

GUIDELINES OF TEACHING FOR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS OF ENGLISH SUMMARY WRITING

แนวทางการสอนการเขียนย่อความภาษาอังกฤษแก่นักศึกษาระดับปริญญาตรี

Charisopon Inthapat¹

Abstract

This article aims to guide for teaching students English summary writing. According to English summary writing, the students / summary writers always have problems when they summarized various information. The important problem is that the students / summary writers usually copy some part of original texts and paste into their drafts but the information is not relevant and the information in summarizing paper is not smooth for reading. Additionally, the summary writers have used this method when they studied in school and they might think that this action is correct and good for summary writing.

On the other hands, copying of information from original text is only used for selecting keywords, main idea and important information. Therefore, the students / summary writers should use reading techniques; skimming, scanning, taking note, re-reading and writing process when they summarized texts. However, the supporting details should be concise and used their own words for writing the summarizing papers. Thus, the summary writers should know definition of summary writing and what good characteristics of summary writing is. Hence, this writing article presents a method which suggests English teachers for teaching the students summarize texts.

Keywords: Reading Techniques, Writing Process, Teaching of Summary Writing

¹ Full-time-Lecturer of English at the office of general education, Panyapiwat Institute of Management, E-mail: charisoponint@pim.ac.th

บทคัดย่อ

บทความนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อเสนอแนะการสอนนักศึกษาในการเขียนย่อความภาษาอังกฤษ เมื่อกล่าวถึง การเขียนย่อความภาษาอังกฤษ นักศึกษาหรือผู้เขียนย่อความมักจะพบปัญหาเมื่อเขียนย่อความข้อมูลต่างๆ ปัญหา สำคัญคือ นักศึกษาหรือผู้เขียนย่อความจะคัดลอกบางส่วนของต้นฉบับและตัดต่อลงในฉบับร่าง แต่ข้อมูลจะไม่มี ความต่อเนื่องและข้อมูลนั้นไม่รื่นเรื่องต่อการอ่าน นอกจากนั้นผู้เขียนย่อความยังใช้วิธีดังกล่าวตั้งแต่เรียนในระดับโรงเรียน และเข้าอาจจะคิดวิธีที่ใช้เป็นวิธีที่ถูกต้องและดีสำหรับการเขียนย่อความ

ความเป็นจริงแล้วการคัดลอกข้อมูลจากต้นฉบับเป็นวิธีการเพื่อใช้ในการเลือกคำสำคัญ ความคิดหลักและ ข้อมูลสำคัญเท่านั้น ดังนั้นนักศึกษาหรือผู้เขียนย่อความควรใช้เทคนิคการอ่าน การอ่านแบบครอบคลุม การอ่านแบบ รายละเอียด การจดโน้ต การอ่านบททวน และกระบวนการการการเขียน ใน การเขียนย่อความ อย่างไรก็ตามรายละเอียด ของเนื้อความควรจะถูกเขียนในรูปแบบย่อและใช้ภาษาของผู้เขียนเองสำหรับการเขียนย่อความ ผู้เขียนย่อความ จึงควรรู้ถึงความหมายของการเขียนย่อความและความหมายของลักษณะของการเขียนย่อความที่ดี ดังนั้นบทความนี้ จึงนำเสนอวิธีการแก้รูปสอนภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อการสอนนักศึกษาในการย่อความเนื้อความ

คำสำคัญ: เทคนิคการย่อความ กระบวนการการเขียน การสอนการเขียนย่อความ

Introduction

By summarizing information, it can be involved in the workers' real situation such as they summarized the information, news, etc., to present in meeting and/or seminar, particularly, the students may be assigned to summarize English texts in learning the English class. However, they do not know how to do in a correct way and they cannot summarize the text effectively. Hence, this paper suggests the teachers of English a teaching methodology of summary writing.

According to the writer's (teacher) teaching situation, he has known that the persons have had the problems since they started at the planning stage of summarizing. Consequently, he will suggest and treat this step for those who will summarize the text.

Then, the writer of this article will suggest some good method of summarizing as the next step.

Definition of Summary Writing

Summary writing in this situation means shortening of various paragraphs or pages in the writers' own words and meaningful information. Furthermore, those who summarize texts should use their own words to write the information. This view is supported by Semple (2009: 1-2), he defined "summary writing is a shortened version of the original text but the information must not be changed and the main purpose of such a simplification is to highlight the major points from the original text."

According to Northan (2011), he added that summary writing is to briefly restate the original information of what the writers have described in their own words into the papers. Doyle (2012) added that summary writing is the restatement of the original text into the writers' own words in showing only the authors' main ideas.

He continued that the summary writing should be written and used simple terminologies to describe the original information. Moreover, the summary writers should manage the written information in the text on their own words, and the use of words should be appropriated to the readers even though they are in different fields of study or work.

With reference to the definition of summary writing, its good characteristics will be presented as follows.

Good Characteristics of Summary Writing

With reference to the principles of good characteristics of summary writing, Marsen (2003) said that good summary writing should be comprehensively selected the important information, facts and concepts and it should be accurate. In addition, the summary writers should make sure that they do not change the author's information and summary writing should be presented as the author's idea. If the summary writing is needed to include an evaluation of the author's ideas, the summary writers should select information from the original text. Furthermore, if the audiences read the summarized text, the text should provide the readers understand the main message on the summarized text without reading the original text. Reid (2003) added that good summary should not avoid the main idea and its length should be about only one third of the original text.

Bean, Chappell & Gillam (2004) supported that there are various good characteristics of a summary writing which should be as follows. Firstly, summary writing must be as clear as possible in communicating information to the audiences. Thus, those who summarize text should assume that the readers do not have access to the summary. Secondly, good summarization should be clear in accordance the main idea of the text. Thirdly, a good summary writing should be organized and arranged from the most to the least important information. Fourthly, a good summary writing should acknowledge the original text summarized; this means, it should be clear regarding the details of the situation taking place and the authors of the information. Fifthly, a good summary writing should not have the summary writers' own comments or opinions. Sixthly, the summary writing should provide background information which is appropriate for the audiences. Seventhly, a good summary writing should focus on the most important idea which is prominent to the audiences, and, lastly, a good summary writing should be written into the summary writers' own words.

Additionally, there are various good characteristics of summary writing and the summary writing also has its own purposes. According to Caesar (2012), summary writing can vary in length from a sentence to many pages, depending on the length of the information being summarized and it depends on the purposes of the summary writing.

Purposes of Summary Writing

Generally, there are various purposes of summary writing such as to write for communicating the ideas to the audiences across space and time, to help the readers understand easily and to believe what the writers wrote. Moreover, it is to demonstrate understanding about the topic or to prove competence (Cox, Harvey & Page 2007). For another purpose of summary writing, it is to provide information for the audiences to read and to understand the text easily. Byrne (1982) added that the purpose of summary writing is to provide a record of some events, to serve as a guide for the readers who do not have time to read the original text or who wish to find out whether it is worth reading.

Marsen (2003) said that there are three main purposes of summary writing. Firstly, summary writers need to record their information. Consequently, a summarized document is easier to file and classify than a longer one. Furthermore, summary writing provides the readers the fast access to the text and helps them decide if a text is useful and the summary writers need to retrieve it. Secondly, summary writers need to communicate their information easily. This means that the summarized text is easy to communicate the information from a full-document in the form of a basic text. To the purpose, it is easy and time saving for the audiences to read. Thirdly, a summary writer might not want to record or communicate a message, they might find that summarizing a document is to help the audiences understand

the information better. Reid (2003: 5) concluded “the purpose of a summary writing is to give a reader a condensed and objective account of the main ideas and features of a text.”

To this view, it is concluded that the main purpose of summary writing is to design for describing to the audiences the main theme of the text and helps them to understand the information quickly. In addition, it helps the audiences more easily understand the details of information.

In order to know how to summarize texts, it is interesting to suggest the summarizing techniques which are benefits for teaching students and / or summary writers.

Summarizing Techniques

The techniques of summary writing can help those who summarize the text know how to summarize more effectively. It is said that summary writing has the steps which helps the summary writers are able to summarize quickly and successfully (Doyle, 2012; Northan, 2011; Marsen, 2003; Langan, 1987) and Wong (1983). Importantly, they suggested the steps of summarizing as follows.

Skimming

Northan (2011) claimed that before the writers summarize the information of the texts, they have to read the whole idea of the text. Consequently, the writers need to skim the text which they are going to summarize and at the same time they have to divide the information into sections: topic sentence, main

idea, major and minor supporting details. Wong (1983) added that by skimming, the summary writers should pick out the main theme of the text and they should focus on headings and subheadings. In addition, the summary writers have to divide the texts into chunks of information and they may find that each paragraph contains a certain main idea (Marsen, 2003). Langan (1987) supported that while skimming, the summary writers will summarize texts and they have to analyze the texts by quickly looking at title, subtitle, first and last several paragraphs so that they know what the article is about. This view is claimed that skimming provides and prepares those who will summarize text know the theme of texts at the pre-step for summarizing texts.

Scanning

Langan (1987) suggested that the summary writers or those who will summarize texts have to comprehend the detail of the texts. By scanning, the summary writers should comprehend the text by finding the happened situation of the text which are specific details such as “who, what, with whom, where, when and how” at the same time the summary writers are able to absorb the feeling of the author’s tone, style and main idea. To this view, the summary writers can use dictionary or context clues to figure out the meaning of any important words which they do not know. By reading at this step, Wright (2012) suggested that summary writers should underline or highlight keywords that will help them to recall a central idea

about the text or information. For the reason, if the summary writers know the meaning of keywords, they will understand and know the important points of the text or article they read as well.

Taking Note

When the summary writers read the texts and they used reading techniques: skimming and scanning, the writers have to note for the main idea and important details of the article into their papers. Moreover, they should logically arrange thesis statement, main idea, and supporting details. They can write from the most to the least important or chronological information into their papers (Langan, 1987). Northan (2011) added that while taking note, the summary writers should note down into their own words and they may change sentence structures. For example, they change from the active voice into the passive voice, however, the summary writers should make sure that they include important information and details into their notes.

Re-reading

After the summary writers used the first two reading techniques, they need to re-read the original text in order to re-check their comprehension about the text. By re-reading, the summary writers go back to the original text to read each area in more details and they read for the depth of information. Moreover, the summary writers should read each section of text more than once until they are able to

write about the information in their own words. Furthermore, the summary writers should be able to illustrate the scene of the text in order to memorize the facts and ideas (Wright, 2012). Additionally, they can underline the topic sentences, keywords, facts and the label areas that they want to refer to the summary which they might miss at the previous steps. To do this, the writers can add much more important details of the text into summarizing paper (Northan, 2011).

Writing Process

According to Hedge (2000: 302), he defined that writing is the product of employing strategies to cope with the composing process, which involves a number of activities as wetting goals, generating ideas, organizing information, selecting appropriate language (planning), drafting, and re-writing; revising and editing. Reid (2000) added that the writers can do re-writing when they want to shape the texts, it means that the summary writers should have writing process as follows.

Firstly, **Planning**: Palmer, Hafner & sharp (1994) and Wehmeyer (2012) said that planning happens at the first stage when the summary writers summarize the texts. To this stage, they read texts and select major and minor sections and focusing on key words. Moreover, the summary writers also plan their drafts by taking note to select and divide the information into sections as well as they write an outline in order to organize their ideas. Moreover, planning helps those who will summarize the texts to

be ready to write and it is a preparation for the second stage.

Secondly, **Drafting**: it is a writing process in which those who summarize or the summary writers transform their plans into complete summarizing texts (Harris, 1993). According to Pappas, Kiefer & Levstik (1995: 216) “Drafting involves attempts to create or construct a whole text.” Kennedy, Kennedy & Smith (2000) support that writers draft in order to create paragraphs and to complete the paper. By drafting, the writers use thesis statement as an introductory sentence of the summary and other sentences are made up to be the body of writing. Furthermore, the summary writers have to organize their drafts into logical order by following topic sentences and evidences. In addition, the summary writers should add transition words and conjunctions into the texts such as however, moreover, and, but, or, so, etc, to create the organized text (Northan, 2011). Doyle (2012) supported that by drafting, the summary should be written in the writers’ own words instead of copying from the source text, but the writers should not change the meaning of the original text.

Thirdly, **Re-writing**: it is another step of writing process which enables the summary writers to shape and re-organize their summary writing (Kroll, 1991). Smith & Bernhardt (1997) divided re-writing stage into revising and editing as follows. **Revising**: Hedge (2000: 302) says, “The writers re-read, look back at original text and then think about how to express the next set of ideas. Thus, after writing part of the

draft, writers also review what they wrote. Then, they added more details in their papers." In case of summary writing, Northan (2011) claimed that revising in the case of summary writing does not mean that the summary writers add their own new ideas but they find and add important information from original text into their summarizing paper. To this, the summary writers also re-think, re-make, re-construct and / or re-create their texts but they cannot add what is out of the original texts (Pappas, Kiefer & Levstik, 1997). **Editing:** To this stage, the summary writers will re-read what they summarized and made corrections for grammatical accuracy (Tribble, 1997). Moreover, they will shape the words and the sentence structures. According to Pappas, Kiefer & Levstik (1995), they claimed that editing is to clean up the draft and / or the first draft of summary writing so that the message or information is stated in the most comprehensible way using the most appropriate language possible. Papas, Kiefer & Levstik (1995) continued that editing is the ability to replace one word with another in order to make it fit better or more vivid. Actually, skillful summary writers also know that they need to read their summarizing text carefully to check errors such word spelling, punctuation, structure, word choice, etc (Harris, 1993). Palmer, Hafner & Sharp (1994) added that, during editing, the summary writers should consider language mistake, the conventions of the language syntax and structures which should be analyzed and corrected.

To the theories, they interest the writer to apply for teaching the students in language class as follows.

Teaching of Summary Writing

According to Wright (2012), he suggested how to teach the summary writing in various kinds of texts such as how to summarize narrative materials which contain dialogues, descriptions, personal comments, stories and anecdotes; novels, and fact and information reports, etc. Consequently, they suggests the solution of teaching as the examples (See Appendix 1).

Wright (2012) said that before doing the summary writing, the teachers should teach their students how to pick out the main theme of the information because to know the theme is the first step and important for summary writing. Furthermore, it enables the students and / or summary writers to select the relevant information of each paragraph and they are able to avoid failure of information. With reference to the example, he suggested ways to summarize the text (See Appendix 2).

With reference to the writer / teacher's method of teaching, he applied the theorists' idea for teaching summary writing to his students. He taught the students to summarize step by step (See Appendix 3)

According to Hamp & Heasley (1993), The writer / teacher motivated his students to read by using skimming and scanning technique and then he asked his students to re-read to know and comprehend what the whole

paragraph is about. Furthermore, the students were asked to find the main idea of the text. Additionally, the writer / teacher taught them to find supporting details of the text (**See Appendix 3: Step 1**).

By doing this activity, the writer asked his students to categorize the text and teach them to write a map or note which is the planning stage. (**See writing process and Appendix 3: Step 2**).

After the students generated the text, the writer / teacher helped them to compose their summarizing text. To this step, the writer / teacher taught his students to use connection words or conjunctions to compose summarizing text which is the drafting stage. (**See writing process and Appendix 3: Step 4**).

Then, the students were asked to compose the paragraph by connecting the important information. However, the sentences are not cohesion and the paragraph has not been written in the students' own words yet. Thus, the writer / teacher guided them how to use linking words and conjunctions to combine the sentences to make well organized sentences. Then, the teacher suggested the students to compose the summarizing text using their own words. By guiding the students to use linking words and conjunctions correctly, they were concerned with the use of grammar point on

the summarizing text. According to the use of grammar: conjunction, writer / teacher explained how to use "so that" and "in order to." (**See Appendix 3: Step 5**).

Lastly, the writer asked his students to read the summarized paper because the summarizing paper only needs the main information. In addition, the students were asked to edit the paragraph by the use of writing process as revising and editing. (**See writing process**).

Conclusion

The guidelines for teaching students' English summary writing, the teachers who teach or train their students summarizing texts should teach their students step by step. First rising the reading technique: skimming and scanning, finding the main idea, major and minor supporting details of the text and then use the writing process; planning: taking note, writing mind map etc. After that, the students should be taught to transfer their notes or mind map into the first draft to the last draft concerning revising and editing. Additionally, the teachers should not forget to guide their students about the use of conjunction or linking words should be taught. Finally, the students should be taught re-writing the summarizing paper and use their own words.

References

Bean, J. C., Chappell, V. & Gillam, A. M. (2004). *Characteristics of a Summary*. Retrieved August 23, 2015, from About.com/od/rg/g/summaryterm.html

Byrne, D. (1982). *Teaching Writing Skill: Contexts for writing: the use of texts*. UK: Longman.

Caesar, J. (2012). *Writing Summary: How long should my summary be?*. Retrieved September 22, 2012, from <http://srjcwritingcenter.com/summaries/summaries.html>

Cox, M., Harvey, C., A. & Page, S. E. (2007). *The Library Media Specialist in the Writing Process*. The Writing Process, Worthington, OH: Linworth Publishing, Inc.

Doyle, A. (2012). *Writing Guide: Paraphrase and Summary*. The University of Kansas, KU Writing Center.

Hamp-Lyons, L. & Heasley, B. (1993). *Study Writing*. Scotland: Cambridge University Press.

Harris, J. (1993). *Introducing Writing*. New Zealand: Penguin English.

Hedge, T. (2000). *Teaching and Learning in the Language Classroom*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kennedy, M. L., Kennedy, W. J. & Smith, H. M. (2000). *Writing in The Disciplines: A Reader For Writers*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Kroll, B. (1991). *Second Language Writing: Research Insights for the Classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Langan, J. (1987). College Writing Skills. Preparing A Summary. McGraw-Hill International Editions. *English Language Series, 106*, 203-205.

Mahathananont, S. & Phongphood, K. (1994). *Teaching Material 3*. Thailand Department of English. Thailand: Siam University.

Marsen, S. (2003). *Professional Writing. The Complete Guide for business Industry and IT. Research and Information Management*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Northan, J. (2011). *Writing a Lay Summary is Easy, Right?: Latest Research and Knowledge Exchange News*. Retrieved September 22, 2012, from <http://blogs.bournemouth.ac.uk/research>

Palmer, B. C., Hafner, M. L. & Sharp, M. F. (1994). *Developing Cultural Literacy Through the Writing Process*. Boston: A Division of Paramount Publishing.

Pappas, C. C., Kiefer, B. Z. & Levstik, L. S. (1995). *An Integrated Language Perspective in the Elementary School*. New York: Longman Publishers.

Reid, S. (2000). *The Prentice Hall Guide for College Writers*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall Upper Saddle River.

Reid, S. (2003). *Academic Writing: Writing the Summary: Definition and Basic Information. Characteristics of a Summary*. Retrieved September 26, 2012, from <http://www.academicdesk.org/2009/11/writing-summary-definiton-and-basic.html>

Semple, J. (2009). *Writing the Summary: Definition and Basic Information. How to write a summary.* Retrieved September 26, 2012, from <http://www.academicdesk.org/2009/11/writing-summary-definiton-and-basic.html>

Smith, E. L. & Bernhardt, S. A. (1997). *Writing at Work, Professional Writing Skills For People On The Job, NTC.* USA: Lincolnwood.

Tribble. C. (1997). *Writing.* Oxford University Press, 18, 115.

Wehmeyer, D. (2012). *Summary Writing, Learning activities help people succeed-find your success here.* Retrieved June 14, 2012, from <http://www.wisc-online.com/objects/ViewObject.aspx?ID=TRG2603>

Wong, S. (1983). *Summary Writing Principles and Practice.* Singapore: Pan Pacific Book Distributors.

Wright, J. (2012). *The Savvy Teacher's Guide: Reading Interventional That Work. Keywords: A Memorization Strategy.* Retrieved September 25, 2012, from www.interventioncentral.org

Appendix 1: Wong (1983), the suggestion for teaching of summary writing.

“Trees are important to man. However, we are cutting them down faster than nature or man can replace them. As a result we are suffering for our wastage of timber. We are in the middle of a world-wide timber shortage. The situation is worsening all the time.”

Wong (1983) suggested that this text should be categorized and separated relevant from irrelevant information as the following.

The theme:	Tree.
The main idea:	We are in the middle of a worldwide timber shortage.
The supporting idea:	man is cutting them too fast and wasting timber.

Then, the students have to write by creating something relevant to them. To this example, they should be able to use cohesive device to make relevant of information.

“We are in the middle of a worldwide timber shortage because man is cutting them down too fast and wasting timber.”

Appendix 2: Wright (2012), the suggestion for teaching of summary writing.

Similarly, Wright (2012) suggested his students to summarize a text by finding keywords and emphasize important ideas and facts as the example below.

Three major classes of processes cause the cycling of carbon in aquatic and terrestrial systems. The first includes the assimilatory and assimilatory reactions of carbon in photosynthesis and respiration. The second class includes the physical exchange of carbon dioxide between the atmosphere and oceans, lakes, and streams. The third type of process that drives the cycling of carbon consists of the dissolution and precipitation (deposition) of carbonate compounds as sediments, particularly limestone and dolomite.

Then, he taught and showed his students to summarized the text and organized important ideas.

Carbon cycles through ecological systems are three ways: Firstly, photosynthesis and respiration. Secondly, physical exchange between the atmosphere and bodies of water and thirdly, depositing or dissolving of mineral sediments such as limestone.

In the example, he made connection between sentences of the surface text and re-write the information.

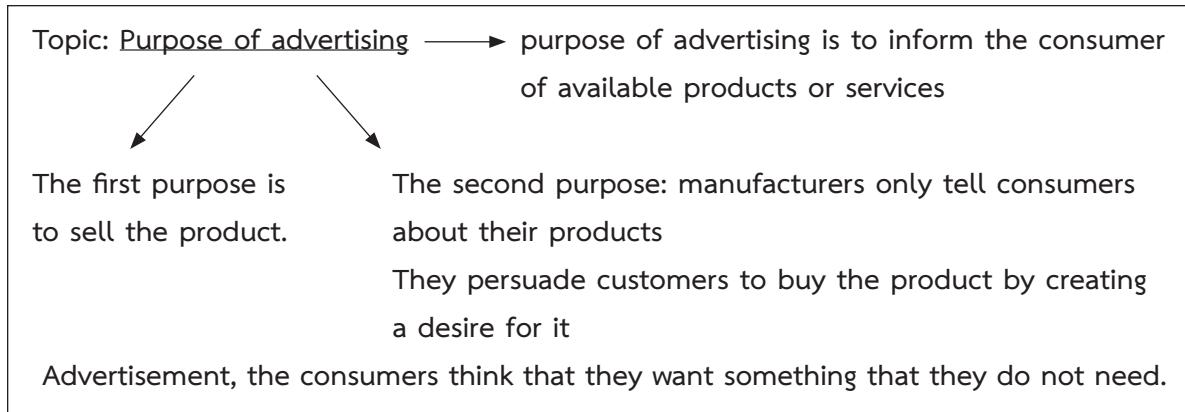
Appendix 3: The writer's method applied for teaching summary writing.

Appendix 3: Step 1

The most obvious purpose of advertising is to inform the consumer of available products or services. The first purpose is to sell the product. The second purpose might be more important to the manufacturers than the first. The manufacturers go beyond only telling consumers about their products. They also try to persuade customers to buy the product by creating a desire for it. Because of advertisement, consumers think that they want something that they do not need. After buying something, the purchaser cannot always explain why it was bought.

Mahathananont & Phongphood (1994)

Appendix 3: Step 2



Appendix 3: Step 3

Purpose of advertising is to inform the consumer of available products or services. The first purpose is to sell the product and the second purpose, manufacturers only tell consumers about their products. They persuade customers to buy the product by creating a desire for it. Advertisement, the consumers think that they want something that they do not need.

Appendix 3: Step 4

The purpose of advertising is to inform the consumer about products or services. Firstly, it is to sell the product. Secondly, manufacturers only tell consumers about their products in order to persuade customers to buy the product.

Appendix 3: Step 5

For example:

so that + clause

- Manufacturers tell consumers about their products so that they persuade customers to buy the product.

in order to + V1

- Manufactures tell consumers about their products in order to persuade customers to buy the product.

Additionally, the writer told the students to change the words to shape the language for example:

The first purpose → Firstly

The second purpose → Secondly



Charisopon Inthapat received his Master Degree in Applied Linguistics in English Language Teaching from King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi and Bachelor Degree in Business Administration in Accounting of Siam University. In past, he was lecturer at five universities; King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi, Bangkok university, South East Asia university, Sripatum university (Chonburi) and Payapiwat Institute of Management and British American Language Institute. Moreover, he was the host of cable TV. Channel of Miccell Media Co., Ltd. in English for Engineer and he is a columnist of monthly magazine: Thailand Construction Variety in the column of English for Engineer. Furthermore, he was an accountant in CP Group; Bangkok Produce Co., Ltd. and Dynamic Intertransport Co., Ltd. Present, he is English lecturer at Panyapiwat Institute of Management (PIM). He has taught English from 1997 to present and his English teaching experience is 18 years.