

An Assessment of Thai Sophomore Students' Paragraph Writing Learning Outcome Using the FRELE-TH Framework Descriptors

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Abstract

Measuring students' language ability can be viewed as subjective and complicated because competency in language is a multi-dimensional system. In order to assess students learning outcome, the Ministry of Education in Thailand is finding ways to help Thai students to develop their learning standard, thus the FRELE-TH was established and designed with the focus on the role of language for communicative purposes. As competence should be measured based on students actual learning outcomes, adapting and creating a language competency framework based on Thai context is necessary. FRELE-TH is a challenging work for different Thai scholars where its descriptors are used to encourage teachers and students to opt for communicative activities ('can do') based on the Thai context. As descriptors used in each level of FRELE-TH are flexible, this does not only provide the language scaffolding but also cognitive scaffolding that foster students' English learning competency.

Keywords: Assessment, FRELE-TH descriptors, Learning outcome, Students' paragraph writing, Thailand

Introduction

The globalization of English not only plays an important role in the world's political, economic, and social life but is also as an academic discipline. It is recognized as the medium language for communication around the world and an important skill for both learners and users to achieve their goal, Thai students are facing problems with this regard.

This was reinforced by the report of Education First Standard English Test (2019), prepared by Swiss-based Education First, Thailand ranked 74th with the score of 47.62, which is regarded as very low proficiency. In 2018, Thailand was placed 64th out of 88 countries with a score of 48.54 which was, again, classified as very low proficiency (Hicks, 2019), and in 2017, was 53rd out of 80 countries, with a score of 49.7. The latest ranking has placed the country the third lowest among countries in Southeast Asia for English proficiency, behind Vietnam, which were ranked 52nd. A possible reason for this is that there is a mismatch between the English language curriculum and the teaching and assessing processes when it comes to practice.

Since Thailand is a member of the ASEAN Economic Community Integration (AEC), English plays an important role for people in this region in communicating. In order to be able to incorporate and compete in AEC, the Ministry of Education (MOE) has adopted a version of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR, 2001) as a framework in the development of curriculum, teaching, studying, and assessing. It is because CEFR is a well-recognized framework in the European countries, many countries around the world have adopted and adapted CLT and CEFR to fit with their local context.

Literature Review

CEFR was primarily intended within the European Policy Forum as a tool for reflection, communication, and empowerment (Trim, 2012). It was developed to facilitate common understanding in the field of language learning, teaching and assessment and provide an arena for discussion in language education. It was designed to provide a set of reference levels or identifying levels of language proficiency, from near-beginners (A1) to a very advanced level (C2) and over a range of skills and areas of use.

These features make it an appropriate tool for comparison of practices across many different contexts both in Europe and beyond. However, in fulfilling this purpose (as a common reference tool), it cannot be applied to all contexts without some kind of user intervention to adapt it to local contexts and objectives (Council of Europe, 2011). Foley (2018, 2019) noted how contextual uses which are seen as deliberate interventions in a given environment can take various forms, apply on different levels, have different aims. Thus, when considering issues of alignment with other forms of assessment, it is important to understand that the CEFR was not intended to be used prescriptively and that there is no single ‘best’ way to account for the alignment of an examination within its own context and purpose of use.

The goals of the CEFR in its current form are descriptive, not normative tool (North, 2014a), but in many European context today, the CEFR descriptors are used in a normative way, as performance standards, or as labels to facilitate score transparency (Fulcher, 2012; O’Sullivan & Weir, 2011; Roever & MaNamara, 2006). As a result, such interpretation of score transparency could be the reason why most test developers rely on CEFR descriptors in developing the rating scale while CEFR is, yet, treating as a heuristic common practice (North 2014a, 2014b; Weir, 2005). Since CEFR descriptors are the framework, two different tests can claim that they are in the same CEFR level. However, with the differences in test specification, it would be unfair to consider them equivalent just because both tests share a CEFR label (Taylor, 2004). Another issue had been raised by Harsch & Martin (2012), the specific details should be added to the CEFR descriptors when using it in a rating context. In order to reach the objectives of the designed test, test developers must add the specific details into the CEFR descriptors. Therefore, different interpretation of the CEFR descriptors could have happened in this step of test development which can cause the deviation of the two tests from the stated descriptors of each CEFR level. On the top of that, the CEFR descriptors has

been criticized as unclear and inconsistency, both within and across levels (Alderson, 2007; Harsch & Rupp, 2011; Papageorgiou, 2010) and also on “descriptive inadequacy” (Fulcher, Davidson, & Kemp, 2011, p.8). Moreover, there is evidence that the unclear and inconsistency of the CEFR descriptors affects the trained raters when interpreting the same test with specific criteria (Deygers & Gorp, 2015; Lumney, 2002). The test developers and trained raters’ different background and experience may influence to the interpretation of the CEFR descriptor as well. The last and important issue of the CEFR framework concerns with the rating scale used in relationship to the CEFR (Galaczi, French, Hubbard, & Green 2011; Harsch & Martin, 2012; Papageorgiou, 2015). According to Alderson, 2007; Papageorgiou (2010), those studies are trying to rectify the blurred lines between level in terms of vagueness and inconsistency of the CEFR descriptors and fitting them into the rating scale. Yet, the study of Deygers & Gorp (2015) showed that the CEFR-based rating scale constructed repeatedly by raters did not assure the same understanding of the descriptors, notwithstanding high-inter reliability indices.

In 2018, CEFR version 2001 was updated because there were many criticisms in terms of need analysis, validation of descriptors, the wording used on the descriptors, and the question of sustaining a native norm (Foley, 2019). Therefore, CEFR version 2018, with its focuses on plurilingualism and mediation, had added the new scales for language activities, defined plus level, pre-A1 level, and C levels. Also, new descriptors for sign language users and young learners which began by EURO Centers Foundation in 2016 were added in CEFR 2018 version.

The risk of using the scales in an overtly prescriptive way in measuring language ability might imply a one-size-fits-all approach. However, the functional and linguistic scales are intended to illustrate the broad nature of the levels rather than define them precisely (Council of Europe, 2018). This, given the many variations in demographics, contexts, purposes, teaching and learning style, means it is difficult to create a test for a ‘typical’ B1 or any other level of student.

In order to enhance the ability of Thais to use English effectively and efficiency, the English Language Institute (ELI), a branch of the MOE announced a policy of basing all aspects of English language curriculum reform on the CEFR framework; consequently, the Framework of Reference for English Language Education in Thailand (FRELE-TH) was developed in April 2014.

According to Hiranburana et al., (2018):

It has been a great challenge for the FRELE-TH, which is an adaptation of the CEFR with (+) levels (A1, A1+, A2, A2+, B1, B1+, B2, B2+, C1, C2) to encourage the partners and practitioners and also stakeholders and in particular learners in English language education to reflect on the actual use of English in

communication in real life situations for the design of curricula, textbooks, course materials, tests and teacher education, not to mention the development of English standards for professionals, which can be benchmarked according to regional and international standards.

In order to meet the needs of Thai learners and users of English, it is essential to develop the framework comprehensible and applicable to the stakeholders. The framework needs to address not only the functions and forms but also the strategies of the language (Hiranburana et al., (2018).

In 1996, the national syllabus was modified when English was made compulsory for all students starting from the primary level. The syllabus was described as a functional-communicative type (Wongsothorn *et al.*, 2002, as cited in Prapphal 2008, p. 128). Its focus is on the use of four skills -- reading, writing, listening, and speaking efficiently and effectively. However, language learning and testing did not keep pace with the syllabus. An effect of the stated mismatch between the tests and national syllabus not only occurs in the elementary to upper secondary exams, but it also creates problems at tertiary level.

Given the current emphasis on assessing proficiency in English, teachers must have an understanding in the language testing process. Testing can also be viewed as a kind of interaction between students and teachers where students are taking the test in return teachers are marking, reporting scores, and giving feedback to them.

Test score is a valuable source that helps language teachers in evaluating the students' performance as well as improving and/or adapting their future teaching plans. It is very useful and makes sense in using tests throughout the lecture sessions. Many teachers use a test at the very first of the class, at the middle of the class, and at the end of the class. The intention is to find out both the progress and the achievement of the students before, while, and at the end of the course.

On language learning side, a test score is an important factor telling learners where they are in the language class. There is more to say that in evaluating students, test score can be viewed as a great source to motivate students to improve themselves in learning the language.

Some of these problems of the test and syllabus are as follows: firstly, each school in Thailand uses different texts and materials in teaching students in the class. In other words, there is a national syllabus, which each school and teacher has to follow, but they have the right to choose their textbooks in teaching. Secondly, students who come from schools in Bangkok or other major provinces such as Chiang Mai or Nakhon Ratchasima, may have an advantage over students who come from schools in rural areas because of lack of appropriate facility and teachers in rural areas. These have caused problems among

both teachers and students in teaching and learning English. It is hoped that FRELE-TH could be used for the design of specifications on standardized tests of English proficiency and benchmarked with those of international standards. In this way, in principle, students and other users' performance and progress could be measured and tracked to be calibrated with other international standards for education and professional purposes (Hiranburana et al, 2018).

Rationale of the Study

As the aim of FRELE-TH framework, based on CEFR, is on how to use the language in 'communication focusing on Thai local context', it would help to develop a clearer pathway for the researcher, as a course coordinator and instructor, to analyze the course objective, course learning outcome (LO) and the writing rubrics used in the FCE 3 course using the FRELE-TH framework so that it can be adapted for future assessment of courses.

In terms of aligning assessment to the CEFR (FRELE-TH), we should understand that the 'Can Do' statements have to be seen as illustrative and not prescriptive, exhaustive, or simply checklists. The 'Can Do' statements offer guides to educators so that they can recognize and talk about ability levels. They can be used for test development but should not feel that adopting 'Can Do' statements mean the work of defining ability levels for the test has been completed (Hirunburana, et al., 2018). If the available illustrative scales in the CEFR toolkit do not match the context closely enough, they can be supplemented with 'Can Do' statements from other sources or new ones written relating more to the context (Hirunburana, et al., 2017).

Other contextual features we have to consider are the important differences between learners, in terms of age, cognitive development, purpose in learning and socio-economic background. Students often differ in their profile of skills (some may be better listeners, than readers or writers). This makes it difficult to compare them in one single scale; consequently, observations on test results cannot be taken as an overall measure of language proficiency.

Framework of the Study

FRELE-TH was developed with more discrete scaling to help Thai learners / users' 'Can Do' level of English proficiency to be more realistic within local, regional, and international contexts. The FRELE-TH, similar to the CEFR, offers two scale types: global scale and illustrative scale and their descriptors to describe English proficiency levels. The overview of the language proficiency at all levels is presented in the global scale.

Table 1.1

The Global Scale Descriptors from the FRELE-TH Level B1 (adapted from Hirunburana et al., 2017)

Level	Overall Descriptors
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B1	<p>The learner/user</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - can understand the main point of clear speech on a familiar matter regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. including short narrative. - can read factual texts on subjects related to his/her and interest as a satisfactory level of comprehension. - can exploit a wide range of simple languages for conversation on familiar topics, express personal opinions and exchange information on topics that are familiar, of personal interest or pertinent to everyday life. - <i>can write straightforward, connected texts on a range of familiar subjects within his/her field of interest, by linking a series of shorter discrete elements into a linear sequence</i> - can understand key words or phrases in conversations and use them to follow the topic. - can guess the meaning of occasional unknown words from the context and deduce sentence meaning provided that the topic discussed is familiar. - <i>can work out how to communicate the main points he/she wants to get across in a range of contexts, limiting the message to what he/she can recall or find the means to express himself/herself though with some hesitation and circumlocutions on familiar topics.</i>
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Illustrative Scale:

Communicative activities, communicative strategies, and communicative competence can be accessible in the illustrative scale.

- Communicative activities ('can do' descriptors) cover
 - reception: listening and reading comprehensions
 - interaction: spoken and written interactions
 - production: spoken and written production
- Communicative strategies cover strategies that Thai learners/users can apply to perform communicative activities. Hirunburana et al., (2017) identified communicative strategies as follow.
 - reception strategies: identifying clues, making inferences
 - interaction strategies: turn-taking, cooperating, asking for clarification
 - production strategies: planning, compensating, monitoring and repair
- Communicative language competence refers to the knowledge that Thai learners/users need to have in order to perform communicative activities. Hirunburana et al., (2017) identified communicative language competence as follow.
 - linguistic competence: range (linguistic and vocabulary), control (grammatical accuracy, vocabulary control, phonological control, and orthographic control)
 - sociolinguistic competence: knowledge and skills need to cope with the social dimension of language use.

- pragmatic competence: precision, coherence, and fluency
 - this is concerned with the language users' knowledge of how messages are organized, structured, and arranged.
 - Also, it focuses on the users' knowledge of the functional use of linguistic resources.

To help the learners and users to have a better understanding of the framework, the developer team adapted more exponents from the Evaluation and Accreditation of Quality Language Services (EAQUALS) project. In addition, the FRELE-TH also offers examples of language functions, discourse markers, topics, vocabulary range, grammar and exponents, and micro-skills, all of which are appropriate to English use in the local, regional, and international context of Thai communication.

This paper is supported by two research questions as part of the underpinnings:

- How can the assessment of the course objective, learning outcome, and rubrics used in second year students' paragraph writing be linked to the FRELE-TH Framework level B1, B1+, B2, and B2+?
- To what extent would the use of FRELE-TH Framework help to give a clearer assessment in terms of students' performance, cutting score, and fairness within the context of the school being studied?

Research Methodology

This study used mix-methodology to obtain and analyze data to answer the research questions and descriptive in nature. For the qualitative analysis, the FRELE-TH framework descriptors of level B1-B2+ were used to compare and interpret the descriptors of the learning outcome (LO), rubrics, the purpose was identifying whether the descriptors of the narrative paragraph writing of the Foundations of College 3 (FCE 3) had met the FRELE-TH framework level B1-B2+ or not.

The focus of this study was on the narrative writing skill, therefore, the primary data used in this research was the students' score from their narrative paragraph writing graded by three instructors and assessed by the researcher. The mean (M) and the standard deviation (SD) of the students' score was calculated for the reliability purposes of the marking process was part of the quantitative method. After that, the average score was used to calculate the data and compare the cut-off point established by the instructors of the course. The average score was used to interpret the students' writing ability using FRELE-TH framework level B1-B2+.

15 sophomore students were the participants and three teachers to help the researcher. All students had passed the Foundations of College English 1 (FCE 1) and Foundations of

College English 2 (FCE 2) with basic knowledge of English. The teachers mentioned also used as inter-raters and inter-coders of the data for the validity and reliability purposes.

The instruments were the students' narrative writing paper, and the FRELE-TH descriptors were used to analyze the data using descriptive analysis.

Findings and Discussion

I: The Results of FRELE-TH vs the Narrative Paragraph Rubric of Three Markers

Table 1: Score Interpretation: 0 – 4

FRELE-TH Level	B1	B1+	B2	B2+
Rubric Score	2.00-2.49	2.50-2.99	3.00-3.49	3.50-4.00

The obtained results of FRELE-TH vs Narrative Paragraph Rubric of three markers, can be shown in the Table 2 below.

The Mean score from the three markers were suggested that the students' ability was in B1+ - B2 level except for the **use of conventions** part which was lower than B1 level. The Mean value of the topic sentence is 2.99 (B1+ level), the supporting details sentences was 3.02 (B2 level), the conclusion was 2.89 (B1+ level), and the Sequence of Events and Transition was 3.28 (B2 level). On the other hand, the Use of Conventions received the lowest mean value, 1.74 out of 4. According to the cut-off score scale, the students' ability in grammar, spelling, punctuation, and terminology was lower than B1 level or probably belonging into A (beginner) level.

From the average mean score of the three markers, the 'use of conventions criterion' had received the lowest mean value of 1.74. From the study's observation one of the markers and from the obtained results, the indication is that there are several factors why students were struggling and having difficulties in the particular criterion. The *first factor* might be from the students' abilities in spelling, applying the punctuation rules, and using the appropriate terminologies in the context. As these participants were English major students, their ability in applying the use of tenses was likely to be acceptable. The *second factor* can be from the rubric descriptor in term of the numbers mistake made. The higher the numbers of mistake made by the students in grammar, spelling, punctuation, and terminology, the lower score they received. In addition, the descriptors in the criterion were too broad as it covered grammar, spelling, punctuation, and terminology of the writing.

For example, if student A and student B received 1 mark each in the 'use of conventions criterion', it could not be interpreted or concluded their competency. It was because student A might make repeated mistakes on the use of the punctuation throughout the writing that might

not influence the meaning of the writing. Student B, however, might make extensive mistakes on grammatical rules that might interfere the meaning of the writing.

Table 2

The Results of FRELE-TH vs the Narrative Paragraph Rubric of Three Marker

Students No.	Topic Sentence (main idea)			Supporting Detail Sentences (3 major detail sentences)			Conclusion / Closing Sentence			Sequence of Events and Transition			Use of Conventions: grammar, spelling, punctuation, and terminology		
	Markers			Markers			Markers			Markers			Markers		
	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C
1	1.00	1.00	0.00	2.00	0.00	2.00	3.00	0.00	0.00	3.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00
2	3.00	2.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	2.00	0.00	0.00	4.00	1.00	3.00	0.00	1.00	1.00
3	2.00	1.00	0.00	4.00	1.00	2.00	3.00	1.00	0.00	3.00	2.00	3.00	0.00	0.00	1.00
4	4.00	4.00	2.00	4.00	1.00	2.00	4.00	1.00	0.00	3.00	1.00	2.00	0.00	0.00	1.00
5	0.00	0.00	2.50	4.00	1.00	2.00	4.00	2.00	0.00	4.00	2.00	2.50	1.00	3.00	1.00
6	3.00	4.00	2.75	4.00	3.00	2.00	3.00	3.00	2.75	4.00	3.00	2.50	0.00	0.00	1.50
7	4.00	3.50	2.50	3.00	3.00	3.50	4.00	4.00	1.50	4.00	3.00	4.00	0.00	0.00	2.50
8	4.00	3.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.00	4.00	4.00	3.00	4.00	3.00	3.50	0.00	1.00	1.50
9	4.00	3.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.00	4.00	1.00	2.00	2.00
10	4.00	3.00	4.00	3.00	4.00	3.00	4.00	4.00	3.00	4.00	3.00	4.00	3.00	3.00	2.00
11	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.50	4.00	4.00	3.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.00	2.00	3.00
12	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.50	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.00	2.00	3.00
13	4.00	4.00	3.50	4.00	4.00	3.75	4.00	4.00	3.75	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.00	3.50
14	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.00	3.75
15	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.75	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.50
SD	1.28	1.34	1.58	0.92	1.62	0.90	0.62	1.60	1.68	0.41	1.15	1.13	1.73	1.40	1.04
Mean	3.27	2.97	2.75	3.53	2.73	2.80	3.67	2.87	2.13	3.80	2.80	3.23	1.53	1.60	2.08
Mean (3 Markers)	2.99 (B1+)			3.02 (B2)			2.89 (B1+)			3.28 (B2)			1.74 (below B1)		

As illustrated the highest average mean (M=3.28) of the three marker was in the *Sequence of Events and Transition* criterion. The stated descriptors in the rubric were focused on how to make the story's flow logically. If the students were able to effectively use time signaling transitional words such as first, second, then, in conclusion in their writing, they were likely to earn higher mark. Besides, using the right transitional words was one of the main requirements in narrative composition paragraph, therefore, the various examples and practices were offered during the class instructions. As the meaning of each transitional words was fairly straightforward, the students tend to have less difficulty in choosing the right transitional word to make their writing's flow logically.

The average mean for the three markers on the Topic Sentence, Supporting Detail Sentences, and Conclusion were likely to be in the same range. According to the cut-off score scale, the Topic Sentence and the Conclusion criteria mean values were in high range of B1+ level with the values of 2.99 and 2.89 respectively while the Supporting Detail Sentences criterion mean values was 3.02 (low range of B2 level). The average mean of the Conclusion criterion was 0.10 less than the Topic Sentence criterion might cause from the students' low ability in restating or paraphrasing the provided topic sentence. As for the Supporting Detail Sentences criterion where the average mean was in B2 level, the students were likely to earn a high mark in this particular criterion. It was because they were composing a narrative paragraph (a story) based on their own experiences; therefore, the quality of the examples and/or evidence used in this criterion was likely to be clear and relevant to the Topic Sentence. In addition, the given topics such as an unforgettable experience, the frightening day, or an event that made me proud were familiar topics which students could relate their experience directly into the writing.

For the SD of the markers, marker A had the lowest SD values (1.28 in Topic Sentence, 0.92 in Supporting Detail Sentences, 0.62 in Conclusion, and 0.41 in Sequence of Events and Transition) out of the three markers except the Use of Conventions criterion. Marker A had the highest SD value in the Use of Conventions criterion which is 1.73. From the results, marker B was the most consistent marker of all three. It was because the SD values of all the criteria are between 1.15 – 1.62 while marker C' SD values were about in the same range of marker B except the Supporting Detail Sentences which is 0.90.

There were two unusual results of SD value among the three markers. The first case was on the Supporting Detail Sentences criterion, marker B seemed to have the highest SD value of 1.62, comparing to marker A and marker C, which were 0.92 and 0.90 respectively. It could be interpreted that marker B might have students with diverse ability in the classrooms. Another explanation could be on the expectations of marker B upon the students writing. There was a possibility that marker B might have put a special focus or emphasis on some of the lessons such as the relationship between the minor details to the major detail; therefore, marker B would expect the students to be able to reflect such a relationship studying in the class on his/her writing. The second case was on the Use of Conventions part, marker A and marker C's SD values seemed to be in the opposite direction. Marker A' SD value in the particular criterion was 1.73 while Marker C was 1.04. It could be interpreted that marker A and marker C might have different interpretation of the stated descriptors in the rubric used which could affect to the numbers of mistake indicated on the rubric.

Image 1

Sample 1 student's narrative paragraph writing

Title: The Revealed Spirit?

Last year, the first ⁹ of the first semester, I had explored myself and found something in the ^{memorable} moment that changed me forever. On September 25, that day was a sunny day. The weather was quite hot. I was going to the class named "The Foundation Of English College 1" with my friends in the morning. When we arrived in the room in 57 building, I chose to sit on the front row confidently. The room was crowded. It was full of classmates. Then, There was a man who wore a casual outfit with his Nike limited edition shoes was walking into the room, and he was carrying some documents. That was my teacher. He started the class by introduction. His name was "Aj. Chaiyapip". He looked kind and awesome. When he started teaching, I was so shocked and I did not know what to do next. He talked all things in English. Besides, I lost to concentrate to the teacher. I was worried continuously. I could not catch even his last words. A few years ago, I was upper secondary school, all subjects I had learnt in Thai. Especially, the English class was in Thai; on the other hand, the English class in the university was actually English so I was not used to study in English. Going back to the class, the teacher kept saying without going to stop. until the break. In that moment,

main idea: memorable moment → changed me forever
 explore myself
 ⊗ memorable = very good, enjoyable, worth remembering } Tell good story.

Handwritten notes:
 Not related with the idea in the topic sentence!
 Not the way to write a topic sentence
 descriptive writing!
 narrative paragraph
 No connection between ideas.

From the example 1, the student's score was 3% out of the total score of 15%. The scores in every criterion were below 2 marks, only the topic sentence criterion is in B1 level, 2 marks. The student's main problem was in the supporting detail and conclusion. Since it was a narrative writing, the students failed to put the supporting ideas in a logical order, and he also provided excessive information (descriptive information) at the beginning of the writing. Some irrelevant information was given in the middle of the writing as he was explaining about his experience studying English in the university level, he abruptly shifted his writing to his experience studying English in the upper secondary school. He could also put his experiences as minor ideas to make his major part clearer. The conclusion part/closing sentence was confusing because of insufficient and irrelevant information was given. As for the topic sentence, it was presented, but it was not clear and effective enough. This might cause from his meaningless and confusing topic, 'the Revealed Spirit'. He was rewarded with 1 mark for both the transitions and the use of conventions criteria. The reason might be the lack of transitional words when connecting the ideas in the supporting idea part. In the use of conventions criterion, the students made 10-12 grammatical errors such as parts of speech, prepositional phrase, and vocabulary.

From the overall descriptors of both global scale and illustrative scale, B1 level student should be able to:

- write straightforward, connected texts on a range of familiar subjects within his/her field of interest, by linking a series of shorter discrete elements into a linear sequence
- work out how to communicate the main points he/she wants to get across in a range of contexts, limiting the message to what he/she can recall or find the means to express himself/herself though with some hesitation and circumlocutions on familiar topics.

The 'score interpretation' indicated that, the overall writing of this student was below B1 level [$Total\ score\ (4) / criteria\ (5) = 0.8$]. It was obvious that the student could not communicate well through his writing. The writer could not compose a straightforward paragraph by linking a series of shorter discrete elements into a linear sequence which could be witnessed from the poor ability in using transitional words to connect the ideas in the supporting part. Furthermore, irrelevant information and poor use of vocabulary in the writing could be another indication that the writer might have a problem expressing his thoughts. It could be concluded that the student's writing ability was below B1 level. It was because the explanations and scores (from the marker) correlated with the stated descriptors in both global and illustrative scales of the FRELE-TH.

Image 2

Sample 2 student's narrative paragraph writing

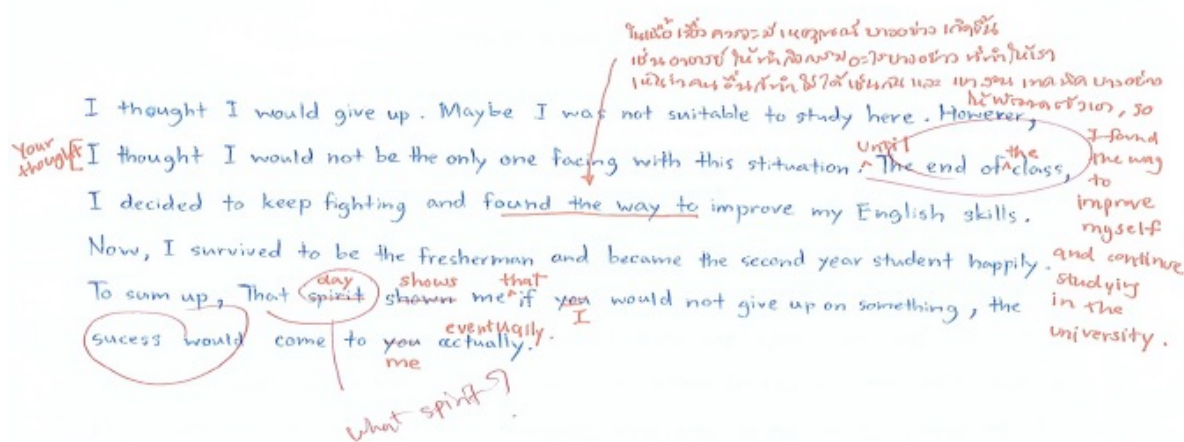


Image 3

Sample 3 student's narrative writing paragraph

Final Draft
(In-class writing = 15%)

My New Chapter

I was very happy when I learnt that I was accepted into MFU. To begin with, I had always wanted to become a student here. The first reason was the location of the campus; it was situated in Chiang Rai, which meant that it was close to my home. Another reason was my intention to meet new people that were not from my high school. Also, I heard that the scenery here was very lovely. Then, I did research about this university and its courses. I was quite surprised that the courses were taught in English. However, I would love to study in a foreign language anyway, which was fine by me. I felt that this place met all of my conditions. After that, I had prepared myself a lot before applying for MFU. I studied very hard. I did mock exams. Most importantly, I put lots of effort to make sure that I would achieve my goal. I was determined to come here only; I had not apply for anywhere else. This included CU, TU and also CMU, where all the kids in the Northern would go after. As a norm, the popularity of these universities was not something that I was looking for. I did not really feel like it was my ultimate answer yet. To be honest, I was a bit nervous as I was living my life patiently for my exam result. Each day I counted down to the day of the exam result announcement. I knew that I had tried my best, but I could not help thinking what would happen if I did not pass. I could only hope that it would turn out to be okay ultimately. In the end, all my hard work really paid off; as a result, I got in.

In the example 3, the student's score was 13.5% out of 15%. The student was awarded with 4 marks in the topic sentence, conclusion, and sequence of events and transition criteria. His topic sentence and conclusion were clear, meaningful, and effective. The entire paragraph writing was in a logical sequence and easy to follow. The writer might have some problems with the content in the supporting sentences because he tried to give the reason why he was happy to be accepted into MFU rather than narrating his feeling of happiness. In the use of conventions part, he made 4-6 errors in tenses, punctuation, punctuations.

Accordingly, the 'score Interpretation' of the Image 3, indicated that this writing was in B2+ level [$Total\ score\ (18) / criteria\ (5) = 3.6$]. It was because the writer has sufficient range of vocabulary and language to give clear descriptions and viewpoints in composing a detailed and easy to follow text on the subject of his interest.

Conclusion

This study is focusing on the assessment of the course learning outcome, and rubrics used in second year students' paragraph writing be linked to the FRELE-TH Framework level

B1, B1+, B2, and B2+ and to understand the usefulness of FRELE-TH Framework help to give a clearer assessment in terms of students' performance, cutting score, and fairness within the context of the school being studied.

The overall findings show that the overall learning outcome (LO) and the writing rubrics used are linked with the descriptors in the FRELE-TH framework level B1, B1+ B2, and B2+. FRELE-TH framework indicated that this is helpful in assessing students' English language competency in relation to the international and global communication. Secondly, the contents and descriptors stated in learning outcome and rubrics showed that FRELE-TH framework worked in the context of the university understudied. In FCE 3, the LO suggested that the learner/user should be able to apply the knowledge learnt from FCE 1 (word/phrase level) and FCE 2 (sentence level) to four types of paragraph writing in FCE 3 while the independent users (in B levels) of FRELE-TH framework should be able to produce a sequential and straightforward text on his/her familiar topic with a good range of language and vocabulary. As for the rubrics, designed by the course instructors, the descriptors in each rubric should be paralleled to the lessons taught. This helps to maximize the students' English language competency not only on the forms and functions of the paragraph but also the meaning and logical contents of the writing.

So, the FRELE-TH Framework can therefore use to give a clearer assessment of students' performance, cutting score, and fairness within the context of the school understudied. The reason is that FRELE-TH aims are on assessing students' English language communicative competency rather than grammatical competence. As the descriptors in the FRELE-TH are more on global scale and illustrative scale, thus this can be viewed as not a ready-made solution, rather contextual. Therefore, its flexibility in merging and sub-dividing the levels and categories gives room for the markers (learners/users) to adopt, adapt, and interpret the stated descriptors based on the actual situation. Additionally, the designed cut-off score scales applied in the analysis could reflect the students' writing ability clearly as indicated in the very low proficiency rank of Thailand reported by English First Standard English Test in 2019.

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