CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Obviously, English is accepted as the global lingua franca in many parts of the world especially in the era of globalization. It has become the most common language of communication for the world's citizen. People use English to communicate in education, business, technology, and academic, etc. (Kannan. 2010). Moreover, these institutions use English to increase understanding between people of different native languages domestically. It also improves cooperation when dealing with foreign business and increases competitiveness at the international levels. In addition, English gives more opportunities to people who use the language well to get better jobs and a higher salary. Consequently, English is necessary for people's lives in every country all over the world.

The role of English in Thailand is crucial and English is used as a foreign language (EFL). Especially, as at the present Thailand is preparing its citizen for the membership of the ASEAN community. This is due to the start in the year 2015 and English will be used as the official language of communication among all its 10 members. This is expressed in the action plan of the ASEAN Socio-cultural Community blueprint (ASCC). Consequently, if Thailand is to compete and interact effectively in the knowledge- based economy, it is necessary to encourage the citizen to be able to use all English skills effectively. Particularly, writing skill, because people use writing in many ways such as writing e-mail, writing resume, applying jobs, and filling form, etc.

The importance of writing is vital in terms of its being used extensively in communication with other people across the world. It is used as a tool to convey the purposes, the expression of ideas, thoughts, and memories into written form such as sentences, paragraphs or compositions by the writer to the reader. There are many kinds of writing such as writing composition, letters, theses, articles, projects, books, etc. Thus, writing is presented as a part and parcel of education. More importantly, many things in people's daily lives involve writing, such as memos, reports, applications, and e-mails. Therefore, people cannot carry out their duties without writing because there will be much information unsent and lots of knowledge left out. Hence, the importance of writing is paramount.

Writing skills seem to be difficult for EFL students in the language learning (Richards. 1990). As a result, they have a poor background knowledge in the target language and a lack of practice, as well as a low motivation to write in English. Following to Richard and Renandya (2002), there are many writing difficulties such as how to generate and organize ideas by using an appropriate choice of vocabulary, sentences, and paragraph organization and how to put such idea into intelligible text.

Results on observation by the researcher revealed that there are many problems regarding writing found in the classroom. Firstly, students do not want to write because they could not write accordingly to the topics assigned. They hesitate to write as they do not know how to start, or which words they should use. Secondly, they write using grammar and structure incorrectly. They feel confused using tenses to make sentences, and could not arrange the words into sentences. The teachers does not understand what they are trying to say. Thirdly, the students have problems about understanding text types in English. Most of them do not know how to write in

different types of text. Fourthly, when they write paragraphs, it appears that their contents do not cover or involve the topics given, they write by translating from Thai into English word by word, using the wrong words, and spelling words incorrectly.

Even though, the researcher used technique such as dictation in order to help them to be able to write words correctly, they still made the same mistakes. Additionally, mind mapping was used to improve the students' writing in order to help them to plan what they were going to write according to the topics given. However, most students still do not write well because they have no idea about the topics, and do not know how to start and write well. Hence, the researcher has found that genre-based approach should be used as the method to solve the problems of students' writing.

Genre-based approach was developed during the 1980's to help young writers improved their writing skill by letting them to be aware of the rhetorical organization and linguistic features related to a particular genre. Genre does not refer to only types of literary texts but also to the predictable and recurring patterns of everyday, academic and literary texts occurring within a particular culture (Hammond & Derewianka. 2001). Bhatia (1999 : 25) asserts that practice of genre is the same as playing a game in which not only game players but also novice writers need to familiarize themselves with rules and conventions in order to behave appropriately. According to Swales (1990), the genres which share the same purposes belong to the same text-types.

It is believed that this approach will help improve the students' writing. Obviously, the students will use language as a resource to construct meanings. In addition, genre-based approach makes genres explicit which helps the students to

understand genres and use them as a model to create their own writing to convey their experiences, information and ideas. Besides, the students can write down more whatever they think in their mind and state it on paper by using a generic and lexicogrammatical structure. Genre-based approach does not only provide an important frame of reference which helps students to identify, understand and interpret texts but also provides the students with comprehensible input of schema for organizing different types of information. Along with that, they will learn how to present content in ways which are most appropriate to their purposes, be better in writing and have more self-efficacy toward writing.

It is noted that as the researcher reviews the literature, there are no more researches conducted on genre-based approach at the primary school level. Therefore, this research is like the pioneer that the researcher wants to fulfill mostly. Besides, this study will be as guidelines for developing teaching, learning and research works for English teachers, other educators and persons who are interested in teaching writing by using genre-based approach. Moreover, it will be as guidelines for all teachers in terms of choosing genre-based approach to enhance students in other levels to improve their writing ability.

1.2 Research Objectives

In accordance with the stated problems, the objectives of this research are as follows:

1.2.1 To find out the efficiency of lesson plans of English writing on genre-based approach for grade 6 students based on the criterion set at 75/75.

1.2.2 To compare the writing ability of grade 6 students before and after

learning through genre-based approach.

1.2.3 To compare the students' self- efficacy toward writing before and after learning through genre-based approach.

1.3 Research Questions

In accordance with the state purposes, three research questions are raised:

1.3.1 Do lesson plans have efficiency based on the criterion set at 75/75?

1.3.2 Does genre-based approach improve the students' writing ability?

1.3.3 Does genre-based approach improve the students' self-efficacy toward writing?

1.4 Research Hypotheses

1.4.1 The students' writing ability post-test mean score is higher than pre-test mean score.

1.4.2 The students' self-efficacy toward writing after learning through genre-based approach is higher than before learning.

1.5 Significance of the Research

It is expected that the results of this research will be:

1.5.1 The guidelines for developing teaching, learning and research works for English teachers, other educators and persons who are interested in teaching writing by using genre-based approach.

1.5.2 The guidelines for all teachers in terms of choosing genre-based approach to enhance students' writing ability.

1.6 Scope and Limitation of the Research

1.6.1 Population and Samples

The population of this study were 88 grade 6 students from 3 classes who took fundamental English (E 16101) course during the second semester of academic year 2013 at Thatumsanitratwitthayakhom School, Thatum District, Surin Province under Surin Primary Educational Service Area Office 2.

The samples of the study were 26 students from one class of grade 6 students who took fundamental English (E 16101) course during the second semester of academic year 2013 at Thatumsanitratwitthayakhom School, Thatum District, Surin Province under Surin Primary Educational Service Area Office 2. The samples were selected by using simple random sampling technique with classroom as a sampling unit by drawing a slot.

1.6.2 Variables of the Research

1.6.2.1 The independent variable was genre-based approach.

1.6.2.2 The dependent variables were the efficiency of the lesson plans, writing ability, and self-efficacy.

1.6.3 Contents of the Research

This research studies only narrative writing and procedural writing because the researcher chooses the topics based on the Basic Education Core Curriculum B.E. 2551 (A.D. 2008) which entails that after graduating grade 6, students will have the qualities as follows: firstly, the students should be able to speak/write in an exchange in interpersonal communication; use orders and requests and give instructions; speak/write to express needs; ask for help; accept and refuse to give help in simple situations; speak and write to ask for and give data about

themselves, friends, families and matters around them ; speak/write to express their feelings about various matters and activities around them, as well as provide brief justifications. Secondly, the students should be able to speak/write to give data about themselves, friends and the surrounding environment ; draw pictures, plans, charts and tables to show the various data that they have heard and read ; speak/write to show opinions about various matters around them. Thirdly, they should be able to tell similarities/differences between the pronunciation of various kinds of sentences, use of punctuation marks and word order regarding structures of sentences in foreign languages and in Thai language; compare the similarities/differences between the festivals, celebrations and traditions of native speakers and those of Thais. Fourthly, they should be able to search for and collect the terms related to other learning areas from learning sources and present them through speaking/writing. Fifthly, they should be skillful in using foreign languages (with emphasis on listening, speaking, reading and writing) to communicate about themselves, their families, schools, the environment, foods, beverages, free time and recreation, health and welfare, selling and buying, and climate with vocabulary of around 1,050-1,200 words (concrete and abstract words). Lastly, they should be able to use simple and compound sentences to communicate meanings in various contexts.

The topics are as follows:

1.6.3.1 Narrative Writing : Myself

1.6.3.2 Narrative Writing : My Family

1.6.3.3 Procedural Writing : How to Make Omelet

1.6.3.4 Procedural Writing : How to Make Orange Juice

1.7 Definitions of Key Terms

1.7.1 Genre refers to patterns of organization that can be seen in a group of texts, is called moves or steps (Swales. 1990). There are two types of genre which are chosen as the topics of this study for the students to write as follows:

1.7.1.1 Narrative writing relates a clear sequence of events that occurs over time. Both what happens and the order in which the events occur are communicated to the reader. Effective narration requires a writer to give a clear sequence of events (fictional or non-fictional) and to provide elaboration.

1.7.1.2 Procedural writing is written to explain how something is done, in a series of sequenced steps. They are organized by goal, material, method and evaluation. Features of procedural writing including: detailed factual description, reader referred to in a general way (draw a line), linking words to do with time, tense is timeless.

1.7.2 Genre-based approach is as "a framework for language instruction" (Byram. 2004: 234). It supports students' writing with generalized, systematic guiding principles about how to produce meaningful passages.

1.7.3 Writing ability means the ability to interpret, clarify and retell in order correctly. In this study, writing ability means the students can write narrative writing and procedural writing by evaluating from writing rubrics, namely organization, development, sentence structure, word choice/grammar usage, and mechanics.

1.7.4 The Criterion set 75/75 is the score used to find out the efficiency of lesson plans as follows:

The first criterion set at 75 (efficiency of the process) is the percentage of students' total mean scores from the exercises scores of genre-based approach.

The second criterion set at 75 (efficiency of the outcome) is the percentage of students' total mean scores from the achievement test (Post-test).

1.7.5 Self-efficacy is the measure of the belief in one's own ability to complete tasks and reach goals. In this study, self-efficacy means confidence of the students toward writing before and after learning through genre-based approach.

1.7.6 Achievement test is a test of developed skill or knowledge. In this study, achievement tests mean the pre-test and post-test that consist of one narrative writing and one procedural writing. The students have to write by using at least 50 words, writing within 45 minutes, and having 20 scores for each.

1.7.7 Grade 6 students refer to grade 6 students who study fundamental English (E 16101) course during the second semester of academic year 2013 of Thatumsanitratwitthayakhom School, Thatum District, Surin Province under Surin Primary Educational Service Area Office 2.

1.8 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter presents the statement of the problems, research objectives, research questions, the significance of the research. Additionally, this chapter also presents the scope and limitations of the research, and the definitions of key terms. Thus, to achieve the research objectives, the literature review is presented in Chapter two.