CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology of this study was conducted to meet the purposes of the research. The first purpose was to compare the number of errors in the areas of grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling before and after training in the use of an editing checklist process. The second purpose was to explore the relationship between initial student writing ability and the ability to use the editing checklists. The final purpose was to investigate the students' reaction to using the editing checklist. This chapter therefore describes the following:

3.1 Subjects

3.2 Research Instruments

3.3 Data collection

3.4 Data analysis

3.1 Subjects

The 33 ninth grade students were trained in the use of an editing checklist process with seven-day lesson plans. Only the writing of 20 students were analyzed because the author was concerned with the problems of unforeseen circumstances such as absentee students during the research time. In addition, as this was writing test, it was important that the data was of quality, rather than that quantity be emphasized. So it was judged that work from twenty students was sufficient for the purposes of the study.

The students studied Fundamental English 3 (E 015), room 1, in the first semester of 2004 academic year of school in Amphoe Muang, Chiang Mai. The author taught in this school for five years so she understood the student's learning style, background of the students and school management. She left the school in April 2004 and went back to do the research in September 2004. Students were still familiar with her, however, she had never taught this group of students before, this was the first time to teach them.

This school is under the authority of the Chiang Mai City Municipality under the Chiang Mai Mayor. The school provides compulsory education according to the Education Act 1999 (kindergarten to ninth grade level) for students who live in the

community or others such as the tribal students from various parts of the north of Thailand. There are approximately 800 students, one school director, two vice-directors and 33 teachers. Students study 7 hours a day: Thai, mathematics, science, social science, English, physical education, Buddhism, computing, music and classical Thai dance. Class begins from 8.30 a.m. to 15.30 p.m. from Monday to Friday.

The school was chosen by the National Education Office as a pilot school on education reform in the areas of education quality assurance and compulsory school syllabus in the year 2001-2002.

3.2 Research instruments

3.2.1 Seven-day lesson plans

The seven–day lesson plans were designed to meet the requirement of Thai ninth grade syllabus (See Appendix C). The research timetable was as follows:

Table 1: Lesson plans implementation (seven days)

Day	Activities	Time 1 hr/period
Day 1	**Review**: Writing process (Jigsaw activity) • Planning • Drafting • Revising • Editing English writing ➢ paragraph writing and short essay	1.5 (Friday)
Day 2	**Data collection**: Pre- instruction • Student wrote an article about *'How to become a good language learner'*. Then they were asked to self-edit their work without training in the use of an editing checklist process. The second draft papers were analyzed by counting errors made in the areas of grammar, punctuation, capitalization and spelling. The second drafts were scored to group students: lower and higher writing ability students.	1.5 (Tuesday)
Day 3	• Introduction to self-editing process • Demonstration of using editing checklist process by providing an example of writing that the researcher made up.	1.5 (Friday) Training in the use of the editing checklists
Day 4	• Students wrote story from pictures given. Then they were handed out the editing checklist to self-edit their work. Researcher observed their improvement.	1.5 (Tuesday) Training in the use of the editing checklists
Day 5	Student wrote article on *'My free time'*. Then they were handed out the editing checklist to self-edit their work. Researcher observed their improvement.	1.5 (Friday) Training in the use of the editing checklists
Day 6	Students wrote article describing their favorite place (s) in Chiang Mai. Then they were handed out the editing checklist to self-edit their work. Researcher observed their improvement.	1.5 (Tuesday) Training in the use of the editing checklists
Day 7	• **Data collection: Post-instruction** Student wrote an article about *'How to become a good language learner'* again. Then they were asked to self-edit their work after they had trained to use the editing checklists for four days. They produced second draft. The second draft papers were assessed by counting errors made in the grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.	1.5 (Tuesday)
Day 8	**Data collection: Questionnaire**	1.5 (Tuesday)

3.3.2 Selecting papers

As only twenty papers were analyzed, the criteria for selection were papers from students who wrote in a way that would enable assessment of the work (for example attempting to write in paragraphs). Secondly, students whose papers were selected should have been trained and participated fully during the research time.

3.2.2 The editing checklist

The editing checklist contained items that represent the appropriate level for the students. The editing checklist was adapted from Fletcher and Portalupi (2001) and Pearson (2001) as they already categorized the skills into three levels as primary, intermediate, and advanced students. There were six items in the editing checklist to cover four areas of errors. The reason for this was to break down the items to provide more detail. For example in the area of grammar, there were two items: (1) Have I written complete sentences?, and (2) Have I used the correct verb tense for my meaning?. This was to assist student more clearly understanding what particular points they should focus on. Without separation of these into two items, the one grammar item would have been too lengthy. In addition, these two items do not refer to the same aspect of grammar and so cannot easily be included

in the same item. In contrast, for spelling, for example, it was felt that one item could cover what was expected of the students (that they should spell words correctly). The editing checklist for this research is shown in figure 9.

Editing Checklist

Assignment: ……….. Topic: ………………………………………………..

Name: ………………………….Class: ……………….Date:……………….

Instruction: Check (✓) off each item as you edit.

☐   Have I used capital letters for the beginning of each sentence, the names of specific people or places?

☐   Have I ended each sentence with a period, comma or other appropriate ending punctuation? (.) (?) or (!)

☐   Have I used an appropriate punctuation for each sentence? (,) (:) (;) or (-)

☐   Have I written complete sentences?

☐   Is each word spelled correctly? Have I underlined incorrect words and found the correct spelling?

☐   Have I used the correct verb tense for my meaning?

Figure 9 The Editing checklist used in this research

To implement the checklist in classroom, the items in the checklist were translated to Thai to ensure that students fully understand the meaning of each category (see Appendix D).

3.3. Data Collection

3.3.1 Topic for research writing

At the beginning students were informed that this was a part of writing research on the use of the editing checklist process. Students were required to write two times – a pre and post test – with the same topic in order to compare papers and to analyze the improvement in their writing in four areas: grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling. However, the classroom procedure would be similar to regular teaching. The author asked for cooperation from them. It was assumed that students would feel that this was like their English class because the author and students had met before. It was believed that students' would feel the researcher was still their 'teacher' because it was only five months since the author left the school. The author believed they were willing to be part of this research.

The topic for writing before and after training in the use of the editing checklist was 'How to become a good language learner'. Before training, students had been taught with integrated skills:

speaking, listening, reading and writing. When they finished their first drafts, they self-edited their drafts without having previously experienced the use of the editing checklists. Their second drafts were produced and used for data collection. These drafts were assessed to group students into 'low' and 'high' writing ability students. After training in the use of the editing checklists with seven-day lesson plans, the same topic was written again, and students edited drafts. The researcher analyzed their papers and compared the mean number of errors counted per one hundred words before and after training.

3.3.2 Scoring criteria

Criterion-based descriptors were used for grouping students. The scoring criteria equally measured the content, organization, grammatical elements, and mechanics. The total score was 18 points, each category being 3 points. The scoring criteria were adopted from the Test in English for Educational Purposes (TEEP) (see Appendix E). There were two graders, an English native speaking teacher and a Thai – English teacher. Student whose score was from 11 or above was considered as 'high writing ability students' and students whose score was lower than 10 was considered as 'low writing ability student'.

3.3.3 Counting errors

Pre- and post-test writing was assessed by counting errors in the four obvious writing aspects: grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling. Each category was defined as follows:

Grammar This refers to (1) writing in complete sentences. A sentence basically is made of two parts: a subject and a predicate, (2) using the correct verb tense including the correct morphological forms.

Punctuation The ability to use periods, commas, colons, semicolons, quotation marks, exclamation marks, and hyphens.

Capitalization The ability to use capital letters in the areas (1) the first word of a sentence, and (2) name of persons or places.

Spelling Spelling words correctly.

The counting of errors can be illustrated with reference to two students' writing samples (appendix B). The higher writing ability student made eight mistakes for the area of grammar, five errors of punctuation, two errors of capitalization, and four misspellings. These can be exemplifying in the following: With 'Study English language at the moment.', the two graders counted this as error of grammar because she did not write a complete sentence. Other elements of

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errors can be illustrated in 'There are many different.up.to anyone ideas. sometimes we think English language very difficult.' The graders counted these as one error of punctuation (the full stop after 'different'), one error of capitalization (the lack of upper case in 'sometimes'), and one error of grammar (the missing verb 'is' in the second sentence). Spelling mistakes could be found such as '…a good language lerner'. In the lower students writing, the first paragraph contains examples of all four categories of error, namely spelling ('people the word'),grammar (used to talking), capitalization (Do you know How…), and punctuation (…How to …study English.).

3.4 Data Analysis

The data analysis was carried out as follows:

3.4.1 The comparison of pre-and post mean number of errors

The pre and post tests mean number of errors counted in the areas of grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling were compared. There were two graders counting errors of student's paper. In order to be able to compare the students' drafts, the following formula was used to correct for the different lengths of student writing.

$$\frac{\text{errors counted}}{\text{number of words students composed}} \times 100$$

The arithmetic mean was calculated to compare the drafts before and after training in the use of the editing checklist. A paired-sample t-test was run to test whether there were differences between the pre-and-test scores.

3.4.2 The relationship between the writing ability and the ability to use the editing checklist

Assessment of students' overall writing ability was scored to group students into higher and lower writing groups. Correlations were used to measure the relationship of overall writing ability and the ability to use the editing checklist. The independent variable was overall writing score and the dependent variable was pre-post differences in grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.

3.4.3 Questionnaire and analysis of the responses

Thirty-three questionnaires were collected to investigate students' reaction toward the use of the editing checklist. The purpose was to understand student reactions toward the use of the editing checklist independent of their performance on their writing papers. This would help the author judge whether the process should be recommended for classroom used in the future.

It was presented in Thai to ensure that failure to understand the instructions or question would not affect the responses (see appendix G). Percentage was used to measure the reaction to the use of the editing checklists. Open-ended questions were also used to reflect their opinion toward the editing checklists.