

ABSTRACT

The main aim of this research was to identify the range of nominal groups in the fixed topic and open topic journal writings of Thai EFL learners. The data of this study is in the form of 30 fixed-topic and 30 open topic journal entries from Basic English students at Assumption University. These entries were taken from three phases (the first, midterm and final) of a semester and the analysis was based on functional grammar (Halliday 1998).

The findings indicate that more extensive nominal groups were being gradually used by the participants during their journal writings. Nominal groups become more complex and longer in the final part of the semester, namely two or more elements of pre-modifier and complex post-modifier were used. Nominal groups as Topical Theme and Marked Topical Theme in the journal writing were also analyzed to see the variety of use of such themes in the students' writing as this was important for cohesion in their texts. The development of nominal groups shows that improvement with the open topic journal writing task allowed greater scope for the students to express themselves and had a consequent effect on the types and range of nominal groups used. It is hoped this study will yield a more precise picture of Thai EFL learners at Assumption University in terms of the development of the features of nominal groups in English writing.