

DEVELOPING ACADEMIC WRITING IN A BUSINESS-ORIENTED UNIVERSITY

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Abstract: This research investigated the development of language choices in the Academic writing of students at an English-medium university in Thailand. The first part involved looking at the writing in the first semester of their English program at the university, representing the level of the students' writing on entry into the university. Seventy two samples of first year students' writing were collected, but only 12 were randomly selected for this study in order to compare their progress over a period of 14 weeks (first semester). The second part of the research looked at the writing of students' journals at the end of their second semester of their first year after the implementation of a writing program based on research originally developed in Australia (Derewianka, 2003). A third part of the research investigated the development of students' writing towards the third year in university with specific reference to their academic writing in the business English program. The focus on Business English was mainly because the university was well-known in this field of study. The framework for the analysis of the students' writing was based on a systemic functional approach (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004). In order to provide insights into the meaning and effectiveness of the text, a discourse grammar needs to be functional and semantic in its orientation. This paper discusses the development of the Nominal Group (NG) in the students' writing in THEME position, as this was felt to be a major issue in the development of academic discourse. However NGs in the RHEME would also be looked, as this was a part of the text structure, where complex nominal groups would be expected as part of the NEW information. The resulting analysis showed that initially the students had a limited knowledge of the different genres and used an equally limited range of lexical and grammatical choices. After the implementation of a new teaching approach in the second semester of the first year, some improvement could be observed. During the third year of the English program, improvement in the writing of genres used in "business" writing, such as Reports, was clearly evident.

Keywords: *Academic Business English, Thailand, lexico-grammatical choices, nominal groups, genres.*

Abstrak: Penelitian ini menyelidiki perkembangan pilihan bahasa siswa dalam mata kuliah menulis akademik di sebuah universitas berbahasa Inggris di Thailand. Bagian pertama melihat tulisan di semester pertama mahasiswa program bahasa Inggris di universitas tersebut untuk melihat kemampuan menulis mahasiswa saat mereka masuk universitas. Tujuh puluh dua sampel tulisan mahasiswa tingkat pertama dikumpulkan, tapi hanya 12 yang dipilih secara acak untuk kajian ini agar bisa dibandingkan kemajuannya setelah empat belas minggu (satu semester). Bagian kedua penelitian ini melihat jurnal hasil tulisan mahasiswa di akhir semester ke dua tahun pertama mereka, setelah penerapan program menulis menggunakan kerangka teori yang dikembangkan di Australia (Derewianka 2003). Bagian ketiga dari penelitian ini menyelidiki perkembangan tulisan mahasiswa menuju tahun ketiga mereka dengan rujukan khusus terhadap tulisan akademis mereka dalam program bahasa Inggris untuk bisnis karena universitas tersebut terkenal dalam bidang kajian itu. Landasan teori yang digunakan untuk menganalisis tulisan mahasiswa ini adalah pendekatan fungsional sistemik (Halliday dan Matthiessen, 2004). Untuk memberikan masukan terhadap makna dan ketepatan-gunaan teks, tata bahasa wacana harus fungsional