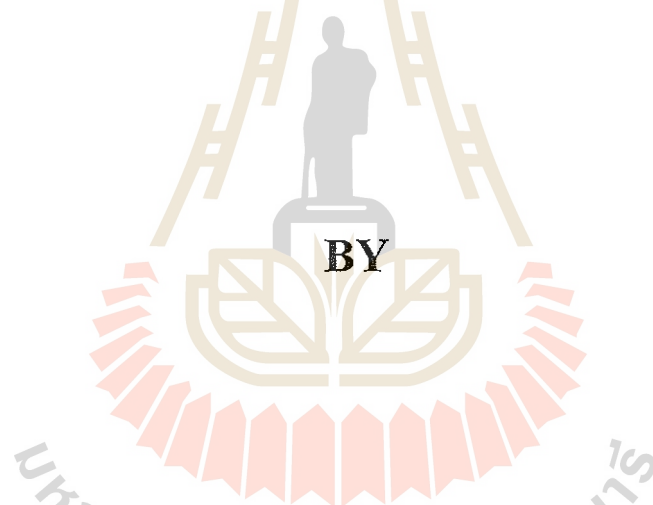


RESEARCH PROPOSAL

**EFFECTIVENESS OF PEER
RESPONSE TECHNIQUE IN EFL
WRITING**



BY

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Research Proposal

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Thesis Title: **Effectiveness of Peer Response Technique in EFL Writing**

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of the peer response technique in EFL writing classes at Khon Kaen University. The study will be conducted in three main phases. Phase I: study the current usage of peer response technique in English writing classes in order to know students' perceptions and reactions and to gain their suggestions that will be useful for developing a practical peer response model. Phase II: develop a practical model of the peer response based on a theoretical framework derived from related literature and the data from Phase I. Phase III: experiment the developed peer response model, and investigate its effectiveness on the students' writing performance and their reflections on the model.

Four research questions will be asked: (1) What are students' perceptions and reactions on the peer response technique they have experienced in their English writing classes? (2) How can a practically and theoretically sound model of the peer response technique be constructed? (3) How effective is the developed model of the peer response technique? (4) How do students perceive and react to the new model of the peer response technique?

The subjects in this study are 50 English-major students enrolled in the English Writing III (Essay Writing) at Khon Kaen University, Thailand. The purposive sampling will be done under the following criteria. 1) These students have experienced the use of peer response technique. 2) They have passed English Writing I (Sentence Writing) and English Writing II (Paragraph Writing) so that they have already been prepared to learn essay writing.

The research designs are descriptive and quasi-experimental designs. The procedures on each phase of the study are planned as follows:

Phase I: The purpose of this phase is to investigate the current use of the peer response technique in English writing classes in order to know students' perceptions and reactions and to gain their suggestions that will be useful for developing a practical peer response model. In this phase, all the subjects will be asked to answer a questionnaire on their reflections on the use of peer response technique in their English writing classes at Khon Kaen University and their writing strategies and styles. Then, ten of them will be selected for in-depth interviews by using the grades of English Writing II as the criterion. Before the interview, these students will be asked to write a reflective essay on the peer response technique they experienced. These subjects are five pairs of students with different grades: A, B+, B, C+ and C (since there have been no lower grades assigned so far).

Phase II: The purpose of this phase is to develop a practical model of the peer response based on a theoretical framework derived from related literature and the data from Phase I. In this phase, a practical peer response model will be developed and piloted with 5-10 international students learning English essay writing at the English Language Institute, University of Surrey, the United Kingdom (if possible). After that the improved model will be tried out with approximately 50 English-major students of English Essay Writing course at Mahasarakam University since they are studying in quite the same context as in Khon Kaen University.

Phase III: The purpose of this phase is to investigate effectiveness of the developed peer response model and the students reflections on the model. 50 English-major students enrolled in English Writing III (Essay Writing) at Khon Kaen University will be given a pretest (essay writing). Then, they are divided into two groups: the control group and the experimental group. The experimental group will use the developed peer response model, while the control group will follow the conventional teacher-centered teaching approach. Both groups will then be given a posttest (essay writing). Only the experimental group will then answer a questionnaire on their reflections on the developed model. 6 students from three different writing performance levels will be chosen for an in-depth interview.

Data collections and analysis will be done as follows:

In Phase I, a questionnaire, reflective essay writing and in-depth interview will be employed to obtain data on the current use of the peer response technique and the students' suggestions on the technique. For the data from the questionnaire, descriptive statistics (percentage) will be used. The interpretive technique will be employed to analyse the data from the essay writing and in-depth interview.

For Phase III, the data from pretest and posttest will be analysed by using descriptive statistics (Analysis of Covariance) so that extraneous and intervening variables are controlled as much as possible. After the treatment, a questionnaire and in-depth interview will be conducted to investigate the students' reflections on the developed peer response model.

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Rationale for the Study

According to the Thai Educational Act B.E. 2542, education for all, learner-centredness and life-long education are three of the focuses. It, then, can be anticipated that the number of students enrolled in each level of educational institutes, including universities, will substantially increase. This number moves in the opposite direction of the number of teachers. How can a smaller number of teachers handle a greater number of students? For English writing classes, one possible way to deal with this particular problem is to empower the students in their writing through the English writing process.

ESL and EFL researchers have agreed with the value of the writing process for a few decades because of its advantages (Reid, 1993). Process writing can get writers close to text perfection through its stages: writing, reflecting on, discussing, and rewriting successive drafts of a text. (Nunan, 1999). The stages of the writing process can be concluded into three main stages: pre-writing to generate ideas, writing first draft with emphasis on content to discover meaning and writing second and third or more drafts to revise ideas and communicate those ideas (Keh, 1996).

Revision is considered to be the most important stage of the writing process. Murray (1978) contends that the revision is the “heart” of the writing process, for it allows learners to carefully review and rewrite their composition so that it is comprehensible according to the purpose of their writing.

Revision refers to activities of reviewing written text with the aim of modifying and correcting it in order to produce grammatically acceptable, coherent discourse. It also includes more complex activities such as rearrangement of ideas and insertion of new information (Chandrasegaran, 1986). For Krashen (1984), Goldstein and Conrad (1990) and Magelsdorf (1992), the revision stage helps students in revising and making better quality of their writing. In reinforcing the revision stage, cooperative learning techniques, which are designed to support cooperation and interaction among students, for example, in employing peer response technique, are required (Keh, 1990).

Peer response is a technique that student readers provide other student writers comments on their writing drafts so that those student writers can improve their own written work (Nelson and Murphy, 1993). Peer response technique can be used either in the forms of pairs or small groups. Some researchers support peer response groups (three or more students) while others prefer peer pairs (student-student). The former argue that peer response groups offer writers a wide range of responses on their writing whereas peer pairs tend to foster more writer-based analysis of written texts (Brannon and Knoblauch, 1984; Spear, 1984 cited in Mendonca and Johnson, 1994). Furthermore, peer pairs set up hierarchical relationship between students, that is tutor and tutee, rather than the equal relationship that develops in peer response groups (Sharan, 1984). In consistence with Saran, Bruffee (1984) says that peer response groups provide a context of variety of thinking, writing, talking, learning, and role-play situations that form a powerful educative force of peer influence.

There are many advantages of peer response technique in enhancing learner-empowerment in their English writing. Barnes (1976), Brief (1984) and Forman and Cazden (1985), for example, contend that the peer response technique gives opportunities to students to play a more active role in their learning. Jacobs (1989) theorizes that peer response also allows more students' cooperation by giving them the additional roles of reader and advisor. It raises writers' awareness, for their readers actually read the text through the eyes of potential readers, trying to judge the meaning of the writing they read from their own perspectives (Mittan, 1989; Moore, 1986). In

addition, Allaei and Connor (1990) believe that through making choices, expressing purposes, reading and rereading their own and peers' written work, students are gradually able to identify errors in their own writing in terms of content, grammar and mechanics. This capability is what students' empowerment is aiming for, and the peer response technique is a practical way to achieve this goal. In conclusion, peer response is a technique that enhances learning autonomy.

Despite a lot of advantages of peer response technique in English writing classes, a good number of researchers disagree with it. They argue that students prefer to follow their teacher's response because they might not always trust their peers in their revision (Mendonca and Johnson, 1994). Carson and Nelson (1996) also find that cultural factors, such as harmony-maintenance strategies, influence Chinese learners when they participate in the peer response activity. In addition, most ESL students give only grammatical comments because they do not know how to judge content, says Ashwell (2000). One cause of students' failure in dealing with content judgement is that they are not adequately prepared to make judgement on the cohesion (Chandrasegaran, 1986).

Even though advantages and disadvantages of the use of peer response technique are still under debate, empirical studies on it, particularly at the tertiary level, are still scarce, and most of them are either comparative studies between the use of peer response technique and another teaching and learning method or the use of the combination of different methods. One example is 'Negotiation of Meaning: Peer Review and Teacher Conference in Writing Instruction' by Adiphattharanan (1996). The finding is that students have more awareness when they write; they have their audience in mind when they write. However, the decision of making any revision depends on the writer's commitment. Another study conducted by Liengprayoon (1999), 'A Study of Peer Review Activities in English Writing of Mathayom Suksa 5 Students,' finds that the peer response activities enhance students' writing capability. Even though the mentioned studies and some other studies evidencing the success of the use of peer response technique, the subjects are in high school where the setting is

different. In other words, studies on the peer response technique used at the tertiary level are still scarce.

Despite the scarce of the studies that can evidence the success of the use of the peer response technique at the tertiary level in Thailand, some teachers of English writing have introduced this technique to their students by using models of peer response that are believed to be successful for the English native students. From informally discussing with some teachers in the Thai TESOL International Conference during January 17-19, 2002, it is found that their aim for introducing the peer response technique to their students is to empower them in their English writing. However, the experience is not so successful. Students are still used to the teacher-centred approach, and the way they give and receive feedback, for Pichitpan (2001), is hierarchical. This reflects students' misperception on the use of peer response technique. In general, people act as they perceive as Rogers (1951, cited in Brown, 2000) notes that individual's self-concept and his sense of reality are internal forces causing a person to act. Hence, it is reasonable to conclude that they should benefit from a practical peer response technique if they have the right perception on it. But how can this practical model that empowers students on their writing be developed? How can the right perceptions of students on the peer response technique be built? And how do we know if the model is effective?

This research, therefore, focuses on investigating the effectiveness of the peer response model and the reflections of the learners who, in this study, are the English-major students at Khon Kaen University and have experienced the peer response activity, particularly in the revision stage of the writing process. The results of this study will be useful for developing a practical teaching and learning approach that enhances autonomous learners.

1.2 Purposes of the Study

The purposes of this study are (1) to investigate students' perceptions and reactions on the peer response technique they have experienced in their English writing classes; (2) to construct a practically and theoretically sound model of the peer response technique; (3) to examine the effectiveness of the developed model of the peer response technique; and (4) to investigate students' perceptions and reactions on the developed model.

1.3 Research Questions

- (1) What are students' perceptions and reactions on the peer response technique they have experienced in their English writing classes?
- (2) How can a practical and theoretically sound model of the use of the peer response technique be constructed?
- (3) How effective is the developed model of the use of peer response technique?
- (4) How do students perceive and react to the new model of the use of peer response technique?

1.4 Significance of the Study

Like some other tertiary institutes, the teaching and learning approach employed in writing classes at Khon Kaen University allows students to rely heavily on their teachers. To be specific, the teachers have played a central role in almost every stage of the writing process. This teaching and learning situation is completely contradictory to the Educational Act, B. E. 2542 where the learner-centred approach is one of the focuses, and it will negatively affect students' capability in their writing in the long run. To be specific, students will not be able to work on their own.

In order to solve this problem, students need to be empowered in their own writing. Peer response, a cooperative learning that enhances learner-centredness, might be a practical way to make students autonomous learners. Once they can produce their own good writing independently, there is no need for them to rely heavily on the teacher, and this would be very beneficial for them as independent learners. Autonomous learning will be possible only when the students clearly understand and have good attitudes towards the peer response technique they use. This research, therefore, aims at developing a practical peer response model to use in EFL writing to enhance students' writing.

1.5 Scope and Limitations of the Study

Since this study is conducted at Khon Kaen University, the context of teaching and learning, learning strategies as well as learning styles of the students might be non-generalisable, and therefore, the results of the study may not be applicable for other different settings.

1.6 Definitions of the Terms

Effectiveness refers to the teaching and learning situation that learners can achieve learning goals under the conditions of materials, method and time; meanwhile, teachers can successfully and happily teach under the conditions of materials, method and time.

Empowerment means the enhancement of learner autonomy in English writing.

Peer response refers to the technique that consists of variety of activities enhancing learner autonomy. In those activities, writing students act as readers of peers who give oral and/or written responses on peers' written work in terms of content, grammar and mechanics.

Revision is a stage of the writing process that involves, first, adding, deleting and/or reorganizing contents, then, correcting grammar and mechanics. These activities are implemented after students make consideration on taking peer comments into account.

1.7 Summary

This study aims at investigating effectiveness of the peer response technique in EFL writing and students' reflections on the technique. The subjects are 50 English-major students enrolled in English Writing III (Essay Writing). The study consists of 3 phases: Phase I: investigating the current use of the peer response technique in English writing classes in order to learn students' perceptions and reactions and to obtain their suggestions that will be beneficial for developing a practical peer response model. Phase II: developing a practical model of the peer response based on a theoretical framework derived from related literature and the data from Phase I. Phase III: using the developed peer response model, and investigate its effectiveness on the students' writing performance and their reflections on the model.

Chapter Two

Review of Related Literature

This chapter discusses the related literature from textbooks, journal articles, books, on-line articles and theses. This related literature from which the conceptual framework derived includes the following topics:

- 2.1 Learner empowerment
- 2.2 Learning strategies and learning styles
- 2.3 Writing process
- 2.4 Writing Process and Cooperative Learning Strategy
- 2.5 Revision and Cooperative Learning Strategy
- 2.6 Peer response

2.1 Learner Empowerment

Learner empowerment refers to the enhancement of learner autonomy. This can be done by fostering learners' sense of responsibility and encouraging them to take an active part in making decisions about their learning (Scharle and Szabo, 2000). In empowering students in their English writing, Reid (1994) states that students can feel empowered when they are introduced situations and contexts that enhance their learning autonomy. In other words, teachers must guide students to the ways that they can learn to gain ownership of their writing, and at the same time, they also have to take their readers into account when they write. Learner empowerment can be achieved via the cooperative learning activities throughout the stages of the writing process.

2.2 Learning Strategies and Learning Styles

In order to achieve the goal of teaching and learning, learning strategies and learning styles of students should also be put into account. Learning strategies, according to O'Malley (1989b), are the ways in which learners try to understand and remember new information, for example, techniques for learning new vocabulary. Learning styles, on the other hand, are the particular approaches by which a student tries to learn (Jordan, 1995). Some researchers give more details about learning strategies and learning styles as follows:

2.2.1 Learning Strategies

For Nisbet and Shucksmith (1986), strategies are the process that a person chooses, coordinate and apply skills. Some researchers have concluded the learning strategies that characterise the good language learners. Rubin and Thompson (1982 cited in Nunan, 1989) state that 'good' or efficient learners tend to exhibit the following characteristics as they go about learning a second language.

1. Good learners find their own way.
2. Good learners organise information about language
3. Good learners are creative and experiment with language.
4. Good learners made their own opportunities, and find strategies for getting practice in using the language inside and outside the classroom.
5. Good learners learn to live with uncertainty and develop strategies for making sense of the target language without wanting to understand every word.
6. Good learners use mnemonics (rhymes, word associations, etc. to recall what has been learned).
7. Good learners make errors work.
8. Good learners use linguistic knowledge, including knowledge of their first language in mastering a second language.
9. Good learners let the context (extra-linguistic knowledge and knowledge of the world) help them in comprehension.

10. Good learners learn to make intelligent guesses.
11. Good learners learn chunks of language as wholes and formalised routines to help them perform 'beyond their competence.'
12. Good learners learn production techniques (e.g. techniques for keeping a conversation going).
13. Good learners learn different styles of speech and writing and learn to vary their language according to the formality of the situation.

(pp. 47-48)

Learning strategies are divided into three main categories: metacognitive, cognitive and socioaffective strategies as stated by Brown (2000):

Metacognitive is a term used in information-processing theory to indicate an "executive" function, strategies that involve planning for learning, thinking about the learning process as it is taking place, monitoring of one's production or comprehension, and evaluating learning after an activity is completed. Cognitive strategies are more limited to specific learning tasks and involve more direct manipulation of the learning material itself. Socioaffective strategies have to do with social-mediating activity and interacting with others. (p. 124)

Below are the learning strategies described by O'Malley et al. (1985b: 582-584)

| Learning Strategy | Description |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Metacognitive strategies | |
| Advance Organizers | Making a general but comprehensive preview of the organizing concept or principle in an anticipated learning activity |
| Directed Attention | Deciding in advance to attend in general to a learning task and to ignore irrelevant distractors |
| Selective Attention | Deciding in advance to attend to specific aspects of language input or situational details that will cue the retention of language input |
| Self-Management | Understanding the conditions that help one learn and arranging for the presence of those conditions |
| Functional Planning | Planning for and rehearsing linguistic components necessary to carry out an upcoming language task |
| Self-Monitoring | Correcting one's speech for accuracy in pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, or for appropriateness related to the setting or to the people who are present |
| Delayed Production | Consciously deciding to postpone speaking in order to learn initially through listening comprehension |
| Self-Evaluation | Checking the outcomes of one's own language learning against an internal measure of completeness and accuracy |

| Learning Strategy | Description |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Cognitive Strategies | |
| Note Taking | Writing down the main idea, important points, outline, or summary of information presented orally or in writing |
| Deduction | Consciously applying rules to produce or understand the second language |
| Recombination | Constructing a meaningful sentence or larger language sequence by combining known elements in a new way |
| Imagery | Relating new information to visual concepts in memory via familiar, easily retrievable visualizations, phrases, or locations |
| Auditory Representation | Retention of the sound or a similar sound for a word, phrase, or longer language sequence |
| Keyword | Remembering a new word in the second language by (1) identifying a familiar word in the first language that sounds like or otherwise resembles the new word and (2) generating easily recalled images of some relationship between the new word and the familiar word |
| Contextualization | Placing a word or phrase in a meaningful language sequence |
| Elaboration | Relating new information to other concepts in memory |
| Transfer | Using previously acquired linguistic and/or conceptual knowledge to facilitate a new language learning task |
| Inferencing | Using available information to guess meanings of new items, predict outcomes, or fill in missing information |

| Learning Strategy | Description |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Socioaffective Strategies | |
| Cooperation | Working with one or more peers to obtain feedback, pool information, or model a language activity |
| Question for Clarification | Asking a teacher or other native speaker for repetition, paraphrasing, explanation, and/or examples |

Peer response technique employs socioaffective strategies, particularly the cooperation among learners in order to facilitate the other learning strategies so that they can achieve their learning goals.

2.2.2 Learning Styles

Learning styles are the preferences of individuals with regard to how they learn; as Keefe (1979 cited in Brown, 2000) states:

Learning styles might be thought of as “cognitive, affective and physiological traits that are relatively stable indicators of how learners perceive, interact with and respond to the learning environment. (p. 114)

Some researchers have conducted studies and come up with interesting findings. William (1988 cited in Nunan, 1989), for example, finds that the learning styles of adult immigrant learners of English as a second language in Australia can be categorized into three groups:

Type 1: ‘Concrete’ learners

These learners tend to like games, pictures, films, video, using cassettes, talking in pairs and practising English outside class.

Type 2: 'Analytical' learners

These learners like studying grammar, studying English books and reading newspapers, studying alone, finding their own mistakes and working on problems set by the teacher.

Type 3: 'Communicative' learners

These students like to learn by watching, listening to native speakers, talking to friends in English and watching television in English, using English out of class in shops, trains, etc., learning new words by hearing them, and learning by conversations.

Type 4: 'Authority-oriented' learners

These learners prefer the teacher to explain everything, like to have their own textbooks, write everything in a notebook, study grammar, learn by reading, and learn new words by seeing them. (p. 52)

It can be said that learning strategies and learning styles are important variables in the learning of English writing. Teachers with awareness on them can learn individual differences and may be able to choose the most appropriate teaching and learning methods that provide students with opportunities for their learning.

2.3 Writing Process

Over decades, the paradigm of teaching of English writing shifted from product to process. According to Nunan (1999), the product-oriented approach focuses on the language perfection whereas the process-oriented approach concentrates on the process of writing activities that leads to a successful writing product. He believes that no perfect text exists, but one can get closer to perfection through the stages of the writing process. The writing process can be characterized as the process that creates and orders ideas derived from the interactions between teachers and students and among peers by using class discussions or determining readers in order to stimulate the reactions of the readers throughout the writing process.

(Sommers, 1980). For Hairston (1982), writing is the process of discovery through researching, developing and organizing the ideas. It is the tool for discovering ideas from the writer's experience and then presenting it to the readers. It, then, can be concluded that writing is a recursive process that consists of information researching, writing planning, organizing ideas in order to produce comprehensible written work. Readers' reactions are taken into account throughout the process as well.

The writing process comprises certain stages variously divided by some researchers. For Raimes (1983) and Murray (1984), the writing process consists of 5 major stages: prewriting, writing, responding, rewriting and evaluating.

In the stage of prewriting, the teacher proposes the writing topic to class, raises motivation, sets up writing purposes, determines audience, discusses the contents with students, screens and orders contents, plans the writing, outlines it and together with the teacher, the students practice writing. In the writing stage, students first logically organize ideas from the prewriting stage, review and add new ideas, or reorganise the ideas without consideration on spelling, grammatical and mechanical accuracy. After the content is well organised, the concentration is placed upon the language and mechanics. In conclusion, the focus of this stage is on the ideas that the writer wants to convey to the reader, the purposes of writing and pattern and mechanics appropriate to the topic. In the response stage, students are given feedback in terms of content, language and mechanics so that they can improve their own writing. Rewriting is the stage that students consider the feedback they receive, then review their work, improve and edit it. The last stage, evaluation, allows students to know the quality of their work. In giving scores to written work, an evaluator has to concentrate on content, organization, expression and word choice as well as accuracy of language and mechanics.

For Brown and Hood (1989), the writing process consists of 3 major stages: prewriting, drafting and revision. Prewriting is the stage of discussing and planning in order to scope the ideas to write. The activities include brainstorming, speed writing, questioning, ordering ideas, studying writing models, outlining, discussing with the

teacher or peer about the meaning that the student writer intends to communicate. In the drafting stage, content is the concentration while the revision stage focuses on reviewing and revising both in terms of content and language.

According to Flower and Hayes' (1981 cited in Hyland, 2002) model, the features of the writing process include

- Writers have goals
- They plan extensively
- Planning involves defining a rhetorical problem, placing it in a context, then making it operational by exploring its parts, arriving at solutions and finally translating ideas on to the page
- All work can be reviewed, evaluated and revised, even before any text has been produced
- Planning, drafting, revising and editing are recursive, interactive and potentially simultaneous
- Plans and text are constantly evaluated in a feedback loop
- The whole process is overseen by an executive control called a monitor. (p. 25)

In conclusion, the writing process is a recursive process consisting of 3 major stages: pre-writing, drafting and revising. Response activities can be involved in the revision stage or after finishing the drafting phase.

2.4 Writing Process and Cooperative Learning Strategy

Cooperative learning strategy provides opportunities to students to work in small groups for idea generation, to cooperatively collect and organize materials, to give and receive peer feedback and to allow authentic audience other than the teacher (Reid, 1993), Roberta Vann and Roberta Abraham (1990) investigate why two language learners fail in using their strategies in writing, and the result reveals that the strategies are inappropriately applied; this causes the limitation of learning.

Cooperative learning refers to a number of teaching strategies designed to support group cooperation and interaction among students, state Jacobsen, Eggen and Kauchak (1999). By using these teaching strategies, many different but compatible goals can be achieved by cooperative learning strategies. This approach can be employed in various levels of learning including the high level. In the high level learning, cooperative learning is employed in order to promote group investigation and solution of some common problems. Students have to be active learners both when they work individually and when they work with others in a group. Cooperative learning appears in various forms such as feedback in the revision of the writing process.

2.5 Revision and Cooperative Learning

According to Chandrasegaran (1986), revision refers to activity of reviewing written text with the aim of modifying and correcting it so as to produce grammatically acceptable, coherent discourse. Therefore, revision does not only focus on grammar, but it also includes more complex activities such as rearrangement of ideas and insertion of new information. For Murray (1978), revision is considered to be the 'heart' of the writing process, for it provides learners opportunities for carefully reviewing, and rewriting their composition so that it is comprehensible according to the purpose of their writing. In reinforcing the revision stage, cooperative learning activities, particularly, feedback is required (Keh, 1990).

2.6 Response: Peer Response

Response is a fundamental element of a process approach to writing. It can be defined as input from a reader to a writer with the effect of providing information to the writer for revision. In other words, it is the comments, questions, and suggestions a reader gives a writer to produce 'reader-based prose' (Flower 1979 in Keh, 1996).

Response activities during the writing process can be implemented as follows:

- Writers discuss their topics in small groups, and peers respond;
- Writers read aloud from their drafts, and class members listen and respond;
- Students write tentative thesis statements on the board, and students and the teacher respond;
- Teachers respond orally to students' questions in class and during peer workshops;
- Students interview each other about topic ideas, their plans for an essay, or their plans for revision;
- Writers annotate their own drafts, describe or label key features (such as thesis statements, specific details, transitional devices, introduction techniques, etc.) of their own writing;
- Teachers conference with students both during class and outside of class, respond to writer's notes, plans, and drafts;
- Peer review groups give responses to each other's writing, sometimes in a reader-response mode (descriptive), sometimes in a criteria-based mode (reactive). (Reid, 1993)

Peer response is a technique that student readers provide other student writers comments on their writing drafts so that those student writers can improve their own written work (Nelson and Murphy, 1993). Peer response technique can be used either in the forms of pairs or small groups. Some researchers prefer peer response groups since they believe peer response groups offer writers a wide range of responses on their writing while peer pairs tend to foster more writer-based analysis of written texts (Spear, 1984 cited in Mendonca and Johnson, 1994). Moreover, peer pairs set up hierarchical relationship between students, that is tutor and tutee, rather than the equal relationship that develops in peer response groups (Sharan, 1984). Peer response groups also offer a context of variety of thinking, writing, talking, learning and role-play situations that form a powerful educative force of peer influence (Sharan, 1984; Bruffee, 1984).

While many researchers and teachers agree with the benefits of this technique, some express their concerns differently. It is, therefore, appropriate to discuss both positive and negative opinions in details as follows:

2.6.1 Positive Views

In teaching writing to both native English speakers (NES) and non-native speakers (NNS) or ESL students, a range of response types are useful for students' greater achievement (Lynch, 1996 cited in Muncie, 2000). Some researchers (Krashen, 1984; Goldstein & Conrad, 1990; Magelsdorf, 1992) find that peer response helps student writers in revising and making better quality of their written work. According to Barnes (1976), Brief (1984) and Forman and Cazden (1985), the peer response technique gives opportunities to students to play a more active role in their learning. Jacobs (1989) theorizes that peer response also allows more active students' cooperation by giving them the additional roles of reader and advisor. It raises writers' awareness, for their readers actually read the text through the eyes of potential readers, trying to judge the meaning of the writing they read from their own perspectives (Mittan, 1989; - Moore, 1986). Recently, Porto (2001) investigates the use of peer response and self-evaluation in separate terms of content and grammar and finds that this combination of techniques helps increase learners' awareness in their writing. In addition, Allaei and Connor (1990) believe that through making choices, expressing purposes, reading and rereading their own and peers' written work, students are gradually able to identify errors in their own writing in terms of content, grammar and mechanics. This capability is what students' empowerment is aiming for, and the peer response technique is a practical way to achieve this goal.

In terms of implication, Bruton and Samuda (1980) suggest that students be given specific guidelines or types of errors to look for rather than being asked to look for errors in general. Perhaps, teachers can select those grammatical error types which they believe should be in students' monitors or those rhetorical points which have been stressed in class. In other words, learners should be presented with a more doable task, one probably less subject to problems of miscorrection.

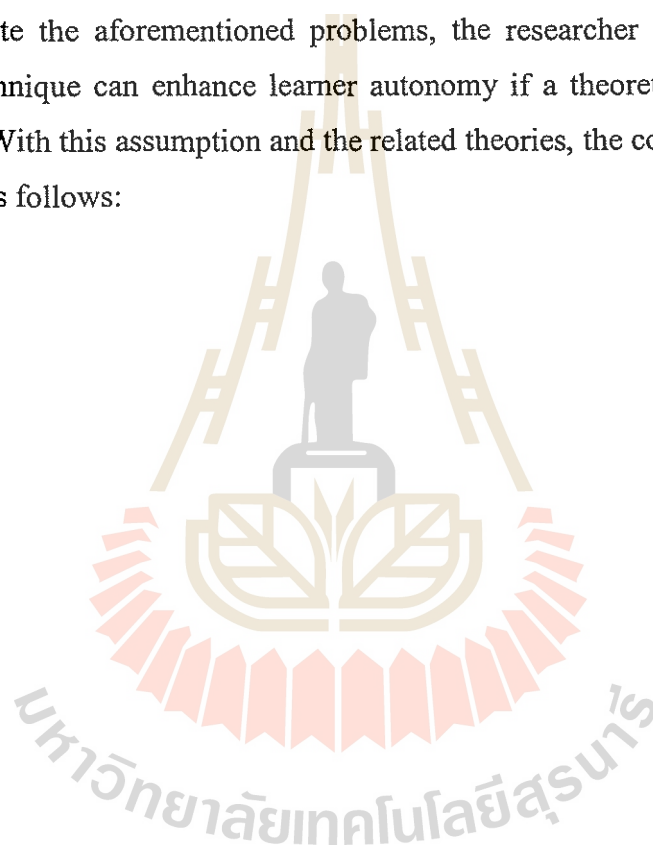
2.6.2 Negative Views

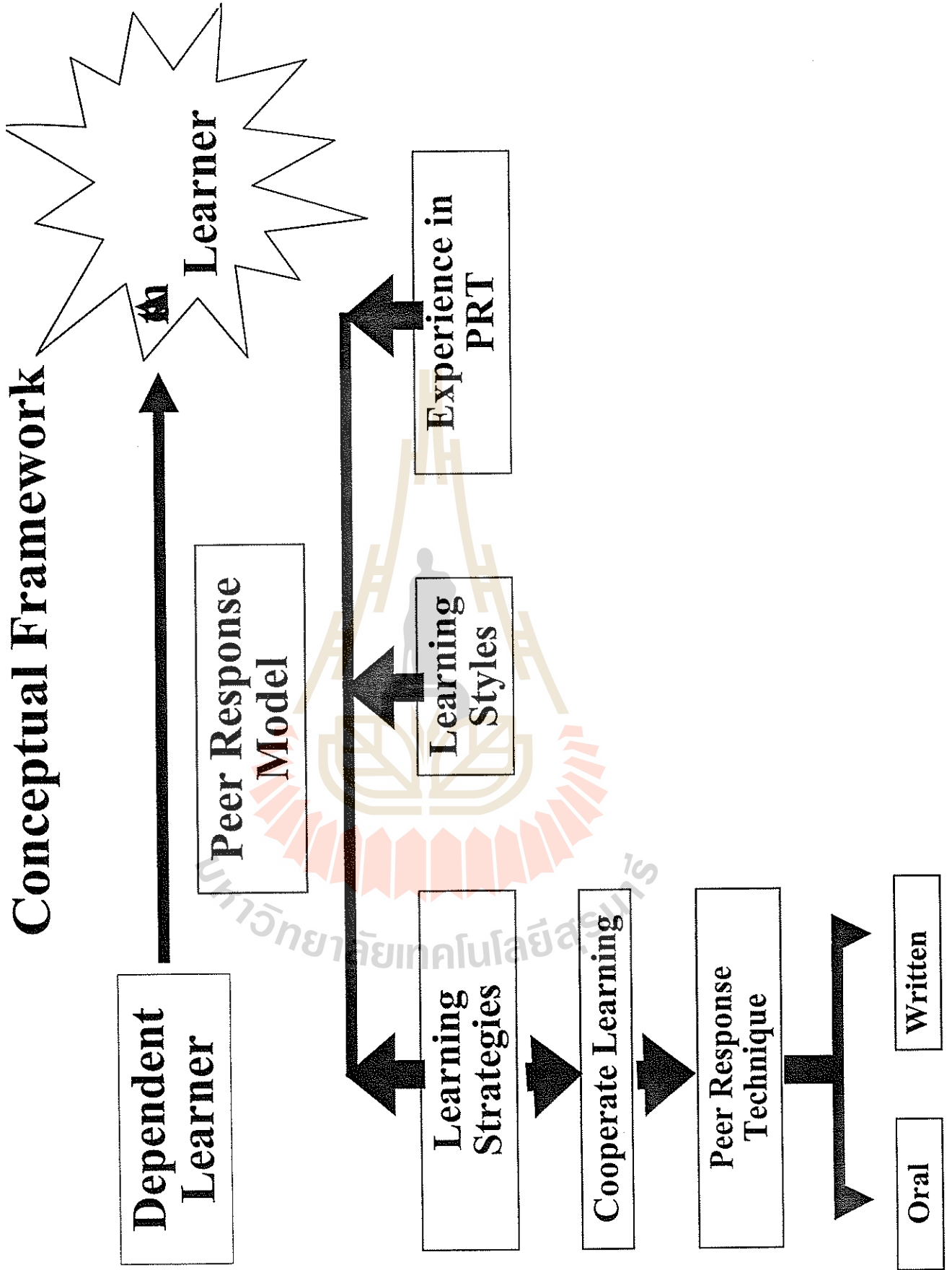
Even though there are many evidences for the effectiveness of the peer response technique used in L1 and L2 writing classes, there appear some concerns among some researchers and teachers of English writing on the use of this technique. These concerns include trust in peer, culture and language capability.

Mendonca and Johnson (1994) argue that student writers might not always trust their peers; the same comment from a teacher will be taken into account for their revision. Mangelsdorf (1996) reports that peer responses are always rated negatively by Asian students and raises the question of the effect of teacher-centred cultures on the way students regard peer comments. Carson and Nelson (1996) believe that cultural factors, such as harmony-maintenance strategies, guide Chinese learners when they participate in peer response. Even in Western cultures, Freedman et al. (1986), for example, find that even when peer evaluation is planned and controlled by the teacher, there may be social implications behind the responses which are determined by the way students maintain social relations. They point out that peer response often turns out to be an exercise in futility because students are busier figuring out easy ways to complete the evaluation sheets than evaluating the text. So, learners may pay only 'lip-service' to the task (Mangelsdorf, 1992). Moreover, in Sengupta's (1998) study, it is clearly seen that peer evaluation is not able to bring a real reader's perspective. A number of reasons for this may be considered. It is

likely that the way instruction in revision is designed and executed has failed to help students to become the real reader, and that the input may not have prepared students with adequate linguistic and cognitive maturity to evaluate and act upon the evaluation. At this point, it can be said that the concerns about the use of peer response lie on three major problems: trust, culture and language ability. All these problems need to be taken into account when developing a practical model of peer response technique.

Despite the aforementioned problems, the researcher believes that the peer response technique can enhance learner autonomy if a theoretically sound model is developed. With this assumption and the related theories, the conceptual framework is established as follows:





Chapter Three

Research Methodology

The methodology of this study includes both qualitative and quantitative methods. The research designs to be employed are descriptive and quasi-experimental.

In Phase I, the researcher will use a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods: questionnairng, in-depth interviewing and reflective essay writing in order to investigate students' perceptions, reactions on the use of the peer response technique as well as their suggestions for developing a practical model of peer response technique. The instruments to be used are a questionnaire, semi-structured questions, a reflective essay writing, and the researcher as an interviewer. The data obtained from the questionnaire will be analysed by using descriptive statistics (percentage), and those derived from the reflective essay writing and the interviewing will be interpreted and reported in the form of narrative prose: story-telling.

In Phase II, the information from Phase I will be used as premises for constructing a model of peer response technique. The pilot of this model will be conducted with 5-10 international students learning English essay writing at the Institute of English language, University of Surrey, the United Kingdom. After revision, it will be piloted with approximately 50 English-major students enrolled in the English essay writing course at Mahasarakam University, a university also in the northeastern region.

In Phase III, 50 subjects will be divided into two groups: the experimental and the control groups. The developed model will be administered to the experimental group. The instruments will be a model of the peer response technique developed from the related literature and the data derived from Phase I, the researcher as a facilitator in the peer response activities, a guideline of how to analyse and identify errors both in terms of language, content and mechanics, some useful checklists as well as pretest, posttest and formative evaluations. The purpose of giving students the formative tests is to learn the improvement of students' English writing capability before and after receiving treatment. The pretest and posttest will indicate the improvement of students' overall writing ability. The modes of rhetoric to use in this study include narration and description, classification, comparison and contrast, cause and effect as well as problem and solution. Each mode requires approximately 2 weeks. The better scores of their writings will indicate the effectiveness of the developed model.

After the experiment, the researcher will investigate the students' perceptions and reactions on the constructed model of the peer response technique. The instruments to be used are a questionnaire, semi-structured questions for in-depth interviewing and essay writing on the students' reflections. The questionnaire will be given to all the subjects in the experimental group in order to investigate their attitudes towards the model. Only 3 pairs of subjects with different writing performance levels (good, average and poor) will be asked to write a reflective essay and receive an in-depth interview on their reflections.

3.1 Subjects

The subjects are 50 students majoring in English and being enrolled in English Writing III (Essay Writing) at the Department of Foreign Languages, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Khon Kaen University, Thailand.

In Phase I, 50 subjects will be purposively selected from 200 students majoring in English, for all of whom have experienced the peer response technique in their English writing courses and been enrolled in the essay writing course. Then 10 subjects will be selected by using stratifying sampling. These subjects include five pairs: the pairs of students who got “A”, “B+”, “B”, “C+”, and “C” in English Writing II. They will be called Pair “A”, Pair “B+”, Pair “B”, Pair “C+” and Pair “C”.

In Phase III, the 50 subjects enrolled in English Writing III (Essay Writing) will be divided into two groups: experimental and control. Then, the experimental group will be given treatment (employing the constructed model).

3.2 Procedure

The research will be conducted as the following steps:

Phase I:

3.2.1 Review of literature

Literature to be reviewed include (1) empowering learners in writing; (2) learning styles and learning strategies in English writing; (3) writing process; (4) writing process and cooperative learning strategy; (5) revision and cooperative learning strategy; and (6) peer response technique.

3.2.2 Select Subjects

The criteria for selecting subjects are the grades in English Writing II (Paragraph Writing) and their enrollment in English Writing III (Essay Writing).

3.2.3 Construct Instruments

Construct instruments: questionnaires, pretest and posttest and semi-structured questions.

Questionnaires (reflections), pretest and posttest (essay writing) and semi-structured questions will be established and then read by three EFL experts. These instruments will be piloted in order to assure their validity.

3.2.4 Collect data 1

3.2.4.1 Give a questionnaire and assign the subjects to write a reflective essay

Ask the subjects to answer a questionnaire and write a reflective essay (Reflection 1), reflecting their understanding and attitudes towards the peer response technique that they have experienced. Encourage them to give suggestions for a more applicable peer response technique.

3.2.4.2 Analyse and Interpret data

Analyse data from the pre-questionnaire, then, interpret the information from essay writing, and make use of them in the in-depth interview.

3.2.4.3 Interview the subjects

Each subject will be interviewed by using the semi-structured questions prepared and on-spot questions. Field-notes will be taken during the interview. Audio-taping will be done only if allowed by the subjects.

3.2.4.4 Interpret the data

Phase II:

3.2.5 Develop a peer response model

Develop a peer response model based on the theoretical framework derived from the literature reviewed and the interpreted data from Phase I.

3.2.5.1 Piloting the model

The peer response model will be tried with 5-10 non-English native students studying English essay writing in the United Kingdom. After revision, it will be piloted with 50 English-major students enrolled in the English essay writing course at Mahasakham University, a state university in the same region as Khon Kaen University.

3.2.5.2 Improve the model

Phase III:

3.2.6 Experiment the model

3.2.9.1 The pretest will be given to all 50 subjects and assessed by three raters who are trained so that inter-rater reliability can be assured.

3.2.9.2 The improved model will be experimented with the subjects in the experimental group.

3.2.7 Collect data 2.

Data collection will be conducted by observing, questionnairing, interviewing and reflective essay writing. Posttest will also be given and assessed by the same raters in 3.2.9.1.

The formative tests will be given during the course and assessed by the same raters in 3.2.9.1.

3.2.8 Analyse and interpret the data.

The data from the questionnaire and pretest and posttest will be analysed by descriptive statistics (percentage and ANCOVA).

3.2.9 Write up the report.

In writing up the report, the researcher will employ both story-telling and academic prose.

3.3 Expected Result

The expected result of this study is a practical model of peer response technique for EFL writing class. This model will be efficient for empowering students in their English writing. In other words, the teacher-student reliance will be reduced, and thus this teaching and learning approach of English writing will be in accordance with the philosophy of the National Education Act, B. E. 2542 in which learner-centredness is emphasized.



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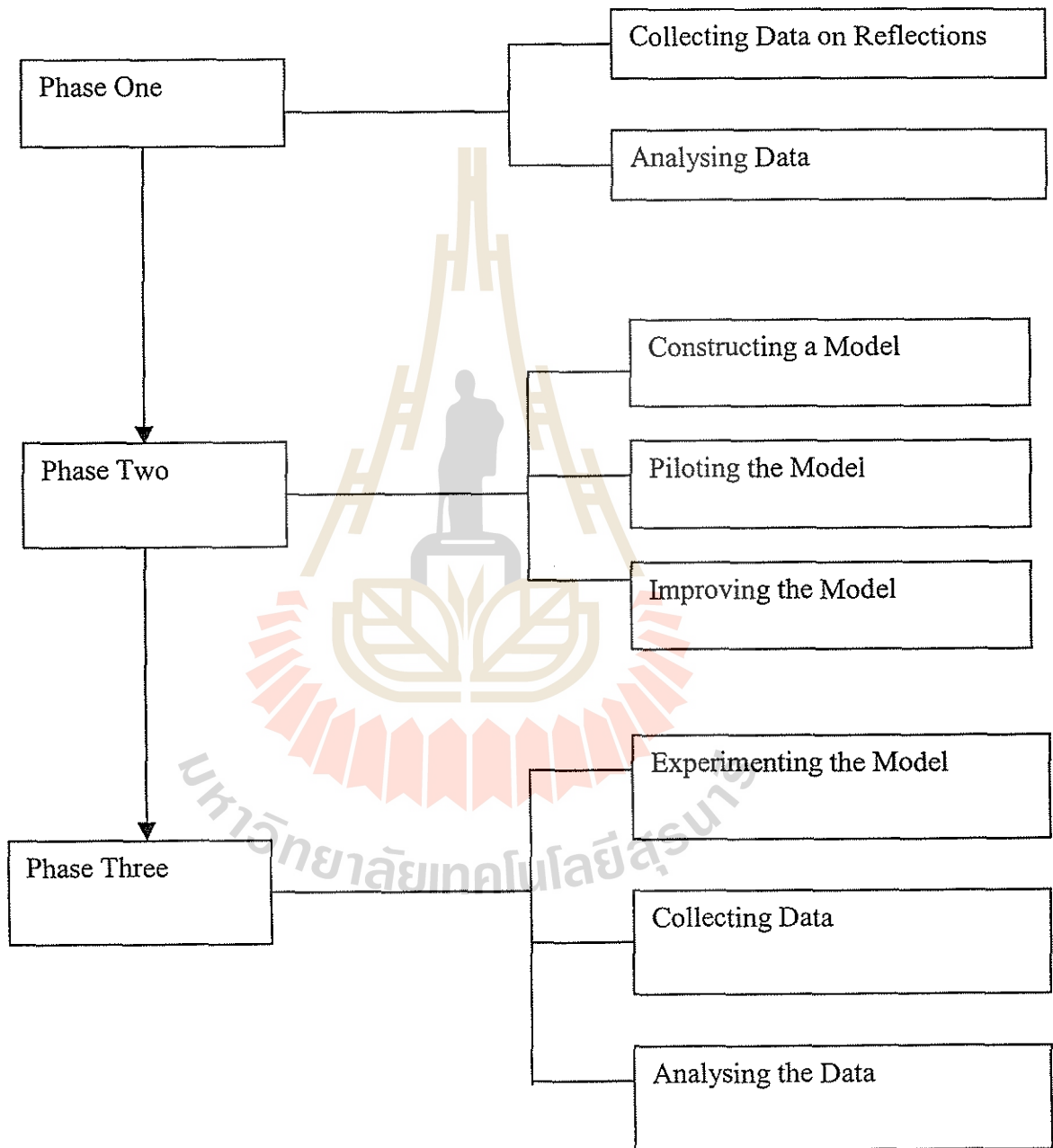
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Appendix



Research Outline



RESEARCH TIMELINE

The research will begin in June 2001 and be finished by April 2004.

| Activities | Duration | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|----------|---|---|---|---|---|------|---|---|---|---|---|------|---|---|---|---|---|------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2001 | | | | | | 2002 | | | | | | 2003 | | | | | | 2004 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Reviewing literature | / | / | / | / | / | / | / | / | / | / | / | / | / | / | / | / | / | / | / | / | / | / | / | / | / | / | / | / | |
| Selecting subjects | | | | | / | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Constructing instruments | | | | | | | / | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Collecting and analysing data 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| *Constructing a practical model | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Experimenting | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Collecting data 2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Analysing data | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Writing up the report | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

* To be conducted at the English Language Institute, University of Surrey, the United Kingdom

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 (Mrs. Patumrat Pichitpan)
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