

Some Difficulties in Writing Skills of English Majored Sophomores at Tay Do University in Viet Nam

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ABSTRACT: *There is no denying that English is not only playing an important role in most regions of the world but also holding the leading role in the education and future careers of students in the era of 4.0 technology. To master English, writing skill is one of the indispensable skills. However, in learning writing process, English learners in general, and English majored sophomores at Tay Do University in particular face many obstacles. The study was conducted to identify the challenges facing second-year students. The participants were 84 English majored sophomores. The survey tool used to collect the data was the questionnaire. The study identified the challenges in writing as vocabulary, grammar, and background knowledge.*

KEY WORDS: writing skill, difficulties, English majored sophomores, university

INTRODUCTION

Rational

In the 21st century, English has become a global language, a means of communication, and has been being widely used in the world. So a lot of huge study materials from major educational institutions and universities are written in English. More than half of websites on the Internet are also written in English, such as newspapers, Internet tools, and services. As long as you know the English language, you will have access to an endless source of information.

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Moreover, English appears a lot in everyday life: on product packaging, names of famous corporations. It can be said that the more life develops, the more this language is ingrained in all aspects of life. It is true to say: Learning English will make life more luxurious.

Nowadays, while people are still much fuss about newfangled 21-century skills, one very aged skill that seems to be only growing in value is writing. Writing is an essential ability and a significant part of communication. It makes us become better readers, better thinkers, better speakers, and better listeners. Through writing, we will inform, explain, argue, entertain, and encourage. Moreover, good writers can convey their message most clearly and easily to a large audience than through live chats or over the phone. Of course, a well-written CV or resume without spelling or grammatical mistakes is tremendously essential.

Mastering writing skills is not simple for English learners. Many Vietnamese students overall and students at Tay Do University, in particular, have suffered many challenges when changing thoughts from mother language to English for various factors, including vocabulary, grammar, and background knowledge.

Therefore, the study “Some difficulties in writing skills of English majored and sophomores at Tay Do University” is conducted to point out the problems that lead to those situations, then the researchers can provide reasonable solutions.

Significance of the study

This study is designed to help find the causes of difficulties for second-year students with writing. For these reasons, there will be effective methods to help students overcome difficulties.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Definitions of writing and its importance

Definitions of writing

The concepts of writing have been discussed by numerous researchers in the area with different perspectives. It resulted in a considerable amount of definitions describing the term, some of which were mentioned below.

According to Rivers (1981), “Writing is conveying information or expression of original ideas consecutively within the new language.” Brown (2001) claims, “Writing may be a thinking process.” Furthermore, he states that writing is often planned and given with a vast number of revisions before its release. Also, Elbow (1973) in Brown (2001) also says, “Writing may be a two-step process.” The first process is deciding the meaning and therefore the second

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process is putting the meaning into language. Writing represents what we think. It is because the writing process reflects things, which stay within the mind. Students who are reluctant to write things down often suffer from this activity. The students find difficulties once they start trying to find some reasons to write down and producing written sentences.

Nunan (2003) says, "Writing is not a regular activity." Physically and mentally, normal people learn to talk a language. Norrish (1983) affirms, "The most significant problem is that writing is more complicated which examines a person's ability to use a language and the ability to declare opinions, and writing requires a person to write not only coherently but efficiently."

Moreover, Zulfani (2001) defines that, "Writing can help students to make stronger by adding more grammatical structures, idioms, and vocabulary, as the important thing in learning a language." Nevertheless, Pincas (1998) states that, "Writing may be a way of communicating a message to a reader for a purpose. The purpose of writing is to precise one's self, to supply information for one's reader, to influence one's reader, and to make a literary composition."

In brief, those definitions above have shared the same meaning that writing is a medium of human communication that involves the representation of a language with symbols. Writing systems are not themselves human languages (with the debatable exception of computer languages); they're means of rendering a language into a form which will be reconstructed by other humans separated by time and/or space.

The importance of writing

The written language has nowadays an important social and educational function and its status has a high social prestige. Tribble (1997) states that, "The writing skill is more and more important nowadays. Becoming a proficient writer is one of the major objectives of many students, especially for those who want to become members of international business, administrative or academic communities."

Indeed, writing can be a life skill, a work-related skill since it is often the idea that others value your learning, values, ideas, and contributions to society. Regardless of your career, good writing skills are essential for success in the workplace. Whether it is an email, a project report, or a sales proposal, content full of spelling errors, grammatical errors, and poorly constructed sentences suggest a similar attitude toward work.

It is not just a term but an immense ability. If someone masters this skill, that person can become successful in the writing world. Writing gives you words that help you to expose who you are as a person. It can help you to express yourself comfortably. Moreover, writing is involved in every area and every aspect of life. Whether you have a creative field, job field, or business field, without it, you can't come up with original, new ideas, and it helps you to put

your imagination into words. Writing provides a structure to your vision and creativity. Besides, this skill allows students to learn all the rules and how to organize their ideas using language better and more coherently.

In short, writing skill is the ability to express ideas, emotions, and thoughts in written form using grammar strictly, appropriate word choice, and logical idea arrangement.

Difficulties in writing

Writing is considered to be one of the most challenging aspects of language learning. In general, they are facing the problem of using a foreign language to express their thoughts effectively. In this skill, the difficulties affecting the development of ideas as well as being able to display all of their thinking are vocabulary, grammar, and background knowledge.

Vocabulary

Vocabulary acts as a significant role in language learning. Vocabulary is an indispensable ability for learning to read, speak, and especially in writing. The first challenge freshman students face in writing is vocabulary. According to Richards (2002), "Vocabulary is a central element of language proficiency and contributes much of the basis for how students speak, listen, read and write."

In the writing process, a lack of vocabulary will cause many obstacles. One of the challenges is choosing the appropriate words for the context. McMahon et al. (2005) states that "Word choice as the use of rich, colorful, precise language that communicates in a way that moves and enlightens the reader. In good descriptive writing, well word choice will paint pictures in the reader's mind." Indeed, in writing, a good essay, even if it is a small paragraph, polymorphic words are unavoidable. However, these words can only appear in appropriate contexts. For that reason, students find it very confusing to choose words, and lead to using familiar words in the paragraph makes it less interesting.

For example: "Love you like a love song" là một bài hát với giai điệu hay, êm tai và tình cảm.

→ "Love you like a love song" is a song with a good melody and affection. (lack of word choice)

→ "Love you like a love song" is a great catchy melody song and full of love lyrics. (having word choice)

Lack of vocabulary is also an obstacle in expressing ideas and makes the text not fully conveyed. Indeed, when writing essays, vocabulary is considered to be the bridge of the ideas in the passage. Students will have to use knowledge and vocabulary to put sentences together

to form a complete paragraph or lesson. Due to limited vocabulary, students have to abuse familiar words, which will make sentences boring, less attractive, and possibly lose the fluency of writing.

In short, vocabulary plays a significant role in writing because a lack of vocabulary will lead to unstable ideas in sentences. Therefore, students need to improve their vocabulary capacity to make the paragraph more attractive.

Grammar

Grammar is the second challenge that students face in writing. According to Hirai et al. (2010), "Grammar is a way to organize the sentence and create a good language." Vietnamese grammar is simple, so, when writing, students are easy to apply. On the contrary, when switching to English grammar to be able to apply it fluently, it is a big challenge because students need to pay attention to a lot of small details such as tense and word order. The first difficulty that students face with grammar is the usage of tense. In the process of writing Vietnamese, it becomes very easy to use it, just with the words like "sẽ", "đã" or "đang", the reader can imagine the circumstances or event being mentioned. On the contrary, the use of tenses is a challenge to match the context in English, sometimes the tenses are alternating, making students feel confused. Due to a lack of the basics of grammar knowledge, using tense will grow a difficult obstacle.

The second difficulty in grammar is the words order in sentences. Each language has its own rules about word order, and learners must respect and obey. In the process of learning a foreign language, the mother tongue has a lot to do with thinking and using the target language. The English word order is not stable, it changes flexibly, and that will create a completely different meaning. Most Vietnamese students often forget or do not know the rules of English word order, so that they use the Vietnamese word order to apply in writing.

For example, with the sentence "Hai chiếc xe hơi màu đỏ đầu tiên"; due to the influence of their mother tongue, students would write "The two red cars first" instead of "The first two red cars".

The compound and complex sentences using in English writing can also be the last difficulty for students. Usually, they are accustomed to using single sentences. However, to be able to write better, even if it is only a short paragraph, it requires 1-2 complex or compound sentences, to be able to write these sentences, students must master the structural rules to be able to use those kinds of sentences.

In short, grammar is the second essential thing in the writing process. Failure to master sentence structures, tense, and word order easily leads to many difficulties as well as discourages

students. Therefore, students need to master basic grammar to avoid those problems and to write better.

Background Knowledge

Besides grammar and vocabulary, background knowledge is also a massive difficulty in the writing process of students. It is also viewed as previous knowledge that someone has experienced, perceived as their way. An (2013) defines, “Background awareness as previous knowledge about a subject. Background knowledge can influence someone’s ability to understand the meaning of texts.” When they encounter certain circumstances or they know this before, they become aware of the meaning of topics easily.

Indeed, background knowledge also influences the writing process quite a bit. When a student has a strong and broad background, exposure to unfamiliar or out-of-curriculum topics will not or may cause little hindrance in developing ideas. On the contrary, when the background knowledge is limited to the curriculum or the background knowledge is not wide enough, it will cause many obstacles. Especially, the written test in IELTS or Toeic exams requires candidates to have enough or wide background knowledge to be able to build into a complete essay and attract examiners.

Lack of background knowledge also affects psychology. The importance of what students have memorized or learned plays a significant role. Marzano (2004) reports that “There is a close relationship between prior knowledge and how children do well in school.” In teaching English, Nation (2006) concludes from his research that “Learners need to know about 98% of the words in the written or spoken language to be able to understand what they hear or read well.” Through Marzano and Nation, it can be seen that students who already have known or have learned about a topic are more likely to contribute ideas better, while students who do not have background knowledge or do not know about the topic will not be able to do well.

In short, background knowledge is a prerequisite for students to develop ideas. Due to that reason, students both in urban or rural areas have to widen their knowledge through the internet or books.

Related studies

It is undeniable that students have many challenges in the writing process. There are many studies on this issue conducted by many students from various universities, at the same time they also found out the reasons for this situation. Here are some researches on this topic.

The first one is the study “Difficulties in Writing Essays of English Majored Sophomores at Tay Do University” Nguyen et al. (2020) especially discusses the problems that students always meet in writing. The authors said that it is not easy to write an essay because many

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mistakes can be made. Moreover, it also shares how to avoid as well as help students can easily overcome the problems. The purpose of this study is to analyze and understand common errors and writing paragraph of English-majored students at Tay Do University. The method used in this study was the survey to conduct research. The participants are 53 English majored Sophomores of course 12. The common difficulties are vocabulary, grammar structures, idea arrangement, background knowledge. Basing on the research results, students could recognize their difficulties and find ways to overcome them.

The next one is the study “Common Errors in Writing Journals of the English-Major Students at Ho Chi Minh City Open University” Ho and Duong (2015). The purpose of the current study is to investigate the common written errors on students’ writing journals and to see whether the extensive writing helps enhance students’ writing fluency. The population of this research is 115 first-year English-major students participated in this study. The study pointed out four most common errors frequently occur in students’ writing journals are relating to tenses, collocations, spellings, and verb forms

The last one is the study conducted by Dan et al. (2018), “An Investigation into Common Mistakes in Paragraph Writing of the First-Year English-Majored Students: A Case Study in Can Tho University, Vietnam” The present study focuses on common mistakes in writing paragraphs of the first-year students majoring in English at Can Tho University, in the academic year 2013-2014. The relevant data for the study was collected from the students’ written products and the in-depth interviews. The students were asked to write a free paragraph about “Your new life in Can Tho University” in English in 30 minutes and least 120 words. Difficulties encountered in this study are “Word Formation”, and “Word Choice” mistakes in participants’ writing were the most serious or frequent, whilst the least commonly made mistakes were “Subject/Verb Agreement”, and “Word Order”.

In these studies, the researchers aimed to find out the difficulties that students face when learning to write paragraph, then give some advice and solution for both student and teacher to improve their study-style better, also provide for the teacher to make teaching more and more effective.

RESEARCH AIMS, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESIS

Research aims

This study aimed to find out the difficulties that English majored sophomores at Tay Do University face in writing especially in English writing and then proposed some methods to improve their writing skills.

Research questions

The study is conducted to deal with the following questions:

1. Do English majored sophomores at Tay Do University have difficulties in writing skill?
2. What problems do English majored sophomores at Tay Do University encounter in English writing?

Hypothesis

Based on the literature review and the questionnaire, it can be hypothesized that English majored sophomores can face three main difficulties in paragraph writing such as vocabulary, grammar, and background knowledge.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The research was carried out to find out the challenges English majored sophomores at Tay Do University face in the writing process. To both achieve the purpose as well as the answer to the research questions, the questionnaires were provided to students to examine their opinions. The research was quantitative because its tool was a questionnaire. The data of the questionnaire would be investigated and concluded. Based on the results, the researchers gave some difficulties in the writing process of English majored second-year students often dealt with.

Participants

The participants in this research were 84 English majored sophomores randomly chosen from Tay Do University. Most students are at the age 18 to 25 years old. They speak Vietnamese as their mother tongue and English is their foreign language. These students mostly come from urban areas and a small number comes from rural regions. Besides, they have been learning English more than 8 years. Their ages and learning process are nearly the same, so they have the same ways of thinking and have faced some similar difficulties. Participants would be given questionnaire to get information about their difficulties in writing skill.

Instruments

The questionnaire includes six questions and fifteen statements and it is classified into the following group:

Table 1. The gist of questionnaire

Question/Statement	Summary of the question's/statement's content
From 1 to 6	Participant's information
From 7 to 10	Difficulties in vocabulary
From 11 to 14	Difficulties in grammar
From 15 to 18	Difficulties in background knowledge

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

General results

The goal of the study was to investigate students' difficulties towards writing English essays. For this aim, the questionnaires were delivered to 84 English majored sophomores at Tay Do University. They gave their opinions by checking the blank according to five scales from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The section was to answer the research question that I presented at the beginning of this paper. The results included statistical evidence on (1) students' difficulties when acquiring English writing skills are (1) vocabulary, (2) grammar, and (3) background knowledge.

Results of the questionnaire

Table 2. Students' years of learning English

1. How long have you studied English?	Percentage
A. More than 8 years	80.95%
B. More than 10 years	14.29%
C. More than 14 years	4.76%
D. Others	0%

The researchers can measure the fundamentals during their writing thanks to the question regarding the time students spent studying English. In response to the question, "How long have you studied English?". There were 68/84 students (80.95 %) said they had studied English for more than 8 years. This indicated that majority of them learned English from grade four

before they entered university. There were 14.29% (12/84) of students who have been studying English for 10 years. In addition, 4.76 % percent (4/84) of the remaining students had studied English for 14 years.

Table 3. Students' interests in writing

2. What do you think about writing in English?	Percentage
A. Very interesting	29.76%
B. Interesting	25.00%
C. Normal	20.24%
D. Boring	11.90%
E. Very Boring	13.10%

Thanks to the data presented, the researchers got more insights into students' thoughts about learning English writing. The responses revealed that most of participants showed their interests in English writing with 29.76%. To be more specific, over a half of students (54.76%) acknowledged that English writing was interesting to study so they would practice a lot so as to master this subject. In addition, there were 20.24% of students considering writing normal. Perhaps, they did not spend time enough on practicing writing and they did not have motivation for English writing much. In contrast, the rest of them with 11.90% and 13.10% of students, admittedly considered English writing to be not interesting and even boring. It could be said that they met a lot of problems in the process of learning English writing. All in all, the statistics showed most of the students had positive attitude towards writing in English.

Table 4. Students' self-evaluation on English writing skill

3. How do you evaluate your English writing skill?	Percentage
A. Very good	5.95%
B. Good	14.29%
C. Normal	34.52%
D. Bad	23.81%
E. Very bad	21.43%

As can be shown in table 4, the figure was obvious that 20.24% of students acknowledging that their English writing skills were good enough to acquire English. It meant that they were competent with given writing tasks assigned by their teachers in class. In addition, there were 34.52% of students assumed that their English writing skill were normal. Meanwhile, the percentage of students having bad English writing ability was rather high with 45.24%. It meant that students' English writing ability was not truly good, so they need to make great efforts and practice as much as possible to improve their writing skills.

Table 5. Student's attitudes towards self-studying English writing

4. How much time do you usually practice improving your writing skill every day?	Percentage
A. Less than one hour	67.86%
B. More than one hour	7.14%
C. More than two hours	3.57%
D. Others	21.43%

From the mentioned table, self-study had a big influence on studying English writing of students, especially in improving their writing skills. There were 67.86% of the students sparing less than one hour every day on practicing writing English. In addition to this, only 7.14% of the participants spent more than one hour for practicing writing English and not many students (3.57%) spent more two hours per day for their writing skill, they were not interested in upgrading this skill. The remainders with 21.43 % responded the answer "others" in which

they confirmed that they had no idea in improving their writing abilities. In short, most of the students did not show their positive attitude towards self-studying in English writing

Students' challenges in learning writing in English

From the figure for the question number 5, it could be clearly seen that English writing was a difficult subject to students. Their common challenges were shown in the figure below:

Table 6. Students' challenges with English writing

5. In your opinion, what aspect are the difficulties of writing?	Percentage
A. Vocabulary	40.48%
B. Grammar	52.38%
C. Background knowledge	14.29%

The table described the data about English majored sophomores' obstacles in English writing. As can be seen from the responses, grammar accounted for the highest percentage when there were 52.38% of the students admitted that they had a lot of problems in grammatical structures. The second position belonged to vocabulary with 40.48% of students encountering difficulties. Finally, students faced the least challenges in rendering background knowledge element with 14.29%. This could be the general challenges for English majored sophomores while learning writing in English.

Table 7. Students' obstacles in English writing

6. How often do you encounter these obstacles mentioned above?	Percentage
A. Always	33.33%
B. Usually	21.43%
C. Often	38.10%
D. Seldom	7.14%
E. Never	0%

Basing on the results in the table 7, it was not hard to see the participants did have troubles rendering English writing. Among 84 respondents, there were 54.76% of students responded that they always or usually ran into the challenges. Besides, 32 participants, accounting for 38.10%, affirming that they often faced obstacles and there were just 7.14% of students asserting that they seldom got into difficulties in this section of English writing. Drawing from the students' responses, it was apparent that English writing was not an easy task for students. Three main difficulties that students often encounter when writing something in English.

Vocabulary

When facing with some difficulties in English writing, the good knowledge of vocabulary is indispensable and very necessary for English majored students. It is a crucial component to have good writing skills. However, students at Tay Do University often struggled for vocabulary in English writing.

Table 8. Difficulties in vocabulary

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
7. My vocabulary capacity is limited.	22.62%	34.52%	21.43%	17.86%	3.57%
8. I always spend lots of time choosing appropriate words to write.	17.86%	45.24%	20.24%	10.71%	5.95%
9. Due to the lack of vocabulary. my ideas are not expressed well.	22.62%	40.48%	23.81%	7.14%	5.95%
10. Due to vocabulary limitations, I often write words over and over or use synonyms in the same sentence.	20.24%	35.71%	30.95%	8.33%	4.76%

The table showed the percentage of students' difficulties in studying vocabulary. As can be seen from this chart, 57.14% of students completely agreed that they had difficulties in studying vocabulary including 34.52% of students' agreement and 22.62 % strongly agreement. Meanwhile, 21.43 % of students did not think that new vocabulary was important in writing essays with 17.86% of "disagreement" and 3.57% "strong disagreement". The figures indicated that participants really had problems with vocabulary with English writing. Vocabulary was one of the challenges to the complicated English writing. Specific difficulties that students

faced in vocabulary were lacking words, word choices, and collocation. The statistical table showed that the students lacked words were 64.1%. Besides, they also said that they did not know the exact meaning of the words and how to use it in the writing context. So they could not explain or express their ideas well. More than 55% of participants (55.95%) admitted that they made mistakes about misspelled words in their English writing due to vocabulary limitations.

Table 9. Difficulties in grammar

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
11. Because I do not master the basic English grammar in 12 tenses, I often make mistakes.	23.81%	33.33%	26.19%	14.29%	2.38%
12. I often overuse single sentences or short sentences in English writing.	17.86%	59.52%	27.38%	10.71%	3.57%
13. The structures of compound and complex sentences make me feel confused when writing.	21.43%	47.62%	22.62%	3.57%	4.76%
14. During the writing process, I often make mistakes in subject-verb and noun-adjective agreement, ill-formed sentences, grammatical errors.	19.05%	34.52%	23.81%	14.29%	8.33%

As can be seen from table, English majored sophomores agreed with the 11th statement that their grammar was insufficient and they often used basic grammar sentences with 57.14% of them agreed this statement. However, nearly 18% of excellent students (17.57%) quite disagreed that idea because they seemed to master basic English grammar, so they could have used 12 tenses in English perfectly while 26.19% of participants had no ideas. Overusing short or single sentences in English writing was also their biggest challenge with 77.38% of responses in the statement number 12 whereas 14.28% of sophomores refused to accept this statement and 27.38% still had no opinion when using short sentences in their English writing. Besides, lack of grammar competence in English writing could make students confused when trying to express their ideas, nearly 70% (69.05) of them accepted with the 13th statement. The proportion of participants had no ideas about using compound and complex structures ranging about 8.33%. In the last statement in the table, more than 50% of participants (53.57%)

considered that they often made mistakes in using subject-verb and noun-adjective agreement, ill-formed sentences, grammatical errors. It claimed that they met obstacles in grammar when they were writing something in English like, subject-verb and noun-adjective agreements, ill-formed sentences, common grammatical errors. As can be seen from table, there was a remarkable number of students in 14th statement (53.57%) who think that their grammar knowledge is not good enough in English writing. To summarize, grammar was really an essential aspect of teaching and learning, English learners could focus on grammar constructs if they want to better their writing skills.

Table 10. Difficulties in background knowledge

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
15. Background knowledge in an essential component in the process of learning English, especially writing skill	29.76%	25%	21.43%	19.05%	4.76%
16. I do not know how to develop ideas or my writing due to unfamiliar topic because I have a shortage of background knowledge.	47.62%	21.43%	14.29%	13.10%	3.57%
17. It is very essential to have the good background knowledge in order to learn English writing better.	41.67%	39.29%	3.57%	10.71%	4.76%
18. I am not confident in writing a new assignment in English because I don't have sufficient background knowledge of the topic that I am going to write about.	23.81%	28.57%	30.95%	9.52%	7.14%

In the 15th statement of the table “Background knowledge in an essential component in the process of learning English, especially writing skill.” it was crucial to determine whether background knowledge had a significant impact in learning English or writing skill. Approximately 55% of respondents (25% of agreement and 29.76% strong agreement) believed that background knowledge was a significant element in writing process while the

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percentage of people who did not realized the importance of background knowledge was 23.81 % and those having no idea was 21.43%. Dealt with the statement number 16, the students' questions faced by unfamiliar topic, specifically, more than half of sophomores (69.05%) shared that they had faced obstacles with unfamiliar topics in their English writing. Besides, 47.62% of them completely agreed. In contrast, there were only 16.67 % of participants who believed that was not a big deal with them and 14.29 % who did not give any opinion about background knowledge.

With the response to the statement 17, the majority of students (nearly 80.96%) quite agreed that "It's very essential to have the good background knowledge in order to learn essay writing better" with 39.29 % of participants who agreed and 41.67 % who fully agreed that in some reasons, they did not have enough good information or experience that made them less confident when writing. On the opposite side, the percentage of sophomores choosing "disagreed" and "strongly disagreed" were 10.71 % and 4.76 % whereas 3.57 % of them showed the neutrality.

In the 18th statement of the background knowledge, 52.38%% of students felt unconfident when writing an essay without the good background knowledge of the given topic in their writing tasks while one third of them (30.95%) had no opinion. However, for good students, background knowledge of the topic was not a challenging issue for them, 16.66% of them disagreed that idea. In short, background knowledge more or less was an influential factor for students when learning English writing.

DISCUSSION

In the process of doing this study, the researchers could measure the basics of their talents and knowledge during their writing thanks to the survey about the time students spent learning English. They have been studying English from 8 to 10 years. In addition, the remaining students have studied English for 14 years. Their English ability was rather good, but they were not sure how good their writing skills are. They could talk and listen well, but writing was a challenge for them. Since writing is a challenging task, students often concentrate on skills such as listening and communicating rather than writing. According to the research results, there were three main causes including vocabulary, grammar structures, background knowledge are the challenges that cause English majored sophomores unsuccessful write in English.

First of all, students often lacked the requisite vocabulary when writing. It was difficult for them to describe themselves clearly and topics also. When presenting with new subjects, they will be perplexed. Additionally, students found it difficult to use suitable vocabulary in various ways. There are many majored collocations in the context that must remember.

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Consequently, students were unsure grammar constructs became the most daunting aspect of English writing. When using coherency, personal pronoun and tenses incorrectly in English, it may be risk confusing or misinforming for audience. Besides, English grammar is a significant challenge. It is difficult for students because they have to struggle with subject-verb structures, resulting in grammatical errors in their sentences. Moreover, the organization of ideas was also a challenge for students when writing the essay. They did not know what they were talking about or did not understand it well enough.

All things considered above, English majored sophomores at Tay Do University faced many difficulties in writing including background knowledge, vocabulary, grammar structures. To improve their writing skills, students must identify their challenges and devise effective solutions.

CONCLUSION

English majored second-year students at Tay Do University have faced a lot of troubles in mastering writing skills, particularly problems in vocabulary, grammar, background knowledge.

Vocabulary

Vocabulary is one of the top challenges facing language majors or amateurs. As expected, due to the limited vocabulary, students have many difficulties writing. Lack of vocabulary or limited vocabulary affects the choice of words suitable for the context when writing. In addition, the lack of vocabulary also affects the word development process, making the sentence of the paragraph not fully developed, which can immediately lose interest when reading.

Grammar

In addition to the lack of vocabulary, the lack of basic grammar knowledge seems to be the next barrier affecting the writing process. At first, the students seemed to have difficulty arranging word order. When the words are not correctly arranged in the correct order or structure, the student is unable to convey the full meaning, and worse, they render the sentence meaningless. Next is the matter of choosing tense. Choosing tense to match the topic of the article takes time and when choosing the wrong one will greatly affect assignments. Finally, there is the emergence of compound and complex sentences. It is easy to see that, students mainly trace with simple sentences, often avoid compound sentences and complex sentences because they do not understand or are not sure about the correct structure. This will make their writing tasks simple, less attractive, and lack clarity.

Background knowledge

Background knowledge is also a significant factor associated with practical knowledge and learning in school and is also one of the barriers affecting writing because background knowledge is also related to vocabulary. As expected, when exposed to familiar topics, students feel light, developing ideas very easily. But when it comes to topics other than school or beyond their ability, students feel confused, which in turn leads to difficulty in developing ideas, often using common words instead of using specialized words, and taking a lot of time to have a complete paragraph.

In brief, doing this research, the researchers hope to find the difficulties in writing of English majored sophomores at Tay Do University, and this research can help students recognize their weaknesses in writing process so that they can have effective learning directions.

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