

## A Study of Using English Parallel Structure to Improve Writing Skill of Undergraduate Students

การศึกษาการใช้โครงสร้างภาษาอังกฤษแบบคู่ขนานเพื่อพัฒนาทักษะการเขียนของนักศึกษาระดับปริญญาตรี

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### Abstract

The purposes of this research were: 1) to study English parallel structure used by undergraduate students, 2) to analyze English parallel structure used by undergraduate students, and 3) to find out the consequences of using English parallel structure by undergraduate students. The study employed both qualitative and quantitative research methods. The sample group of the study comprises 60 students in the 1st – 4th year who studying a program in Teaching English from Buriram Buddhist College and Surin Campus. The data collection was questionnaire, Pre-Test, Post-Test Technique, group discussion, in-depth interview, and participant observation. The methods of Mean and Percentage were used in this research to analyze the data.

#### The research results found that:

1. English parallel structure is an important element of proper writing. Words, phrases, and clauses should all be parallel when linked together in a series or connected with coordinating conjunctions, correlative conjunctions, and phrases and clauses of comparison. Combinations and patterns of words should all agree with the subject. The sentence structures comprise words, groups of words that perform the same function. If they are any part of speech, they must be of the same type with conjunctions being connected, such as and, but, or, etc.

2. The development of writing skills of the students who have been trained in parallel writing skills in the previous exercises. That is, from observing the results of students' English writing skills training; it is shown that students' writing abilities have improved significantly. This exercise has the effect of making students develop skills in noticing words in sentences, word positions in sentences, conjunctions used in parallel structures, various sentence patterns, etc.

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3. The test of the knowledge and understanding of the sample group was classified into three structures, namely, 1) in terms of remembering, the sample group was able to write down vocabulary and classify words as well as translate short sentences, 2) in terms of understanding, the sample group was able to understand short, uncomplicated sentence structures, and 3) in terms of application, the sample group was able to use their memory and understanding of the structure to correctly do exercises according to the structure of sentences that were not very complex at the beginning to moderate levels respectively.

**Keywords:** English Parallel Structure, Writing Skill, Undergraduate Student

### บทคัดย่อ

การวิจัยนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อ 1) ศึกษาโครงสร้างภาษาอังกฤษแบบคู่ขานของนักศึกษาระดับปริญญาตรี 2) วิเคราะห์โครงสร้างภาษาอังกฤษแบบคู่ขานของนักศึกษาระดับปริญญาตรี และ 3) ค้นหาผลการใช้โครงสร้างภาษาอังกฤษแบบคู่ขานของนักศึกษาระดับปริญญาตรี เป็นการศึกษาวิจัยเชิงคุณภาพและเชิงปริมาณ กลุ่มตัวอย่างประกอบด้วยนิสิตชั้นปีที่ 1-4 ที่กำลังศึกษาในหลักสูตรการสอนภาษาอังกฤษ มหาวิทยาลัยมหาจุฬาลงกรณราชวิทยาลัย วิทยาลัยสหบุรีรัมย์และวิทยาเขตสุรินทร์ จำนวน 60 คน การเก็บข้อมูลประกอบด้วยแบบสอบถาม การทดสอบก่อนและหลัง การอภิปรายกลุ่ม การสัมภาษณ์เชิงลึก และการสังเกตผู้เข้าร่วม งานวิจัยนี้ใช้วิธีการหาค่าเฉลี่ยและร้อยละในการวิเคราะห์ข้อมูล

### ผลการวิจัยพบว่า

1. โครงสร้างประโยคในภาษาอังกฤษแบบคู่ขานเป็นองค์ประกอบสำคัญในการเขียนที่ถูกต้อง คำ วลี และประโยคทั้งหมดควรเป็นแบบคู่ขานเมื่อเชื่อมโยงกันเป็นชุดหรือเชื่อมโยงกันด้วยคำสันฐานประสาน คำสันฐานคู่ขาน วลีและประโยคเปรียบเทียบ การผสมคำและรูปแบบของคำควรสอดคล้องกับประธาน โครงสร้างประโยคประกอบด้วยคำ กลุ่มคำที่ทำหน้าที่เดียวกัน หากคำเหล่านี้เป็นส่วนหนึ่งของคำพูด จะต้องเป็นประเภทเดียวกัน โดยใช้คำเชื่อม เช่น and, but, or เป็นต้น

2. การพัฒนาทักษะการเขียนของนิสิตที่ได้รับการฝึกฝนทักษะการเขียนแบบคู่ขานในแบบฝึกหัดก่อนเรียน กล่าวคือ จากการสังเกตผลการฝึกทักษะการเขียนภาษาอังกฤษของนิสิตพบว่ามีการพัฒนาขึ้นอย่างเห็นได้ชัด ซึ่งทำให้นิสิตพัฒนาทักษะในการสังเกตคำในประโยค ตำแหน่งของคำในประโยค คำเชื่อมที่ใช้ในโครงสร้างคู่ขาน และรูปแบบประโยคต่าง ๆ เป็นต้น

3. การทดสอบความรู้ความเข้าใจของกลุ่มตัวอย่าง แบ่งเป็น 3 โครงสร้าง คือ 1) ด้านการจดจำ กลุ่มตัวอย่างสามารถจำคำศัพท์และจำแกนคำได้ รวมถึงแปลประโยคสั้น ๆ ได้ 2) ด้านการเข้าใจ กลุ่มตัวอย่างสามารถเข้าใจโครงสร้างประโยคสั้น ๆ ไม่ซับซ้อน และ

3) ด้านการนำไปใช้ กลุ่มตัวอย่างสามารถใช้ความจำและความเข้าใจโครงสร้าง ทำแบบฝึกหัด ตามโครงสร้างประโยคที่ไม่ซับซ้อนมากในระดับเริ่มต้นถึงปานกลางได้อย่างถูกต้อง ตามลำดับ

**คำสำคัญ:** โครงสร้างภาษาอังกฤษแบบคู่ขนาน, ทักษะการเขียน, นักศึกษาปริญญาตรี

## 1. Introduction

English is the language used in international communication in everyday life for education and careers. Students at the university level in the future will become graduates entering the labor market which must communicate internationally who therefore must have the ability to use sufficient English by means of communication. Good learners of English must have the knowledge, ability to write letters, spelling, use of language structures, vocabulary selection or group words, and then bring these abilities to write out as they want. But the learners often have problems with vocabulary, sentence structure, grammar, punctuation, and often have flaws in writing (Rivers, 1970: 243-244).

In modern times, communication is not limited to domestic only, but it is an international communication, both work and education in the university needs to have English language proficiency which consisting of 4 skills: writing, speaking, reading and writing. In the teaching of all 4 English skills, writing skills are the most complex skills that require many elements to make the learners write correctly (Wanida Phenkongkam, 1987: 17). In addition, writing skills are the most difficult skills of all 4 skills. Students must use knowledge such as grammar, vocabulary, and language use to communicate their thoughts (Wilaiporn Thanasuwan, 1987: 62). Accordingly, writing does not use only the ability to compile sentences correctly according to grammar, but it is the choice to transfer the experience with the purpose and must also relate to the skills of choosing the language to suit the situation as well (Pitsinee Khaow-Urai, 2021: 1-12).

In a country where the citizens can use English to communicate effectively. It has many advantages in development such as economy, society, technology and education for the context of teaching and learning English in Thailand, it is the teaching of English in Thailand that is teaching English as a foreign language because it does not use English as the official language. The opportunity to use English writing and speaking skills for Thai students in real situations is less than reading and writing skills, which is a skill that can be used to study and research at any time. Thus, both reading and writing skills are important to learners (Saisunee Termsinsuk, 2006: 85). Students must be trained to compile ideas that

will come out in the form of sentences in order to form a message that is accepted in the native group (Boonsiri Phong-Aksorn, 1981: 42).

As the researcher who is a lecturer in Teaching English at the higher education level, who is always aware of the importance of writing and has experienced problems with the writing of the undergraduate students. The researcher is therefore interested in finding solutions to solve this problem. The ways that researcher thinks it can help to eliminate this problem is to use textbook of English structure for the undergraduate students to practice more. The textbook will be a tool for effective learning. The textbook does not only helps to communicate well, but also allows the students to have automatic communication behavior. It can be used to practice every aspect of the language and will be completely meaningful when it can be used to communicate (Nuanyai Numee, 1986: 4).

As the result of this problem, students cannot use vocabulary to write and communicate in the form of sentences. Therefore, the development of teaching and learning styles must be developed by encouraging learners to be able to write. The researcher has studied the techniques of practice in parallel writing skill in order to develop the process of writing English skill in order to increase writing competencies that encourage learners to create creativity in learning vocabulary, sentences and more meaning as well as understand the pattern of the word group and the structure of the sentence more and more, resulting in the ability from learning until they can use the vocabulary to write and convey meaning as they needed. The results of this research will be a guideline for the instructor to improve teaching methods and develop writing skills to increase the efficiency of using English writing skill more effectively.

## 2. Objectives of the Research

1. To study English parallel structure used by undergraduate students.
2. To analyze English parallel structure used by undergraduate students.
3. To find out the consequences of using English parallel structure by undergraduate students.

## 3. Research Methodology

### 3.1 Research Design

1. Collect data from English articles, thesis, magazines, textbooks and academic journals from many resources; internet and various.

2. Compile English parallel structure: sentences and vocabularies from document i.e. English articles, thesis, magazines, and textbooks.

3. Select randomly 60 undergraduate students, (30 students from Buriram Buddhist College and 30 students from MCU (Surin Campus) who are studying in Teaching English program as the key informants.

4. Study the information about English parallel structure and the development of English writing skill by using English parallel structure which is classified definitely in writing techniques.

The researcher conducts the study based on experimental research (qualitative and quantitative research procedures) mainly using pre-test and post-test activities, interviewing people, population's observation and the questionnaires. The pre-test and post-test and questionnaire are revised and approved by the research advisors to achieve content validity, clearness of the instructions, the survey, the format, and the series of the questions.

Both the pre-test and post-test used in the research are created by the researcher to access the research purpose, the undergraduate students' needs and university curriculums. Accomplished tools were mostly compiled document i.e. English articles, thesis, magazines, and textbooks; 10 sentences of English parallel structure with coordinating conjunctions, 10 sentences of English parallel structure with correlative conjunctions, and 10 sentences of English parallel structure with Phrases and Clauses of Comparison. The tools are chosen by the researcher to consider the authentic tools. The questions used for the research are created by the researcher as well; all of research tools were checked by research advisors and English specialists who are working at Buriram Buddhist College and MCU, Surin Campus.

The pre-test was run to the 60 undergraduate students on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021. The researcher gave them 2 hours to complete the test. From May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021 to June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021, the undergraduate students were taught by the researcher presenting English parallel structure related to the research into the classes for 5 weeks or 10 hours (2 hours per week). The contents; English parallel structure used in the tools in different situations and meaning.

The researcher, for example, used 10 sentences of English parallel structure with coordinating conjunctions, 10 sentences of English parallel structure with correlative conjunctions, and 10 sentences of English parallel structure with

Phrases and Clauses of Comparison in different situations for sentences to test the writing skill whether in the pre-test or post-test. After the instruction for 14 hours, the undergraduate students were taken for the post-test which the same test as the pre-test. But the undergraduate students did not realize it would be the same because the researcher did not inform them that they have to take the same test again.

The researcher interviewed the undergraduate students about parallel structure that they could really understand writing skill which were used in the test. The undergraduate students were developed skill of remembering English parallel structure, skill of understanding English parallel structure, and skill of applying English parallel structure respectively. The students revealed that they sometimes remember and understand some sentences and meanings of the sentences and vocabularies only for the short structures. But the long structures used in the test, they did not remember and understand and were confused. The important points are that they are not familiar with the parallel structures. Most of undergraduate students confronted with problems. Now that the five-week action was considered a period of time long enough, the undergraduate students did not forget what was they tested from the pre-test. Moreover, they could apply what they learned from the authentic tools in the pre-test provided in the classes to accomplish the tests in the post-test more effectively.

**Figure 1:** Shows the research design of the study



Pre-test: the first duration of pre-test on English sentences of parallel structures would take place at the beginning of group discussion in 1<sup>st</sup> week.

Worksheet 1: the second duration of worksheet 1 on English sentences of parallel structures would take place at the experimental group in 2<sup>nd</sup> week.

Worksheet 2: the third duration of worksheet 2 on English sentences of parallel structures would take place at the experimental group in 3<sup>rd</sup> week.

Worksheet 3: the fourth duration of worksheet on English sentences of parallel structures would take place at the experimental group in 4<sup>th</sup> week.

Post-test: the fifth duration of post-test on English sentences of parallel structures would take place at the end of group discussion in 5<sup>th</sup> week.

### 3.2 Research Tools

The research tools in this study consist of pre-test, group discussion, post-test, in-depth interview, participant observation and questionnaire, designed specifically for the study.

#### Pre-Test

Pre-test is very important tool to check up general information of the population and English writing skill by using English parallel structure to know background of writing skill before preparing a group discussion one time per two weeks for 8 weeks to follow and improve writing skill.

#### Group Discussion

This part was set up by the researcher one time per two week for 7 weeks. The contents pointed to use English parallel structure to train and measure the undergraduate students around 8 times in 2 months from May 2021 to June 2021 before post-test.

#### In-Depth Interview

Researcher points out to interview people who are directly good at English language, especially in writing skill, related to this research consisting of 2 scholars, 7 English lecturers, and 1 English native speaker. In in-depth interviews, apart from the researcher, students are also taken to collect interview data in order to enhance students' English skills.

#### Participant Observation

This part uses to observe overall performances and reactions in using English parallel structure of the population who participated in group discussion. It is very useful for the study. In in-depth interviews, apart from the researcher, students are also taken to collect interview data in order to enhance students' English skills.

#### Post-Test

The post-test is exceedingly to organize after training the population (pre-test) by testing and joining group discussion. It is considered on the final test paper of writing process to collect data from using English parallel structure after completing the group discussion in week 7.

English parallel structure are used for taking in four sets, take the time to teach the exercises for 2 hours of English structure for the undergraduate

students. English writing achievement test with a total of 60 items for undergraduate students used to measure before and after learning.

### **3.3 Data Collection**

The researcher collected information from documentary survey, for example, thesis books, academic books, textbooks, academic journals, articles, and particular websites. For those which are used to support particular information and research study. Apart from that, the documentary survey is to be good guidelines in supporting the research because it can make the research gets better and be different version from the previous study.

### **3.4 Data Analysis**

To analyze the data obtained from all completed questionnaires, pre-test and post-test, the Statistic Package for Social and Science Program (SPSS). To process the data and analyze the answers obtained from the target groups, descriptive analysis (percentage and mean) was applied. The percentage and mean are used to analyze entire variables measured in each section of the questionnaires.

To analyze the English parallel structure test, pre-test and post-test is used to measure whether the different levels of the writing skill, and select the parallel structure to improve writing skill that are statistically significant or not. After the entire data are analyzed, they will be set and interpreted in the tables.

## **4. Research Results**

From the various data analysis, the researcher, therefore, summarizes the findings according to the following objectives of the study:

**4.1 After studying English parallel structure, the researcher found that parallel structure is an important element of proper writing.** Words, phrases and clauses should all be parallel when linked together in a series or connected with coordinating conjunctions, combinations and patterns of words should all agree with the subject. The sentence structures made up of words, groups of words that perform the same function. If they are any type of part of speech, they must be of the same type, with conjunctions being connected, such as and, but, or, etc. Single words, multi-word phrases and clauses can be made parallel by ensuring each item is equal. Examples of parallel structure include multiple gerunds or – ing verbal that function as nouns, past participles, infinitive

phrases (to be) and complete clauses including a subject and predicate. Never mix and match when using parallel structure to create a list or series.

**4.2 The test showed that the students had different backgrounds in English writing skills.** It can be observed from the results of the English writing practice test with English parallel structure that the learning process is divided into 3 sections: 1) Remember, 2) Understand, and 3) Apply. The results indicated that in the all part of writing comprehension of coordinating conjunction, correlative conjunction, and phrases and clauses of comparison, it was found that from an initial introduction to the practice material before taking the test, many students were able to recognize English parallel structures from the sentences in the exercise that were given as examples. That is, from observing the results of students' English writing skills training; it is shown that students' writing abilities have improved significantly. This exercise has the effect of making students develop skills in noticing words in sentences, word positions in sentences, conjunctions used in parallel structures, various sentence patterns etc. However, the exercises have a variety of sentences that are randomly tested, it can be said that this writing exercise can be used to further develop students' English writing skills.

**4.3 The findings showed that the English writing skill was taken by a great number of the populations when they were on the test.** In contrast to the pre-test, writing skill of the undergraduate student before testing English parallel structure of the populations is at medium level but after they have taken the post-test, the skill is run to be at high level. Therefore, parallel structure is the improvement of English writing skill.

Regarding writing skill of the undergraduate students was improved by using English parallel structure in the pre-test, the findings showed that they could learn most of parallel sentences, but their writing skill was quite low. When they have tested in the post-test, their writing skill was very high. This indicates that the populations knew little about writing skill in English. Regarding the populations' knowledge of writing skill, they rated highly the understanding as the closest in parallel structure. Thus the sentence and vocabulary were not complicated and easy to understand, but the sentence structures were complicated and quite difficult to comprehend in writing.

It is important to note that writing skill is one of the most needed English skills for undergraduate students who are studying in Teaching English. Because the findings showed that writing skill was improved into high level after taking the post-test through English parallel structure in the test. A large number of populations face the different sentences and structures then they can mostly understand the contents from the findings concluded in the previous chapter, all vocabularies are easy to improve the writing skill in English due to short and compact items. But the English sentences are pretty difficult to improve writing skill due to having a long sentence and complex components. By comparison, entirely improvement of writing skill by using parallel structure is good method.

At the end of this chapter, an overall discussion of the findings and suggestion for further study are also proposed. Especially, the findings of this study will be useful to persons and students who were interested in English writing skill due to improvement of other skills as speaking, reading, and writing. In addition, another important finding, relating to an effective English learning experience, is the preparations that can help the undergraduate students improve their writing skill by using parallel structure, Teaching English, Buriram Buddhist College and Surin Campus.

## 5. Discussion of Research Results

The research on a study of English parallel structure to improve writing skill of undergraduate students has discussed as follow:

5.1 From the research, the researcher found that the use of English parallel structures for the development of writing skills of undergraduate students in the field of Teaching English has three effects that cause changes and development of writing skills: 1) Motivation for learning English 2) Attitudes in learning English and behavior change in learning English.

5.2 Using a variety of English parallel structures, both practicing writing from English example sentences and a variety of vocabulary, as a guide for practicing writing language in different situations that is similar to real-life experiences. Developing English writing skills that focus on learners (target groups) as practitioners and as the center of teaching, giving learners (target groups) a positive attitude and being able to develop behaviors and writing skills in English. It will also make the learners (target groups) familiar with the use of English in

writing. Each activity gives the target audience an opportunity to practice using the language to communicate with others and to apply the knowledge gained in their studies. From the in-depth interview observations, it was found that the target group has interest and intention in the form of informal education that does not focus on classroom learning. Therefore, the English parallel structure is used to develop all 3 types of English writing skills. Creating a variety of learning channels in the classroom is another thing that will benefit the learning process that allows students to develop their potential through direct and tangible experiences.

5.3 Major problems for the development of English writing skills are lack of basic knowledge of grammar, taking a long time to think in Thai and then arranging them in English, not knowing English words, and fear of writing words or English sentences incorrect. Problems with a lack of basic knowledge in grammar resulted in a lack of confidence in writing, most of the problems were caused by the sample itself, such as feeling anxious when writing in English, unable to think of a word, resulting in a lack of confidence and fear when writing in English, fear that the reader will not understand what the students want to convey, that the problem will arise from their ability to use the language and knowledge of vocabulary and grammar. It is not enough to make it impossible to communicate in writing. When there is a language problem causing concern and lack of confidence in communicating in English, the writing skill in English is not developed.

5.4 Providing English writing skills learning to support undergraduate students to have a guideline for practicing English communication skills by applying the 3 parallel structures to combine in practice on their own. Learn continuously throughout life by distributing English language development opportunities evenly within the classroom, community and society around them, both living and non-living. Studying or learning to improve English writing skills is a hospitable environment and factors that support media, knowledge resources, people, and situations so that individuals can learn in a variety of ways that learn and develop according to their interests.

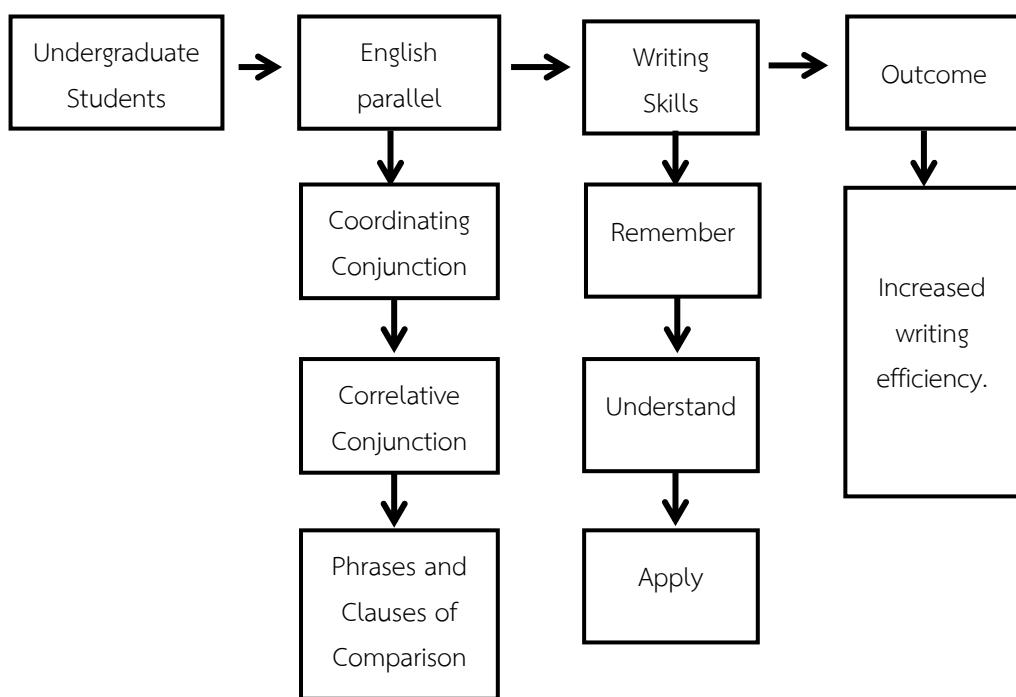
## 6. Suggestion

As this study has been conducted from Buriram Buddhist College and Surin Campus, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, based on the findings and the conclusion of the study, it is suggested that further study be explored in the following areas:

1. Further studies should include improving English vocabularies and sentences confronted by the undergraduate students, majoring in Teaching English, Buriram Buddhist College and Surin Campus, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University.
2. Further study should find out writing techniques: English grammar, spelling, and Punctuation to improve writing skills.
3. Further study should be more variety of writing techniques; for example, Descriptive writing, Narrative writing, Persuasive writing, and Expository writing.

## 7. Knowledge Received

From analyzing the data, the researcher created a model for developing English writing skills by using parallel structures as follows:



Model of developing writing skills by using English parallel structure

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