What did you do after the conceptualization process?
2. Did the ideas you receive from the conceptualization process help you or not?
3. How? Why?
4. How did you draft the outline of your essay? How many times did you draft the
5. Outline? What did you do to add on details in the outline?
6. Did you use translating tool in writing? Did you use a dictionary? Did you think
7. In Chinese or English while you were writing the essay?
8. What problems did you have in the writing process? How did you solve them?