DIFFICULTIES IN STUDYING WRITING OF ENGLISH-MAJORED SOPHOMORES AT A UNIVERSITY IN VIETNAM

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Abstract:
Writing plays an important role in studying a foreign language, especially English. However, students have faced a lot of difficulties in learning English writing. This study aimed to find out and analyze the students' difficulties in learning English writing skills. The participants of this research were fifty students who were English majored sophomores at Tay Do University. The instruments used in the present study were two questionnaires and an interview. The results showed that the students had seven difficulties in learning English writing such as difficulties with vocabulary, problems with grammar, problems with prior knowledge, troubles with organizing ideas, problems with allotted time, difficulties with teacher and difficulties with mother tongue. Among these difficulties, "allotted time" caused the most difficulty to the students. Generally, the results of this thesis stated that all of participants had difficulties in learning English writing, especially problem with allotted time.

Keywords: difficulties in writing, writing skill, learning English writing

1. Introduction

Nowadays, English has become an important language, perhaps the most important language of international communication. Studying English is known as a world trend. This trend is really suitable for the world situation, a situation of peace and cooperation. Studying English offers a lot of advantages to learners and satisfies lots of people's needs, from individual's needs to organizations' recruitment needs or companies' recruitment needs. This process is appropriate to the development of both society and humanity. However, it is not easy to study English well because learning English depends on satisfying four main English skills, such as listening, speaking, reading and writing. In addition, each skill asks learners for getting other small skills.

Regarding the necessity and importance of English language, English writing is also interpreted as a skill that learners join in the process of studying. Thanks to English writing, the learners can improve and can support other English skills because writing is

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known as the most difficult skill in English four main skills. In fact, writing demands different and various small skills which are constructed from lots of levels such as sentence level, paragraph level, essay level, etc. It is not easy for learners to satisfy the demands of writing.

For all above reasons, this study aimed to find out whether English majored sophomores encountered difficulties in writing or not. Moreover, this study also analyzed and classified their difficulties in learning writing to help the readers have a profound understanding about writing difficulties. Specifically, this research was carried out in order to answer two following questions.

1) What difficulties do English majored sophomores at Tay Do University face in studying English writing?
2) Which is the most prominent problem among the participants' writing difficulties?

2. Literature review

2.1 Definition of writing

Writing is defined by many linguists in a variety of ways. According to Hesse (2010, p.3), writing is a learning way. Hesse's definition is simple, but he offers the relationship of writing to education, study activities specifically. Come to another writing definition, Yakhontova (2003, p.19) indicates that *"writing is considered to be a complex cognitive process."* Two above terms show the quality of writing. Moreover, some linguists also describe writing functions. As an example, Wen (2007, p.8) affirms *"writing is regarded as a process that composes writers' thoughts in a language."* Generally, definitions of writing are diverse and all of them figure out the important role of writing in humanity communication.

2.2 The importance of writing

Writing is one of the most important skills of English. Writing not only improves individual's writing skills and knowledge but also supports other English main skills. Wen (2007, p.4) shows *"writing is gradually becoming an important issue nowadays in English."* According to Yakhontova (2003), English academic writing is formal and useful. Writing serves for various goals by its population. He also indicates some important characteristics of academic writing. They are *"an important feature of academic written discourse is a cautious manner of writing"* and *"English academic writing is a tendency to choose more formal alternatives when selecting words of different parts of speech."*

Feldmann and Usoff (2001) also agree that students' awareness of the importance of writing have to be heightened. That is the ultimate goal and is also the first step to help students write more effectively. In short, the authors mainly affirm the importance of writing which affect most English as a foreign language learners to help the learners get success.

2.3 Definition of writing difficulties

"Writing difficulties are problems learners encounter in the process of writing," Wen (2007, p.9) writes. Writing difficulties represent for weaknesses that learners, especially foreign people, get in studying English writing. According to him, many second and language learners have difficulties with English academic writing. He also indicates that both the cultural and linguistic differences can lead English as a foreign language learners to writing difficulties. Moreover, he also illustrates that linguistic differences might cause grammatical errors and misunderstandings in context. In general, Wen expresses both the quality and some factors that affect foreign language learners' English academic writing.

2.4 Some factors which affect writing
2.4.1 School motivation

School motivation is one of the most important factors in both teaching and studying. People need motivation to study well. As an example, Linnenbrink and Pintrich (2002, p. 313) state *"students need both the cognitive skill and the motivational will to do well in school."* All those authors imply necessity of motivation which is as an academic enabler for school success. Especially, to emphasize the importance of motivation in writing, Feldmann and Usoff (2001, p.3) claim *"'establish motivation for writing' as a key component of an effective writing assignment in classes."* In general, those linguistics pay much attention to the position and the importance of school motivation.

2.4.2 Prior knowledge

Prior knowledge of each people is considered as a key factor in education. According Amadieu, Van Gog, Paas, Tricot and Mariné (2009, p.6), prior knowledge level is a strong moderator of the relationship between the degree of the concept map structure and the learning outcomes. They indicate the reality of prior knowledge in education. Many authors mainly focus on the importance of prior knowledge because they recognize the position of prior knowledge in education. As an illustration, learners' prior knowledge is important because it allows people face with lots of matters in the process of study, they say. In writing aspect, Kellogg (1987, p.256) thinks the importance of knowledge in other tasks suggests that they should be a key factor in writing. In short, linguistics focuses on the importance of prior knowledge completely.

2.4.3 Time

Time is an important factor in education, especially time in class. Both teachers and students need time to finish their works, activities in class because the time in class is short generally. According to Smith (2000, p.656), the time of academic learning is defined strictly as the portion of time that students are actively engaged in instruction and leads directly them to demonstrated learning. The above definition shows the effect of time on learners. Moreover, the limit of time causes stress for both teachers and students in class. They have to arrange works to suitable for time limit. To emphasize the necessity of time

in class, Applebee and Langer (2006, p.5) show that *"the importance of devoting more time to writing instruction, recommending that the amount of time students spend writing should be at least doubled."* In short, both teachers and students need more time to finish their works in class.

2.4.4 Mother tongue

Mother tongue affect English as a foreign language learners. There is a general effect on learners by their mother tongue. Butzkamm (2003) indicates that "*the mother tongue, as a cognitive and pedagogical resource, is the greatest asset people bring to the task of foreign language learning*." The effect of mother tongue is so strong that Khati (2011, p.43) admits that teachers try to prevent their students from using first language in the classroom, but they cannot prevent students from using first language in their brains. It is agreed that the position of mother tongue strongly influence on English as a foreign language learners. Mother tongue is considered as the main tool of English as a foreign language learners in solving problems that are from works on class. Khati (2011) also states "*using English only, in English as a foreign language classrooms can lead to some problems because there would be no guarantee that the instructions and explanations are understood correctly*." Unexpectedly, mother tongue leads learners to using first language in every activity in English as a foreign language classroom.

2.4.5 School facilities

School facilities directly affect teaching and learning. According to Syakima, Sapri and Shahril (2011, p.210), there are many facilities provided in schools that support learning activities, especially educational goals. The quality of the facilities provided has a relationship with learning performance. These statements show the basic role of facilities in education. School facilities also show the importance of this objects in the aspect of education. As an example, Turnquist (1991, p.24) states *"a school facility can affect the degree of success of students and teachers."* Besides, they strongly affirm that *"it is important to provide effective facilities to the students for their learning activities"*. Generally, it is necessary to recognize the importance and the effects of school facilities.

2.5 Previous scientific studies

In the process of conducting this research, I got four previous scientific studies that supported and were also my rationales to carry out the study. Those authors had the same goal in finding writing difficulties of college students or university students and they achieved success with their aims. Moreover, the authors had affected on my study, especially Mr. Wen.

First of all, Wen (2007) was the most effective of the authors towards my thesis. Wen who was from China. The topic of Wen's research was *"Writing Strategies and Writing Difficulties among College Students of Differing English Proficiency."* The participants in his study were the college students at National Pingtung Institute of Commerce, China. His instruments were two questionnaires and two interviews. They were writing strategy

questionnaire, writing difficulty questionnaire, student interview form and teacher interview form. After finishing the research, he indicated that insufficient vocabulary knowledge was the main factor lead students to writing difficulties.

Secondly, Barker (1999) was an author from Australia. His topic research was bout *"First Year Students' Perceptions of Writing Difficulties in Science 'I Didn't Expect it to be so Different to School'."* In Barker's study, the participants were first year students at Victoria University, Australia. The instruments were two questionnaires for students and two interviews for both students and lecturer. After finished the study, Barker identified some main issues that related to teaching method, learning way and knowledge of the students and the lecturers.

Thirdly, Asuncion and Querol (2009-2010) were two authors of the study of *"Writing Difficulties, Proficiency, and Traces of Interlanguage and Cognitive Processes of Tertiary Students in Picture-Clued Narration."* In their research, the participants were college students at Saint Mary's University in Nueva Vizcaya province, Philippines. Asuncion and Querol used only one instrument in their study. That instrument was a picture-clued narration (a test). Thanks to this research, those authors had identified both cultural factors, knowledge and some structural errors of the students were students' biggest problems in studying writing.

Finally, Mojica (2007) was also a Philippines author. She conducted a study about *"An Investigation on Self-Reported Writing Problems and Actual Writing Deficiencies of EFL Learners in the Beginners' Level."* In her research, the participants were learners in the beginners' level who were from the Center for Language Learning (CeLL) of De La Salle University, in Philippines. To carry out the study, she used a three-part questionnaire as a research instrument. The results showed that lack of facility in using English, lack of practice, motivation, grammar and vocabulary in English writing were learners' basic writing difficulties.

3. Material and Methods

3.1 Participants

In this study, the participants were fifty English majored sophomores at Tay Do University. There were 3 males and 47 females participated in the research. Their ages ranged from 20 to 27. Besides, they all spoke Vietnamese as their first language and English as their foreign language. All of them were sophomores, so they were considered as at equal level. Especially, most of them had learnt English writing skills for two years, so it was confirmed that they encountered lots of difficulties with learning writing in class. Specifically, they learnt English writing with Interaction one in the first year. When this research was carried out, they were studying English writing with the course book Interaction two.

3.2 Instruments
The two main instruments employed in this study were questionnaire and interview. There were two questionnaires and an interview.

3.2.1 Two questionnaires
The first questionnaire was an **open questionnaire**. *"What are some difficulties that you often encounter in studying English writing in class?"* was the open question of this questionnaire. By this questionnaire, the students could express their opinion freely about all difficulties that they faced in learning writing in class. Thanks to that, the researcher could find out main factors to design the second questionnaire after.

The second questionnaire was a **closed questionnaire** which was designed based on the results of the first questionnaire. The second questionnaire included seven main problems that 50 students had presented in the first questionnaire. Each difficulty was designed with three to four items. Each item had five levels for the students to choose.
1 = Strongly disagree,
2 = Disagree,
3 = Neutral,
4 = Agree,
5 = Strongly agree.

All of the items of seven problems were mixed randomly to create a complete questionnaire.

3.2.2 The interview
This instrument was designed to interview ten participants. The interview had seven questions which were a representative for seven writing difficulties. Those questions were created in the following order.
1) Problems with vocabulary,
2) Problems with grammar,
3) Problems with prior knowledge,
4) Problems with organizing ideas,
5) Problems with allotted time,
6) Problems with teacher,
7) Problems with mother tongue.

Besides, each interview was designed as a conversation between the researcher and the student that was recorded carefully. Thanks to the data from this interview, the researcher could get more information that the participants did not state in two previous questionnaires. However, the researcher could confirm again about all of data that he got before, so the study would be more reliable.

3.3 Procedure
Procedure to carry out the research included the following phases.

Phase 1: searching information and started writing the literature related to the research topic**.**

Phase 2: creating and delivering the first questionnaire to the participants. Then, the researcher analyzed the feedbacks collected from fifty students in the first questionnaire.

Phase 3: designing and delivering the second questionnaire and the interview of the participants.

Phase 4: analyzing data and finishing the research.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 General results
4.1.1 Results from the first questionnaire
The researcher classified and collected students' writing difficulties in the first questionnaire. The researcher found out that most of their problems mainly fell into the following seven groups.

1) Problems with vocabulary,
2) Problems with grammar,
3) Problems with prior knowledge,
4) Problems with organizing ideas,
5) Problems with allotted time,
6) Problems with teacher,
7) Problems with mother tongue.

4.1.2 Results from the second questionnaire
Based on the results of the first questionnaire, the researcher designed and delivered the second questionnaire to the participants. In the second questionnaire, each difficulty had three to four items. Each item had five degrees arranged descending from 5 to 1.

Table 1: Five degrees of each item

Degree	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Number of degree	5	4	3	2	1

To find the percentage of students' difficulties in each group, the researcher used the following formula.

$$x = \frac{(A \times 100\%) + (B \times 75\%) + (C \times 50\%) + (D \times 25\%) + (E \times 1\%)}{\text{Number of participan ts (50 students)} \times \text{Number of items}}$$

Abbreviations:
x: The percentage of a problem
A: Total of "Strongly agree" in each difficulty

B: Total of "Agree" in each difficulty

C: Total of "Neutral" in each difficulty

D: Total of "Disagree" in each difficulty

E: Total of "Strongly disagree" in each difficulty

The results from the second questionnaire were presented in the following table.

Table 2: Students' difficulties in studying writing

Students' difficulties in studying writing	Percentages (%)
1. Problems with vocabulary	67.17
2. Problems with grammar	63.63
3. Problems with prior knowledge	56.75
4. Problems with organizing ideas	51.25
5. Problems with allotted time	70.83
6. Problems with teacher	62.00
7. Problems with mother tongue	62.50
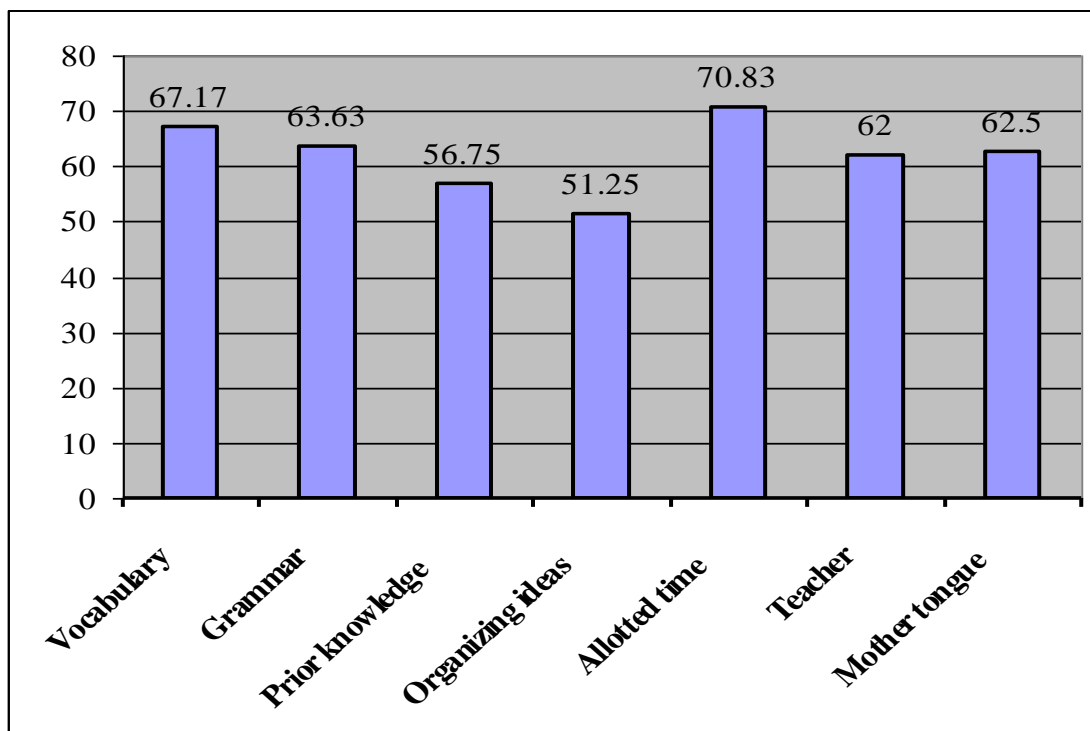
Chart 1: Students' difficulties in studying writing

The above table stated the degree of difficulties that the participants encountered when they learnt English writing skill. The table implied that the students had biggest difficulties with allotted time (70.83%). The second problem was about vocabulary (67.17%) and the third problem was about grammar (63.63%). Trouble with mother tongue was the fourth difficulty that the students encountered (62.5%). Problem with teacher was the fifth difficulty (62%). The next trouble was about prior knowledge (56.75%). The problem with organizing idea was the latest difficulty (51.25%). Especially, the percentage of both seven problems was over 50 percent, so it was considered that the

research on both seven difficulties of English majored sophomores at Tay Do University were reliable. Generally, the students had writing difficulties with allotted time, vocabulary and grammar that offered highest rates of percentage. In contrast, problems with prior knowledge held the lowest percentage among seven major problems that students encounter.

4.2 Detailed description on students' writing difficulties
4.2.1 Problems with vocabulary

Table 3: Students' problems with vocabulary

Degree	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Percentage (%)	20.66	48.66	11.33	17.33	2

From this table, the results from the second questionnaire showed that the highest percentage, also as the most prominent percentage, belonged to "Strongly agree" (20.66%) and "Agree" (48.66) while the percentage of both "Neutral" (11.33%), "Disagree" (17.33%) and "Strongly disagree" (2%) was low. It is meant that the students faced a lot of problems with vocabulary, so students' difficulties with vocabulary were reliable for this research.

For the interview, the first interview question was about the difficulty with vocabulary *"In writing, what are some problems that you often face in term of vocabulary?"* two students stated that *"I lack of vocabulary".* The rest eight students also agreed with that opinion. They had difficulties with vocabulary. Four students additionally explained that both parts of speech, academic words and scientific words led them to writing difficulties.

4.2.2 Problems with grammar

Table 4: Students' problems with grammar

Degree	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Percentage (%)	17	46	15.5	17.5	4

The percentage of "Agree" (46%) in the above table was the highest percentage. The percentage of both "Strongly agree" (17%) and "Agree" (46%) was more prominent than the percentage of both "Neutral" (15.5%), "Disagree" (17.5%) and "Strongly disagree" (4%). Therefore, it was concluded that the students had difficulties in their studying writing in class.

For the interview, the second interview question was about the difficulty about grammar. *"What are some grammatical errors that you often make in writing? Why do you commit such errors?"* two students talked *"I get some problems with English tenses",* and seven other students also agreed. In addition, two other students showed that they met troubles with word-order and punctuation. Six students also additionally explained that they had those mistakes due to some reasons such as confusion with English tenses, carelessness and focus due to their habit.

4.2.3 Problems with prior knowledge

Table 5: Students' problems with prior knowledge

Degree	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Percentage	12.5	32.5	26.5	26.5	2

About the second questionnaire results, the percentage of "Agree" (32.5%) of problems with prior knowledge was the highest percentage and was the most prominent percentage in five degrees. Therefore, the students' difficulties with prior knowledge was revealed.

About the interview results, the third question was about the difficulty with prior knowledge. *"Have you ever had difficulties in collecting ideas for your writing? Why do you have such difficulties? What do you often do to get ideas for your writing?"* Ten students agreed with the above statement because of lacking prior knowledge, vocabulary. They found the information from their teachers, from their friends and on the internet. One student said *"yes, I have. I get difficulties because my knowledge is limited. To get ideas, I often find information on the internet and ask my friends."* Besides, the students also gave their opinions about the way to develop ideas such as finding information on the internet, help from their teachers and from their friends, thinking of Vietnamese ideas before exchanging to English.

4.2.4 Problems with organizing ideas

Table 6: Students' problems with organizing ideas

Degree	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Percentage (%)	5.5	36	21.5	32	5

About these results of the second questionnaire, the percentage of "Agree" (36%) of the problems with organizing ideas that was the highest percentage. The percentage of "Strongly agree" and "Agree" was not really prominent, but it was believed that the students were facing with problems from organizing ideas.

The fourth interview question was about the difficulty with organizing ideas. *"Do you often make an outline before you write? Why and why not?"* Seven students stated that they made the outline before they wrote. They agreed the outline helped them get some advantages such as smooth writing, writing better. One student stated *"I often make an outline before I write. If I have an outline, I will develop ideas fluently."* Another student also agreed with the above statement, she mentioned *"if I have an outline, my ideas will not be repeated."* Besides, three students disagreed with creating the outline. They thought that writing with an outline led to difficulties for developing ideas. They strongly agreed that the limited time affected on creating the outline and affected on the quality of their writing.

4.2.5 Problems with allotted time

Table 7: Students' problems with allotted time

Degree	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Percentage (%)	20.66	54	13.33	12	0

About these results of the second questionnaire, the percentage of "Agree" (54%) of the difficulties with allotted time that was the highest and prominent percentage completely. The percentage of "Strongly agree" (20.66%) and "Agree" (54%) was really prominent, if it was compared with the percentage of both "Neutral" (13.33%), "Disagree" (12%) and "Strongly disagree" (0%). Therefore, it was believed that the students were facing with problems from allotted time.

About the interview results, the fifth interview question was about the difficulty with allotted time. *"Do you like writing in an allotted time in class or writing at home (free time)? Why?"* About this question, seven sophomores showed that they wanted to write at home as a great controlling their time. In addition, they had enough time to find new words and reread their writing before handing. They also felt comfortable with unlimited time. Specifically, A student said *"I like work at home. If I write my writings at home, I will have enough time to think and to develop my ideas."* Another student agreed *"I like write at home. It will be easier to develop ideas and will feel more comfortable."* In contrast, three people agreed with writing in class with allotted time because they thought they could focus better. In addition, *"writing in a limited time can evaluate more rightly their writing ability"*, they stated.

4.2.6 Problems with teacher

Table 8: Students' problems with teacher

Degree	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Percentage (%)	20.66	34	20.66	22	2.66

About these results of the second questionnaire, the percentage of "Agree" (34%) of the difficulties with teacher that was the highest percentage. It was believed that the students were encountering with problems from teacher. The percentage of "Strongly agree" (20.66%) and "Agree" (34%) was not really prominent, if it was compared with the percentage of "Neutral" (20.66%) and "Disagree" (22%). Therefore, it was considered that the students rarely had difficulties with teacher.

About the interview results, the sixth interview question was about the difficulty with teacher. *"Have you had problems related to your teacher's teaching method in writing? If yes, what are the problems?"* Five people stated that they agreed with the problem with teacher, but not strongly. *"The teacher often generally talks about the content of subject also as the topics while the knowledge between the teacher and the students is not balanced"*, two students agreed that. Another student said *"vocabulary is supported by teacher that is not enough because the time in class is short."* She also stated *"teacher's teaching method is as an*

instruction, but teacher's guidance contributes to the quality of students' writings." Besides, they wished they could have more teacher's guidance. In contrast, five students did not agree with the question. Although they did not give their opinion specifically, they answered shortly. Generally, from the second questionnaire and the interview, the problems with teacher's teaching method were not problems so big that the students had a lot of writing difficulties.

4.2.7 Problems with mother tongue

Table 9: Students' problems with mother tongue

Degree	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Percentage (%)	17	43.5	14.5	22.5	2.5

From the above results, the percentage of the degree of "Agree" (43.5%) was the most prominent percentage which illustrated that the students were encountering with problems from mother tongue. Generally, the percentage of "Strongly agree" (17%) and "Agree" (43.5%) was more prominent than the percentage of "Neutral" (14.5%), "Disagree" (22.5%) and "Strongly disagree" (2.5%).

Besides, the results from the interview were shown as follows. The seventh question of the interview was about the difficulty with mother tongue. *"Does your mother tongue (Vietnamese) have an influence on your writing?"* Ten students stated that they agreed with the difficulty with mother language. They thought they lacked of prior knowledge and strongly agreed with the differences between the language and sentence structure of two countries that affected their making tasks. A student told *"mother tongue affects studying and making tests. The differences of two languages cause my confusion and uncomfort."* Another student expressed *"I often find ideas in Vietnamese first, then I translate my ideas into English."*

4.3 Discussion

The process of analyzing information stated that the results were suitable for the hypothesis. Almost English majored sophomores at Tay Do University faced difficulties in studying writing. The problems with allotted time, vocabulary and grammar were biggest writing difficulties that the sophomores encountered in studying writing in class. The hypothesis of this study was hypothesized that the students had difficulties with vocabulary and grammar in their studying English writing in class. By the results of this research, the sophomores not only faced writing problems with vocabulary and grammar but also encountered writing difficulties with allotted time. They strongly agreed that the time in class was short for them to study, to practice and to improve their writing. The time in class was so short that the students got worried, uncomfortable and unconfident, so they had writing difficulties in class.

Moreover, through analyzing of two questionnaires and the interview, it was recognized that not only the time limitation but also their prior knowledge caused

writing difficulties for them. Lacking of prior knowledge led the students to waste lots of time to complete their tasks. Moreover, lacking of prior knowledge led them to poor vocabulary, bad grammar, bad developing and organizing ideas, uninterested in writing topics. Therefore, they felt unconfident and they had English writing difficulties. In addition, students' interest, students' try and students' motivation in studying were also factors that affected their prior knowledge. Those elements directly influenced on their writing abilities that mainly caused writing problems for the students. Generally, the last factor that affected on sophomores' writing problems was allotted time.

5. Recommendations

5.1 Recommendations for the teachers

The teachers who play an important role in teaching as well as in instructing their students' learning activities. In education, both great controlling time, great making strategies of teaching and great help are interpreted as great gifts from the teachers to their students.

Firstly, great controlling time is an important factor towards each teacher. In fact, their controlling time plays an important role in their teaching. It is difficult for the teacher to balance between their content of subject and their short time in class. A successful teacher is often a great controller in balancing between the content of the subject and the short time in class. Thanks to great controlling time, the teachers can conduct their teaching more fluently and effectively. Besides, if the teachers control their short time in class well, they ensure that they can conduct teaching activities well such as giving out great contents of subject, or great strategies, or great help, or great motivation.

Secondly, great making strategies of teaching ensures the content of the subject and satisfies students' learning needs in a subject. In fact, thanks to great controlling time, the teachers give out great making teaching strategies. Specifically, basing on their short time in class, they give the students great writing strategies, samples of examples, exercises and tests. Moreover, they also give their students the ways to study and to search information to serve for studying English writing skills.

Finally, great help from the teachers is interpreted as spirit presents for the students. In fact, teachers' help is delivered to students and is shown in various ways. For example, teachers' instructions are considered as friendly and necessary help for the students. Lots of students agree that they need more teachers' instructions about the writing contents or writing topics. Besides, teachers' comments are also great help for the students. By teachers' comments on each of students' test, the students will study well and they will feel more confidently. Thanks to that, the teachers create school motivation to their students as well as teaching method.

Shortly, the teachers give their students great gifts such as great controlling time, great making teaching strategies and great help. The teachers who play an important role in teaching and they clearly know their students. They not only evaluate the students by writing tasks but also help students by their teaching, or examples, or instructions, or

comments. Moreover, the teachers are people who mainly create motivation and help their students in class get English writing skills to take the last aim in education, great teaching and studying.

5.2 Recommendations for the students

The students play an important role in success of a subject. They are main members and contribute to the studying fact of a subject. They are considered as a central factor, so they should have great learning strategies in each subject to satisfy difficulties from the subject or allotted time. In the process of study, some learning strategies help students that are great controlling time, great motivation, great comments from teachers and great help from teachers and from friends.

First of all, great controlling time helps students ensure their works. In fact, if students always control their short time well, they will finish their works on time. For example, the students usually prepare their homework well before they go to school by their short time in class. They will focus better on their tasks, so they finish their tasks on time. Moreover, great controlling time also helps students have enough time to relax or to join other activities to study well.

Secondly, great motivation helps students have a great comfortable spirit to conduct their works well. In fact, great motivation from teachers that is shown in various acts such as good marks, great praise, good encouragement, etc. Thanks to benefits from great controlling time, students can do everything to achieve school motivation. Besides, great motivation is interpreted as a factor that contributes lots of advantages to students' success in during their learning process, because great motivation helps students overcome every difficulty in their works. This factor helps students become to be more actively in cooperation. Great motivation also motivates students work with teachers and friends more effectively.

Thirdly, teachers' comments help students correct writing errors and perfect their English writing skills. Thanks to teachers' comments on each writing task, students can correct their mistakes on the tasks. Besides, they can draw experiences and can know the way to perfect the writings in this subject. In addition, teachers' comments are considered as great instructions that help students recognize errors on their tasks, also help students find the way to correct and to perfect their writings.

Finally, help from teachers and from friends contributes to the students' motivation. In fact, the students receive a lot of help from their teachers and friends in during their learning process. For example, students get teachers' guidance in class that helps students perfect their skills necessarily. Besides, students receive friendly help from their friends that motivate some good characteristics such as cooperation, solidarity, helpfulness, etc.

Generally, both great controlling time, great motivation, great teachers' comments and great help from teachers and from friends help students in their learning process. Thanks to above conveniences, the students can overcome the difficulties in studying English writing and can improve their English skills, especially English writing.

6. Conclusion

By analyzing and collecting information from the participants' answers in the instruments, I had results which showed students' difficulties in learning English writing. There were following seven problems.

1) Problems with vocabulary,
2) Problems with grammar,
3) Problems with prior knowledge,
4) Problems with organizing ideas,
5) Problems with allotted time,
6) Problems with teacher,
7) Problems with mother tongue.

Especially, the difficulty with allotted time was the biggest problem that the sophomores at Tay Do University encountered. Besides, through three times of collecting and analyzing students' answers in two questionnaires and the interview, I would like to confirm that the difficulties of English majored sophomores could belong to two main reasons. The first factor belonged to themselves. They lacked of prior knowledge about vocabulary, grammar, social experiences and knowledge. In addition, they sometimes lacked of great motivation and feeling to study well. The second factor belonged to other elements such as the facilities, the study environment, the weather and limited time. Those factors directly affected students' ability in learning foreign language skills, especially English writing skill.

Conflict of Interest Statement
The author declares no conflicts of interests.

About the Author

My main research interest is to investigate the issues related to cross-linguistic influence (especially linguistic, cultural and conceptual transfer). My research interests also extend to L2 learner's motivation, language learning strategies, individual differences (e.g. personality, attitude, autonomy) in L2 acquisition. Other areas of interest include error analysis, corrective feedback and learner self-assessment.

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