A STUDY OF NARRATIVE ORGANIZATION BY
THIRD-YEAR ENGLISH MAJORS AT UBON
RATCHATHANI RAJABHAT UNIVERSITY

PRAPATSORN LAWAN

AN INDEPENDENT STUDY SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
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MAJOR IN TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE
FACULTY OF LIBERAL ARTS
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(Miss Prapatsorn Lawan)
Researcher
บทคัดย่อ

ชื่อเรื่อง : การศึกษาโครงสร้างการเขียนพรรณนาของนักศึกษาวิชาเอกภาษาอังกฤษ ชั้นปีที่ 3 มหาวิทยาลัยราชภัฏอุบลราชธานี
โดย : ประภัสสร  LPARAM
ชื่อปริญญานิ : สิริพิศาลทวารภานิติ
สาขาวิชา : การสอนภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาต่างประเทศ
ประธานกรรมการที่ปรึกษา : ดร. สายสุนัน ชัยมงคล

พื้นที่สำคัญ : การเขียนพรรณนา โครงสร้างการเขียนพรรณนาของ Labov

การศึกษาระดับนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์ เพื่อวิเคราะห์โครงสร้างการเขียนพรรณนามาตรฐานของ Labov (1972) โดยใช้จำนวนเจ็ดของนักศึกษาวิชาเอกภาษาอังกฤษ ชั้นปีที่ 3 มหาวิทยาลัยราชภัฏอุบลราชธานี จำนวน 30 คน ซึ่งตัววิจัยเป็นผู้วิเคราะห์ และเจ้าของภาษาเป็นผู้ตรวจสอบ

ผลการศึกษาพบว่านักศึกษาส่วนใหญ่ไม่สามารถเขียนตามรูปแบบมาตรฐานของ Labov (1972) แม้แต่จำนวนจำนวน 62.07% สามารถเขียนได้ครอบคลุม 6 สำนวนประกอบ แต่ผ่าไม่คิดคานเพียง 10.34% สามารถเรียงตั้งแต่ 6 สำนวนประกอบตามโครงสร้างของ Labov (1972) ได้
ABSTRACT

TITLE: A STUDY OF NARRATIVE ORGANIZATION BY THIRD-YEAR ENGLISH MAJORS AT UBON RATCHATHANI RAJABHAT UNIVERSITY

BY: PRAPATSORN LAWAN

DEGREE: MASTER OF ARTS

MAJOR: TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

CHAIR: SAISUNEE CHAIMONGKOL, Ph.D.

KEYWORDS: NARRATIVE / LABOV NARRATIVE PATTERN

This study aimed to analyze the organization of narrative compositions written by third-year English majors at Ubon Ratchathani Rajabhat University. Thirty students' narratives were analyzed by the researcher and checked by a native speaker of English in terms of Labov's narrative pattern (1972). The result of the study showed that most of the students could not write according to the pattern investigated. More than half of the compositions (62.07%) contained all the six elements; however, only 10.34% had these six elements arranged in the appropriate order.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the rationale, research question, purpose and scope of the study.

1.1 Rationale and Background of the Study

English is the most widely used language for communication in the world. It has become an international language (Harmer, 2001), and today it is virtually impossible to overstate the importance of acquiring English. At this period of time, if our country wishes to compete successfully with other countries in all aspects, learning a foreign language is necessary. (The Ministry of Education, 2002) Learning a foreign language broadens our outlook on the world and helps us to communicate and learn about other cultures and countries. As a result, English, one of the influential foreign languages, has become an obligatory subject in the curriculum at every level. According to the curriculum used by the English Department of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at Ubon Ratchathani Rajabhat University as published in 2001, the four skills for communication- listening, speaking, reading, and writing-are to be emphasized. Therefore, writing is an important skill that language teachers should deal with. However, it often receives inadequate attention, partly because “in terms of skills, producing a coherent, fluent, extended piece of writing is probably the most difficult thing there is to do in language.” (Nunan, 1999: 271) Writing is a complicated skill, and it is very difficult to be a good writer even for a native speaker.

“Good writing does not just happen. The best writers spend a great deal of time thinking, planning, rewriting, and editing.” (West, 2000: 2 cited in Abisamra, 2001) Writing is, therefore, a very complex and difficult process for learners to acquire.

One of the rhetorical properties of good writing is a proper organization. Different types of writing-narrative, descriptive, expository, persuasive and
argumentative (Abisamra, 2001) -require different forms of organization. Mastery of organizational patterns of writing is thus necessary for EFL learners.

Of all the types mentioned above, narratives are probably the most interesting because they tell stories, and the readers want to know about what happens to other people. (Pemberton, 1991: 245 cited in Tiewjaroen 2004) Narratives, spoken as well as written, offer insights into ‘lives and experiences’ of people. Moreover, people are most involved with narratives since narrative writing can be found in a variety of everyday items such as in newspapers, magazines, and short stories. However, EFL learners usually have problems writing good narratives because they do not know how to write grammatically, do not know enough vocabulary, and probably do not understand their rhetorical organization.

Narrative writing looks simple because students are frequently exposed to it in both L1 and L2. It is based on a simple type of organization: sequential events described chronologically. Moreover, it has several typical features such as characters, settings and conflicts. The characters, the setting, and the conflict are usually introduced at the beginning of a narrative. The conflict reaches its high point in the middle and is resolved in the ending. (Abisamra, 2001) Therefore, understanding these features and their sequences or organization is necessary for learners who want to be good English writers.

According to the researcher’s informal interviews with third-year English majors at Ubon Ratchathani Rajabhat University, the students do not clearly understand the rhetorical organization of any type of writing. They are likely typical of the majority of the students in Thailand, which suggests that many writing courses are inadequate or ineffective. It appears that Thai students’ problems arise from the facts that they do not have a chance to learn how to write well-organized English texts and that they cannot make use of the organizational patterns of various types of Thai writing because they are not explicitly or well stated. (Junta, 2005)

As required by the Education Reforming Standards, one of the teachers' duties is to find ways to improve students’ writing ability. Moreover, as far as the researcher is concerned, there have been a few attempts to explore how written narrative is organized by Thai students in different aspects. (Indrasuta, 1988 and Kaweera, 2003) Consequently, this study was conducted to help meet this requirement by primarily
1.2 Research Question

How do third-year English majors at Ubon Ratchathani Rajabhat University organize their English narratives based on Labov’s pattern (1972)?

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purposes of the study are to investigate how third-year English majors at Ubon Ratchathani Rajabhat University organize the pattern of the narrative as compared to the narrative organization proposed by Labov (1972), and to recommend the way to improve or develop effective teaching of writing.

1.4 Scope of the Study

This study will look into the narrative compositions written by third-year English majors at Ubon Ratchathani Rajabhat University in the 2005 academic year in terms of the number and arrangement of narrative components as proposed by Labov (1972). It is not intended to look at fluency or grammatical accuracy. The major purpose of this study is to investigate how students actually organize their English narratives.

1.5 Definition of Key Term

Narrative organization refers to the presence and sequence of the six elements: abstract, orientation, complication, evaluation, resolution and coda as proposed by Labov (1972). (To be elaborated in Chapter 2)
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter discusses the definition, organization and uses of narratives as well as previous studies.

2.1 Definition and Organization of Narratives

Numerous definitions of ‘narrative’ have been offered. For example, a narrative is a kind of text that tells a story in a sequence of events which is usually chronologically ordered (Crosby & Carter, 1986; Chatman, 1993). Additionally, according to Campsall (2005), a narrative is a particular form of social discourse in which a story, real or fictional, is presented sequentially from a point of view. To sum up, a narrative is a story told in a sequential order.

The organization patterns of the narrative have also been proposed by several scholars (Alvarez & Merchán (1992), Ploeger (2001), Lee (2003), Lam Andrew (2005)). This study, however, focuses on Labov’s narrative pattern (1972:114-115 cited in Davies 1995). The six elements of narratives as mentioned and ordered by Labov are abstract, orientation, complication, evaluation, resolution and coda. The following are definitions and examples of the six elements as arranged by Labov (1972).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements</th>
<th>Definitions</th>
<th>Examples (Blackwell, 2000: 4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Abstract (A)</strong></td>
<td>Summary of the story.</td>
<td>Somebody just wrecked the front of our car.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Orientation (O)</strong></td>
<td>Place and time given as background of the story.</td>
<td>- We were coming out of the North car park, just after lunch,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- and there was this guy ahead of us in one of those jeep-like deals, seemingly leaving too.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Complication (C)</strong></td>
<td>A series of events leading to the crisis.</td>
<td>- He suddenly went into reverse and came back towards us at speed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Even before we could sound the horn he hit us.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evaluation (E)</strong></td>
<td>Opinion or attitude toward the story.</td>
<td>- We were furious with him.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- There was broken glass all over the ground, and it didn't seem wise to drive the car without having a mechanic check it over.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- It wouldn't be so bad but the car isn't ours; it's on loan to us.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resolution (R)</strong></td>
<td>Outcome of the story.</td>
<td>- Well we exchanged names</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- And addresses and insurance and so forth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Coda (Cd)</strong></td>
<td>Signal about the return to the present or the ending of the story.</td>
<td>- But it means we're going to be without a car for a few days at least.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.2 Uses of Narratives

"Any time you tell what happened you are using narration." (Kirschner & Mandell, 1989: 47). According to Ploeger (2001: 139) and Lacey (2005), narratives are used to tell about experiences in one’s life. They can be told in both spoken and written forms. As claimed by Lacey (2005), human communication itself could not exist without narratives. We use narratives to communicate to each other.

In terms of teaching, a narrative is beneficial for teachers and students. (Weller, 2005) Teachers use the narrative as a tool in education; for instance, they use the narrative to teach children difficult concepts. They use the narrative to explain something to better the understanding of the learners. The narrative genre should be an excellent vehicle for language learning as it is mostly used in everyday communication. Since it is so much utilized, it has extreme relevance to the communicative needs of language users. To help language learners learn a target language, the narrative genre is the most familiar and should be good materials for teaching because they can be found in formal writing such as, autobiographies histories, biographies and journals as well as informal writing such as personal letters, and diaries. (Kirschner & Mandell, 1989)

In primary schools language teachers use narratives to enhance reading comprehension, retelling ability, and discussion skills. (Tavakoli, 2005: 1) "More recently, EFL/ESOL teachers have started to use narratives for wider purposes such as improving speaking and communication abilities, teaching structures and vocabulary, and exploring narrative genres."(Tavakoli, 2005: 1) Tiewjaroen’s study (2004) shows that narratives can effectively develop students’ knowledge of conjunctive adverbials of additive, adversative, causal and sequential types.

As can be seen above, we use narratives for a variety of purposes in our daily life. As a result, narratives are an important type of writing for EFL learners. The next topic will present the previous studies concerning narratives.
2.3 Previous Studies

There have been many previous studies carried out to gain insights into the characteristics of the rhetorical organization of ESL/EFL students’ writing. Those studies involved four types of writing: narration, exposition, argumentation, and description.

Indrasuta (1988 cited in Kaweera, 2003: 20) looked at the differences in rhetorical organization of narratives between Thai students and American students. Ninety students were asked to write narratives on “I Succeed at Last” and “I Made a Hard Decision.” Their compositions were then analyzed in terms of the use of narrative components (i.e. plot, conflict, setting, theme, character, scene, and figurative language). It was found that there was a higher use of narrative components among the U.S. students’ compositions than among the Thai students’ compositions.

Based on Lee (2003), there are similar studies by Tennen (1980), Matsuyama (1983), Soter (1988), Berman and Slobin (1994), Invernezzi and Abouzeid (1995), and Berman (1999) which focused on contrastive studies of oral or written narratives represented by different language groups, emphasizing five components of narrative structure, namely, orientation (the beginning of the story), initiating event (the beginning of complicated event in the story), complicating event (a series of events, which leads to a crisis), highpoint (the result of the story), and coda (the ending of the story). The findings showed that there were similar global structures found in narrative writing among different language and culture groups. However, different language groups employed narrative rhetoric differently. (Lee, 2003) Three types of elements which could be seen in narrative structure were informative elements (the facts that provide information about external situation in which events take place), narrative elements (events in temporally ordered clauses), and evaluative elements (how the narrator judges a story). The three elements are equivalent to orientation, complication with resolution and evaluation respectively.

Therefore, this study aims to observe the common narrative patterns presented by a group of Thai students, the finding of which is expected to facilitate writing instruction for English instructors.
CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

This chapter will discuss the research methodology which includes subjects, instrument, procedure, data collection and analysis.

3.1 Subjects

Thirty third-year English majors at Ubon Ratchatani Rajabhat University who enrolled in English for Tourism I (section 1) in the 2005 academic year were purposively selected as the subjects for the study because the class was taught by the researcher. They were 21 females and 9 males, aged between 20-22. The students had no chance to properly study organization of writing. What they learned was only three basic components: introduction, body, and conclusion, despite having had two writing courses: Controlled and Formulaic Writing (1551107) related to the practical study of everyday written and communicative English, and Formal Paragraph Writing (1552102) focusing on the features of paragraph writing necessary for clarity. Having finished these two courses, the students are assumed to be able to express their ideas through writing at the discourse level.

3.2 Instrument

The instrument for the study is a writing task requiring the students to write a 120-150 word narrative about an unforgettable event in their lives.

3.3 Procedure

Each of the 30 students was required to write a narrative on an unforgettable event in his or her life during a one-hour period in class. After that, all 30 papers were analyzed according to Labov’s narrative structure (1972). The analysis was done by a researcher and checked by a native English speaker.
3.4 Data Collection and Analysis

The data were collected from the students' narrative writing. First, each piece of writing was parsed into clauses and students' assumed-to-be clauses or sentences, i.e. a unit beginning with a capital letter and ending with a period. Some examples of parsed units are as follows:

(2) I have an accident about motorcycle
(3) that it was an unforgettable event for me.

Then, each clause was categorized as an element (A, O, C, R, E or Cd). Next, all the elements of each narrative were arranged into an organizational pattern (A,O,C,E,R,Cd; O,C, R, Cd; E, O, R, C, Cd; O,E, C, R, etc.) After that, the narrative organization patterns were analyzed and calculated in terms of the number of elements and their organizations, using percentages.

Finally, the data about the organizational patterns of narratives written by the 30 third-year students were described.
CHAPTER 4
RESULTS

In this chapter, the answers to the research questions are presented.

4.1 Results

Having collected all the 30 students’ compositions, the researcher analyzed the compositions and the native English speaker checked the analysis in order to see how the students organized their narratives. It happened that one of them was not a narrative, but a descriptive as the factual events were simply described. Therefore, the number of the narrative writings to be analyzed and taken into consideration was 29.

Each composition was first parsed into clauses and assumed-to-be clauses or sentences, each of which was then categorized as a narrative element (A, O, C, E, R, Cd), following Labov’s narrative pattern (1972). Next, the elements of each narrative were arranged in order to find out the number of Labov’s organization patterns as shown in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Labov’s pattern (A, O, C, E, R, Cd)</th>
<th>Different patterns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total (29)</strong></td>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Percentages (100%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>10.34</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 The Percentage of Labov’s Narrative Pattern (A, O, C, E, R, Cd)
It is obvious from Table 1 that only three compositions (10.34%) had the narrative organizational patterns as suggested by Labov (1972) whereas 26 (89.66%) did not. The result shows that the majority of the students have problems producing Labov’s organizational pattern of narratives. Next, the number of narrative elements used by the students is presented in Table 2.

**Table 2** The Number of Narrative Elements Used by the Students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Elements</th>
<th>Number of Narratives</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Six elements</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>62.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five elements</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>27.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four elements</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>29</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on Table 2, almost two-thirds of the compositions (62.07%) contain all the six elements while about one-fourth (27.58%) and a few (10.34%) contain 5 and 4 elements respectively. The missing elements are shown in Table 3.

**Table 3** Missing Elements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Missing Elements</th>
<th>Narratives with Five elements</th>
<th>Narratives with Four elements</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complication</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resolution</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coda</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3 shows that the only two missing elements are the abstract and the coda. The number of missing abstracts (10) is higher than that of missing codas (4).

The ways these narrative elements were organized by the students are illustrated in Table 4.

**Table 4** Organizational Patterns of the Students’ Narratives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Patterns</th>
<th>Number of Narratives</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Six elements</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A, O, C, R, E, Cd</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A, O, C, E, R, Cd</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A, O, C, E, C, O, R, Cd</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A, O, C, E, C, E, C, E, R, Cd</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A, O, E, O, C, R, E, Cd</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A, O, E, O, E, C, E, R, Cd</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A, O, E, C, E, C, E, C, R, Cd</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A, O, E, C, E, R, Cd</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A, O, E, C, R, Cd</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A, O, E, O, C, O, C, E, O, E, R, Cd</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A, O, A, C, E, R, Cd</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A, O, R, E, A, C, R, Cd</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Five elements</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A, O, C, E, C, R</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O, C, E, R, Cd</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O, C, R, E, Cd</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O, C, R, E, R, Cd</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>O, C, R, C, E, C, E, Cd</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O, C, E, O, C, R, E, Cd</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O, E, O, C, R, Cd</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4 Organizational Patterns of the Students’ Narratives. (Continue)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Patterns</th>
<th>Number of Narratives</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Four elements</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O, C, E, C, R</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O, E, C, E, R</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 shows that all narratives with all the six elements begin with an abstract, followed by an orientation and ended with a coda. On the other hand, almost all of those with five elements begin with an orientation, followed by a complication and ended with a coda. Similarly, all of those with four elements begin with an orientation, but end with either a resolution or an evaluation.

The discussion of the findings will be provided in the next chapter.
CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses the results shown in the previous chapter and pedagogical implications.

5.1 Discussion

Based on the results, very few students demonstrated their ability to write a narrative with all of the components organized according to Labov's patterns: abstract, orientation, complication, evaluation, resolution, and coda. The majority of the students failed to compose their narratives with all the six components in such a sequence. Their compositions are varied in terms of the number of elements and their arrangements. The number of the elements ranged from 4 to 6 with the missing elements being abstracts and codas. Students' problems in narrative writing can be attributed to insufficient writing experience, limited English proficiency and absence of L1 positive transfer.

Concerning the first cause, the students have little opportunity to familiarize themselves with writing a narrative organizationally. With under 7% of the students appropriately writing a narrative, it is most likely that their knowledge came from their prior experience, not from a classroom teaching. They are thus an exception, not the norm. Despite having had two writing courses—Controlled and Formulaic Writing and Formal Paragraph Writing, the students seemed to have no chance to properly study organization of any writing genre. What they learned was only three basic components: introduction, body, and conclusion. Both courses simply require the students to write several essays of different topics with emphasis on grammar, vocabulary and the three basic components. Thus, the students did not clearly know about any genre of writing.

Moreover, in a group interview, many students expressed their lack of confidence in writing English. This may not be limited to their English writing because even when they write in Thai, they also have writing problems (Thaiboon,
2000:3-9, cited in Junta 2005). When asked to write English narratives, it is not surprising that they did not know how to write well-organized ones. That is why the majority of the students have problems producing the organizational pattern of narratives as outlined by Labov (1972). The most serious problem found in their narratives is the mixing- up of three elements: complication, evaluation and resolution. They seem not to have clear ideas of what each is, which results in lack of coherence and thus difficulty in understanding their stories.

Limited English proficiency is another problem that prevents them from writing grammatically and comprehensibly. Worse, they can neither express their ideas nor use appropriate words and cohesive devices, so narratives are abundant with irrelevant and incoherent pieces of information.

Regarding the absence of L1 positive transfer, one obvious point is that there is no concrete narrative organization in Thai writing. (Junta, 2005) Therefore, students cannot positively transfer Thai narrative organization to English writing. The reason why the complication, evaluation and resolution are mixed up is probably due to the fact that the students negatively transfer cultural differences reflected in discourse structures. Directness and indirectness involved in cultural beliefs are characteristics of Westerners and Asians respectively. (Levine and Adelman, 1982) Their effects can be seen in the way both groups compose their writing. That is, an ‘Oriental’ writing style develops by “turning and turning in a widening gyre” whereas the ‘Western’ writing style is ‘linear’, beginning with a topic statement and going directly to the point. (Kaplan, 1984:45) Thai students, as a result, use typical ‘Oriental’ writing style to write English narratives, resulting in the mess-up of narrative elements.

Although not all of the students could write their compositions with all the elements in the proper order, the great majority of these subjects used all the six elements suggested by Labov (1972). Regarding the missing abstracts and codas, this is also supported by studies done by several scholars concerning the global elements of narratives which exclude abstract and coda. It is agreed that both can be elicited from the story (Labov, 1972). Thus, they may not be needed.

In conclusion, as shown by the nature of compositions written by this group of Thai students, there needs to be a major change in teaching of writing in order to
enable the students to write better narratives. To meet such a goal, some pedagogical implications are provided below.

5.2 Pedagogical Implications

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that Thai students lack the ability to form narrative pattern of writing. The teacher should therefore provide a genre-based approach termed the teaching-learning cycle (Callaghan and Rothery 1988, cited in Burns 2001: 202), which is composed of different speaking and writing activities relevant to the genre involved. The stages of the teaching-learning cycle of a narrative genre are suggested as follows:

First, the teacher provides samples of English narrative and analyzes their structures and language in comparison with Thai narratives. Next, the students are set to work and create their own narratives with continuing support and analysis from peers, and with revision and analysis from the teacher. Then, the teacher and students should analyze the narratives together by identifying all the six components as suggested by Labov (1972). The teacher should also help students to focus on how to write a flowing text by demonstrating and giving examples of cohesive devices. What’s more, the teachers should encourage the learners to be more confident to write in any genre by having them practice writing regularly so that their capability of idea expressions and their language proficiency would be improved.
CHAPTER 6
CONCLUSION

This chapter states the conclusion, the limitations of the study and the recommendations for further study.

6.1 Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to investigate how third-year English majors at Ubon Rachathani Rajabhat University organized narrative patterns. The results of the study showed that only 6.89% of the students composed their narratives conforming to the organization (A, O, C, E, R, Cd) proposed by Labov (1972) whereas 89.66% did not. Regarding the number of narrative elements used by the students, more than half of the compositions (62.07%) contain all the six elements. However, only 10.34% arranged these six elements in the appropriate order. Two missing elements were abstracts and codas. The students’ problems are most likely caused by insufficient writing experience, limited English proficiency and absence of L1 positive transfer.

6.2 Limitations of the Study

This study still contains some limitations. The first is that the subjects were only 29 third year students at Ubon Ratchatani Rajabhat University. It is advisable to include the students of other academic years. In addition, students’ limited English proficiency including incorrect grammatical usage and spelling errors prevents the researcher from understanding their ideas, which makes it difficult to analyze their narratives.
6.3 Recommendations for Further Study

According to the limitations mentioned in the previous section, further study should be conducted with a larger number of students and students from other institutions to see if they have the same problems. Alternatively, the study should be conducted with the higher-proficient students who do not have serious problems expressing their ideas. Also, the researcher may have to interview the subjects to see what they really mean or what they want to write in the story.
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APPENDIX
Appendix A
An Unforgettable Event

1. (Ab) My unforgettable event is my bad accident.
2. (O) That day is on 7 August
3. (O) and it is raining a long time.
4. (O) When the rain stop
5. (O) I and my friends go back school.
6. (C) We have find a nest of bird on the tree
7. (C) my friends tell me climbed up.
8. (C) I follow order them,
9. (C) the tree is very smooth
10. (C) and I slippery.
11. (E) That day I feel unlucky
12. (E) I think
13. (E) it unlikely story for me so much.
14. (R) I broke my leg.
15. (R) My friends are ran for tell a teacher in the classroom.
16. (R) My teacher bring me to the hospital
17. (R) and tell about me with my mother
18. (R) that cause broke my leg.
19. (Cd) Nowadays, I promise my self
20. (Cd) that will not climb up on the tree forever
21. (Cd) and this cause me afraid height thenceforth.
22. (Cd) Therefore, that day it's my an unforgettable for me.
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