A Study of English Writing Skills of Master of Arts Second Year Students at Faculty of Education in Mahachulalonkornrajavidylaya University

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Abstract

This study investigated the English writing skills of second-year Master of Arts students at the Faculty of Education, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, and explored solutions to the problems they encountered in academic English writing. The study employed a descriptive research approach using a five-point Likert-scale questionnaire administered to 31 second-year students and in-depth interviews with five purposively selected key informants. The quantitative data were analyzed using frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation, while the qualitative information from the interviews was synthesized descriptively.

The findings revealed that the students experienced English writing problems at a moderate level, with an overall mean score of 3.23 (S.D. = 1.066). The most prominent difficulties concerned developing specific reasons, examples, and supporting details for topic sentences, using sufficient evidence to support main ideas, selecting appropriate topic sentences, and varying sentence length and structure. Regarding solutions to these problems, the students reported a high level of ability, with an overall mean score of 3.58 (S.D. = 0.940). Most students indicated that they were able to organize evidence, use transitions and connecting words, apply appropriate grammar and punctuation, develop paragraphs, revise and edit their writing, and use strategies to overcome writing difficulties. However, moderate levels remained in logically organizing supporting materials and revising and editing sentences to make them effective and error-free.

The study suggests that students should place greater emphasis on the writing process, particularly content organization, coherence, revision, and sentence-level editing. Regular writing practice, together with constructive feedback from teachers and peers, may further strengthen students' academic English writing skills.

Keywords: English Writing Skills; Academic Writing; Master of Arts Students; Writing Problems; Writing Strategies; Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University

Introduction

English writing is an essential academic skill for university students because it enables them to communicate ideas, construct arguments, report research findings, and participate in academic discourse. At the graduate level, writing competence is particularly important because

students are expected to produce increasingly complex forms of academic writing, including assignments, reports, research papers, and theses. Writing should therefore be understood not simply as the production of grammatically correct sentences but as a complex process through which writers generate, organize, develop, and communicate ideas effectively to a particular audience. Langan and Albright (2020) emphasize that writing is a skill that develops through a process involving prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and reviewing. Similarly, effective academic writing requires writers to consider how ideas are organized and connected so that the intended meaning can be communicated clearly.

Despite its importance, English writing remains a challenging area for many students, particularly those who use English as an additional language. Previous studies have identified difficulties in several dimensions of writing, including grammar, vocabulary, mechanics, cohesion and coherence, organization, and the development of ideas (Ayana, 2020; Boonyarattanasoontorn, 2017; Umar et al., 2023). Students may also experience difficulties in selecting appropriate vocabulary, constructing accurate sentences, organizing paragraphs, developing supporting details, and maintaining logical relationships among ideas. Such difficulties can affect not only linguistic accuracy but also the overall quality and effectiveness of academic communication. In higher education, these problems become increasingly significant because students are expected to write independently and demonstrate their ability to synthesize and communicate knowledge through academic texts.

Writing is also a recursive process rather than a single act of composing a final text. Effective writers typically engage in planning, drafting, revising, and editing before producing a final version (Sa'adah, 2020). Revision is particularly important because it enables writers to reconsider the organization and development of their ideas, strengthen supporting evidence, improve cohesion, and correct weaknesses in sentence construction. Bailey (2022) similarly highlights the importance of academic writing processes, including the selection and evaluation of sources, organization of ideas, revision, proofreading, and the use of appropriate academic vocabulary. Thus, students' writing difficulties should be examined not only in terms of grammatical or lexical errors but also in relation to the strategies they use to develop, organize, and revise their writing.

Previous research has demonstrated that English writing difficulties occur across different educational contexts. Barua (2017), for example, reported that students at Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University encountered problems related to syntax, grammar, vocabulary, and the writing process. Lun (2019) found that undergraduate students at the Faculty of Humanities of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University experienced difficulties in English writing, particularly in revising sentences and organizing connections among ideas. Nandiya (2019) also investigated academic writing in English among Myanmar students at the same university and identified challenges associated with academic writing. More broadly, Boonyarattanasoontorn (2017) found that Thai university students experienced difficulties in writing paragraphs and other

forms of English texts, while Umar et al. (2023) identified grammatical, structural, and prepositional problems among English learners in higher education.

Although these studies provide useful evidence concerning English writing difficulties, important contextual and empirical gaps remain. Much of the previous research has focused on undergraduate students or general English writing contexts, while comparatively less attention has been given to graduate students who are required to produce academic texts for advanced study. In addition, identifying writing problems alone may not provide sufficient guidance for educational improvement. It is also necessary to examine how students perceive possible solutions and what strategies they believe can help them overcome difficulties in organizing ideas, supporting arguments, revising content, and editing sentences. Such information is particularly relevant in graduate education, where students are expected to become increasingly independent writers and researchers.

The context of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University is especially relevant because students in the Faculty of Education are required to use English for academic learning and communication while coming from diverse educational and linguistic backgrounds. The present study therefore focuses on second-year Master of Arts students in the Faculty of Education to examine the problems they experience in English writing and the approaches they perceive as useful for addressing those problems. Understanding students' difficulties at this level can provide evidence for developing more appropriate academic writing instruction and support.

Accordingly, this study investigates the English writing skills of second-year Master of Arts students at the Faculty of Education, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University. Specifically, the study aims to examine the major problems students encounter in English writing and to identify potential solutions to those problems. By addressing both writing difficulties and perceived solutions, the study seeks to contribute empirical evidence that can support the development of effective writing instruction and writing-support strategies for graduate students in a higher-education context.

Objectives of the Research

1. To study English writing skills of Master of Arts second year students at the Faculty of Education in Mahachulalonkornrajavidylaya University

2. To find out the solutions to the problems of the English writing skills of Master of Arts second year students at the Faculty of Education in Mahachulalonkornrajavidylaya University

Research Methodology

This research is qualitative research. Research area is at the Faculty of Education, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, Lam Sai, Wang Noi, Ayutthaya, Thailand. Population is 65 M.Ed. second year students who are studying at the Faculty of Education in Mahachulalonkornrajavidylaya University.

Sample group are 31 students are selected to choose one of five-point Likert scales each item (30 statements) randomly in the class room and five-key informant students are selected to interview with five questions purposively from population of 65 students using the selection method of purposive and random sampling.

Research Tools

The research tools are included:

1) Questionnaire: It was applied to develop English writing skills by using statements questionnaire.

2) Interview: It was used by talking about writing skills to students who have well owned perspectives, experiences, attitudes, and behaviours about problems of academic writing skill to solve the difficulties of writing.

Data Collection

Data was collected during the time between the June 2025 to February 2026. It brings quantitative data easy to analyse with statistics such as frequency and percentage for quantitative research and qualitative data to synthesize data and then write a descriptive narrative for qualitative research.

The research used a quantitative approach to answer the research questions. A five-point scale questionnaire was used to choose one of chi-square text with their perception for the students. For the difficulties and learning strategies as the solutions of the writing problems, a questionnaire was obtained to gather data on the students.

Questionnaires were submitted to five experts to examine and revise them as appropriately for their validity.

Data Analysis

Section one was related to personal informations such as genders, ages, status of students, and the number of years studied English. Section two consisted of thirty items with five chi-square texts aimed to reveal students' opinion on difficulties in writing English. five chi-square texts ranked into five levels (Strongly Agree=5, Agree=4, Neutral=3, Disagree=2, Strongly Disagree=1). The design was based on the research of Lun, S. (2019) and Xaiyasing, L. (2022).

In this study, frequency and percentage were applied to measure the demographic data for individuals. Mean and standard deviation were used to determine writing difficulties, and solution of the writing problems for objectives.

In addition, mean score was evaluated to determine suitable ranges such as 1.00-1.80 = very low, 1.81-2.60 = low, 2.61-3.40 = medium, 3.41- 4.20 = high, 4.21-5.00 = very high.

Results

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Of the 31 participants, 23 (74.2%) were male and 8 (25.8%) were female. Regarding age, 2 participants (6.5%) were 20–25 years old, 11 (35.5%) were 26–30 years old, 17 (54.8%) were 31–35 years old, and 1 (3.2%) was over 35 years old. In terms of status, 19 participants (61.3%) were monks, 5 (16.1%)

were nuns, and 7 (22.6%) were laypersons. Regarding years of English study, 6 participants (19.4%) reported 1–4 years, 13 (41.9%) reported 5–8 years, 9 (29.0%) reported 9–12 years, and 3 (9.7%) reported more than 12 years.

Table 1 Demographic Characteristics of the Participants (N = 31)

Personal Information	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	23	74.2
Female	8	25.8
Age (years)		
20–25	2	6.5
26–30	11	35.5
31–35	17	54.8
>35	1	3.2
Status		
Monk	19	61.3
Nun	5	16.1
Layperson	7	22.6
Years of English Study		
1–4	6	19.4
5–8	13	41.9
9–12	9	29.0
>12	3	9.7

Note. N = total sample; n = frequency; % = percentage.

Objective 1: To Study English Writing Skills of Master of Arts Second-Year Students at the Faculty of Education in Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University

The results show that the respondents experienced problems in several aspects of English writing, including the writing process, content development, organization, and sentence revision (see Table 2).

Table 2 Perceived Problems in English Writing Skills Among the Participants

Statements	M	SD	Level
1. Difficulty with the writing process, including generating and developing ideas	3.35	0.985	Moderate
2. Difficulty using parallelism when revising sentences	3.13	1.284	Moderate
3. Difficulty maintaining unity by relating sentences to the main topic	3.23	1.175	Moderate
4. Difficulty using sufficient evidence to support the main idea	3.42	1.119	High
5. Difficulty using transitions and connecting words for organization	2.94	1.093	Moderate

Statements	M	SD	Level
6. Difficulty providing specific reasons, examples, and details to develop the topic sentence	3.45	1.121	High
7. Difficulty using specific words and active verbs when revising sentences	2.94	1.031	Moderate
8. Difficulty omitting details that do not support the topic sentence	3.29	1.071	Moderate
9. Difficulty selecting and adequately developing a topic sentence	3.42	1.089	High
10. Difficulty writing clear and well-structured sentences in English	3.06	0.929	Moderate
11. Difficulty varying sentence length and structure within a specified time limit	3.42	1.025	High
12. Difficulty using words effectively by avoiding slang, clichés, pretentious language, and wordiness	2.84	1.068	Moderate
13. Difficulty focusing on generating ideas and details about the topic	3.29	0.864	Moderate
14. Difficulty writing different types of essays or academic papers in English	3.35	1.199	Moderate
15. Lack of confidence in English writing for academic purposes	3.29	0.938	Moderate
Overall	3.23	1.066	Moderate

Note. M = mean; SD = standard deviation. Interpretation: 1.00–1.80 = very low, 1.81–2.60 = low, 2.61–3.40 = moderate, 3.41–4.20 = high, and 4.21–5.00 = very high.

As shown in Table 2, the mean scores ranged from 2.84 to 3.45. The overall mean score was 3.23 (SD = 1.066), indicating a moderate level of perceived difficulty. Four items were rated at a high level. The highest mean score was found for difficulty in providing specific reasons, examples, and supporting details to develop the topic sentence (M = 3.45, SD = 1.121).

The second-highest mean score was 3.42 (SD = 1.119) for difficulty in using sufficient evidence to support the main idea. Difficulty in selecting a topic sentence and supporting it adequately also obtained a mean of 3.42 (SD = 1.089). These findings indicate that the respondents experienced difficulties in developing and supporting central ideas in English writing.

Difficulty in varying sentence length and structure within a specified time limit also received a high rating (M = 3.42, SD = 1.025). The remaining items were rated at a moderate level, including difficulty with the writing process and generating ideas (M = 3.35, SD = 0.985), maintaining unity by relating sentences to the main topic (M = 3.23, SD = 1.175), and using parallelism when revising sentences (M = 3.13, SD = 1.284).

The respondents also reported moderate difficulties in using transitions and connecting words for organization (M = 2.94, SD = 1.093), using specific words and active verbs when revising sentences (M = 2.94, SD = 1.031), omitting details that did not support the topic sentence (M =

3.29, SD = 1.071), writing clear and well-structured sentences (M = 3.06, SD = 0.929), and focusing on ideas and details about the topic (M = 3.29, SD = 0.864).

The respondents further reported moderate difficulties in writing different types of essays or academic papers in English (M = 3.35, SD = 1.199), maintaining confidence in academic English writing (M = 3.29, SD = 0.938), and using words effectively by avoiding slang, clichés, pretentious language, and wordiness (M = 2.84, SD = 1.068).

Overall, the results indicate that the respondents experienced English writing problems at a moderate level (M = 3.23, SD = 1.066). The most prominent difficulties concerned developing supporting details, using evidence to support main ideas, selecting and developing topic sentences, and varying sentence structure.

Objective 2 To Find Out the Solutions to the Problems of the English Writing Skills of Master of Arts Second-Year Students at the Faculty of Education in Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University

The results showed that the respondents reported a high level of perceived ability to address their English writing problems (see Table 3). The mean scores ranged from 3.32 to 3.87, with an overall mean score of 3.58 (SD = 0.940), indicating a high level.

Table 3 Perceived Solutions to English Writing Problems Among the Participants

Statements	M	SD	Level
1. Ability to organize specific evidence using a clear method of organization	3.61	0.919	High
2. Ability to use transitions and connecting words to connect specific evidence	3.55	1.091	High
3. Sufficient and effective word choices for expressing ideas in writing	3.45	0.888	High
4. Ability to use punctuation marks appropriately	3.84	0.898	High
5. Good sentence skills, including grammar, mechanics, punctuation, and word use	3.77	0.920	High
6. Ability to develop a paragraph with a clear main idea and supporting details or evidence	3.61	0.989	High
7. Ability to provide logical and detailed support for a topic sentence or thesis statement	3.61	0.989	High
8. Ability to organize and logically connect supporting materials	3.39	0.955	Moderate
9. Ability to check transitions and connecting words used to link materials	3.45	0.850	High
10. Ability to revise and edit sentences to make them effective and error-free	3.32	1.013	Moderate
11. Ability to revise and edit writing so that it is unified, supported, and organized	3.55	0.888	High

Statements	M	SD	Level
12. Ability to ensure that evidence supports the opening point and contributes to unity	3.45	0.850	High
13. Knowledge of strategies for overcoming difficulties in English writing	3.74	0.999	High
14. Receiving sufficient guidance, comments, and feedback from teachers and peers	3.87	0.991	High
15. Confidence when writing essays or assignments in English	3.52	0.851	High
Overall	3.58	0.940	High

Note. M = mean; SD = standard deviation. Interpretation: 1.00–1.80 = very low, 1.81–2.60 = low, 2.61–3.40 = moderate, 3.41–4.20 = high, and 4.21–5.00 = very high.

As shown in Table 3, the highest mean score was 3.87 (SD = 0.991) for receiving sufficient guidance, comments, and feedback from teachers and peers to improve writing. The ability to use punctuation marks appropriately obtained the second-highest mean score (M = 3.84, SD = 0.898). The respondents also reported high levels of sentence skills, including grammar, mechanics, punctuation, and word use (M = 3.77, SD = 0.920), and knowledge of strategies for overcoming difficulties in English writing (M = 3.74, SD = 0.999).

The participants reported high levels of ability to organize specific evidence using a clear method of organization (M = 3.61, SD = 0.919), develop paragraphs with clear main ideas and supporting details or evidence (M = 3.61, SD = 0.989), and provide logical and detailed support for a topic sentence or thesis statement (M = 3.61, SD = 0.989).

Other items rated at a high level included using transitions and connecting words to connect specific evidence (M = 3.55, SD = 1.091), revising and editing writing so that it was unified, supported, and organized (M = 3.55, SD = 0.888), having sufficient and effective word choices (M = 3.45, SD = 0.888), checking transitions and connecting words (M = 3.45, SD = 0.850), ensuring that evidence supports the opening point and contributes to unity (M = 3.45, SD = 0.850), and feeling confident when writing essays or assignments in English (M = 3.52, SD = 0.851).

Two items were rated at a moderate level: the ability to organize and logically connect supporting materials (M = 3.39, SD = 0.955) and the ability to revise and edit sentences to make them effective and error-free (M = 3.32, SD = 1.013).

Overall, the findings indicate that the respondents reported a high level of perceived ability to address English writing problems (M = 3.58, SD = 0.940). Thirteen of the 15 items were rated at a high level, whereas two items were rated at a moderate level.

Discussions

This section is to discuss research objectives and finding result of the questionnaire. Actually, it is to discuss what the research problem was, how the M.Ed. second year students at the Faculty of Education, MCU were facing problems in writing English skills, whose theory was

consistent or different with specific statements of questionnaire, and whose research was relevant with the present research. As a result, the discussions of the research objectives were as follows:

Objective 1 To Study English Writing Skills of Master of Arts Second Year Students at the Faculty of Education in Mahachulalonkornrajavidylaya University

This research found that the overall mean score of 3.23 with the standard deviation of 1.066 according to objective number 1 is consistent with the theory of writing (Muschla, G. R. (2010) or literature review in writing process, revising sentences, and revising connections of matches the set assumptions that good writing begins with a good idea. Without an interesting idea, even the most skilful writing will result in a weak piece.

This may be because half of the students were weak in understanding 15 previous statements. In the same way, Lun, S. (2019)'s research which Bachelor's Degree students at the Faculty of Humanities, MCU in Nong Khai Campus also faced difficulties with the Moderate mean score of 3.81 showed that they did not check before they submit it on revising sentences and revising connections.

This study also found that the respondents' difficulties at highest mean scale 3.45 on growing topic sentence. They had lack of knowledge about providing specific reasons, examples, and details to develop the topic sentence for revising sentences. Similarly, Barua, S. (2017)'s research which Bachelor of Arts of the students in English at Mahachulalongkornrajavidayalaya University also had the mean score of 3.20 showed that the respondents faced the difficulties in revising sentences with each specific detail and example supports. However, his research was different from this such as statistical scale, time, faculty, and so on.

As well as in the research of Boonyarattanasoontorn, P. (2017) which Bangkok University undergraduate students had the high mean score of 3.57 showed that the students faced difficulties in writing a paragraph / a story in English. (Mean= 3.57). Likewise, Xaiyasing, L. (2022)'s research which half of grade seven students of the Buddhist Upper Secondary School at Thahin in Pakse District Champasak Province of Laos also had the moderate mean 3.16 showed that the students had problems in writing all kinds of English phrases.

However, those researches were contradicted with this current study such as statistics, scope of the population, area, time, questionnaires, and writing strategies. As a result, it was concluded that the results contradicted with Barua, S. (2017)'s, Boonyarattanasoontorn, P. (2017)'s, and Xaiyasing, L. (2022)'s research finding.

Objective 2 To Find out the Solutions to the Problems of the English Writing Skills of Master of Arts Second Year Students at the Faculty of Education in Mahachulalonkornrajavidylaya University

With regards to find out the solutions to the problems of the English writing skills, it was found that overall average of mean 3.58, S.D. 0.940 that is why level of students' opinion was high in solving the problems of writing according to objective number two is consistent with the theory of writing which had been reported to be significantly used among successful writers such

"Aware of the importance of ideas, professional authors spend a lot of effort and time identifying, developing, researching, and organizing ideas before they begin writing" (Muschla, G. R. 2010).

Writing process which had been also reported "Writing also follows a process. Good writers follow the steps of the writing process when they write" (Singleton, J. (2005), writing accuracy and fluency which had been said "A person who wants to be a good writer need both accuracy and fluency" (Blanchard, K. L. (2013), and elements of writing which had been expressed "Practice with common assignments such as reports and cause–effect essays" (Bailey, S. 2004, 2015, 2022).

The reason why the level of the solution of the problems in writing English skills was high due to the fact that majority of students took the choice of the positive side of the agreement in the statements of objective two. Thus, this finding corresponds with the concepts of experts previously shown above.

However, nearly half of participants were weak in solving the problems on statement number eight and ten in accord to their rate: mean 3.39 and 3.32, S.D. 0.955 and 1.013, level-moderate. This may be because half of the students faced difficulties on revising connections of their supporting material logically and revising sentences to be effective and error-free. The reason why the students faced the problems on revising content and sentences due to the fact that students not only come from different educational backgrounds but also, they have encountered many difficulties when writing in English such as spelling and grammar, sentence structures, sentences flow smoothly, longer paragraph and organizing ideas, and limited vocabulary, arranging ideas in order, and using compound complex sentences.

Therefore, students feel anxious to compose their paper because of the lack of unity, support, and coherence in revising content and the lack of sentence skills in revising sentences. Thus, it was concluded that the results contradicted with Singleton, J. (2005)'s the concepts of writing process.

New Body of Knowledge

This section is to present knowledge as a result of research. First, in demographic data, the frequencies and percentages of gender: male were 23 (74.2%) and females were 8 (25.8%). For ages, 20–25 years: 2 (6.5%), 26–30 years: 11 (35.5%), 31–35 years: 17 (54.8%), and more than 35 years: 1 (3.2%). For Status, Monk: 19 (61.3%), Nun: 5 (16.1%), and Layperson: 7 (22.6%). For Number of years Studied English, 1–4 years: 6 (19.4%), 5-8 years 13 (41.9%), 9-12 years 9 (29.0%), More than 12: 3 (9.7%) participated as the students' backgrounds of knowledge.

Second, in research objective one, the scores of mean and Standard Deviation (S.D) were overall average 3.23 $\bar{x}$, 1.066 S.D. from fifteen statements to evaluate the level of students' the rate of problems of writing skills.

Last, in research objective two, the scale of means and S.D. were overall average 3.58 $\bar{x}$, 0.940 S.D. from fifteen statements to measure the level of respondents' the rate of solutions of the problem in English writing skills.

Suggestions

From research results the researcher has the following suggestions:

1. Suggestion for an Applications

This research has found students' weakness of skill on writing process, revising sentences, and revising content. The important thing is to find out the solutions of the problems can be applied to practice daily task writing, students should be encouraged to practice regularly themselves by using the phone or laptop with all apps in English language, posting writing assignments and blogs, and communicating with teachers and classmates in a fun online environment for students.

2. Suggestions for further researchs

For the next research, research should be tried to find the research gaps of English writing rate from the different fields of academic year or faculties of academic institution that have not yet been explored to analyse whether these issues change over time or with more practice to English.

It also should be investigated the long-term effectiveness of various writing strategies about students' English writing skills as a general study.

Moreover, it should be explored the impact of specific writing skills such as effective writing, writing fluency, academic writing, and social and professional writing on different aspects of writing strategy as a specific research.

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