ABSTRACT

This research used Systemic Functional Grammar by Halliday (1994) to investigate students’ strengths and weaknesses in terms of genre writing, like Narrative. The populations of this study were taken from two different schools, situated in Bangkok and Southern, Thailand areas where students were asked to write a narrative text based on the picture given to them. The three areas of SFG were investigated, 1) the processes which tell what’s going on in the story. 2) The complex nominal groups which are focusing on N12 to N19, and 3) the thematic development of the text.

The analysis found that the students from Bangkok had greater ability to write the texts using higher numbers of material, relational, existential, and mental while the texts produced by students from Southern part were weaker in terms of variation of the processes. The findings of how students employed complex nominal groups, indicated that both areas missed N13, N15, and N16. The Bangkok group, however, had greater ability to employ N12, N14, N17, N18, and N19. Additionally, students who were under studied had both problems with tenses.

With regards to the narrative text structures, the students from Southern had better understanding of the narrative structure than students from Bangkok.

The thematic development of the students’ writings from both schools were quite satisfying in terms of the marked topical themes used to mark the time. However, most of the students had limited knowledge about how to use the complex nominal groups, the complex clauses to develop their themes in order to produce a more interesting narrative text.

As students are still lacking different linguistic knowledge, thus teaching the students how to create long nominal groups and how to apply different processes in various contexts can be very helpful. Using SFG’s curriculum cycle perhaps is a better way to let students start a writing course with more practical ways of learning.