

An Examination of the Textual Qualities “Agency” and “Power” in EFL Writing

การศึกษาคุณลักษณะงานเขียนด้านตัวตนและพลังในงานเขียนภาษาอังกฤษ ในฐานะภาษาต่างประเทศ

สมศักดิ์ แก้วนุช (Somsak Kaewnuch)

Abstract

The teaching and learning of English as a foreign language (EFL) writing in Thailand is mostly concentrated on the body of the language and on objectivity and reliability. What we teach so little, therefore, is matters about the function of language. “Agency” and “power” are two textual qualities out of many others on this side. While these two qualities are hard to grasp in text, they are highly valued by composition teachers and are the sources of other high-order textual qualities such as being interpretative and analytical. This small-scaled, but insightful study, adopting a qualitative method, attempted to decipher them in Thai students’ writing. The researcher looked for these two qualities in thirty-six paragraphs from thirty-six Thai university students and learners with two different proficiency levels. Using Corbin and Strauss (1998)’s methodology for grounded theory, the researcher categorized words, phrases, ideas, and expressions into the two textual qualities. The results showed that 1) opinions exhibit more agency than the pronoun I, and opinions or reasons, well-formed sentences with details, writer’s strategies, word choice, and argument are crucial in achieving power, 2) writer’s involvement in the topic and opinions or reasons are two features shared by both qualities, and 3) linguistic inability and informative writing hinder the construction of agency and power.

Key words: EFL writing, power, agency, textual quality, function of language

บทคัดย่อ

การเรียนการสอนการเขียนภาษาอังกฤษในฐานะภาษาต่างประเทศนั้นเน้นที่การสอนตัวภาษานั้น รูปธรรมและความเชื่อมั่นในการวัดผล ดังนั้นสิ่งที่น้อยหรือขาดไปคือการให้ความสำคัญด้านหน้าที่ของภาษา สำหรับการศึกษารื่อง ตัวตน (agency) และ พลัง (power) ในการเขียนนั้นเป็นส่วนหนึ่งของความพยายามที่จะข้ามข้อจำกัดดังกล่าว แม้ว่าการศึกษาของสองลักษณะ (ตัวตนและพลัง) นี้ในงานเขียนจะทำได้ยากในงานเขียน ทั้งสองลักษณะนี้ได้รับการตีค่าอย่างสูงโดยนักทฤษฎีทางการเขียน อีกทั้งยังเป็นแหล่งที่มาของคุณลักษณะงานเขียนระดับสูงหลายลักษณะ เช่น การตีความและการวิเคราะห์ งานวิจัยชิ้นนี้เป็นงานวิจัยเชิงคุณภาพแบบ สมบูรณ์ ผู้วิจัยวิเคราะห์คุณลักษณะของพลังและตัวตนในงานเขียนย่อหน้า 36 ชิ้นจากนักศึกษาและผู้เรียนชาวไทย 2 กลุ่มที่มีความสามารถทางภาษาอังกฤษต่างกัน กลุ่มละ 18 ชิ้นโดยวิธีของการสร้างทฤษฎีใหม่ของ คอร์บิโน (Corbin) และสเตราส์ (Strauss) พบว่า 1) การออกคำคิดเห็นช่วยสร้างตัวตนมากกว่าการใช้สรรพนามบุรุษที่ 1 ขณะที่ความคิดหรือเหตุผล ประโยคโครงสร้างดีที่มีรายละเอียด การเลือกใช้คำ และการโต้แย้ง จะทำให้เกิดพลังในการเขียน 2) ความรู้สึกที่ผู้เขียนมีส่วนร่วมในสิ่งที่เขียนและการแสดงความคิดหรือเหตุผลเป็นสองลักษณะที่แสดงทั้งตัวตนและพลังของผู้เขียน และ 3) การขาดทักษะทางภาษาและการเขียนแบบให้ข้อมูลเท่านั้นเป็นอุปสรรคต่อการสร้างตัวตนและพลังในการเขียน

คำสำคัญ: การเขียนภาษาอังกฤษในฐานะภาษาต่างประเทศ พลังในงานเขียน ตัวตนผู้เขียน คุณลักษณะของงานเขียนหน้าที่ของภาษา

Introduction

The teaching and learning of English as a foreign language (EFL) writing in Thailand could be said to be largely influenced by four major approaches: generative grammar, grammar translation method, current-traditional rhetoric, and psychometric assessment. Generative grammar focuses on the syntax, the set of rules governing the combination of words into sentences. Grammar translation is widely used in the country, involving, for example, using the mother tongue to explain the intricacies of grammar, teaching a lot of vocabulary in lists of isolated words, using texts to explain grammar, doing fill-in-the-blank exercises, and translating disconnected sentences from the target language to the mother tongue (Prator & Celce-Murcia, 1973, as cited in Brown, 2007; The grammar translation method). The third method, current-traditional rhetoric, is similar to the first and second in its emphasis on grammar and correctness. However, its other half emphasizes genres of writing. Current-traditional rhetoric champions the five-paragraph theme and distinguishes genres into exposition, description, narration, and argument, treating them as if they could not be combined (Crowley, 1998). The last, psychometric assessment, due to its emphasis on

reliability, tries to objectify writing by reducing the discursive nature of writing to such measurable textual qualities as *ideas, form, flavor, mechanics, and wording* (Broad, 2003).

The education of EFL writing, therefore, lies for the most part on teaching the body of the language and enhancing the ability to organize the text to satisfy sanctioned forms. Such emphases could be said to be appropriate for a number of reasons. One reason is that without the language students cannot express themselves. Therefore, they obviously need to know the language first. Other reasons are, for instance, that the class size is usually too large, that students vary so much in writing skill, that our educational system is product-oriented, that English education is still geared towards examinations, and so on (see Islam and Bari (2012) to understand the EFL context). These emphases and limitations certainly cause us to have little time for teaching the function of language, the second half that we EFL teachers should try to enhance.

It is the second half that is the main goal of our teaching—to help our students communicate realistically and effectively, and we should incorporate it even in the teaching of grammar. Many theorists accuse Chomsky’s transformative grammar of not paying attention to meaning, but Halliday (as cited in Halliday and Matthiessen, 1999) teaches us that grammar is systemically natural and is always based on meaning. For example, we can explain that a phrase after a comma has a function to intensify an emotion, as in “I love you so much, so much that I forget to love myself.” Similar to Halliday’s functional grammar, cognitive linguistics, too, teaches us to be imaginative, interpretative, critical, and analytical in order to work out the meanings and implications conveyed in language. The use of the pronouns “I” and “we,” for instance, can get different results in a particular occasion (see Faigley, 1992; Writing center). Finally, the functional approach to language instruction also extends to the cultural, everyday use of language. In *The Language of Oppression*, for example, Bosmajian (1983) describes how words such as “black parasites” and “blood contamination” could arouse hatred and lead to the massacre of millions of Jews by the Nazis. In *Metaphor We Live By*, Lakoff and Johnson (2003) explain categories of metaphors we daily use, and we can observe the power of words in those categories. For example, words such as *attack, plague,* and *shoot* often convey the emotion of the user, and are, as a result, powerful.

Being aware of the importance of the function of language and the inadequacy of this part in our teaching, the researcher was interested in investigating some qualities serving the function of language in EFL writing, hoping that it would be useful for the development of the field. The demand for teaching language for communication nowadays is constantly increasing in the EFL context. The awareness of such demand should be reflected in the EFL

writing classroom, too, by our incorporation of the teaching of the function of language. As suggested by Bavali and Sadighi (2008) that the traditional disentangled descriptions of language such as those by Chomsky and the descriptions of the functional uses of language such as those by Halliday could be combined and seen as complementing each other, the researcher believes that an integration of our four traditional approaches mentioned above and new ways of teaching and assessing writing geared toward the functional use of language is ultimately useful. Such a manner of teaching would fit newer trends in composition instruction. For example, in the process approach students are given autonomy to make their meet the expected rhetorical situation (Murray, 1997). In the post-process students learn how writing is used in real situations (McComisky, 2000).

This study could be viewed as the very beginning of trying to integrate the two sides because it is investigating only two textual qualities thought to be part of the second half of language teaching. The two textual qualities investigated were agency and power. Here, power basically means the power of language use, and agency refers to the writer's existence felt or perceived by the reader. Both mutually rely on each other. The use of powerful, aggressive, or polite words brings the writer out from silence into light. Reversely, the writer may be perceived as immoral, moral, educated, selfish, and so on, and that leads to a level of power. Agency and power are obviously abstract qualities, and we hardly find a study of such abstract qualities as these in the Thai context. There are many more studies focusing on the concrete, easily measurable qualities, such as the locations of topic and concluding sentences, errors, transitions, and genres of writing. Unfortunately, the qualities on the functional side are abstract, hard to measure. This study attempted to do that difficult task.

Below the article includes the literature review, the research questions and methodology, the findings, the discussion, and teaching implications.

Literature review

The term "agency" is derived from the word "agent," which means the self, so "agency" should mean "the state or existence of the self." Direct definitions of the term are not found, but we can understand agency from some related definitions. Murphy (1997) explains that "[a]lthough subjects are born into pre-existing linguistic systems that place them within symbolic webs, there exists agency. Subjects consist in their ability to 'counteract' forces of race, sex, class, ability, disability, gender, and so on" (p. 44). Trimber (2000) defines agency as "the way people live the history of the contemporary, the way they articulate (in the double sense of the term) their desires, needs, and projects, giving voice to their lived

experience as they join the productive labors to the institutions and social structures they live within” (p. 287). From the explanations by Murphy and Trimbur above, it should be noted that agency largely refers to the ability a person possesses to build relationships with other people.

Some theorists, however, particularly discuss the relationship between agency and society. Certeau (1984) thinks that subjects always have strategies or tactics to live with others. Althusser (as cited in Eagleton, 1991) believes that the subject uses ideology in their lived relations with other subjects. Flannery (1991) describes agents as having responsibilities “to act in the world, to act in such a way as to right social wrongs, to be more responsible citizens and customers and consumers, to operate more effectively and successfully in the workplace” (p. 701). It is from these theorists that we begin to see the power of agents. To explain this simply, if they violate social norms, they can lose power, or if they are useful to others, they obtain power. Some people, too, can use an ideology to manipulate others and to be seen powerful.

Power, therefore, is the quality derived from how an agent behaves. In writing, it is after we perceive how writer acts, or what he or she believes, that we begin to have a feeling about the writer, to feel that the writer is reliable, educated, polite, impolite, aggressive, and so on. It is at this point that we recognize the writer’s power. However, the writer’s image that constitutes power is described with a different term, that is, ethos. The term is commonly known in the name of “source credibility” (McCroskey & Young, 1981). Source credibility, or ethos, was thought by Aristotle to be the potent means of persuasion (ibid.). Thus, a very short description of the three terms agency, ethos, and power is this: agency is the display of self without consideration of the type of power it possesses, ethos is the self’s cultural and ideological interactions with others that create the writer’s characteristics, and power is the force derived from the writer’s characteristics that can influence the reader.

It is clear from the above explanation that the terms agency, power, and ethos are dependent on each other. Broad (2003) conducted a study on what exactly writing teachers value in students’ texts, based on his assumption that it is not psychometric criteria such as *ideas*, *organization*, and *wording* that they really value. He presented one dynamic map in which the constellation of ethos overlaps that of power and agency, meaning that they contribute to each other. The qualities that clearly link the two groups together are *voice*, *personality*, *sophisticated*, *elegant*, and *mature* (p. 39). These words show that the three words are related to subjective judgments of the reader on the writer. The other qualities within the two constellations also show subjective judgments. The textual qualities *distanced*,

sincerity, and *honesty* in the ethos group and *tight*, *show not tell*, and *control* in the agency and power group imply subjective interpretations. It could be said, thus, that how one reader recognizes the three terms in texts is by no means similar to how another reader perceives them.

The assessment of subjective textual qualities such as agency, power, and ethos, as a result, could certainly be deemed unreliable. Some theorists, therefore, have attempted to ease the appraisal of subjective textual qualities, that is, to make it more objective and thus more reliable. By so doing, the objectification of the assessment of agency, power, and ethos weighs more on writing ability. For example, Broad's constellation of agency and power is more about the assessment of the writer's writing ability than of his human qualities. According to the constellation, the writer's agency and power would be felt more vividly if the writing is goal-directed, serious, and concise, moves easily, and shows the writer's linguistic competence. To achieve these, writers can certainly use formalist criteria such as the use of transitional words to link sentences and paragraphs and the starting of each paragraph with a topic sentence.

The assessment of ethos, too, has been objectified. Three key words have been used as guidelines for assessing ethos: credibility, trustworthy, and reliability (Campbell, 1995; James Pette, 2010; Kies, 2012). Credibility can be achieved through voice consistency by stating a conclusion conveys the same message as that in the topic sentence. Trustworthiness is established with the use of references such as web links, pictures, or academic sources, or with the use of examples to support a point. Finally, reliability is manifested through the order of the details in a message. The writer should write a clear topic sentence in order for the readers to know his or her purpose immediately. It should be noted that the assessment of ethos, as the three terms denote, is limited to the assessment of writing ability. It does not cover such abstract qualities as *mature*, *elegant*, and *sophisticated*, as suggested by Broad (2003).

Finally, as for related research, Kaewnuch (2008) found that poor grammar is a major obstacle to expressing agency and power. Other obstacles include informative writing, received knowledge, public opinions, dryness, openness, plainness, poor organization, poor logic, lack of confidence, and inability to analyze the rhetorical situation. It was found that the writer's emotional engagement and seriousness and the readers' share with the writer in culture, experience and difficulty in life contribute to agency and power. Metaphor was a key element of the two textual qualities because it not only helps the reader to perceive the writer's engagement and seriousness in the text but also to share with him the culture and experience

expressed in the text. Other features that contribute to agency and power reported in the same study include the use of “I,” visible symbols such as questions, interjections, and commands, ability to organize texts, in-text skills such the use of references and transitional words, sentence structures, and the writer’s ethos, authority, and subjectivity. For the writer’s power especially, the study suggested trying to be lively, interesting, creative, and imaginative, and to use ideology. Similarly, Kaewnuch (2011)’s study reports that grammar and readability on one side and seriousness, interestingness, word power, and imagination achieved through metaphor on the other side establish ethos and create power.

Research questions

1. What textual features exhibit agency and power in the writing of Thai students and learners?
2. What are qualities shared by agency and power?
3. What textual features stop Thai students and learners from expressing agency and power?

Hypotheses

The level of agency and power in the writing of Thai students and learners is low because they have been taught mostly to become competent in the language, not to use it functionally. It is possible, however, to describe the textual features in their writing that exhibit agency and power or that prevent the construction of them. It is possible, too, to describe the qualities shared by agency and power.

Methodology

The research was a basic research study employing a qualitative method, which largely relies on the interpretation of research data (Mertlers & Charles, 2008). The main strategy of data analysis was selective coding, which is “carried out for the purpose of discovering concepts and relationships in raw data and then organizing these into a theoretical explanatory scheme” (Strauss and Corbin,1998, p. 11). In selective coding, also called “open coding,” words, phrases, and ideas that reflect such abstract concepts as agency, political awareness, and self-denial are categorized and labeled (Goulding, 2002; Merriam, 2002). Kaewnuch (2008), in his dissertation, uses labels such as “SP” (sentence pattern) and “CK1/CK2” (common knowledge level 1 and common knowledge level 2) in the open coding stage. The open coding strategy allows researchers to see the connection of categories and

subcategories within the data. After grouping the categories and subcategories, a theory that can explain the phenomenon emerges.

The research instrument of this study was a form consisting of four columns: agency, power, overlaps, and remarks. The researcher took agency and power as the major categories. The overlaps column was used for the qualities or features thought to be shared by agency and power. Words, phrases, expressions, and textual features, for example, those suggested by Broad (2003), were jotted down in the first three columns. The last column was for remarks about the first three columns. The remarks were used in the discussion of the findings. Using codes such as those used by Kaewnuch (2008), each of which had a definition, was also employed, in case the concepts could not be written into the columns comfortably. The codes were put in the four columns, and the definitions of the codes were written on separate sheets. The codes used in the study were, for example, O for opinions and M for metaphors. “Pitsanulok offers everything a modern city should have” is an opinion. “A casino is a sucking machine” is a metaphor. In addition, while unearthing the paragraphs, the researcher also tried to describe some interesting but hard-to-grasp features or qualities on separate sheets.

Using the form, the researcher read the thirty-six paragraphs, each approximately 10 sentences long, which belonged to two groups of students and learners. The first eighteen paragraphs on reasons why Pitsanulok was good for living belonged to eighteen general students and learners who lived in Pitsanulok and volunteered to write on the topic. These students and learners, eleven females and seven males, were approximately 18-22 years old. They had studied English for approximately twelve to fourteen years. They were, however, much less competent in English because they were not English majors. The last eighteen paragraphs on whether there should be a legal casino in Thailand belonged to eighteen first-year and English-major students, fourteen females and four males and all eighteen years old, from Srinakharinwirot University in 2014. Both topics, in fact, allow for the expression of agency and power, but it is certainly easier to express agency and ethos in the casino topic, which is argumentative by nature. However, the reason for choosing the two competently different groups and the two topics was not really to make a comparison but rather to look at the production of agency and power as a spectrum, from low to high, the body of the language on one side and the function of the language on the other.

Finally, it should be noted that the counting of the frequencies of agency, power, qualities they share, and qualities that prevent them from appearing was by no means accurate. Of course, a reader cannot be always sure whether a word, a phrase, or a sentence expresses agency or power. A context, in addition, can vary a meaning of a word, a phrase, or

a sentence. In this study, the researcher counted only the words, phrases, sentences, and expressions that clearly gave a sense of agency and power.

Findings

The findings are presented in the three tables in the order of the research questions; that is, tables 1, 2, and 3 present answers to research questions 1, 2, and 3 respectively. In the tables, frequencies of instances or signs perceived to convey agency and power are given. Dotted lines divide the two groups, and the Srinakharinwirot group is below. Note that this is not to compare the two groups, but to consider and discuss the two qualities in depth. A comparison would diverge from that aim.

Table 1

Textual features displaying agency and power

Textual features displaying agency	Textual features displaying power
My (1)	Metaphor (1)
I + Be + Adj./ I + verb (4)	Shows writer's involvement with the point or event (5)
Shows writer's involvement with the topic or event (3)	Strong words (1)
.....	I + Be + Adj. (1)
Writer sounds knowledgeable (1)	Transitions and use of same structure in presenting details (1)
Opinion (15)
Yeah! (1)	Reason or opinion (26)
I agree (1)	Strong words (5)
	Long sentences with good details (16)
	Metaphor (3)
	Effective word choice (1)
	Counter opinion (1)
	Persuasion (1)
	Idea that makes reader think (1)
	Counterclaim (1)
	Accusation (1)
	Question (1)
	Elegant use of language (6)

Intensifying adverb (1)
 Interesting idea (1)
 Writer sounds knowledgeable about the
 topic/ writer sounds like adult speaking (2)

The table, based on the frequencies recorded, shows clearly that agency is a quality harder to be perceived than power. The use “I” does not guarantee the feeling that the writer exists. It is when the pronoun comes with a verb or an adjective describing the feeling that agency becomes more perceivable. Opinions and reasons are found in large numbers to show both qualities. Sentences loaded with details rank number two in expressing power, meaning that linguistic ability plays a key role in achieving power. One point to be noted from the findings in table 1 is that written language obtains power mostly because of details, linguistic ability, writer’s strategies, and word choices, rather than because of the perception of who the writer is. Another point worth noting is that students who are more linguistically competent tend to write more powerfully.

Table 2

Qualities or signs shared by agency and power

Qualities or signs shared by agency and power
Shows writer’s involvement with the topic or event (3)
Reason or opinion (12)

Table 2 shows that chances are rare that a reader perceives both agency and power together. One of the reasons might be that readers must have a feel about who the writer is before they are aware of the writer’s existence. In other words, agency is holistically perceived. On the contrary, power is not holistic but scattered. It may be said power fluctuates. At the beginning, the writer may sound powerful, but the power can dwindle at the end. Another fact that table 2 shows is that reasons or opinions do not necessarily display both agency and power. If readers look back at table 1 and compare the number of opinions in the agency column with the number of opinions in the power column and then with the number of opinions in table 2, they will find that most opinions triggering agency convey power. Another half of the opinions found (look at the power column in table 1), however, do not give a sense of agency.

Table 3

Textual features that obstruct displaying agency and power

Textual features that obstruct displaying agency and power
Being informative (77) Example: I live in Pitsanulok. It is quite big and there is a famous temple.
Severe error (7) Example: for make money many up
Run-on sentence (7) Example: It is good province the food is cheap the weather is not hot.
Comma splice (1) Example: I love this province, it has many good things.
Inability in sentence structure/confusing structure/ill-formed structure (41) Example: I work for help mother find money.
Fragment (11) Example: I love this province, it has many good things.
Semantically confusing/ obscure (9) Example: This province's name people call it Pitsanulok.
Discontinuity in content/ poor in movement of sentences/being scattered (2) (The student mentions one thing and moves past it to another point suddenly, and so the reader does not see why he or she mentions it.)
Choppiness (3) Ex: It is a good province. The food is delicious and cheap. The weather is not hot.
Being well-organized but not engaging (1)
.....
Being informative (1) See the example above.
Inability in sentence structure/confusing structure/ill-formed structure (7) See the example above.
Semantically confusing/ obscure (9) See the example above.
Discontinuity in content/ poor in movement of sentences/being scattered (2) Already explained above.
Being linguistically competent but confusing (1) (The student is competent but his/her sentences are obscure or hard to follow due to, for example, lengthiness.)
Cliché (3) Ex: Morality is necessary. All of us must behave morally. (However, while such statements like these sound too common, they sometimes suggest what kind of person the writer is, and so they can empower writing.
Unsupported opinion (1) (The student mentions one thing and moves past it to another point suddenly without explaining it.)

Table 3 shows two important facts. First, it is obvious that linguistic ability plays a vital role in achieving agency and power. Why the first group of students and learners, those living in Phitsanulok, could not write as powerfully as the second group was that they produced many more ill-formed or confusing sentences. We can cross-check this fact by looking back table 1; the second group, due to their higher linguistic ability, exerted more power. Second, genres matter. Argumentative writing exerts power because it contains opinions, either for or against something. If we look back at table 1, we will find that the second group used strategies that were appropriate for argument, and that was why they were considered more powerful. On the other hand, the first group produced mostly informative or expository writing. Informative writing gives information but does not engage readers very well. It is worth noting that the writing of EFL students tends to be informative due to linguistic inability.

Discussion and teaching implications

The above findings show that our traditional teaching that emphasizes grammar and structure (or syntax) already employs power as a major criterion of assessment, although it is not explicitly articulated. For at least one-third of the time we have, we should always teach grammar and structure, of course not in the old chalk-and-talk, or teacher-dominated ways but in ways which allow our students to simultaneously absorb grammar and structure with other skills. That will allow students to learn the language naturally. An example is teaching grammar, syntax, listening, and writing together. The listening is for students to get hold of grammar and syntax either consciously or subconsciously. Grammar exercises may be explicitly taught in short periods of time, using examples from the listening. In addition, the topic of writing can be related to the listening and the grammar and syntax in it in order for them to learn and practice them more.

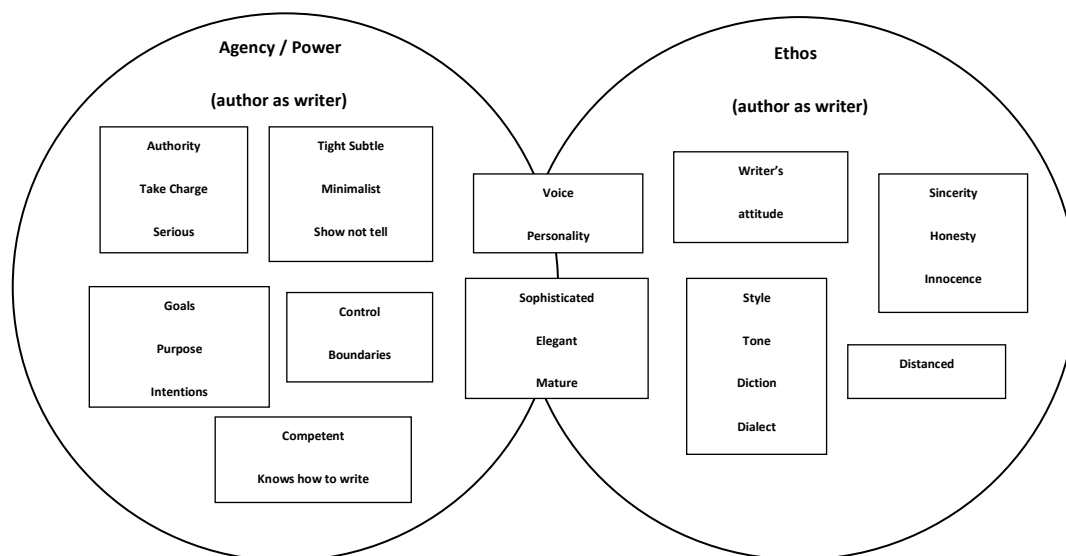
Approximately two-thirds of the time should be spent teaching other highly valued textual qualities, such as voice, ability in word choice, and understanding of the rhetorical situation, all of which are important in performing the function of language and are not highlighted, as evidenced in the use of the four methods mentioned in the introduction section above. As this study shows, abilities required for performing the function of language are usually taught in this country only at higher levels; argumentative writing is taught only at university and mostly to English-major students. As a result of this fact, more instruction of the function of language needs to be added to the general teaching and to the education of English of students of lower levels. Remember that theory on first language acquisition and

also observations tell us that children as young as 3-4 years old can use language as effectively as adults in their daily activities. (See Clark, 2009, about first language acquisition.) Students of a second or foreign language, too, should have plenty chances to absorb the function of language, and its instruction should not be waited till university.

Agency and power are two qualities on the functional side. As shown in all three tables above, most of the features in all tables are related to human interactions, to feelings, to subjective judgments. As they are abstract, subject to interpretation and hard to attain, to help students establish these qualities, they, consequently, need to be explicitly instructed how to accomplish them in their writing. Metaphor, for instance, can taught; we can use Lakoff and Johnson (2003)'s explanations as guidelines. The use of strong words (e.g., spiritual hero), intensifying adverbs (e.g., certainly, strongly), and reasons can be taught and practiced.

Teaching agency and power is certainly a difficult task, a big project, and takes time. The tables show unrelated activities required in the development of these qualities. Metaphor, counterclaims, accusations, and questions can be instructed separately. There are certainly tough for EFL students who linguistic competence is limited. In addition, but as table 3 shows, linguistic ability plays a critical role in attaining these qualities; therefore, we cannot ignore teaching grammar and structure. Table 3 especially shows that up to almost 50 percent agency and power rely on grammar and structure. Thus, teaching agency and power should be a combination of teaching grammar and structure, which is continuous, and teaching features or agency and power, which is random and discontinuous. It, therefore, should be gradual, long-term process, or a behind-the-scene agenda that all EFL writing teachers should keep in mind.

So, where exactly should we go from these findings? Take a careful look at part of Broad (2003)'s dynamic map below, which shows an overlap of the constellation of agency and power and the constellation of ethos. Although the dynamic map covers a few more areas that writing teachers of native students in Broad's research value as good writing, the researcher finds this overlap of agency and power, and ethos sufficient for EFL students to produce good writing. The explanation under the diagram below tries to connect the findings, the current condition of EFL writing, and the ideal project of EFL writing instruction.



(Broad, 2003, p. 39)

As the researcher has expounded in several articles (e.g., Kaewnuch (2014a) and Kaewnuch (2014b)) that EFL writing instruction keeps emphasizing correctness and form, the findings of this study have shown that functional writing does not leave our traditional method. The writing that stresses correctness and form contributes to many features of agency and power. Ill-formed sentences, fragments, comma splices, run-ons, lack of support, errors, chopiness, and confusion in meaning, which tarnish agency and power, as table 3 above shows, can be all improved by the teaching of grammar and structure. Broad's group of agency and power helps highlight such a need in grammar and structure. For example, being tight and serious, achieving a goal, showing a clear boundary, and showing an authority or control require the writer to have a good grammar and sentence structure and to follow the form appropriate for the task. The project of teaching of this side—grammar, structure, and form—should, as said above, be constant, simple at lower levels and complex at higher levels.

The bigger part that this study has shown, however, is the specific features of agency and power that in turn constitutes ethos. The use of metaphor, word choices, accusations, and counterclaims, for example, portray the writer's characteristic and assign power to him or her. However, the findings of this study do not reveal any secure picture, or ethos, of any writer, perhaps because it was not the aims of both writing assignments. None of the thirty-six

writers was found to be a mature, arrogant, sincere, or polite person. Therefore, as the above diagram shows, we cannot stop at just teaching grammar, structure, form, agency, and power; we have to move forward to teaching ethos, the quality that results from the strategies of power and agency, and that in turn contributes to the construction of agency and power.

References

- Bavali, M., & Sadighi, F. (2008). Chomsky's universal grammar and Halliday's systemic functional linguistics: An appraisal and a compromise. *Pan-Pacific Association of Applied Linguistics*, 12(1), 11-28. Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ920998.pdf>
- Campbell, C. P. (1995). *Ethos: Character and ethics in teaching writing*: New York, NY: Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers. Retrieved from http://0ieeexplore.ieee.org.portal.tamuce.edu/xpls/abs_all.jsp?arnumber=406725&tag=1
- Bosmajian, H. A. (1983). *The language of oppression (2nd & subsequent)*. Lanham, Md: University Press of America.
- Broad, B. (2003). *What we really value: Beyond rubrics in teaching and assessing writing*. Logan, UT: Utah State University Press.
- Brown, H.D. (2007). *Teaching by principles: An interactive approach to language pedagogy*. New York, NY: Longman.
- Certeau, M. D. (1984). *The practice of everyday life*. Trans. Steven Rendall. Berkeley, Calif: University of California Press.
- Clark, E.V. (2009). *First language acquisition* (2nd ed.). Calif: Stanford University Press.
- Crowley, S. (1998). *Composition in the university: Historical and polemical essays*. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Eagleton, T. (1991). *Ideology: An introduction*. New York, NY: Verso.
- Faigley, L. (1992). *Fragments of rationality: Postmodernity and the subject of composition*. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Flannery, K. T. (1991). Reviewing composing and the question of agency. *College English*, 53(6), 701-713.
- Generative grammar. Retrieved from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Generative_grammar
- Goulding, C. (2002). *Grounded theory: A practical guide for management, business and market researchers*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Halliday, M., & Matthiessen, C. (1999). *Construing experience through meaning*. London: Cassell

- Islam, M. J., & Bari, I. S. (2012). Implementation of CLT in Bangladesh and Thailand: Problems and challenges. *Outlooks: VUB* 2(1). 1 January, 2012. Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/5753157/Implementation_of_CLT_in_Bangladesh_and_Thailand_Problems_and_Challenges
- James Prette. (2010). *Evaluating the ethos*. Retrieved from <http://www.jamesprette.com/2010/10/evaluating-ethos.html>
- Kaewnuch, S. (2008). *Teaching agency and power as social: Creating transformative subjects in the clashes of modernity and postmodernity in Thai EFL writing classrooms*. Dissertation. Illinois State University.
- _____. (2011). Power and reader-writer relationship: EFL writing assessment. Srinakharinwirot University. Bangkok: Manusat Paritat: *Journal of Humanities*
- _____. (2014a). Conflicts in rubrics, pedagogy, and EFL writing. *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences Uttaradit Rajabhat University* 1(2), 15-30.
- _____. (2014b). The modern subject, the postmodern subject, and the reconstruction of the EFL student writer. *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences Mahasarakham University* 33(6), 386-397.
- Kies, D. (2012). *Ethical appeal: Ethos*. Retrieved from <http://papyr.com/hypertextbooks/compl/ethos.html>
- Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (2003). *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Mertlers, C. A., & Charles, C. M. (2008). *Introduction to Educational Research*. (6th ed.). Boston: Pearson.
- Merriam, S. B. (Ed.) (2002). *Qualitative research in practice: Examples for discussion and analysis*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- McComisky, B. (2000). *Teaching composition as a social process*. Logan, UT: Utah State University Press.
- McCroskey, J. C., & Young, T. J. (1981). Ethos and credibility: The construct and its measurement after three decades. *Central States Speech Journal*, 32, 24-35.
- Murray, D. M. (1997). Teaching writing as a process not product. In Victor Villanueva (ed.), *Cross-talk in comp theory: A reader*. Urbana, IL: NCTE, 3-6.
- Murphy, S. P. (1997). Integrating the powers of agency, resistance, and subjectivity in the composition classroom: An example from James Joyce's "Nausicaa" episode. *The CEA CRITIC*, 59, 42-53. The grammar translation method. Retrieved from <https://esl-methods.wikispaces.com/file/view/The+Grammar+Translation+Method.pdf>
- Trimber, J. (2000). Agency and the death of the author: A partial defense of modernism. *Jac*,

20(2), 284-298.

Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basic qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*. Thousand Oaks, London: SAGE Publications.

Writing center. (n.d.). Ethos. Retrieved from

<http://www.umaryland.edu/writing/documents/Ethos.1.1.pdf>