



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

**FACTORS AFFECTING CREATIVITY IN ENGLISH AS A SECOND
LANGUAGE TERTIARY STUDENTS' WRITING**

LEE POH LE.

FBMK 2005 9



**FACTORS AFFECTING CREATIVITY IN ENGLISH AS A SECOND
LANGUAGE TERTIARY STUDENTS' WRITING**

By

LEE POH LE

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia,
in Fulfilment of the Requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

August 2005



To my family and friends who have given me moral support throughout my work
and all those who value creativity in themselves and in others.



Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

FACTORS AFFECTING CREATIVITY IN ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE TERTIARY STUDENTS' WRITING

By

LEE POH LE

August 2005

Chairman: Professor Chan Swee Heng, PhD

Faculty: Modern Languages and Communication

Tertiary student writers, learning English as a second language (ESL), use reading and writing strategies in the process of writing. Does intervention with the explicit teaching about the Top-Level Structure (TLS) benefit these student writers in the use of strategies? This study on 182 ESL tertiary student writers revealed that there was performance gain after intervention with the explicit teaching about the Top-Level Structure (TLS). The performance of 93 (24 male, 69 female) tertiary students in the treatment group was compare with 89 (31 male, 58 female) tertiary students in the control group. The treatment group was explicitly taught about the TLS through the creative problem solving (CPS) approach for ten weeks. In the course of the ten weeks, the treatment group practised using the TLS in their reading and writing tasks; while the control group was not taught to do so.



The result of the post-test means adjusted by pre-test using the ANCOVA showed that there was a significant difference between the two groups, favouring the treatment group. It may be implied that the tertiary student writers in the treatment group had beneficially use the TLS in their writing task, comprising story writing and response writing.



Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia
sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah.

**FAKTOR-FAKTOR KREATIF YANG MEMBERI KESAN KE ATAS
PENULISAN PELAJAR-PELAJAR DI PERINGKAT IJAZAH YANG
BELAJAR BAHASA INGGERIS SEBAGAI BAHASA KEDUA**

Oleh

LEE POH LE

Ogos 2005

Pengerusi: Profesor Chan Swee Heng, PhD

Fakulti: Bahasa Moden dan Komunikasi

Pelajar-pelajar penulisan di peringkat ijazah yang belajar Bahasa Inggeris sebagai bahasa kedua (ESL) menggunakan strategi-strategi dalam proses penulisan. Yang menjadi persoalan di sini ialah, adakah pengajaran struktur peringkat atas (Top-Level Structure – TLS) secara terus dapat memanfaatkan pelajar-pelajar ini? Adakah faktor-faktor seperti daya kreativiti, pandangan diri tentang kreativiti, jantina dan matapelajaran major memberi kesan ke atas penulisan mereka, terutamanya dalam penulisan cerita dan penulisan respon? Kajian ini yang melibatkan 182 pelajar ESL di peringkat ijazah menunjukkan bahawa pengajaran TLS secara terus dapat meningkatkan prestasi mereka dalam penulisan cerita dan respon kepada teks. Prestasi 93 pelajar dalam kumpulan rawatan (yang terdiri daripada 24 pelajar lelaki dan 69 pelajar perempuan) yang diberi pengajaran khas dibandingkan dengan 89 pelajar lain dalam kumpulan kawalan (yang terdiri daripada 31 pelajar lelaki dan 58 pelajar perempuan) yang tidak diberi apa-apa pengajaran. Kumpulan rawatan diajar tentang TLS melalui pendekatan penyelesaian masalah secara kreatif (CPS) selama

sepuluh minggu. Dalam jangkamasa sepuluh minggu tersebut, kumpulan rawatan ini berlatih menggunakan teknik TLS dalam latihan-latihan pembacaan dan penulisan sementara kumpulan kawalan tidak diajar sedemikian.

Keputusan min ujian pos dikawal ujian pra menggunakan teknik ANCOVA menunjukkan terdapat perbezaan yang ketara antara kedua-dua kumpulan ini, di mana kumpulan rawatan menunjukkan keputusan yang lebih cemerlang. Akan tetapi, daya kreativiti, pandangan diri tentang kreativiti, jantina dan matapelajaran major tidak memberi kesan ke atas penulisan mereka. Ini menunjukkan bahawa pelajar-pelajar peringkat ijazah dalam kumpulan rawatan bermanfaat dengan menggunakan TLS dalam penulisan.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to all those who have kindly rendered me their assistance in one way or another in writing this thesis.

Special thanks go to Professor Dr. Chan Swee Heng, the chairman of my supervisory committee, who has devoted much time and patience in guiding me throughout my writing. Thanks also go to Associate Professor Dr. Sharmeem Rafik Khan Galea and Associate Professor Dr. Mohd. Faiz Sathi Abdullah, members of my supervisory committee, who have given their time and assistance when I most needed them.

I would also like to thank the students and teachers who took part in my data collection. Special thanks go to the students in the treatment group who have earnestly participated in all the tests and activities that were carried out in the course of my data collection.

I would also like to record my sincere appreciation for my friends, Miss Chan Mei Yuit and Alice Lee, who have constantly given me the moral support I need throughout the course of study.

Thanks also go to Dr. Zain Mohd Ali for introducing me to the TESL programme. Without this first step into research awareness, this study would not have been written.



I am also very grateful to the Examination Committee Members, Dr. Wan Roselezam binti Wan Yahaya, Associate Professor Dr. Hj. Rosli Talif, Associate Professor Dr. Malachi Edwin and Professor Dr. James Dean Brown, who have so patiently read through my thesis and given me invaluable comments to improve on my writing.



I certify that an Examination Committee met on 19th August 2005 to conduct the final examination of Lee Poh Le on his Doctor of Philosophy thesis entitled “Factors Affecting Creativity in English as a Second Language Tertiary Students’ Writing” in accordance with Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (Higher Degree) Act 1980 and Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (Higher Degree) Regulations 1981. The Committee recommends that the candidate be awarded the relevant degree. Members of the Examination Committee are as follows:

Wan Roselezam Wan Yahya, PhD

Lecturer
Faculty of Modern Language and Communication
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Chairman)

Malachi Edwin A/L N. Vethamani, PhD


Associate Professor
Faculty of Educational Studies
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Internal Examiner)

Rosli Talif, PhD

Associate Professor
Faculty of Modern Language and Communication
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Internal Examiner)

James Dean Brown, PhD

Professor
Department of Second Language Studies
University Of Hawai’i
Honolulu, Hawai
(External Examiner)



ZAKARIAH ABD. RASHID, Ph.D.
Professor/Deputy Dean
School of Graduate Studies
Universiti Putra Malaysia

Date: **25 OCT 2005**



This thesis submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The members of the Supervisory Committee are as follows:

Chan Swee Heng, PhD
Professor
Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Chairman)

Sharmeem Rafik Khan Galea, PhD
Associate Professor
Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Member)

Mohd. Faiz Sathi Abdullah, PhD
Associate Professor
Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Member)



AINI IDERIS, PhD
Professor/Dean
School of Graduate

17 NOV 2005



DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the thesis is based on my original work except for quotations and citations which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted for any other degree at UPM or other institutions.



LEE POH LE

Date: 30 August 2005

TABLE OF CONTENT

	Page
DEDICATION	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
ABSTRAK	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	vii
APPROVAL	ix
DECLARATION	xi
LIST OF TABLES	xvii
LIST OF FIGURES	xix
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xxi
CHAPTER	
1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Preamble	1
1.2 Background of the Study	5
1.2.1 Second Language (L2) Reading and Writing Relations	7
1.2.2 Using Top-Level Structure to Improve Reading and Writing	8
1.2.3 Reading as Creative Act	14
1.2.4 Associative Theory of Creativity	17
1.2.5 Motivation	20
1.2.6 Prior Knowledge	20
1.2.7 Other Variables	24
1.2.8 Theories of Language Use	25
1.2.8.1 The Structural and Functional Theories	25
1.2.8.2 Cognitive and Behavioral Theories	27
1.2.8.3 Interpretive Theories	27
1.2.9 Summary	29
1.3 Statement of the Problem	30
1.4 Purpose and Objectives of the Study	32
1.5 Hypotheses of the Study	33
1.6 Significance of the Study	34
1.7 Limitations of the Study	37
1.8 Definition of Terms	38
1.8.1 Subject Major	38
1.8.2 Torrance Test of Creative Thinking (TTCT)	38
1.8.3 Creative Writing	39
1.8.3.1 Story Writing	39
1.8.3.2 Response Writing	39
1.8.4 T-units	40
1.8.5 TLS	40
1.9 Summary	40
1.10 Conceptual Framework of the Study	41



1.11	Conclusion	47
2	LITERATURE REVIEW	48
2.1	Introduction	48
2.2	Models, Domains and Functions of Writing	48
2.2.1	The Whole Language Theory	51
2.2.2	Two Different Drafting Strategies in Writing	57
2.3	Top Level Structure (TLS) and Story Writing and Response Writing	61
2.3.1	Prior Knowledge for Writing and Reading	66
2.3.2	Creative Problem Solving	75
2.4	Creative Writing and Its Related Variables	79
2.4.1	Creative Personality	81
2.4.2	Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking	86
2.4.2.1	Predictive Validity of the Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking	90
2.4.2.2	Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking and Creative Problem Solving	91
2.4.2.3	Creativity and Language Use	94
2.4.2.4	Creativity in Writing and Self-Report on Creativity	113
2.4.2.5	Creativity in Writing and Gender	118
2.4.2.6	Creativity in Writing and Subject Majors (Arts and Science)	129
2.5	Conclusion	136
3	TYPE OF RESEARCH AND RESEARCH DESIGN	138
3.1	Introduction	138
3.2	The Research Design	138
3.3	The Subjects	140
3.4	The Population and Sample	143
3.5	Instrumentation	145
3.5.1	The Pilot Tests	152
3.5.2	The Procedure	157
3.5.3	Treatment	162
3.6	The Final Data Analysis	176
3.6.1	Experimental Group Differences	176
3.6.2	Secondary Variables	179
3.7	Results	180
3.8	Conclusion	181
4	ANALYSIS AND RESULTS OF THE FINDINGS	182
4.1	Introduction	182
4.2	Discussion	182
4.3	Inter-rater Reliability coefficients	183
4.3.1	Research Hypothesis 1: No Effect of Explicit Teaching about the TLS on ESL Story Writing	186
4.3.2	Research Hypothesis 2: No Effect of Explicit Teaching about the TLS on ESL Response Writing	190



4.3.3	Research Hypothesis 3: No Effect of Creativity on ESL Story Writing	193
4.3.4	Research Hypothesis 4: No Effect of Creativity on ESL Response Writing	195
4.3.5	Research Hypothesis 5: No Effect of Self-Report on Creativity on ESL Story Writing	197
4.3.6	Research Hypothesis 6: No Effect of Self-Report on Creativity on ESL Response Writing	200
4.3.7	Research Hypothesis 7: No Effect of Gender on ESL Story Writing	201
4.3.8	Research Hypothesis 8: No Effect of Gender on ESL Response Writing	203
4.3.9	Research Hypothesis 9: No Effect of Subject Major on ESL Response Writing	204
4.3.10	Research Hypothesis 10: No Effect of Subject Major on ESL Response Writing	205
4.4	Gains in Performance	207
4.4.1	Creativity in Writing	207
4.4.2	Overall Gain in Performance	208
4.4.3	Interaction and Main Effects	211
4.4.4	Treatment Group	217
4.4.5	Control Group	220
4.5	Students' Sample Writing	221
4.5.1	Sample 1	223
4.5.2	Sample 2	225
4.5.3	Sample 3	228
4.5.4	Sample 4	231
4.5.5	Sample 5	234
4.5.6	Sample 6	237
4.5.7	Sample 7	240
4.5.8	Sample 8	244
4.5.9	Sample 9	247
4.5.10	Sample 10	248
4.5.11	Sample 11	250
4.5.12	Sample 12	252
4.5.13	Sample 13	255
4.5.14	Sample 14	257
4.5.15	Sample 15	259
4.5.16	Sample 16	262
4.6	Conclusion	265
5	CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION	267
5.1	Introduction	267
5.2	Summary and Conclusion	267
5.3	Pedagogical Implications	273
5.4	Suggestions for Further Research	275
5.5	Conclusion	276



BIBLIOGRAPHY	278
APPENDICES	307
BIODATA OF THE AUTHOR	345



APPENDICES

Appendix		
A1	Consent Form	307
A2	Self-Report on Creativity	308
B	Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking	311
C	Interview Questions	315
D	Attitude toward Creativity Based- Interpretations on Self-Report on creativity	318
E	Story Writing – Pre-test/Post-test	318
F	Article for Response Writing pre-test and Post test	319
G	Scoring Guides for Story Writing and Response Writing	322
H	Text for Sample Teaching of the TLS	326
I	Scores Sheets	328
J	Panel of Judges for Content Validation	330
K	Lesson Plans	332
L	BBI 2411 Reading and Discussion Skills 3(3+0)	340



LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1	Test Retest Coefficients of Correlation between Creativity Predictors Established in 1959 and the Criterion Measures Established in 1966 and 1971	90
2	Means and Standard Deviation of the TTCT Scores	146
3	Scoring Reliability	147
4	Schedule for Treatment	162
5	Connectors for TLS Structures	170
6	Qualitative Categorical Variables and their levels of Observations	180
7	Differences in Group Means on Story Writing Subscales	188
8	Differences in Group Means on Response Writing Subscales	191
9	Differences in Group Means on Story Writing Subscales by Creative and Non-Creative Students	194
10	Differences in Group Means on Response Writing Subscales by Creative and Non-Creative Students	196
11	Differences in Group Means on Story Writing Subscales by Average Creativity, Above Average Creativity and Superior Creativity Students	199
12	Differences in Group Means on Response Writing Subscales by Average Creativity, Above Average Creativity and Superior Creativity Students	201
13	Differences in Group Means on Story Writing Subscales by Male and Female Students	202
14	Differences in Group Means on Response Writing Subscales by Male and Female Students	204
15	Differences in Group Means on Story Writing Subscales by Subject Major	204
16	Differences in Group Means on Story Response Subscales by Subject Major	206



17	Differences in Group Means on Creativity in Writing by Other Variables	208
18	Overall and Sub-scale Gain in Performance	209
19	Gain in Performance between Means of the Pre-Test Scores and Post-Test Scores	210
20	Analysis of the Writing for Sample 1	223
21	Analysis of the Writing for Sample 2	226
22	Analysis of the Writing for Sample 3	228
23	Analysis of the Writing for Sample 4	231
24	Analysis of the Writing for Sample 5	235
25	Analysis of the Writing for Sample 6	238
26	Analysis of the Writing for Sample 7	241
27	Analysis of the Writing for Sample 8	244
28	Analysis of the Writing for Sample 9	247
29	Analysis of the Writing for Sample 10	249
30	Analysis of the Writing for Sample 11	251
31	Analysis of the Writing for Sample 12	253
32	Analysis of the Writing for Sample 13	255
33	Analysis of the Writing for Sample 14	257
34	Analysis of the Writing for Sample 15	260
35	Analysis of the Writing for Sample 16	262



1. LIST OF FIGURES

List of Figures	Page
1 Top-Level Structure Patterns	13
2 The Relationship between Creativity and Writing Under the Hayes and Flower Model	17
3 The Relationship between Thought and Symbol	28
4 The Researcher's Model of TLS Intervention on Students' Creativity in Writing	45
5 The Reading Process	56
6 Formula for Sampling from Continuous Data	144
7 An Example of the Application of the Problem and Solution TLS Pattern	167
8 An Example of Elaborations of the Problem and Solution TLS Pattern	168
9 Interaction and Main Effects of Creativity on Creativity in Writing	212
10 Interaction and Main Effects of Self-Report on Creativity on Creativity in Writing	213
11 Interaction and Main Effects of Gender on Creativity in Writing	215
12 Interaction and Main Effects of Subject Major on Creativity in Writing	216
13 Diagrammatic Representation of the Selection for Sample Story Writing and Response Writing	222
14 TLS Pattern for Main Idea of Sample 1	224
15 TLS Pattern for Main Idea of Sample 2	226
16 TLS Pattern for Main Idea of Sample 3	229
17 TLS Pattern for Main Idea of Sample 4	232
18 TLS Pattern for Main Idea of Sample 5	236
19 TLS Pattern for Main Idea of Sample 6	239



20	TLS Pattern for Main Idea of Sample 7	242
21	TLS Pattern for Main Idea of Sample 8	245
22	TLS Pattern for Main Idea of Sample 10	249
23	TLS Pattern for Main Idea of Sample 11	251
24	TLS Pattern for Main Idea of Sample 12	254
25	TLS Pattern for Main Idea of Sample 13	256
26	TLS Pattern for Main Idea of Sample 14	258
27	TLS Pattern for Main Idea of Sample 15	261
28	TLS Pattern for Main Idea of Sample 16	264



LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Meaning
BBI 241 I	English for Reading and Discussion Skills
CPS	Creative Problem Solving
ESL	English as a Second Language
L2	Second Language
MUET	Malaysian University English Examination
TLS	Top-Level Structure
TTCT	Torrance Test of Creative Thinking
WL	Whole Language



CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Preamble

Writing, like reading, is a language skill that has to be learned. Unlike listening and speaking which are natural processes of child development, writing as well as reading need the conscious mastery of linguistic skills. A learner begins by recognizing the sounds represented by the alphabet at pre-school level and progresses through school and college where the learner will learn the skills of using language in interpretation and representation of a multitude of discourse in various genres in communication. To be adept at skills in writing, one also has to be equally adept at skills in reading as well (Torrance, 2004). The reason for this is that reading comes before, during and after the writing process. One cannot produce a text without reading it as writing progresses. As such, the skills required in writing will also incorporate the skills of reading, besides the physical process of putting pen to paper or fingers to keyboard. All these skills require a certain amount of instruction (Hinkle, 2004).

Students receive formal instruction in reading and writing at the introductory level from kindergarten, and gradually progress through primary school level to more complex levels at secondary school and tertiary institution. However, academic investigation in writing revealed writing problems among undergraduates in higher education. Students are found to have a poor command of English, thereby, pointing to the need in improving essay writing skills, spelling and syntax (Lamb, 1994; Hinkle, 2004). This shortcoming cannot be left unchecked, for students would need to write in their work life. Therefore, they need good models of what is wanted in an



essay and intervention on how an essay is written. However, this does not mean that students merely copy texts that their lecturers have given them and turn them in as assignments. If this is done, then, there will not be any growth in knowledge and ideas amongst them. Students must take ownership of their work. They must have the opportunity and the technical know-how to write text creatively and efficiently. They must have the opportunity to develop their own essay topics with new ideas from exploring and understanding the course content they learn. On the other hand, it should be noted that the best professional and academic essays are driven by an array of ideas thoroughly supported by facts, expert information and critical analysis (Hinkle, 2004). All these are made possible by making the correct choice of words relating to the use of correct rhetorical structures.

Research in the interactive process of reading and writing confirmed that, students make use of rhetorical structure in a similar way in both reading and writing (Meyer, 1982; Langer, 1986). The rhetorical structure referred to here is the top-level structure (TLS). TLS binds the thesis idea in expository text of which narrative text such as story and critical text such as response are included. An understanding of the TLS will make understanding and presenting text clearer, thereby carrying the meaning of ideas faster and more effectively. This knowledge of TLS is especially useful to ESL students who may have little experience in reading or writing expository text in English. They can use this TLS construct as a strategy to help them understand relationships among ideas in text as they progress to read or create text with increasing sophistication parallel to their second language competence (Murphy, 1993).

When students reach tertiary level, more writing activities will be required of them. However, writing is closely linked with creativity (Lin, 1998). Therefore, the process of writing is the primary means of fostering creativity in students. Axiomatically, the effective means of teaching writing skills would be the stimulating of creativity and idea generation (Wai, Tse & Tsang, 2003). This view concurs with that of Hayes and Flower (1980) who view the relationship of writing and creativity at multi-levels, among which the writer's memory is of particular importance in idea generation. It is said that the process of writing includes planning, translating and reviewing. When a writer prepares to write; idea generation, organization and goal-setting take place. Language corresponding to the ideas generated and goals set are matched at the translating process. It is the function of idea generation to retrieve information items from memory that are relevant to the writing task. In this framework, creativity reflects the quality of the factors that enable the retrieval of items from memory for idea generation. (Wai, Tse & Tsang, 2003). The better the ability to retrieve ideas from memory, the more ideas will be generated. Thus, the more creative will be the writing. If students have organized their reading information according to the TLS structures, it would be better remembered (Murphy, 1993), therefore, it would be easier for the students to retrieve these information from memory for idea generation (Torrance, M.; Thomas, G. V. & Robinson, E. J., 2000; Galbraith, D. & Torrance, M., 2004).

It can be said that an understanding and the ability to use rhetorical structures such as the TLS would enhance students' writing skill. A text written with well-supported

