

**EFFECTS OF COOPERATIVE LEARNING
ON EFL UNIVERSITY STUDENT SUMMARY WRITING**

A THESIS

BY

WICHITRA S. EKAWAT

**Presented in Partial Fulfilment for the Requirements for the
Master of Arts Degree in Teaching English as a Foreign Language
at Srinakharinwirot University**

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AN ABSTRACT

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The purposes of this research were to study effects of cooperative learning on EFL university students' summary writing and their preferences for cooperative learning. Nineteen third-year English majors enrolled in Reading and Summarising at Srinakharinwirot University participated in this study in the second semester of 2008. The participants took a pretest and posttest in traditional individualistic learning, and another set of pretest and posttest with the cooperative learning intervention. Two raters rated all the tests using the summary writing rubric adapted from the Canadian National Adult Literacy Database. The *t* – test was applied to find the differences between the mean scores of the two sets of tests. The findings indicated statistically significant differences for both learning methods at the .05 level. However, comparison of the students' progressions revealed that the cooperative learning method generated a higher median, and so was considered more effective than individualistic learning. Moreover, the participants' accuracy, distortions, and grammatical errors made during the cooperative learning intervention were compared. The results demonstrated statistically significant differences at the .05 level in all of the areas tested, meaning the participants produced significantly more accurate idea units, fewer distortions, and fewer grammatical errors. A preference questionnaire was administered at the end of the experiment, and the results indicated that the participants preferred the cooperative learning method over individualistic learning.

Key words: Cooperative learning, EFL, summary writing.

ผลการเรียนรู้แบบร่วมมือในการเขียนย่อความของนิสิตมหาวิทยาลัย
ที่เรียนภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาต่างประเทศ

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งานวิจัยครั้งนี้ มีจุดมุ่งหมายเพื่อศึกษาผลการเรียนรู้แบบร่วมมือในการเขียนย่อความของ
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สอนเขียนภาษาอังกฤษ จำนวนสองท่าน เป็นผู้ตรวจให้คะแนน โดยใช้เกณฑ์การประเมินผลการ
เขียนย่อความซึ่งปรับปรุงจากเกณฑ์การเขียนย่อความของฐานข้อมูลการศึกษาผู้ใหญ่แห่งชาติ
แคนาดา หลังจากนั้น นำคะแนนมาหาค่าเฉลี่ยและวิจัยข้อมูล โดยใช้ t -test ในการวิเคราะห์เพื่อ
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

It has been found in research that summary writing can enhance reading and writing skills (Hoye, 1989; Karnes, 1990; Sriratampai, 1999; Vasupen, 1996), which are important for language students. The ability to write an effective summary is said to be the most important writing skill a university student may possess, and university students need to be able to summarise before they can successfully produce other kinds of writing (Jamieson, 1999). Summary writing prompts the students to focus on specific items of information and leads the students to present their ideas carefully (Langer & Applebee, 1987; Zhou & Siriyothin, 2008).

Besides, a number of research studies were conducted on summary writing to prove the hypotheses that students had better reading comprehension after learning to summarise (Honnert & Bozan, 2005; Vasupen, 1996; Zhou & Siriyothin, 2008) or that they had improvements in other academic engagements (Edwards & Chard, 2000).

However, summary writing is not an easy task. Kirkland and Saunders (1991, p. 108) state that to summarise a text effectively, the students must have adequate reading skills, comprehension, control of grammar, vocabulary and writing skills in order to restate the information accurately. The fact that English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students find it difficult to write adequate summaries is therefore not surprising. A number of problems related to summary writing have been identified.

EFL students in China, for instance, were found to use source texts mostly without citing references or acknowledgement (Shi, 2004), and EFL writers used more near copies of the text than native English writers (Keck, 2006). When Sriratampai

(1999) conducted her study on Thai university students, she had anticipated the common problem area in summary writing: identifying or restating the main ideas, and with it, issues of plagiarism and distortion of the original information in the text. The results of her investigation on her students' summaries proved her hypotheses correct.

To state briefly, summary writing is a study skill that enhances reading and writing abilities, prompting the students to focus on specific information, and leading them to present their ideas carefully. However, because summary writing involves other language skills, there are problems that need to be addressed in learning to summarise. EFL students were found to be unable to restate the main ideas of the text, to commit plagiarism and to distort the original information, and to use source texts mostly without citing references or acknowledgement.

In this research, it was proposed that to address the problems in summary writing encountered by EFL students in Thailand, the students should be allowed the experience of cooperative learning (Murray, 1993, p. 100). This is because in a natural setting, when professionals or students or people in general are required to write or complete various types of summary assignments, they tend to do it with assistance from other people. They ask friends or colleagues for opinions or critiques on what they have written in order to improve it before the finished paper is presented.

The practice of cooperative learning such as in writing has been in public interest for a great many years. Cooperative writing benefits the student writers in many ways. First, the students in the cooperative learning process combine their knowledge to help one another to accomplish a writing assignment (Clair, n.d.). Second, there are more people to proofread the writing, and thus they minimise the number of mistakes and improve the writing quality (Clair, n.d.). Third, the students learn from each other as the more confident will model successful writing practices for the struggling students

(Webb, et al., 1998, p. 607). Fourth, social relationships are fostered among the student writers (Elbow, 2000, p. 372). And finally, the students are given practice at a kind of writing that they will find in future occupation (Stewart, 1988, p. 63).

In light of the above, and in an attempt to find ways to improve EFL students' summary writing ability, the present research study sought to utilize cooperative learning to give the students opportunities to express their full potentials to acquire the required summarising skills.

Objectives of the Study

The research was designed to conduct a two-phased quasi experiment using one group of participants. In the first phase, during the first half of the semester, the participants took an individualistic summary writing pretest and posttest with traditional classroom instruction, whereas in the second phase during the latter half of the semester, the participants were assigned a pretest before cooperative learning instruction and a posttest after the cooperative learning treatment. The overall objective of the study was to compare the participants' progressions in the two methods of summary writing. The objectives can be restated as follows.

1. To compare the participants' progressions on the summary writing pretest and posttest of the individualistic and cooperative learning methods.
2. To compare the number of accuracies on the pretest and posttest of summary writing made by the participants while participating in the cooperative learning method.
3. To compare the number of distortions on the pretest and posttest of summary writing made by the participants while participating in the cooperative learning method.

4. To compare the number of grammatical errors on the posttest of summary writing made by the participants while participating in the cooperative learning method and the number of grammatical errors made on the pretest.

5. To study whether the participants prefer the cooperative learning method over the individualistic learning method.

Research Hypotheses

The researcher set the following alternative hypotheses for the study.

1. The participants would achieve higher scores on the summary writing posttest than those on the pretest of the respective individualistic and cooperative learning methods, and the *progression* obtained from cooperative learning would be higher than that obtained while learning individually.

2. The number of *accurate idea units* on the posttest of summary writing made by the participants while participating in the cooperative learning method would be significantly higher than the number of accuracies made on the pretest of summary writing.

3. The number of *distortions* on the posttest of summary writing made by the participants while participating in the cooperative learning method would be smaller than the number of distortions made on the pretest of summary writing.

4. The *grammatical errors* on the posttest of summary writing made by the participants while participating in the cooperative learning method would be significantly fewer than the number of grammatical errors on the pretest of summary writing.

The level of significance (α) for testing these hypotheses was set at $\alpha = .05$. That is, the level of confidence was at 95%. The probability of rejecting the null hypotheses was less than 5% in 100%. The hypotheses were tested by paired t - test at $\alpha = .05$.

Significance of the Study

The goal of summary writing teachers is to enhance the students' achievement. The goal of EFL students is to be able to write good summaries of what they read. One of the ways to teach EFL students summary writing is to involve them in cooperative learning (Murray, 1993). In order to ascertain the effectiveness of the cooperative learning method, it is necessary to conduct a study to investigate effects of cooperative learning on EFL university student summary writing.

The research results serve as guidelines for appropriate lesson plans for future EFL students of summary writing, development of plans to further enhance students' summary writing skills and identification of summary writing problems in the classroom. If the experience of cooperative learning transferred positively to later individualistic summary writing, implementation of the cooperative learning method should be encouraged in the classroom.

Scope of the Study

Participants

A sample of one section of 19 English majors enrolled in a tertiary reading and summarising course at Srinakharinwirot University (SWU) was selected to participate in this quasi-experimental research by purposive sampling (or *purposeful sampling* in Gall,

Gall, & Borg, 2007, p. 178) in the second semester of academic year 2008 to investigate effects of cooperative learning on EFL university student summary writing.

Length of the Study

The research study was implemented in the second semester of 2008 and was designed to last 14 weeks, during which the participants met once a week for three hours, 42 hours *in toto*.

Variables

1. *Independent variable.* Two methods of teaching summary writing: through individualistic and cooperative learning.

2. *Dependent variables.*

2.1 Scores of third-year English majors' summary writing

2.2 Student learning style preferences for summary writing

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following terms are defined.

Summary writing is a restatement of the important ideas of the text without copying or distorting the original information (Hodges & Laws, 1967; Oshima & Hogue, 1999, p. 94; Raimes, 1983, p. 58; Temiyanon, n.d., p. 81). In this research, summary writing refers to the participants' summary writing of the two given passages (Discuss Fish, and Should wild animals be kept as pets?) was assessed through a set of summary writing rubric adapted from the Canadian National Adult Literacy Database (2008).

Individualistic learning refers to an instruction method in which students learn and work individually at own level and rate towards an academic goal without consulting one another.

Cooperative learning refers to an instruction method in which students in small groups of two to four help one another learn and work cooperatively to achieve a common academic goal, which in this research is summary writing.

Accuracy refers to a correct and exact representation of the content of the original text in a new statement in a summary. An accurate clause or statement is counted as one accurate idea unit (Carrell, 1985).

Distortion refers to a misrepresentation of the content of the source, an omission of significant details, or insertion of personal ideas in the summary, changing the meaning of the original.

Grammatical errors refer to errors or mistakes committed in the structure of a statement, resulting in damage in the flow of the utterance or communication. For example, using it's instead of its in writing is a common grammatical error.

The SMOG Formula is a readability calculator, which estimates the years of education needed to understand a piece of writing in English, formulated by McLaughlin (1969). The reading passages chosen for the participants to summarise in this research had been tested for their readability by using the SMOG Calculator, which instantly assesses an entire text, available at (<http://www.harrymclaughlin.com/SMOG.htm>).

Learning style preferences for summary writing refer to the participants' feelings of satisfaction with summary writing through either individualistic or cooperative learning as measured by the preference questionnaire developed by the researcher using Likert's 5 rating scales, and interpretation of preferences based on Best (1970).

The current research compared the participants' progressions on the summary writing pretests and posttests of the individualistic and cooperative learning methods. It also investigated whether the participants made more accurate statements and fewer

distortions on the cooperative learning posttest than those on the pretest. In addition, the participants' grammatical errors on the cooperative learning pretest and posttest of summary writing were compared. Finally, the participants' preferences for the cooperative learning method over the individualistic learning method were studied.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

The review of the related literature is divided into three sections, namely, summary writing, cooperative learning, and related research on cooperative summary writing. Discussed in the first part are requirements for a good summary, some EFL summarising constraints, summary writing and reading comprehension, and problems in summary writing. In the second part, some theoretical perspectives on and principles of cooperative learning are described, as well as roles of teachers and students in the cooperative learning method. And finally, in the third part, the related research on cooperative writing and individualistic summary writing is presented.

Summary Writing

Requirements for a good summary

A major goal of the language learning process is to develop in the language learner the ability to understand concepts and restate them in different words. Summarising provides the language learner with valuable practice in searching for meaning and communicating that meaning. One vital skill that the learner needs for summarising is the art of condensing and presenting only salient information, compressing large amounts of words, giving only the gist of a passage without changing the meaning of the original (Jamieson, 1999; Oshima & Hogue, 1999, p. 94; Raimes, 1983, p. 58; Wong, 1981, p.13). Kirkland and Saunders (1991, p. 108) have found that in order to render satisfactory summaries, EFL students must have adequate

control of grammar, vocabulary, and writing skills to express the ideas obtained from the reading and comprehension of the source.

Temiyanon (n.d., pp. 80-81) reiterates the concept in much the same way. She states that summary writing usually involves a reading activity. Before writing a summary, one must understand the message of the source and select only the main points for summarisation. For EFL learners, the challenge of summary writing includes accuracy, conciseness, and word choice. The purpose of summary writing is to briefly present the ideas put forward without distortion or plagiarism. It is suggested that the main idea and major detail be combined, and minor detail excluded.

Components of a good assignment summary include (1) a balanced coverage of the original (Swales & Feak, 1994, pp 105-106); (2) condensed, original information presented in the summary writer's own words (Swales & Feak, 1994, pp 105-106; Hodges & Laws, 1967; Donley, 1975); (3) accuracy of the source content without additional opinions (Hodges & Laws, 1967; Donley, 1975); and (4) an appropriate length of $\frac{1}{3}$ or $\frac{1}{2}$ the length of the source, or as required by the reader (Hodges & Laws, 1967).

In general, summary writing specialists are in agreement with regard to summarising practices. Main ideas and supporting details are to be identified. Some words must be paraphrased without distorting the original meaning. All the main ideas must be included and combined for conciseness where possible, and key words should be used in the summary.

Some EFL Summarising Constraints

Summarising is a highly complex activity. EFL students are confronted with a number of issues pertaining to summarisation. These are categorised as either external or internal constraints.

In order to maximise student performance in summary writing, as suggested by Kirkland and Saunders, external and internal constraints, the two factors adversely affecting their summarising performance should be considered (Kirkland & Saunders, 1991, pp. 105-114).

External constraints are factors such as the purpose and audience of the assignment, features of the assignment itself, discourse community conventions, nature of the material to be summarised, time constraints, and the environment in which the EFL student must function. One of the external constraints frequently discussed is the nature of the material to be summarised. Some EFL students have found that summarising material of a paragraph or so in length is more difficult than summarising an article or section of an article because of the structure or language of the shorter segment. The important factor may be second language (L2) proficiency and not the text length that creates difficulty for EFL students (Kirkland & Saunders, 1991, p. 107).

Internal constraints consist of L2 proficiency, content schemata, affect, formal schemata, cognitive skills and metacognitive skills, all of which are important. However, L2 proficiency seems to be fundamental to successful summarising. EFL students who are limited in the control of grammar, vocabulary, and writing skills are unlikely to paraphrase or retain the original meanings of the source texts.

In teaching summarising, Kirkland and Saunders (1991, pp. 107-109) recommend limiting external constraints to prevent “cognitive overload” and allow students “cognitive space” to focus on improving their skills. And in designing

summary assignments, they suggest selection of texts with patterns that are manageable for EFL students.

In short, EFL students have both external and internal constraints to encounter. While external factors such as features of the assignment, nature of the material to be summarised, and time constraints can be maneuvered, it is internal constraints such as language proficiency, schemata and cognitive skills that the students often find overpowering. The teacher is therefore advised to limit the former constraints so as to allow the students to focus on developing their summarising skills.

Summary Writing and Reading Comprehension

As Wong (1981, p.19) indicates that summary writing is a test of comprehension, Jamieson (1999) also states that one cannot write a good summary of a source without understanding it, that summary writing is a reading strategy that helps with comprehension of a source text, there seems to be a strong connection between summary writing and reading comprehension as seen in a number of research studies.

In the first study, Edwards and Chard (2000) created a sample language arts/history curriculum based on state curriculum standards and implemented it in a classroom for 22 secondary students with emotional/behavioural disorders in a residential treatment program. Their emphasis on the use of story elements and narrative summary writing resulted in improvements in both summary writing skills and academic engagement.

Similarly successful was an investigation of the learning experiences of 23 Japanese students in a one-year academic exchange programme in a Canadian university, conducted by Shi and Beckett (2002). In it, the participants either wrote an opinion task or a summary task at the beginning of the programme using preselected

source texts. Analyses of interview data and comparisons of the original and revised texts indicated that the participants revised their drafts to use more words of their own and to follow the direct English style, indicating comprehension of the source texts.

For most middle school-level students, summarising main ideas could prove to be difficult, especially for those with low vocabulary and language acquisition skills. However, students who were English language learners in a special education programme demonstrated striking improvements as Honnert and Bozan (2005) discovered that teaching summarisation as a reading strategy increased the students' abilities to (a) acquire and use information and (b) better comprehend science concepts. In combination with other vocabulary attainment activities, summary frames enhanced the students' ability to apply information to discussions, laboratory reports, and projects, proving that there was a strong connection between summarising and reading comprehension.

The fifth study in the discussion of the connection between summarising and reading comprehension was a pilot study on the effects of reading tasks on Chinese EFL students' reading comprehension conducted by Zhou and Siriyothin (2008). They hypothesised that the students of the experimental group, reading with summary writing and reading with journal writing would show better reading ability than those of the control group, reading with no writing. Participants of the pilot study were 72 third-year English majors from three classes. Of these, 50 (69.4%) were females and 22 (30.6%) males. All the students were high school graduates and were currently pursuing a university degree. The results of the students' written feedback on Unit Five showed that 71% (17 out of 24) of the students from the group of reading with summary writing had positive attitudes towards the tasks they had done. For Unit Six, the number was similar in that 82% of the students (18 out of 22, two absent)

commented positively about their tasks. One of the comments was that writing summaries helped them reorganise the text they had read. Some complained that because they were not required to write summaries on a regular basis, they had forgotten how to summarise appropriately. The participants also recommended that a short lecture be given on the format of a good summary.

As evidenced by the above research, summary writing is an effective reading instruction. When combined with story elements, it brings about improvements in summarising skills and academic engagement. Summary writing instruction is also an effective reading strategy that equips the students with better skills to acquire and use information as well as to understand science concepts. Moreover, the students' ability to apply the information to other academic activities has also been enhanced by summarising practice. And lastly, with appropriate summarising instruction, the students were found to have positive attitudes towards summarising tasks, and to be able to successfully paraphrase texts by using their own words in their summaries.

Problems in Summary Writing

Examined in this section are some of the problems in EFL summary writing found in research studies. EFL learners have been alleged with lacking effective summarising skills, using source without citing references, using "Near Copies" in their paraphrase, and finally, lacking attention to aspects of form, content, and audience.

The first study reviewed in this section was conducted by Kim (2001). The purpose of the study was to examine 70 Korean EFL first-year university students' summarising skill. The researcher selected two English expository texts: Texts A and B, from a college-level ESL reading book for the participants to summarise. Text A

was supposedly easier than Text B. Data collected from two summaries were analysed in terms of the content idea units in the summary, the idea units on four levels of importance, use of three summarisation rules (deletion, selection, and transformation), and accuracy. The results reveal that the participants were sensitive to importance, though not fully. The most frequently used rule was *deletion*, and the least frequently used rule was *transformation*. Data analysis has also revealed that text difficulty can affect the summary writer's behaviour. The results have indicated that Korean EFL students do not possess effective summarisation skills and are in need of appropriate instruction and practice to improve these skills.

Second, in the report of her research study, Shi (2004) examined how first language and the type of writing task affect undergraduates' word usage from source readings in their English writing. Of 87 participating university undergraduates, 39 were native English speakers from a first-year writing course in a North American university, whereas 48 were third-year Chinese students learning English as a second language in a university in China. Using two preselected source texts, half of the students in each group completed a *summary task*; the other half completed an *opinion task*. Student drafts and the source texts were compared to identify whether the students borrowed strings of words from the sources with or without acknowledgement. A two-way analysis of variance has indicated that both *task* and *first language* had an effect on the amount of words borrowed. The study has found that students who did the *summary task* borrowed more words than those who wrote the *opinion essays*, and that Chinese students used source texts mostly without citing references for either task.

Another problem frequently found in summary writing is the use of paraphrase. Paraphrasing is considered by many to be an important skill for academic writing, and some have argued that the teaching of paraphrasing might help students avoid copying

from source texts. Few studies, however, have investigated the ways in which both L1 and L2 academic writers already use paraphrasing as a textual borrowing strategy when completing their academic assignments. To better understand university students' paraphrasing strategies, Keck (2006) analysed L1 ($n = 79$) and L2 ($n = 74$) writers' use of paraphrase within a summary task and developed a method for classifying these paraphrases into four major Paraphrase Types: Near Copy, Minimal Revision, Moderate Revision, and Substantial Revision. The study then compared the L1 and L2 writers' use of these Paraphrase Types within their summaries. It was found that, while both groups used about five paraphrases per summary, L2 writers used significantly more Near Copies than L1 writers. In contrast, the summaries of L1 writers contained significantly more Moderate and Substantial Revisions than those of the L2 writers. The research results implied that future studies should be conducted of students' textual borrowing strategies with emphasis on issues involving plagiarism and the teaching of paraphrasing in university writing classrooms.

The final study reviewed in this section was carried out at the pedagogic practitioners' level by Halleck and Connor (2006), who, in their report on a research study on TESOL professionals' summary writing of successful conference proposals, described the genre characteristics of the one-page "summary" in the TESOL conference proposal, using a corpus of proposals submitted to the 1996 TESOL Conference. They identified rhetorical moves in each proposal ("territory," "gap," "goal," "means," "reporting previous research," "outcomes," "benefits," "competence claim," "importance claim") and compared the use of these moves in proposals of three different subgenres (Research, Pedagogical and Administrative). The art of writing a successful conference proposal is an important task for many TESOL professionals because if the proposal is not accepted, they will not be able to present

their paper, and thus may not be able to get funds to attend the conference. The discoveries found in the study should help writers of proposals for future conferences attend to aspects of form, content and audience of conference proposals.

The above literature reveals only some of the problems encountered by summary writers, especially by EFL learners across the board. The challenging areas include overall summarising skills, stating the main ideas, borrowing strings of words from the source without acknowledgement, use of paraphrase types, textual borrowing strategies, and plagiarism. And the pedagogic practitioners' problems in summary writing of conference proposals include attention to aspects of form, content and audience.

Cooperative Learning

Theoretical Perspectives on Cooperative Learning

Theoretical perspectives and concepts on language pedagogy in terms of their overlap with cooperative learning discussed in this section include sociocultural theory and affective factors.

Sociocultural theory. The ideas of Vygotsky (Jacobs & Hannah, 2004, citing Vygotsky, 1978) and related scholars have been accepted by many educators as critical for language pedagogy. Vygotsky's sociocultural theory sees humans not as isolated individuals, but as culturally and historically situated. It emphasises the ways that we help each other learn, rather than learning on our own. This help can be called scaffolding.

Scaffolding refers to the support provided as buildings are being constructed. It provides "contextual supports for meaning through the use of simplified language,

teacher modeling, visuals and graphics, cooperative learning and hands-on learning” (Ovando, Collier, & Combs, 2003, p. 345). The teacher of second or foreign language learners has to facilitate that support. And eventually, “as students become more proficient, the scaffold is gradually removed” (Diaz-Rico & Weed, 2002, p. 85). Scaffolding especially effective for second language learners are of three types (Bradley & Bradley, 2004), namely, (1) Simplifying the language: The teacher can make the language easier for the learners to understand by shortening the reading material, using the present tense and avoiding difficult vocabulary; (2) Asking for completion, not generation: The teacher can provide a list of possible answers for students to choose or let them complete a partially finished outline or paragraph; and (3) Using visuals: The teacher can present information through the use of graphic organizers, tables, charts, outlines, and graphs and ask for students to respond

Scaffolding can be given to a student by teachers, more capable classmates and even by students at or below that student’s current level. When teachers use cooperative learning, their aim is to enable students to work towards groups in which scaffolding takes place (Jacobs & Hannah, 2004). In a cooperative learning group, the members care about each other, and use the skills to help one another.

Both cooperative learning and sociocultural theory attempt to build an environment that fosters mutual aid. As Newman and Holtzman (Jacobs & Hannah, 2004, citing Newman & Holtzman, 1993, p. 77) note:

Vygotsky’s strategy was essentially a cooperative learning strategy. He created heterogeneous groups of ... children (he called them a collective), providing them not only with the opportunity but the need for cooperation and joint activity by giving them tasks that were beyond the developmental level of some, if not all, of them.

These children learn to solve problems, some of which are at their real capacity, through the teacher's guidance or more capable peers. The learning activity which helps children solve harder problems and reach their potential development level is social activity such as group work similar to cooperative learning.

Affective factors. The term "affect" is used to imply a wide range of phenomena involving emotions, moods, dispositions, and preferences (Oatley & Jenkins, 1996, p. 124). It is important to understand affect in language learning for two reasons. First, attention to affect can lead to more effective language learning. Second, the result of attention or lack of attention to affect reaches beyond language teaching.

Success in learning depends not only on cognitive factors, but also on the environment in which instruction takes place, as well as the students' perception of the educational context they find themselves in. As an attempt to "educate the whole student," Goleman (1995) proposes that both the cognitive functions as well as the emotional functions be equally dealt with in all subjects and all educational institutions so that the student may be cognitively as well as emotionally literate. It is believed that overly negative emotions such as anxiety, fear, stress, anger or depression can reduce learning capacity, while positive emotional factors such as self-esteem, empathy or motivation can be used to greatly enhance the language learning process (Arnold & Brown, 1999). Therefore, affective factors require attention in foreign language learning as well as in any approach to instructional methods (Jacobs & Hannah, 2004; Jacobs & McCafferty, 2006, pp. 27-29).

Individual learners' affective factors are very important for foreign language learning. In general, learning English as a foreign language in non-English speaking countries usually takes place in the classroom, where the teacher is the direct organiser

and carrier of a language class. It is a disadvantage for the EFL students as well as a serious obstacle to these students' advanced EFL acquisition when they do not have the opportunity to be in contact with native speakers and the culture of the target language (James, 1990). Traditional EFL teaching has been teacher-centred, emphasising the cognitive aspect and ignoring the emotional communication between students. This often results in a common phenomenon called emotional illiteracy (Goleman, 1995), which is harmful to language learning and students' all-round development (Qin, 2007).

Over the past two decades, however, teaching EFL has been impacted by one of the mainstreams of contemporary educational theories and practices namely Humanism, of which cooperative learning is one approach (Huitt, n.d.). Humanism emphasises the importance of the learner's affect and places the individual's thought, feelings and emotions at the forefront of all human development. The learner-centred humanistic approach to foreign language teaching assumes that students learn a foreign language best when they are treated as individuals with their own characters, both in cognition and in affect or specific needs. The role of the teacher in the learner-centred approach shifts from that of instructor towards that of facilitator, thus playing a more important role in developing student positive affective state. The learner-centred approach stresses the importance of a learning environment, which minimises anxiety and enhances personal security. With this approach, the teacher creates a supportive, non-threatening atmosphere for the learners so they can study non-defensively and therefore, effectively (Huitt, n.d.; Gage and Berliner, 1991; Huitt, 2009). Humanistic education stresses the need to unite the cognitive and affective domains in order to educate the whole person. The target of humanistic education is to develop human beings' ability in every aspect, intelligence and personality alike (Qin, 2007).

As a humanistic approach to education, cooperative learning may improve the affective climate and promote language learning in the following instances. (a) When working in supportive cooperative learning groups, students may feel less anxious and more willing to take risks (Jacobs & McCafferty, 2006, citing Tsui, 1996; Crandall, 1999, p. 234); (b) When students feel that group members are relying on them, they may feel more motivated to make the effort needed to maximise learning (Jacobs & McCafferty, 2006, citing Long & Porter, 1985, p. 211; Crandall, 1999, pp. 234-235); and (c) An increase in self-confidence and self-esteem gained from working in supportive cooperative learning groups will lead to students' increased effort in language learning and a greater willingness to continue trying to make their views understood (Crandall, 1999, p. 234).

Indeed, both sociocultural theory and cooperative learning seek to encourage mutual support in the cooperative groups. When the students work in supportive cooperative learning groups, affective factors are positively taken care of, and the students feel less anxious and more motivated to learn.

Principles of Cooperative Learning

Cooperative learning (e.g. Kagan, 1986) is also known as collaborative learning (e.g. Bruffee, 1984) (Murray, 1993, citing Kagan, 1986; Bruffee, 1984). It is a body of concepts and techniques for helping to maximise the benefits of cooperation among students. There is no one generally accepted version of cooperative learning. In fact, different theoretical perspectives on learning, for example, socio-cultural theory, social psychology and Piagetian developmental psychology, have contributed to the development of different approaches to cooperative learning (Jacobs & Hannah,

2004; McCafferty, Jacobs, & DaSilva , 2006, pp. 9-17). With this background, various principles have been proposed in the cooperative learning literature (for example, Johnson & Johnson, 1994, Kagan, 1994; Slavin, 1995). Some essential elements of cooperative learning are:

1. **Collaborative Skills** (Johnson & Johnson, 1994, pp. 186-187; Jacobs, Lee & Ball, 1995, pp. 18-19; Jacobs & Hannah, 2004). Collaborative skills are those needed to work with others. Some of the skills important to successful collaboration are checking that others understand, asking for and giving reasons, disagreeing politely and responding politely to disagreement and encouraging others to participate and responding to encouragement to participate. Students in a cooperative learning group will have an opportunity to practise these skills.

2. **Group Autonomy** (Jacobs & Hannah, 2004; McCafferty, Jacobs, & DaSilva Iddings, 2006, p. 26). This principle encourages students to look to themselves for resources rather than relying primarily on the teacher. When student groups are having difficulty, teachers may want to intervene either in a particular group or with the entire class. For example, if they need clarification or an explanation of a key word or concept, intervention should not be the first option. Students can provide input modification for each other, and they should be trusted to do the tasks they are responsible for.

3. **Simultaneous Interaction** (Kagan, 1994; Jacobs & Hannah, 2004). In classrooms in which group activities are not used, the normal interaction pattern is that of sequential interaction, in which one person at a time – usually the teacher – speaks. In contrast, when group activities are used, one student per group is speaking. If the class is working in groups of two (or pairs) 20 students may be speaking simultaneously.

4. **Equal Participation** (Kagan, 1994; Jacobs & Hannah, 2004). A frequent problem in groups is that one or two group members dominate the group and, for whatever reason, hinder the participation of others. Cooperative learning offers many ways of promoting equal participation in groups. Two of these are the use of rotating roles in a group, such as facilitator, recorder, questioner, encourager of participation and paraphraser, and the use of tasks that require a range of abilities, such as drawing, acting and categorizing, rather than only language abilities.

5. **Individual Accountability** (Johnson & Johnson, 1994, pp. 86-89; Jacobs, Lee & Ball, 1995, pp. 20-21; Jacobs & Hannah, 2004). Individual accountability is the other side of equal participation. When equal participation is encouraged in groups, everyone should be made to feel they have opportunities to take part in the group. When *individual accountability* is encouraged, no one should attempt to avoid using those opportunities. Techniques for encouraging *individual accountability* help to avoid the problem of social loafers, sleeping partners or free riders.

6. **Positive Interdependence** (Johnson & Johnson, 1994; Jacobs, Lee & Ball, 1995; Jacobs & Hannah, 2004). This principle is central to cooperative learning. When positive interdependence exists among members of a group, they feel that they cannot succeed unless the other members of the group do, and *vice versa*. They also perceive mutual benefits and share their resources to support and encourage one another to celebrate their joint success when their common goal is achieved.

Johnson and Johnson (1994) suggest a number of ways to structure positive interdependence in a learning group. Some of these are:

a) **Positive goal interdependence:** The group has a common learning goal and works together to achieve it. All members of the group must learn the assigned material and care about how much each other learns.

b) **Positive role interdependence:** Each group member is assigned complementary and interconnected roles with responsibilities to complete the task. Apart from the roles mentioned above, there are also housekeeping types of roles, such as timekeeper who reminds the group of time limits, and checker who checks to see that everyone understands what the group is doing or has done.

c) **Positive resource interdependence:** Each group member has a portion of the resources, information, or material required for the task to be completed. For the group to attain its goal, their resources must be combined or shared.

d) **Positive reward interdependence:** If groups meet a pre-set goal, they receive some kind of reward. Rewards can take many forms such as bonus points, sweets, certificates, praise, the chance to do their team cheer or handshake or just a feeling of satisfaction. Celebrating group efforts and success regularly enhances the quality of cooperation.

Roles in Cooperative Learning

The roles of the teacher and the learner are different in cooperative learning from those in the traditional classroom. Students and teachers new to cooperative learning will need to make adjustments to assimilate to this new learning technique.

The role of the cooperative learner. The teacher can delegate authority to students in cooperative learning groups. Each learner is expected to (1) make constructive contributions to the group's efforts, (2) encourage other group members to contribute, (3) keep one another on task, working towards their common goal, (4) compromise by resolving interpersonal problems in the group, and (5) treat each other with care and respect, and make every effort to teach and learn from each other (Flowers & Ritz, 1994).

The role of the cooperative learning teacher. The cooperative learning teacher might appear to have less work than one who uses the traditional teaching method since the students in the cooperative learning groups learn from each other (Dahley, 1994; Flowers & Ritz, 1994). In fact, the responsibilities of the teacher who uses cooperative learning are manifold. They include (1) planning lessons, activities, and evaluation; (2) grouping students; (3) placing students in groups; (4) presenting and explaining the task to the students; (5) monitoring group activities and intervening when necessary; (6) helping students with social skills; and (7) evaluating students (Flowers & Ritz, 1994). The cooperative learning teacher fades in the background and becomes a guide, coach and facilitator after the lesson is implemented (Dahley, 1994; Halas, 1996; Hertz-Lazarowitz, 2008).

The cooperative learning practices employed in this research study were based on the principles and techniques proposed by Kagan (1994): *Simultaneous Interaction* and *Equal Participation*. The principles of *positive interdependence* and *individual accountability* (Johnson & Johnson, 1994), the very heart of cooperative learning, were also emphasised. During each lesson with the cooperative learning intervention, the participants in the study were assigned a reading passage to summarise in groups of four with mixed ability. The group members were given the roles of facilitator, questioner, paraphraser, and recorder respectively, rotating the roles as appropriate. The cooperative group task was carefully structured to ensure equal participation, and each group member was periodically reminded that they had an important contribution to make towards the completion of the group's task.

To sum up, cooperative learning reflects sociocultural perspectives in all classroom discussions and group work. Supportive cooperative learning groups improve the affective climate in the classroom and help the students feel motivated to

learn while discussing with peers. New ideas can be generated and learning increased as a result. In addition, the students in supportive cooperative learning groups, with the teacher's guidance, have the opportunities to develop collaborative skills, and practise group autonomy, simultaneous interaction, individual accountability and the various types of positive interdependence. Moreover, equal participation can be encouraged by keeping the groups small. And finally, learners and teachers employing the cooperative learning method have specific roles to take. The learners make constructive contributions to their cooperative learning groups and learn from each other for greater gains on academic achievements while the teacher tailors the contents or explanations to fit the immediate needs of the learners and becomes a guide, coach and facilitator rather than the instructor.

Related Research on Collaborative and Summary Writing

Discussed in this section are (a) four research studies on collaborative writing, (b) one study on independent summary writing, and their findings.

Studies on Collaborative Writing

The following studies on collaborative writing employs techniques of peer-editing, critiquing, read aloud, peer-interview, co-authoring, interactive and group writing, and classroom-based collaborative writing.

Hart (1991) studied two groups of 20 students ($n = 40$) to determine whether peer-editing and critiquing techniques help to improve their writing skills during a semester at Gloucester County College. He selected two English Composition classes

by random sampling and placed them in an experimental group and a control group. Both groups took a 50-minute in-class pre-test (Essay 1). The experimental group used collaborative learning activities, including peer-editing, peer-criticism, read aloud and peer interview, while the control group received instruction through the traditional lecture approach. Twelve weeks later, both groups took a 50-minute in-class posttest (Essay 2). Two raters from the English Department simultaneously evaluated both the pre- and posttests using the holistic evaluation method based on the Educational Testing Service guidelines. There was no discrepancy in scores ranging from one through six rated by the two evaluators. The means and standard deviations of the pre-test were determined and analysed using a one-tailed *t*-test at a confidence level of .01. There was no significant difference between the pretest mean scores of the experimental and control groups. The means and standard deviations of the posttest were calculated and analysed also by using the *t*-test analysis. Hart's findings indicated that there is a positive relationship between peer-editing and the improvement of college students' writing skills.

Aghbar and Alam (1992) investigated the influence of co-authoring as a means to improve students' writing. They investigated co-authoring or full dyadic writing (FDW) to ascertain how it affects individual student's writing and to identify and examine the procedures they used in co-authoring. The students ($n = 31$) were from two English as a Second Language classes taught by the same instructor. Students self-selected a team member who spoke a different native language to form a dyad. These dyads collaborated on seven essays, with the first and fifth essays entirely co-authored. Aghbar and Alam used the instructor's evaluation as the measurement instrument. The findings indicated that the students performed better on the first FDW co-authored essay than on the following individual essay. There was no significant

difference between the second co-authored FDW essay and the next individual essay. The findings further indicated that the positive effects of FDW transferred to individual student writing. The co-authored essays were more clearly focussed and unified than the individually written essays.

Louth, McAllister and McAllister (1993) investigated the effects of two collaborative writing techniques (interactive and group writing) on college freshmen's writing ability and attitudes toward writing. Participants were 136 college freshmen enrolled in six sections of freshman composition taught by two teachers. Each teacher taught one section to write interactively, one section to use group writing, and one section to write independently over an 8-week period. In the 7th week, all participants wrote posttest essays using the technique employed in class. In the 8th week, all participants independently wrote posttest essays on the same subject as on the pretest. Trained graders rated pretests and posttest essays holistically without information on experimental conditions. An attitude survey was administered at the end of the semester to all groups. Though students in both collaborative conditions generally wrote better posttests than did students writing independently, there was no statistically significant difference between the collaborative and independent writers. However, attitude measures showed that participants in the collaborative conditions were significantly more pleased with their writing than were those who worked independently.

Although commonly used in language classrooms, pair and group work has rarely been investigated when students jointly produce written assignments. Storch (2005) studied the role of interaction in L2 learning by investigating classroom based collaborative writing. The participants (23 adult ESL students completing degree courses) were given a choice to write either in pairs or individually. Most of the

participants chose to work in pairs, but some chose to work individually. All pair work was audio-taped and all completed texts were collected. All pairs were also interviewed after class. The study compared texts produced by pairs with those produced by individual learners and investigated the nature of the writing processes evident in the pair talk. The study also elicited the learners' reflections on the experience of collaborative writing. It was found that pairs produced shorter but better texts in terms of task fulfilment, grammatical accuracy, and complexity. Collaboration granted students the opportunity to put ideas together and provide each other with feedback. Most students were positive about the experience, although some expressed some reservations about collaborative writing. The implication was that learners should be encouraged to participate in activities that engender collaboration and interaction.

Study on Individualistic Summary Writing

One research study on individualistic summary writing reviewed in this section was investigated by Sriratapai (1999). Her subjects (44 third-year English majors at SWU) were asked to summarise a problem-solution text in a class session individually. The summaries were then analysed with regard to the main idea, plagiarism, and distortion of the text. The findings indicated that most of the participants failed to catch all the main ideas of the essay, that an average of 50.76% of the topical ideas were stated in the summaries; 68.18% (30 / 44) of the students committed plagiarism, and 97.73% (43 / 44) of the students distorted the content of the text. The results of her study revealed that the major problem was the students' inability to present the main ideas in their summaries. The second most serious

problem was distortion of the original content. The implications were that the students' skills in both reading and writing needed improvements. With further paraphrasing practice, they might have been able to avoid plagiarism.

The review of the literature demonstrates that all cooperative efforts resulted in positive outcomes. Pair work was shorter and better in terms of task fulfillment, grammatical accuracy, and complexity. Cooperative activities such as peer-editing and peer criticism led to the improvement of cooperative writing skills. Moreover, co-authoring or Full Dyadic Writing (FDW) also showed transfer of positive effects to later individual writing, proving the hypothesis that co-authoring improved students' writing. Attitudinally, students in the cooperative conditions were significantly more pleased with their writing than were those who worked independently. Unfortunately, the final investigation, which was on individualistic summary writing, was reported to have unsatisfactory outcomes. In it, most participants failed to catch the main ideas, more than half plagiarised, and almost all of the 44 participants distorted the meaning of the original text.

The studies mentioned above claimed that collaborative writing improved the students' writing ability. So it seems logical that EFL teachers should employ the cooperative learning strategy to the teaching of summary writing to help students learn from working together. Therefore, investigating effects of cooperative learning on EFL university students summary writing should be beneficial to EFL teaching and learning.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter consists of the research design, a description of the research participants, the instruments and measurements for validity and reliability, and the data analysis procedure.

The Research Design

This research investigated effects of cooperative learning on EFL university student summary writing. Prior to the main study, a pilot pretest and posttest were administered and the summaries were rated by two qualified raters to test the reliability of the summary writing rubric and to assess inter-rater reliability of the two raters. To determine the effects of cooperative learning on the students in the main study, the posttest mean score of student summaries receiving instruction in the traditional individualistic method was compared with the posttest mean score of student summaries receiving instruction in the cooperative learning method. In the first phase, 19 participants formed a control group and took a summary writing pretest on “Discus Fish as Hobby” (412 words, SMOG Grade 13.33) before learning how to summarise a text. They took a posttest five weeks after learning to summarise individually. In the second phase, the participants formed an experimental group and were assigned a pretest before cooperative learning and a posttest after the cooperative learning intervention, using the reading passage “Should Wild Animals Be Kept as Pets” (451 words, SMOG Grade 13.76). Selection of the reading passages was based on three criteria, namely, (a) the participants’ schema, (b) the SMOG readability grade (McLaughlin, 2008), and (c)

the length of not more than 500 words, so that the participants could complete the reading and summary writing task in one class hour.

The research design is represented in Figure 1.

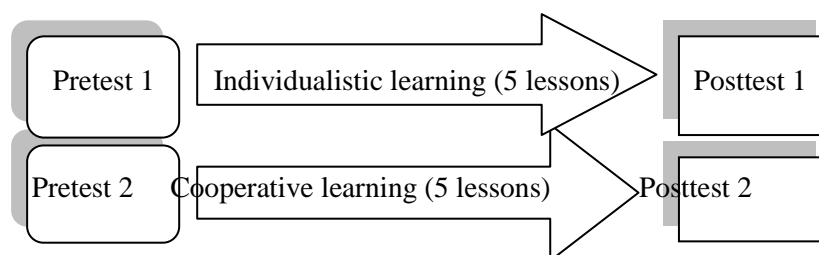


Figure 1. Research design.

The Research Participants

The participants of this study were one section of 19 third-year English majors enrolled in EN 332 at SWU in the second semester of the academic year 2008. Fifteen were female and four were male. They served the purpose of the study because one of the cooperative learning components requires group members that are heterogeneous, reflecting a mixture of achievement levels, gender and language ability (Jacobs, Lee & Ball, 1995, pp. 19-20). It was also appropriate because the participants were enrolled in the course designed for English majors to study reading and summarising. Their average age was 21. Some of these had also spent some time abroad. So, though they had been exposed to learning English for at least 10 years, the participants' experience with English varied. Generally, Thai students get to practise English only in English classes because outside of class they speak Thai. Most of the participants in this study (15, or 78.95%) preferred studying English in Thai, and only 4 of them (21.05%) preferred all English in class. Only 9 out of 19 (47%) liked to study reading and writing in English. The participants formed a control group during the first phase of the experiment or the

first half semester, reading and writing summaries through the traditional individualistic learning method. The control class lasted seven weeks, from 29th October, 2008 to 17th December, 2008. During the second phase or the latter half semester, they formed an experimental group, reading and writing summaries in a cooperative learning environment. The cooperative learning intervention began on 14th January, 2009, and ended on 25th February, 2009, seven weeks *in toto*. Apart from reading and learning to summarise selected texts in class, the students were assigned external reading and summarising to meet the course requirements.

The next section describes the experimental instruments and measurements for internal validity and reliability.

Instruments and Measurements

The instruments used in this study were the lesson plans, the summary writing pretests and posttests, the evaluation criteria, and the preference questionnaire.

The Lesson Plans

Two lesson plans were submitted to three specialists for approval. One lesson plan was for the control group: teaching summary writing through traditional individualistic classroom instruction, and the other, for the experimental group, teaching summary writing through the cooperative learning method. The difficulty of the language in the reading passages was commensurate with the participants' competence, based on the SMOG Readability Test formulated by McLaughlin (2008). The SMOG Grade indicates the level of readability of texts as follows.

0 – 6	low-literate
7 - 8	junior high school

9 - 11	some high school
12	high school graduate
13 - 15	some college
16	university degree
17 - 18	post-graduate studies
19+	post-graduate degree

Only one reading passage, **How English Became French**, was selected for the participants' individualistic summarising practice in the control group because the participants needed to be taught reading and summarising components and strategies such as outlining, paraphrasing, and some useful structures in summary writing before they summarised a text on their own. The passage was considered appropriate because it was of 475 words in length and its readability level was 11.66. The passage was retrieved from (<http://sts.zju.edu.cn/english2/unit3/Practical%20Writing.htm>).

Four reading passages were selected for the experimental group's summarising exercises during the cooperative learning intervention. The first in the selection, **The Four Wives**, is a motivational-inspirational narrative that encourages the reader to be mindful of the spiritual self (605 words, SMOG Grade 9.15, requiring some high school education). The second and third passages, **Our Changing Language** (536 words, SMOG Grade 12.17, requiring completion of high school education) and **The Influences of Travel** (495 words, SMOG Grade 12.98, requiring completion of high school education) are cause and effect essays requiring the reader to look at a situation and examine the causes for it. The last reading passage to be summarised in a cooperative learning group, **On Being Fat in America**, (351 words, SMOG Grade 14.75, requiring some college education) is a problem-solution text, of which the reader has to identify the problem and the solution before writing a summary.

The teaching sequences of the two learning methods.

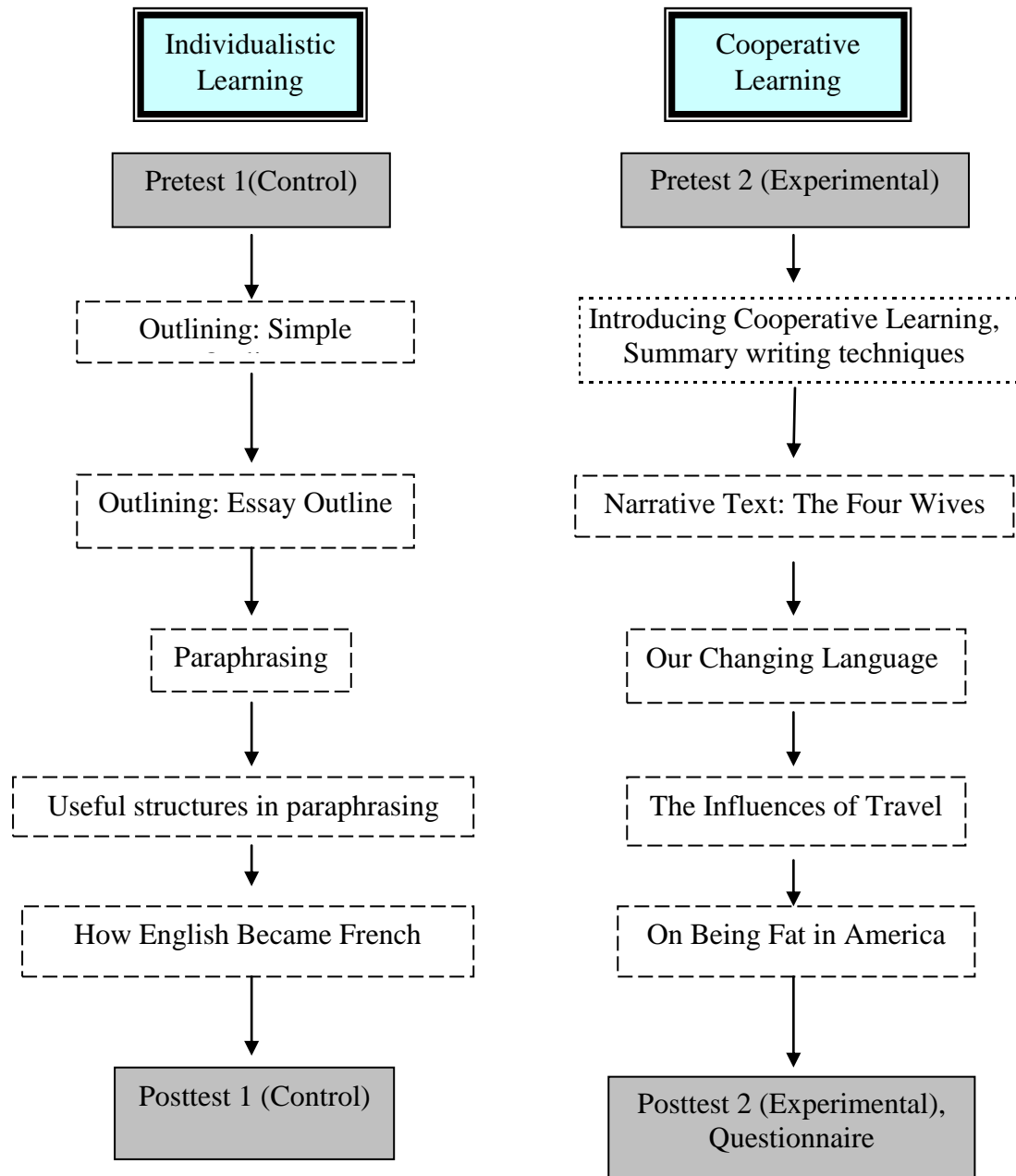


Figure 2. The teaching sequences of the two methods: individualistic and cooperative learning. The dashed-lined box indicates the writing practice after classroom instruction, and the opaque box shows the assessment.

The procedures and steps of teaching reading and summary writing using the two learning methods are described in Appendix A: Lesson Plans.

The summary writing pretests and posttests

The researcher presented a number of reading passages to three English language specialists who gave valuable input on selection of appropriate passages for the participants to take as pretests and posttests in the study. The two reading passages chosen were based on three criteria. (a) They were commensurate with the participants' schema, (b) tested for their readability by using the SMOG Calculator (McLaughlin, 2008), and (c) were of about 500 words so that the participants could complete the reading and summary writing task in one class hour. The passages chosen for the study are: for Individualistic Learning, **Discuss Fish as Hobby** (412 words, SMOG Grade 13.33); and for Cooperative Learning, **Should Wild Animals Be Kept as Pets?** (451 words, SMOG Grade 13.76).

Designing the rubric and assessment of reliability. The researcher studied a number of rubrics to evaluate student summaries and selected the summary writing evaluation generated by the Canadian National Adult Literacy Database (NALD) for this study because it measures areas that served summarising purposes, namely, purpose and form, organisation and style. However, the original Canadian NALD rubric does not measure grammar, which is a major problem for EFL students and other non-native English speakers. Therefore, the researcher adjusted the NALD summary writing evaluation to include an additional category to measure the participants' English grammar in their summaries. The criteria for summary writing evaluation are as follows.

<u>Category</u>	<u>Point</u>	<u>Percent</u>
1. Purpose and Form	4	25
2. Organisation	4	25
3. Style	4	25
4. Grammar and Mechanics	4	25
Total	16	100

After making adjustments to the evaluation criteria, the researcher submitted the rubric to the English language specialists at SWU Faculty of Humanities for review, feedback and approval. The detail of the rubric is given in Appendix B.

Assessment of validity and reliability. The researcher tried out one reading passage, *Discus Fish as Hobby*, on a pilot study group of 16 students during the first semester of 2008, prior to commencement of the main study in the second semester of the same academic year. The pilot pretest was administered in August 2008 and the posttest five weeks later in September, both during the first semester of 2008. The pilot group was given one hour to summarise the passage and their summaries were rated by two qualified raters to test the reliability of the summary writing rubric adapted from the Canadian National Adult Literacy Database (NALD) evaluation. The researcher calculated the scores of the two sets of the pilot group's summaries to find the mean scores and standard deviation, and used Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient to assess inter-rater reliability of the two raters. Table 1 presents the mean scores of the pilot pretest by the two raters, 7.625 and 7.781, with the correlation of .749.

Table 1

Pilot Pretest Results

Pretest	Mean \pm SD	Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)
Rater 1	7.625 \pm .8062	.749	.289
Rater 2	7.781 \pm .4070		

$n = 16$

The results of the pilot posttest rated by the two raters were 9.656 and 9.781, with the correlation of .986, the scores were therefore considered statistically reliable, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Pilot Posttest Results

Posttest	Mean \pm SD	Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)
Rater 1	9.656 \pm 1.2612	.986	.041
Rater 2	9.781 \pm 1.3162		

n = 16

Raters. The researcher trained five Thai teachers of English to use the summary writing rubric developed for this study. After two weeks of training, two were qualified to rate the pretests and posttests in this research study. The two raters held post-graduate qualifications, each with over ten years of experience teaching writing and other English courses at reputable, accredited universities in Thailand.

In short, the researcher selected two reading passages for the participants to use as pretests and posttests in this research study, established assessment criteria for the participants' summaries by making adjustments from the Canadian National Adult Literacy Database. The rubric was then pilot tested to find inter-rater reliability, and qualified raters were trained to use the rubric to assess the participants' pretests and posttests in this study.

The preference questionnaire

The researcher developed a questionnaire consisting of two parts. The first part contains two sections, the first of which asked the participants to provide demographic data such as age, gender, number of years studying English, and open-ended questions such as why they chose to major in English, which language they preferred as a medium of instruction in an English class, and which language skills they liked. The second section of the first part asked probing questions to gain more insight into and information about the participants' attitudes towards the two learning methods, individualistic and cooperative. The questions were: Do you like to work alone or in a cooperative learning group? Do you think you can write better summaries by yourself or do you write better with friends? It was expected that the participants' responses to these questions would provide useful detail on how they felt about the two learning styles. The second part of the questionnaire comprised 20 items, some of which might solicit more positive feelings towards cooperative learning. For example,

I feel that a summary by my group is more successful than a summary I did alone, and

I understand a reading passage better when I discuss it with others.

The other items were likely to appeal to those who preferred individualistic learning, such as,

I feel that group activities waste a lot of time and are unnecessary, and

I don't like asking someone else's opinion in class.

The participants were asked to indicate the level of their agreement to each of the statements on a scale of 1 to 5, in accordance with the Likert's 5 rating scales.

Designing the preference questionnaire and assessment of validity. The researcher proposed a 30-item preference questionnaire to evaluate the third-year English majors' preferences for summary writing through the cooperative learning method using

Likert's 5 rating scales. It was then submitted to three specialists/instructors of English at SWU Faculty of Humanities, who judged each item by using the following criteria to determine whether it was congruent with the objective of the test.

+ 1 = the item contained content validity.

0 = the item might not be valid.

- 1 = the item was an invalid construct.

After the specialists rated all the items, the researcher used the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) formula to evaluate content validity at the item development stage.

$$IOC = \Sigma R / N$$

ΣR = the total score for each item given by all the specialists,

N = the number of specialists reviewing the item validity

Of the 30 items, 10 with the indices of $IOC < 0.5$ were discarded, and 20 with the $IOC \geq 0.5$ were used in the questionnaire. Table 3 presents the ratings of each item by the three specialists.

Table 3

IOC Ratings

Item No.	Expert 1 Rating	Expert 2 Rating	Expert 3 Rating	Total	IOC	Remarks
1	1	1	1	3	1	Accepted
2	1	0	1	2	0.66	Accepted
3	1	1	1	3	1	Accepted
4	1	1	1	3	1	Accepted
5	1	1	1	3	1	Accepted
6	1	0	1	2	0.66	Accepted
7	1	1	1	3	1	Accepted
8	1	0	1	2	0.66	Accepted
9	0	1	1	2	0.66	Accepted
10	1	1	1	3	1	Accepted
11	1	1	1	3	1	Accepted
12	1	0	1	2	0.66	Accepted
13	1	1	1	3	1	Accepted

(Table continues)

(Table continued)

Item No.	Expert 1 Rating	Expert 2 Rating	Expert 3 Rating	Total	IOC	Remarks
14	0	1	1	2	0.66	Accepted
15	0	1	1	2	0.66	Accepted
16	0	1	1	2	0.66	Accepted
17	1	0	1	2	0.66	Accepted
18	1	1	1	3	1	Accepted
19	1	1	1	3	1	Accepted
20	1	0	1	2	0.66	Accepted

Average IOC 20 items = 0.83

The 20-item questionnaire was tried out on a sample drawn from the same population as the main study. The respondents were a group of 16 third-year university English majors. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was then calculated for internal consistency reliability, and the result of data analysis of Cronbach's alpha was .678. The questionnaire was used with the main study group at the end of the quasi experiment to find out the degree to which the participants preferred the cooperative learning method.

Data Analysis Procedures

This quasi experimental study was guided by the alternative hypothesis which held that the participants would achieve higher scores on the summary writing posttest than those on the pretest of the respective individualistic and cooperative learning methods, and that the progression obtained from cooperative learning would be higher than that obtained while learning individually. It was also hypothesised that the posttest mean scores of accuracy, distortions, and grammatical errors made by the participants while participating in the cooperative learning method would be significantly higher than those of the pretest. The level of statistically significant difference was set at .05.

The researcher taught the participants reading and summarising in consonance with the research design. Data were collected from November 2008 to February 2009 from the two sets of summary writing pretest and posttest.

The researcher applied the paired samples *t* – test in the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) in the statistical analysis to find a significant difference in the participants’ mean scores, standard deviation, and progression between the pretest and posttest of the individualistic learning method and the pretest and posttest of the cooperative learning method.

Calculation of progression. To calculate the participants’ progression of the two learning methods, the researcher studied Hake (1999)’s equation of gain percentage. The average normalized gain <g> for a course is defined as the ratio of the actual average gain (%posttest - %pretest) to the maximum possible average gain (100 - %pretest) as shown in Hake’s equation:

$$\text{Gain percentage} = \frac{(\%posttest - \% pretest)}{(100 - \% pretest)}$$

Further, the paired samples *t* - test was used to find the mean scores and standard deviations of the number of accurate idea units, distortions, and grammatical errors committed by the participants. And finally, descriptive statistics was used to present the mean, standard deviation and median of the participants’ response to each statement made on the preference questionnaire.

Preference data analysis. The questionnaire containing the participants’ responses to the 20 statements made in relation to learning style preferences for summary writing was statistically analysed. Each item was evaluated for mean, standard deviation, median, and standard error of mean. Criteria for interpretation of the participants’ responses based on Best (1970, pp. 201-204) are as follows.

<u>Mean</u>	<u>Median</u>	<u>Participants' preferred learning method</u>
1.00 – 1.50	1	Individualistic learning strongly preferred
1.51 – 2.50	2	Individualistic learning preferred
2.51 – 3.50	3	Indifferent (Undecided)
3.51 – 4.50	4	Cooperative learning preferred
4.51 – 5.00	5	Cooperative learning strongly preferred

Ethical Issues

The researcher obtained permission from the class instructor and the English Department of Srinakharinwirot University to teach the students enrolled in the relevant course to conduct the current study.

The participants in this research were fully informed of the nature and purpose of the research, the procedures, and expected benefits to the participants. The consent document was written in simple English, and the participants voluntarily gave the researcher consent in writing after having had the opportunity to ask any pertinent questions and have them answered by the researcher. To ensure confidentiality or anonymity of the participants, pseudonyms were used and all data collected and stored are accessible only to the researcher.

Conclusion

To investigate effects of cooperative learning on EFL university student summary writing in this study, the participants' scores were analysed by paired samples *t* – test to indicate statistical significance. The alternative hypotheses of the study were that the participants would achieve higher scores on the posttest than those on the pretests, and that the participants' progression while in cooperative learning would be significantly

different from that while using the individualistic learning method. It was further hypothesised that the participants would produce more accurate idea units, fewer distortions and fewer grammatical errors on the posttest than those on the pretests. The *t* - test was applied to find a significant difference in the participants' progression revealed in the results of the pretests and posttests of the two learning methods. The criterion level for determining statistical significance for these hypotheses is the confidence level of $p < .05$. And finally, the mean and median of the individual items on the preference questionnaire were studied to find whether the participants preferred cooperative learning over individualistic learning.

The research findings, which include comparing pretest and posttest mean scores and testing of research hypotheses, are presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

This chapter presents the research findings of the 19 participants' summary writing performances. The research objectives set in Chapter 1 are recapitulated in relation to the data obtained, and the findings are tabulated and summarily discussed.

The first research objective was to compare the participants' progressions on the summary writing pretest and posttest of the individualistic and cooperative learning methods. To compare the progressions of the participants' scores, the researcher used the paired samples *t* - test to find mean scores and standard deviations of the two sets of tests. The results of the participants' individualistic summary writing pretest and posttest are displayed in Table 4.

Table 4

Results of Individualistic Learning Pretest and Posttest

	Mean \pm SD	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i> -value	Mean difference
Individualistic Pretest	7.566 \pm .6914	-6.077	.000	1.789
Individualistic Posttest	9.355 \pm 1.5123			

n = 19

The paired samples *t* - test reveals a significant difference between the pretest and posttest of the individualistic learning method at *p*-value < .01, and *t* = -6.077, with the mean of posttest scores higher than that of the pretest scores (individualistic pretest mean = 7.566; individualistic posttest mean = 9.355). The difference of the two mean scores (9.355 –

7.566) is 1.789, meaning the participants made a significant improvement in their summary writing performance while learning individualistically. With this result, the hypothesis that the participants achieved higher scores on the individualistic summary writing posttest than those on the pretest was confirmed.

The results of the participants' summary writing pretest and posttest of the cooperative learning method are presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Results of the Pretest and Posttest of the Cooperative Learning Method

	Mean \pm SD	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i> -value	Mean difference
Cooperative Learning Pretest	8.079 \pm 1.3335	-9.445	.000	3.408
Cooperative Learning Posttest	11.487 \pm 2.0875			

$n = 19$

With regard to cooperative learning, results of the paired samples *t* - test reveal the posttest score (mean = 11.487) as higher than the pretest score (mean = 8.079). This difference is also statistically significant at *p*-value < .01, and *t* = -9.445. The difference of the two mean scores (11.487 – 8.079) is 3.408, meaning the participants made a significant improvement while participating in the cooperative learning method. The results supported the hypothesis that the participants achieved significantly higher scores on the summary writing posttest than those on the pretest in the cooperative learning method.

To compare the participants' progression or the average normalized gain <g> of the two learning methods, the actual learning gain obtained for their summary writing of each learning method was calculated by subtracting the pretest percentage from the posttest

percentage. The maximum possible gain is 100% minus the pretest percentage. The results are displayed in Table 6.

Table 6

Comparison of Progressions of the Two Learning Methods

	Mean \pm SD	Median	SE	Min	Max
Individualistic Gain	.21 \pm .15	.17	.04	.00	.50
Cooperative Gain	.50 \pm .21	.53	.05	.05	.75

$n = 19$

If we assume that the average normalised gain $\langle g \rangle$ is a valid measure of the average effectiveness in promoting student summary writing ability, it appears that, on average, the cooperative learning method is twice as effective in helping students learn summary writing as the traditional individualistic learning method since individualistic $\langle g \rangle = .21 \pm .15$ SD and cooperative $\langle g \rangle = .50 \pm .21$ SD. The compared medians of the two methods (.53 - .17) exhibit a difference of .36, more than twice the value of .17, which is the individualistic learning median. The cooperative learning method, which generates the higher median, is therefore considered more effective than the individualistic learning method, confirming the first hypothesis that the progression obtained from cooperative learning would be higher than that obtained while learning individualistically.

Sample actual gains achieved by selected individual participants are displayed in Table 7.

Table 7

Progressions of the Individualistic (IL) and Cooperative Learning (CL) Methods

Proficiency Level	Student Name	% IL Pretest	% IL Posttest	IL Gain	% CL Pretest	% CL Posttest	CL Gain
Low	Nancy	35.94	37.5	0.02	37.50	40.62	0.05
	Vera	45.31	53.13	0.14	43.75	53.13	0.17
	Jennifer	45.31	50.00	0.09	28.13	43.75	0.22
Moderate	Patrick	45.31	59.38	0.26	50.00	84.38	0.69
	Rose	54.69	60.94	0.14	56.25	78.13	0.50
	Erin	46.88	51.56	0.09	43.75	81.25	0.67
High	Gail	50.00	75.00	0.50	51.56	81.25	0.61
	Tricia	54.69	62.50	0.17	59.38	89.06	0.73
	Lucie	45.31	64.06	0.34	50.00	87.50	0.57
Average		47.29	58.47	0.21	47.20	73.11	0.50

Percentages of individual participants' achievements are posted along with the actual gains to allow for distinctive comparison of progressions in summary writing pretest and posttest scores of the individualistic learning and cooperative learning methods. Discussion of these results is given in Chapter 5.

The second research objective was to compare the number of accurate idea units on the pretest and posttest of summary writing made by the participants in the cooperative learning method. The paired samples *t* - test was used to find the mean scores and standard deviations of accuracy on both tests, the results of which are shown in Table 8.

Table 8

Results of the participants' accurate idea units in summary writing

	Mean ± SD	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i> -value	Mean difference
Pretest Accuracy	6.16 ± 1.675	-2.387	.014	.68
Posttest Accuracy	6.84 ± 1.425			

n = 19

The paired samples t - test indicates a significant difference in the number of accurate idea units made by the participants on the pretest and posttest of the cooperative learning method at p -value $<.05$, and $t = -2.387$. The pretest mean = 6.16 and the posttest mean = 6.84 reveal that, in terms of accuracy, the participants produced significantly more accurate idea units in their summary writing after participating in the cooperative learning method. The results support the hypothesis that the number of accurate idea units on the posttest was significantly higher than the number of those made on the pretest.

Figure 3 shows the number of accurate idea units produced by the selected participants of the three levels of proficiency: *low*, *moderate*, and *high achievers*. *Low achievers* included Nancy, Vera, Jennifer; *moderate achievers* were Patrick, Rose, Erin, and *high achievers* were Gail, Tricia, and Lucie. Discussion of these results is in Chapter 5.

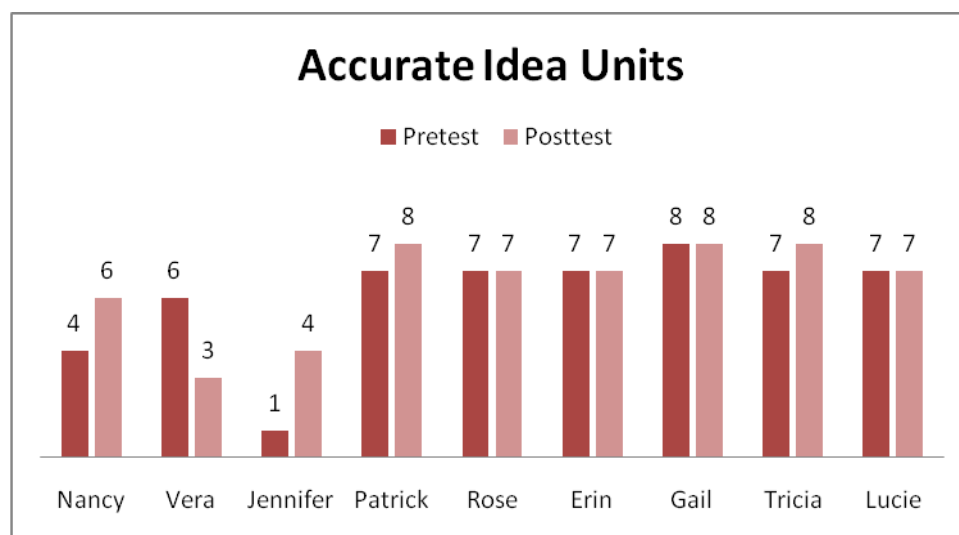


Figure 3. Number of accurate idea units

The third research objective was to compare the number of distortions on the pretest and posttest made by the participants in the cooperative learning method. The paired samples *t* - test was used to find the means and standard deviations of distortions on both tests, the results of which are displayed in Table 9.

Table 9

Results of distortions

	Mean \pm SD	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i> -value	Mean difference
Pretest Distortions	7.95 \pm 2.592	2.787	.006	1.37
Posttest Distortions	6.58 \pm 2.411			

n = 19

The paired samples *t* - test results of distortions in the participants' summary writing pretest and posttest of the cooperative learning method reveal a significant difference at *p*-value .006 and *t* = 2.787 with the pretest mean = 7.95 and the posttest mean = 6.58. The results support the hypothesis that the number of distortions on the posttest of summary writing made by the participants while participating in the cooperative learning method was smaller than the number of distortions made on the pretest.

Figure 4 illustrates the number of distortions committed by the selected participants. Nancy, Vera, Jennifer were representatives of *low achievers*, Patrick, Rose, Erin represented *moderate achievers*, and Gail, Tricia, and Lucie were *high achievers*. Discussion of these results is in Chapter 5.

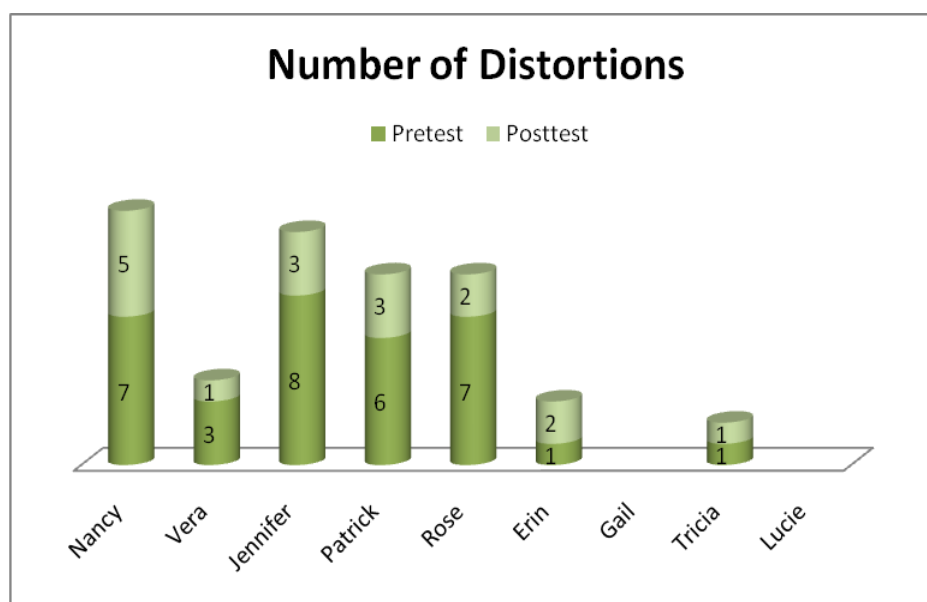


Figure 4. Number of distortions

The fourth research objective was to compare the number of grammatical errors on the posttest of summary writing made by the participants while participating in the cooperative learning method and the number of grammatical errors made on the pretest. The paired samples *t* - test was used to find the mean scores and standard deviations of grammatical errors made on both tests, the results of which are reported in Table 10.

Table 10

Results of grammatical errors

	Mean \pm SD	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i> -value
Pretest Grammatical Errors	13.16 \pm 5.947	1.858	.040
Posttest Grammatical Errors	10.21 \pm 5.931		

n = 19

Regarding grammatical errors, the paired samples *t* - test reveals a significant difference in the number of errors made on the cooperative learning pretest and the posttest at *p*-value $< .05$. With the given results, the fourth hypothesis was confirmed that the grammatical errors on the posttest were significantly fewer than the number of errors on the pretest. It could be interpreted that the participants' knowledge of the English grammar improved after the cooperative learning treatment (pretest mean = 13.16; posttest mean = 10.21).

Figure 5 displays the types of most frequent grammatical errors committed by the participants in the present study.

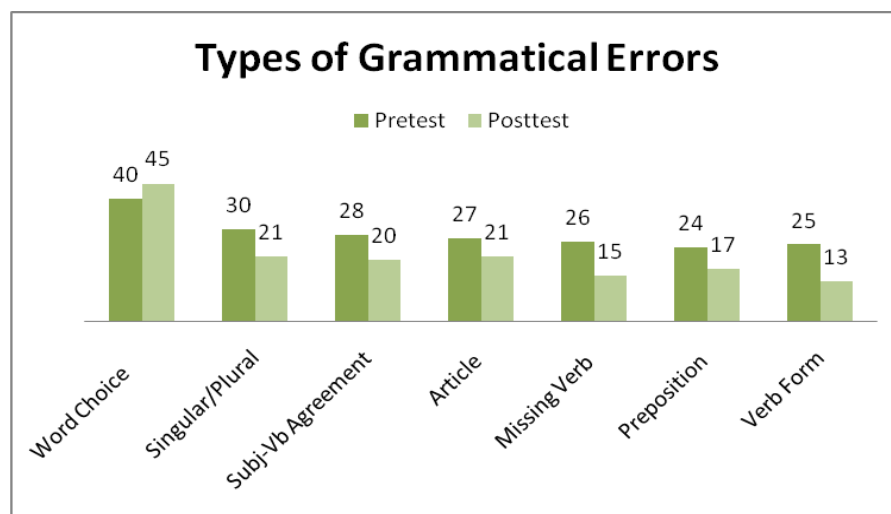


Figure 5. Types of most frequent grammatical errors.

Less frequently committed types of errors on the pretest and posttest were Active/Passive Voice (6 on pretest +12 on posttest = 18 occurrences); Parts of Speech (11+5 = 16); Missing Subject (6+9 = 15); Missing Object (9+5 = 14); Verb Tense (7+8 = 15); Run-on (7 + 2 = 9); and Comparative Degree (2+1 = 3) respectively.

Figure 6 displays the number of grammatical errors committed by the participants representing the three levels of proficiency: *high* (Gail, Tricia, and Lucie), *moderate* (Patrick, Rose, Erin), and *low achievers* (Nancy, Vera, Jennifer). Discussion of these results is in Chapter 5.

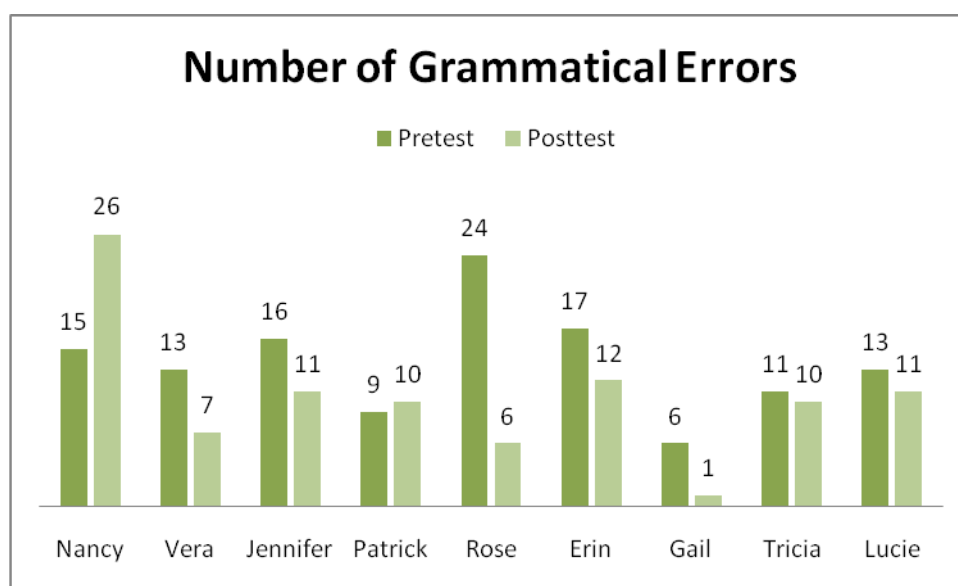


Figure 6. Number of grammatical errors

The fifth research objective was to study if the participants preferred the cooperative learning method over the individualistic learning method. The findings of the participants' responses to the preference questionnaire are demonstrated in Table 11 and expressed as means (*SD*) and medians (*SE*) of each of the 20 statements made about preferred learning methods, either individualistic or cooperative learning.

Table 11*Learning Style Preference Results*

Item	Mean \pm SD	Median	SE
1. Cooperative summary writing is fun.	3.68 \pm .58	4	.13
2. I feel that cooperative group work is slow and sometimes confusing; so it is better to work alone.	3.26 \pm .93	3	.21
3. I feel that I can use better English when I am in a cooperative summary writing group.	3.53 \pm .69	4	.16
4. Generally speaking, my summary is more successful than a group effort.	3.21 \pm .85	3	.2
5. I feel that a summary by my cooperative group is more successful than a summary I did alone.	3.74 \pm .87	4	.2
6. I don't like asking someone else's opinion in class.	4.26 \pm .65	4	.15
7. I feel that my group members listen to one another during cooperative group discussions.	3.89 \pm .57	4	.13
8. I can use better words when I write my own summaries than when I work in a group.	3.37 \pm .96	4	.22
9. I feel that I could depend on my cooperative group to stay focussed on the assignments.	3.79 \pm .54	4	.12
10. I think different opinions are not helpful; they tend to slow down the summary writing process.	4.00 \pm .75	4	.17
11. I feel that in a cooperative group, my friends correct me when I make a mistake.	4.26 \pm .65	4	.15
12. It is good to ask somebody else's opinion while I am learning.	4.05 \pm .62	4	.14
13. I feel that I can concentrate better when I summarise a text by myself.	2.47 \pm .96	2	.22
14. I learn more when I work in a cooperative group than when I study alone.	4.00 \pm .75	4	.17

Table continues

Table 11 (continued)

Item	Mean \pm <i>SD</i>	Median	<i>SE</i>
15. It is better to work alone because I don't learn anything new from cooperative group work.	3.84 \pm .76	4	.18
16. I understand a reading passage better when I discuss it with others.	3.53 \pm 1.26	4	.29
17. I feel that group activities waste a lot of time and are unnecessary.	4.05 \pm .97	4	.22
18. I feel that everyone in my cooperative group helps equally to finish the assignments.	4.00 \pm .75	4	.17
19. I feel that some of my group members did not share any knowledge or skills with the team.	3.63 \pm 1.12	4	.26
20. Though we sometimes have different opinions, I still think it is good to share ideas.	4.53 \pm .51	5	.12

n = 19

Table 11 demonstrates that the participants' responses to 17 of the 20 items (85% of the total number of items) are in favour of cooperative learning, with mean scores between $3.37 \pm .96$ and $4.53 \pm .51$, and medians of 4. On a scale of 1.00 to 5.00, the highest mean score is $4.53 \pm .51$ SD, median 5 (Item 20). Responses to two items (Items 2 and 4, or 10% of the total number) are less explicit or indistinct, and thus, indicate indifference towards either method of learning, whereas one (Item 13, or 5% of the total number) expresses an inclination for individualistic learning. It could be interpreted that the participants of the research study preferred cooperative learning to individualistic learning.

In summary, this chapter revealed the research findings based on the mean scores of the pretest and posttest of the two respective learning methods, individualistic and cooperative, corresponding to the research objectives stipulated in Chapter 1. The analysis of the findings indicates that (1) the participants made significant progressions in their summary writing of both individualistic and cooperative learning methods; however, the cooperative learning method generated a higher median in the posttest and was therefore considered more effective than the individualistic learning method in helping students learn summary writing; (2) the participants produced significantly more accurate idea units in their summary writing after cooperative learning; (3) they also produced significantly fewer distortions after cooperative learning; (4) the participants committed significantly fewer grammatical errors in their summary writing after the cooperative learning intervention; finally, (5) the results of the preference test demonstrated the participants' preference for the cooperative learning method over individualistic learning.

The discussion of the research findings and suggestions for further studies are presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents first a summary of the research, then, discussion of its findings under the headings of progression, accuracy and distortions, grammatical errors, and learning style preferences. Observations from the researcher are presented next. The end of the chapter offers suggestions, recommendations for further research, and the limitations of the study.

Summary of the Research

The purpose of this research was to study the effects of cooperative learning on EFL university student summary writing. The EFL subjects were purposively sampled and assigned to a control group taught by the traditional individualistic learning method in the first phase of the experiment, and to an experimental group taught by the cooperative learning method in the second phase. The research objectives were to compare the participants' progression on the individualistic and cooperative learning summary writing pretests and posttests, to compare the numbers of accuracies, distortions, and grammatical errors made by the participants while participating in the cooperative learning method, and finally, to study if the participants preferred cooperative learning over the individualistic learning method. Two qualified raters rated the two sets of pretest and posttest using the Canadian National Adult Literacy Database

(NALD) summary writing rubric. The mean scores of the two sets of tests were compared and tested by paired samples t -test. The findings indicated as follows. First, the participants made significant progressions in their summary writing performance while learning both individualistically (median = .17) and cooperatively (median = .53). The compared medians of the two learning methods exhibit a difference of .36, more than twice the value of .17. The cooperative learning method, which generated a higher median in the posttest, was therefore considered more effective than the individualistic learning method in helping students learn summary writing. Further, the participants produced significantly more accurate statements, significantly fewer distortions, as well as significantly fewer grammatical errors in their summary writing after the cooperative learning intervention. And finally, the results of the preference questionnaire demonstrated the participants' preference for cooperative learning over individualistic learning at medians of 4.

DISCUSSION

This part discusses the findings first by examining the participants' progressions. The findings of accuracy and distortions are discussed together, followed by a discussion of grammatical errors, and finally, of the participants' learning style preferences. For the purpose of illustration, the participants were classified as *high, moderate, or low achievers*. *High achievers* were the participants who had presented high summary writing achievement, *moderate achievers* attained the average summary writing results, and *low achievers* were those who had not presented satisfactory results in summary writing. Classification of the participants into these three proficiency levels was

arbitrary and based on the researcher's observation of overall levels of participation in class. Three participants were selected to represent each category and pseudonyms were used to conceal their identity. The findings of this research revealed statistically significant differences in all the results at the .05 level.

Progressions

Participants at all levels of proficiency attained steady progressions, some more rapid than others. It is evident that the moderate as well as high achievers during the first phase of the experiment with individualistic learning made substantial improvements in their summary writing performances after the cooperative learning intervention in the second phase of the experiment. Contrarily, the low achievers secured marginal progressions. One explanation for this marginalised difference could be the effect brought about by the low achievers' inability to adequately comprehend the source text and likely the use of the target language throughout the semester. It is a common practice in Thailand to teach English at all educational levels through the national language, using Thai as a medium of instruction in public schools. When English was employed as the only medium of instruction, which was appropriate for third-year university students majoring in English, it proved to be an obstacle for the low achieving participants. One has to be particularly interested in English to attain a high level of proficiency in non-English-speaking settings such as in Thailand.

Another explanation could be that, although it was their major subject at the university, two of the participants, plausibly amongst the low achievers, had developed an aversion to English, as straightforwardly admitted in the questionnaire at the end of

the study. Arnold (1999) pointed out that anxiety and tension may be the emotional factors that impede the learning process. Some of the low achievers must have experienced a certain amount of tension and anxiety during earlier exposures to English. These negative emotional factors later became psychological barriers to cognitive activity, which eventually developed into an aversion to the learning of the English language, and hence the low achievement.

Accuracy and Distortions

The results of the participants' accuracy and distortions are discussed together in relation to cooperative learning as they are evidence of academic achievements as a consequence of cooperative learning.

On comparing the number of accurate idea units found on the pretest with that of the posttest of summary writing made by the participants in the cooperative learning method, the participants were found to produce significantly more accurate idea units in their summary writing posttest than those on the pretest.

The highest number of accurate idea units produced by the moderate and high achievers was eight, while the reading text included 12 important idea units, 4-5 of which were omitted by the moderate and high achievers in their summaries. The low achievers appeared to have a better understanding of the source text when they stated a higher number of accuracies on the posttest. However, there was one exception with Vera, who produced 6 accurate idea units on the pretest, and only 3 on the posttest. This was probably due to the fact that she had lost interest in writing the last summary and spent one-fourth of the allotted time doing it. The achievement outcome for the

moderate and high achievers did not show substantial improvement as a result of having participated in cooperative learning groups. On the contrary, 5 out of a total of 6 low achievers in class seemed to benefit from cooperative learning and improved on stating accurate idea units, with the exception of Vera (discussed above).

Similarly, comparison of the numbers of distortions made on the same set of tests revealed that they were significantly different, indicating that the participants made considerably fewer distortions after exposure to the cooperative learning experience. One exception was with Erin, a moderate achiever, who distorted two idea units on the posttest while she did only one on the pretest. One of the high achievers distorted one idea unit on either of the pretest and posttest, while the other two high achievers did not generate any distortion, demonstrating complete understanding of the source text.

It is evident that the participants on the whole made steady progressions while participating in the cooperative learning method, which, in part, was expressed in the fact that most of them exhibited the ability to produce more accurate idea units and committed fewer distortions in their summary writing posttest. Cohen (1994, p. 6) states that cooperative learning can help students learn academically. In cooperative learning groups, students on the one hand acquire the content of the subject, and on the other hand they develop meta-disciplinary competence, such as “higher order thinking skills” (p. 14), which include forming hypotheses, making decisions and finding categories. In addition, cooperative learning encourages students to find solutions to the problems. Therefore, they have to discuss, form ideas and opinions and have to give feedback. Cohen (1994, p. 15) also points out:

... discussion within the group promotes more frequent oral summarising, explaining, and elaborating what one knows; cooperative learning promotes greater ability to take the perspective of others ...; in the group setting, one's thinking is monitored by others and has the benefit of both the input of other people's thinking and their critical feedback.

Most of the participants in this study appeared to have benefited from social-affective learning, which is another advantage of cooperative learning. They learned to support each other, to deal with differences in a group, to work in a team and to deal with the perspective of others. A further advantage was that they were able to learn to listen to each other and to solve problems together. This led to less fear and stress in the class and increased the motivation (Slavin, 1995, p. 70). All in all, the classroom atmosphere was improved through cooperative learning, making it conducive to the learning process.

Grammatical Errors

Where the English grammar was concerned, the findings of the number of grammatical errors committed by the participants while in the cooperative learning method revealed a significant difference between the summary writing pretest and the posttest. This means the grammatical errors committed on the posttest were significantly fewer than those on the pretest.

It is generally said that most of the difficulties that learners face in the study of English are a consequence of the degree to which their native language differs from English. EFL learners often produce errors of syntax (and pronunciation) thought to result from the influence of their mother tongue, such as applying its grammatical patterns inappropriately to English. The participants in this study were no exceptions to the generalised statements. Several features of English create no small difficulties for

Thai learners of EFL, notably singular-plural, subject-verb agreement, the use of articles, and tenses. However, the most frequent type of error committed in this study was the choice of words. In her study, Sriratapai (1999) found that 68.18% of her research informants committed plagiarism in their summaries. Accordingly, to avoid the problem of plagiarism, the participants of the present study were taught to paraphrase the text content with a few hours of practice. While attempting to use new words, most of the participants often did not realise that different synonyms may carry different meanings or connotations in different circumstances, or that one given synonym could not always be readily used in place of a word in the original text. Even the best amongst the high achievers was found to contribute at least one to the frequency of this type of mistake.

English language practitioners are broadly in concurrence that grammar correctness is important (Celce-Murcia, 1991; Kolln, 1996). Celce-Murcia (1991) further states that for EFL learners, the ability to use correct grammar is crucial to the achievement of educational and professional goals. Moreover, “the importance of a reasonable degree of grammar accuracy in academic or professional writing cannot be overstated” (p. 465). As students majoring in English, the participants saw the need to improve their English syntax and discussed correct usage while in their cooperative learning groups. Most participants were able to reduce the number of grammatical errors on the summary writing posttest. The achievement could be interpreted as a direct consequence of their cooperative learning experience as they might have benefited from a transfer of knowledge or learning technique gained during cooperative group consultation. Although it was indisputable that collectively the participants produced

fewer grammatical errors on the posttest, in actual fact, one of the low achievers (Nancy) and one moderate performer (Patrick) committed more errors on their summary writing posttest. Nancy, in trying to use new vocabulary words, made 7 wrong word choices on the posttest, while she did only 2 on the pretest. She did not make any mistake with the use of singular or plural nouns on the pretest, but she made 4 of those on the posttest. Three wrong word choices accounted for Patrick's higher number of errors on the posttest. This was probably because language competence cannot be developed in a short time, as stated by Musumeci (1997) that language learning requires time and cannot be accomplished hastily. Some of the participants were trying to use new words to demonstrate their writing competence, but the size of vocabulary cannot be quickly expanded, which explained a high frequency of errors in word choice.

Learning Style Preferences

Learning styles are complex and not easy to pinpoint or assess. However, they are expressed in learners' preferences, which can be studied and assessed. The results of the preference test in this study demonstrate that the participants preferred the cooperative learning method over individualistic learning. As demonstrated in the previous chapter (Table 14) that the participants' responses to 17 of the 20 items (85% of the total number of items) are in favour of cooperative learning, with mean scores between $3.37 \pm .96$ and $4.53 \pm .51$, and medians of 4. This is consistent with the participants' responses to the open-ended questions on the questionnaire. The majority of the responses (15 from the total of 19) were in support of cooperative learning. Two responses revealed preferences for individual work. And two expressed mixed feelings

about the two learning methods. Following are the responses, some of which have been translated into English.

From a total of 15 responses expressing preferences for cooperative learning, five are displayed as follows. Student 1: “I think I learn better when I work with my friends in a cooperative group. When I summarise a text by myself and use only my idea, my summary may not be complete. Sometimes it is unclear and some points are missing. So I think it is better to discuss with other people to get good ideas”. Student 2: “My experience may be less than my friends on the topic we are reading. My friends may have more experience in areas that I don’t know. If we help each other do cooperative work, our ideas will be better than the idea of one person”. Student 3: “Discussion in a cooperative group helps to make the content of our summaries better and the language flow smoother and better too. My group always tells when we should change some words, so I like working in a cooperative group”. Student 4: “I believe that cooperative group help[s] me learn better than I can learn by myself. My skills are not accurate enough. My grammar is wrong in some way[s]. My friends can remind me in my group and correct me when I am wrong. I definitely think that cooperative learning is better than learning alone”. Student 5: “Many times I don’t understand what I read. Sometimes the sentence is long and complex. I can’t paraphrase or summarise well because I don’t have a good word. My friend can help me in group work. But when I do alone, my problem is complex idea[s] in long sentence[s]. So cooperative group learning is good for me”.

Most participants’ preferences for group consultation and shared responsibilities may have been reinforced by the cooperative learning process. However, at some point

in the cooperative learning group session, Kagan's principle of equal participation was not adhered to when a more confident participant took control of the group's decision-making, as revealed in two responses. Student 6 expressed possibilities of a problem encountered in a group situation:

I like [working in a] cooperative learning group, which helps us learn what other people think. Different ideas can be put into our work to make it interesting. One person may not [be able to] consider everything, but others in the group can fill in the missing piece[s], so the work turns out good. It is awkward when some group members do not cooperate or share, or they just don't want to do the task assign[ed] to them. If we are group[ed] with responsible people, we don't have problems. But when one person is not willing, we get stuck.

Student 7 had mixed feelings about cooperative learning:

I think work[ing] in group[s] is better than work[ing] by myself because we can share opinion[s] to work but it depends on member[s] of each group. To write summaries, I prefer to do it myself because [when] I worked in [a] group, one of my friend[s] seemed to not want any opinion except her[s]. She thought her opinion is the best so I think if [a] member of my group is like that I will do better by myself.

Although the cooperative learning method was appreciated, Student 8 personally preferred own decision-making and brought out the pros and cons of cooperative learning as follows:

It is OK to work in a cooperative learning group [where] everyone help[s] everyone else [from] think[ing to] plan[ning] and finish[ing] the work. We get to know what our friends think. But the more people share, the longer it take[s] and the more problems we have. When we don't agree, we have arguments. I like to work alone. I like to make my own decision and finish my work quickly. If I am wrong, it is my own fault, and I correct it myself. I think individual work is easier than group work.

And lastly, the more competent students preferred individualistic work because it enabled them to exhibit their full language competence. The last two participants would rather work alone when it came to writing summaries. Spending time sharing with the

group of people with less capability was likely viewed as a hindrance. Student 9, who seemed to be amongst the high performers, stated:

Working alone is good when we need to organize our ideas the way we want them. For example, before making a summary we need to concentrate on the reading and the main ideas in order to summarise. We need to paraphrase what we read using our own words. If we work in a group, we cannot do this because friends will start giving their input and we lose our own thoughts. It is hard to combine our ideas with other people's ideas especially when we don't know how to paraphrase their input. So I think it is better to work alone.

Student 10, another one amongst the high performers, stated her learning style with more detail than the remainder of the class did:

Cooperative learning groups help with sharing ideas, but I think it is more suitable for lessons that need different answers. Personally I prefer working individually, especially when it is summary writing. When you write a summary, it is difficult to put ideas of different people together and write a coherent piece of work. I feel that it is better to work alone than to work in a group because we pay attention to what we do and do not have to wait for other people's parts, which may not turn out as we expected. I enjoy writing and exploring new vocabulary. I use ENG-TH, TH-ENG, ENG-ENG dictionaries to study sample sentences, collocations as well as the thesaurus. I also check my grammar while I write and edit my writing afterwards. Teaching in English is good because we major in English. But using some Thai will help the students feel more relaxed.

The open-ended responses in the preference questionnaire shed light on intricate issues that the 20 items measured on a five point Likert scale did not bring out. The responses revealed areas needing improvement in carrying out the cooperative learning procedure.

Observations from the researcher

Cooperative Learning is based on a view of students' needs to interact well with others in their future work places and in other kinds of relationships. The ultimate aim

of cooperative learning is to help students take what they learn in the classroom into other areas of their lives (Falcão, 2000). Following are some of the observations by the researcher in the cooperative learning classroom:

First of all, most of the participants primarily made significant improvements in their participation during group work. They generally listened to one another and regarded the shared ideas as important input to the group efforts. Second, it was observed that the high achievers developed the ability to share their knowledge with their lower-achieving group members while helping them with academic content although it seemed that some of the high achievers would have enjoyed working on their own. Third, interaction between low and high achievers was more frequent as they worked in the same group. Another benefit was that the low achievers learned to be responsible for their learning in that they tried to participate more actively although with minimal achievements in their learning process. Moreover, the participants generally regarded mistakes as important in the learning process. They became familiar with the idea of having peers help them with their language awareness, and the cooperative learning group seemed to have encouraged the participants to accept one another more. Finally, group evaluation and post-lesson reflections on completion of each task led the participants to make efforts to develop their individual accountability. Each participant seemed to gain more understanding of the academic content and group functions.

The instructional use of cooperative learning in small group situations helped the participants work together to maximise their own and each other's learning. Most

importantly, positive interdependence observed amongst the participants for the achievement of pre-set goals was evidence that they understood the feeling of “All for one, one for all” (Johnson & Johnson, 1994; Jacobs, Lee & Ball, 1995).

Suggestions

This part offers suggestions in accordance with the research findings in respect of student progressions, accuracy, distortions, grammatical errors, and learning style preferences as follows.

1. With regard to student progressions, it is suggested that cooperative learning be used in other subjects where students could benefit from cooperative group efforts to help students learn more effectively. Most research shows that cooperative learning is conducive to foreign language acquisition though achievements outcome in cooperative learning is unclear in some parts (Seong, 2001). For better results, cooperative learning must be properly structured, with students placed into heterogeneous groups and supervised. Research confirms that for students to be successful in a cooperative learning environment, two key elements must be present: positive interdependence amongst students, and individual and group accountability (Young, 2009). Other elements such as social skills and group evaluation will also add to the success of cooperative learning activities.

2. Cooperative learning is also relevant where accuracy is concerned. It is suggested that students be taught more reading strategies and given more exercises to

identify main ideas and important details in a cooperative learning environment. Along with reading strategies, students should also be taught how and when to use them (Carrell, Gajdusek, & Wise, 1998). During cooperative learning group exercises, peer output may not be all accurate; however, it is more important for students to have frequent opportunities to produce output amongst peers as this has a greater chance of producing language acquisition than relying on the formal accurate input provided by the teacher (Seong, 2001). Producing frequent output will boost the students' confidence in their language learning ability and motivate them to express themselves more.

3. In terms of distortions in summary writing, students should be given ample paraphrasing practice along with the summary writing instruction. Basically, students should be given more summary writing exercises because doing a summary requires them to read a written text, understand it, and restate its meaning in their own words. Moreover, study skills should be taught to help them acquire knowledge and competence. Their higher level thinking skills can also be cultivated to assist them in developing the relationships amongst concepts that are critical for concept evaluation and application (Bos & Anders, 1988). Students who are equipped with such are usually able to distinguish between accurate and distorted statements as they are being produced.

4. EFL learners' committing grammatical errors is almost a natural phenomenon and is widespread at all levels, including in tertiary education. There are many ways to help students improve their English grammar. One is that the teacher

may assign free writing where students can write for 10 – 15 minutes. The teacher then underlines grammatical problems and lets the students make changes to these areas without telling them what is wrong. Many times the students will be able to correct themselves. For those mistakes that they cannot correct, the teacher should explain the grammar rule and point out how the rule was broken. Another way to help students improve their grammar is that the students should be required to keep a grammar notebook where they write down the mistakes they made in their writing or the mistakes that they keep making repeatedly. This grammar notebook should be kept throughout the semester and the students should go over their notes before each English lesson.

5. The research findings regarding the learning style preferences revealed that the majority of the participants preferred cooperative learning while the remainder preferred studying on their own. This was hardly surprising as students have different learning styles (and strategies). The teacher should not adhere to only one preferred teaching method, but rather select methods appropriate for specific lessons. Since learning styles play a crucial role in the learning process, the teacher should be careful in choosing the appropriate teaching method. The teacher should be aware that students learn differently. It is important to determine students' learning styles and try to accommodate for them. It is equally important for students to adapt to different learning styles as the ability to adapt plays a key role in their academic achievement. In the language classroom, competition is often fostered either intentionally or unintentionally. However, in studies where students were taught specifically to be cooperative, results revealed vast improvement in language skills as well as increased

self-esteem, motivation, generosity, and positive attitudes toward others (Gunderson & Johnson, 1980; Sharan et al., 1985).

In conclusion, EFL students should be advised to dedicate themselves to language learning because English proficiency does not happen overnight. The English language pattern must become the EFL learners' second nature for them to be successful in all areas of language learning. And to be able to do so, they must be able to recognise errors when they are made. Grammar is present in every English utterance or statement, be it reading, writing, listening, or speaking. Blessed are those who are aware of this fact; and making the students realise this is the teacher's occupation.

Recommendations for Further Studies

The recommendations for further research are suggested as follows:

1. Future research should make an attempt to study the use of cooperative learning in other English subjects such as translation or literature where students can benefit from cooperative group learning.

2. Future research should be carried out on other subjects requiring the use of summary writing to help students improve their understanding of the content being taught.

3. This research included only a small number of participants in only one section. If a larger sample size will validate the statistic results, future research should involve at least two groups of participants in the study in order to better generalise the findings.

4. Future research on a similar topic should attempt to study the effectiveness of cooperative learning over the length of two semesters to study the participants' language development in greater detail.

5. Future research should assess the teaching styles of the teachers and the learning styles of students and study the impact of the former on the latter in order to increase competency in both teaching and learning.

Limitations of the Study

There were several limitations in the process of conducting this research study.

1. Only a few publications are available about cooperative learning in the EFL classroom (McCafferty, Jacobs & DaSilva Iddings, 2006), and even fewer resources on the subject of cooperative summary writing either locally in hard copies or electronically, resulting in a limited review of the literature.

2. The sample size was too small. With 19 participants and only one group to study, the research results cannot adequately answer all questions that may arise about cooperative summary writing.

3. The research design did not allow ample time for best results in cooperative learning practice while the participants also had other course requirements to meet during the semester. Had the participants been given a whole semester to practise cooperative summary writing, they might have benefited more from it and achieved more distinct results. The length of the study being limited to only 14 weeks was too short to help the participants improve their language competence. Leeds (2003) stated that language competence required time. Additionally, according to Hinkel (2004), knowledge of vocabulary and a greater understanding of grammar promote the quality of EFL writing, so it was apparent that the participants needed more time to apply knowledge of the English grammar and vocabulary during summary writing practice in order to demonstrate greater improvement.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Lesson Plan for Regular Classroom Instruction

Time: Wednesday, 29th October, 2008, 9:30 – 12:00

Classroom description: The class consists of 19 students (4 male and 15 female), all of whom are third-year English majors enrolled in the Faculty of Humanities at Srinakharinwirot University. The room is a regular classroom with chairs that can be moved around.

Goal: The students should be able to read for the main idea in each paragraph and tell the differences among the topic sentence, supporting details, and the concluding sentence.

Objectives: By the end of the lesson the students will have been able to

1. Identify the topic sentence, supporting details, and the concluding sentence in a paragraph.
2. Recognise an outline of a simple paragraph.

Content: Paragraph reading

Reading for the main idea: The topic sentence, the controlling idea

Reading for details: Supporting sentences

The concluding sentence

Outlining

A simple outline

Instructional Media:

1. *Reading and summary*, pages 1-18
2. Stripped sentences/paragraphs for practice
3. LCD
4. Visualiser

5. Computer with PowerPoint file
6. Questions for evaluation

Activities: (1) Paragraph reading practice
(2) Reorganising paragraphs

Evaluation: Paragraph reading questions

Teaching Procedures

Introduction and icebreaking activities. (20 minutes)

1. At the start of class, the teacher introduces the course syllabus, course requirements, and criteria for evaluation to the students. This is only done once in the first class session.
2. Teacher and students spend some time getting to know one another through icebreaking activities. In later sessions, this is replaced by small talks and reviews of past lessons.

Pre-reading steps. (20 minutes)

3. Teacher gets the students ready to receive instruction.
4. Teacher explains the functions of the topic sentence, the controlling idea, supporting sentences, and the concluding sentence.
5. Teacher shows model paragraphs on the screen and asks the students to point out the topic, the topic sentence, the controlling idea. For example:

A model paragraph

Bread is an important part of our daily food. When we sit down for a meal, there is always bread on the table. For breakfast, we have bread with butter or cheese. Some people have jam or olives. For lunch, we have bread with a meat or vegetable dish. Poor people eat more bread with a small piece of meat or vegetable or cheese. For example, the lunch of a worker may be a loaf of bread with some yogurt. Again at dinner, we eat bread

with whatever food there is on the table. When there is rice, we have bread, too. We think that if there is no bread, there is no food.

The topic sentence: *Bread is an important part of our daily food.*

The topic: *Bread.*

The controlling idea: *an important part of our daily food.*

While-reading steps. (50 minutes)

6. Teacher displays exercises for practice on the screen. The students are called out individually to read each item aloud as oral practice.

7. Each student answers the question orally.

8. Teacher explains vocabulary or grammar where appropriate.

9. Teacher asks the students to form groups of three to four and distributes stripped sentences/paragraphs for practice.

10. The students rearrange the sentences and put them in correct order to show the topic sentence, supporting details, and the concluding sentence.

Evaluation (60 minutes)

Post-reading steps.

11. Teacher distributes questions to evaluate the students' comprehension of the lesson.

12. The students answer the questions silently.

13. Teacher asks each student to either read their answer aloud or show their answer on the visualiser and discuss how they obtain the answer.

14. The comprehension is evaluated through written answers.

Lesson Plan for Cooperative Learning Instruction

Time: Wednesday, 14th January, 2009, 9:30 – 12:00

Classroom description: The class consists of 19 students (4 male and 15 female), all of whom are third-year English majors enrolled in the Faculty of Humanities at SWU. The room is a regular classroom with chairs that can be moved around when cooperative group work is required.

Goal: The students should be able to work together in a cooperative learning group to summarise a narrative text.

Objectives: By the end of the lesson the students will have been able to

3. Organise a narrative text based on a chronological order.
4. Use some of the connectors such as *first, then, next, finally, eventually, as soon as, immediately, and after* in their summaries.
5. Read and summarise a narrative text together in their respective cooperative learning groups.

Content: How to organise and summarise a narrative text

Vocabulary study

How to work in a cooperative learning group

Asking comprehension questions

Writing cooperative group summaries

Language Focus: The Past Simple and Past Perfect Tenses

Direct and Indirect Speech

Instructional Media:

1. *Reading and summary*, pages 69-76
2. The Four Wives, a reading passage

3. LCD
4. Visualiser
5. Computer with PowerPoint file

- Activities:**
- (1) Getting into cooperative learning groups
 - (2) Asking and answering questions based on the reading passage
 - (3) Writing a cooperative group summary

Evaluation: Cooperative group summary

Teaching Procedures

Introduction to Cooperative Learning. (20 minutes)

3. At the start of class, the teacher introduces cooperative learning to the class, telling them that cooperative learning is much more than just sitting and working together in groups.

4. Teacher emphasises the principle of positive interdependence, which is most important in cooperative learning. The group members should feel that they sink or swim together, that what helps one group member helps them all, and anything that hurts one group member hurts them all.

5. Teacher further explains that while positive interdependence is fostered, each group member must also have individual accountability to learn and to help others learn.

6. Teacher assigns students into four cooperative learning groups of four. One cooperative learning group has three members because there are 19 students. Group members take the roles of facilitator, questioner, paraphraser, recorder, editor, rotating the roles as appropriate.

Pre-reading steps. (20 minutes)

5. Teacher gets the students ready to receive instruction.

6. Teacher shows the organisation of a narrative text based on a chronological order, using connectors which signify the order of events such as *first, previously, then, after that, next, finally, eventually, when, as soon as, immediately, and while.*

7. Teacher introduces some vocabulary from the text.

While-reading steps. (50 minutes)

8. Teacher displays a sample narrative text for the students to read.

A Sample Personal Experience

As my train was not *due to leave* for another hour, I had *plenty of time to spare*. After buying some magazines to read on the journey, I *made my way to the luggage office to collect* the heavy suitcase I had left there three days before. There were only a few people waiting, and I took out my wallet to find the receipt for my case. The receipt did not seem to be where I had left it. I emptied the contents of the wallet: railway-tickets, money, scraps of paper, and photographs tumbled out of it, but no matter how hard I searched, the receipt was nowhere to be found.

When my turn came, I explained the situation sorrowfully to the assistant. The man looked at me suspiciously as if to say that he had heard this type of story many times and asked me to describe the case. I told him that it was an old, brown-looking object no different from the many cases I could see on the shelves. The assistant then gave me a form and told me to make a list of the chief contents of the case. If they were correct, he said, I could take the case away. I tried to remember all the articles I had hurriedly packed and wrote them down as they came to me.

After I had done this, I went to look among the shelves. There were hundreds of cases there and for one dreadful moment, it occurred to me that if someone had picked the receipt up, he could have easily *claimed* the case already. This had not happened

fortunately, for after a time, I found the case lying on its side high up in a corner. After examining the articles inside, the assistant was soon satisfied that it was mine and told me I could take the case away. Again I took out my wallet: this time to pay. I pulled out a ten-shilling note and the “lost” receipt slipped out with it. I could not help *blushing* and glanced up at the assistant. He was nodding his head knowingly, as if to say that he had often seen this happen before too!

(Alexander, 1970, p. 18)

9. Teacher asks some comprehension questions based on the text, and asks the students to practise making more questions of the same type. For example: Who is the narrator? Where was he? Why did he need the receipt? Why did the writer feel foolish? What did the luggage officer advise him to do? What did the writer do after that? These questions could be used as guidelines to write a summary of the text.

10. Teacher teaches the Past Simple and Past Perfect Tenses and Direct and Indirect Speech as these are often found in narrative texts.

11. Teacher and students put together a summary of the sample narrative text.

Evaluation (60 minutes)

Post-reading steps.

12. Teacher distributes a passage (The Four Wives) to each student to summarise.

13. The students sit in their cooperative learning groups, each reading the passage before taking up their assigned role to start making a group summary.

14. All group members participate in the discussion, asking questions, finding the answers, paraphrasing the text, writing the summary.

15. Teacher asks each group to show their group summary on the visualiser.

16. The achievement is evaluated through the written group summary.

APPENDIX B

How English Became French

"Name the one person who had the greatest effect on the English language." You will get answers like "Shakespeare", "Samuel Johnson", and "Webster", but none of those men had any effect at all compared to a man who didn't even speak English - William the Conqueror.

Prior to 1066, in the land we now call Great Britain lived peoples belonging to two major language groups. In the west-central region lived the Welsh, who spoke a Celtic language, and in the north lived the Scots, whose language, though not the same as Welsh, was also Celtic. The rest of the country was inhabited by the dominant Saxons, actually a mixture of Angles, Saxons, and other Germanic and Nordic peoples, who spoke what we now call Anglo-Saxon (or Old English), a Germanic language. If this state of affairs had lasted, English (which comes from Engle, the Angles) today would be close to German.

But this state of affairs didn't last because a Norman duke, William, living in the part of France called Normandy, decided to extend his domain over England. In 1066 the Normans under Duke William met the Saxons under King Harold in battle at a place called Hastings. There the French-speaking Normans defeated the Saxons and began their rule over England, establishing not only their political dominance but their linguistic dominance as well.

For about a century, French became the official language of England while Old English became the language of peasants and outcasts. As a result our current vocabulary for politics and the law comes from French rather than German. Such words as *nation*, *state*, *realm*, *capital*, *senate*, *president*, *legal*, *court*, *appeal* - even *politics* and *law* - as well as many others, come from French. On the other hand, words like *field*, *road*, *plow*, *bread*, *milk*, *water*, and *steal* come from Old English.

In some cases, modern English even shows a distinction between upper-class French and lower-class Anglo-Saxon in its vocabulary. Which is higher-class, *car* (from French) or *wagon* (from German)? What about *people* (French) and *folk* (German)? Or *chair* (French) and *stool* (German)? We even have different words for some foods, meat in particular depending on whether it's still out in the fields or at home ready to be cooked. The words *cow*, *sheep*, and *lamb* are, not surprisingly, all German, reflecting the fact that the Saxon peasants were doing the farming. But the words *beef*, *mutton*, and *veal* are French, perhaps indicating that the Norman nobility were doing most of the eating.

When Americans visit Europe for the first time, they usually find Germany more "foreign" than France because the German they see on signs, posters, and advertisements seems much more different from English than French does. Few realize that our language is actually Germanic in its origins and that the French influences are all the result of one man's ambition.

SMOG Grade 11.66, some high school

475 words

<http://sts.zju.edu.cn/english2/unit3/Practical%20Writing.htm>

The Four Wives

There was a rich merchant who had 4 wives. He loved the 4th wife the most and adorned her with rich robes and treated her to delicacies. He took great care of her and gave her nothing but the best.

He also loved the 3rd wife very much. He's very proud of her and always wanted to show off her to his friends. However, the merchant was always in great fear that she might run away with some other men.

He too, loved his 2nd wife. She was a very considerate person, always patient and in fact was the merchant's confidante. Whenever the merchant faced some problems, he always turned to his 2nd wife and she would always help him out and tide him through difficult times.

Now, the merchant's 1st wife is a very loyal partner and has made great contributions in maintaining his wealth and business as well as taking care of the household. However, the merchant did not love the first wife and although she loved him deeply, he hardly took notice of her.

One day, the merchant fell ill. Before long, he knew that he was going to die soon. He thought of his luxurious life and told himself, "Now I have 4 wives with me. But when I die, I'll be alone. How lonely I'll be!"

Thus, he asked the 4th wife, "I loved you most, endowed you with finest clothing and showered great care over you. Now that I'm dying, will you follow me and keep me company?"

"No way!" replied the 4th wife and she walked away without another word.

The answer cut like a sharp knife right into the merchant's heart. The sad merchant then asked the 3rd wife, "I have loved you so much for all in my life. Now that I'm dying, will you follow me and keep me company?"

"No!" replied the 3rd wife. "Life is so good over here! I'm going to remarry when you die!"

The merchant's heart sank and turned cold.

He then asked the 2nd wife, "I always turned to you for help and you've always helped me out. Now I need your help again. When I die, will you follow me and keep company?"

“I’m sorry, I can’t help you out this time!” replied the 2nd wife. “At the very most, I can only send you to your grave.”

The answer came like a bolt of thunder and the merchant was devastated. Then a voice called out: “I’ll leave with you. I’ll follow you no matter where you go.” The merchant looked up and there was his first wife. She was so skinny, almost like she suffered from malnutrition.

Greatly grieved, the merchant said, “I should have taken much better care of you while I could have!”

Actually, we all have four wives in our lives.

- (a) The 4th wife is our body. No matter how much time and effort we lavish in making it look good, it’ll leave us when we die.
- (b) Our 3rd wife? Our possessions, status and wealth. When we die, they all go to others.
- (c) The 2nd wife is our family and friends. No matter how close they had been to us when we’re alive, the furthest they can stay by us is up to the grave.
- (d) The 1st wife is in fact our soul, often neglected in our pursuit of material, wealth and sensual pleasure.

Guess what? It is actually the only thing that follows us wherever we go. Perhaps it’s a good idea to cultivate and strengthen it now rather than to wait until we’re on our deathbed to lament.

SMOG Grade 9.15, some high school

605 words

Motivational Story-Inspirational God Story: The four wives, 2007

Our Changing Language

Before computers were invented, the words *byte* and *modem* did not exist, and a mouse was something that made some people scream and run away. Words are added to language every day, but not only as new things are invented. Changes in society also cause changes in language. For example, today the people of the former Soviet Union use words like *free market* and *capitalism*.

Changes in attitude also affect language. As people become more sensitive to the rights and needs of individuals, it becomes necessary to change the words we use to describe them. The elderly are now called *senior citizens*. The handicapped are described as *physically challenged*. Many of the words we once used had negative feelings attached to them. New words show an awareness in today's society that differences are good and that everyone deserves respect. Even the names of certain jobs have changed so that workers can be proud of what they do. The trashman is now called a *sanitation worker*, a doorman is an *attendant*, and a janitor is a *custodian*.

Many of the words we use to identify people have changed many times in recent years. Sometimes it is difficult to know what is right and what is wrong. Do we call a person of color a *black* or an *African American*? Is it better to say *native Americans* or *American Indians*? And whatever do we do with the Man of the Year? If we don't know what the proper words are, then we must use sensitivity, respect, and even a little imagination.

One important influence on our language in the past decade has been the changing role of women in modern society. There was a time when an unmarried woman was called a spinster. But that was before women went into space in rockets, worked underground in mines, and became managers of corporations. As women entered more and more areas that were once thought of as men's jobs, it became necessary to change the job titles. For example, a mailman is now a *mail carrier*, a watchman is a *guard*, and a lineman is a *line repairer*. And the Man of the Year? Well, she's the *Newsmaker of the Year*.

These new attitudes have also helped men, and some job titles have been changed to include them. Stewardesses are now called *flight attendants*. A laundress is a *laundry worker*, and a maid is a *houseworker*, because men wash floors too!

Sometimes new words may seem awkward and silly, such as *chair* for chairman, *fisher* for fisherman, and *drafter* for draftsman. But change is never easy. People often fight change until it becomes a familiar part of everyday life.

Women have fought long and hard to be treated equally in language as well as in society, because they know that changes in language can cause changes in attitudes. If every person isn't referred to as *he*, people will begin to realize that men aren't the only ones who are important or who have made great achievements. Most words that indicate only one gender have been replaced with words that refer to both males and females. Thus, a poetess is called a *poet*, a waitress is a *server*, and mankind has become *humankind*.

SMOG Grade 12.17, high school graduate
536 words
(Broukal, 2004, pp. 137-138)

The Influences of Travel

Travel has a number of different effects on the world. The more people travel, the greater impacts become. Because the world travel is very important for business and tourism, we need to understand its various effects. When people move from place to place, they bring both objects and attitudes with them, which change the places they visit. Also, the very fact of travelers' presence may have an effect by increasing the number of people living in a place. The influences of travel fall into three categories: environmental, cultural and economic.

Perhaps the most obvious of all the effects of travel are environmental changes. This kind of consequences can be seen all over the world. As the number of tourists rises, there is an increasing demand for accommodations and food, especially in tourist attraction areas. Inevitably, trees in the forests are cut down to meet these demands; as a result, the habitat of plants and animals is lost. Moreover, waste from excess food can also be harmful to nature. In Brazil, for instance, improperly treated leftovers made waterways, lagoons and the ocean unsafe for swimming and fishing. Unbelievably, bears in Yellowstone National Park were moved out because of tourists' garbage.

Another effect of travel takes the form of cultural changes. Food is one of the foundations of culture, and food habits are often changed to meet tourists' needs. For example, hamburger restaurants have opened in big cities all over China. Steamed rice has then been substituted by hamburgers. Though such changes may not seem to affect a nation's whole way of life very much, without good care and protection, cultures can gradually disappear. However, this type of impact can cause very sudden changes. Native people in East Africa, for instance, were abruptly moved away from their traditional herding lands in order that accommodations for tourists could be built. In deed, tourist travel has a very powerful and rapid effect on their cultural life.

Furthermore, travel may have a tremendous influence on the country's economy. Travelers tend to spend money on accommodations, food, transportation and services. Tourists and business travelers may have far larger budgets for such things than local people. As a result, prices may rise out of reach for them. On the other hand, however, such economic influences may enable local people to earn money by selling handicrafts, food products or services to travelers. Certain groups of people have found profitable new careers, such as the Nepalis who now guide and accommodate trekkers in the mountains. Nevertheless, both positive and negative economic effects of travel need to be considered.

In conclusion, travel can have diverse impacts on a nation's environment, culture and economy. Therefore, each country should have clear policies to promote the various advantages of travel aiming for business and tourism benefits. Likewise, the country should try its best to preserve their national resources so that the country will be sustainable keeping a good balance of environment, culture and economy to its fruitful potential.

SMOG Grade 12.98, high school graduate

495 words

Source: Guide to Sustainable Tourism, 2007

On Being Fat in America

Fat people in American society are often discriminated against in their jobs and forced to degrade themselves publicly, sociologists find. Two sociologists, Dr. Ardyth Stimson of New Jersey's Kean College and Dr. Jack Kamerman, are currently studying fat people and their role in society.

According to Dr. Stimson, "We treat people who are fat as handicapped people but we don't give them the sympathy that we give to other handicapped people. Instead, they're completely rejected and blamed for their handicap. In addition, they're expected to participate in what we sociologists call degradation ceremonies. In other words, you're supposed to stand there and say, "Hee, hee, hee, don't I look awful? Hee, hee, hee, isn't it funny I can't move around?"

"Some cities," Kamerman said, "set overweight limits for teachers, and if you exceed that limit – 25 per cent above what the insurance tables define as healthy – you are fired." He also said there have been other studies that found fat people do not get promoted as easily and do not advance in a company.

Stimson recently completed a study of 40 women, and while none was even remotely medically overweight, she said 39 felt they were fat, and it caused some of them trouble in their everyday relationships.

"America has become so weight conscious," she said, "that 40 per cent of all Americans are now considered overweight." She said there is something wrong in a society when that percentage of people are considered to be abnormal. "The problem is so great," she said, "that if you are overweight, people no longer think of you as a doctor, a lawyer, or a teacher, but as that fat person."

In some instances, the mental pain of fat people is so severe the effect it has on their lives far surpasses the medical complications that could arise as a result of being fat. If fat men and women were treated as equals, their self-esteem would rise and they would probably lose weight.

SMOG Grade 14.75, some college

351 words

Source: Connor & McCagg, 1987, p. 85.

APPENDIX C

Discus Fish as Hobby

Just as dogs make great companions, discus fish make a great show. Breeding discus as a hobby has become so popular that aquariums all over the world have become the home of this king of the exotic species. For some breeders, discus as a hobby means an immense satisfaction particularly when one manages to get some baby discus too. It is truly rewarding to see that what started with discus as a hobby has turned into a life time experience and a true friendship. What is so special about discus as a hobby? Apart from the great beauty of these fish, discus are unique in their social and loving behaviour.

Those who breed discus as a hobby will be more than surprised to notice that the discus show signs of connection to the environment outside the tank. For instance breeding discus as a hobby implies spending lots of time around the tank, cleaning, feeding or simply watching the discus. They are said to recognize the owner in time and they can get as close to you as to eat out of your hand. When breeding discus as a hobby, some owners have noticed that the discus will watch you move around the room or even react to TV noise.

Apart from such social behavior, discus enjoy silence and a close community with other fellows from the same species. If you take discus as a hobby, you may want to take into consideration that they prefer living in close communities that is together with several other members. The dominant discus would be the first to couple, followed by the others if proper conditions are met. Even if you breed discus as a hobby you may still have to separate the couples in a different tank allowing them to raise their fry.

For everyone who takes discus as a hobby, it is important that all the proper living conditions are kept under constant observation. You should not use for instance a too powerful lamp for your discus; as a hobby you'd like to keep them in the spot light, but this warms the water above the accepted level and reduces the oxygen quantity. There is a short step to take between breeding discus as a hobby and breeding them at a professional level, after all, discus require the same attention no matter your devotion. Even if you take discus as a hobby, you still have to pay attention to their needs all the time!

SMOG Grade 13.33, some college

412 words

Source: [http://www.ArticlePros.com/author.php?Michael Teoh](http://www.ArticlePros.com/author.php?Michael+Teoh)

Should Wild Animals Be Kept as Pets?

The Humane Society of the United States strongly opposes keeping wild animals as pets. This principle applies to both native and nonnative species, whether caught in the wild or bred in captivity. The overwhelming majority of people who obtain these animals are unable to provide the care they require.

Despite what animal sellers may say, appropriate care for wild animals requires considerable expertise, specialized facilities, and lifelong dedication to the animals. Their nutritional and social needs are demanding to meet and, in many cases, are unknown. They often grow to be larger, stronger, and more dangerous than owners expect or can manage. Small cats such as ocelots and bobcats can be as deadly to children as lions and tigers. Wild animals also pose a danger to human health and safety through disease and parasites.

Baby animals can be irresistibly adorable—until the cuddly baby becomes bigger and stronger than the owner ever imagined. The instinctive behavior of the adult animal replaces the dependent behavior of the juvenile, resulting in biting, scratching, or displaying destructive behaviors without provocation or warning. Such animals typically become too difficult to manage and are confined to small cages, passed from owner to owner, or disposed of in other ways. There are not enough reputable sanctuaries or other of monkey pox facilities to properly care for unwanted wild animals. They can end up back in the exotic pet trade. Some may be released into the wild where, if they survive, they can disrupt the local ecosystem.

Wild animals are not domesticated simply by being captive born or hand-raised. It's a different story with dogs and cats, who have been domesticated by selective breeding for desired traits over thousands of years. These special animal companions depend on humans for food, shelter, veterinary care, and affection. Wild animals, by nature, are self-sufficient and fare best without our interference. The instinctive behavior of these animals makes them unsuitable as pets.

When wild-caught animals are kept as pets, their suffering may begin with capture—every year millions of birds and reptiles suffer and die on the journey to the pet store. Even after purchase, their lives are likely to be filled with misery. If they survive, they may languish in a cramped backyard cage or circle endlessly in a cat carrier or aquarium. More commonly, they become sick or die because their owners are unable to care for them properly. The global wild pet trade continues to threaten the existence of some species in their native habitats.

Having any animal as a pet means being responsible for providing appropriate and humane care. Where wild animals are concerned, meeting this responsibility is usually impossible. People, animals, and the environment suffer the consequences.

SMOG Grade 13.9, some college

451 words

http://www.hsus.org/pets/issues_affecting_our_pets/should_wild_animals_be_kept_as_pets.html

APPENDIX D

Summary Writing Evaluation Criteria

Purpose & Form (25%)

- 1
 - No clear topic sentence to indicate main idea of summary.
 - Supporting details are weak and not clear what idea they are supporting.
 - Summary not completed in sentence and paragraph form.
- 2
 - Main idea presented in summary is evident but supporting details only minimally supportive; therefore, reader is vague about content of original article.
 - Some paragraphing in summary.
 - Summary is too long (too short) to be effective.
- 3
 - Clear main idea & sufficient and relevant supporting details within summary gives reader adequate understanding of content of original article.
 - Is one third to a half the length of the original
 - Is written in sentence and paragraph form.
- 4
 - Summary demonstrates a strong focus and concisely catches the main points of the original article.
 - The main idea is clear, sustained and supporting details presenting in same order as original.
 - Length of summary is appropriate
 - Is in correct paragraph(s) form.

Organization (25%)

- 1
 - No clear beginning, middle or ending
 - No use of transitions within written summary
- 2
 - Distinguishable beginning, middle and end
 - Use of transitions is attempted within written summary.
- 3
 - Overall organization of summary demonstrates a strong beginning, middle and ending.
 - Clear use of transitions
- 4
 - Organization of summary is logical & coincides with the original.
 - There is a well-linked beginning, middle and end
 - Excellent use of transitions within summary.

Style (25%)

- 1
 - No distinguishable voice.
 - Vocabulary is simple but sufficient to convey basic ideas.
 - Frequent direct copying from original text.
- 2
 - Writer's voice is evident and summary reflects the writer's opinions.
 - Attempting to use vocabulary from within original article.
- 3
 - Voice is objective and no personal opinion is evident.
 - Vocabulary is appropriate to the purpose of the writing.
 - Effective use of some sentence variety.

- 4
 - Voice is objective and impartially presents article's point of view.
 - Vocabulary is appropriate for intended audience and reflects accurately the degree of complexity of the original.
 - Sentence variety is varied.

Grammar & Mechanics (25%)

- 1
 - No distinguishable voice.
 - Vocabulary is simple but sufficient to convey basic ideas.
 - Frequent direct copying from original text.
- 2
 - Several errors in spelling, punctuation, verb tenses, subject-verb agreement, pronoun usage, and sentence structure that have some impact on the clarity of meaning & overall impression
- 3
 - Writing has been well edited.
 - Occasional errors in spelling, punctuation, verb tenses, subject-verb agreement, pronoun usage, and sentence structure, but they do not affect the clarity of meaning.
- 4
 - Practically no errors in spelling, punctuation, verb tenses, subject-verb agreement, pronoun usage, and sentence structure

Adapted from Canadian National Adult Literacy Database: Summary Writing Evaluation. Retrieved 21 August 2008 from <http://www.nald.ca/clr/flemings/geninfo/general/lbs5/summary.htm>

APPENDIX E

Demographic Data and Questionnaire

I. Please provide the following detail. Your name and personal information will be treated confidentially. Your opinions and preference ratings on the questionnaire will be used only for educational research purposes and will not affect you in anyway.

- 1. Your age
- 2. Gender (Male / Female)
- 3. Number of years of formal education years
- 4. Number of years studying English years
- 5. Started learning English: Kindergarten / Grade / Other
- 6. Number of years studying at university years
- 7. Choose one. (a) I like English. (b) I do not like English.
- 8. I have chosen to major in English because
-
- 9. I like to learn
..... (a) Listening/Speaking(b) Reading (c) Writing (d) All skills
because
-
- 10. What languages do like to speak and listen to in English classes?
.... (a) English only, because
- (b) English and Thai, because

II. Do you like to work alone or in a cooperative learning group? Do you think you can write better summaries by yourself or do you write better with friends? Please feel free to write your answers either in Thai or in English.

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Please go on to the next page.

Preference Questionnaire

On a scale of 1 to 5, indicate the level of your agreement to each of the statements below by writing the number of your choice (either 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5) in the blank provided against each item.

5 4 3 2 1
 Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree

- ___ 1. Cooperative summary writing is fun.
- ___ 2. I feel that cooperative group work is slow and sometimes confusing; so it is better to work alone.
- ___ 3. I feel that I can use better English when I am in a cooperative summary writing group.
- ___ 4. Generally speaking, my summary is more successful than a group effort.
- ___ 5. I feel that a summary by my group is more successful than a summary I did alone.
- ___ 6. I don't like asking someone else's opinion in class.
- ___ 7. I feel that my group members listen to one another during group discussions.
- ___ 8. I can use better words when I write my own summaries than when I work in a group.
- ___ 9. I feel that I could depend on my group to stay focussed on the assignments.
- ___ 10. Though we sometimes have different opinions, I still think it is good to share ideas.
- ___ 11. I feel that in a cooperative group, my friends correct me when I make a mistake.
- ___ 12. It is good to ask somebody else's opinion while I am learning.
- ___ 13. I feel that I can concentrate better when I summarise a text by myself.
- ___ 14. I learn more when I work in a cooperative group than when I study alone.
- ___ 15. It is better to work alone because I don't learn anything new from cooperative group work.
- ___ 16. I understand a reading passage better when I discuss it with others.
- ___ 17. I feel that group activities waste a lot of time and are unnecessary.
- ___ 18. I feel that everyone in my cooperative group helps equally to finish the assignments.
- ___ 19. I feel that some of my group members did not share any knowledge or skills with the team.
- ___ 20. Though we sometimes have different opinions, I still think it is good to share ideas.

Thank you very much. End of questionnaire.

APPENDIX F

Consent Form

I, , hereby give consent to Ms Wichitra S. Ekawat to perform the following investigational procedures:

1. Teaching me reading and summary writing during October 29, 2008 – February 25, 2009, from 09:30 to 12:30 for three hours per week at Srinakharinwirot University.
2. Test my summary writing ability.
3. Use my summaries and the summary writing scores in her research study.

With my understanding that Ms Ekawat will not reveal my name in her research, I voluntarily consent to the procedures and treatments as required in the research study.

..... (Signed)

..... (Date)

..... (Witness)

..... (Witness)

VITA

VITA

Name: Wichitra S. Ekawat

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