

Chapter 2

Literature Review

This chapter will throw light on pertinent literature and discuss related studies. The literature review has been divided into processes, problems encountered when learning and developing the macro skills with a focus on listening in a second language, focus on reading before writing, theories, advantages of collaboration, and using visual aids on developing listening, importance of developing the schema of the learner in a second language community, advantages of visual imagery on improving writing skill, the benefits of mind mapping in helping the second language learner make meaning, importance and need for the use of authentic reading and listening media in a foreign language community, the advantages of collaborative and cooperative learning and classroom interaction, the necessity for recognition and effective use of discourse markers, details regarding the research method namely the quasi-experimental design along with its concepts for data collection and analysis such as paired samples t-test, in addition to the benefits of understanding and incorporating the Thai culture and learning strategies as the study involves subjects from this region, finally pertinent related studies will also be discussed.

2.1 The process of Listening



Figure 2 (Chapter3) Listening Effectively by Dr. John Kline

According to Wolvin (2010), the elements of listening have been organized into the following four elements

- a. The Physiology of Listening
- b. The Psychology of Listening
- c. The Sociology of Listening
- d. The Communication of Listening

He discusses the findings of Newby & Popelka, (1992) that the Physiology of Listening involves the delicate hearing mechanism involving the middle ear, setting into vibration the tympanic membrane and conducting these vibrations through the inner ear to the brain. The listener also sometimes receives varied visual stimuli such as facial expressions, gestures, etc. The physiology of listening also extends to the neurology of the process. In other words the auditory and/or visual receptors pass the message stimulus received to be recorded in the brain. He concludes that listening is a complex physiological process involving human receptors, which are influenced by the human sensory capacity and states that the neurobiology and psychobiology of the listener occupy the crux of their ability to function as a listening communicator.

Support for the above claims lie in the actual identification of the receptors by medical surgeons, doctors, and researchers Broca in the 1860s and Wernicke in the 1870s respectively. Identifying these areas and recognizing the defects due to inefficiency to perform adequately, has helped linguists identify several problems in speech such as tips and slips of the tongue, slips of the ear, etc. The branch of neurolinguistics helps to connect the relation between the physical characteristics, and function of the brain to how language is actually perceived and produced.

Returning to the findings and discussions by Wolvin, on the second element of listening; the Psychology of listening, he states that the messages that have now been received need to be attended to by the short-term memory system. Furthermore the attention span here is found to be quite limited. One of the relevant aspects to the driving of the present research lies in the fact, as stated by Wolvin, (p. 12) that the message received through the process of listening is affected not only by the listener's working memory but also the listener's perceptual filter. The background information, experience, roles etc., shape the listener's expectations of the message that is heard. In other words the stronger the schema on a particular topic the greater could be the ability to comprehend and communicate and perhaps on the flip side to miscomprehend. He also states the work of Mulanax and Powers that as the listener creates meaning the degree of congruence between the listener and the source of the audible information becomes more accurate.

The third element to consider is the Sociology of Listening. Although Wolvin, concludes that the act of responding to the information heard is limited to the receiving and decoding of information, others like Perry show that it is a separate function. Perry has stated that the reconstruction of memory along with the triggering of schema before providing a response indicates a strong process of feedback, which is separate from the three stages of listening. Wolvin claims that, the sociology of listening extends beyond just relationships and enters into the culture of a listening community as a whole. He also asserts that the ability to listen centers on clarity, conciseness, and color of the communicator's language.

The fourth element that Wolvin considers is the Communication of Listening, and reveals that effective listening and listenable speaking come together towards the end and form what he refers to as the communication perspective of listening behavior. He has pointed out the characteristics of a truly engaged listener as stated by Floyd (1985) namely

1. genuineness
2. accurate empathic understanding
3. unconditional positive regard
4. presentness
5. spirit of mutual equality
6. supportive psychological climate

The important point shared here is that the listener is considered the true communicator and the outcome of the communication depends on the listener. Hence if second language learners are not provided with adequate exposure to effective and authentic listening material there is a definite possibility for breakdown in communication, which could in turn, be revealed in poor speaking and writing skills.

2.2 Potential Problems due to ineffective listening

Underwood (1989) draws our attention to the potential problems affecting the process of listening in English. For instance she highlights the lack of control over the speed with which the speaker is conveying the message, inability to request repetition of what has been said, the listener's limited vocabulary, failure to recognize 'signals' both verbal and nonverbal, problems in interpretation of the message, a weak ability for concentration, and one that concerns the pedagogical society, the learning habits that are inborn as well as inculcated in a classroom.

Furthermore the actual physical characteristics and limitations called 'aphasia', which refers to language disorders caused by diseases in the brain (Caplan, 1987), identified by neurolinguists and other medical scientists are contributing to a wealth of information for language teaching and learning. According to the National Institutes of Health, National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders, research is attempting to understand the parts of the language process that contribute to sentence comprehension and production and how these parts may break down in aphasia.

Out of the aspects stated above the one that has bearing on the present research is that of recognition and interpretation of verbal and nonverbal signals when attending, for instance classroom seminars, lectures, discussions, or watching or listening to audio/video recordings.

Underwood, (1989) and Rost (1991) share several examples of exercises and activities that clearly indicate the relation between listening and writing skills in routine tasks. Underwood also stresses the importance of pre-listening, while-listening and post-listening activities and the strategies associated with the three. In each of the three phases she has mentioned the need for using not only the reading and speaking processes, but also the writing process. This view is supported by Henning (1973) and mentioned by Richards (1985) that selective listening would be beneficial in building on the spellings of words and deciphering between words that sound the same,

Underwood (1989, p.78) also indicates the need to make post-listening activities intrinsically motivating and suggests problem-solving and decision-making activities as popular and also offers examples of oral/aural activities. In my opinion motivating listening tasks can also be a pre-cursor to effective problem-solving tasks. Support on the aspects of problem-solving tasks as well as intrinsically motivating tasks, can be garnered from the brief by Mathew-Aydinli (2007), and the research article by Bernardo (2010).

Underwood specifies that orally summarizing a story before actually writing the summary is likely to be more beneficial offering further support to the conducting of the present research (1989, p. 79) where collaborative activities between participants within the group have been designed in the lessons to offer this much needed platform. Ur (1984, p.148) also supports such an activity, but emphasizes the need to clearly describe the problem so that the learners can comprehend and provide the necessary solutions.

2.3 Strengthening input through authentic reading before media & writing

Langer & Flihan (2000) have discussed the history on when focus regarding the relationship and subsequent effects of reading on writing took place. They mentioned that the 1980's marked the beginning of research into the effects and relationship between reading skills and writing skills as well as whether or not it involved cognitive or social processes.

In another longitudinal and in depth correlational study by Stotsky (1983, p. 636) showed that the benefits of reading on writing and viz. versa were equivalent. They stated that those writers who were considered as possessing the skill were better readers not only of their own writing, but also that written by others. Furthermore those deemed as better writers read more than the poorer ones. In addition, from another angle, better readers were more likely to produce writing that was syntactically mature than those produced by poorer readers.

That reading and writing were determined as skills that assist in meaning-making activities was studied and discussed by Anderson, Spiro & Montague (1977) and Gregg & Steinberg (1980). In a related study Purves (1993) observed that readers sometimes try to connect with the writer of the topic they are reading by placing themselves in the shoes of that author. This is considered as an important way for readers to gain personal and cultural perspectives that might not be part of their schema up until that time, in turn providing opportunities for improved interpretation and discussion while writing.

Another importance of providing localized or familiar reading topics and subsequent effect on positively encouraging development of writing performance and a better attitude toward learning was studied by Hanson (1991) and Rubin & Hansen (1996). In addition Tierney et al. (1989) researched the effects of reading and writing on thinking, and also the way varied writing topics affect the process and way of thinking and learning. This important research claims that combining reading and writing has an improved chance of developing critical thinking skills when compared with

assigning tasks that require only one of these skills for e.g. reading to answer given comprehension questions.

Apart from the already familiar studies on the importance between reading and writing, which was employed in this research via the use of authentic reading texts it is of additional relevance for the technique utilized in this study to gather pertinent information on the importance, and necessity of the effects of reading on listening and viz versa, which was mentioned by Underwood (1989, p. 16). She reiterated that in order to achieve better results the two skills of listening and reading need to be employed, and especially when they are related to writing tasks. She further discusses that the learner feels more confident and reassured when they can retrieve information from the reading text as they are able to review it again, and take better note of cohesive devices, the writing format, style used, vocabulary, syntax and overall content that they may need to discuss in a given writing assignment. It is imperative to add here that the present research study incorporated the reading as the first activity followed by the media on a related topic to achieve the aims of all previous research studies discussed in this subsection.

2.4 Importance of enhancing the schema with familiar content

Carrell and Eisterhold (1983, p. 80) have identified that, "one of the most obvious reasons why a particular content schema may fail to exist for a reader is that the schema is culturally specific and is not part of a particular reader's cultural background." This is a problem faced by most second language learners especially when it comes to the comprehension of what has been written in the assigned texts or while listening and/or watching a video. Carrell and others have suggested several pre-reading tasks for building the schemata of the learners. Although schema theory has helped to increase and improve reading skills it has failed to actually assist in the comprehension of textual matter that has weighted inference on topics that are unfamiliar to the reader.

This research builds on the idea of postmethod pedagogy introduced by Kumaravadeļu (2006), and the principles put forth in the constructivist theory which offers an insight into how locally supplemented material utilizing local themes can be effectively implemented to develop the schema of the L2 learner. Although Kumaravadeļu has suggested this concept in the frame of empowering the local teacher, this concept could also support the development of materials in close proximity with the L2 learner's own background information in order to accentuate and embolden the schemata of that learner in the L2 that they are learning.

Such familiarity even if only subtle can offer great benefits in satisfying the affective filter of the learner as proposed by Krashen (1982), and the overall learning process such as offering a much needed reprieve from anxiety of learning something totally unfamiliar. Thereby motivating the learner not only to continue learning, but ensuring increased attention and interest towards what they are learning including an increased likelihood of retention of the information that they have read or seen for later use. Furthermore the L2 learner would also be in a better position to partake in a real life context as they can connect through words and images from their past and present experiences with the topic, issues and even the people. Support for this is drawn from

the article by Tomlinson (2010) where he discusses the role of the inner voice and its crucial role in the acquisition of the L1, which is not effectively promoted or used in the acquisition of an L2, he states '...though there is evidence that the use of an L2 inner voice, at lower levels, can enhance L2 performance which can be facilitated by teachers and materials.' He continues that there is also considerable literature on the importance of using visual imaging when acquiring the L1. Although there are clear parallels between the use of visual imagery and L2 improvement, it is not utilized or promoted as much in the acquisition of the L2.

2.5 Advantages of using visual aids on reading and writing tasks

Ur, (1984) in chapter 5 discusses the advantages of familiarity to listening on a particular reading text prior to actually reading it. She states that learners are likely to comprehend the written word in the text better if they have already heard it. And as we know that reading offers this advantage to a writer it can be discerned that listening to material connected with the reading could have a positive effect on the writing skills of the learner. Furthermore she points out the advantages of supplying additional visual aids through pictures, diagrams, maps etc. on the ability to listen as it can assist in retaining information better in the long-term memory of the receiver. Once again an indirect and positive correlation can be fathomed on the effect of integrating these resources in not only developing the schema of a second or foreign language learner, but also on improving the recognition and retention of discourse markers that can be used in a future written product.

Apart from discussing several instances where the activities and listening exercises involve writing skills, Ur, also indicates the necessity for note-taking skills, which is of particular need to academic students.

2.6 Relevance of mind-mapping while brainstorming

Developing the skill of mind-mapping has clear advantages and positive consequences for the learner throughout an academic tenure as well as once it becomes habitual, a much needed skill for exemplary performance in any profession. During the phase of academia students are often confronted with the task of taking down notes while a lecture is underway. The notes taken can be 'chicken scratch' and undecipherable even to the writer or it can be organized, coherent and effective. Learners at this level need considerable practice at developing this skill not only when they are taking notes in their first language, but also when doing the same in a second language. Cornell University, one of the renowned universities in North America along with ASC the Academic Skills Center at California Polytechnic State University, California has developed a system referred to as the 'Note Taking System' wherein they have suggested five methods for taking effective notes. One of these is entitled 'The Mapping Method'. Mapping, according to the article by ASC, is a way of relating each fact or idea presented from different sources with other facts or ideas based on comprehension and concentration skills. The clear advantage of using this method for the present study lies in the fact that it increases active participation, provides room for instant knowledge as to understanding the input being given and emphasizes critical thinking, and cognitive development.

Several sites online provide free software for teachers to create mind-maps relevant to their class level from those that are pictographic for instance which can be used to learn topical vocabulary to ones that provide open-ended question formats. In this study the latter was incorporated in order to implicitly strengthen the Wh- question use and comprehension among the participating students

2.7 The Relevant Theories

The main theories and pedagogical models that have a direct influence on this study are

- a. The Monitor Model
- b. Constructivism
- c. TBLT

The finer aspects of which, relations, and influence on the present research will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

2.7.1 The Monitor Model

Stephen Krashen's (1982) Monitor Model is an example of nativist theories. The model forms a foundation for the Natural Approach, which is a comprehension-based approach to foreign and second language teaching. The model comprises of five hypotheses namely:

- a. The Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis
- b. The Monitor Hypothesis
- c. The Natural Order Hypothesis
- d. The Input Hypothesis
- e. The Affective Filter Hypothesis

Although all five hypotheses proposed by Krashen are in many ways interdependent, the one that has direct bearing on this research study is the input hypothesis. In brief it discusses the need to provide the learner with comprehensible input, which is just a little above their present level of understanding. In other words he formulated $i+1$ and suggests that if the input provided in a language classroom is too difficult for instance $i+4$, etc. the students will not be motivated enough to assimilate the input. On the other hand he also asserts that input that is too easy would also have negative motivating factors, as they would lack challenge. In this study I designed my treatments with comprehensible input that would be a little over the present level of schema of the participating students, in the range of $i+2$ to a maximum of $i+3$ due to the mixed proficiency levels of the target population as determined by the Pre-Test scores.

2.7.2 Constructivism

Lev Vygotsky views learning as a process that requires environmental input and social interaction. Vygotsky's theory is unique because of the notion of scaffolding, or building upon a foundation, through a process of constructivism which takes place at a developmentally appropriate and prime learning zone, and where teachers and peers act as motivators to reach the next higher level of capacity and potential. The present

research emulated this unique principle in the design of the PBL activities and the overall integration of the chosen authentic media and reading. For instance by including a creative PBL task such as working in small groups to first gather as much information from all sources that is the authentic reading text, followed by their own listening notes, then accumulating further information through interaction with their peers and through active consultation and discussion coming up with effective and realistically feasible solutions to a given problem, the subjects in this study enhanced and broadened the circle entitled 'What I can do with help' and narrowed the circle 'What I can't do' as indicated in Figure 1.

Constructivism places importance on discourse and interaction as the channels for learning (Feden and Voguel, 2003) Vygotsky; however, shifts slightly from the social perspective of the theory and focuses on language as the key to the cognitive aspect of learning (Vygotsky, 1978).

2.7.2.1 Zone of Proximal Development

Vygotsky theorized that all human beings possess a "zone of proximal development, or ZPD". This concept can be paraphrased as a measure of the potential of an individual at a certain human developmental stage versus the potential the individual could develop with added input and guidance from a mentoring environment. The notion of a ZPD presupposes that such human potential is unlimited and the capacity is expandable depending on the quality of input received from the immediate support systems, for instance, peers (Vygotsky, 1978). Concisely, Vygotsky's theory directly implicates sociology as an essential part of cognitive development and the conduit that connects the individual with its environment is language (Vygotsky, 1978).

As gathered from the above explanation the essence of the forthcoming research involves the bridging of the gap using the agents of creative, authentic and comprehensible language resources along with sound support systems that not only include the teacher or facilitator, but more importantly a much necessary peer support in collaboration when solving the PBL activity to get the learner from the stage of what they know or can do to what they need to know or should do as evidenced in Figure 1 of this thesis manuscript.

2.7.3 TBLT- Task Based Language Teaching

Task based activities that reflect or simulate a real-life situation, as well as creative extension-activities, seem to be essential to linguistic development (Ballman, 1997: Shrum & Glisan 2000). When students succeed in tying information that has been acquired and understood to real-life contexts, the use of authentic classroom material and instruction is realized.

In TBLT the most important part lies in the design and implementation of the task. So what is a task?

According to Ellis (2003) it is a work-plan that requires learners to process language pragmatically in order to achieve an outcome that can be evaluated in terms of whether the correct or appropriately proportional content has been conveyed.

The tasks for this study were designed on similar lines as those stated above. In addition they held an element of creativity on the lines of solving problems with an Asian reference, more importantly revolving around Thailand and its neighbors as well as those, which could be some part of the present experience of the students in the study. The reason for upholding the cultural perspectives was done in order to help the learners to effectively increase critical cognitive skills through familiar concepts and ultimately lead them to the enhancing of academic writing skills.

2.7.3.1 Problem Based Learning (PBL)

According to Aydinli (2007) problem-based learning purposefully combines cognitive and metacognitive teaching and learning, and engages language students in learning how to learn while they also learn language and content.

Based on the core concept of PBL this research study employed tasks created in a more cognitively challenging form that requires the solving of a problem. The Problem Based Learning approach is a derivative of TBLT, which strengthens critical and higher order thinking skills of the learners. Another advantage is that it enables the learners to critically find solutions to problems that affect the present day world that they live in. The creative problem based learning activities, which have been integrated with authentic reading and media in this study follow this principle with the intent to providing the learner with all the necessary tools to use the input gained from available resources toward an enhanced academic writing performance.

Inclusion of PBL activities in a writing curriculum could have far reaching positive effects in the development of not only the writing skill, but also strengthen all other skills which enable the student to function effectively in the classroom as a student and a skilled and capable professional in the future. For instance in this study by integrating the necessity for the students to procure information from all given and available sources namely the authentic reading text, the authentic media, peers during mind-mapping, and discussion for clarification of the given problem question offered a better platform for the subjects in this study to increase their overall cognitive skills and lead to improved recognition of keywords while reading, improved note-taking skills while listening, enhanced organizational skills while mapping and improved interactional skills with group members while trying to solve the given problem before culminating in an effective and enhanced individual written product.

As Tulviste & Wertsch (1992), gaining from the principles and reflections of Vygotsky in relation to contemporary developmental psychology in children noted that it is important to expose the learner to varieties of activities and settings, as this enables the learner to master a heterogeneous set of mediational means such as the use of authentic reading and media to develop a heterogeneous set of mental processes. Furthermore they posited that the key to the development of a child's mental processing of information, and growth is dependent on the activities or tasks that they need to function in. In other words the learner needs to be exposed to real life events

to empower their overall development and acquisition of a second language. This recommendation was taken up and utilized in the task designs for this study.

2.8 The benefits of using authentic material

Building on what was discussed in the previous section, Hill & Tomlinson (2003) discuss the importance of providing varied and effective material to learners especially those that provide much needed input for improving and integrating information from real life contexts both in the choice of reading texts and listening texts. Furthermore they have stressed the need for developing material that would provide genuine sources of input, which would have positive outcomes for the learner in terms of acquiring the language and retaining it. They have mentioned that most coursebooks in use in foreign and second language classrooms offer scripted dialogues or monologues, which usually have very little relevance to a learner, as they do not sufficiently expose them to real situations. Keeping this lack of provision and the needs of the learners to feel not only connected to the information they read or listen, but also understand the relevance in terms of their own lives, this study selected authentic reading and complementary authentic media for its treatments.

Advantages of relevant input have been discussed extensively by Hill & Tomlinson especially in the context of materials development. While Rost (1991) suggests teachers to play a conscious role in providing students with channels for exposure to varied and real life listening contexts. Furthermore Sheerin (1989) has also suggested the use of Self Access centers for the provision of additional options for introducing the learner to varied listening contexts in order to improve their listening skills. If it is implied explicitly that our second language learners are in grave need of improving their listening skills then it becomes necessary to further understand what effects can listening to authentic media have on their overall proficiency.

Providing a framework, and authentic input in this study (where a disciplined sequence of material via the selected reading texts and complementary media), lay the foundation for understanding the effects on the students' performance and enhancements of language skills, especially the effects of using authentic material on their academic writing performance, as well as gaining further information on learners preference toward the kind of material they felt was most useful for them.

2.9 Advantages of using a collaborative model

As noted by Tulviste & Wetsch (1992) collaborative activities used in the developmental process for gaining and improving a child's knowledge are numerous, especially when they incorporate the construction of unique solutions to demanding questions. Furthermore they explain that through this joint engagement and the activities designed, participants who are in collaboration are able to share responsibilities and feel less pressure when it comes to depending entirely on their own past experiences to find solutions to the given problems. Instead they can cooperate and collaborate in order to learn from each other.

Nunan (1992) has listed several benefits to the learners in using collaborative learning

some of which pertinent to the current study are

- a. It encourages learners to learn about the processes involved in learning as a whole thereby providing a much-needed platform for the students to learn better.
- b. It encourages self-awareness and consciousness about the language being learned, thereby increasing better approaches to thinking and effective application while learning.
- c. It encourages problem solving and coming to an agreement on the solutions not only within the classroom, but also in social, procedural, linguistic and content terms.
- d. It establishes the need for the learner to recognize that decision-making activities are genuine forms of communication.

The activities designed for this study paid close attention to the concepts of collaboration and ultimately in the production of an academically acceptable written product using both implicit and explicit factors, through materials design, choice of media and reading, instructions, tasks, and etc.

2.10 The use of facilitators and a systematic approach in writing

It is never too early to offer second language learners especially those from EAP disciplines training in how to use a systematic approach to writing. Ultimately every academician has to produce either an Undergraduate written thesis or if the student is more academically driven a Postgraduate thesis and ultimately a Doctoral Dissertation. One of the keys for a successful outcome lies in the approach applied by the writer. Moreover a systematic approach enables for a more disciplined performance, which can be a skill most beneficial to the learner, if developed. The use of well-defined instructions and familiarizing the learner to the same, over a period of time, is one way of taking them closer to acquiring a good handle over this skill. As discussed in this chapter the process of scaffolding is applied in the teaching and learning of writing. In addition as noted by Coffin, Curry, Goodman, Hewings, Lillis M. & Swann (2003) one of the chief details in using the system of scaffolding and in other words a systematic and graded process in writing is to assist the students in raising their awareness levels while in the long run creating deep-rooted and established conventions in their overall linguistic and rhetorical abilities.

Regarding the importance of discourse markers and cohesive devices, Richards (1985) also discusses that cohesive devices shared between speech and written discourse lead to marking grammatical ties. He also points out the difference in the actual use of discourse markers between spoken and written discourse and the relevance of identification through curricular design in the learning and teaching of a second language. Furthermore he discusses the micro-skills related to academic listening which includes identifying discourse markers in lectures, recognition of other signals such as conversational gambits, etc., and the familiarity with different registers such as written versus colloquial. His findings and discussions appear to have influenced the research conducted by Zhang (2012) & Smit (2006). In this study some lessons focused on the use of selected discourse markers in order to bring cohesion and coherence to the fore. In addition it was one of the key requirements of

the rubrics employed for evaluating the students' writing performance throughout this study.

2.11 The quasi-experimental research method

According to Brown, D & Rodgers (2002) any research is conducted in order to explore while experiencing, observing, and recording events in order to understand their significance. Before anything useful can be ascertained from this experience it is important to collect and compile data in order to be able to analyze and report the findings.

There are many research designs and different scholars address them with slightly varied terms; however, for the purpose of this study the suggestions and recommendations put forth by Nunan & Bailey (2009) have been adopted. The main research method for this study is the experimental method, which is considered as a 'pure' research method by Grotjahn (1987) retrieved from Nunan & Bailey who further discuss Grotjahn's reference to this type of research as a paradigm involving three relevant steps, namely

- a. Experimental design
- b. Quantitative data
- c. Statistical analysis

However, the class of experimental or scientific research undertaken in the present study is more aptly called the quasi-experimental design as it offers a possibility for making comparisons on the dependent variable, in this study was the student's academic writing performance, and due to lack of a randomly sampled and randomly selected control group.

The quasi-experimental design incorporated a One-group Pre-test Post-test design as well as the Time Series Design in order to procure reliable and valid data to illustrate the effectiveness of the treatments rendered in the study and also strengthen the method of research conducted. The group in this study was an intact group selected through the process of purposive sampling i.e. they not only served as the control group prior to rendering of the treatment, but took on the role of the experimental group during and following the treatments administered.

The data collected required analysis using descriptive statistics wherein two of the chief concepts namely the mean and standard deviation are computed. Furthermore in order to ascertain the reliability of the data collected, frequency polygons in the shape of a bell curve, referred to as the normal distribution curve, was plotted. The normal distribution curve serves the purpose of providing three descriptive statistics called the measures of central tendency, namely the mean, median and mode and along with the range, standard deviation and variance they form the measures of dispersion. According to Brown, D (1988) the measures of dispersion provide the researcher with relevant information ranging from what percentage of students scored a certain score range to providing information on a particular student's position within that normal distribution, most importantly it can provide valuable clues to the researcher on what went wrong if the data deviated from the normal distribution.

The data analysis in research designs employing small numbers of subjects taking a Pre- and Post-Test, generally 20 or less, incorporate test analysis of the data collected. As noted by Nunan & Bailey (2009) that although it is chiefly used in the comparison between two separate groups of subjects, it can be adapted slightly in order to analyze the mean scores of a single group through the application of a paired samples t-test, which compares the means between two variables in a single group, as in this study, where the aim is to check whether the difference between the Pre- and Post- Test was due to the treatment.

2.12 Keeping the Thai target academicians in mind

Prakongchati & Intaraprasert (2007) examined the learning strategies of Thai academic students and based on this developed a questionnaire to assist future researchers to garner information on learner preferences, which could in turn assist in the planning and implementing of tasks in the classroom, and out of it. The results obtained revealed four main categories of language learning strategies along with several sub strategies under each of the four main categories, which were then coded as follows:

P for Preparing Oneself for Classroom Lessons;
U for Understanding while Studying in Class;
I for Improving One's Language Skills; and
E for Expanding One's General Knowledge of English

In other words the findings confirm and emphasize the fact that no single learning strategy categorization can be applicable universally and teachers and researchers need to keep this in mind when planning and implementing tasks to achieve a particular purpose.

Another important aspect that is being explored with conviction is that of relations between the identity of the learner and the acquisition of an L2. The branch of sociolinguistics is deeply focused on understanding how language molds and is molded by the learner's identity. McCool (2009, p. 6) discussing identity states '...everyone is faced with developing a sense of self, a process that begins in adolescence'. If this is undisputed it only makes good sense to use materials and techniques within an L2 classroom that would satisfy the pride of the learner and build on his or her established identity. It can be visualized as another bridge that narrows the gap in the ZPD model. This research attempted to satisfy this need through the implementation of materials, both written and visual, as well as in the design of the instructions including the while and post activities. Each lesson served as the bridge between the Thai L2 learner and the improved acquisition of the L2 they are learning.

Further substantiated in an interview with Kumaravadivellu .B. (2011) at the 19th KOTESOL conference wherein to a question posed by the interviewer on the importance of cultural context and globalization in the classroom, he replied "...the contemporary life is such that we cannot escape the impact of cultural

globalization...we need to make English Language Teaching much more relevant to our students.'

2.13 Related studies

In a related study mentioned in the book by Nunan (1992, p. 76) a French teacher using the process of shared understanding through phases in her classroom provided greater control to the students in the overall learning process. Moreover support for the collaborative tasks used in the present research study apart from theoretical implications while writing in collaboration, can be garnered from the reference on how the participating writers in the French class used a number of social and interactional rules; such as agreeing on a common goal; contributing various levels of information from their own experiences and knowledge on the subject; interacting as a group for the benefit of all involved while still focusing on their own improvement in the learning process.

Another recent study by Bozorgian (2012) supports the fact that listening has a strong, yet equal bearing on speaking and writing skills. His study was conducted on a massive scale i.e. on 1800 participants taking the IELTS exam in Tehran. This study further indicated that approaching writing especially academic writing in a systematic way using facilitators that require listening can have positive outcomes on writing abilities of the learners.

Kaun (2009) implemented the principles of the neo-Vygotskian theories (another term used for the theories of Constructivism as proposed by Vygotsky in contemporary developmental psychology) of scaffolding through the use of speech recognition software to develop academic essay writing. The outcomes of the study were positive in that there was a significant difference in the written product through the implementing of a systematic approach. Using speech recognition software required the student to first listen carefully before they were asked to paraphrase what they heard.

The other relevant study that supports the need for a systematic approach in writing is by Dujsik (2008) and Ellis & Yuan (2004). Dujsik used computers on the experimental group for pre-writing tasks, and evaluated the outcomes on the written product and compared these outcomes against those of the control group. In the other study Ellis & Yuan examined the effects of three types of planning, namely: no-planning, pre-task planning, and unpressured on-line planning, on the written narratives of the participants in the study. A medium of pictures was used to deliver content, trigger schema, and enhance critical thinking. The results revealed that pre-task planning resulted in the greatest fluency and greater syntactic variety, while the unpressured on-line planning approach assisted greater fluency. One of the roles that the integrated technique in this research fulfilled is by providing students with a pre-task planning stage in the use of mind-maps, and a collaborative problem based learning stage in order to find an effective and collective solution through interaction and integration of input from the reading texts, media and the knowledge and experience of all members within the group.

2.14 Summary of the Chapter

In this chapter the relevant literature related to the research topic for this study has been discussed. Both the physical or physiological aspects of listening, and its effects pedagogically on other macro skills especially writing have been introduced. The literature review has attempted to cover the theories related to the listening process as well as the relevant stages that make up for effective listening, and focused on the development of this skill. In addition the previously determined importance and relevance of effective reading skills on writing performance has been touched upon. Furthermore the relevant second language theories and methods that form the backbone of the present research design and treatment techniques have been portrayed. In addition further support through references to previous empirical studies and its outcomes on writing especially in the academic setting have been covered.

A brief relating to the need for implementing a problem based learning approach has been conveyed. In addition the importance of recognizing signals and discourse markers have also been discussed. Furthermore the readers have also been enlightened on the relevance of building on the schema and focusing on local themes, and issues to not only build on their existing knowledge, but also satisfy the affective filter of the learners and uphold the L2 learners pride, and identity in the concept of 'self' and its role in the acquisition of an L2. Building on this the cultural and essentially the relevance of the Thai academic context concerning learning strategies employed in the academic setting as discussed through a specific study in sub-section 2.12 offers a pertinent focus on the subject group in this study. Finally relevant and pertinent studies relating to the present research have been touched upon.

Chapter 3, which follows describes the research method employed and provides detailed descriptions of the instruments used in the study. Furthermore it describes the steps undertaken to assure validity and reliability of the instruments. In addition it will cover the data analysis procedures undertaken including the types of grading system used for evaluating the proficiency level in academic writing of the students in the study.