A STUDY OF E-MAIL WRITING ABILITY OF CHIANGRAI RAJABHAT UNIVERSITY 4TH YEAR TOURISM INDUSTRY STUDENTS

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การศึกษาความสามารถด้านการเขียนจดหมายอิเล็กทรอนิกส์ของนักศึกษา
วิชาเอกอุตสาหกรรมการท่องเที่ยวชั้นปีที่ 4 มหาวิทยาลัยราชภัฏเชียงราย

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ณัฏฐพล สันธิ: การศึกษาความสามารถด้านการเขียนจดหมายอิเล็กทรอนิกส์ของนักศึกษาวิชาเอกอุตสาหกรรมการท่องเที่ยวชั้นปีที่ 4 มหาวิทยาลัยราชภัฏเชียงราย. (A STUDY OF E-MAIL WRITING ABILITY OF CHIANGRAI RAJABHAT UNIVERSITY 4TH YEAR TOURISM INDUSTRY STUDENTS)
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การศึกษาวิจัยนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อ 1) ศึกษาความต้องการของผู้มีส่วนเกี่ยวข้องในกิจการธุรกิจนำเที่ยวด้านความสามารถในการเขียนจดหมายอิเล็กทรอนิกส์; 2) วัดความสามารถในการเขียนจดหมายอิเล็กทรอนิกส์; และ 3) ศึกษาการใช้กลยุทธ์การเขียนจดหมายอิเล็กทรอนิกส์ของนักศึกษาวิชาเอกอุตสาหกรรมการท่องเที่ยวชั้นปีที่ 4 มหาวิทยาลัยราชภัฏเชียงราย เครื่องมือในงานวิจัยประกอบด้วยแบบสอบถามความต้องการ, ข้อสอบวัดความสามารถการเขียนจดหมายอิเล็กทรอนิกส์และเกณฑ์การตรวจให้คะแนน, และแบบสัมภาษณ์การใช้กลยุทธ์การเขียนจดหมายอิเล็กทรอนิกส์ของนักศึกษาวิชาเอกอุตสาหกรรมการท่องเที่ยวชั้นปีที่ 4 มหาวิทยาลัยราชภัฏเชียงราย โดยในงานวิจัยนี้มีกลุ่มตัวอย่างสองกลุ่มคือ 1) บริษัทนำเที่ยวจำนวน 10 บริษัท และ 2) นักศึกษาวิชาเอกอุตสาหกรรมการท่องเที่ยวชั้นปีที่ 4 มหาวิทยาลัยราชภัฏเชียงรายจำนวน 29 คน

ผลการวิจัยในส่วนการศึกษาความต้องการพบว่าประเภทของจดหมายอิเล็กทรอนิกส์ที่ใช้บ่อยที่สุดในปริบทธุรกิจนำเที่ยว คือ 1) การจองห้องพัก 2) การตอบรับการจอง และ 3) การขอเปลี่ยนแปลงการจอง ผลการวิเคราะห์รูปแบบลักษณะโครงสร้างของจดหมายอิเล็กทรอนิกส์ทั้ง 3 ประเภท พบรูปแบบโครงสร้างหลักซึ่งประกอบด้วย 4 ส่วน และโครงสร้างรองมีการใช้รูปแบบคำขึ้นต้นและลงท้ายจดหมาย และมีการใช้รูปแบบการบอกเล่าและคำสั่ง ซึ่งเป็นลักษณะสำคัญของการโต้ตอบจดหมายเชิงธุรกิจ ผลการวิเคราะห์ความต้องการและการวิเคราะห์รูปแบบโครงสร้างสามารถนำมาสร้างข้อสอบวัดความสามารถและเกณฑ์การตรวจให้คะแนนการเขียนจดหมายอิเล็กทรอนิกส์ได้อย่างมีประสิทธิผล โดยเน้นการวินิจฉัยจุดแข็งและจุดด้อยสะท้อนการบูรณาการกรอบแนวคิดการวิเคราะห์รูปแบบโครงสร้างและกรอบแนวคิดภาษาเพื่อวัตถุประสงค์เฉพาะได้เป็นอย่างดี การศึกษากลยุทธ์การเขียนจดหมายอิเล็กทรอนิกส์พบว่าผลการใช้กลยุทธ์ไม่สอดคล้องกับผลคะแนนสอบ ทั้งนี้อาจเป็นเพราะการใช้กลยุทธ์ของนักศึกษายังไม่มีประสิทธิผลเพียงพอ และการขาดทักษะด้านภาษาและเนื้อหาวิชา ผลการวิจัยนำเสนอ รูปแบบการพัฒนาแบบทดสอบและเกณฑ์การตรวจเพื่อนำไปใช้เป็นแนวทางในการจัดเตรียมการฝึกอบรมหรือจัดทำรายวิชาสำหรับการเขียนจดหมายอิเล็กทรอนิกส์สำหรับนักศึกษาวิชาเอกอุตสาหกรรมการท่องเที่ยวและเนื้อหาวิชาอื่นๆ

…………………………………………………………………………………………………….

สาขาวิชา ภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษานานาชาติ ลายมือชื่อนิสิต……………………………..…..

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NATTHAPHON SANTHI : A STUDY OF E-MAIL WRITING ABILITY OF CHIANGRAI RAJABHAT UNIVERSITY 4TH YEAR TOURISM INDUSTRY STUDENTS. ADVISOR: PROFESSOR EMERITUS KANCHANA PRAPPHAL, Ph.D., 181 pp.

This study aims to achieve three objectives including: 1) to examine the e-mail writing ability needed among personnel in Thai travel agencies; 2) to assess e-mail writing ability of Chiangrai Rajabhat University 4th year tourism industry students; and 3) to investigate the students' e-mail writing strategies. The research instruments included a needs analysis questionnaire, three e-mail writing ability test tasks and rubrics, and an e-mail controlled retrospective interview. There were two groups of the population involved in this study. Firstly, ten travel agencies in Bangkok were recruited for the needs assessment. Secondly, twenty-nine 4th year tourism industry students at Chiangrai Rajabhat University involved in the test administration to assess their e-mail writing abilities and strategies. Questionnaire results from ten travel agencies revealed three most common e-mail tasks, and the tasks samples were analyzed using two-layer genre analysis, at the macro level, the results showed the 4-move structure, and, at the micro structure distinct linguistic features were found such as business greetings and endings, declaratives and imperatives patterns which determine the core functions and define the nature of business correspondence.

The results from the needs and genre analysis were used to formulate the construct definition of the three e-mail test tasks and the rubrics to assess and evaluate the students' e-mail writing abilities. The findings showed effective integration of Genre Analysis and Language for Specific Purposes (LSP) served its intended purpose in assessing the students' e-mail writing ability with emphasis to the diagnostic purpose. However, the test score results were inconsistent with strategies investigation results with possible explanation that the inefficient use of strategies somewhat affected by factors involving the students' lacks in linguistic and background knowledge. The findings showed that the e-mail writing ability constructs, tasks, and the scoring rubrics could be used as resources for e-mail writing training workshops or courses for tourism industry students and other areas of Language for Specific Purposes.

Field of Study : English as an International Language Student's Signature..................

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CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews the related literature and research articles to obtain theoretical frameworks contributing to developing the needs assessment, test specifications for designing e-mail test tasks and scoring rubrics, and e-mail writing strategies investigation in the essence of a specific purpose language test. This chapter covers the review of: 1) an overview of the tourism industry and the role of e-mail in tourism business; 2) language assessment and evaluation frameworks; 3) genre analysis frameworks; 4) writing strategies frameworks; and 5) related research

2.1 Thailand tourism industry

Tourism industry is one of the central pillars to Thailand's economy, only second to the export sector, which generates high-level of income and employment opportunities to the country (NESDB, 2008). It is a sensitive business to both internal and external factors which affect the growth of the industry, for example, global economic slowdown as well as international and domestic political unrest; however, this sector still plays an important role in accounting for about 6.7 percent of the country economic GDP or equivalent to 567 billion baht in 2007. It has also created employment directly and indirectly around 3.3 million jobs or approximately 8.4 percent of the country employment (BOI & TAT, 2000-2004; Bangkok Post Thailand Tourism Review, 2007). In addition, World Travel and Tourism Council's (WTTC) 2007 in the Tourism Satellite Accounting study proclaims that the tourism industry contribution rate to the country's economics will continue for the next 10 years to reach approximately 1,257 billion baht, and generate more than 4.7 million jobs in 2017 (Bangkok Post Thailand Tourism Review, 2007).

Thailand has the pride in its diverse range of destinations, luxury hotels, the warmest welcome and service in the world as well as an inviting landscape for foreign infrastructure investment on being South-East Asia's tourism hub. Echoing on this strength, Thailand has been recently voted the 3rd favorite destinations around the world by 30,000 readers of the US publication, Conde Nast Traveler (Bangkok Post Thailand Tourism Review, 2007). In addition, Bangkok - Thailand capital city - has also been voted the world's top city on the World's Best Awards 2008, in an online survey. The Country Brand Index (CBI) also ranked Thailand as the "Best Country Brand for Value for Money", and in the third place on "Friendly Locals and Authenticity" category, announced at the World Travel Market, the premier annual exhibition of the global travel trade (The Nation, 2009).

To date, Thailand is well recognized internationally as a world-class tourism destination, welcoming millions of tourists and visitors annually.

2.2 Impact of ICTs towards Thailand tourism industry

Information and communication technologies (ICTs) have revolutionized and modernized the way businesses perform and the way the organizations maintain its competitive capabilities in the digital age, especially the travel intermediary sector (Buhalis & Licata, 2002).

Basically, tourists may deal directly with any of the tourism service suppliers, i.e. transportations, accommodations and other travel related products, but they customarily rely on the professional services provided by tourism promoters such as travel agencies that provide information and services. The travel agencies take on the intermediary role of being the mediator between the product providers and the customers underlying the definition of the term “intermediary” which, according to Dictionary of Travel, Tourism and Hospitality 3rd Edition by Medlik (2003: 94), refers to “a person or organization acting between parties, e.g., a travel agent selling a tour operator’s holidays (vacations) to tourists.”

Hoontrakul & Sahadev (2004: 5), in their extensive discussion on intermediary role in Thailand tourism industry with regard to tourism products distribution channels stated that the intermediaries in the travel and tourism sector exist mainly because: firstly, the services providers lack expertise and they incline to indulge in direct sales; secondly, the customers and service providers in the travel sector are normally separated by large geographical distance which makes the position of the intermediary at close contact with the customer absolutely indispensable for effective product distribution.

Hoontrakul & Sahadev (2004: 5) further stated that there are two economic reasons explaining why the hotels still have to market their products through the intermediaries. First, it is the inability to achieve economies of scales because its customer base is highly dispersed across all the continents; and any marketing effort globally is a big burden for marketing cost. Secondly, it is the inability to achieve economies of scope because a large sales and marketing network (scope) is economically feasible only when a large number of rooms, be it tens of thousands of room-nights, are sold through it. Therefore, a single hotel or even a relatively large hotel tries to achieve the economies of scales through the help of the intermediaries.

The intermediary has an important role in the tourism product distribution channels. However, the advent of the Internet technology and the inception of electronic commerce (e-commerce) developments in the late 1990s, and the evolving of the concept of B2B (Business to Business) and B2C (Business to Consumers) applications have deeply affected the tourism industry in general as well as the role of the traditional intermediaries in particular (Buhalis & Licata, 2002). The role of the traditional intermediaries has been affected by the “disintermediation effect” in which the products providers and customers can deal directly through the online market underlying e-commerce or e-tourism without going through any mediators. Therefore, many traditional intermediaries are reinventing themselves today from “intermediaries” to "infomediaries" becoming travel consultants, information brokers or trusted and independent travel advisors by focusing on the quality of the services and information provided to their clients. For one thing, while the Internet is useful and powerful, the buyers are overwhelmed with the information available on the Internet, so they want one-stop-shopping in that the information they know must be accurate, and the advice they can trust. That opens up opportunities for a third party such as an infomediary or a re-intermediary or an e-intermediary (UNCTAD, 2000) or online intermediaries.

Hoontrakul & Sahadev (2004) indicated that the online intermediary is an alternative channel (Channel 4) on tourism products distribution model illustrated in Figure 1.

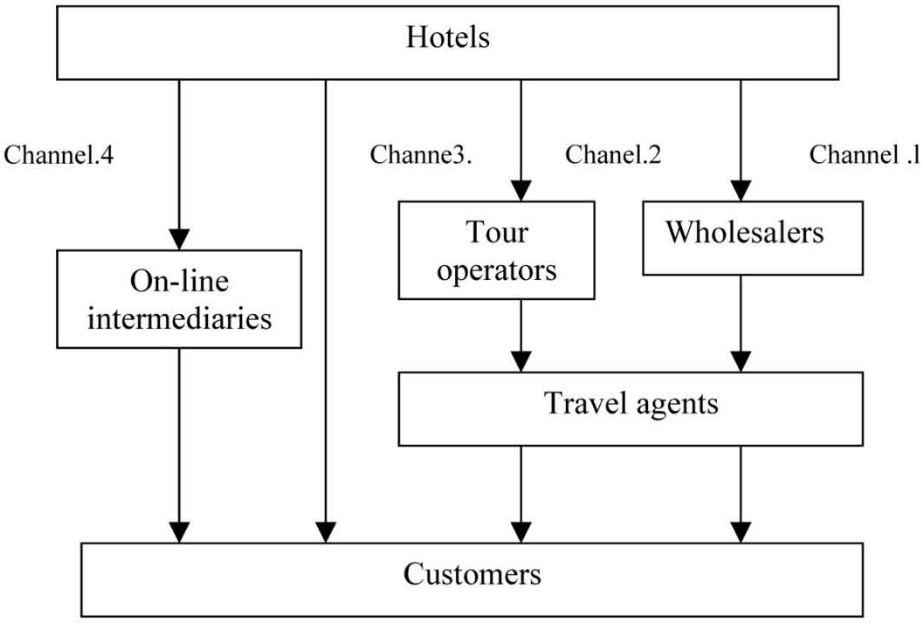

Figure 2.1: Hotel rooms distribution channel for travel intermediary business in Thailand tourism industry (Hoontrakul & Sahadev, 2004: 5)

Hoontrakul & Sahadev (2004: 6) stated that the tourism product distribution channel such as hotel entails four basic means through which a customer can book the accommodation in a hotel as illustrated in Figure 2.1. The first two channels are the most established and popular one, and the fourth channel is the latest and emerging channel that has been perceived revolutionizing the tourism sector. The tourism products distribution channels as illustrated in Figure 1 are easy to follow and understand the sale and product distribution concept, but the business operation in reality is more complex in that the traditional intermediaries (channels 1 and 2) can take the advantages of the Internet technology and become online intermediary too while maintaining their strong off-line business operation with their established partners. Therefore, this distribution model is flexible and is depending on the goal and available resources to cope with the complexity of the business environment. The in-depth discussion on this topic is beyond the purpose of this study.

However, it is important to note that the transaction process is the heart of the online intermediary which communication will generate the sale. Hoontrakul & Sahadev (2004: 13) pointed out that **normally the communication between the online intermediary and a potential customer (tourists) or transaction process progresses normally through e-mail**; and there are three stages before the customers indulge in a transaction. In the initial stage the customer just visits the website. Once, the customer is serious about travelling to a place of interest, he/she posts an inquiry about the rooms, prices and availability. This is considered as the inquiry stage.

Before the inquiry culminates into a transaction, the potential customer may require more information about the destination, the hotel to stay, and the possibility of reducing the price or simply bargaining the price. After that, when the inquirer is convinced, he/she transacts with the online intermediary. This is a transaction stage, and the customer can pay either via non-instant method like traditional bank transfer or instant-method like online payment such as a credit card or e-banking. Figure 2.2 illustrates the transaction process within the Inquiry and Sale framework in online travel sale; and Figure 2.3 illustrates the flow chart of transaction processing in online travel sale.

Figure 2.2: Transaction process within the Inquiry and Sale framework in online travel sale (Hoontrakul & Sahadev, 2005: 17)

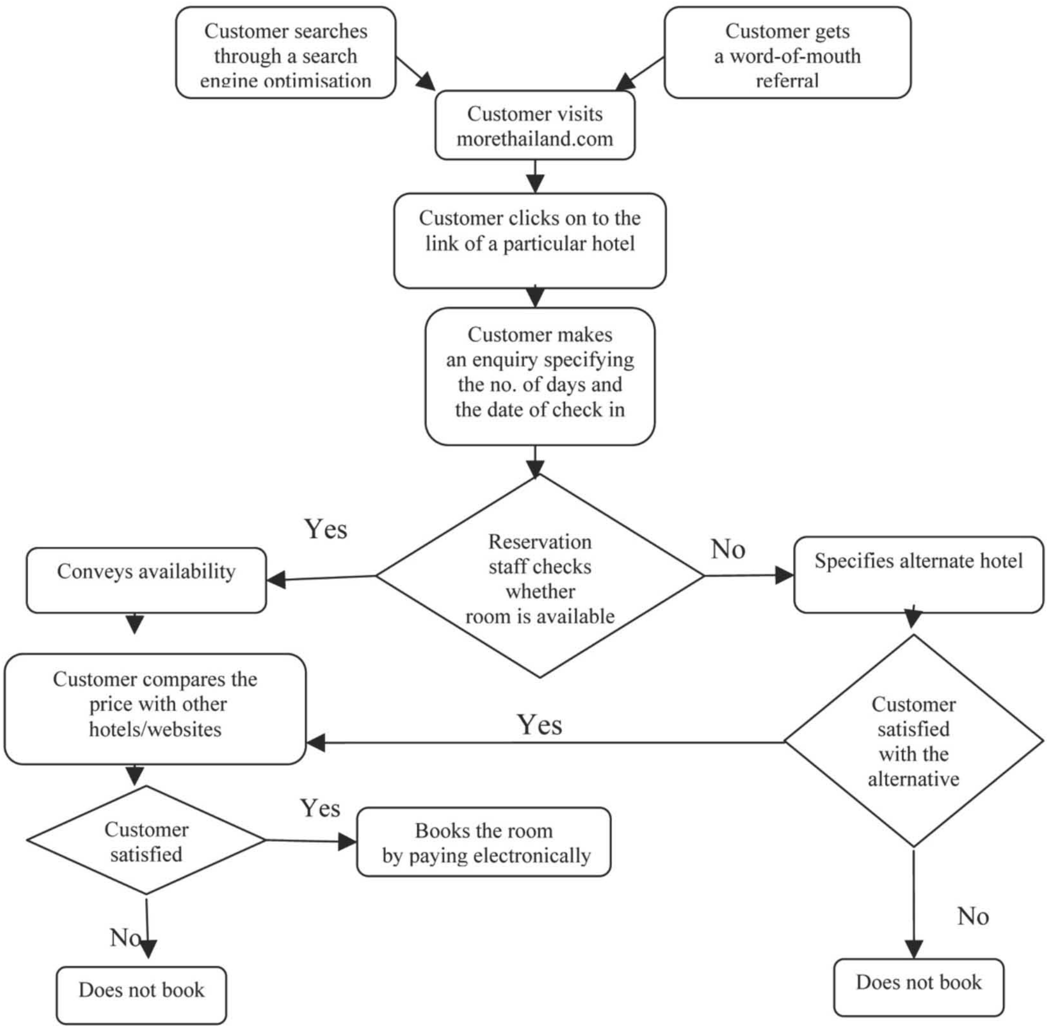

Figure 2.3: Flow chart illustrating the transaction process in an online travel sale – the case study of morethailand.com (Hoontrakul & Sahadev, 2005: 18)

2.3 Overview of the e-tourism situation in Thailand

Clearly, the Internet technologies such as the Web and e-mail have become the influential technological applications to tourism industry in several plausible ways. First, tourism products are simply information-based products because a consumer inquires and gets product information through the media, friends or a travel agent. Then, the consumer makes a booking for transportations, accommodations and other travel-related services. Thereafter, he/she, in exchange for cash, receives, yet, again more information, that is, vouchers and travel itineraries. Tourism products are, therefore, information-based goods or confidence goods (Hoontrakul & Sahadev, 2004), entailing that the customers' buying decision relies on the quality of the information they receive. In addition, tourism products are considered intangible because they don't need products manufacturing and logistics facilities, making it easy to adapt to implementing ICTs and e-commerce. Second, with the appropriate implementation and strategies, the Web and e-mail technology, as applications underpinning e-commerce or e-tourism, can be effective tools for tourism SMEs to enhance its competitive opportunity lending itself into the emerging online territory (Keretho & Limstit, 2002; Livi, 2008).

The term "e-tourism" or "tourism e-commerce" refers to the management of travel business on the Internet with regard to selling, suggesting, reserving the accommodation for tourists via the web sites and it is a subset of the "e-commerce" which generally refers to the selling of goods and services via the Internet. Many studies indicate that travel is being swept into the Web economy as stated by Goeldner & Ritchie (2009: 196) that "Tourism-related services are now the king of the Internet sales, and are regularly cited as one of the fastest growing e-commerce sector." Online travel bookings in the United States and Europe have been reported to reach $15.5 billion in 2000 from $8 billion in 1999. And, it has been estimated that purchasing tourism products is increasing dramatically (UNCTAD, 2001).

In the same way, ETC New Media Trend Watch (2009) reported the current trends on the Internet usage worldwide, indicating that:

1. The number of Internet users worldwide has increased exponentially by over 336% since 2000.
2. The US online vacation rental market will be worth 4.7 billion by 2010.
3. Customer satisfaction with online travel remains unchanged.
4. 79% of US e-mail users went on to book travel online after receiving e-mail from a travel company.
5. The top 5 countries Internet users globally are Germany, India, Japan, USA and China.

These facts and figures addressed positive impact of the Internet for the tourism products providers to adapt and adopt the Internet technology to empowering their business operation capability and competitiveness. Especially, the figure showed relatively high percentage of e-mail users in the US that had experience in the e-mail sale circle. In addition, the countries on the top-5 list of the Internet users worldwide are tourism markets of Thailand, and the online channel can increase more tourism e-commerce transaction from these countries. Intrapairot & Srivihok (2003) revealed the findings of the tourists' survey indicating that the Internet was third in rank, behind words of mouth and guidebooks when travelers search for information about tourism products.

The Web and e-mail can provide competitive advantages to Thailand SMEs. For example, Intrapairot & Srivihok (2003: 199), in their review of " The e-Commerce of SMEs in Thailand", clearly emphasized that Thailand SMEs should take the advantage of the ICTs adoption to their business operation with the expected advantages of e-Commerce strategy which include decreasing costs, expanding market places, enhancing competitiveness, improving business image, and increasing revenues; however, with cautions about the hidden pitfalls in the backend of this business.

Cosh & Assenov (2007) also stated that e-mail is a powerful facilitator for building relationships with customers and is available with little investment. Similarly, enabling potential new customers to easily contact the organization, e-mail also offers a way of developing existing customers, building future relationships through up selling and cross selling. Using branded e-mail, along with the security features, can increase trust and dependability in the organization.

Songyu (2006) in her study of the perception of international tourists and entrepreneurs in Thailand, the characteristics of the tourists who surf e-tourism web sites and identifying the SWOT of tourism industry in Thailand, the finding of the study indicated that most tourists were satisfied with e-tourism, and they would choose it as a means for the information searching, booking e-tourism products for the next trip. In addition, the entrepreneurs also saw that e-tourism is a powerful means to facilitate information searching purpose which allows the customers to find information for their travel planning at ease. Thai tourism entrepreneurs accepted that e-tourism impact had already begun to affect tourism business operation in Thailand; though, e-tourism is still not popular among local Thai travel agencies.

Intrapairot & Srivihok (2003: 211) noted that e-tourism entrepreneurs in Thailand could be divided into two groups. The first group refers to those who run their traditional tourism businesses and develop web sites for public relations, providing information, and establishing additional storefronts. The second group performs pure online tourism companies using the Internet to connect with their customers.

Although Thai tourism product providers as SME entrepreneurs realize the importance of e-commerce as a cutting-edge tool to empower their business, Intrapairot & Srivihok (2003: 216) clearly pointed out that Thai SMEs, as the supply side, are not ready to develop a complete e-commerce. Given the possible reasons for the lacks and frustrations of Thai SMEs entrepreneurs towards the e-tourism approach, Intrapairot & Srivihok (2003: 211) wrote:

> *A study of Thai entrepreneurs indicated that most of them are not ready to develop a complete e-commerce. Most web sites are for web presence only. Few online reservation forms are provided because most SMEs still prefer making reservations via e-mail and facsimile to real-time e-commerce. A survey of 206 tourism businesses revealed that many small and medium sized tourism enterprises did not have web sites (67.6% and 52.9%, respectively). The web sites were used for public relations (35.4%), reservation services (23.3%), and online payment (4.9%). Problems and obstacles for tourism e-commerce were for the most part similar to those identified by previous research: lack of knowledge and technique for improving web sites, high costs, insufficient competence of IT people, lack of confidence in online payment, fear of imitation (e.g. routes, products, and services), legal problems, and* ***difficulties with language and communication*** *(Kao-Saad et al., 2001).*

Similarly, Cosh & Assenov (2007: 500) underscored that ICTs adoption in Thai tourism industry is still in its infancy. In their quantitative and qualitative study, investigating the use of online services and evaluating the effectiveness of e-mail use of Thai tourism product providers, the study revealed that these providers' e-mail customer service was found disappointing. Cosh & Assenov addressed in this study that "**there is evidently a large skill gap of employees' language capabilities and e-commerce knowledge**". They suggested that better e-mail policies and training should give the travel agencies an immediate competitive advantage.

Intrapairot & Srivihok (2003) pointed out that the evolution of e-tourism exerts negative impacts on Thai entrepreneurs especially, SMEs. Suppliers tend to employ e-commerce for direct sales or replace their traditional intermediation with major online tourism companies. The situation leads to losing market share to new online rivals in the near future. Therefore, Thai entrepreneurs have to adapt themselves well to suit the e-tourism environment such as serving niche markets, becoming subsidiaries of large enterprises to handle domestic business or niche products, and developing web sites to connect directly with their customers.

To conclude, the Internet has revolutionized and modernized the tourism industry in all aspects of its business activities. However, there are conceivable pros and cons in various levels of Thailand tourism industry, e-tourism, and language use activities as discussed above. The lacks and insufficiencies about language proficiency indicated by Intrapairot & Srivihok (2003) and Cosh & Assenov (2007) raised an immediate interest for language practitioners in the extent that they leaded to the needs to develop assessment framework to assess the e-mail writing ability of the personnel working in this domain in that the assessment results can provide the beneficial washback of testing practice that leads to more teaching and learning about writing more effective e-mail.

2.4 Thai tourism e-commerce and language testing in Thailand

With regard to English language development for Thailand workforce in the important industries underpinning Thailand economy such as tourism, the government initiatives have already been in progress. For example, in 2004, Thai Cabinet approved the budget of 315.3 million baht (8.08 million US dollars) to upgrade English language instruction. The Office of Basic Education Commissions has created 175 English resource and instruction centers to develop teachers and instructional media. The office will provide English language teacher training to 500 teachers in each of the 30 key tourism provinces. Tuition will be provided in the form of intensive courses, distance learning, exhibitions and continuing training. The government policy to promote tourism in the provinces is intended to lead to a boost in English language learning (Prapphal, 2008: 137).

In addition, the English Language Development Center (ELDC, 2005) has attempted to formulate the "Standards of English for Occupations" in prompt response with the needs for Thai workforce to communicate competently in English to maintain and enhance the country's competitiveness globally. The Standards of English for Occupations comprises 4 standards. The first two concern language skills used in the workplace, while the last two involve understanding and using non-verbal communication appropriate to audience, purpose, setting, and culture. Each standard contains benchmarks specified at basic, intermediate, and advanced levels, as well as benchmark indicators to indicate what workplace personnel use English to do.

Stakeholders were involved in the needs analysis in order to gather information for formulating the benchmark indicators for each standard. The needs study include six strategic industrial groups, which are considered important to the national economy, namely, tourism industry, fashion industry, health science industry, food industry, automobile industry and information technology industry. For tourism industry, the needs assessment revealed that "Thailand tourism industry personnel at all levels need speaking and listening skills (80 and 60 percent) to provide information concerning tourist attractions, history and culture. The senior and junior administrators also need writing skills (30 percent) to give information on tourist attractions and to conduct market promotion as well as publicity. They need reading skills as well (20 percent) to read the customers' complaints and compliments."

Of these six industries, the ELDC (www.eldc.go.th) has formulated the standards for twenty-five occupations, for example, English for Caddies, English for Tour Guides (In-Bound) etc. The purposes of the standards of English for Occupations include:

1. An organization, entrepreneur, etc. can use the standards as criteria to assess personnel's English proficiencies and/or use them to set appropriate goals for organizing an English training course for its own personnel.

2. Workplace personnel can use the standards as a guideline to assess their English proficiencies regarding present or prospective occupations and/or to set goals for improving their English.
3. English language training institutions/programs can use the standards as a basis for workplace English curriculum development, lesson planning, materials development, learner placement and assessment.
4. Vocational and higher education institutions can use the standards as a basis for occupation English curriculum development, lesson planning, materials development, resources selection, student placement and assessment.

The ELDC has made a significant contribution in corresponding with the needs for quality assurance by stakeholders that involved "the private sectors increasingly expect universities to be solely responsible for producing a professional workforce" (Kirtikara, 2001). However, in reality, the practice in adopting these standards has not yet been reported. In addition, these standards were formulated on the basis of "general standards" judging from the construct to formulate the standards, so they may not capture specific tasks and ability that are crucial for new working environments such as that of the new emerging e-tourism and online intermediary.

The benefits of the models of language standards or benchmarks can be used as a guideline for Thai language professionals to formulate their assessment frameworks. For example, Prapphal (2008: 140; Noom-ura 2008: 189) noted that language benchmarks like that of the ELDC or other developed language proficiency scales such as the American Council on the Teaching Foreign Languages (ACTFL), the Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB), and the Common European Framework for Reference (CEF) may also be used to assist Thai language assessors in setting up assessment frameworks; though, with cautions that Thai language professionals must examine the needs in the local context in order to use the language proficiency standard frameworks efficiently and effectively.

2.5 E-mail Definition

E-mail (or email) is a short form of an Electronic Mail. It is a method to send a message through a computer network or the Internet. Broadly defined by different scholars, the e-mail definitions, therefore, vary depending on the degree of specificity on the basis of those who provide the definitions and the conditions being considered to exemplify those e-mail definitions.

For example, in Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary Seventh Edition, Hornby & Turnbull (2000: 428) described that e-mail (also formal electronic mail) is a way of sending messages and data to other people by means of computers connected together in a network.

Gonglewski et al. (2001: 1) stated that e-mail is a form of asynchronous computer-mediated communication that underpins all of Internet applications.

Frehner (2008: 37) provided a more elaborative definition, that is, "e-mail, in computer science, is abbreviation of the term electronic mail, and is a method of transmitting data, text files, digital photos, or audio and video files from one computer to another over an intranet or the Internet. E-mail enables computer users to send messages and data quickly through a local area network (intranet) or beyond that through the Internet. E-mail came into widespread use in the 1990s and has become a major development in business and personal communications."

Crystal (2001: 10) clearly elaborated the nature of the e-mail system that "e-mail is the use of computer systems to transfer messages between users, and is a type of computer-mediated communication or CMC in short; the message can be saved for revision or sent immediately to one or many intended recipients in just one click. The message can be just plain text, rich text or containing other media as file attachment e.g. documents, pictures and videos, etc. Recipients can read the message on the computer screen either immediately as near synchronous CMC or at a later point in time as asynchronous CMC."

Similarly, Habil and Rafik–Galea (2002: 2) wrote electronic mail (e-mail) communication is one type of CMC. It is generally a text-based CMC whereby participants interact by means of the written word that is typed on the keyboard of one's own computer and is later sent over to each other via a computer network. The message is then ready to be read by the participants on their computer screens either immediately (synchronous CMC) or at a later point in time (asynchronous CMC).

In sum, e-mail is basically a means to send and receive messages through a computer network. It is a way of writing, sending and receiving messages in the computer network environment which is called CMC or a computer-mediated communication whether it is near synchronous or asynchronous CMC in nature. However, the popularity of e-mail has evoked controversies in terms of stylistic variation, that is, style and register used in e-mail writing resulting in e-mail style paradox.

2.6 E-mail style and register

Style or stylistic refers to, first, variation in a person's speech or writing. Style usually varies from casual to formal according to the type of situation, the person or persons being addressed to, the location, the topic discussed, etc. A particular style, e.g. a formal style or a colloquial style, is sometimes referred to as a stylistic variety. However, some linguists use the term "register" for a stylistic variety while others differentiate between the two. Second, style can also refer to a particular person's use of speech or writing at all times or to a way of speaking or writing at a particular period of time, e.g. Dickens' style, the style of Shakespeare, an 18th-century style of writing (*Richards & Schmidt, 2002: 523*).

Again, based on the definition by Richards & Schmidt (2002: 452) in Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics 3rd Edition*,* "register" refers to, first, as synonym to "style"; and, second, a speech variety used by a particular group of people, usually sharing the same occupation (e.g. doctors, lawyers) or the same interests (e.g. stamp collectors, baseball fans). A particular register often distinguishes itself from other registers by having a number of distinctive words, by using words or phrases in a particular way (e.g. in tennis: deuce, love, tramlines), and sometimes by special grammatical constructions (e.g. legal language).

Taking the definitions illustrated above and applied to define e-mail style and e-mail register, it can be summarized that e-mail style, if justified by formality, attributes to two patterns, that is, formal or informal. However, degree of formality is prone to some social factors such as types of situations, the person or persons being addressed to, the location, the topic discussed, etc. In contrast, e-mail register seems to relate with the use of technical words or phrases and sometimes special grammatical constructions that are used and shared by particular groups of people such as those who work in the same occupation (e.g. legal language) or those who share the same interests (e.g. sports jargons).

Therefore, e-mail style is basically referred to the formality scale while e-mail register is basically referred to the use of distinguished technical terms or special grammatical constructions specifically used by people in the same profession or those who share the same interests. Both two terms are integral components to determine e-mail writing ability traits and they may be required as components in scoring rubrics for grading e-mail writing ability.

2.7 E-mail style paradox

Generally, e-mail tends to fall into the informal "written speech" category (Wallace, 2004: 94) with studies addressing that e-mail tends to use more casual lexicon, to be less carefully edited, and to assume a greater degree of familiarity with the interlocutor as evidenced by the choice of salutation and the use of first names with the persons you have never met (Baron, 1998; Baron, 2000). Baron (1998: 150; 2000: 250) used the continuum-based relationship between written and spoken language to characterize the linguistic profile of e-mail by taking four components regarding social and linguistic perspectives into consideration, that is, social dynamics, format, grammar, and style as the following details:

> **Social Dynamics** refers to the relationship between participants in the exchange.
> **Format** refers to the physical parameters of the messages that result from the technology through which messages are formulated, transmitted, and received. Given the rapid evolution of computer technology over the past 30 years, some aspects of form (for instance, length of message, and editing e-mail) that were originally restricted by the technology are now less constrained. However, earlier problems (such as difficulty in editing e-mail) still color contemporary usage.
> **Grammar** refers to the lexical and syntactic aspects of the message.
> **Style** refers to the choices users make about how to convey semantic intent. These stylistic choices are expressed through selection of lexical, grammatical, and discourse options.

The e-mail analysis conclusion indicated the following elements constituting the linguistic profile of the e-mail in the end of 1990s (Baron, 2000: 251):

Social dynamics: Predominantly like writing

- interlocutors are physically separated
- physical separation fosters personal disclosure and helps level the conversational playing field

Format: (Mixed) writing and speech

- like writing, e-mail is durable
- like speech, e-mail is typically unedited

Grammar:

Lexicon: predominantly like speech

- heavy use of first- and second-person pronouns

Syntax: (mixed) writing and speech

- like writing, e-mail has high type/token ratio, high use of adverbial subordinate clauses, high use of disjunctions
- like speech, e-mail commonly uses present tense, contractions

Style: Predominantly like speech

- low level of formality
- expression of emotion not always self-monitored (flaming)

Baron's (1998) e-mail analysis supports the view that e-mail language tends to be informal. However, in business communication, a more formal style following a traditional letter or memo is increasingly being used for the purposes of getting the right tone, or for legal reasons. Given e-mail as a medium for business communication, the sender is likely to construct the e-mail following the more formal paper-based communication medium (Wallace, 2004: 94).

In addition, the degree of formality of e-mail characteristics in reality is flexible and varied. For example, with regards to style, Crystal (2001) argues that the relationship between writer and audience controls the e-mail style. The same participant may change the style to suit different communicative purposes. E-mail format is similar to conventional letters or memos and is technically fixed as default by the computer software.

Gimenez (2000) in an analysis of 63 commercial e-mails from the import-export company based in the UK which later were compared with 40 business letters from the same company, the study considered factors such as register, style and contextual features for analyzing the e-mails. The finding indicated that the commercial e-mail showed a tendency towards a more flexible register. That is, with regards to register, e-mail messages contain simple, straightforward syntactic structures, showing a preference for coordination rather than subordination, and the use of elliptical forms. Concerning style, even the commercial e-mail, however, the style is informal and personalized, indicated by the use of the sender's first name, contracted forms, abbreviations, the choice of informal lexical items, and complex lexical repetition. Gimenez (2000: 250) noted that the level of informality and flexibility of style depend on the relationship already established between the sender and the recipient of the message. In contrast, Gains (1999) reported that the commercial e-mail tends to follow the conventions of formal or semi-formal style for written business English, with well-formed and correctly punctuated sentences.

The communicative purposes and social norms in specific contexts also determine the senders' stylistic preferences. For example, e-mail messages in Gains' (1999) study reflected the documents used in legal context which follow the standard conventions adopted in formal business communication and only a few features which reflected those in conversational discourse were found. This may account for the fact that the e-mail is written to serve the legal purpose and is used within this particular legal-oriented context holding permanent legal status (Gains, 1999: 90), therefore, affecting the style and register preferences used in the e-mail messages.

Gains (1999) concluded that the purpose, text-type and relationship between writer and audience determine the e-mail writing style and register which Gimenz (2000) proposed that the e-mail styles flexibility can be illustrated by the informal-formal scale rather than dichotomous division as shown in Figure 4 below.

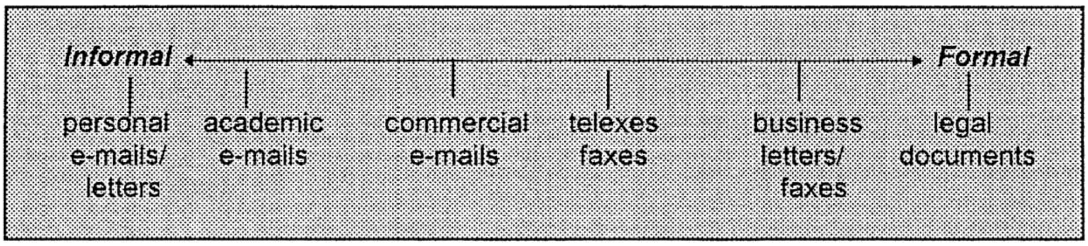

Figure 2.4: The e-mail styles flexibility continuum (Gimenez, 2000: 250)

Culture and exposure to particular rhetorical styles also determine the different styles of e-mail writing. Kameda (2008) reported a contrastive rhetoric study in business e-mail writing across cultures in a case of Singaporean and Japanese business students. The study focused on the cross-cultural communication skills with communication and perception of different rhetorical styles of the writer and the receiver. Kameda, a teacher in Japan, and her colleague, a teacher in Singapore, collaborated on the analysis of persuasive communication in business e-mails written by their students from the two countries.

Based on three scenarios explaining business situations, that is, 60 Singaporean and 110 Japanese students participated in exchanging writing informative, negative, and persuasive e-mail tasks. The e-mail analysis results revealed interesting issues; one of which was the different rhetorical style, another was the matter of explicit vs. implicit message purpose and aggressive vs. modest approach in e-mail writing.

The finding showed that the majority of the Japanese students' rhetorical style followed the Ki-Shou-Ten-Ketsu framework originated from the Chinese prose style. Ki refers to beginning an argument; Shou refers to developing an argument; Ten refers to finishing the development; and Ketsu refers to bringing all the 3 elements together to reach conclusion. The KSTK writing pattern places the emphasis at the end of the prose (Ketsu) or the result-last style (Kameda termed it as explanation first and result later) while Singaporean students followed the Western writing framework which places the purpose at the beginning of the prose (Thesis Statement).

In addition, Japanese students held the implicit approach to writing the main message more than Singaporean counterparts. The audience responsible approach is used to explain the implicit nature of the Japanese writing style, while the writer responsible approach is clearly explicit in nature of writing in the Western style. On the other hand, Singaporean students outnumbered Japanese students in taking the aggressive approach by making reference to the rival company in writing persuasive e-mails in order to get the business. Japanese students preferred the modest approach paying deeply respect and consideration to others, albeit the rival company.

Kameda concluded reasons underlying the difference between rhetorical styles found in the two groups of students that although Singaporeans are familiar with the Chinese logic which underpins the Japanese rhetorical writing pattern, they have been exposed to the bilingual education system, thus making the Singaporean students familiar more with the Western rhetorical writing style contributing to differences in rhetorical features such as explicit approach vs. implicit approach, and aggressive approach vs. modest approach when compared with Japanese students' e-mails. The changes were also found in the Japanese students' writing style by not using apology and seasonal greetings in the introduction like their predecessors. Kameda stated that this change might be affected by the student's learning and exposure to the Western rhetorical pattern as well as through the passage of time.

The e-mail style seemed to be partially fixed due to the preset format of the e-mail composing software. To illustrate, Frehner (2008: 40-41) noted that e-mail has the structure with fixed components that are set by the mailer software. So, e-mail consists of **a header, body and optional signature**. The header, which can be compared to the letterhead in non-electronic mails, comprises four parts including the sender's e-mail address, the recipient's e-mail address, the time and date, and the subject.

Frehner (2008) further described that the subject in the header, which can be compared to the reference line in (business) letters, usually contains a brief description or the keyword of the message and can thus be used as a contextualization cue to make intertextual references. It is useful especially if the threads get longer and helps to contextualize the message by maintaining the reference object.

The body plays the part of pure writing, but Frehner (2008) pointed out that it somehow includes graphics, photographs, videos or sounds. The signature may be automatically or manually added at the end of the body depending on the user's preference on the e-mail program settings. The signature line is optional and usually contains further information of the addresser such as phone or fax number, or postal address, but it can also be made up of jokes or quotations.

The organization of e-mails seemed static following the preset three-functional components structure (Frehner, 2008); however, Chapman (2007: 6) expanded the e-mail structure into six components forming a clearer logical structure including: **Subject line**, **Salutation**, **Opening Sentence**, **Conclusion**, and **Close**.

The stylistic of e-mail style seemed fluctuated in similar manner to that of the linguistic features which vary according to various factors including the purpose, text-type and relationship between the writer and the audience (Gains, 1999). Cultural factors and social norms also determine the rhetorical style of e-mail writing. For example, in the case of Japanese and Singaporean students' e-mail writing, they exploited different prose styles and ways to approach the clients via e-mail. It is also obvious in the case of legal texts in legal working environment. A more formal or semi-formal style of business e-mail writing has been found.

The tendency of a more formal style choice of business e-mail writing seems to accord with the concept of **"tone"** in business correspondence textbook. For example, Wilson & Wauson (2010: 401) addressed that, in business writing, tone defines the writer's attitudes toward the reader and the subject. Tone is a reflection of the writer and is determined by language choice including words and the style which expresses the level of care and details of the writer towards the reader. So, tone is the quality in the writing that reveals the writer's attitudes toward the topic and the reader. It can also be said that tone is the product of the choice of words, the structure of sentences, and the order of the information being presented.

Geffner (2010: 163) remarked that while tone in business letters varies from familiar to formal (other scholars used the term "informal to formal" e.g. Emmerson, 2004; Chapman, 2007), successful business correspondences come in the form of **natural tone** which means not too sound businesslike that result in stilted and stiff style. Writing in a relax manner is suggested to achieve natural tone within the limits of Standard English.

Geffner (2010) exemplified too businesslike forms that are considered stilted and stiff as follows:

"As per your request, please find enclosed" "herewith a check in the amount of $16.49"

With suggested revised version of these expressions in a more natural tone, which produced:

"As you requested, I am enclosing a check for $16.49."

Geffner (2010) claimed that the words like "as per" and "herewith" contribute nothing to the message while making the writing sound stilted and stiff. So, the revised version is more efficient, personal, and friendly in which fewer words are used, so less time for the writer to write as well as for the reader to read and understand the message.

Emmerson (2004: 8) provided more elaborate definitions regarding formal and informal style continuum in e-mail writing as he wrote:

Formal	*This is the style of an old-fashioned letter. Ideas are presented politely and carefully, and there is much use of fixed expressions and long words. The language is impersonal. Grammar and punctuation are important. This style is not common in e-mails, but you can find it if the subject matter is serious (for example a complaint).*
Neutral/Standard	*This is the most common style in professional/work e-mails. The writer and reader are both busy, so the language is simple, clear and direct. Sentences are short and there is use of contractions (I've for I have etc.). The language is more personal. However, the style is not similar to speech, which is too direct.*
Informal	*This is the most common style for e-mails between friends. Sometimes the e-mail can be very short or it could include personal news, funny comments etc. This is the style that is closest to speech, so there are everyday words and conversational expressions. The reader will also be more tolerant of bad grammar etc.*

Chapman (2007: 7) outlined the e-mail components with its communicative purpose definition and suggested formal and informal expressions in each of the element:

1. **Subject line:** This should be short and give some specific information about the contents of your message.

2. **Salutation:** As in letter writing, the salutation can be formal or informal, depending on how well you know the person you are writing to. For example:

Dear Mr, Mrs, Ms …	*A formal form of address, also used when first contacting a person.*
Dear John	*Less formal. Either you have had contact with this person before, or they have already addressed you by your first name.*
Hi/Hello Mary	*Informal, usually used with colleagues you often work with in the U.S.A. and the U.K.*
(or just the name)	*also sometimes used at first contact.*
(no salutation)	*Very informal, usually used in messages which are part of a longer e-mail exchange.*

3. **Opening sentence:** This is used to explain why you are writing. (Remember: the opening sentence should always start with a capital letter.)

I'm writing to ...	*More formal introduction to say why you are writing.*
Just a quick note to ...	*Friendly, informal way to say why you are writing.*

4. **Conclusion:** This is where you tell the reader what kind of response, if any, you expect.

Looking forward to your reply.	*Friendly ending, can be used in formal or informal correspondence.*
Hope to hear from you soon.	*Informal ending to indicate a reply is necessary.*

5. Close: Like the salutation, this can vary from formal to very informal.

Yours sincerely	*Very formal, rarely used in e-mail correspondence.*
Regards/Best wishes	*Most commonly used close, can be used in formal and informal e-mails.*
Bye/All the Best/Best	*Friendly, informal close.*
James/Mary	*Name only (or initials) is also common when writing to close colleagues.*

Talbot (2009: 116) noted the issues regarding **tone and appropriateness** in e-mail writing as she wrote:

> "*Probably most reader complaints about e-mails relate to poor tone and inappropriate subject matter. Regarding the first point, be aware that you need to introduce the right tone for your target audience in each e-mail.*"

Talbot (2009) advised ways to fine tuning appropriate tone for effective e-mail writing by using basic self-check questions below.

- Is 'Hi' the right opening salutation?
- Or should you use 'Hello' or 'Dear' followed by the recipient's first name or title and surname?"
- Or is it sufficient simply to use their first name alone; for example: 'Paolo'? (Some would find this approach inappropriate.)

Geffner (2010: 165) asserted that while striving for a natural tone, the business correspondence writer should consider a reader-oriented approach or what he calls "*you approach*". This approach aims for positive attitudes in the writing as if you share the reader's point of view. It is important to remain **courteous and tactful** letting the reader knows that you care even when the subject of the letter is unpleasant. Geffner (2010) suggested that adding expressions like "please", "thank you", "we are sorry", or "I appreciate" is enough to make a sentence sound more courteous; for example, the utterances below seemed a bit unpleasant.

We have received your order.
Sorry for the delay.

Geffner (2010) wrote a revised version with a more courteous manner as:

Thank you for your recent order.
Please accept our apologies for the delay.

Geffner (2010) lastly concludes that maintaining goodwill relationship is the underlying goal of any business correspondence. To achieve this goal any business e-mail writing is considered effective when it is written in a natural tone, positive attitude, courtesy and tactful manner.

In conclusion, the e-mail stylistic and linguistic features are two important attributes that must be considered and analyzed thoroughly when designing e-mail test tasks. But they seems unstable and fluctuated even though Chapman (2007) proposed the rule of thumb addressing about fluidity of the e-mail style that "*...for e-mails - whether formal or informal - to be most effective, it is a good idea to give them a clear, logical structure.*" How test developers could arrive at the comprehensive understanding about these two main features to determine proficient e-mail writer in this specific target language use situation? To begin with, apart of the literature review as discussed above, three frameworks can be used to formulate sound definition of e-mail writing abilities, that is, Language for Specific Purposes (LSP) assessment framework (Douglas, 2000), genre analysis framework (Swales, 1990), and Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB, 2000). These frameworks focuses on two-level of macro- and micro-discourse structure with an aim to achieve thorough understanding of stylistic and linguistic features of the e-mail tasks in the target language use situation which is colored by various kinds of socio-cultural factors such as relationship between sender and receiver, culture, etc.

2.8 Frameworks of assessing e-mail writing abilities

To assess e-mail writing abilities, Weigle (2002: 2) contends that it is first necessary to understand the nature of e-mail writing on how it has been used to achieve its communicative purpose in a particular context which will provide a broad foundation underlying the construction of a test of e-mail writing abilities. There are basically two aspects to consider in approaching assessing e-mail writing abilities, that is, **1) purpose** – why people use e-mail writing in a particular context; and **2) what types of writing text** that are likely needed in that particular context. This is because the needs for writing are different from context to context; therefore, the writing abilities vary according to purposes, audience, tasks, text-types as well as the levels of cognitive demands, communicative functions and strategies in order to accomplish each writing task in a particular context (Weigle, 2002: 12). For example, especially for second-language learners, writing may mean anything from mastering the second language characters to writing a Ph.D. dissertation. Therefore, these various needs and factors affecting the way people write have important implications for the testing of writing, both in terms of designing appropriate writing tasks and in terms of evaluating writing abilities (Weigle, 2002: 7).

Weigle (2002: 11) clearly illustrated the comprehensive classification models of groups of writers and written text types, exemplifying that there are many factors affecting one's writing ability, for example, writers' background knowledge and types of writing which involves needs and purposes for writing; therefore, the type of writing (text types) can be categorized through the degree of cognitive processing, and dominant intention or purpose (Weigle, 2002: 10) as illustrated in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Groups of second-language writers and types of writing (Weigle, 2002: 11, adapted from Bernhardt, 1991)

Learners		Needs	Purposes	Types of writing
Children	minority group members; e.g. in bilingual program	Academic ‘school’ writing skills	for survival	I, II, III
	majority group members; e.g. in immersion programs		for enhancement	I, II, III
Adults	Minority group members, immigrant status	immediate literacy skills	for survival in the workplace	I, II
	quasi-temporary academic status	academic ‘educated’ language skills	for advanced subject matter degrees	I, II, III
	majority language group members; e.g. traditional foreign-language learners		for educational and/or job enhancement and/or interest	I, II

Type I refers to the least demanding task of cognitive processing, which is to reproduce information that has already been linguistically encoded or determined, such as taking a dictation or filling in a form.

Type II refers to the next level of cognitive processing demanding task, which involves arranging or organizing information that is known to the writer, such as writing a laboratory report.

Type III refers to the most demanding task of cognitive processing, which involves inventing or generating new ideas or information, as in expository writing. It is also known as writing for knowledge transforming which is seen as the most critical in academic writing for first-language writers, and for second language writers in academic settings.

It can be seen that the writing needs of different groups of writers are varied in terms of both cognitive demands and communicative functions. Considerations in these differences are important basis in developing appropriate writing tests for these different populations and settings (Weigle, 2002: 12); however, this model is still relatively broad with limited details to describing the writing ability and the context of language use. The e-mail writing tasks in the travel agency context may fall within one of these tasks category or overlap among the three. The more detailed description of the language and task characteristics is further discussed below.

2.9 Frameworks of target language use (TLU) situations: Approaches to test designs

In any test design, every single test has its intended purpose; therefore, test purpose is the very first consideration in designing a language test. Bachman and Palmer (1996) address two main purposes regarding to designing a language test: first, to make inferences about language ability, and second, to make decisions based on those inferences (Bachman and Palmer, 1996). It is, therefore, important to clearly specify what is meant by language ability. However, the researchers in both first- and second language have general consensus in perceiving that writing varies within different people in different situations which make it impossible that a single definition of language ability can cover all situations (Weigle, 2002: 3). For example, the ability to write down exactly what someone else says (an important skill for a stenographer) is quite different from the ability to write a persuasive essay. Weigle (2002: 4) states that if it is too broad in defining writing ability in a specific target language use situation, perhaps it is useful to frame the way in which people use second language in general and second-language writing in particular, and the writing types that are found in using that particular target language situation to define writing ability.

Weigle's concepts in an approach to defining writing ability also corresponds with that of Bachman & Palmer (1996: 8-12) in an approach to language test development and use which is based on two fundamental principles, that is: 1) a correspondence between language test performance and language use which means that the test performance must correspond in demonstrable ways to language use in non-test situations, or the test performance must demonstrate the way in which it should be used as its intended purposes; and 2) the test must be able to demonstrate a clear and explicit definition of the qualities of test usefulness which consists of several qualities (construct validity, reliability, authenticity, interactiveness, impact, and practicality). These qualities are important considerations for quality control in the particular language test design, development and use.

With this approach of Bachman & Palmer (1996: 10), they illustrate the correspondences which demonstrate the relationship of language test performance (test tasks) and language use (non-test tasks) in the target language use (TLU) situation, as illustrated in Figure 5 below.

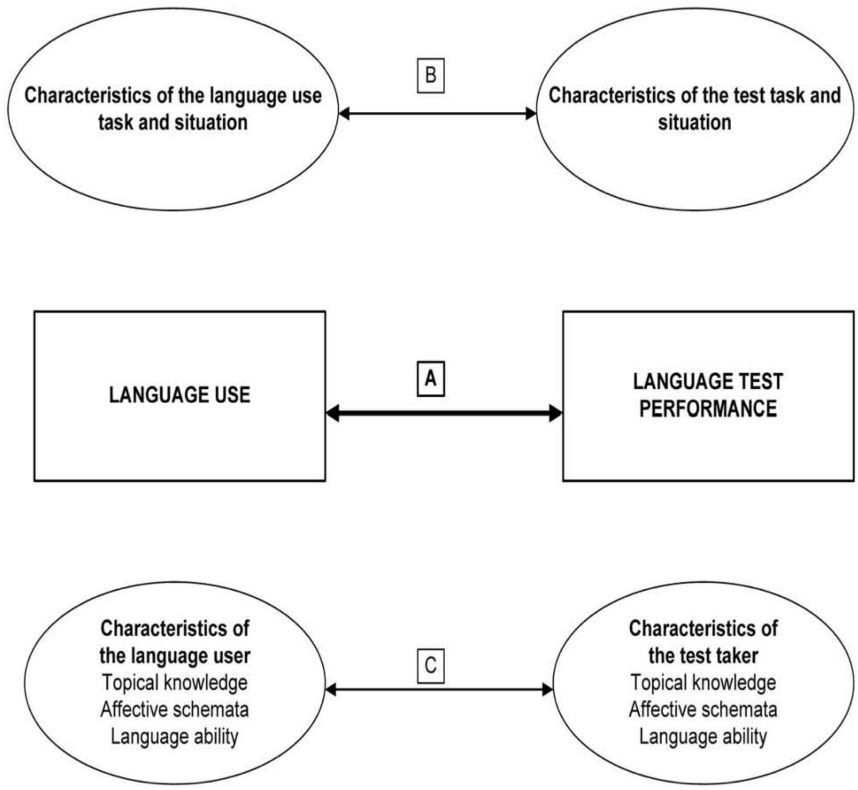

Figure 2.5: Correspondences between language use and language test performance (Bachman and Palmer, 1996: 12)

In designing a language test, it seems sensible and realistic in making inference about language ability through test performance which demonstrates the degree of correspondence of the characteristics of tasks and language use in the target language use (TLU) situation; however, there are a lot of tasks and individual characteristics to be considered within the particular target language use situation. Bachman & Palmer (1996: 11) propose that one way to tackle the complex area of task characteristics is to identify and analyze the tasks that the test takers will need to accomplish in the target language use (TLU) situation. They note that there are 2 sets of characteristics which affect both language use and language test, that is, characteristics of the language use situations and tasks, and of the language users and tests.

In designing a language test, the primary interest is to make inferences about language ability which is tied directly to the characteristics of individuals, but there are other individual characteristics to consider as well, that is, topical knowledge, or knowledge schemata, and affective schemata. With the belief that these characteristics not only can have important influences on both language use and test performance but also facilitate the test takers' performance.

2.10 Frameworks of language task characteristics and characteristics of individuals

Like teacher needs to develop their lesson plans to compass their instruction, test developer needs to formulate the clear description about what kind of language abilities are being measured and what kind of tasks are used to achieve that purpose. So, Bachman & Palmer (1996) conceptualize the framework of language task characteristics and characteristics of individuals which are the current theoretical basis for any language test development approach with an aim to meet two main purposes in defining construct of the test, that is, language abilities and tasks.

The framework of language task characteristics

The framework of language task characteristics proposed by Bachman & Palmer (1996: 47) involves three activities: 1) describing target language use (TLU) tasks as a basis for designing language test tasks; 2) describing different test tasks in order to ensure their comparability, and as a means for assessing reliability; and 3) comparing the characteristics of TLU and test tasks to assess authenticity as illustrated in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2: Framework of language task characteristics (Bachman & Palmer, 1996: 47)

Task characteristics
Characteristics of the setting
Physical characteristics
Participants
Time of task
Characteristics of the test rubrics
Instructions
Language (native, target)
Channel (aural, visual)
Specification of procedures and tasks
Structure
Number of parts/tasks
Salience of parts/tasks
Sequence of parts/tasks
Relative importance of parts/tasks
Time allotment
Scoring method
Criteria for correctness
Procedures for scoring the response
Explicitness of criteria and procedures
Characteristics of the input
Format
Channel (aural, visual)
Form (language, non-language, both)
Language (native, target, both)
Length
Type (item, prompt)
Degree of speededness

Vehicle ('live', 'reproduced', both)

Language of input

Language characteristics

Organizational characteristics

Grammatical (vocabulary, syntax, phonology, graphology)

Textual (cohesion, rhetorical/conversational organization)

Pragmatic characteristics

Functional (ideational, manipulative, heuristic, imaginative)

Sociolinguistic (dialect/variety, register, naturalness, cultural references and figurative language)

Topical characteristics

Characteristics of the expected response

Format

Channel (aural, visual)

Form (language, non-language, both)

Language (native, target, both)

Length

Type (selected, limited production, extended production)

Degree of speededness

Language of expected response

Language characteristics

Organizational characteristics

Grammatical (vocabulary, syntax, phonology, graphology)

Textual (cohesion, rhetorical/conversational organization)

Pragmatic characteristics

Functional (ideational, manipulative, heuristic, imaginative)

Sociolinguistic (dialect/variety, register, naturalness, cultural references, and figurative language)

Topical characteristics

Relationship between input and response
Reactivity (reciprocal, non-reciprocal, adaptive)
Scope of relationship (broad, narrow)
Directness of relationship (direct, indirect)

The framework of characteristics of individuals (components of communicative language ability)

Bachman & Palmer (1996) categorize the characteristics of individuals into four sets which they believe that these characteristics have influences on language use: 1) personal characteristics, such as age, sex, and native language, 2) the topical knowledge that test takers bring to the language testing situation, 3) their affective schemata, and 4) their language ability which includes language knowledge and strategic competence or metacognitive strategies. While the four sets of individual characteristics are important, the primary interest in language testing is language ability.

They discuss the four sets of individual characteristics (Bachman & Palmer, 1996: 64-65) in the extent that, first, the personal characteristics are of individual characteristics that are not part of test takers' language ability, but may affect the test takers' performance on language tests. Second, topical knowledge or real-world knowledge should also be considered in test development since it enables individuals to use language with reference to the world that they live. Third, affective schemata refers to emotional correlates of topical interests which determines the language user's affective response to the task, and can either facilitate or limit the ways the test takers' attempts to accomplish the test tasks. Finally, language ability refers broadly to two components: language competence, which then later refers to language knowledge, and strategic competence.

Language knowledge is described into two broad categories: organizational knowledge and pragmatic knowledge. Organizational knowledge refers to the knowledge to control the formal structure of language for producing or comprehending grammatically acceptable utterances or sentences, and for organizing these to form texts, both oral and written which cover two areas: grammatical knowledge and textual knowledge. Pragmatic knowledge enables individuals to create or interpret discourse by relating utterances or sentences and texts to their meanings, to the intentions of language users, and to relevant characteristics of the language use setting (Bachman & Palmer, 1996: 69).

Strategic competence refers to a set of metacognitive components, or strategies which can be thought of as higher order executive processes that provide a cognitive management function in language use, as well as in other cognitive activities as defined by Bachman & Palmer (1996: 70). Strategic competence is thus the ability that allows one to integrate language knowledge and individual characteristics in appropriate ways to meet one's communicative goals through the execution of each component to achieve communicative goals. This management of resources refers to the process of applying metacognitive components or strategic competence or strategies. Bachman & Palmer (1996: 70) identify three areas of metacognitive components to operate in this process: goal setting, assessment, and planning.

The framework of communicative language ability model proposed by Douglas (2000: 35) and Weigle (2002: 43) has slightly reformulated the framework of Bachman and Palmer (1996) by taking out organizational knowledge and pragmatic knowledge and leaving only language knowledge as the umbrella term underlying all the components in Bachman and Palmer's (1996) framework except that of "control of execution" which Douglas (2000) considers as an addition to strategic competence in the extent to which it is the process of organizing the required elements of language knowledge and topical knowledge to carry out a communicative plan, as illustrated in Table 3 below.

Table 2.3: Components of communicative language ability (Weigle, 2002: 43, adapted from Douglas, 2000: 35) based on Bachman and Palmer (1996) framework

Language knowledge
Grammatical knowledge
- Knowledge of vocabulary
- Knowledge of morphology and syntax
- Knowledge of phonology
Textual knowledge
- Knowledge of cohesion
- Knowledge of rhetorical or conversation organization
Functional knowledge
- Knowledge of ideational functions
- Knowledge of manipulative functions
- Knowledge of heuristic functions
- Knowledge of imaginative functions
Sociolinguistic knowledge
- Knowledge of dialects/varieties
- Knowledge of registers
- Knowledge of idiomatic expressions
- Knowledge of cultural references
Strategic competence
Assessment
- Evaluating communicative situation or test task and engaging an appropriate discourse domain
- Evaluating the correctness or appropriateness of the response
Goal setting
- Deciding how (and whether) to respond to the communicative situation

Planning
- Deciding what elements of language knowledge and background knowledge are required to reach the established goal
Control of execution
- Retrieving and organizing the appropriate elements of language knowledge to carry out the plan

Even though the components of the communicative language ability model of Weigle (2002: 43) as well as that of Douglas (2000: 35) are built upon Bachman and Palmer's (1996) framework, they are slightly different. Douglas's framework (2000) includes topical knowledge, but that of Weigle (2002) excludes this component and discusses it separately.

According to Weigle (2002: 45), the primary interest in designing a writing test is language ability, not the other components of language use that are involved in actual communication. Even though Bachman and Palmer (1996: 121) stated that individual characteristics such as personality factors, affective or emotional factors and topical knowledge have influences on language ability, they suggested three options in defining a construct definition with regards to topical knowledge: 1) specifically excluding topical knowledge from the construct, 2) including both language ability and topical knowledge in the construct definition, and 3) defining language ability and topical knowledge as separate constructs. And, the specific purpose of the test will define the choices of topical knowledge as the construct of the test.

In contrast, Douglas (2000: 2) considers topical knowledge or background knowledge as an important factor in defining the construct of specific language specific purpose (LSP) test and it should be included in the construct definition of the test which he defines LSP definition:

Specific purpose language ability results from the interaction between specific purpose background knowledge and language ability, by means of strategic competence engaged by specific purpose input in the form of test method characteristics.

In assessing e-mail writing ability, the communicative language ability model which is set forth by Bachman and Palmer (1996) with the slight modification of that by Douglas (2000) and Weigle (2002) is all relevant to the current approach to a test design, development and use. Only topical knowledge or background knowledge would determine the choice of the models to implement in designing a language test. The decision on whether to include or exclude the topical knowledge in the test construct definition could be finalized from the analysis of the target language use and task characteristics which the information will define the options of topical knowledge with regards to construction definition as suggested by Bachman and Palmer (1996).

However, it has been found that topical knowledge (background knowledge) has an important influence on task performance, especially in the area of language for specific purposes (Salmani-Nodoushan, 2007). The findings in accord with Douglas (2000: 7) in that the measures of language ability are always colored by such factors as background knowledge and test methods. This claim accords with the definition of LSP tests in that the interaction between language knowledge and specific content knowledge which is executed by strategic competence are fundamental goals of any language for specific purposes (LSP) test. This distinctive feature of LSP test also enhances the authenticity of test tasks and places the LSP test on the more specificity end of the general-specific purpose test continuum similarly to the e-mail styles flexibility continuum (See Figure 2.4).

2.11 Frameworks of assessing Language for Specific Purposes (LSP)

Douglas (2000: 1) elaborated the meaning of LSP tests as follows:
"*Testing language for specific purposes (LSP) refers to that branch of language testing in which the test contents and test methods are derived from an analysis of a specific language use situation, such as Spanish for Business, Japanese for Tour Guides, Italian for Language Teachers, or English for Air Traffic Control.*"

Douglas (2000: 1) further explained the distinction between general purpose language tests versus specific purpose tests:

> "*LSP tests are usually contrasted with general purpose language tests, in which purpose is more broadly defined, as in the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) (Douglas, 2000: 1). However, it is important to note that tests are not either general purposes or specific purposes – all tests are developed for some purposes – but there is a continuum of specificity from very general to very specific, and a given test may fall at any point on the continuum.*"

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is derived from ELT – English Language Teaching (ELT) with three reasons to support its origination: 1) the rise of commerce and technology and there is a demand for an international language; and English is accepted in this sense of lingua-franca, 2) the development in the field of linguistics, that is, socio-cultural aspect which claims that language varies in contexts, and 3) the development in educational psychology which lays upon learners' needs and interests (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987: 7-8). Taking these factors into consideration, it is now widely accepted that language use differs in situations; and with the benefit of the difference in language uses across contexts, Hutchinson and Waters (1987: 19) emphasize that ESP should not be taken into account as a product of language learning, but an approach to learning a language in which it reflects specific reasons for learning which imply the learners' motivation in ESP classroom.

Hutchinson and Waters (1987: 166) also state that ESP should not be seen differently from that of general English which they argue that ESP relies almost entirely on two effective factors which contribute to differentiating English for Specific Purposes (ESP) from that of English for General Purposes (GE). Firstly, face validity makes the specific purposes and language contents look relevant to the learners. Secondly, familiarity explains the extent to which the learners have some experience in working with the particular texts in the ESP context so they are likely to have advantages in comprehending those texts.

Given that face validity seemingly enhances the degree of the authenticity of the ESP contents when they look relevant to the learners at the time they encounter with the texts in their specific content areas; however, Bhatia (1993: 194), in his book, *Analysing Genre: Language Use in Professional Settings*, taking the approach of genre analysis to the ESP assessment for the authenticity of texts, tasks, and language use in target situations which bring two types of requirements: authenticity of communication and authenticity of purpose associated with a communicative task, pointed out that the authenticity of communication does not refer to simple surface-level for the sake of face validity alone, but more of an underlying rationality that makes people realize the use of a language as purposeful and truly communicative in real-life setting.

In line with Bhatia (1993) and Hutchinson & Waters (1987), discussed in the literature with respect to English teaching, learning, and assessment situation in Thailand, ELDC (2005), suggested that the suitable management of English language teaching for personnel in certain professions or work places should focus on the communicative approach in the form of English for Specific Purposes or ESP. However, the degree of success of ESP depends on the learners' ability to use English in real situations; therefore, the content of the teaching should be relevant to the work and the teaching activities or materials used in the training or teaching should stimulate learners to have awareness of the importance and necessity to use the language.

Bhatia (1993: 193) further states that the nature of ESP course depends heavily on the requirements of other disciplines and areas of expertise; and thus in many cases, ESP courses are supported by institutional arrangements i.e. industrial or business organizations, or university departments which makes ESP teaching specialized and requires advanced preparation in the form of needs analysis indicating specific knowledge and understanding of skills and abilities that the learners need to acquire, the texts and tasks they need to handle, the target situations they are likely to participate in, and the roles they are likely to assume after they complete the ESP course. With this specificity which results in expectations of accountability for the achievement of the learners, assessment remains the most neglected aspect of ESP theory and practice.

Bhatia (1993: 193) further argues that one of the reasons for the lack of research in ESP assessment, which he claims ESP testing can rarely be a genuine communicative activity is that it is difficult and even unrealistic to predict what students will do in a real situation based on test performance through a simulated testing activity. Thus, he points out:

> "*Attainment in ESP does not relate to the knowledge of language usage, but to an ability to use language to communicate in a specific area. The real success of ESP testing should be based on the performance of learners in actual target-situations, academic or professional areas for which they have been trained. For example, if a learner is given training in negotiating in business situations, the real success of the course will depend on the extent to which the learner can successfully participate and win contracts in actual business settings*."

Douglas (2000: 2), from the testing perspective, in his book *Assessing Languages for Specific Purposes*, proposes a more developed distinction between LSP and ESP when English for specific purposes (ESP) is a more specific term than LSP which is used in a broader term. He suggests that there are two distinguishable features in defining the specific purpose language ability. Firstly, the authenticity of tasks which means the test tasks should reflect critical features of tasks in the target language use situation. Secondly, there is the interaction between language knowledge and specific purpose content or background knowledge. According to him, the authenticity of test tasks is now widely accepted as an integral part of the latest approach in developing a test. The second feature makes it the clearest feature of LSP test that the interaction between language knowledge and specific content or background knowledge come into play through language competence and strategic competence while test takers are trying to accomplish a particular test task. While in the general language tests, the background knowledge is seen as a confounding variable which contributes to the measurement error and it should be minimized as much as possible. On the contrary, in the LSP test, the specific content knowledge is an integral part in developing the test.

To draw a conclusion in accordance with Douglas (2000: 3), these two characteristics of LSP ability- language knowledge and specific purpose content knowledge- are fundamental factors for establishing a theory of LSP testing.

While there are already many good tests available, why bother developing a LSP test. Douglas (2000: 6-8) noted that the ESP tests are developed for some purposes to achieve some goals in contextualized communication. There are two possible reasons for this. First, performances vary from one context to another according to the influence of socio-cultural aspects of linguistics which explains the way in which test takers' ability are different according to contexts, text-types and test tasks. Secondly, the specific purpose language test is more precise as stated by Douglas (2000: 7-8). It refers to the technical language which has specific characteristics and communicative functions within that field. The classic example is in the case of law or legalese which serves specific communicative functions and has specific characteristics in the legal context.

Nevertheless, it might be argued that the test is developed to make an inference about the test takers' language ability through the test tasks which reflect the tasks in the target language use situation, so it might not be necessary to include specific content knowledge into the test. According to Douglas (2000)'s discussion about precision as mentioned in the previous paragraph, he states that, in the case of law as a good example, it might also be possible that it is not necessary to include language and tasks that are not related to legal register in the test in order to draw a conclusion about a test taker's language ability, but the ultimate goal in developing a LSP test is to measure a test taker's ability to use the language within a specific target language use situation, and therefore, it is necessary to include specific texts and tasks in this sense.

The current trend in developing a good test is framed around the model of communicative language ability proposed by Bachman and Palmer (1996). It has two fundamental components as integral parts in defining test takers' language ability: language knowledge and strategic competence knowledge. As an extension to that of Bachman and Palmer's (1996) model, Douglas (2000: 35) proposed to include background knowledge as the third component which he believes that once it comes to play in the test task, it will reflect the interaction between language knowledge and background knowledge through the use of strategic competence of the test takers to accomplish an LSP test task as he noted that:

> *Specific purpose language ability results from the interaction between specific purpose background knowledge and language ability, by means of strategic competence engaged by specific purpose input in the form of test method characteristics (Douglas, 2000: 40).*

Table 2.4: Components of specific purpose language ability (Douglas, 2000: 40)

Language knowledge
Grammatical knowledge
- Knowledge of vocabulary
- Knowledge of morphology and syntax
- Knowledge of phonology
Textual knowledge
- Knowledge of cohesion
- Knowledge of rhetorical or conversation organization
Functional knowledge
- Knowledge of ideational functions
- Knowledge of manipulative functions
- Knowledge of heuristic functions
- Knowledge of imaginative functions
Sociolinguistic knowledge
- Knowledge of dialects/varieties
- Knowledge of registers
- Knowledge of idiomatic expressions
- Knowledge of cultural references
Strategic competence
Assessment
- Evaluating communicative situation or test task and engaging an appropriate discourse domain
- Evaluating the correctness or appropriateness of the response
Goal setting
- Deciding how (and whether) to respond to the communicative situation
Planning
- Deciding what elements of language knowledge and background knowledge are required to reach the established goal

Control of execution - Retrieving and organizing the appropriate elements of language knowledge to carry out the plan **Background knowledge** Discourse domains Frames of reference based on past experience which we use to make sense of current input and make predictions about that which is to come

Douglas's (2000) point of view about the LSP ability also reflects that of Bachman and Palmer's (1996) notion of additional aspects to language knowledge and strategic knowledge in the extent to which the actual language use in genuine communicative situations involves other considerations: specifically, topical knowledge, personality factors, and affect or emotional factors. However, Weigle (2002: 45) argues that if language ability is the central focus, not the other components of language use in actual communication such as the topical knowledge, so it may or may not be specifically assessed in a writing test and thus may or may not be part of the construct being measured. Even though, in her view, topical or background knowledge relatively contrasts with that of Douglas's (2000). It could be seen that Weigle's (2000) aspect of topical knowledge depends merely on the degree of specificity. She exemplifies the case of classical music that if the knowledge about classical music could be included as a part of the construct "writing about music", the test task will be designed and based on this knowledge, but if the focus of the test is a more general definition of writing ability, the topical knowledge in classical music would be excluded from the test task. The test developer should understand that this topical knowledge will have an effect on test takers' performance and thus on their test scores.

However, Bhatia (1993: 193-200), in his genre analysis approach to ESP assessment, stated that for ESP assessment to be effective, it must be towards the specific end of the general-specific continuum which upholds the notion that ESP testing should include topical knowledge in the construct of the test. Bhatia's (1993) statement also leads to the most important question of ESP assessment: "how specific is specific?". He discussed this question in two aspects: texts and tasks. They can affect the degree of specificity resulting in ESP assessment to fall within the rather specific end of the general-specific continuum. There are a number of studies revealing that familiarity of texts in specific content areas and tasks have effects on individual language performance.

For example, Bhatia (1993: 197) exemplified the study by Alderson and Urquhart (1985) investigating two groups of subjects on the reading tests. One group was to read familiar texts in their content areas and the other read unfamiliar texts out of their content areas. They found that the latter group might lack not only the content of the subject area, but also the knowledge of genre, rhetorical organization, and linguistic and non-linguistic relations. Another example of Bhatia's study is that he compared reading strategies used by two groups of readers. The result revealed that the readers with the reading texts in their familiar subject disciplines read the text smoothly while another group of readers with the texts from an unfamiliar content area read slowly and had difficulties with unfamiliar words. Therefore, Bhatia (1993: 198) points out:

> *...lack of content familiarity does affect reading processes and strategies adversely, sometimes turning good readers into poor performers.*

With regards to tasks, Bhatia (1993: 193) points out the relationship of learners' performance and the advantage of familiarity with subject-specific tasks that:

> *It is very likely that in measuring learner's performance on specific tasks one may actually be measuring very specific abilities, rather than a general ability to perform overall comprehension activities.*

The question of specificity of texts and tasks may bring the tension in ending up with devising a specific language test for every test taker if taking into account the perfection in accuracy and effectiveness. However, this tension reflects the quality control process or test qualities in Bachman and Palmer's (1996) framework. One of the aspects in the test qualities is practicality which refers to the manageable aspect of all resources available (time, budget, human resources, etc.). Bhatia (1993: 199) suggests adopting a genre-based approach to ESP assessment in the selection of texts and tasks as a way to compromise this tension with three-way advantages. Firstly, the communicative purpose of the genre and other aspects of the genre will help alleviate the disadvantaged feeling of the examiner when encountering with unfamiliarity of the text-content and lexis. Secondly, it will be a mutual benefit for the test designer for which the genre-based approach to the ESP assessment will provide a nice combination of specificity of content and practical convenience of not having to design a separate test for learners in individual subject-disciplines. The relevance of test tasks will promote the validity of the test whereby it reflects the correspondence of test task and relevant task in the target situation. Finally, the generic integrity of the texts is maintained and it may ensure the authenticity of the content of the test and the task on one hand and will reflect the real-life target situation on the other.

Tarone (2001: 53) also supported the Genre Analysis Approach to ESP Assessment noting that "it now seems clear that all second-language acquisition must start and end with specific second language (L2) learners who must function in the L2 in specific local social situations, and who therefore must acquire a set of L2 registers and genres. And, the research in Languages for Specific Purposes (LSP) revealed that native speakers as well as fluent expert non-native speakers of any language formed distinct discourse communities who pursue their common goals using distinct registers and "genres" which are shaped to serve their communicative purposes (Bhatia, 1993).

In sum, the frameworks for assessing language abilities proposed by Bachman & Palmer (1996) and their successors including Weigle (2002) and Douglas (2000) maintain strong concept of good testing practice in that a language test must be able to clearly demonstrate the degree of correspondence between the characteristics of the language and tasks in target language use situation and test situation. So, they proposed extensive frameworks to determine characteristics of the language and tasks in target language use situation. Drawing on from the literature and the e-mail writing situation in the travel agency business, Language for Specific Purpose (LSP) framework fit the needs in this testing situation because Douglas (2000: 126) maintained that assessing language for specific purpose ability requires to demonstrate the correspondence among three main components, that is, language knowledge, background knowledge, strategic competence. Especially, for him, background knowledge is considered key feature that determine language for specific-purpose test from a more general-purpose test. However, he asserted that the test developer would face difficulties in defining the construct definition since the proposed frameworks do not provide an automatic procedure to translate the target language and tasks characteristics into test tasks. These steps require the test developer's experience, sound background in applied linguistics, and creative mind to make fine judgment of what should be included or excluded when defining the construct of the language abilities in the language test. So, genre analysis framework is proposed to fill this gap of difficulties in identifying language components of the e-mail writing abilities.

2.12 Genre analysis framework

Dudley-Evans (1994: 219) pointed out that genre analysis has become an important approach to text analysis, especially in the field of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and the genre knowledge has been viewed as a key contributor to the development of writing ability (Bronia, 2005: 76) in a way that the student writers will be equipped to realize how schematic structure and linguistic features are related to social context and purpose.

Developing a writing test, Weigle (2002: 90) stated that genre has an important role when it comes to the issue of considerations in task design. In her view, genre can be defined both in terms of the intended form and the intended function of the writing. Letters, laboratory reports or essays are written products which are referred to form. Functions can be described in terms of communicative purposes (Weigle, 2002: 96) such as describing, inviting, apologizing, and discourse mode in narration, description, exposition and argumentation. Although Weigle (2002) did not clearly pin down the link between form and function which constitute genre, it can be construed that genre is realized as a relatively stable form with communicative functions attached to it.

Considering task design concerning genre in writing assessment, Weigle (2002: 97) pointed out that *"the genre (form and function) that the prompt is intended to elicit will depend on a large measure in the universe of generalization, that is, what kind of writing, both in terms of form and function, the test taker is going to have to do beyond the test? Thus, authenticity is a key consideration.*"

Dudley-Evens (1994: 219) noted that "*within the conventions of the genre in question it was the writer's communicative purpose that governs the choice at the grammatical and lexical level. The communicative purpose is, in fact, the defining feature by which a genre such as an academic article is distinguished from other genres and by which the consideration of genre is distinguished from the consideration of register*". Dudley-Evans (ibid) defined genre analysis as "*a system that is able to reveal something of the patterns of organizing a genre and the language used to express those patterns in the light of communicative purposes*".

Martin and Rose (2003: 7) proposed that genre, in their view, refers to different types of texts (*speech or written*) [*parenthesis added*] that enact various types of social contexts. Genre is a staged, goal-oriented social process. That is, when we participate in genres with other people, it reflects the social process of the genre. We also use genres to get the things done which attribute the goal-oriented characteristic of the genre underlying the communicative purpose(s) of the genre in question. In addition, it usually takes us a few steps to reach our goals which exhibit stages in constructing a genre.

Martin and Rose (2003: 7) have also contended that a genre has the predictable patterns of meaning or generic integrity of the genre (the latter term used by Bhatia, 1993) which we can learn to predict how each situation is likely to unfold, and learn how to interact with it. Through our lifetime, we have encountered a myriad of genres with either more or less predictable patterns of meaning, for instance, greetings, casual conversations, arguments, telephone inquiries, instructions, lectures, debates, plays, jokes, games, e-mail and so on. The predictable patterns of meaning can be seen in a myriad of studies, for example; Taweewong (2006: 128-129) applied the move-step analysis of the genre (Swales, 1990) to analyze the business e-mail correspondence and revealed the 7-move structure of this genre including Move 1 Opening Salutation, Move 2 Establishing Correspondence Chain, Move 3 Introducing Purposes, Move 4 Attaching Documents, Move 5 Soliciting Response, Move 6 Ending Positively, and Move 7 Closing Salutation. The moves in the genre reflect the cognitive schema pattern of the genre in a way that each move has its communicative purpose and at the same time complementarily activates the overall generic convention of the genre in order to fulfill its communicative purpose.

Another interesting genre definition comes from Knapp & Watkins (2005: 22) stating that:

> *Genres are classified according to their social purpose and identified according to the stages they move through to attain their purpose. Purpose is theorised here as a cultural category; for example, shopping would be seen as having a universal purpose, but the stages required to achieve that purpose could be conceivably different, depending on the cultural context; for example, shopping in Bangkok as opposed to Bendigo.*

Swales (1990) seemed to provide a more elaborated and practical definition of the genre as follows:

> *Genre refers to a recognizable communicative event characterized by a set of communicative purpose(s) identified and mutually understood by the members of the professional or academic community in which it regularly occurs. Most often it is highly structured and conventionalized with constraints on allowable contributions in terms of their intent, positioning, form and functional value. These constraints, however, are often exploited by the expert members of the discourse community to achieve private intentions within the framework of socially recognized purposes(s).*

The communicative purpose seemed to be the most important feature in defining a genre in question. Genre in Swales (1990) is realized by means of move-structure analysis of the genre within which each move works in harmony to shape the generic integrity of the genre and ultimately fulfills the overall communicative purpose of the genre. The basic unit of the genre in Swales genre model consists of moves, steps, and their sequencing, or it is known as the move-step analysis. Moves are rhetorical instruments that realize a sub-set of specific communicative purposes associated with a genre, and as such they are interpreted in the context of the communicative purposes of the genre. In addition, moves are recognized in terms of the functional values that are assigned to linguistic forms (Bhatia, 2001: 84-85). Steps or stages refer to sub-moves complementing to realize the move. Bhatia (2001: 84-86) noted that it is important to distinguish the terms “steps” and “strategies” in that steps refer to stages or sub-moves to realize the move, while strategies refer to rhetorical strategies that can be selective in nature by means of choices or different ways to completing the same move so that rhetorical strategies have less power to discriminate one move from another, but steps or sub-moves can make a significant difference in the status and identification of genres.

The classic example of the move-step analysis of the genre analysis is the CARS (Create a Research Space) model that Swales (1990: 141) used to summarize the move-step of the research article introductions. To date, this model is still useful and widely used in analyzing the genre in question. The Swales (1990) CARS model shown in the figure below illustrates the 3-move structure of the research article introduction, even though Swales (1990) proposed a 4-move structure of the Research Space Model for Article Introduction, consisting of Move 1: Establishing the research field, Move 2: Summarizing previous research, Move 3: Preparing for present research, and Move 4: Introducing the present research. Bhatia (1993: 31) noted that Swales has offered various versions of the interpretative move-structure of the research article in a number of his 1981, 1986, and 1990 publications.

Move 1 Establishing a territory
Step 1 Claiming centrality
and/or
Step 2 Making topic generalization(s)
Step 3 Reviewing items of previous research

Declining rhetorical effort

Move 2 Establishing a niche
Step 1A Counter-claiming
or
Step 1B Indicating a gap
or
Step 1C Question-raising
or
Step 1D Continuing a tradition

Weakening knowledge claims

Move 3 Occupying the niche
Step 1A Outlining purposes
or
Step 1B Announcing present research
Step 2 Announcing principal findings
Step 3 Indicating RA structure

Increasing explicitness

Figure 2.6: The Swales (1990: 141) CARS model representing the move-step analysis of the research articles introductions

Based on the Swales (1990) and Bhatia (1993) genre analysis models, Wang (2005: 76-81) applied the move-step analysis to analyze job application letters. The results revealed the generic convention of the 6-move structure of the job application letter as illustrated in the following figure.

5. Linguistic Analysis

5.1 Schematic structure

V.K. Bhatia concluded the seven-move structure in the job application letters (Bhatia, 1993: 59). In my present research, I only used 6 moves, for they were easier to label the samples.

Move 1: Establishing Self
Step 1A: Establishing a niche
Step 1B: Referring to the source of job information about a vacancy
Move 2: Offering Self
Step 2A: Introducing self
Step 2B: Elaborating on self
Step 2C: Evaluating self
Move 3: Referring to Enclosed Materials
Move 4: Using Pressure Tactics
Move 5: Inviting Further Action
Move 6: Goodwill Ending

To make the above schematic structure easy to follow, here is an example from the present corpus.

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am responding to your advertisement in the *Sunday Star Tribune* placed under both the education and engineering categories.	M1 (1B)	
This dual listing intrigued me, as my experience has been strong in both teaching and in industry. Also I have long admired your company's consumer product line.	2C	M2
While obtaining my PhD, I taught Physics and electrical engineering at the University of Minnesota for three years. Since that time I have been working at Gould Electronics as a process engineer involved with inspection, qualification, and upgrading materials on a product assembly line. My latest project has been supervising work on a prototype color flat-panel display unit. I also continue to teach one course a semester in the University's physics department.	2B	
The details of my education, work history and publications are given in the enclosed resume.	M3	
I would enjoy an opportunity to meet with you and learn more about Northern and your program needs. Would it be possible to set an interview next week? I can be reached at 566-1907 after 6pm.	M5	
I am looking forward to hearing from you.	M6	

Respectively yours

Figure 2.7: The move-step analysis of the job application letters in Wang's study (2005: 78)

Thus, it can be seen that the move-step analysis is used to accumulate the communicative purpose of the genre, and it is considered nuts and bolts of genre analysis framework.

The communicative purpose and schematic structure seem to be two important defining characteristics of the genre when Bhatia (1993: 13) contended that "*although there are a number of other factors, like content, form, intended audience, medium or channel, that influence the nature and construction of a genre, it is primarily characterized by the communicative purpose(s) that it is intended to fulfill. This shared set of communicative purpose(s) shapes the genre and gives it an internal structure. Any major change in the communicative purpose(s) is likely to give us a different genre; however, minor changes or modifications help us distinguish sub-genres. Although it may not always be possible to draw a fine distinction between genres and sub-genres, communicative purpose is a fairly reliable criterion to identify and distinguish sub-genres.*"

Bhatia's view towards move-step structure and the communicative purpose of a genre can be construed that there is more than 1-level interpretation of the genre in that the two defining features of move-step analysis and communicative intention of the genre can either bypass or encompass all other linguistic and metalinguistic factors to shaping the cognitive structure of genre. Those factors include, according to Bhatia (1993: 13), *content, form, intended audience, medium or channel that influence the nature and construction of a genre.* The bypassing approach of other metalinguistic features and focusing only on the move-step structure, linguistic features and the communicative purpose reflect the notion that the cognitive patterning of the genre is relatively stable across disciplines or professional contexts. This approach perhaps benefits for selecting texts and tasks across disciplines when these texts seem to share similarities regarding the cognitive schema realized by the move-step structure of a genre.

Bhatia (1993: 199) proposed that adopting a genre-based approach to ESP assessment in selecting texts and tasks is a way to compromise the specificity tension with three-way advantages. Firstly, the communicative purpose of the genre and other aspects of the genre will help alleviate the disadvantaged feeling of the learner when encountering with unfamiliarity of the text-content and lexis. Secondly, it will be a mutual benefit for the test designer for which the genre-based approach to the ESP assessment will provide a nice combination of specificity of content and practical convenience of not having to design a separate test for learners in individual subject-disciplines. The relevance of test tasks will promote the validity of the test whereby it reflects the correspondence of a test task and the relevant task in the target situation. Finally, the generic integrity of the texts is maintained and it may ensure the authenticity of the content of the test and the task on one hand and will reflect the real-life target situation on the other.

At this move-step and linguistic analysis level, Bhatia (2001: 81) perceived this view by means of the text-internal analysis, but admitted that "*although text-internal factors are important for the identification of communicative purposes, they can give misleading insights when used on their own. Textual factors typically depend on their form-function correlation, and it is not always possible to have one-to-one correlation in this area*".

In addition, the encompassing approach (metalinguistic) to the move-step structure can complement analyzing other contextual features (i.e. subject matter, relationship between the interactants, and channel of communication) or register analysis (Martin, 2003: 243) to complete the genre model when it is necessary to determine sub-genres from the same genre or different genres and sub-genres across disciplines and professional contexts. For example, general news reporting has different characteristics from sports reporting as well as newspapers reporting in *The Sun* is not written in the same way as in *Guardian*, although these genres share the same communicative purpose, that is, to inform the readers about the day-to-day happenings in the world. Bhatia (1993: 20-21) used the term "strategies" by means of identifying discriminative and non-discriminative power of strategies in distinguishing between genre and sub-genres. However, Bhatia (1993: 21) admitted that it seems almost impossible to draw up clearly defined criteria to make a satisfactory distinction between them.

At the register analysis level (metafunctions), Bhatia (2001: 81) proposed to take account of the text-external factors to confirm the integrity of the genre as he stated that "*linguistic forms do carry specific generic values, but the only way one can assign the right generic value to any linguistic feature of the genre is by reference to text-external factors. Similarly, any conclusion based on text-external factors needs to be confirmed by reference to text-internal factors. Bhatia (2003: 81) discusses this issue by considering the case of complex nominals in three different genres — academic scientific genre, advertising, and legislation — on the basis of which he concludes that although one may find an above average use of complex nominals in all the three genres, their form, distribution and generic values are very different in the three cases*".

The text-internal and -external factors governing the genre's view resonates with Martin and Rose (2003: 254) when they referred to the term "metaredundancy" explaining the system of the relationship between register and generic structure (genre) in a way that "*it is the idea of patterns at one level redounding with patterns at the next level. Thus the genre is a pattern of register patterns, just as register variables (field, tenor, and mode) are a pattern of linguistic ones (ideational, interpersonal, and textual)*" as illustrated in Figure 2.8 [parenthesis added].

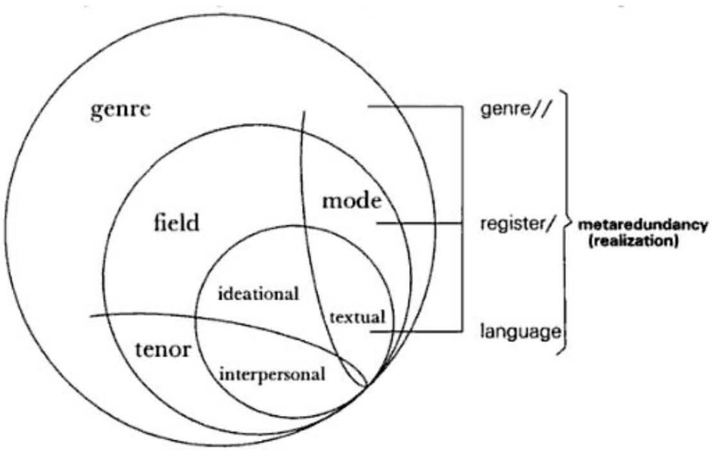

Figure 2.8: The relationship between genre, register and language (Martin & Rose, 2005: 254)

Basically, genre analysis, therefore, consists of two layer analysis to realize language use underpinning the genre model of language, i.e. contextual and linguistic analysis (Wang, 2005: 77), or the analysis of the text internal and text external features (Bhatia, 1993) influencing the interpretation of a genre in question. Figure 2.9 shows the 2-layer genre analysis which is a modified model of Bhatia (1993) given in Wang (2005: 77).

Layer 1 Contextual analysis (Bronia2005)

Purpose		What are the communicative purposes of the text? How are they achieved?
Context of situation	Mode	What is the channel of communication?
	Tenor	What roles may be required of the writer and its readers in this genre? Do they have the equal status and how does this affect the text?
	Field	What subject matter is the text about?

Layer 2 Linguistic analysis

Schematic structure	In what way/order are the ideas organized in the text?
Linguistic features	What are the lexico-grammatical features for realizing the schematic structure? How are they related to context?
Overall generic features	What are the central / peripheral moves? What's its preferred sequence of moves? Is there any recurrence and embedding of moves?

Figure 2.9: The 2-layer genre analysis (Wang, 2005: 77)

The contextual layer refers to metafunctions in the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) including ideational (representational), interpersonal and textual to explain the language system as a tool for communication. The three metafunctions are activated by three contextual components – field, tenor and mode – which combine to describe the whole context. Field refers to the text-generating activity or the stuff being talked or written about and activates the ideational (representational). Tenor refers to the role relationships of the participants and activates the interpersonal. Mode refers to the rhetorical mode being adopted by the participants and activating the textual. These contextual attributes are used to realize register (Halliday & Hasan, 1985: 38) which refers to a semantic concept of the text. Register is an abstract concept, and used to analyze and understand discourse or genre. These three terms, that is, discourse, register, and genre, are used for different purposes to realize the variations in the discourse.

The three-contextual factors are useful to help realize the register (text). For example, a text belonging to a specific discipline is identified in terms of content, that is, a subject matter or field of discourse; so, this type of text (register) can be configured as the specific register on the basis of one or two of these contextual features. Such register is regarded as either primarily field-dominated register, such as scientific register or mainly mode-dominated register, as in the case of casual conversation, or tenor-dominated register like client consultation (Bhatia, 2004: 31-32).

Register analysis focusing on the surface-level to language in contexts descriptions might have been criticized if it relies mainly on looking at frequency occurrence of lexico-grammatical features in the texts in question. Bhatia (2004: 4-8) pointed out that this early stages of the register analysis puts emphasis on statistically significant features of lexis and grammar without putting much effort to describe purposes or functions that those linguistic features try to achieve. Bhatia (2004: 4-8) also noted that the study of language variations as “registers” is relatively restricted within clause boundaries without much reference to discourse organization. Thus, he proposed the genre analysis to extend the scope of the study from the micro-structures (textualization of lexico-grammar) to macro-structure including organization of discourse and contextualization of discourse.

Another genre analysis model that seems practical for this study was Santos (2002) in an attempt to identify generic features of the Business Letter of Negotiation (BLN) genre. A four-move structure of the BLN was proposed which outlined stages to achieve communicative purpose of this specific genre. Santos (2002)'s BLN four-move structure included:

Move 1: Establishing the negotiation chain
Move 2: Providing information/answers
Move 3: Requesting information/actions
Move 4: Ending.

Santos (2002) maintained Swales' (1990) concept of genre that members of a specific discourse community share "structure, style, content, and intended audience" in order to express their communicative purpose and therefore formulate rhetorical features of the specific genre which can be realized through the formulation of the move structure of that kind of genre.

Santos (2002: 185) claimed that the shared communicative purposes of the Business Letter of Negotiation (BLN) include: **the exchange of information and the request for favors and services**. And, these communicative purposes are considered routine tasks in business communication as Geffner (2010: 191) pointed out that:

> *"As a business man, you will inevitably have to write many request letters. The need for information or special favors, services, or products arises daily in almost every type of business."*

Detailing each move and its underlying communicative functions, Santos (2002: 178-187) provided that:

Move 1: Establishing the negotiation chain. Move 1 covers the header position which introduces and sets the scene of the communication chain. It provides the reference information that links a previous letter (e-mail) to the next one. This rhetorical function also gives information about participants and date which sets the scene of the communication event. It also fulfills the act of greeting saying "hello" to the addressee. There are several steps involved in this move including:

(i) Defining participants

(ii) Attention to – line

(iii) Attention to the message – line

(iv) Reference – line

(v) Addressing and greeting the addressee.

Santos (2002: 183) noted that steps are the rhetorical functions signaling negotiation strategies that allow the participants to give opinions, make comments, and show flexibility in the process of dealing including options to show personal impact or emotional feelings. The steps are supportive ideas that help empowering the main move to achieve its communicative purpose.

Santos (ibid) further described that **Reference – line** (Step-iv) which is now function identical to the **Subject** in e-mail platform (Frehner, 2008: 40-41) needs special attention as it provides this genre with a dialogue-like feature which helps the participants to keep track of the negotiation chain. It also helps the reader to know that his communicative event has a sequence in terms of message exchange.

Move 2: Providing information/answers and Move 3: Requesting information/actions. Santos (2002: 180) outlined that these two moves contain real content of the message which is exchanged between the participants and account for the communicative purpose that formulates the genre whereas Move 2 usually comes first and Move 3 follows respectively. Consistent with Frehner (2008: 40), Santos

(2002: 185) pointed out that both moves (Move 2 and Move 3) provide "new information" and the "real content" of the interaction, that is, the exchange of information and the request for favors and services which then help realize the genre of business negotiation. However, each move contains optional steps and sub-steps that help identify communicative purpose of the move. The details of the two moves are provided below.

Move 2: Providing information/answers

(i) Information:

(a) Introducing and providing information

(b) Continuing/adding

(c) Up-dating

(d) Agreeing

(e) Showing opposition (unexpected results)

(ii) Advising about message:

(a) by mail

(b) along with the fax

(c) within the fax

Move 3: Requesting information/actions.

(i) Information:

(a) Explaining/clarifying

(b) Giving opinion/comments/guidance/suggestions

(c) Confirming information

(d) Acknowledging receipt of a message

(ii) Exchange of ideas/discussions:

(iii) Actions/favors of

(a) Material/document mailing

(b) Service/action/attitude/help

Santos (2002: 181) clearly described the linguistic choices used to denote providing and requesting function in the main moves of BLN. For example, personal pronouns or names are linguistic forms used to signal direct discourse and emphasis that this is the person who does the action (provision), the information not the company or the department. Or the message itself is realized as an actor of the move through the use of defining pronoun such as "this" or by words related to content ideas. Santos (2002: 182) further described that request forms are varied depending on the nature of the request and status-role rank. The linguistic choices denoting request function usually include interrogatives, imperatives or declaratives. Interrogatives and declaratives may come directly. However, to tone down direct request and to show politeness and formalism in business correspondence, mitigation forms such as "could" or "would" or the expression "would like" or "please" or "gently" or "kindly" are used.

Move 4: Ending. Santos (2002: 179) noted that this last move acts similarly to the traditional closing in the non-electronic business letter. It is a place where the writer signs off and provides individual professional data such as the full name and rank status in the company to the addressee. There are several steps to realize this move. They are:

(i) Signing off

(ii) Signature – line

(iii) Job status in the company

(iv) Company credentials

(v) Note and PS – line

(vi) Copy to – line

(vii) File data.

However, Santos (2002) addressed that Steps (i) and (ii) are the most frequent while the others may occur according to communicative motivation. However, Santos (2002: 180) rightly noted that the PS – line functions as the last-minute information that conveys relevant information so it deserves special attention.

Santos (2002)'s genre analysis study of the Business Letter of Negotiation (BLN) has provided the groundbreaking concept towards defining effective e-mail writing ability in that: firstly, it suggests patterns of rhetorical elements that are important to realize the move-step structure of the genre of interest and therefore results in classifying the genre of Business Letters of Negotiation (BLN) with the 4-move structure proposal. Secondly, it provides an elaborative and practical means to analyze the business correspondence discourse.

In sum, the move-step analysis is the heart of the genre analysis frameworks as proposed by Swales (1990), Bhatia (1993), Santos (2002), and Wang (2005). Nevertheless, the register analysis can be used in harmony with the move-step analysis to achieve descriptions of genres in-depth and results in the cognitive schema represented by the move-structure as well as lexico-grammatical features in terms of registers, and contextual features that shape the overall communicative purpose of the genre in question. The in-depth description model of the language reflects the view that language learning is moving from general to specific end of the continuum. Such a model integrating the move-step and register analysis is proposed in Wang's (2005) study which reflects the 2-layer analysis of the genre, that is, contextual and linguistic analysis. This model is applicable for analyzing any text analysis within the area of applied linguistics and ESP.

Bhatia (2001: 79) stated that genre analysis continues to provide an attractive framework for the analysis of language use for a variety of applied linguistic purposes, particularly for the teaching and learning of English for academic and professional purposes. However, he noted a criticism against the genre analysis in that the model seemed to encourage prescription rather than creativity in application. In response, he chose to look at another side of the coin in that instead of viewing genre analysis from the prescriptive aspect, the model should be looked upon the descriptive perspectives and perceived as pattern seeking rather than pattern imposing (Bhatia, 1993: 40).

For the final remark, the ultimate goal to devise a good LSP test or specifically an ESP test is to make inference about individual language ability within a specific target situation; therefore, the test tasks should reflect the correspondence between the target language use and task. The genre-based approach to ESP assessment could provide a promising framework in the selection of texts and tasks to determine the degree of authenticity and specificity.

2.13 Integrated frameworks (assessing Language for Specific Purposes and genre analysis)

1. Needs Analysis (Douglas, 2000)

Specialist informants identifying significant e-mail tasks (check-list)

2. The Genre Analysis framework (Santos, 2002; Wang, 2005)
Layer 1 Contextual analysis (Field, Tenor, and Mode)
Layer 2 Linguistic analysis
Macro level: Move-step analysis
Micro level: Lexico-grammatical features

3. Framework of specific purpose language ability (Douglas, 2000)

Language knowledge
Grammatical knowledge
Textual knowledge
Functional knowledge
Sociolinguistic knowledge
Strategic competence
Assessment
Goal setting
Planning
Control of execution
Background knowledge
Discourse domains
Frames of reference based on past experience which we use to make sense of current input and make predictions about that which is to come

4. Framework for task characteristics in language use situations and LSP tests (Douglas, 2000)

Characteristics of the rubrics
Specifications of objectives
Procedures for responding
Structure for the communicative event
Time allotment
Evaluation
Characteristics of the input
Prompt
Input data
Characteristics of the expected response
Format
Type of response
Response content
Level of authenticity
Characteristics of the interaction between input and response
Reactivity
Scope
Directness
Characteristics of assessment
Construct definition
Criteria for correctness
Rating procedure

5.Components of test specifications (Douglas, 2000)

1. Describe the purposes of the test.
2. Describe the TLU situation and list the TLU tasks.
3. Describe the characteristics of the language users / test takers.
4. Define the construct to be measured.
5. Describe the content of the test.
6. Describe criteria for correctness.
7. Provide samples of tasks/items the specs are intended to generate.
8. Develop a plan for evaluating the qualities of good testing practice.

Modified CLB (2000)
Integrated Scoring Scheme
- Effectiveness (Macro)
- Accuracy (Micro)

Figure 2.10: The conceptual frameworks for developing the e-mail test tasks

According to Figure 2.10, two main frameworks, that is, genre analysis (Wang, 2005; Santos, 2002) and Assessing Language for Specific Purposes (Douglas, 2000), are integrated to provide insight description of the language knowledge and target language use situation tasks characteristics. The analysis results contribute the sound basis for developing the test specifications of e-mail writing abilities.

The genre analysis framework Wang (2005) and Santos (2002) contributes three attributes regarding language knowledge, strategic competence and specific purpose content knowledge. First, the genre analysis will result in the illustration of the move-step structure, the identification of the communicative purpose of the genre in question (using three e-mail tasks) as well as the strategies that the writers used to accomplish the tasks. Second, the lexico-grammatical elements in realizing the genre will be illustrated in terms of special lexis and grammatical constructions regularly occurred in the genre studied. Finally, the relationship between the contextual features (field, tenor and mode) will extend the interpretation and reflect the detailed description of the genre in question in terms of specific purpose content, the relationship between the e-mail interactants, and the description of the channel used in the e-mail communication. These contextual features have the tendency to influence the variations of the genre.

The framework of specific purpose language ability in Douglas (2000) can take advantage of the genre analysis results and use them to compose the construct definition of the specific purpose language ability. The framework for task characteristics in language use situations and LSP tests will provide the basis for the identification, description and development of the rubrics, input, expected response, interaction between input and response, and assessment procedure. The data from the genre analysis will provide the data through the grounded description of the target language use situation and tasks. The interaction of the three frameworks can be illustrated in Figure 11 below. The data analysis which results from the three frameworks contributes the development of the test blueprint (specifications) in this study.

Although Douglas (2000) noted that through the analysis of the content and language in the specific purpose domain the test developer can arrive at an understanding of the target language use situation and the problems that need to be addressed in the test, the test developer should consult with the specialist informants in the case of identifying what is worth focusing on in the analyzed data or what aspects of the data are highly valued by the professional in the field. This problem can be alleviated by adopting needs analysis or using significant-tasks checklist as recommended by Bachman & Palmer (1996: 108). Douglas suggested that the test developer should consult the specialist informants early in the analysis of the target language use situation.

Therefore, the needs analysis needs to be conducted using the questionnaire with the specialist informants in the travel agency "*who have a feel of the technical language of the discipline and are open to linguistically-oriented questions*" (Douglas, 2000: 98) with an aim to identify significant e-mail writing tasks and expectations about e-mail writing abilities.

Douglas (2000) described that the analysis results of target language and tasks characteristics are translated into the framework of specific purpose language ability and the framework of task characteristics. Douglas (2000:189-200) used the Oxford International Business English Certificate (OIBEC) as an example to demonstrate how to use the frameworks to analyze specific purpose language ability and test task characteristics in the OIBEC.

Table 2.5 exemplifies the analysis of the specific purpose language ability of the target language use situation.

Table 2.5: The analysis of the specific purpose language ability of the target language use situation in the OIBEC (Douglas, 2000: 194)

Language Knowledge	
Grammatical Knowledge	
Vocabulary	Wide range, advanced level, business and financial terminology
Morphology/Syntax	Wide range, advanced level
Phonology/Graphology	Standard written forms
Textual knowledge	
Cohesion	implicit: must synthesize information from Case Study documents
Organization	implicit: correct business letter format
Functional knowledge	Ideational: presenting information from Case Study documents; manipulative: arguing the need for more money
Sociolinguistic knowledge	
Dialect /variety	Standard English
Register	Business/Commercial
Idiom	Some: 'at a price'
Cultural reference	Some implicit cultural knowledge necessary: commercial 'goodwill,' younger members of Kudos family 'not interested' in running the business
Strategic competence	Relate knowledge from reading input data to language knowledge necessary to write a note of explanation to Managing Director

Background knowledge	International business, finance, UK business culture; temporary knowledge from input data

Table 2.6 illustrates the task characteristics of the OIBEC.

Table 2.6: The task characteristics of the OIBEC (Douglas, 2000: 195)

Objective	To assess candidates' ability to express themselves in writing clearly, concisely, and with reasonable accuracy, and to solve business and commercial problems involving finance, travel, business negotiation and company development
Procedures for responding	Write response in spaces provided in test booklet, using black or blue ink or ball-point pen
Structure	
Number of tasks	Six
Relative importance	Variable: tasks receive from 20 to 10 marks each
Task distinctions	Clear: each task is numbered and begins on a separate page
Time allotment	One hour and 35 minutes for all six tasks
Evaluation	Test takers are told that they will be tested on ability to write with clarity, conciseness, and reasonable accuracy, their ability to set out a business letter, and their ability to solve problems; they are given little information about criteria or procedures for scoring

Table 2.7 shows the characteristics of the input, expected response and assessment of the OIBEC.

Table 2.7: The characteristics of the input, expected response and assessment of the OIBEC (Douglas, 2000: 197-198)

Input	
Prompt	
Features of context	
Setting	No information given
Participants	Finance Director and Managing Director of Kudos Tours
Purpose	Largely implicit: to write a note, as Finance Director, to the Managing Director, laying out the details of a deal to obtain replacement airline seats for a number of planned tours
Form/Content	Content based on input in Case Study materials
Tone	Implicit: personal but formal
Language	Standard business English
Norms	High-level executive to superior
Genre	Informational note
Problem identification	Implicit: 'Taurus Transport. . . are able to meet our needs, but at a price ... We therefore need to find £1,945,200 urgently. . .'
Input data	
Format	Case Study booklet combining narrative, tables, letters, and memos
Vehicle of delivery	Written
Length	Seven pages
Level of authenticity	
Situational	Fairly high level: good information about a 'company in trouble'

Interactional	Fairly engaging: candidates have three days to study Case Study materials
Expected response	
Format	Written
Type	Extended: 50 lines provided for handwritten response
Response content	
Language	clear, concise, accurate expression, business letter genre
Background-knowledge	Interpretation of business financial charts, banking practice, office practices
Level of authenticity	
Situational	Fairly high: common task in business world
Interactional	Fairly high
Interaction between input and-response	
Reactivity	Non-reciprocal
Scope	Broad: seven pages of input data, with specific reference to two tables
Directness	Moderately direct: must use information in Case Study document, but some business-related background knowledge needed to interpret input data
Assessment	
Construct definition	Information given in syllabus and specimen material booklet: able to 'express himself/herself clearly, concisely, and with reasonable accuracy,' 'demonstrate the ability to solve business and

	commercial problems,' 'set out a letter correctly,' and 'edit writing'; these criteria appear to be based on consultations with business specialists
Criteria for correctness	Little information provided; a pass mark of 60% is required for a Certificate, and of 75% for Distinction
Rating procedures	Little information provided; papers rated by trained examiners in Oxford

In sum, the genre analysis and the framework to assessing the specific purpose language ability when used in harmony can become significant contributions to both instruction and testing activities of the genre in question. The genre analysis can provide insight understanding to the cognitive structure (move structure) as well as contextual and linguistic devices to realize the communicative purpose of the genre. These aspects have been claimed to provide a significant contribution to the pedagogical implication for those practitioners who advocate the genre-based teaching approach, especially, for teaching writing. Bhatia (2004: 205) noted that the genre-based approach has the tendency to alleviate the tension between a product-process dilemma since the genre pedagogy seems to provide fine tuning for the balance between the long-standing dichotomy because in writing we need not only take into account the product but the process, as well as the purpose and the participants.

In addition, the framework to assessing specific purpose language ability can provide comprehensive specifications of the tests and lead the test developers better understanding of features which constitute the specific purpose language ability as well as detailed descriptions of tasks characteristics in the specific target language use situations which demonstrate the essential features that are shared between the test situation and non-test situation. Moreover, more insight of the assessment criteria reflected by the features that are valued in the TLU can be carefully described and included the scoring criteria; however, the test developers must also consider some constraints related to allowable and manageable resources. Oftentimes, the assessment criteria is somewhat implicit such as Douglas (2000: 197-198) outlined the OIBEC test and its criteria for correctness such as "*Little information provided; a pass mark of 60% is required for a Certificate, and of 75% for Distinction*". Like this, the test developer may need scoring scheme framework to explicitly define the scoring scales.

2.14 Scoring criteria and the modified Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB)

Genre analysis and assessing specific purpose language ability frameworks may contribute a sound theoretical basis for the e-mail writing ability test development; however, Douglas (2000) did not elaborate extensively about the rating scales choice. Nevertheless, he contended that, in the LSP testing, the criteria for correctness, the construct definition and test tasks are usually derived from the analysis of the TLU situation, for it must reflect the realities of language use in the target situation in the same way that the criteria for correctness and rating procedures must also reflect the constructs to be measured.

Weigle (2002: 109) concluded that for a writing test there are basically three types of rating scales, that is, primary trait scales, holistic scales, and analytic scales (or multiple-trait scales as Weigle argued that both scales resemble the same concept). There are two distinctive features contributing to the characteristics of the three types of the scales including: 1) whether the scale is intended to be specific to a single writing task or generalized to a class of tasks (broadly or narrowly defined), and 2) whether a single score or multiple scores are given to each script. The following table describes the types of rating scales used for the assessment of writing.

Table 2.8: The types of rating scales for assessing writing (Weigle, 2002: 109)

	Specific to a particular writing task	Generalizable to a class of writing tasks
Single score Multiple scores	Primary trait	Holistic Analytic

The primary trait is defined with respect to the specific writing assignment and essays are judged according to the degree of success with which the writer has carried out the assignment. Therefore, the criteria for correctness in the LSP test seem to fall within the primary trait approach since the analysis of the TLU focuses mainly on specific purpose situations and tasks. However, Weigle (2002) pointed out that the primary trait scoring is very time- and labor-intensive, as a scoring guide must be developed for every writing task estimating that 60-80 hours per task are required to create a scoring guide (Weigle 2002: 110). Therefore, the primary trait assessment has not been widely used in assessing second-language writing, and little information exists on how primary trait scoring might be applied in second-language testing.

Holistic scoring refers to the assigning of a single score to a script based on the overall impression of the script. The raters normally use the rating scale or scoring rubrics which outline the scoring criteria as the basis to judge the script making the distinction between the terms referring to overall impression and general impression marking; however, the criteria are never explicitly stated in the latter term. Holistic has become widely used in writing assessment over the past 25 years and has a number of positive features. It uses lesser resource than other types of rating scales in terms of time for judging the script (therefore less expensive). However, it has some disadvantages. For example, it does not provide useful diagnostic information about a person's writing ability which is perhaps necessary for the students to know their weak and strong points in their writing scripts. Weigle (2002: 114) noted that assigning a single score to the script is somehow problematic because raters find it difficult to distinguish between various aspects of writers' writing ability such as control of syntax, depth of vocabulary, organization, and so on since one's writing performance is developed at different rates from others. Therefore, the inter-rater reliability is achieved at the expense of validity which means that there appears an instance of reliability among raters, but validity among them may be compromised because the raters may arrive at the same score by using different focus on the scoring criteria.

Analytic scoring refers to the way the scripts are rated on several aspects of writing rather than on a single score. Weigle (2002: 114) described that depending on the purpose of the assessment, scripts might be rated on such features as content, organization, cohesion, register, vocabulary, grammar or mechanics. Analytic scoring schemes provide more detailed information about the test takers' performance in different aspects of writing than what the holistic scoring can offer. Therefore, analytic scoring is preferred over holistic one by many writing specialists for its strength in promoting the diagnostic approach for writing assessment which is one of the significant contributions for writing pedagogy.

Weigle (2002) stated that one of the best known and most widely used analytical scales in ESL was created and proposed by Jacobs et al. (1981) which comprises five aspects of writing to consider while rating the scripts. They are content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics. The weights of these five aspects are emphasized differently, that is, content (30 points), language use (25 points), organization and vocabulary are equally weighted (20 points), and mechanics receiving very little emphasis (5 points). Eventually, the total score is given by accumulating scores from each component of the rating scales. The composite score is good for providing a single score for decision making by means of cut-off scores for placement, exit or exemption purposes. However, Weigle (2002) cautioned the negative effect of reporting a single score at the expense of the power of analytical scoring scheme. Weigle (2002) noted that the Jacobs et al. (1981) scales are used by many college-level writing programs, and the training materials are provided together with the sample compositions for users who can learn to apply the scales quite quickly. The Jacob et al. (1981) scoring profile is shown in Figure 2.11.

ESL COMPOSITION PROFILE

STUDENT DATE TOPIC

	SCORE	LEVEL	CRITERIA	COMMENTS
CONTENT		30-27	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: knowledgeable • substantive • thorough development of thesis • relevant to assigned topic	
		26-22	GOOD TO AVERAGE: some knowledge of subject • adequate range • limited development of thesis • mostly relevant to topic, but lacks detail	
		21-17	FAIR TO POOR: limited knowledge of subject • little substance • inadequate development of topic	
		16-13	VERY POOR: does not show knowledge of subject • non-substantive • not pertinent • OR not enough to evaluate	
ORGANIZATION		20-18	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: fluent expression • ideas clearly stated/supported • succinct • well-organized • logical sequencing • cohesive	
		17-14	GOOD TO AVERAGE: somewhat choppy • loosely organized but main ideas stand out • limited support • logical but incomplete sequencing	
		13-10	FAIR TO POOR: non-fluent • ideas confused or disconnected • lacks logical sequencing and development	
		9-7	VERY POOR: does not communicate • no organization • OR not enough to evaluate	
VOCABULARY		20-18	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: sophisticated range • effective word/idiom choice and usage • word form mastery • appropriate register	
		17-14	GOOD TO AVERAGE: adequate range • occasional errors of word/idiom form, choice, usage *but meaning not obscured*	
		13-10	FAIR TO POOR: limited range • frequent errors of word/idiom form, choice, usage • *meaning confused or obscured*	
		9-7	VERY POOR: essentially translation • little knowledge of English vocabulary, idioms, word form • OR not enough to evaluate	
LANGUAGE USE		25-22	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: effective complex constructions • few errors of agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, prepositions	
		21-18	GOOD TO AVERAGE: effective but simple constructions • minor problems in complex constructions • several errors of agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, prepositions *but meaning seldom obscured*	
		17-11	FAIR TO POOR: major problems in simple/complex constructions • frequent errors of negation, agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, prepositions and/or fragments, run-ons, deletions • *meaning confused or obscured*	
		10-5	VERY POOR: virtually no mastery of sentence construction rules • dominated by errors • does not communicate • OR not enough to evaluate	
MECHANICS		5	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: demonstrates mastery of conventions • few errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing	
		4	GOOD TO AVERAGE: occasional errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing *but meaning not obscured*	
		3	FAIR TO POOR: frequent errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing • poor handwriting • *meaning confused or obscured*	
		2	VERY POOR: no mastery of conventions • dominated by errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing • handwriting illegible • OR not enough to evaluate	

TOTAL SCORE READER COMMENTS

Figure 2.11: Jacobs et al.'s (1981) scoring profile (in Weigle, 2002: 116)

Test in English for Educational Purposes (TEEP) analytical rating scale by Weir (1988) has also been widely used in assessing writing scripts (Weigle, 2002: 115). TEEP scale comprises a number of scales instead of a single scale. The Weir scheme consists of seven scales, each divided into four levels with score points ranging from 0 to 3 (4-point scale). The first four scales are related to communicative effectiveness including relevance and adequacy of content, compositional organization, cohesion, and adequacy of vocabulary for purpose, while others relate to accuracy focusing on grammar, mechanical accuracy I (punctuation) and mechanical accuracy II (spelling). The seven scales are reported separately and are not combined to a single score to provide valuable diagnostic (strengths and weaknesses) information to teachers and test takers. Unlike the Jacobs et al. model, the TEEP does not provide different weightings on each component of the scale, but the weight is given equally across the scales (0-3). In addition, the TEEP scores are not accumulated to give the total score. However, reporting separate scores for each rating criteria may be useful for providing accurate pictures of test takers' abilities in writing, but the test users may find it hard to interpret the scores and combine them with other parts of a test battery for decision-making purposes. Especially, the program administrators, who usually have to make quick decisions about many students, may prefer a single score (Weigle, 2002: 124). Both the Jacobs et al. scale and the TEEP scale were extensively piloted and revised to make sure that it could be applied reliably by trained raters. The TEEP scale and its attributes are illustrated in Table 2.9.

Table 2.9: The TEEP attributes of writing scales developed by Weir (1990 in Weigle, 2002: 117)

1. Relevance and adequacy of content 0 The answer almost no relation to the task set; totally inadequate answer 1 Answer of limited relevance to the task set; possibly major gaps in treatment of topic and/or pointless repetition 2 For the most part answers the tasks set, though occurred some gaps or redundant information 3 Relevant and adequate answer to the task set **2. Compositional organisation** 0 No apparent organisation of content 1 Very little organisation of content; underlying structure not sufficiently apparent 2 Some organisational skills in evidence, but not adequately controlled 3 Overall shape and internal pattern clear; organisational skills adequately controlled **3. Cohesion** 0 Cohesion almost totally absent; writing so fragmentary that virtually impossible for comprehension of the intended communication 1 Unsatisfactory cohesion causing difficulty in comprehension of most of the intended communication 2 For the most part satisfactory cohesion though occasional deficiencies leading to ineffective result of certain parts of the communication 3 Satisfactory use of cohesion resulting in effective communication

4. Adequacy of vocabulary for purpose

0 Vocabulary inadequate even for the most basic parts of the intended communication

1 Frequent inadequacies in vocabulary for the task; perhaps frequent lexical inappropriacies and/or repetition

2 Some inadequacies in vocabulary for the task; perhaps some lexical inappropriacies and/or circumlocution

3 Almost no inadequacies in vocabulary for the task; only rare inappropriacies and/or circumlocution

5. Grammar

0 Almost all grammatical patterns inaccurate

1 Frequent grammatical inaccuracies

2 Some grammatical inaccuracies

3 Almost no grammatical inaccuracies

6. Mechanical accuracy I (punctuation)

0 Ignorance of conventions of punctuation

1 Low standard of accuracy in punctuation

2 Some inaccuracies in punctuation

3 Almost no inaccuracies in punctuation

7. Mechanical accuracy II (spelling)

0 Almost all spelling inaccurate

1 Low standard of accuracy in spelling

2 Some inaccuracies in spelling

3 Almost no inaccuracies in spelling

As for the issue related to the weightings in the scale, Weigle (2002: 124) recommended that weightings of each component in the scale should be valued equally or a focused holistic scale is perhaps more appropriate if one component is valued higher than the others in a given context. Weigle (2002: 125) admitted that weighting of scores is a complex issue. If finding the issue is difficult to justify, consulting with the statisticians who are familiar with this tension is recommended to resolve this problem.

Since the holistic scale and analytic scale are both of the advantages on the one hand, and of the disadvantages on the other, Weigle, (2002: 121) summarized the two types of the scales against the six qualities of test usefulness (Bachman & Palmer, 1996) as illustrated in the following comparison table.

Table 2.10: A comparison of holistic and analytic scales on six qualities (Weigle, 2002: 121)

Quality	**Holistic Scale**	**Analytic Scale**
Reliability	Lower than analytic but still acceptable	Higher than holistic
Construct Validity	Holistic scale assumes that all relevant aspects of writing ability develop at the same rate and can thus be captured in a single score; Holistic scores correlate with superficial aspects such as length and handwriting	Analytic scales more appropriate for L2 writers as different aspects of writing ability develop at different rates
Practicality	Relatively fast and easy	Time-consuming; expensive

Impact	Single score may mask an uneven writing profile and may be misleading for placement	More scales provide useful diagnostic information for placement and/or instruction; More useful for rater training
Authenticity	White (1995) argues that reading holistically is a more natural process than reading analytically	Raters may read holistically and adjust analytic scores to match holistic impression
Interactiveness	N/A	N/A

The Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB, 2000) scoring scales for writing combine both holistic and analytical approaches to assess writing. The scale consists of two parts. First, the overall effectiveness of communication is scored using the effectiveness criterion (holistic). The effectiveness criterion describes the overall communicative effect: it determines whether the global purpose of communication has been achieved according to the task requirements. The assessor asks the question: "*Has the purpose of communication been addressed? Has the writer demonstrated a global ability to perform the function required by the task, such as providing or requesting information?"* (CLB, 2000: 44).

Second, the quality of communication is scored, using specific criteria that focus on relevant aspects of writing performance in a given task (analytic). The quality of communication criteria focuses on specific aspects of communication, including appropriateness, organization, grammatical accuracy, vocabulary, cohesion, mechanics, adequacy and relevance of content. The analytical attributes used in the CLB scale resemble those of the Weir's (1990) TEEP scale except that the CLB has merged the accuracy traits (punctuation and spelling) into one single scale (mechanics) while the TEEP scheme spells out these two traits separately. In addition, the 4-point scale is also used in the CLB reflecting the same type of scale used in the TEEP rating model.

The Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB, 2000) is: 1) a descriptive scale of communicative proficiency to be used by English as a Second Language (ESL) practitioners and learners; 2) a set of descriptive statements for L2 proficiency levels divided over 3 stages of progression, that is, Basic, Intermediate, and Advanced (each stage consists of 4 sub-stage of progression including Initial, Developing, Adequate, and Fluent); 3) the statements of communicative competencies and performance tasks in which the learner demonstrates application of language knowledge (competence) and skill; 4) a reference framework for curriculum development, evaluation and language assessment of English as a Second Language; and 5) a national standard for planning second language curricular for a variety of contexts plus a common "yardstick" for assessing outcomes, especially, in Canada. The table below illustrates an overview of CLB on writing.

Table 2.11: An overview of CLB writing skills (CLB, 2002: 2)

Benchmarks	Proficiency Levels	Writing Competencies
Stage 1: Basic Proficiency		
1 2 3 4	Initial Developing Adequate Fluent	Creating simple texts: - Social interaction - Recording information - Business/service messages - Presenting information/ideas
State 2: Intermediate Proficiency		
1 2 3 4	Initial Developing Adequate Fluent	Creating moderately complex texts: - Social interaction - Recording information - Business/service messages - Presenting information/ideas

Stage 3: Advanced Proficiency		
1 2 3 4	Initial Developing Adequate Fluent	Creating complex and very complex texts: - Social interaction - Recording information - Business/service messages - Presenting information/ideas

The CLB is as sophisticated as other standards or benchmarks such as the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTEL), etc. Serving the purpose of the e-mail test research project, only the rating scales concept of the CLB framework will be adopted and adapted for assessing writing with two underlying reasons. Firstly, the CLB combined both the holistic and analytic features to assess writing making the scale more realistic in the way that the holistic feature will provide the effectiveness of communication in terms of whether the communicative purpose is achieved or not. This attribute is serving for the decision-making purpose which reflects the way in which the e-mail readers in the real world would normally focus on the purpose when reading e-mail messages arriving at their inbox daily. In addition, the communicative purpose or how one uses the language to get things done is the focus of the genre analysis framework and the framework of specific purpose language ability, which are the theoretical underpinnings of this research study. Secondly, the CLB scoring scale also concerns with the analytic scoring scheme which would benefit teachers and testers to get the better picture of the examiners' writing abilities based on separated traits in the analytical scales. The analytic scoring is the strong candidate for providing diagnostic power to the rating scale which will be useful for pedagogical purposes. The table below illustrates an overview of the CLB criteria and ratings in assessing writing performance.

Table 2.12: the overview of criteria and ratings in writing performance (CLB, 2000: 37)

Criteria	**Weight / points**
A. Effectiveness	1 2 3 4 (worth 30%)
B. Other criteria together **Details:** Appropriateness Organization / Coherence Vocabulary Grammar (accuracy) Mechanics Cohesion Relevance and adequacy of content	worth 70% 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

Each criterion has ratings 1 through 4 for four levels of performances. The numbers indicate unsatisfactory, below average, satisfactory (adequate), and above satisfactory performance respectively. The description of each of the levels of performance is described below.

Ratings for levels of performance
1- unable to achieve yet (less than 50%) 2- needs help (less than a pass 50-69%) 3- satisfactory benchmark achievement: pass (70-80%) 4- more than satisfactory achievement (>80%)

Although the CLB rating scale structure seems to be fixed, the flexibility is allowed in terms of both the attributes included in the quality scales (analytic) and the weight proportion between the holistic and the analytic scales; however, the 30-70 formula is basically suggested.

The traits included in the scales are also flexible depending upon the justification between results of the target language use situation and tasks analysis and what should be valued in the characteristics of tasks, and what are to be assessed and included in the scales. The table below illustrates the CLB rating criteria and the descriptions of four levels of performance.

Table 2.13: A rating scale for evaluating writing: the criteria and the descriptors of four levels of performance (CLB, 2000: 44-46)

Effectiveness: 1 Learner is not yet functionally effective in writing; purpose of communication is not achieved according to task requirements. 2 Learner is functionally only marginally effective in writing; purpose of communication is only marginally achieved according to task requirements. 3 Learner is functionally effective in writing; purpose of communication is achieved according to task requirements. 4 Learner is functionally very effective in writing; purpose of communication is achieved with excellence according to task requirements. *Effectiveness describes whether the global purpose of communication has been achieved according to task requirements. Has the writer demonstrated a global functional ability to perform the writing task according to task requirements? Is the reader able to understand the writer's message? If necessary, would the reader be able to use the writer's text, according to task requirements?* **Appropriateness:** 1 Not enough ability to function in writing to demonstrate appropriateness. 2 Evidence to suggest insufficient awareness of socio-cultural appropriateness of language and/or format to social contextual factors and purpose 3 Developing sense of appropriateness of language, format / text layout to social contextual factors evident in accomplishing the task. Evidence of some control of formal and informal registers in writing, and of using appropriate idioms, figurative

language, and cultural references (for Benchmark levels 6-12). *Still frequent non-native (unnatural*) phrasing of otherwise grammatical text*

4 Good appropriateness of language, format, and layout to social contextual factors: control of formal and informal register, knowledge of socio-cultural conventions, evidence of appropriate cultural references, high degree of "naturalness" in expression. Errors likely to cause social misunderstandings are rare.

In written texts, appropriateness includes language, suitable format, layout, visual/graphic presentation of text to audience and purpose, appropriate use of formality, register, style, and socio-cultural knowledge and references (e.g., cultural metaphors, quotations, etc.) and naturalness of expression. (Pawley and Syder,1983)

Organization:

1 No apparent organization in text

2 Very little organization of content; an attempt to develop a theme, but main idea(s) and underlying structure are not sufficiently apparent

3 Adequate development structure, adequate support for main idea(s). Some deficiencies in paragraph development and some lacks of clear connections between paragraphs

4 Clear internal development structure, clear organizational devices, and good support for main ideas

This criterion describes: textual or rhetorical organization (coherence) of text. A well-organized coherent text develops logically, according to its purpose/function. It follows certain thematic organization patterns.

(e.g., topic and comment/main idea and supporting details) and rhetorical modes (e.g., temporal/chronological ordering and sequence, cause-effect, condition-result, comparison-contrast, etc.). It contains discourse markers or rhetorical pattern signals, such as: *first, to conclude, besides, for instance, as mentioned above, in other words, to sum up*. A well-organized coherent text is easy to follow and to interpret as to its purpose / function.

Cohesion:

1 Cohesion almost totally absent. Writing is fragmented and disjointed. Comprehension almost impossible

2 Unsatisfactory cohesion: clauses are not appropriately and adequately connected through cohesion devices. Difficulty in comprehension

3 Adequate cohesion but occasional deficiencies in the use of cohesive devices make communication less than that totally clear and effective.

4 Very good use of cohesion devices to link all elements of text together; very good flow and connectedness of text for effective communication

This criterion describes surface connectedness between clauses in the text achieved by formal textual links (syntactic, semantic) between sentences and their parts. Cohesion is involved in producing explicit relationships among utterances or sentences of a text. Cohesion rules dictate how sentences/clauses in a piece of text may be "stitched together", or externally and internally connected with each other by cohesion devices into connected discourse. Cohesion devices include reference, ellipsis, deixis, conjunctions (grammatical), repetitions, substitutions/ synonyms, lexical chains, and parallel structures.

Grammatical accuracy:

1 Inadequate control of grammar; most grammatical patterns inaccurate; errors severely impede text comprehension.

2 Poor control of grammatical structures: many grammatical inaccuracies (e.g. tense, word order, sentence structure, phrase structure) frequently impede text comprehension.

3 Some grammatical inaccuracies which occasionally impede text comprehension

4 Few grammatical inaccuracies and minor slips, unlikely to impede text comprehension

This criterion describes control of formal features of English, such as verb tenses, word order, sentence patterns, subordination, coordination, embedding (e.g., reported speech or relative clauses), parts of speech, inflections (e.g., agreement and concord), and prepositions, as well as variety in the use of structures.

Adequacy of vocabulary for purpose:

1 Vocabulary inadequate even for the most basic parts of the task

2 Limited vocabulary, inadequate for the task. Frequent lexical gaps and inaccuracies. Frequent repetition and circumlocution

3 Vocabulary mostly sufficient for the task, but there may be some lexical inaccuracies and inadequacies, and circumlocution

4 Expanded vocabulary adequate and accurate for the task; almost no inadequacies, only rare inappropriateness or circumlocution. Skilful use of idiomatic language

Legibility/mechanics: handwriting, spelling, punctuation:

1 Much of the spelling inaccurate; systematic omissions in punctuation; and /or barely legible handwriting

2 Low standard of accuracy in spelling and punctuation and/or low legibility of handwriting

3 Some inaccuracies in spelling and punctuation; legible handwriting

4 Good control over spelling; good knowledge of punctuation conventions; few inaccuracies; legible handwriting

Relevance, accuracy and adequacy of content:

1 Irrelevant, inaccurate and/or inadequate response according to task requirements

2 Response of limited relevance, accuracy and/or adequacy according to task requirements

3 Mostly relevant, accurate, and adequate response according to task requirements; may have some gaps or redundancies and repetitions

4 Relevant, accurate, and adequate response according to task requirements

"Accuracy" in the criterion applies to research-based tasks which require factually accurate information.

A conceivable problem in the CLB rating scale is observed in that the scores are reported separately on each scale. The CLB rating scheme is based on the 4-point scale in which the score is reported separately on each scale, but it is difficult to translate each score to accumulate the total score for quick decision purpose as Weigle (2002: 124) pointed out that reporting separate scores provides more useful diagnostic information and generally provides a more accurate picture of test takers' abilities in writing. However, separate scores can be harder for test users to interpret quickly and cannot be combined easily with other parts of the test battery for decision-making purposes.

This problem can be resolved by providing the training or detailed description for the test users and raters that they understand how to report the scores quite easily. The CLB rating scale provides the comprehensive example of using the rule of three in arithmetic to translate the separated scores accumulating the total score for decision-making purposes while the power of analytic scoring scheme is still maintained. The following table illustrates an example of using the CLB scales for scoring a writing task (CLB, 2000: 53).

Table 2.14: An example of using the CLB scales: Scoring a writing task

In the example below, the same CLB assessment / evaluation writing task was given to three students. The table illustrates the scoring the three students received. Student A demonstrated outstanding performance and achieved a maximum rating. Student B's performance in the task was satisfactory: a pass. Student C did not achieve a passing grade and needs help / more practice to achieve the standard in the particular competency that the task evaluates.

Criteria used	**Student A**	**Student B**	**Student C**
Effectiveness	**4** (worth 30%)	**3** (worth 30%)	**2** (worth 30%)
Other criteria (below) combined	worth 70%	worth 70%	worth 70%
Details:			
Organization	**4**	**3**	**2**
Appropriateness of style, register, layout, and format of text to purpose	**4**	**2**	**3**
Grammar	**4**	**3**	**2**
Vocabulary	**4**	**3**	**3**
Legibility/mechanics	**4**	**4**	**3**
Cohesion	**4**	**2**	**2**
Relevance of content	**4**	**4**	**2**

On effectiveness of the text (holistic score), Student A received the maximum, 4 out of 4 points, which translates into a maximum possible subscore of 30%. On the combined analytic criteria (quality of the writing), the score was 28 out of 28 points, worth a maximum possible subscore of 70% (producing a final composite score of 100%). A passing score is established at 75% of the maximum score. Student B achieved 3 out of 4 points for effectiveness (a subscore of 22.5% of a possible 30%), and 21 out of 28 points (a subscore of 52.5% of a possible 70%) for the quality of the text (analytic criteria), for a total composite score of 75%, which is a pass (satisfactory achievement). Student C received only 2 out of 4 points (a subscore of 15% of a possible 30%) and 17 out of 28 points (a subscore of 42.5% out of a possible 70%) for his performance, giving a total composite score of 57.5%, which is less than a pass. The students' performance in accomplishing the task can be reported in short as follows:

Student A's Rating	**Student B's Rating**	**Student C's Rating**
1. ____ 2. ____ 3. ____ 4. ✓ (Above Satisfactory)	1. ____ 2. ____ 3. ✓ (Satisfactory = Pass) 4. ____	1. ____ 2. ✓ (Below average = Fail) 3. ____ 4. ____

To conclude, the Canadian Language Benchmark rating scale seems a practical rating scale choice for assessing e-mail writing ability because of its comprehensive features to assess the writing practice. That is, CLB rating scales combine holistic and analytic scoring scheme allowing both effectiveness and quality to be considered when rating the scripts. The holistic features would reflect the real practice in the real world when a reader reads an e-mail message and finds what the communicative purpose of this e-mail is. However, the effectiveness has to be judged against a set of criteria based on the result of the analysis of the characteristics of the target language use situation and tasks which are used to develop the criteria of correctness for assessment to avoid the researcher's bias. The analytic features would be beneficial in terms of diagnostic power determining the strengths and weaknesses of the students' writing abilities reflected in the scripts. The results will be used for pedagogical purposes to help the students, on the one hand, to know where they are in their writing endeavor and what should be improved to become successful second-language writers. On the other hand, the diagnostic results will provide empirical evidence for teachers and testers to revise and improve the writing programs or to develop a new writing course to meet the students' needs and lacks on the basis of the needs in the TLU situation by means of the analysis of TLU situation and tasks.

For example, following the Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) the e-mail writing ability can be viewed within two-dimensions including effectiveness and accuracy (holistic and analytic). From this perspective both effectiveness (holistic) and accuracy (analytic) promote effectiveness in e-mail writing ability. Therefore, these two components underpin the development of the descriptors assessment rubrics. The holistic involves effectiveness, while the analytic includes sub-components such as grammatical accuracy, tone, organization, and technical vocabulary.

According to Geffner (2010) his mastering of fundamentals of English and the finer points of styles refers to extensive list of areas involving grammar and sentence structures including: verbs and subjects, sentence completers, sentence structures, subject-verb agreement, verb forms, pronouns, advanced sentence structures, and mechanics (which include conventions in using punctuation, capitalization, abbreviations and numbers). With emphasis, Geffner (2010) maintained that mastering the fundamentals of English allows the writer to communicate with confidence and promote clear and effective communication.

So, the two-layer discourse (macro and micro) plays an important role in determining effective e-mail writing in business communication as Mackey (2001: V) addressed that the micro includes mechanics of various forms of correspondence (format, salutations and closings, headings, etc.), and the macro involves the style of writing, the impact of language choice on tone. Likewise, Geffner (2010: XI) concurred that writing an e-mail to achieve its intended purpose (macro) requires a writer to master both the fundamentals of English and the finer points of style (micro). These are key considerations that the test developer should take into account when developing the test tasks and its scoring rubrics.

2.15 Controlling raters for the reliability and validity of test scores

Topics involving the test have been discussed extensively in the previous sections; however, issues concerning the raters that involve the topics of reliability and validity must be taken into consideration. In other words, the whole process of a test development must be valid and reliable. In the rating situation, validity and reliability in any language test begins with a well-defined construct definition. Validity is key determining feature that pinpoints whether the test measures accurately what it is intended to measure. While, reliability deals with the issue of rater reliability which means the consistency in scoring with which the main defining characteristic of the rater reliability deals with *the scores by two or more raters or* *between one rater at Time X and that same rater at Time Y are consistent* (MacKey & Gass, 2005: 106).

According to McKay (2006: 12), there are two types of the raters' reliability, that is, **inter-rater reliability and intra-rater reliability**. Inter-rater reliability deals with two raters examining the same data and using the same categorization system to see if they arrive at similar conclusions. For example, two raters might score the same group of student essays using a six-point holistic scoring rubric. The degree that the two raters agreed would indicate the level of inter-rater reliability. If a study reports an inter-rater reliability of .90, this would indicate that the two raters agreed on their rating 90% of the time and disagreed 10% of the time. Intra-rater reliability indicates the degree that the same researcher assigns the same rating on the data on two different occasions. If the result is high, then the confidence and consistency of the scoring method can be attained.

According to McKay (2006), it can be construed that the inter-rater reliability has to do with a group of raters (a team rater) that has been assigned to rate the same script or a set of scripts. In contrast, the intra-rater reliability relates to the extent to which someone analyzing the same data would come up with the same results. However, to control reliability factors, the researcher may have to consider the practicality issue which relates to available resources such as time, budget, and human resources involved in any rating situation. Weigle (2002: 128) noted that the issue of unreliability in writing assessment refers to inconsistencies in scoring, and there are two main types: 1) inconsistencies in the ratings of a single scorer across different scripts of similar quality or the same script on different occasions or intra-rater reliability issue, and 2) inconsistencies between different scorers (inter-rater reliability issue). White (1984) proposed six practices and procedures that are important for maintaining high reliability in large-scale assessments as follows:

1. The use of a scoring rubric that details explicitly the criteria to be used in scoring.
2. The use of sample scripts in training that exemplify points on the scale with the note to be considered that only when all rates are in close agreement on these scores for these sample scripts that reliable scoring can take place.
3. Each script must be scored independently by at least two raters, with a third rater adjudicating in cases of discrepancy.
4. Scoring should be done in a controlled reading, by which is meant that a group of readers meets together to grade scripts at the same place and time. Two advantages of controlled reading are that the circumstances under which scripts are read are controlled, thus eliminating unnecessary sources of error variance, and that a positive social environment is formed which helps to enforce and maintain the rating standards. Unfortunately, group scoring is not always feasible; Alderson et al. (1995, 133-135) present alternatives for scoring when this is the case.
5. Checks on the reading in progress by reading leaders (sometimes called Table Leaders) help to ensure that individual readers are maintaining the agreed-upon standards for grading.
6. Evaluation and record keeping are essential for an ongoing assessment program so that reliable readers are kept on and unreliable readers are retrained or dropped if necessary.

White (1984) pointed out that the tone set by the reading leaders has a tremendous influence on the success of the reading. In other words, the atmosphere in a team-rating situation also has an effect on the scoring. For example, if a reading leader provides the sensitive and respectful reading atmosphere, it can be an enjoyable and professionally valuable experience for readers. On the other hand, if readers feel exploited or pressed because the readings are run poorly, it can turn the readers against the grading process, which in turn can have negative impacts on the scoring itself.

According to Weigle (2002), the high degree of rater reliability can be maintained by following the six recommendations proposed by White (1984). Therefore, the suggestions by White (1984) provide sound practice to ensure the reliability in terms of inter- and intra- rater reliability for the e-mail test research study by means of rater training. However, Weigle (2002) also discussed extensively on the issue related to the scoring rubrics that must be explicitly defined and described for which it would affect the validity of the test scores as well. Although the scoring can be reliable, it may not actually represent the validity of the test. For benefits in the second-language context, Weigle (2002: 114) upheld the use of analytic scoring scheme over the holistic scoring scheme to increase the degree of validity of the scoring rubric stating two disadvantages of this type of the rating scale concerning the issues of the difference in the development rates and aspects of the writers and the difficulty in the interpretation of the holistic score as she wrote:

> *…the single score does not provide useful diagnostic information about a person's writing ability, as a single score does not allow raters to distinguish between various aspects of writing such as control of syntax, depth of vocabulary, organization, and so on. This is especially problematic for second-language writers, since different aspects of writing ability develop at different rates for different writers: some writers have excellent writing skills in terms of content and organization but may have much lower grammatical control, while others may have an excellent grasp of sentence structure but may not know how to organize their writing in a logical way".*

In addition, Weigle (2002: 114) further asserted that:

> *…another disadvantage of holistic scoring is that holistic scores are not always easy to interpret, as raters do not necessarily use the same criteria to arrive at the same scores; for example, a certain script might be given a 4 on holistic scale by one rater because of its rhetorical features (content,*

organization, development), while another rater might give the same script a 4 because of its linguistic features (control of grammar and vocabulary)."

Weigle (2002: 135) stated that there are a number of ways to investigate the reliability or consistency of raters. Two important aspects of reliability are intra-rater reliability (self-consistency) and inter-rater reliability (agreement between raters). In the simple cases, the reliability of ratings on a holistic scale between two raters, or between the scores given to the same samples by one rater on two different occasions, can be calculated by means of a correlation coefficient. This statistic is a number between 0 and 1 indicating the strength of the relationship between two sets of scores. A correlation coefficient close to 0 indicates that there is little or no relationship between the scores given by the fist rater and those given by the second (or on the second occasion), while a coefficient close to 1 indicates a strong relationship between the sets of scores. Weigle (2002: 135) suggested the statistical formulas for calculating the correlating coefficient including either Spearman rank-order correlation coefficient or Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient depending on the member of subjects or even the commonly known spreadsheet software like Microsoft Excel can calculate the correlation coefficient.

Assessing the inter-rater reliability when more than two sets of raters are involved can be done through the analysis of variance (ANOVA). ANOVA can be used to compare the distributions of scores given by a set of raters (assuming they have all scored the same scripts). The two main statistics used to describe the distribution of scores are the mean, or average score, and the standard deviation, or the average amount that scores differ from the mean. ANOVA can be used to determine whether there is any statistical difference between the mean scores of raters; that is, if some raters tend to give higher or lower scores than other raters, irrespective of the correlation among raters' scores (Weigle, 2002: 135).

In sum, the most important aspects related to the rater reliability issue concern the intra- and inter-rater reliability. Weigle (2002) suggested the above mentioned six recommendations proposed by White (1984) to control the use of explicitly spelled out scoring rubrics and the rater training including the use of scoring rubrics and model scripts for assessing the scripts efficiently. Weigle (2002) also proposed statistical means to evaluate the consistency of a rater and the raters in scoring the scripts. Such methods include the analysis of correlation coefficient using either Spearman rank-order correlation coefficient or Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient which can be easily calculated through the software package like the SPSS or the commonly known spreadsheet software like Microsoft Excel. The correlation coefficient will result in assessing the self consistency or the intra-rater reliability; however, if more set of raters are involved Weigle (2002: 135) suggested the use of ANOVA to evaluate the inter-rater reliability or the degree of the agreement between two or more sets of raters. Weigle also suggested the use of cross-tabulated method to judge the overall success of a rating session. However, the first two statistical methods, that is, the correlation coefficient and the distribution of rating scores (mean and standard deviation) would be sufficient for determining the rater reliability for the e-mail test research study.

Weigle (2002: 136) noted that considering the reliability of the scoring is important; however, investigating how scoring procedures affect the construct validity of a writing test should also be taken into account, that is, the validity of inferences made on the basis of test results. Weigle contended that looking at construct validity in terms of scoring procedures is somewhat less straightforward than investigating reliability; it involves, however, investigation of a multitude of factors form a variety of perspectives by asking a few following basic questions.

Do the scoring procedures – in particular, the scoring guide accurately reflect the construct being measured? Therefore, the scoring guide must represent an explicit statement of what aspects of writing are being considered as part of the construct, and thus the first question, for example, if we are interested primarily in accuracy of content and logical organization in writing, the scoring guide should not focus heavily on grammar. As Bachman (1990: 239) noted the issue of validity that "*validity, on the other hand, is concerned with identifying the factors that produce the reliable variance in test scores. That is, validation addresses the question, "What specific abilities account for the reliable variance in test scores?" Thus, we might say that reliability is concerned with determining how much of the variance in test scores is reliable variance, while validity is concerned with determining what abilities contribute to this reliable variance"*.

The validity and reliability are closely related when Weigle (2002: 114) pointed out the drawback of the holistic scoring that it has come under criticism in recent years for its focus on achieving high inter-rater reliability at the expense of validity meaning that the reliability of the score may have come from different criteria that the raters used to arrive at the same score, but somehow those criteria the raters use may not necessarily assess what the test is supposed to test or what the raters are supposed to score. This tension can be alleviated by explicitly stated "what does it mean by language ability?" and Douglas (2000) proposed the analysis of TLU situation and tasks to determine the construct definition of the language for specific purposes in order to control the degree of construct validity.

Another question that should be asked in relation to the issue of construct validity is whether the scoring procedures are implemented in an appropriate way. This question relates to rater behavior. This issue can be resolved by implementing a team leader by using the model scripts for rater training. Aslo, Weigle (2002) proposed the think-aloud protocols to investigate the raters' decision-making processes.

A third question is whether the scores obtained from the test allow us to make appropriate inferences about writing ability and thus appropriate decisions about test takers. Weigle (2002: 137) stated that to answer this question, we need to evaluate our scoring procedures in terms of consequences for individual test takers and in terms of consequences for the educational system or teaching program. This issue can be discussed in the extent of washback. Weigle suggested several ways to evaluate the consequences of the scoring procedure. For individuals, one can investigate the appropriateness of decisions made on the basis of the test scores. In a wider context, the positive and negative impact of the scoring procedures can be made through disseminating the rating criteria among teachers, students, and other stakeholders allowing for frank discussion, and ideally consensus about, the goals of writing instruction and the expected outcomes for students.

In conclusion, apart from the reliability issue, the validity issue in the scoring procedure is important that the test developer must take into consideration. Weigle (2002) suggested ways to investigate the validity by asking three basic questions, that is, do the scoring procedures – in particular, the scoring guide – accurately reflect the construct being measured? This question has to do with the internal validity in which the test developer must ensure that the test is testing the abilities being measured and the scoring procedure or vice versa. The second question involves whether the scoring procedures are being implemented in an appropriate way. The question deals with the rater behavior which can be controlled by different methods, such as team raters led by the Table Leader and the think-aloud protocol to monitor decision-making processes of the raters. The third question concerns washback or external validity in that whether the scores obtained from the test allow us to make appropriate inferences about writing ability. This question can be answered by means of an individual aspect and in a wider context.

2.16 Studies related to e-mail

In e-mail writing, Thaweewong (2006) studied the business e-mail correspondence in internal communication between Thais and Germans in the profit and non-profit organizations. Her study is grounded on the genre analysis framework focusing on the analysis of moves and steps as the heart of genre analysis which falls within the textual knowledge in the model of communicative language ability by Bachman and Palmer (1996) as it appears to reside within knowledge of rhetorical or conversational organization which is a sub-category of textual knowledge under grammatical knowledge and language knowledge. The study was also to find out if the social contexts, such as national culture and corporate culture, might play any role in the e-mail communication among profit and non-profit organizations which are both Thais and Germans.

The results of the study revealed that a business e-mail correspondence consists of seven moves: Move 1 Opening Salutation, Move 2 Establishing Correspondence Chain, Move 3 Introducing Purposes, Move 4 Attaching Documents, Move 5 Soliciting Response, Move 6 Ending Positively, and Move 7 Closing Salutation. These moves play important roles in communicative functions as she noted that "…a "move" is a text segment that can be identified by its particular linguistic clues. The move allows for a specific function within a text to be met and almost always signals the content of a particular discourse within a genre. A genre, therefore, is constructed based on moves, with each move leading to the overall coherent understanding of the text" (Thaweewong, 2006: 128-129). In addition, within moves there are also steps or the strategies used to complete each move (Xu, 2005: 25).

Thaweewong's genre analysis study clearly reflects the correspondence in harmony of language knowledge and strategic knowledge in business e-mail correspondence. The strategic knowledge comes into play in terms of the steps within the moves structure in the e-mail genre which she stated that national and corporate cultures govern the social and contextual knowledge of business people. This knowledge is applied differently depending on their communicative purposes. However, to effectively communicate in the business context, other linguistic strategies such as move structures and linguistic forms within the moves as well as politeness strategies are also required.

Loha (2004) studied the e-mail writing process of the undergraduate students in one of the public universities in Thailand through the application of Flower and Hayes (1981) writing model which describes the process of writing as recursive and complex with three major steps of the writing process, that is, planning, translating and reviewing. Within each of the process, there are many writing strategies which influence the way the students compose the e-mail. In this study, thirteen writing strategies underlying each process of composing the e-mail were reported. The findings also revealed no distinctive differences in the writing process of the students when completing e-mail writing and non-e-mail writing tasks. Thus, it could be concluded that both e-mail writing and non-e-mail writing process are technically similar. Moreover, the result of the study contributed confidence to the teacher to integrated e-mail writing tasks into classroom practice due to students' positive perception and participation towards e-mail writing activities.

Biesenbach-Lucas (2005) reported the study of American university students and International students in communication topics and strategies in e-mail consultation. Three major communication topics include: facilitative, substantive and relational whereas the communication strategies include: requesting, negotiating and reporting. Focusing on the communication strategies, the analysis of communication strategies revealed that American students took greater initiative in providing progress reports, negotiating project topics, and requesting instructor responses, not only quantitatively, but also qualitatively by providing more potential response points for the professor than international students. One of the reasons to explain this phenomenon is that the issues of culture and second language ability account for this difference, which means the international students are not familiar with the American way to consult with the professors as well as the lack of their second language ability may interfere with their e-mail writing ability. Orientation and pre-academic ESL writing instruction is suggested to accommodate the international students' cultural differences.

Other studies in e-mail writing, for example, Shang (2007) examined 40 non-traditional EFL students, who are older and have more social and working experiences than traditional students. He studied the overall effects of using e-mail on improving writing performance in the aspects of syntactic complexity, grammatical accuracy and lexical density. Also, the relationship between the number of e-mail exchanges and writing performance were investigated. The students were in the intermediate reading class at a university in Taiwan. Both qualitative and quantitative analyses revealed that the students made improvements on syntactic complexity and grammatical accuracy. He further suggested that exchanging e-mail messages with peers can improve the students' writing performance. Interestingly, through students' self-reports, it was found that the students perceived e-mail as a positive strategy for their learning. For an instructional implication, designing effective e-mail tasks could help improve the students' foreign language writing and attitudes towards learning English.

Chai (2006) conducted a study based on the perception that pre-writing strategies would help equip the students to accomplish writing tasks more effectively and efficiently, especially in the planning stage. This stage is a major distinction between expert and novice writers whereas experts generate far more elaborate and integrated goal networks than novices do. He further reported an investigation of the relationship between the writing plan and the writing scores. The data which were taken from the 1998 Provincial Learning Assessment Programme (PLAP) in Writing from schools across British Columbia, Canada included the sample of 2,374 essay booklets - 772 at Grade 4, 825 at Grade 7, and 777 at Grade 10. These samples were sorted into two categories: writing plans and no writing plans.

It was reported that the common features of writing quality were qualitatively identified in a sample of writing plans across the three grade levels. An analytic scoring scheme based on (i) identified features of writing quality in writing plans, (ii) evaluative terms commonly used as criteria to measure writing performance in both large-scale and classroom assessments, and (iii) theory and research in writing, was developed and used to assess a sample of 1,797 writing plans. Correlation and regression analyses were used to determine the relationships between the quality of writing plans and writing scores. It was found that the features of writing quality in writing plans were associated with higher writing scores. Therefore, Chai (2006) claimed that identification of features of writing plan quality could provide valuable instructional information to promote students' writing ability.

Li (2000: 229-245) examined linguistic characteristics of 132 ESL writing pieces in the task-based e-mail activities. The tasks were differed in terms of purpose, audience interaction and task structure. In this study, Li referred to the purpose by means of rhetorical purposes embedded within each type of rhetorical form. In addition, absence or presence of the audience interaction is realized among different rhetorical patterns. For example, a personal narrative and reflective essay fall into the audience interaction absence category while the presence of audience interaction is realized in the compare/contrast and persuasive essay. Task structures were divided into structured and non-structured. Structured tasks referred to the preset prompts that the writer answered these questions accordingly in the form of essay; therefore, the writer had to write in the structured manner following the order of provided questions. Li stated that narrative and compare/contrast were grouped in the structured task category. On the other hand, the other two tasks, which included persuasive and reflective essays, the students freely wrote according to their own writing plan. These tasks allowed the student writers the degree of freedom in writing. The degree of freedom on task structures affected the linguistic characteristics in the students' writing pieces in terms of syntactic, lexical complexity and grammatical accuracy. The features were used as the analytical procedures to determine linguistic characteristics of the e-mail writing tasks produced by the ESL student writers. The writing pieces were digitally collected and analyzed by means of the computerized text analysis programs.

The statistical analysis results revealed that there were significant syntactic, lexical and grammatical differences in the students' e-mail writing tasks. That is, students tended to produce more complex texts syntactically and lexically in the e-mail tasks involving with audience interaction. The writing pieces in non-structured tasks were found using diverse vocabulary because students were allowed some degrees of freedom to express their ideas in this type of tasks. Nevertheless, Li addressed that there was an interesting trade-off effect observed between the linguistic complexity and the grammatical accuracy. That is, if the students produced more complex texts, they would make more grammatical mistakes in their writing. Li contended that this effect indicated the complexity of the second language writing process.

Li also noted that the findings upheld important implications for designing the task-based e-mail writing activities for enhancing second language writing. The study results clearly indicated that rhetorical purpose, audience interaction, and task structure were the features that determined linguistic choices and characteristics of the e-mail writing products, which included syntactic, lexical complexity and grammatical accuracy. However, Li mentioned that for a more comprehensive understanding of the complexity of second language writing process, the linguistic investigation should be done at the discourse level and the individual difference variables such as motivation, attitudes, gender and learning styles should also be considered.

So far, literature review has indicated that the e-mail writing reflects both process and product. The process can be realized by the stages in completing a writing task and product is realized in terms of generic convention such as genre. There are variations in the types of writing products with various variables determining the variations of the texts at the micro and macro levels such as purpose, audience interaction, task structure and social convention. These variations also reflect the expectation of the e-mail writing product within the specific social settings. The specific purpose language ability in terms of background knowledge and technical language in the specific content areas as well as strategies or strategic competence also plays a role in determining the effectiveness of e-mail communication in the contextualized target language use as Douglas (2000) clearly stated:

> *"…if we want to know how well individuals can use language in specific contexts of use, we will require a measure that takes into account both their language knowledge and their background knowledge, and their use of strategic competence in relating to the salient characteristics of the target language use situation to their specific purpose language abilities." Douglas (2000: 282)*

Therefore, in the next topic the literature with regard to writing strategies and issues involving strategies taxonomy are presented and discussed.

2.17 Writing strategies

Mu (2005) pointed out that many researchers are in consensus to claim that writing strategies are attributes to distinguish a successful writer from a less-successful writer. In addition, Petric, B. & Czarl, B. (2003: 188) noted that writing strategies or *learning strategies* are considered important ingredients for the second language student writers to become the proficient writers because writing is a complicated process.

However, strategies are normally referred to as learning strategies or language learning strategies when it is used in a context of literature in the SLA (Second Language Acquisition) area. For example, Cohen (1998: 5) offered a definition of language learning strategies as follows:

> *Language learning strategies include strategies for identifying the material that needs to be learned, distinguishing it from other materials if need be, grouping it for easier learning (e.g., grouping vocabulary by category into nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and so forth), having repeated contact with the material (e.g., through classroom tasks or the completion of homework assignments), and formally committing the material to memory when it does not seem to be acquired naturally (whether through rote memory techniques such as repetition, the use of mnemonics, or some other memory technique).*

Oxford (1990: 8) defined learning strategies as "*specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations"*. O'malley and Chamot (1990: 1), in the similar vein, provided that "*learning strategies are special ways of processing information that enhances comprehension, learning, or retention of the information*".

In the Bachman & Palmer (1996: 70) model of communicative language ability, strategies or strategic competence are referred to as "*a set of metacognitive components or strategies, which can be thought of as higher order executive processes that provide a cognitive management function in language use, as well as in other cognitive activities*". This communicative language ability model comprises *language knowledge* and *strategic competence* interacting with each other to attribute one's language ability to achieve genuine communicative function. While language knowledge involves the knowledge about language and its fundamental building blocks, the strategic competence, on the other hand, facilitates one to manipulate the language knowledge more efficiently.

Similarly, the Language for Specific Purposes (LSP) Ability model (Douglas, 2000) which was developed based on the communicative language ability model of that of Bachman & Palmer (1996) comprises elements including *language knowledge*, *background knowledge* and *strategies or strategic competence*. Language knowledge refers to fundamental building blocks of a language while strategies are components mediating the interaction between language knowledge and background knowledge or topical knowledge attributing language proficiency of a language learner to successfully accomplish tasks in any specific purposes context.

Some general findings from the literature review on language learning strategies from Sun (1998: 45)'s Ph.D. dissertation entitled "*E-mail Writing Strategies and Selected Learner and Teacher Variables in the ESL Classroom*" provided the productive conclusions about advantages of learning strategies that uphold successful learner's language learning experience which include:

1. Language learning strategies can be classified into four broad categories: cognitive, metacognitive, social, and affective strategies.
2. Successful language learners use strategies more frequently and use a greater variety of strategies than unsuccessful learners. In addition, skilled learners are more aware of their strategy use and are more able to choose appropriate learning strategies that fit into their unique situations.
3. The specific strategies chosen for a task often depend on the nature of the task demands.
4. Strategy use appears to be influenced by individual factors such as sex, age, career orientation, major, years of study, national origin, learning styles, and motivation.
5. Strategy training is more effective when it is integrated into regular class activities.

Some definitions of language learning strategies are advanced into specific language ability. For example, Cohen (1998) provided a specific definition for communicative strategies that are used in writing as *the means writers use to express their ideas in a most effective way*. The Cohen (1998) definition has also been used as a basis to classify ESL writing strategies in Mu (2005)'s study. Likewise, Petric, B. & Czarl, B. (2003), in their study, noted that writing strategies refer "*actions or* *behaviours consciously carried out by writers in order to make their writing more efficient*". This definition was also developed based on Cohen's definition of learner strategies (Cohen, 1998: 10–11). Advantages towards acquiring writing strategies were also outlined by Hsiao and Oxford (2002: 372) in the extent that strategies can "*pave the way toward greater proficiency, learner autonomy, and self-regulation*".

On the other hand, following the communicative language ability model of Bachman & Palmer (1996), Weigle (2002: 42), in her view relating to defining the construct definition of language ability in language assessment perspective, pointed out that strategies or strategic competence is considered more of a general ability (i.e. non-language specific) rather than of a language specific ability when one utilizes strategies to lubricate language knowledge and the external situation as well as some individual characteristics such as topical knowledge to get any language related tasks done and to achieve its communicative purpose. For example, Weigle (2002: 44) wrote "*in the example of writing a letter to the editor, accomplishing this task requires a number of factors other than language knowledge. To begin with, one would need knowledge of the subject under discussion (topical knowledge), and one would need to feel strong enough about the topic to write about it (affective). Furthermore, one's personal characteristics (e.g. experience with letters to the editor, degree of extroversion) may influence the choice of content and language, as well as whether one actually follows through with the plan to write the letter"*.

However, Weigle (2002: 44) is conceivably well aware that "*there are some specific metacognitive strategies involved in writing when a writing task involves **knowledge transformation** rather than **knowledge telling***". Weigle further stated those novice writers are differentiated from expert writers by these writing-specific strategies. The nature of ***knowledge transformation*** in writing is said to be found in academic writing tasks following influential writing process models that are set forth by Hayes (1996) and Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987). So, from the discussion here, Weigle concluded that writers develop strategies that are specific to writing through practice and experience.

Strategies or strategic competence can be viewed through both general- and specific-lens of ability. However, investigating learner's learning strategies or writing strategies for the specific domain of skills, researchers have undertaken extensive efforts to propose a series of strategy taxonomy to serve as a sound theoretical framework in and attempt to study the second language learning or writing strategies.

Evidences of language learning (writing) strategies and its taxonomies

Strategies taxonomies are the product of extensive research undertaking in the area of language learning strategies in general and writing strategies for the skills-specific ability and the like. One of the influential language learning strategies taxonomies in SLA was initially proposed by Oxford (1990) together with her well-known *Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL)* as a powerful strategy research tool to identify learners' language learning strategies in L2 studies since 1990 as Dornyei (2005: 178) noted that "*Rebecca Oxford's Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) is the most often used questionnaire in L2 studies*".

Oxford's taxonomy divides learning strategies into two fundamental classes, i.e. *direct* and *indirect*. These two classes are expanded into six sub-groups, which include 1) the direct group: *memory, cognitive*, and *compensation (i.e. communication)*; and 2) the indirect group: *metacognitive*, *affective*, and *social* (Oxford, 1990: 14).

Dornyei (2005: 181) stated that *the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) is the most often employed instrument for assessing language learning strategy use. It was developed by Rebecca Oxford (1990) and is based on Oxford's strategy taxonomy. Thus, the questionnaire consists of six scales: (a) Remembering more effectively (memory strategies), (b) Using your mental processes (cognitive strategies), (c) Compensating for missing knowledge (compensation strategies or communication strategies), (d) Organizing and evaluating your learning* *(metacognitive strategies), (e) Managing your emotions (affective strategies), and (f) Learning with others (social strategies).*

This illustrates briefly how to use the SILL in assessing strategies in the L2 context; however, Dornyei (2005: 181) further explained that *"scale scores are obtained by computing the average of the item scores within a scale, and there is a very user-friendly worksheet attached to the battery for test takers to be able to calculate their own score profile". The items on the SILL all involve 5-point rating scales ranging from '**never or almost never true of me**' to '**always or almost always true of me**'*. The sample items for Rebecca Oxford's (1990) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) are outlined in Table 2.15.

Table 2.15: Sample items of Oxford's (1990) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) (Adapted from Dornyei, 2005: 182)

Strategy Taxonomy	Statement in the SILL questionnaire corresponding to each item of the strategy taxonomy
Memory strategies	"I use a combination of sounds and images to remember the new word."
Cognitive strategies	"I look for patterns in the new language."
Compensation strategies	"I make up new words if I do not know the right one."
Metacognitive strategies	"I arrange my schedule to study and practice the new language consistently, not just when there is the pressure of a test."
Affective strategies	"I try to relax whenever I feel anxious about using the new language."
Social strategies	"I work with other language learners to practice, review, or share information."

Dornyei (2005: 168) also pointed out that another influential effort in this area is the taxonomy of O'Malley and Chamot (1990). This classification model is similar to the one proposed by Oxford (1990) which includes three main classes of strategies consisting of *cognitive strategies* (similar to those of the Oxford cognitive and memory categories), *metacognitive strategies* (equivalent to those of the Oxford system), and *social/affective strategies* (partially corresponding to the Oxford categories of social, affective and compensation or communication strategies).

For practical purpose, Dornyei (2005: 169) eventually concluded that "*the strategies systems proposed by Oxford (1990) and O'Malley and Chamot (1990) are highly compatible*". Therefore, the merging of both strategies classification systems was proposed and resulted in another typology that comprises four main components as follows:

1. *Cognitive strategies*, involving the manipulation or transformation of the learning materials/input (e.g. repetition, summarizing, using images).
2. *Metacoginitive strategies*, involving higher-order strategies aimed at analyzing, monitoring, evaluating, planning, and organizing one's own learning process.
3. *Social strategies*, involving interpersonal behaviors aimed at increasing the amount of L2 communications and practice the learner undertakes (e.g. initiating interaction with native speakers, cooperating with peers).
4. *Affective strategies*, involving taking control of the emotional (affective) conditions and experiences that shape one's subjective involvement in learning.

The strategy taxonomy, which was proposed by Oxford (1990); O'Malley and Chamot (1990), and the Oxford (1990) SILL have been used by researchers as theoretical underpinning to the development of strategies research tool since the 1990s. For example, Sun (1998), based on the four components of strategies typology, developed the SIEW or Strategy Inventory for E-mail Writing. Sun (1998: 55) wrote:

> *SlEW is a self-report 5-point Likert scale with 50 items. Respondents must rate their frequency of use of e-mail writing strategy, ranging from (1) rarely or never to (5) always. This questionnaire was designed to assess the frequency with which learners use various writing strategies. Items on the survey were developed based on three parts of literature review: the literature review on ESL writing strategies, e-mail communication in ESL settings, and second language learning strategies. The Strategy Inventory for E-mail Writing was categorized into four psychological function subgroups.*

The four subgroups include 1) cognitive strategies which is referred to as using all one's mental processes in planning, composing, and revising; 2) metacognitive strategies is referred to as organizing and evaluating one's learning; 3) affective strategies is referred to as managing one's emotions; and 4) social strategies is referred to as learning with others.

Sun (1998) findings revealed that students reported using variety of different e-mail strategies in their process of e-mail writing.

Similarly, focusing on composing or writing process, Mu (2005) exemplified Riazi (1997)'s summary of composing strategies in which four Iranian doctoral students of education were studied while conceptualizing their academic writing tasks. In Riazi's study, these strategies were grouped into four categories including cognitive, metacognitive, social strategies and search strategies. The first three labeling of strategy taxonomies were in accord with that of Oxford (1990) and O'Malley and Chamot (1990) while the last labeling was proposed by Riazi himself (Riazi, 1997: 122). Table 2.16 illustrates evidences of strategies used in the composing process while writers were engaged in academic writing tasks (Riazi, 1997).

Table 2.16: Composing Strategies (Adapted from Riazi, 1997 and Mu, 2005)

Composing Strategies	Constituents	Phases of Composing Process
Cognitive Strategies Interacting with the materials to be used in writing by manipulating them mentally or physically	Note-taking Elaboration Use of mother tongue knowledge and skill transfer from L1 Inferencing Drafting (revising & editing)	Reading & writing Reading & writing Reading & writing Reading Writing
Metacognitive Strategies Executive processes used to plan, monitor, and evaluate a writing task	Assigning goals Planning (making & changing outlines) Rationalizing appropriate formats Monitoring & evaluation	Task representation & reading Writing Reading & writing Reading/writing/task representation
Social Strategies Interacting with other persons to assist in performing the task or to gain affective control	Appealing for clarifications Getting feedback from professors & peers	Task representation Writing
Search Strategies Searching and using supporting sources	Searching and using libraries (books, journal, ERIC, microfiche) Using guidelines Using others' writing as model	Reading and writing

In addition, from the study of Japanese students' writing strategies, Sasaki (2000) provided an extensive list of strategies that were used in different phases of the composing process; however, she presented different means to categorize the strategies. Instead of categorizing the writing strategies following the psychological functions that were proposed by Oxford (1990) and O'Malley and Chamot (1990), i.e. cognitive, metacognitive, social and affective where each functional heading contains strategies elements underpinning each of the taxonomy concepts, Sasaki chose to present a lengthy list of strategies categories following the phases in the writing process, i.e. planning, retrieving, generating ideas, verbalizing, etc. Each heading also provides evidences of strategies used that correspond to each of the heading concepts as illustrates in Table 2.17.

Table 2.17: Japanese ESL Students' Writing Strategies (Adapted from Sasaki, 2000 and Mu, 2005)

Writing strategies	Definitions
Planning (1) Global planning (2) Thematic planning (3) Local planning (4) Organizing (5) Conclusion planning	 Detailed planning of overall organization Less detailed planning of overall organization Planning what to write next Organizing the generated ideas Planning of the conclusion
Retrieving (1) Plan retrieving (2) Information retrieving	 Retrieving the already constructed plan Retrieving appropriate information from long-term memory
Generating ideas (1) Naturally generated (2) Description generated	 Generating an idea without any stimulus Generating an idea related to the previous description
Verbalizing (1) Verbalizing a proposition (2) Rhetorical refining (3) Mechanical refining (4) Sense of readers	 Verbalizing the content the writer intends to write Refining the rhetorical aspect(s) of an expression Refining the mechanical or(L1/ESL) grammatical aspect(s) of an expression Adjusting expression(s)to the readers
Translating *Rereading*	Translating the generated idea into ESL Rereading the already produced sentence
Evaluating (1) ESL proficiency evaluation (2) Local text evaluation (3) General text evaluation	 Evaluating one's own ESL proficiency Evaluating part of the generated text Evaluating the generated text in general
Others (1) Resting (2) Questioning (3) Impossible to categorize	 Resting Asking the researcher a question Impossible to categorize

From here it can be concluded that there are basically two schemes to categorize writing strategies of writing process. Firstly, psychological functions can be used as heading to group the strategies into four subsets including cognitive, metacognitive, affective and social (Oxford, 1990; O'Malley and Chamot, 1990) as in Sun (1998)'s study. Secondly, phases in the writing process can also be used as headings to group the strategies as those of Sasaki (2000) which give the detailed description of strategies. However, Petric, B. & Czarl, B. (2003: 190) proposed the use of SILL (Strategy Inventory for Language Learning) of Oxford (1990) as the basis to develop a questionnaire to identify strategies used during the writing process as they wrote:

> *The format (of the questionnaire) was taken from Oxford's SILL, as was the five-point Likert scale with options ranging from* ***never or almost never true of me*** *to* ***always or almost always true of me****. The items were sequenced following the structure of the writing process, i.e. pre-writing, writing, and revising stages, so as to provide a clear frame of reference to the respondents. The final form of the questionnaire consists of 44 items, of which 38 are strategy items and 6 are background questions. The main part dealing with strategies is divided into three subsections: planning strategies (8 items), while-writing strategies (14 items), and revising strategies (16 items). This division was introduced for the sake of clarity. The questionnaire was checked for content validity and reliability was checked by test-retest.*

Two perspectives toward designing a strategy inventory questionnaire to identify writing strategies can be illustrated by the questionnaire items that were proposed by Sun (1998), Petric, B. & Czarl, B. (2003) as given in the Appendix 1.

Questionnaire seems to be a feasible and practical research tool to identify writing strategies in any context. However, Dornyei (2005: 183) noted that "*the SILL may be a useful instrument for raising student's awareness of L2 learning strategies and for initiating class discussions and its use for research purposes is questionable*". This is because the findings from using the strategy inventory questionnaire following the Oxford (1990) SILL model as a sole research tool to identify strategies used in the writing process are based on frequency counts; therefore, it raises some questions concerning the validity issue. For example, Dornyei (2005: 182) noted that "*a high* *score on the SILL is achieved by a learner using as many different strategies as possible, and therefore, it is largely the quantity that matters;"* while underscored that *"in strategy use it is not necessarily the quantity but the quality of the employed strategies that is important".*

In the same vein, Petric, B. & Czarl, B. (2003: 209) also pointed out some pros and cons when using questionnaires in writing strategy research as they wrote:

> *This method does not provide a thorough understanding of strategy use. This does not mean that questionnaires are useless in writing strategy research: they can provide important insights into general tendencies in a particular population, especially when used with a large number of participants. However, the larger the number of participants, the more likely that the differences in the context will be greater. This needs to be balanced carefully by the researcher. On the other hand, as it became evident in this study, qualitative data from think-aloud protocols were much more informative in revealing different factors involved in strategy use, which suggests that interviews may be more suitable for researching this very complex area, or that a combination of methods may be more fruitful than questionnaire research alone.*

Categorizing writing strategies can be approached into two perspectives, that is, based on psychological process strategies comprise four subgroups following the strategy taxonomies that were set forth by Oxford (1990); O'Malley and Chamot (1990) including cognitive, metacognitive, affective, and social. However, writing strategies can also be classified following several processes such as pre-writing, writing, revising, etc. (Sasaki, 2000; Petric & Czarl, 2003). The two approaches results in different formats, as proposed by Sun (1998) and Petric & Czarl (2003). Both models were employed as the framework to develop questionnaire investigating writing strategies in Sun (1998) and Petric & Czarl (2003).

But using the questionnaire solely in writing strategy research raises some criticisms regarding its drawbacks about the validity of the questionnaire because it provides only the quantity perspective of the strategies used while it does not illustrate sufficient information about the quality issue. Therefore, an interview is suggested as a suitable method for researching this very complex area, or using the questionnaire in combination with an interview to validate the findings from the questionnaire.

The final remarks for this chapter is that the literature review has extensively discussed issues regarding ways to attain comprehensive understanding of the e-mail writing ability. The main themes include, firstly, that it is necessary to find out what expectations of the e-mail writing ability in the specific settings are. This can be done by investigating the target language use and tasks and the analysis of genre in question. The findings will then, secondly, be used as the basis for designing an e-mail writing ability test following the framework for assessing Language for Specific Purpose (LSP) proposed by Douglas (2000). Finally, it is also important to examine the writing process by investigating the writing strategies employed by the writers.

The following chapter presents the research methodology including population and sample, research instruments, data collection, and data analysis.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the details about research design, procedures, and the methodology of the research study.

3.1 Research design

This study employed a non-experimental design and undertook quantitative and qualitative approaches to arrive at the comprehensive answers to the research questions. The quantitative approach involved investigating descriptive figures such as percentage, mean, and standard deviation, while the qualitative was used to describe and explained the quantitative results in a descriptive manner as outlined in Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1: Overview of research design

Research Questions	Type of Data & Instruments	Participants	Data Analysis
RQ1: What e-mail writing abilities are needed among personnel in Thailand travel agencies?	**Quantitative** (Questionnaire)	Ten travel agencies	Percentage
	Qualitative (Genre analysis)	Thirty e-mail samples	Content analysis
RQ2: What are the e-mail writing abilities of the 4th year tourism industry students of Chiangrai Rajabhat University?	**Quantitative** (Test scores from e-mail test tasks)	Twenty-nine 4th year tourism industry students	Mean, Standard Deviation, and Percentage

RQ3: What are the e-mail writing strategies of the 4th year tourism industry students of Chiangrai Rajabhat University?	**Qualitative** (Interview)	Twenty 4th year tourism industry students (10 good and 10 poor students)	Content analysis

3.2 Research Procedures

The study was divided into three phases: needs analysis, test design and administration, and strategies investigation in corresponding with the three research questions. Table 3.2 described the research procedures.

Table 3.2: Overview of research procedures

Research procedures	Participants	Research instruments
Phase 1: Needs analysis	Ten travel agencies	- Questionnaire
	Thirty e-mail samples	- Content analysis (Genre analysis)
Phase 2: Test design & test administration	Twenty-nine 4th year tourism industry students	- E-mail test tasks - Test specification - Scoring rubrics
Phase 3: Strategies investigation	Twenty 4th year tourism industry students	- Interview questions

3.3 Population and samples

Table 3.1 and 3.2 outlined two groups of the population recruited to participate in the three phases of the study. Phase 1, ten travel agencies in Bangkok were randomly selected from fifty-six travel agencies list for needs assessment with regard to e-mail writing expectations and for collecting thirty e-mail samples (3 e-mails per each of the three significant tasks from10 companies). Phase 2, twenty-nine 4th year tourism industry students at Chiangrai Rajabhat University involved in the test administration to assess their e-mail writing abilities. Phase 3, twenty students including ten good (high achiever) and ten poor (low achiever) students were recruited for strategies investigation. Table 3.3 illustrated the description of population and sample in this study.

Table 3.3: Overview of population and sample in the three phases of this study

Research procedures	Population and sample		Description
Phase 1: Needs analysis	Population	56 Tour companies	Registered in-bound and out-bound tour companies that are ATTA members and do business in the Worldwide market category.
	Sample	10 Tour companies	Randomly selected from the 56 companies.
Phase 2: Test design and administration	Population	29 fourth-year tourism industry students	Twenty-nine tourism industry students were recruited as the whole population.

Phase 3: Strategies investigation	Population	29 fourth-year tourism industry students	
	Sample	20 fourth-year tourism industry students	10 good (high achiever) and 10 poor (low achiever) students were recruited from the total twenty-nine students

Detailed description of the population and sample participated in the three phases of this study was presented in the subsequent sections.

3.3.1 Needs analysis (Phase 1)

Fifty-six travel agencies population were selected from the Bangkok-based tour companies, members of the Association of Thai Travel Agent (ATTA), and categorized in the Worldwide market segment.

The tour companies in the Worldwide (in-bound and out-bound) market category are corresponding with the scope of this study due to its internationally-oriented business and the tendency to use English and e-mail as the medium of the international communication. In addition, ATTA membership and Bangkok-based travel agencies were selected as criteria to select the population held two reasons. Firstly, Bangkok holds the largest proportion of the registered travel agencies and ATTA membership is reliable source of the travel agencies company database in Thailand. Throughout the country, 7,222 travel agencies registered with the Tourism Authority of Thailand, and they are divided into 3 types of business: International (Inbound & Outbound), Domestic and Specific Areas. Of the 7,222 companies, 3,010 deal with international tour operators (Inbound and Outbound), 852 operate domestic services and 3,360 operate services in specific areas. The 3, 010 companies are relevant to this study due to its international-oriented business; however, 2,300 companies are located in Bangkok and other 710 companies are located in other provinces (Bangkok Tourist Business and Guide Register Office, 2007). Therefore, the large proportion of the tour companies, which deal with international business reflecting the use of English as a lingua franca, is mostly located in Bangkok. Table 3.4 outlines Thailand travel agencies database from the Bangkok Tourist Business and Guide Register Office. The data was retrieved on February 28, 2007.

Table 3.4: Thailand travel agencies database (Bangkok Tourist Business and Guide Register Office, 2007)

Summary of Business Units Granted the Tourism License						
Types of License	Total	Office of the Registrar				
		Bangkok	Northern Region	Southern Region 1	Southern Region 2	North-Eastern Region
Outbound	3,010	2,300	148	117	320	125
Inbound	852	514	113	67	117	41
Specific Area	3,360	448	753	127	2,060	16
Total	7,222	3,262	1,014	311	2,453	182

Secondly, of the 2,300 companies, not all companies registered the ATTA membership. ATTA is one of the well-recognized associations that support Thailand tourism industry. The ATTA has held the international-oriented image since its inception in 1968. It was recently awarded the outstanding association of the year 2005 and 2007. In addition, ATTA provides the online access to the company profile of all its members via the ATTA's website (www.atta.or.th/DirectoryUI.aspx); therefore, making it convenient to search and categorize the tour companies.

Using several criteria, ATTA divides its members into groups, but only two important factors used to categorize the ATTA membership are relevant to this research study, namely, membership type and specialized market segment. ATTA provides three types of the membership. Full membership is only reserved for the tour companies and the staff working with these companies. Associate membership refers to the corporate that has business closely related to the tour operation such as hotel and insurance companies. Honorary membership is reserved for the individuals nominated by the ATTA committee. Of these three membership categories, the full membership is the most relevant criteria in selecting the tour company samples and the other two types appear irrelevant to the objectives of this study.

In addition, the tour companies holding the ATTA full membership type specialize in different market segments; for example, some expose the business to the Worldwide market, but some limit the business to only the niche market like Europe, Asia, USA, Russia, China, Japan, etc. Moreover, these travel agencies are handling the business market either the in-bound or the out-bound or the integrated market approach. So, with the two criteria, Bangkok holding the largest proportion of the registered tour companies in Thailand and with the integrity of ATTA, lead the researcher to employ ATTA database in the selection of the population in this study.

3.3.2 Test design and administration (Phase 2)

Twenty-nine 4th year tourism industry students at Chiangrai Rajabhat University participated in this stage as the whole population for the test administration.

3.3.3 Strategy investigation (Phase 3)

Twenty students (ten good and ten poor) were recruited from twenty-nine 4th year tourism industry students for strategy investigation.

3.4 Research instruments

Following three phases of the study, three research instruments, developed by the researcher, were used in this study: 1) needs analysis questionnaire to indicate the top three tasks in the travel agencies; 2) three e-mail test tasks and scoring rubrics to evaluate the students' e-mail writing ability; and 3) controlled retrospective interview to investigate writing strategies.

3.4.1 Needs Analysis questionnaire (Phase 1)

The needs assessment questionnaire was developed to identify e-mail tasks in the "Inquiry and Sale" framework for the travel agency operation. The questionnaire consists of two parts. Part one indicates the distinctive e-mail tasks that the travel agencies handle daily. Part two identifies expectations about the e-mail writing abilities. The information from the questionnaire was used to support the data from the content analysis of e-mail samples (genre analysis). From each of the 10 travel agencies, three informants including; first: company owners or managing directors; second: the reservation managers or supervisors; third: the reservation staff handling e-mail tasks, participated in responding to the questionnaire.

Development

In the process of developing the constructs of the first part of the needs questionnaire, the researcher conducted an informal interview with one of the travel agencies in order to get some ideas about e-mail tasks needed in the “Inquiry and Sale” framework. The informal interview result highlighted that there were five tasks including “Quotation Reply”, “Accommodation Booking”, “Service Booking with Suppliers”, “Service Amendment”, and “Service Confirmation” respectively. However, to confirm the interview results, these five tasks were used as checklist items in the first part of the needs questionnaire in order to confirm with the travel agency sample group and to find out the three most distinctive tasks.

Included as the second part of the needs questionnaire, this section was to identify the expectations of the quality of e-mail writing (holistic and analytic), the researcher provided the checklist for the respondents to specify meaningful rating proportion between effectiveness and accuracy which the first represents the holistic scoring approach while the latter corresponds to the analytic one. The holistic scoring focuses on the overall communicative effect that determines whether the global purpose of communication has been achieved according to the task requirements. The analytic scoring addresses the specific criteria that focus on relevant aspects of performance in a given writing task. Both scoring platforms are meaningful features for both assessment and pedagogical purposes (CLB, 2000); however, it is necessary to identify the perception of the stakeholders in the travel agency context of how they consider meaningful weighting between these two elements of scoring patterns that reflect the authentic practice in their current business operation.

Validation

According to Douglas (2000), content validation needs involvement from specialist informants from the specific purpose field in question to work with the test development team on the selection and use of appropriate texts. The needs questionnaire was validated by three experts including two professors from the field of language assessment and evaluation, and a veteran manager from one of the recognized travel agencies in judging content validity of the questionnaire. The questionnaire validation process involved the experts' review and judgment on the content items using the three-value checklist including agree, not sure, and disagree. The total agreement values were calculated for IOC index which revealed that the IOC index for this questionnaire was .89 which means that the three-panel expert arrived at high degree of agreement about the questionnaire content and its intended purpose. The questionnaire was revised according to the experts' comments. The IOC (Index of Item-Objective Congruence) calculation requires at least two of the experts' agreement in order to claim the validity and the IOC index must be higher than .05.

3.4.2 Designing E-mail Writing Ability Test (Phase 2)

The findings from the needs analysis questionnaire that revealed three significant tasks (Accommodation Booking, Service Confirmation, and Service Amendment) were used in the development of the e-mail writing ability test. Three steps in designing the e-mail test included: 1) analyzing the three tasks using the genre analysis framework (Wang, 2005; Santos, 2002); 2) defining constructs for e-mail writing ability test using the framework of target language use and task characteristics (Douglas, 2000); and 3) developing three e-mail tests tasks and scoring rubrics.

Step 1: Genre analysis of three e-mail tasks

Genre analysis of the three e-mail tasks covered two-layer analysis which includes: Layer 1 – Contextual analysis (Wang, 2005) and Layer 2 Linguistic analysis (Santos, 2002). The contextual analysis allowed the research to arrive at comprehensive understanding about the relationship of the three contextual features which influence the linguistic choices, such as, purpose (field), relationship between e-mail writer and recipient (tenor), and channel of communication (mode).

Layer 1: Contextual analysis of three e-mail tasks

The contextual analysis results the three e-mail tasks were analyzed and summarized in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5: Contextual analysis of three e-mail tasks

Tasks/Purposes	**Context of Situations**		
	Field	**Tenor**	**Mode**
Task 1: Accommodation Booking/**Request** a room reservation and confirmation from the hotel and **provide** the necessary information about the clients to the hotel.	When the travel agency receives e-mail requesting a room reservation from their client, the agency uses e-mail to contact the hotels (that are requested by their clients) for booking and confirmation of room reservation.	The travel agency staff is the sender and the hotel reservation staff is the intended reader of this e-mail task. Client and service provider explain the relationship between the travel agency and the hotel.	E-mail is a chosen channel of communication to accomplish all three e-mail tasks because e-mail is convenient and a cost-saving means for today business operation. However, sometimes the

Task 2: Confirm Services with customers/**Provide** confirmation result and **request** payment from the clients.	When the travel agency can confirm services e.g. room reservation for their clients, the agency send e-mail to the clients informing them about their confirmed booking and requesting for payment.	The travel agency staff is the sender and the travel agency's client is the intended reader of this e-mail task. Client and service provider explain the relationship between the travel agency and its client.	participants choose to use telephone first and then use e-mail for proof of evidence and follow-up records or vice versa.
Task 3: Amend services/**Provide** the supplier information about the change of the booking and **request** service amendment and confirmation from the supplier.	When the travel agency receives a request to amend the services such as travelling date, the travel agency then sends e-mail to the related suppliers to inform them about the change of the services in the booking and request for service amendment and confirmation from those suppliers.	The travel agency staff is the sender and the travel agency's supplier is the intended reader of this e-mail task. Client and service provider explain the relationship between the travel agency and its supplier.	Sometimes, e-mail is the only means to finish these three e-mail tasks. Fax is rarely used unless the participants are not equipped with the Internet connection or for other reasons such as confidentiality.

From Table 3.5, the contextual analysis results of the three e-mail tasks clearly indicated the relationship between the three contextual features that work under the "Inquiry and Sale" framework of the travel agency business (Hoontrakul & Sahadev, 2005: 17). For example, the purpose (field) of the task such as e-mail requesting accommodation booking involves the correspondence between the travel agency and hotel reservation staff which entails the business-oriented relationship (tenor) of the two parties (service provider and client). This act of request requires the travel agency staff to provide sufficient contents e.g. information about the hotel choice, room types, meal choices, etc. Business-oriented context favors the use of E-mail (tenor), which is written mode, as the communication choice for practical purposes such as speed and cost advantages. The contextual analysis results were used in harmony with the linguistic analysis results in Layer 2 to formulate the language and tasks characteristics within the Language for Specific Purpose (LSP) framework (Douglas, 2000) in Step 2.

Layer 2: Linguistic analysis of three e-mail tasks

Linguistic analysis within the genre framework involved identifying schematic structure (move-structure) and linguistic features used to realize the communicative functions in each of the move. The schematic analysis of the three e-mail tasks revealed the e-mail structure that follows the four-move pattern within the framework of Business Letter of Negotiation (BLN) proposed by Santos (2002). The linguistic features, which were used to realize the communicative purpose of each move, were crosschecked with the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 and reported in Table 3.6 below.

Table 3.6: Summary of move structure and linguistic features of the three e-mails

Structural moves	Functions	Examples of sentences, phrases & expressions
Move 1: Establishing the negotiation chain	To set the scene of the communication chain. The writer writes the clear subject line as well as greets and addresses the participants using polite forms of language.	1. State clear subject line identifying clearly the purpose of the e-mail message such as “New booking …” “Confirmation…” “Amendment…” 2. The opening salutation commonly found is “Dear”. 3. Sometimes, greeting patterns such as “Greeting from …” “Warmest greeting from….” “Once again greeting from…” are also used after the opening salutation. 4. Phrases identify reference information patterns are also used to establish link to set the scene for the negotiation such as “From our conversation over the phone…” “Refer to our telephone conversation a few minutes ago…”

Move 2 (Providing information/ answers)	To provide information for the hotel reservation/confirmation/amendment procedure such as details about period of stay and room rates, guests' names/surnames, flight details which is important for the hotel to know for transfers arrangement	**Declaratives/Imperatives** are commonly found in combination with technical vocabulary and abbreviation for travel agency and hotel operation such as "We're pleased to confirm 1 DBL/ABF 2 NTS for …. (meaning confirmed hotel booking includes a double-bed room with American Breakfast for 2 nights).
Move 3 (Requesting information/ actions)	To make requests for actions/information	**Imperatives that identify requesting function** in this context is commonly used with "please" such as "please book and confirm…". Other linguistic forms that can fulfill requesting purpose may also be used such as declaratives.
Move 4 (Ending)	To end the correspondence	Closing salutation patterns appropriate for business context are used such as Best regards or Regards. Sign-off patterns such as signature and company address with an aim to give details about the sender and the company such as job position, contact address, e-mail, website, tel, fax, etc.

According to Table 3.6, the genre analysis results were used to develop the scoring rubrics to assess the 4th year tourism industry students' e-mail writing abilities. For example, the four-move pattern was the criterion evaluating the students' ability to construct the expected business e-mail of negotiation structure (four-move). This criterion is categorized under Organization within the five scoring rubrics of the Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) scoring scheme. The knowledge of the four-move pattern in composing the three e-mail tasks also corresponded with the textual knowledge (knowledge of text organization) and functional knowledge (knowledge of using language to get the things done) within Language for Specific Purposes (LSP) ability framework (Douglas, 2000). A more detailed description of the integration between genre analysis results of the three e-mail tasks and the Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB, 2000) scoring scheme was outlined in Step 2 below.

Step 2: Defining constructs for e-mail writing ability test (translating genre analysis results into the frameworks of language and tasks characteristics of the target language use situation)

The schematic structure and linguistic features obtained from the genre analysis results as summarized in Table 3.5 and Table 3.6 clearly described the two-layer knowledge about the business e-mail of negotiation genre (Santos, 2002). That is, at the macro level, the business e-mail negotiation genre composes of four communicative moves: Move 1 Establishing the negotiation chain, Move 2 Providing, Move 3 Requesting, and Move 4 Ending. At the micro level, the business e-mail negotiation genre needs observable linguistic choices to realize the communicative purpose of each move. Declarative and imperative forms of utterance were the distinctive features that determine the nature of business negotiation.

However, according to Douglas (2000), in order to define Language for Specific Purpose (LSP) ability, components of LSP ability must be clearly determined and outlined. Douglas (2000: 282) maintained that for any specific purposes language test to examine how well the individuals can use language in specific contexts of use, the test must address both their language knowledge and their background knowledge, and their use of strategic competence that work in harmony to formulate the successful communication of the specific purpose language abilities in the target language use situation.

So, the information from Table 3.5 and Table 3.6 were translated into the framework of specific purpose language ability and the framework for task characteristics in language use situation (Douglas, 2000:103-108). Table 3.7 and Table 3.8 outlined the integration outcome from translating the genre analysis results into the two frameworks of Douglas (2000). The integration was aimed at achieving clearly defined specific purpose language ability (language knowledge, background knowledge, and specific competence) in relating to the characteristics of the target language use situation and tasks. The information from these two frameworks was served as a means to develop the e-mail writing abilities test specifications, tasks, and scoring rubrics in Step 3.

Defining the language characteristics of target language use situation of the three e-mail tasks

Table 3.7 outlined the components and characteristics of specific purpose language ability derived from the genre analysis results of the three e-mail tasks.

Table 3.7: The summary of the language characteristics of the three e-mail tasks

Categories	**Characteristics**
Language knowledge	
Vocabulary	Wide range, but technical terminology in the travel agency operation such as accommodation, confirm, amend, room incl. ABF, etc. are distinctive features of this discourse situation.
Syntax	Wide range, but imperatives and declaratives to realize requesting and providing functions are considered key linguistic features in this discourse situation.
Graphology	Standard written forms
Textual knowledge	
Cohesion/Organization	Four-move structure of the business e-mail of negotiation
Functional knowledge	Ideational and manipulative: providing information/answers; requesting information/actions

Sociolinguistic knowledge	Standard English with appropriate business tone (relatively formal)
Background knowledge	Knowledge in tourism-related business e.g. travel-agency operation and hotel reservation is needed to interpret and produce necessary information in the e-mail tasks.
Strategic competence	Relate knowledge from reading input to language knowledge in order to produce e-mail tasks that correspond to the tasks purposes

Table 3.8 presents the task characteristics of the three e-mail tasks: Accommodation Booking, Service Confirmation, and Service Amendment.

Table 3.8: The summary of the situation and tasks characteristics of the three e-mail tasks

Characteristics	**TLU Situation & Tasks**
Rubric Objective	Explicit in situation: the travel agency staff receives e-mails requesting for services such as to book accommodation, to confirm services and to amend services for their clients. So, the staff needs to act on these tasks promptly and effectively.

Procedure for responding	Explicit: the tasks are handled mainly through e-mail (but some other communication channels are used to support the tasks completion such as telephone, faxes, etc.
Structure	
Number of tasks	Three tasks: accommodation booking, service confirmation, and service amendment
Relative importance	Importance: the three e-mail tasks are daily routine tasks, but revenue generating tasks for the travel agency.
Task distinctions	Clear: at the micro level these tasks are clearly distinguished from each other through its subtle communicative purposes e.g. to book accommodation, to confirm services, and to amend services. But their macro purpose is to request for information or actions.
Time allotment	Varies: time spending on difficulty-level of the e.g. some requests are more time-consuming than the others.
Evaluation	Implicit: the tasks completion is determined whether the purposes of the tasks are achieved or not e.g. the clients' requests are fulfilled.

Input	
Prompt	
Features of context	
Setting	Travel agency operation in Thailand
Participants	Client - service provider explains the relationship among the concerned parties including overseas tour operators, travel agencies, hotels, restaurants, etc.
Purpose	Explicit: the travel agency staff needs to write e-mail corresponding to their clients' requests e.g. to book accommodation, to confirm services, and to amend services.
Tone	Business (relatively formal), but in a courtesy and tactful manner
Language	Standard English
Norms	Client - service provider relationship within the request/reply pattern of business negotiation norm.
Genre	E-mail of business negotiation genre with four-move structure: Move 1 Establishing the negotiation chain; Move 2 Providing; Move 3 Requesting; Move 4 Ending.

Problem identification	Explicit: the client sends e-mails to the service provider to request for information/actions/answers e.g. accommodation booking, service confirmation and service amendment.
Input data	
Format	E-mail
Vehicle of delivery	Written (e-mail)
Expected response	
Format	Written (e-mail)
Response content language	E-mail writing should be clear, concise and with reasonable accuracy, and follows the business negotiation genre (four-move structure).
Background knowledge	Knowledge in understanding the travel operation and hotel tasks e.g. accommodation booking, service confirmation, and service amendment.
Level of authenticity	
Situational/Interactional	Fairly high: routine tasks in the travel agency operation

Interaction between input and response	
Reactivity	Non-reciprocal
Scope	Narrow: based on input data (received e-mails)
Directness	Moderately direct: must use information in the received e-mails. Some travel agency operation background is needed to interpret input data.
Assessment	
Construct definition	To write business e-mail of business negotiation effectively and with reasonable accuracy.
Criteria for correctness	Implicit: the stakeholders expect to see e-mail written product having both effectiveness and accuracy.
Rating procedure	Implicit: the clients' responses determine the success of the communication and the tasks.

Step 3: The development of test specifications

After translating genre analysis results into the frameworks of language and tasks characteristics of the target language use situation (Table 3.5-Table 3.8), this section outlines the details of the test specifications as proposed by Douglas, (2000: 109-120) and the details of the three e-mail writing test tasks. The test specifications were developed based on the information gathered from the analysis of the language and tasks characteristics of the target language use (TLU) situations, needs analysis and genre analysis results, literature review, and CLB (2000)'s integrated scoring scheme. According to Douglas (2000: 109) the test specifications is served as a kind of blueprints for test developers and item writers, a reference point for validation researchers, and sometimes a source of information for score users. The components in the test specifications include: the purpose of the test, the ability to be measured, characteristics of the test takers, a description of the content of the test, scoring criteria, and sample test items or tasks. Following Douglas (2000: 109), the test specifications include eight sections, but Douglas (2000: 109) noted that test specifications are dynamic and therefore changes can be made following feedback from members of the test development team, subject specialist informants, and experience gained in trailing, or piloting the test tasks. So, the test specifications allow some room for adjustments.

Test Specifications of Three E-mail Tasks

1. The purposes of the test: This section describes the purposes of the test. The e-mail writing test is aimed to assess students' ability to write/reply effective business e-mail of negotiation clearly, concisely, logically, appropriately, and with reasonable accuracy. The test is used to determine whether the students acquire an adequate level of e-mail writing abilities to handle business negotiation tasks in the travel agency operation (proficiency). The test can also provide diagnostic information about students' strengths and weaknesses in writing business e-mail of negotiation. The test results can be used to develop the training program for students whose e-mail writing abilities are considered inadequate to handle these e-mail tasks.

2. The tasks characteristics in TLU situation and test tasks: This section describes the summary of the target language use situations and tasks that would be used in the test with an aim to maintain the degree of authenticity of the tasks characteristics of the target language use situation (TLU) and test tasks (Douglas, 2000: 73). The needs analysis results indicated three significant tasks in the travel agency operation (Accommodation Booking, Service Confirmation, Service Amendment). Therefore, Table 3.9 outlined the keywords (in bold) in the three e-mail tasks. The keywords demonstrate the acts of requesting and providing actions/answers which are two determining features in the business e-mail of negotiation. The keywords are served as a means to demonstrate the degree of correspondence between the tasks characteristics of the TLU situations and the test tasks.

Table 3.9: The Target Language Use (TLU) situations and tasks used in the test

TLU Situations & Tasks	Test Tasks
1. Travel agency reservation staff **write an e-mail** to a hotel **to request a room reservation** for their clients (tour operator overseas which are the travel agency customers) and ask for confirmation.	1. Students **write an e-mail requesting** a hotel room reservation and **asking for a room confirmation** right away.
2. Travel agency reservation staff **write an e-mail** to a client (tour operator overseas) to **provide confirmation result** of a hotel room reservation and **ask for conformation and payment**.	2. Students **write an e-mail providing confirmation result** of a hotel room reservation and **asking for confirmation and payment**.
3. Travel agency reservation staff **write an e-mail** to a hotel to **request period amendment** of a hotel room reservation for the clients (tour operator overseas which are the travel agency customers), and **ask for confirmation**.	3. Students **write an e-mail amending period** of a hotel room reservation and **asking for amendment result and confirmation** of the booking.

3. Characteristics of the test takers: This section describes the characteristics of the test takers. The test takers are twenty-nine 4th year tourism industry students from Chiangrai Rajabhat University. Twenty-three were female and six were male students typically aged from mid-twenties. Following their four-year (8-semester) study plan, these students are subjected to finish ten English courses, which accumulate the 30 credits for English subjects, namely English for Tourism I-VI, English for Hotel I-II, Business Communication English I-II.

4. Definition of the constructs to be measured: This section describes the definition of the constructs to be measured. According to Table 3.5 – Table 3.8, the results from the genre analysis of the three e-mail tasks, the target language use situations and tasks frameworks (Douglas, 2000), the integrated scoring scheme (CLB, 2000), and the literature review have been blended to formulate the construct definition of e-mail writing abilities following the Language for Specific Purpose (LSP) Ability Model (Douglas, 2000). The components in the Language for Specific Purpose ability for the e-mail writing test include:

(1) Language knowledge/language ability

- Grammatical knowledge refers to knowledge of formal features of English such as mechanics, morphology, syntax and word choices using appropriate vocabulary (general vocabulary and technical vocabulary) based on the situations provided. Table 3.5 – Table 3.6 outlined linguistic features that determine grammatical knowledge needed to achieve the communicative functions of the four-move structure of the e-mail. For example, Move 1 involved business-greeting pattern like “Dear+Name or Dear+Surname”. Declaratives and imperatives with the mitigation device like “Please” are used to complete the providing and requesting functions in Move 2 and Move 3 respectively. Business ending forms like “Best regards and Regards” fit the complementary closing function in Move 4.

- Textual knowledge is the knowledge of cohesion and knowledge of rhetorical organization of the discourse. According to Table 3.5 – Table 3.6, business e-mail of negotiation determines the expected rhetorical structure of e-mail writing in the travel agency operation. The business e-mail of negotiation pattern follows the four -move structure (Santos, 2002) that includes: Move 1 Establishing the negotiation chain; Move 2 Providing information/answers; Move 3 Requesting information/actions; and Move 4 Ending.

- Functional knowledge means the knowledge of how to state the purpose using accurate forms in business e-mail of negotiation genre based on the writing situation. This type of knowledge determines form-function relationship that formulates the realization of the discourse structure. Linguistic choices are clearly summarized in order to meet the communicative functions of the four-move pattern of business e-mail of negotiation as outlined in Grammatical knowledge and Table 3.5 – Table 3.6.

- Sociolinguistic knowledge refers to the knowledge of how to control tone in the business e-mail of negotiation. Formal and semi-formal conventions are norm in business correspondence; however, Geffner (2010: 165) emphasized natural, polite, and tactful tone to fine-tune the formal and semi-formal writing style. Geffner (2010) proposed that adding expressions like "please", "thank you", "we are sorry", or "I appreciate" is enough to make a sentence sound more polite and courteous in the declarative and imperative functions in Move 2 and Move 2. Polite greetings and endings in business like "Dear+Name/Dear+Surname" and "Best regards/Regards" are commonly chosen forms in completing the functions in Move 1 and Move 4.

(2) Background knowledge and strategic competence. Background knowledge refers to the knowledge of how to write the business e-mail of negotiation using the background knowledge in travel agency operation based on the prompt provided in order to complete the tasks. Strategic competence involves the abilities to evaluate, plan, and execute the language knowledge plus background knowledge to complete the task (Douglas, 2000: 28-29). Background knowledge and strategic competence are somewhat implicit

(Douglas, 2000:38), but still observable, and Douglas (2000: 28) affirmed that background knowledge and strategic competence are central to LSP tests as he wrote:

> *…this cognitive aspect responsible for assessing the characteristics of the language use situation (including the language user's own background and language knowledge, as well as, subsequently, assessing the success of the communicative response to the situation), setting communicative goals, planning a response in light of the goals, and controlling the execution of the plan.*

Table 3.7 and Table 3.8 outline the language constructs and tasks characteristics of the three e-mail tasks with an aim to illustrate that the writer needs language knowledge, background knowledge, and strategic competence as a means to write effective business e-mail of negotiation. For example, the following utterance clearly showed the needs of language knowledge, background knowledge, and strategic competence in the following e-mail extract requesting accommodation booking.

> *From our conversation over the phone, please book and confirm 1 DBL Beach Front Bungalow (1st – 3rd row) with ABF from 26 Dec'10 – 04 Jan'11 (9 nts) for ROBINSON Mr/Ms as per our contract rate at THB x,xxx net/room/night (incl.ABF). Compulsory grand dinner on 31Dec'10 at THB x,xxx net/pax.*

According to the above e-mail extract, the e-mail writer engaged in drawing various types of knowledge i.e. language, background, and strategies. For example, for language knowledge, the writer acquired the use of a simple phrase like "*From our conversation over the phone*" to function as the reference point between the use of telephone and e-mail. As described in Table 3.7 the reservation staff often chose to use telephone first and then e-mail for proof of evidence and follow-up records. The use of this expression requires not only the language knowledge about the form as prefabricated expression, but also the understanding about the way business is handled in the travel agency which is linked directly to the background knowledge of this business. In addition, the use of the prefabricated chunk "*From our conversation over the phone*" perfectly serves as the linking function to the main purpose of this e-mail, that is, to request accommodation booking. After the expression, the writer directly used the imperative statement "*book and confirm*" which are common word choices for the purpose of reservation job at the travel agency. The writer also employed the mitigation device using "please" to tone down the request effect in a more courteous and tactful manner. This requires strategic competence in good judgment about vocabulary, phrase, sentence choices, the right order of these linguistic choices, and the knowledge of procedural work pattern in this travel agency in order to complete the task's purpose.

As it can be seen that even the simple statement about to book and confirm hotel accommodation, the e-mail writers require not only the language knowledge from word to sentence level, but they also need background knowledge of the business and strategic competence in evaluating the situation and selecting linguistic choices that meet the purpose in the given task. Douglas (2000: 38) addressed issues involving background knowledge and strategic competence towards formulating the construct definition and the scoring criteria that background knowledge and strategic competence, for the purpose of LSP test, may be outlined in the construct definition, but may not be given a separate score for practical purposes since the test users are not interested in receiving one.

5. Scoring criteria: This section describes the scoring criteria used in this study. Drawing on the information from Table 3.5 – 3.6, criteria for correctness is somewhat implicit, so modified CLB (2000) integrated scoring scheme was employed to formulate the scoring rubrics to assess the e-mail writing abilities of the 4th year tourism industry students. CLB (2000) integrated scoring scheme blends holistic and analytical approaches to assess writing performance. CLB (2000) scoring scheme pays attention to both the contents needed to meet the task's purpose (effectiveness), and other aspects of writing quality (e.g. grammatical accuracy). Effectiveness and accuracy are two main features in the CLB (2000) scoring rubrics. Modified CLB (2000) scoring criteria includes five criteria: Effectiveness, Grammatical accuracy, Appropriateness, Organization, and Vocabulary. Holistic scoring approach encourages the raters to read each writing script quickly and base their score on appearance of the contents needed for the task' purpose. On the other hand, analytic scoring approach focuses on linguistic aspects of the writing performance in a given task such as grammatical accuracy, appropriateness, organization, and vocabulary. Both effectiveness and accuracy are important features to determine effective e-mail writing abilities. For example, the stakeholders voiced their opinions regarding the two main aspects of e-mail writing performance as follows:

> *Both are equally important in the sense that to achieve effective communication you need to communicate with quality, though grammatical perfection is not a necessity the layout of text & format is. One can accomplish a lot by employing the proper structure. (Arlymear Travel)*

> *Effectiveness means marketing and communication. Accuracy means confidence in delivery. Both in my view must go together. (Go Visit Asia)*

> *They complete each other brilliantly. A targeted e-mail with understanding contents is the key. In my opinion, what is more important for us is the accuracy even if there are some mistakes in English. (Excel World Travel)*

In addition, holistic scoring (effectiveness) demonstrates the real-world situation when the e-mail recipient quickly read for contents that meet the purpose of the message, and overlook the accuracy aspect of the message. However, Geffner (2010) maintained that mastering the accuracy in writing allows the writer to communicate with confidence and promote clear and effective communication. Moreover, Weigle (2002: 121) affirmed that analytic scales is more appropriate for L2 writers for pedagogical purpose because analytic scoring can provide diagnostic information about the writers' strengths and weaknesses in their developing aspects of the writing performance.

The modified CLB (2000) scoring criteria cover the details of constructs within the framework of Language for Specific Purpose (LSP) ability (Douglas, 2000) which include: grammatical knowledge, textual and functional knowledge, sociolinguistic knowledge, and background knowledge. Table 3.10 outlines the scoring criteria to assess the students' e-mail writing abilities in corresponding with the LSP assessment constructs.

Table 3.10: Criteria and descriptors of e-mail writing ability assessment bands (Adapted from the CLB (2000)'s integrated scoring scheme)

Criteria	Bands	Descriptors	Assessment Constructs
1. Effectiveness Based on the prompts provided, effectiveness describes whether the **global purpose of communication has been achieved** according to task requirements.	1	**Not achieve** the purpose of communication according to task requirements because **several parts of the content** based on the prompts provided are missing	**Language Knowledge, Background Knowledge, and Strategic Competence**
	2	**Only marginally achieved** the purpose of communication according to task requirements because **some parts of the content** based on the prompts provided are missing	
	3	**Achieving** the purpose of communication according to task requirements, but **a few parts of the content** based on the prompts provided are still missing	
	4	**Well achieving** the purpose of communication according to task requirements, and **all parts the content** based on the prompts provided are complete	

2. Grammatical Accuracy This criterion describes the ability to control **formal features** of English such as spelling, punctuation and syntax but focusing on the keyword "**impede text comprehension**". The language used is simple, clear and direct.	1 2 3 4	**Poor control** of spelling, punctuation and grammatical structures that **severely impede** text comprehension (grammatical errors ≥ 50%) **Fair control** of spelling, punctuation, and grammatical structures that **frequently impede** text comprehension (grammatical errors ≤ 50%) **Good control** of spelling, punctuation, and grammatical inaccuracies that **occasionally impede** text comprehension (grammatical errors ≤ 20%) **Very good control** of spelling, punctuation, and grammatical inaccuracies with minor slips such as spelling and punctuation that **unlikely impede** text comprehension (< 10%)	**Language Knowledge (Grammatical Knowledge), Background Knowledge, and Strategic Competence**
3. Appropriateness This criterion describes the ability to control **tone** or the writer's attitude toward the topic and the reader. The most common style (formality) in professional/work e-mails is **Neutral/Standard (not too formal/informal)** which underlies natural tone, positive attitude, courtesy and tactful manner as well as the **appropriate** conventions in the use of greeting and ending patterns.	1 2 3 4	**Poor control** of tone (natural, polite, and tactful) writing style with appropriate use of greeting and ending patterns **Fair control** of tone (natural, polite, and tactful) writing style with appropriate use of greeting and ending patterns **Good control** of tone (natural, polite, and tactful) writing style with appropriate use of greeting and ending patterns **Very good control** of tone (natural, polite, and tactful) writing style with appropriate use of greeting and ending patterns	**Language Knowledge (Sociolinguistic Knowledge), Background Knowledge, and Strategic Competence**

4. Organization This criterion describes the ability to control **rhetorical organization** of the text that develops logically according to its purpose/function. Business e-mails are brief and right to the point and tend to follow the four-move structure including: **Move 1**: Provide the clear subject line that indicates the task purpose and use appropriate greetings. **Move 2**: Address the providing information/answers function. **Move 3**: Address the requesting actions/services function. **Move 4**: Use appropriate ending patterns.	1 2 3 4	**Poor control** of rhetorical organization: no obligatory moves appear; demonstrate limited knowledge of the structural moves and function of the required moves. **Fair control** of rhetorical organization: only some of the obligatory moves appear; demonstrate quite limited knowledge of the structural moves and function of the required moves. **Good control** of rhetorical organization: all of the obligatory moves appear; demonstrate good knowledge of the structural moves and function of the required moves. But the moves sequence is relatively not effective. **Very good control** of rhetorical organization: all of the obligatory moves appear; explicitly demonstrate the knowledge of the structural moves and function of the required moves. The moves sequence is excellently effective.	**Language Knowledge (Textual Knowledge and Functional Knowledge), Background Knowledge, and Strategic Competence**

5. Vocabulary The criterion describes the ability to use **adequate and accurate choice of vocabulary for the task** (using appropriate vocabulary i.e. general and technical vocabulary to meet the purpose of the situation provided).	1 2 3 4	**Poor vocabulary:** limited control of vocabulary choice (general and technical vocabulary); inadequate to meet the task's purpose **Fair vocabulary:** fair control of vocabulary choice (general and technical vocabulary); relatively sufficient to meet the task's purpose **Good vocabulary:** good control of vocabulary choice (general and technical vocabulary); sufficient to meet the task's purpose **Very good vocabulary:** effective control of vocabulary choice (general and technical vocabulary) to meet the task's purpose	**Language Knowledge (Vocabulary), Background Knowledge, and Strategic Competence**

6. Raters and scoring plan: This section describes details about raters and scoring plan. There are two raters in this study to obtain reliability check (inter-rater reliability). The raters were trained prior to test events. The scores were marked on the scoring sheet and the assessors work independently. The assessors did their rating on the printed version of the answer sheets. The scoring guidelines include:

1. Review the criteria and descriptors of e-mail writing abilities assessment bands.

2. Use the scoring sheet to rate the student's performance level by circling the appropriate band (1, 2, 3, or 4)

Table 3.11: The e-mail writing ability scoring sheet (Adapted from CLB, 2000: 37)

Criteria	Scores
1. Effectiveness	1 2 3 4
2. Grammatical accuracy	1 2 3 4
3. Appropriateness	1 2 3 4
4. Organization	1 2 3 4
5. Vocabulary	1 2 3 4

3. Calculate the total score by combining the assigned score from each criterion. The total score for each task is 20, and the total score for all three tasks is 60. From the total score, each student was categorized into four groups based on the four-band scale for four levels of performances (Adapted from CLB, 2000: 47). Illustrated in Table 3.12, the ratings 1 to 4 indicate unsatisfactory (Initial), below average (Developing), satisfactory (Adequate), and above satisfactory performance (Fluent) respectively. The cut-off level for this study is set at Band 3 (Adequate) with score 70-80% of the total score following the purpose of the test in that the test aims at assessing the students' ability in writing effective business e-mail of negotiation to meet the purpose of the given task. Brown (1996: 259) asserted that the cut-point often relates to the purposes of the test which also claims validity aspect of the test in that the test measures what it is designed to measure. So, from the CLB (2000) descriptions of four bands and scores levels outlined in Table 3.12, the cut-off point is set at Band 3 (Adequate) which indicates the "effective" writing performance that meets the task requirements and the aim of the e-mail writing test.

Table 3.12: Descriptions of bands and scores levels (Adapted from CLB, 2000: 47)

Bands	Scores Achieved	Descriptions
1 – Initial	Less than 50% of the total score	Performance not effective relative to task requirements; the writer achieves less than 50% of the total score
2 – Developing	50-69% of the total score	Performance marginally effective relative to task requirements; the writer achieves more than 49% but less than 70% of the total score
3 – Adequate (Cut-off point)	70-80% of the total score	Performance effective relative to task requirements; the writer achieves 70% - 80% of the total score
4 – Fluent	More than 80% of the total score	Performance very effective relative to task requirements; the writer achieves more than 80% of the total score

7. Content of the test: The content of the test consists of the following parts.

(1) Organization of the test:

a. Number of tasks: Three tasks which consisting of one item per each task, and the score for each task is 20.

b. Task types: Three tasks types: 1) writing accommodation booking e-mail; 2) writing service confirmation e-mail; and 3) writing service amendment e-mail.

c. Response format: The students receive the test questions in printed-paper. Following the prompts provided, they use Word Processing software (Microsoft Word) to write responses and then save the files into the computer's hard disk.

(2) Time allocation: The test takers are allowed two hours to complete all three tasks.

(3) Length of input data: The test consists of three pages.

(4) Test task details: This section describes the content of the **"Test of the E-mail Writing Abilities for Chiangrai Rajabaht University 4th Year Tourism Industry Students".**

The e-mail writing ability test has two sections. Section 1 provides information about the overview of the reservation job and their routine tasks. This section sets the scene for the test takers to familiarize with the reservation job and how the three main tasks originate. Section 2 describes the details of the three test tasks and the instruction to complete the test tasks. The three tasks resemble the sequence of the reservation's job in the real business context.

Section 1: Information about a reservation staff in a travel agency

Reservation staff hold revenue-generating position in travel agency business operation because they handle all sorts of requests for services from the clients. Generally, services include accommodation, ticketing, tours etc. The basic overview of this job includes: after receiving an e-mail requesting a hotel reservation from a customer, the reservation staff checks room availability and e-mails feedback to the customer with two options: 1) if the requested hotel room can be confirmed, the reservation staff confirms the room with the client and request for payment; 2) if the room cannot be confirmed e.g. the requested hotel is fully booked, the reservation staff provides alternative offers to the clients. However, customers sometimes change their travelling plan and ask the travel agent for service amendment. So, this scenario results in three distinctive tasks for the reservation staff to handle daily including 1) accommodation booking; 2) service confirmation; and 3) service amendment.

Section 2: The test has three tasks including 1) accommodation booking; 2) service confirmation; and 3) service amendment. The students must read the prompts carefully and follow the instruction at the end of each task.

Task 1: Accommodation Booking

Role: You are a reservation staff of Chiangrai Travel & Leisure – a local travel agency in Chiangrai, Thailand. Your job is handling customers' e-mails requesting for services. The services include a variety of travel related products such as accommodation, land and air transportation, tours, etc. But the most frequent tasks are to book an accommodation, confirm services, and amend services.

Situation 1: You are receiving e-mail from Pinker - a reservation staff at the Global Leisure which is one of your key tour operator partners oversea that sends clients to your company regularly. Pinker asks you to book a room at Le Méridien Chiangrai Resort for 3 nights from 24 – 26 December 2011. Pinker mentioned in the e-mail that the clients request a Deluxe Garden View Room for 2 persons. The contracted rate of this room type for your company is 4,000 THB per room per night with breakfast (ABF). Although your company provides the clients free airport-hotel transfer, you still need to inform the resort your clients' names and flights details as follows:

Passengers: Mr. Robert ROBINSON/Mrs. Lucy ROBINSON

Flights: TG131 24 DEC BKK CEI 0835 0955

TG135 26 DEC CEI BKK 1545 1705

Instructions: Write an e-mail to book a room at Le Méridien Chiangrai Resort for the requested period and ask if the hotel can confirm the room right away. In the e-mail message, provide all relevant and important information.

Task 2: Service Confirmation

Situation 2: You've just received a confirmation e-mail from Le Méridien Chiangrai Resort stating that the Deluxe Garden View Room for 3 nights from 24 – 26 December 2011 for Mr./Mrs. ROBINSON is available. So, you need to e-mail Pinker and mention that you can confirm a room at Le Méridien Chiangrai Resort for his clients. You also need to ask Pinker for reverting confirmation so that you can send him an invoice to request for payment.

Instructions: Write a confirmation e-mail to let Pinker know that the Deluxe Garden View Room for 3 nights from 24 – 26 December 2011 at Le Méridien Chiangrai Resort for Mr./Mrs. ROBINSON can be confirmed. Also, ask for his returning confirmation to issue the invoice. In the e-mail message, provide all relevant and important information.

Task 3: Service Amendment

Situation 3: You are receiving e-mail from Pinker - a reservation staff at the Global Travel Service which is one of your key tour operator partners oversea that sends clients to your company regularly. Pinker mentioned in the e-mail that his clients need extension of their stay at Le Méridien Chiangrai Resort from 24-26 December 2011 (2 nights) to 24 December 2011 - 1 January 2012 (8 nights). The price and room category needed remains the same (Deluxe Garden View Room at 4,000 THB./room/night with ABF). You need to send e-mail to the resort asking them to amend and reconfirm this reservation. Although your company provides the clients airport-hotel transfer, you still need to inform the resort your clients' names and flights details as follows:

Passengers:	Mr. Robert ROBINSON/Mrs. Lucy ROBINSON
Flights:	TG131 24 DEC BKK CEI 0835 0955
	TG135 01 JAN CEI BKK 1545 1705

Instructions: Write e-mail to Le Méridien Chiangrai Resort and ask if they can amend and reconfirm the room for the new period of stay. In the e-mail message, provide all relevant and important information.

8. Plan for evaluating the qualities of good test practice:

The reliability and validity of the test were observed. As for the reliability of the raters, Pearson Correlation Coefficient was calculated. The correlation coefficient was set at .80. Regarding the validity of the test, the constructs and contents of the test were evaluated by three experts.

To conclude, this section outlined three stages in developing three e-mail writing test tasks (Accommodation Booking, Service Confirmation, and Service Amendment). The three stages involved: 1) analyzing the three tasks using the genre analysis framework (Wang, 2005; Santos, 2002); 2) defining constructs for e-mail writing ability test using the framework of target language use and task characteristics (Douglas, 2000); and 3) developing three e-mail tests tasks and scoring rubrics.

The three stages followed the conceptual frameworks for developing the e-mail test tasks indicated in Figure 2.11. The highlight of this test design stage is the integration of genre analysis and Language for Specific Purpose (LSP) ability as described in Table 3.5 – Table 3.8. The integration also employs CLB (2000) scoring scheme to formulate the scoring rubrics as illustrated Table 3.10. The modified CLB (2000) integrated scoring rubrics highlight effectiveness and accuracy which are demonstrated through the Language for Specific Purpose (LSP) framework. The LSP abilities includes language knowledge, background knowledge, and strategic competence which are embedded within five CLB (2000) scoring criteria that include Effectiveness, Grammatical accuracy, Appropriateness, Organization, and Vocabulary. LSP tests aims at investigating the language ability in a target language use situation with embedded knowledge including background knowledge and strategic competence. However, the implicit nature of background knowledge and strategic competence in the scoring rubrics was observed. Douglas (2000: 38) maintained that, for purpose of LSP test, background knowledge and strategic competence may be outlined in the construct definition, but may not be given a separate score for practical purposes since the test users are not interested in receiving one.

3.4.3 Controlled retrospective interview (Phase 3)

The objective of the interview questions is to identify "what" and "how" the strategies are used in the e-mail writing process. The scope of the e-mail writing strategies proposed in this study was derived from the synthesis of the learning strategies frameworks set fourth by Oxford (1990) and O'Mallay and Chamot (1990), Sun (1998), Petric, B. & Czarl, B. (2003), and Dornyei (2005). Although their strategies classifications are inconsistent, there is a consensus that strategies are basically classified into four groups, including metacognitive, cognitive, social and affective (Dornyei, 2005: 169).

During the course of literature review to synthesize the descriptions of strategies of Oxford (1990) and O'Mallay and Chamot (1990) as well as other related literature, for example, Sun (1998) and Petric, B. & Czarl, B. (2003), it was found that the descriptions of the strategies categories and the sub-strategies are inconsistent and overlapping. However, the descriptions of strategies proposed by O'Mallay and Chamot (1990: 137-139) was chosen as the constructs for the development of interview questions in this study because it corresponds to the four-group strategies classification scheme. In addition, its metacognitive sub-strategies descriptions (planning, monitoring, evaluating) also reflect the stages in the writing process that includes pre-writing, writing and revising (Petric, B. & Czarl, B., 2003:190) as well as the rest of strategies categories corresponds with strategic competence stages outlined by Douglas (2000: 40). However, only three types of strategies were selected for this study including metacognitive, cognitive, and affective because the social affective is considered irrelevant for testing situation.

Descriptions of the four-group strategies

1. Metacognitive strategies involve thinking about the learning process, planning for learning, monitoring the learning task, and evaluating how well one has learned (O'Mallay and Chamot, 1990: 137). Seven sub-strategies were proposed, but only three sub-strategies were chosen following the frequently used metacognitive strategies learners engaged in tasks specific to writing (O'Mallay and Chamot, 1990: 142). The three processes in the metacognitive strategies related to writing include: 1) Planning, 2) Monitoring and 3) Evaluation.

1.1 Planning refers to previewing the organizing concepts or principles of an anticipated learning task (advance organization); proposing strategies for handling an upcoming task; generating a plan for the parts, sequences, main ideas, or language functions to be used in handling a task (organizational planning).

1.2 Monitoring or self-monitoring refers to checking, verifying or correcting one's comprehension or performance in the course of a language task. For example, style monitoring involves checking, verifying, or correcting based upon an internal stylistic register.

1.3 Evaluation or self-evaluation refers to checking the outcomes of one's own language performance against an internal measure of completeness and accuracy; checking one's language repertoire, strategy use, or ability to perform the task at hand. For example, production evaluation involves checking one's work when the task is finished.

2. Cognitive strategies involve interacting with the material to be learned, manipulating the material mentally or physically, or applying a specific technique to a learning task (O'Mallay and Chamot, 1990: 138). Eleven sub-strategies were proposed, but only six were chosen following the frequently used cognitive strategies the learner engaged in tasks specific to writing (O'Mallay and Chamot, 1990: 142). The sub-strategies in the cognitive cluster include:

2.1 Summarizing refers to making a mental or written summary of language and information presented in a task.

2.2 Resourcing refers to using available reference sources of information about the target language, including dictionaries, textbooks, and prior work.

2.3. Substitution or compensation in Oxford (1990) refers to selecting alternative approaches, revised plans, or different words or phrases to accomplish a language task.

2.4 Translation refers to rendering ideas from one language to another in a relative verbatim manner.

2.5 Deduction refers to consciously applying learned or self-developed rules to produce or understand the target language.

3. Social strategies involve interacting with another person to assist learning (O'Mallay and Chamot, 1990: 139). Only two sub-strategies were proposed.

3.1 Questioning for clarification refers to asking for explanation, verification, rephrasing, or examples about the material; asking for clarification or verification about the task; posing questions to the self.

3.2 Cooperation refers to working together with peers to solve a problem, pool information, check a learning task, model a language activity, or get feedback on oral or written performance.

4. Affective strategies involve using affective control to assist a learning task (O'Mallay and Chamot, 1990: 139). Only two sub-strategies were proposed.

4.1 Self-talk refers to reducing anxiety by using mental techniques that make one feel competent to do the learning task.

4.2 Self-reinforcement refers to providing personal motivation by arranging rewards for oneself when a language learning activity has been successfully completed.

In this study, the descriptions of strategies proposed by O'Mallay and Chamot (1990) were used as the construct definition to develop the interview questions consisting of ten questions covering the three-group strategies (metacognitive, cognitive, and affective). The interview questions were used to identify e-mail writing strategies of the 4th year tourism industry students at Chiangrai Rajabhat University. The interview questions are shown in Appendix B.

The interviewed was structured with the checklist for practical purpose. Each question contains the checklist item with "Yes and No" options. The "Yes and No" options indicate whether the students employ that type of strategies or not. However, the researcher included the open-ended response appended each of the strategies questions for the students to describe how they use the selected strategy. Each of the strategies questions holds the keywords that determine the characteristics of the strategy category. For example, planning strategy is categorized under metacognitive strategies because the planning process involves evaluating situation and prepares stages in completing the task. So, the question and statement below demonstrates the correspondence between planning definition and the corresponding **keywords** embedded in the question:

*Do you use **planning** strategy? For example, before I start writing or replying e-mail, I write down the **outline** of main ideas **mentally** or **physically** on paper?* *Please explain how you use this strategy.* ---

The same question and statement pattern were employed to all ten strategies question within three classes of the strategies taxonomy which include metacognitive, cognitive, and affective.

Validating the interview questions

The interview questions were validated by three experts in the field of specific subject in the study for content and construct validity. The three experts were professors and lecturers at the university level; they held experience in teaching writing for academic and business content areas. Content validation process involved the three-expert panel to review and judge the degree of correspondence between the question items and the purpose of the study by employing the calculation of IOC (Index of Item-Objective Congruence). The IOC index requires at least two out of three experts' agreement on each of the question items. The IOC index from the interview questions for this study was 1.0 which means that the three experts arrived at consensus agreement about the interview questions and they were considered valid. However, some comments were required e.g. inconsistency between question in Thai and the one in English. The research undertook the revision following the experts' comments accordingly.

3.5 Data collection

3.5.1 Needs Analysis (Phase 1)

The needs assessment questionnaire was administered with three specialist informants in each company to confirm the expected e-mail writing skills required in the workplace. The three specialist informants refer to the company owner or managing director, the reservation manager or supervisor, and the staff handling e-mail tasks. Thirty selected e-mail messages (10 e-mails per each of three significant e-mail tasks) from 10 travel agencies sample group were analyzed using genre analysis framework (Wang, 2005; Santos, 2002) and the assessing language for specific purposes framework (Douglas, 2000).

3.5.2 E-mail test administration and strategy investigation (Phase 2; Phase 3)

Three e-mail test tasks and the scoring rubrics were developed and validated by three experts for the content and construct validity. The experts included three ESP practitioners who are specialists in the e-mail writing. The IOC (Index of Item-Objective Congruence) measure was employed as a means for content validation of the three e-mail test tasks and the rubrics. The IOC index was at .093 which means that three experts held high degree of agreement towards the content and the purpose of the test tasks and the rubrics. However, some adjustments were made on both the test tasks and rubrics following comments from the experts and for practical purposes. The three test tasks were administered via the computer in a computer room in Humanity Faculty, Chiangrai Rajabhat University in June 2011. The testing time was two hours. The test takers were computer literate with some basic computer courses. Twenty-nine 4th year Tourism Management students as the whole population were involved in the test administration stage. The students typed in their answers and saved them as the digital file in the centrally networked hard drive using Microsoft Word. The interview was carried out one day after the test administration for the raters to finish marking the papers. Twenty students (10 poor and 10 good) were involved in the interview process. The interview questions consisted of ten questions following three groups of strategies, that is, metacognitive, cognitive, and affective.

3.4 Data analysis

1. Needs analysis (Phase 1)

The needs assessment questionnaire was administered with three specialist informants in each company to confirm the expected e-mail writing skills required in the workplace. The three specialist informants refer to the company owner or managing director, the reservation manager or supervisor, and the staff handling e-mail tasks. Three e-mail samples were collected from each of the 10 travel agencies which accumulated 30 e-mail samples for genre analysis. Table 3.13 showed the data collected and analyzed in the needs analysis.

Table 3.13: The data collection in the needs assessment

Data	**Description**
30 questionnaires	3 specialist informants from each of the 10 companies participated in answering the questionnaire confirming e-mail writing ability expectations (30 informants)
30 e-mails	3 e-mail samples from each of the 10 company sample group for genre analysis (30 e-mail samples)

2. E-mail test administration and strategy investigation (Phase 3)

The scores from twenty-nine e-mail test takers taking three e-mail test tasks were analyzed through descriptive statistics including mean, standard deviation, and percentage. The interview results were also reported through frequency and percentage. Table 3.14 provides the number of data collection from the test and the interview.

Table 3.14: The data collection in the test administration and strategy investigation

Data	Description
87 test scripts	3 test tasks from 29 students participating in the test administration
20 students	10 good and 10 poor students in the e-mail writing strategy investigation

Table 3.15 summarizes the data analysis carried out in this study.

Table 3.15: The summary of data analysis

Research Questions	Type of Data & Instruments	No. of participants	Data Analysis
RQ1: What e-mail writing abilities are needed among personnel in Thailand travel agencies?	**Quantitative** (questionnaire)	10 travel agencies	Percentage
	Qualitative (Genre analysis)	30 e-mail samples	Content analysis
RQ2: What are the e-mail writing abilities of the 4th year tourism industry students of Chiangrai Rajabhat University?	**Quantitative** (Test scores from three e-mail test tasks)	29 students	Mean, Standard Deviation, and Percentage
RQ3: What are the e-mail writing strategies of the 4th year tourism industry students of Chiangrai Rajabhat University?	**Qualitative** (controlled retrospective interview)	10 students	Content analysis

The results from data analysis are presented in the subsequent chapter.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the details of the findings and discussion following three research questions in this study.

4. 1 Research Question 1 "What e-mail writing abilities are needed among personnel in Thailand travel agencies?"

To meet the aim of Research Question 1, firstly, the needs assessment questionnaire was developed to identify e-mail tasks in the "Inquiry and Sale" framework of the travel agency business and the stakeholders' expectation about the staff's e-mail writing ability. Secondly, genre analysis was employed to analyze the two-layer discourse of the e-mail tasks, that is, macro- and micro-structure. The macro structure is determined by the appearance of the moves which are realized mainly by the distinct communicative function of one move from the others. Move consists of cluster of phrases or sentences that demonstrate distinct communicative purpose. Micro layer involves distinct linguistic choices employed to realize the communicative function of the move. The information from the needs assessment questionnaire was used to supplement the discussion with the data from the genre analysis of the e-mail samples.

4.1.1 Needs Analysis Results

The needs assessment questionnaire was administered to 10 travel agencies sample group with an aim to identify the distinctive e-mail tasks that the travel agencies handle daily. The needs assessment questionnaire was distributed to 10 travel agencies in Bangkok. The participants were 30 stakeholders including, Managing Director, Reservation Manager or Supervisor, and Reservation Staff. Questionnaire consisted of two parts: part 1 identifies the e-mail use in travel agency business correspondence; part 2 investigates the stakeholders' opinion towards the expected e-mail ability of the staff. Table 4.1 illustrated the use of English e-mail in the travel agency business.

Table 4.1: The use of English e-mail in travel agency business

English e-mail use in travel agency business correspondence	N=30	
	Frequency	**%**
Use	30	100%

According to Table 4.1, the stakeholders held consensus agreement that e-mail is considered the main channel of their business communication with frequency report of the e-mail use at 100%. The e-mail choice for communication channel in the travel agency business echoed the nature of the communication between the online intermediary and potential customers (tourists) in that the transaction process progresses normally through e-mail (Hoontrakul & Sahadev, 2004: 13).

Table 4.2: The importance of e-mail in travel agency business

Importance of e-mail in travel agency business	N=30	
	Frequency	**%**
Very important	28	93.33%
Important	2	6.67%

In the overall picture, Table 4.2 clearly showed that the stakeholders held consensus agreement that e-mail is considered important for their business communication. Ninety three percent of the respondents agreed that e-mail was very important for their business operation, while only seven percent considered that e-mail was important. A High degree of importance of e-mail choice in travel agency business was due to the advantage characteristics of e-mail which favors competitive capacities for the travel agency such as decreasing costs, expanding market places, enhancing competitiveness, improving business image, and increasing revenues (Cosh & Assenov, 2007; Intrapairot & Srivihok, 2003).

Table 4.3: The significant e-mail tasks in travel agency business

E-mail tasks in travel agency business	N=30	
	Frequency	**%**
Quotation Reply	2	6.67%
Accommodation Booking	10	33.33%
Booking with Suppliers Service	4	13.33%
Service Amendment	6	20%
Service Confirmation	8	26.67%

From Table 4.3, of five frequently found tasks in the travel agency business, the stakeholders voiced their opinion that the top three most significant e-mail tasks in travel agency business operation were Accommodation Booking (34%), Service Confirmation (26.67%), and Service Amendment (20%) respectively. The top three e-mail tasks are considered revenue-generating mechanism in the "Inquiry and Sale" framework of travel agency business (Hoontrakul & Sahadev, 2005:17).

Table 4.4: Expected e-mail writing ability of the travel agency staff

Expected e-mail writing ability of the travel agency staff	**N=30**	
	Frequency	**%**
Effectiveness	15	50%
Service Confirmation	15	50%

Following Table 4.4, the stakeholders paid attention to "effectiveness" and "accuracy" features that promote effective e-mail writing ability at equal proportion, that is, 50% for effectiveness and 50% for accuracy. Stakeholders voiced their opinions regarding the effectiveness and accuracy attributes determining quality of the e-mail writing, for example:

> *Both are equally important in the sense that to achieve effective communication you need to communicate with quality, though grammatical perfection is not a necessity the layout of text & format is. One can accomplish a lot by employing the proper structure. (Arlymear Travel)*

> *Effectiveness means marketing and communication. Accuracy means confidence in delivery. Both in my view must go together. (Go Visit Asia)*

> *They complete each other brilliantly. A targeted e-mail with understanding contents is the key. In my opinion, what is more important for us is the accuracy even if there are some mistakes in English. (Excel World Travel)*

The stakeholders' voices conform to Talbot's statement about effective business writing requirements that needs both effectiveness (holistic) and accuracy (analytic) as she wrote:

In the workplace, you certainly need to know how to access the right information and process this when you write. You need to be accurate too. Some companies require you to follow a standard house style. (Talbot, 2009: 34)

So, CLB (2000) integrated scoring scheme as discussed in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 corresponded with the travel agency stakeholders' opinions that these two features promote effectiveness in business e-mail communication and therefore determine effective e-mail writing ability. Geffner (2010: XI) also pointed out that mastery in communication skills requires both the fundamentals of English and the finer points of style. This is because communication skills are considered important for individuals who live in the IT age where information is essential but information can also be a problem if it is incomplete or incoherent.

The needs analysis results revealed that the top three e-mail tasks in the travel agency business and the expected e-mail writing quality indicated by the stakeholders in travel agency. The e-mail samples collected from the travel agencies were analyzed to describe the detailed e-mail writing abilities.

4.1.2 Genre Analysis Results

According to Table 4.3, Accommodation Booking, Service Confirmation, and Service Amendment are three distinctive e-mail tasks that occur within the "Inquiry and Sale" framework of the travel agency business. Thirty e-mail samples were collected (ten e-mails per task). Thirty samples of the three e-mail tasks were analyzed using the genre analysis approach (Wang, 2005; Santos, 2002).

Genre analysis covered two-layer analysis which includes: Layer 1 – Contextual analysis (Wang, 2005) and Layer 2 Linguistic analysis (Santos, 2002). The contextual analysis allows the researcher to arrive at comprehensive understanding about the relationship of the three contextual features which influence the linguistic choices, such as, purpose (field), relationship between e-mail writer and recipient (tenor), and channel of communication (mode).

4.1.2.1 Contextual analysis of the e-mail test samples

The contextual analysis results of thirty e-mail tasks were analyzed and summarized in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Contextual analysis of the e-mail samples

Tasks/Purposes	**Context of Situations**		
	Field	**Tenor**	**Mode**
Task 1: Accommodation Booking/**Request** a room reservation and confirmation from the hotel and **provide** the necessary information about the clients to the hotel.	When the travel agency receives e-mail requesting a room reservation from their client, the agency uses e-mail to contact the hotels (that are requested by their clients) for booking and confirmation of room reservation.	The travel agency staff is the sender and the hotel reservation staff is the intended reader of this e-mail task. Client and service provider explain the relationship between the travel agency and the hotel.	E-mail is a chosen channel of communication to accomplish this task because e-mail is convenient and a cost-saving means for today business operation. However, sometimes the participants choose to use telephone first and then use e-mail for proof of evidence and follow-up records

			or vice versa. Sometimes, e-mail is the only means to finish this task. Fax is rarely used unless the participants are not equipped with the Internet connection or for other reasons such as confidentiality.
Task 2: Confirm Services with customers/**Provide** confirmation result and **request** payment from the clients.	When the travel agency can confirm services e.g. room reservation for their clients, the agency send e-mail to the clients informing them about their confirmed booking and requesting for payment.	The travel agency staff is the sender and the travel agency's client is the intended reader of this e-mail task. Client and service provider explain the relationship between the travel agency and its client.	Similar to Task 1

Task 3: Amend services/**Provide** the supplier information about the change of the booking and **request** service amendment and confirmation from the supplier.	When the travel agency receives a request from their client to amend the services such as travelling date, the travel agency then sends e-mail to the related suppliers to inform them about the change of the services in the booking and request for services amendment and confirmation from those suppliers.	The travel agency staff is the sender and the travel agency's supplier is the intended reader of this e-mail task. Client and service provider explain the relationship between the travel agency and its supplier.	Similar to Task 1

From Table 4.5, the relationship among the three contextual features that work under the "Inquiry and Sale" framework of the travel agency business (Hoontrakul & Sahadev, 2005: 17) was observed. For example, the purpose of the task such as e-mail requesting accommodation booking requires that travel agency reservation staff provides sufficient contents as a means to complete the act of request (field) e.g. information about the hotel choice, room types, meal choices, etc. The correspondence within the "Inquiry and Sale" indicated the business-oriented relationship of the two parties as service provider and client. The business-oriented relationship defined the use of certain linguistic forms such as polite greetings and endings which favor relatively formal style but adhere to courteous and tactful manner in the business writing (Gains, 1999; Geffner, 2010). The business-oriented situation influenced E-mail choice (mode), which is written mode, as the communication channel for cost-and-speed effective purposes. The contextual analysis led to the linguistic analysis results in Layer 2.

4.1.2.2 Linguistic analysis of three e-mail test tasks

The contextual features outlined in the previous section defined the purpose of the task (field), relationship among the e-mail writers (tenor), and choice of communication channel (mode). The correspondence between three discourse contextual features influences contents linguistic choices in business e-mail of negotiation samples written by the travel agency reservation staff. Next, in Layer 2, linguistic analysis within the genre framework employed the move-structure analysis as a means to reveal insight knowledge about the business e-mail of negotiation cognitive structure. The analysis involved identifying schematic structure (move structure) and linguistic features used to realize the communicative functions in each of the move. The Business Letters of Negotiation (BLN) genre framework (Santos, 2002) described that this type of genre linguistically possesses two- level structure (macro- and micro-structure). At the macro level, the four-move pattern defines communicative purpose of the genre, that is, to exchange information and request for favors and services (Santos, 2002: 185). The four-move structure includes: Move 1 - Establishing the negotiation chain, Move 2 – Providing Information/answers, Move 3 Requesting Information/actions, and Move 4 – Ending. At the micro level, distinct linguistic devices defining the communicative purpose within each of the move include declarative and imperative forms to realize Move 2 (providing) and Move 3 (requesting) functions respectively. The three e-mail tasks given below outlined the genre analysis (schematic rhetorical structure and lexcio-grammatical features) of the e-mail samples based on the model of Business Letter of Negotiation (BLN) genre (Santos, 2002).

E-mail Task 1: Accommodation Booking

Move 1 (Establishing the Negotiation Chain)	From: xxx@xxx.com To: group@hotel.com Date: Fri, 3 Dec 2010 21:20:35 +0700 **(STEP1=Subject-line) Subject: NEW BKG ROBINSON MR X 2** **(STEP2=Defining participants)**Dear Reservation Department,
Move 3 (Requesting information/actions)	**(STEP1=Referring to previous event/contact)** From our conversation over the phone**, (STEP2=Stating main purpose: Requesting)** please book and confirm
Move 2 (Providing information/answers)	**(STEP1=Providing information: Period of stay and room rates)** 1 DBL Beach Front Bungalow (1st – 3rd row) with ABF from 26Dec'10 – 04Jan'11 (9 nts) for ROBINSON Mr/Ms as per our contract rate at THB x,xxx net/room/night (incl.ABF). Compulsory grand dinner on 31Dec'10 at THB x,xxx net/pax. **(STEP2=Providing information: Transportation)** Flights: QR 22 DEC MXP DOH 1055 1830 QR 22 DEC DOH BKK 2030 0659+1 (23DEC) QR 04 JAN BKK DOH 1950 2315 QR 05 JAN DOH MXP 0125 0610
Move 4 (Ending)	**(STEP1=Closing salutation)**Best regards, **(STEP3=Signature-line)**xxx xxxx (Ms.) **(STEP4=Office address)**

E-mail Task 2: Confirm services with customers

Move 1 (Establishing the Negotiation Chain)	**(STEP1=Defining participants)**From: Company.com [mailto:info@company.com] **(STEP1=Defining participants)**Sent: Friday, June 11, 2010 10:21 PM **(STEP1=Defining participants)**To: charlie@xxxtravel.com **(STEP2=Subject line)Subject: Confirmation ROBINSON MR X 2** **(STEP3=Addressing and greeting the addressee)**Dear Edwin,
Move 2 (Providing information/answers)	**(STEP1=Expressing thanks)** Thank you and appreciate your consistent support toward our company **(STEP2=Stating main purpose: acknowledging/ providing confirmation result)** and I am very **pleased to confirm** your reservation as the following: Clients: Mr/Ms. ROBINSON Hotel: Plaza Arcade, Singapore Room: 1 Deluxe Period: 25-29 July 2010 Rate: USDxxx.00 per room per night included breakfast. Flight: TG649 15:44-18:25hrs Confirmation: ABC1141244 The above booking is confirmed under allocation record, and if you need any special requirements such as higher floor, view, etc. **Please advise** us accordingly.
Move 3 (Requesting information/actions)	**(STEP1=Stating main purpose: requesting confirmation/payment)** The invoice will be sent after receiving your revert confirmation.
Move 4 (Ending)	**(STEP1= Expressing thanks/expectation of reply/attention)**So, we are looking forward to hearing from you soon. **(STEP2=Complimentary closing)**Kind regards, **(STEP3=Signature-line)**Xxx Xxxx **(STEP4=Office address)**Company credentials

E-mail Task 3: Amend services

Move 1 (Establishing the Negotiation Chain)	**(STEP1=Defining participants)**From: Company.Com [mailto:info@companytravel.com] **(STEP1=Defining participants)**Sent: Friday, June 11, 2010 10:21 PM **(STEP1=Defining participants)**To: charlie@xxxtravel.com **(STEP2=Subject-line)Subject: Amend Booking ROBINSON MR X 2** **(STEP3=Addressing and greeting the addressee)Dear The reservation team** **(STEP3=Addressing and greeting the addressee)**How are you doing? Hope you are doing fine there in Turkey!
Move 2 (Providing information/answers)	**(STEP1=Providing reasons for changes of the booking)**Due to your B2B website is not able to login and we could not amend our current booking. **(STEP2=Providing information: original booking)**My customers would like to amend their reservation in Paris as follows: **Original booking** Hotel : Grown Plaza Hotel, Paris Room : 1 twin Period : 12-19 July 2010
Move 3 (Requesting information/actions)	**(STEP1=Requesting booking amendment and providing information for new booking)** Due to their travelling plan is changed, therefore, **please amend** the booking to new date as follows: **New booking** Hotel : Grown Plaza Hotel, Paris Room : 1 twin Period : 13-16 July 2010 **(STEP2=Requesting amendment and providing information for new booking)Please advise** your new rates and **reconfirm** as soon as possible.
Move 4 (Ending)	**(STEP1= Prompting further contact)**We are looking forward to hearing from you soonest. **(STEP2=Complimentary closing)Kind regards,** **(STEP3=Signature-line)**Xxx Xxxx **(STEP4=Office address)**

The genre analysis results of the three e-mail tasks (Accommodation Booking, Service Confirmation, and Service Amendment) revealed that the schematic structure of these tasks was consistent with the four-move structure of the BLN genre proposed by Santos (2002). The components of four obligatory moves were outlined and discussed as follows:

Move 1: Establishing the negotiation chain. There are three steps to help realize this move including: 1) Defining participants; 2) Subject-line; and 3) Addressing and greeting the addressee. The linguistic elements in this move (the sender's e-mail address, the recipient's e-mail address, the time and date, the subject, and greetings) correspond to “the header” in Frehner (2008: 40-41) description of the e-mail structure. According to Santos (2002: 178), **the communicative function of this move is to introduce and set the scene of the communication event.** Setting the scene includes: information about participants, that is, the sender’s e-mail address in the “From” line and the addressee’s e-mail address in the “To” line. These e-mail accounts can be manually input by the writer or automatically retrieved from the contact list database called “address book”. Date and time is automatically filled out by the e-mail program. About the addressing term, Chapman (2007: 60) noted that “*the salutation can be formal to informal depending on how well you know the person you are writing to.*” making the salutation forms in e-mail writing varied accordingly, but “Dear” seems routinely chosen to greet the addressee in this community illustrating the formalism in business correspondence. Finally, the term “Reference-line” in business letters and fax (Santos, 2002: 178) is now replaced with “Subject-line” in the context of e-mail (Frehner, 2008: 40-41). However, these two terms serve identical function in which this sub-move provides contextualization cue indicating intertextual references and therefore helps the participants to keep track of the negotiation chain. Noticeably, the use of myriad abbreviation forms that seem well-understood among the participants within this discourse community; for example, BKG stands for “Booking”, NTS for “nights”, THB for “Thai Baht”, etc. are commonly found in the e-mail samples.

Move 2: Providing information/answers and Move 3: Requesting actions/services. Santos (2002: 180) described rightly that these two moves are equally important for the business negotiation discourse because they contain real content of the negotiation that is exchanged between the participants and account for communicative purpose which then generates the name of the genre. **The communicative functions of these two moves include the exchange of information and the request for actions/services.** Santos (ibid) noted that these two moves can occur independently in the business negotiation correspondence. However, when these moves occur in the same e-mail "providing information" comes first and is followed by "requesting actions" as it can be seen in Task 2 and Task 3. Santos (2002) contended that the sequence of first providing information/answers and second requesting information/actions follows the traditional schematic of "old information" and "new information". But the sequence of these two moves is not that fixed; for example, Move 3 can occur before Move 2 as in Task 1. The choice may lay upon which order fits which situation.

Following Santos (2002: 182) the linguistic choice of requesting such as declaratives, interrogatives and imperatives are found greatly across the e-mail samples. Imperatives are found using together with "please" to introduce politeness and formalism in business correspondence. The use of such polite form of imperatives is to reduce the impact of command.

Move 4: Ending. This move acts as **the signing-off ritual in business correspondence and characterizes the end of the e-mail message**. Santos (2002) described several steps to complete the move including: signing off, signature-line, job status, company credentials, PS – line, copy-to line, and file data. From the e-mail samples, only four steps are found because Santos's study is the analysis of business letters which is more traditional non-electronic media when compared with e-mail. However, the missing steps including copy-to and file data are replaced by CC and Attachment functions in the e-mail template that is dictated by the mailer software. The CC and Attachment in e-mail platform are placed in Move 1 as it can be used as reference to set the scene in defining participants and thus establishing the negotiation chain.

The schematic analysis of the e-mail samples revealed the e-mail structure that follows the four-move pattern within the framework of Business Letters of Negotiation (BLN) proposed by Santos (2002). The linguistic features, which were used to realize the communicative purpose of each move, were crosschecked with the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 and reported in Table 4.6 below.

Table 4.6: Summary of move-structure and linguistic features of the e-mail samples

Structural moves	**Functions**	**Examples of sentences, phrases & expressions**
Move 1: Establishing the negotiation chain	To set the scene of the communication chain. The writer writes clear subject line as well as greets and addresses the participants using polite forms of language.	1. State clear subject line identifying clearly the purpose of the e-mail message such as "New booking …" "Confirmation…" "Amendment…" 2. The opening salutation commonly found is "Dear". 3. Sometimes, greeting patterns such as "Greeting from …" "Warmest greeting from…." "Once again greeting from…" are also used following the opening salutation.

		4. Phrases identify reference information patterns are also used to establish link to set the scene for the negotiation such as "From our conversation over the phone…" "Refer to our telephone conversation a few minutes ago…"
Move 2 (Providing information/ answers)	To provide information for the hotel reservation/confirmation/amendment procedure such as details about period of stay and room rates, guests' names/surnames, flight details which is important for the hotel to know for transfers arrangement	**Declaratives/Imperatives** are commonly found in combination with technical vocabulary and abbreviation for travel agency and hotel operation such as "We're pleased to confirm 1 DBL/ABF 2 NTS for …. (meaning confirmed hotel booking includes a double-bed room with American Breakfast for 2 nights).
Move 3 (Requesting information/ actions)	To make requests for actions/information	**Imperatives that identify requesting function** in this context is commonly used with "please" such as "please book and confirm…". Other linguistic forms that can fulfill requesting purpose may also be used such as declaratives.

Move 4 (Ending)	To end the correspondence	Closing salutation patterns appropriate for business context are used such as Best regards or Regards. Sign-off patterns including signature and company address are commonly found to give details about the sender and the company such as job position, contact address, e-mail, website, tel, fax, etc.

The genre analysis results of the top three e-mail tasks in the travel agency include "Accommodation Booking", "Service Confirmation", and "Service Amendment" and reveal that the schematic move-structure is consistent with the 4-move structure model proposed by Santos (2002). But the steps which are considered sub-moves that help realize the communicative purpose of the main moves are varied. However, the concept of Santos (2002)'s 4-move structure model has provided a useful means for the analysis of the business negotiation discourse. In addition, the obligatory 4-move structure seems essential for productive writing and can be used as one of the attributes to determine effective e-mail writing because it is considered a convention shared among the participants in this discourse community and considered practical means to achieve effectiveness and efficiency in business negotiation correspondence.

Although Santos (2002) provided the practical 4-move structure to describe the business negotiation correspondence, linguistic components such as salutation and farewell choices in Move 1 and Move 4 were little described. This is probably because special attention was placed more on Move 2 and Move 3 which are considered real content of the genre of interest while Move 1 and Move 4 are the social ritual of greeting. However, Frehner (2008: 44) reported that:

> *"…because there are no clearly established stylistic conventions so greeting and leave-taking in e-mail may be omitted or appear in various unconventional ways as if no restrictions for creativity. And this unsettles many of e-mail users unsure of the salutation and closing formulas to employ and keep away from using traditional forms such as "Dear" or "Regards"."*

While Chapman (2007: 60) contended that the salutation and close choices in e-mail can vary from formal to very informal. But, Talbot (2009: 20-30) put interesting notes about the dilemma in linguistic choices and provided suggestions that:

> *"…the advice I constantly give is: reflect the expectations of your target readership. One size will not fit all. Because both English and business writing itself are in a state of flux, sometimes you will find that a middle course is the route to success."*

Nevertheless, the results of the analysis of e-mail samples in the travel agency context showed that the use of "Dear" for salutation and "Best regards" or "Regards" were found consistently. This illustrates that the participants in this context are aware of the formalism in business correspondence and therefore follow the traditional ways of salutation and closing in business letter writing.

4.1.3 Summary

The results from the genre analysis were then used as a blueprint to formulate the construct definition of the three e-mail test tasks and the rubrics to assess and evaluate the students’ e-mail writing ability as described in Chapter 3, Section 3.4.2. The three e-mail test tasks included Accommodation Booking, Service Confirmation, and Service Amendment. The students’ performance on the three e-mail writing tasks was reported and discussed in the next section which answers the second research question that “What are the e-mail writing abilities of Chiangrai Rajabhat University 4th year tourism industry students?”

4.2 Research Question 2 “What are the e-mail writing abilities of Chiangrai Rajabhat University 4th year tourism industry students?”

The previous section reported and discussed regarding what kind of language knowledge that the tourism students needs to acquire the e-mail writing ability in order to become the member of the tourism business context. In this section, the e-mail writing ability constructs obtained from the previous section were used to evaluate the tourism industry students’ e-mail writing performance. So, to determine the e-mail writing abilities of the university 4th year tourism industry students at Chiangrai Rajabhat University, twenty-nine students participated in the test situation by completing three e-mail tasks including: 1) Accommodation Booking, 2) Service Confirmation, and 3) Service Amendment. The total score for each task is twenty in which the calculation comes from the sum of the score from five assessment components under the scale of 1 to 4. The five assessment criteria include Effectiveness, Accuracy, Appropriateness, Organization, and Vocabulary. The following table illustrates the descriptive statistics of the three e-mail tasks of the two raters.

Table 4.7: Descriptive statistics of the three e-mail tasks assessed by two raters (N=29)

Raters/Tasks	Mean	%	SD	Max	%	Min	%
Rater 1 (Total)	27.38	45.63	8.45	50	83.33	16	26.67
Task 1	9.48	47.40	3.08	17	85.00	5	25
Task 2	8.38	41.90	3.28	18	90.00	5	25
Task 3	9.52	47.60	3.82	19	95.00	5	25
Rater 2 (Total)	31.72	52.87	6.67	47	78.33	22	36.67
Task 1	11.38	56.90	2.56	16	80.00	6	30.00
Task 2	9.59	47.93	2.28	15	75.00	5	25.00
Task 3	10.76	53.79	3.17	18	90.00	6	30.00

From the total score of 20 points in each task, Table 4.7 illustrated an overview of e-mail writing assessment results rated by two raters. Of Rater 1 the students' mean score in the three tasks included 9.48, 8.38, and 9.52 for Task 1, 2, and 3 respectively. Likewise, the mean score judged by Rater 2 included 11.38, 9,59, and 10.76 following the same order of the tasks. The scores judged by two raters indicated that the students' writing performance on all three e-mail test tasks was below 50% of the total score. The highest scores in each task were around 17 to 19 points for in all three tasks which are considered quite high; however, the lowest scores in all three tasks were 5 points. In addition, the Standard Deviation values were 3.08, 3.28, and 3.82 in Task 1, 2, and 3 which indicated that the distribution of the scores is considered close to the mean. Thus, the e-mail writing performance of the 4th year tourism industry students at Chiangrai Rajabhat University is homogeneous below 50% of the total score in all of the e-mail test tasks.

As pointed out in the previous section that the students' e-mail writings were assessed by two trained raters. However, for the reliability check purposes, the following table showed the correlation coefficient of the two raters.

Table 4.8: Correlation coefficient of the three tasks between the two raters

Tasks	**Correlations between raters**
Total	.76**

$p \leq .01$ / N =29

The correlation results indicated that the total correlation between the two raters is at .76 ($p \leq .01$) meaning that they agreed in judging the e-mail writing ability of the 4th year tourism industry students. The correlation coefficient is known as an inter-rater reliability check for any assessment situation that involves more than one rater rating the same samples on two different occasions.

The two raters involved in assessing e-mail writing were the researcher of this study, and an English instructor who had been teaching English composition for about five years and also had experience in using scoring rubrics to assess writing performance of students at Chiangrai Rajabhat University.

According to Weigle (2002: 135), the correlation coefficient is a number between 0 and 1 indicating the strength of the relationship between two sets of scores. A correlation coefficient close to 0 indicates that there is little or no relationship between the scores given by the fist rater and those given by the second (or on the second occasion), while a coefficient close to 1 indicates a strong relationship between the sets of scores.

Next, the scores judged by the first rater were selected for detailed report and discussion about the students' e-mail writing ability. Table 4.7 showed the sum of mean score for each of the five assessment components involving: Effectiveness (Purpose), Accuracy, Appropriateness, Organization, and Vocabulary.

The scores in each components confirmed that the overall e-mail writing performance of the students is below 50% (lower than 2 in the 4-scale rubric) in almost all of the rating criteria except that of Organization criterion (66%). From the data set, it can also be inferred that grammatical ability of the students was their most weaknesses among the five language ability components when the sum of mean scores in Appropriateness and Accuracy scales were the lowest scores, that is, 4.24 (35%) and 4.55 (38%) while students' ability regarding schematic pattern of the e-mail structure was their strength when the sum of mean scores in Organization criterion in all three tasks was the highest among the other four components, that is, 8.00 (66%).

The previous section illustrated the quantitative aspect of the students' e-mail writing ability which was reported and discussed through the descriptive statistics. However, the qualitative aspect of the students' e-mail writing is also needed to evaluate the overall performance of the students. So, the in-depth analysis was also conducted to portray the students' e-mail writing performance. The genre analysis proposed in Chapter 3 was employed as a framework underpinning the analysis. Genre analysis focuses on two levels of the genre structure that include move structure (macro) and linguistic features (micro) intertwined to shape the formulation of the genre. The communicative purpose is the key feature to mark the boundary of each of the move. The business e-mail of negotiation (BEN) genre in the travel agency business comprises 4-move structure including: Move 1 Establishing the Negotiation Chain, Move 2 Providing Information/answers, Move 3 Requesting Information/actions, and Move 4 Ending.

Following the test-score results illustrated in the previous section, Table 4.10 showed the distribution of the move structure appeared in the 4th year tourism students' e-mail writing. Twenty e-mail writings judged by two-trained raters were selected (10 from the highest score and 10 from the lowest score) for the analysis. The analysis results were reported in order following the sequence of the three e-mail tasks.

Table 4.10: Distribution of moves appearing in Task 1

Moves Sequence	Good Students (N=10)		Poor Students (N=10)	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Move 1 Establishing the Negotiation Chain	10	100%	10	100%
Move 2 Providing Information/answers	10	100%	10	100%
Move 3 Requesting information/actions	7	70%	4	40%
Move 4 Ending	4	40%	2	20%

Table 4.10 illustrates the distribution of the moves found in the 4th year tourism industry students' e-mail writings in Task 1. That is, Move 1 and Move 2 appeared 100% in all the e-mail samples of both good and poor students, while Move 3 and Move 4 were found 70% and 40% in good students' as well as 40% and 20% in poor students' e-mail samples respectively.

Table 4.11: The distribution of moves appearing in Task 2

Moves Sequence	Good Students (N=10)		Poor Students (N=10)	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Move 1 Establishing the Negotiation Chain	9	90%	5	50%
Move 2 Providing Information/answers	10	100%	7	70%
Move 3 Requesting information/actions	9	90%	0	-
Move 4 Ending	6	60%	3	30%

Table 4.11 shows the distribution of the moves found in the 4th year tourism students' e-mail writings in Task 2. According to the 4-move structure, good students accounted for more than 50% of the move distribution found in the Task 2 e-mail samples, that is, 90%, 100%, 90%, and 60% while the poor students held only 50%, 70%, 0%, and 30% respectively.

Table 4.12: The distribution of moves appearing in Task 3

Moves Sequence	Good Students (N=10)		Poor Students (N=10)	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Move 1 Establishing the Negotiation Chain	9	90%	6	60%
Move 2 Providing Information/answers	10	100%	4	40%
Move 3 Requesting Information/actions	9	90%	2	20%
Move 4 Ending	9	90%	1	10%

Table 4.12 outlines the distribution of the moves found in the 4th year tourism students' e-mail writings in Task 3. According to the 4-move structure, good students accounted for nearly 100% of the move distribution found in the Task 2 e-mail samples, that is, 90%, 100%, 90%, and 90% while the poor students held only 60%, 40%, 20%, and 10% respectively.

[redacted]

Table 4.11 – Table 4.13 illustrate the move-structure distribution in the students' e-mail writing. The distribution of the move-structure was used to formulate the scoring criteria under "Organization" scale within the modified CLB (2000) scoring scheme as discussed and elaborated in Chapter 3. CLB (2000) concentrates on holistic (macro) and analytic (micro) features to determine the e-mail writing ability. The modified CLB (2000) includes five scoring criteria which comprise Effectiveness, Organization, Appropriateness, Vocabulary, and Grammatical accuracy. Effectiveness defines the overall communicative purpose of the e-mail writing. Organization concentrates on the four-move structure of the business e-mail genre. Appropriateness involves linguistic choices influenced by sociolinguistic factors such as politeness in business context. Vocabulary deals with the general and technical vocabulary choices that meet the task's purpose. Grammatical accuracy focuses on fundamental phrase and sentence structures in Standard English.

"Organization" scale is linked directly to "Effectiveness" criterion since it controls the holistic view of business e-mail of negotiation genre because these two criteria outline the macro structure of the genre. While "Appropriateness", "Vocabulary", and Grammatical accuracy control the analytic view since these criteria concentrate on the micro features of the genre.

According to the data shown in Table 4.11-4.13, the distribution of the move-structure confirmed the capacity of the move-structure to determine the holistic view of the students' e-mail writing ability because the occurrence of moves allow the raters to quickly assess the students' e-mail writing ability by judging the number of moves appearance or disappearance. The overall effectiveness of the business e-mail of negotiation is determined by the complete occurrence of the four-move structure. So, in case of any missing move, the overall effectiveness of the genre is put at risk.

In the process of raters coding of the move and marking the students' e-mail writing, two raters indicated the occurrence by writing the move number in the students' papers while marking the e-mail scripts. For example, in the students' papers, the raters labeled the number of the move where they could clearly indicate the occurrence of the move. On the other hand, in any instance of the missing move, the raters marked the move number with a slash to provide evidence for the missing moves. Figures 4.1 and 4.2 exemplify the method the raters employed during marking the scores and coding of the move structure in the students' e-mail writing outcomes.

Tast1 : Jutamat Kampang

1

To Le Meridien Chiang Rai Rosort
I would like to ~~reservation~~ ~~to~~ a room at Le Meridien Chiang Rai Resort for 3
night from 24-26 December 2011
2
and I would like to Deluxe Garden View Room for 2 ~~person~~. ~~Rate per~~ 4000 People at our contracted
THB per room per night with breakfast (ABF). Contracted Rate
and there are details for your clients names and flight as follow

Passengers : Mr. Robert ROBINSON/Mrs. Lucy ROBINSON

Flights : TG130 24 DEC BKK CEI 0835 0955
TG135 26 DEC CEI BKK 1545 1705

~~3~~

~~4~~

Criteria	Score			
1. Effectiveness	1	2	3	4
2. Accuracy	1	2	3	4
3. Appropriateness	1	2	3	4
4. Organization	1	2	3	4
5. Vocabulary	1	2	3	4
Total	10/20			

Figure 4.1: Scoring method and coding of the move-structure in a student's e-mail writing outcome (poor student)

Figure 4.1 illustrates one student's writing in the low-achiever group that clearly indicated the flaws in the e-mail writing performance. But the most critical issue is the organization determined by the appearance and disappearance of the moves. This task aims at requesting hotel accommodation (Accommodation Booking) and confirmation from the hotel reservation staff. From the student's writing, this student clearly lacked the knowledge of the basic business writing and the four-move pattern of e-mail business of negotiation. For example, Move 1 Establishing the negotiation chain, the students used the "To+Hotel Name" which is considered an inappropriate greeting style. Also, in an attempt to book a hotel room in an act of request of Move 3 Requesting, the student seemed to acquire the "would like to+V(present)" form which is commonly served as a "request" function. But, the student employed ineffective use of the "would like to" by using a wrong word form, i.e. reservation, in place of the verb. Also, the student failed to meet the instruction in the task that requires two acts of request, that is, book and confirm. However, the students provided the information about the clients traveling to the hotel as a means to serve the purpose of Move 2 Providing. But, as mentioned, an ineffective use of the expression "would like to+V" and the missing keyword in the "book and confirm" instruction brought the student unable to complete the expected four-move pattern in the business e-mail of negotiation. Especially, the ineffective and missing of Move 3 are considered critical for the e-mail writing ability concerning the business e-mail of negotiation in the travel agency business. Next, Figure 4.2 illustrated the writing performance of the student in the high-achiever group.

Task1:Chompunuch Jeerapanya

1 Dear the reservation staff of Le Meridien Chiangrai Resort.

2 I'm a reservation staff of Chiangrai Travel & Leisure - a local travel agency in Chiangrai,Thailand. I wanna book a room at your hotel for 3 nights from 24-26 December 2011.Req~~uest a~~ Deluxe Garden View Room for 2 persons and the room rates of this room type per room per night with breakfast[ABF] and provides the clients free airport-hotel transfer. 4000

My clients'names and flights details as follows:

Passengers: Mr. Robert ROBINSON/Mrs. Lucy ROBINSON

Flights: TG131 24 DEC BKK CEI 0835 0955
TG135 26 DEC CEI BKK 1545 1705

3 Please confirm the room and the room rate right away.In the E-mail message provide all relevant and important information.

4 Thank you.

Missing 4000

Criteria	Score			
1. Effectiveness	1	2	3	4
2. Accuracy	1	2	3	4
3. Appropriateness	1	2	3	4
4. Organization	1	2	3	4
5. Vocabulary	1	2	3	4
Total	17/20			

Figure 4.2: Scoring method and coding of the move-structure in a student's e-mail writing outcome (good student)

Figure 4.2 illustrates the e-mail writing performance from one of the students in the high-achiever group. The student performance achieved the task's demand in that the e-mail writing showed occurrence of the structural moves that follow the four-move pattern of business e-mail of negotiation. That is, Move 1 shows business greeting format using "Dear+Job position/Department" but the use was relatively ineffective in a redundancy manner and should be shortened to "Dear Reservation" that would suffice this purpose. The student was able to complete the purposes of Move 2 Providing by giving sufficient contents that supplement the act of request in Move 3 Requesting. Declarative sentences were used to realize the purpose of Move 2. The student employed distinct keywords required by the task including "book and confirm" which indicated the appearance of Move 3. The student also employed mitigation device to minimize intrusive effect of direct command of the imperative forms and to show polite and tactful manner in business writing style. The student ended the correspondence with a simple thanking pattern which is sufficient to show courtesy in this situation. However, some flaws in the student's writing were observed in the use of colloquial language in the business writing such as "wanna" in place of "would like to" pattern. The ending was also incomplete since the student did not put their name after the complementary closing. The flaws affected the low scores in Appropriateness and Effective scales as illustrated in Figure 4.2.

Table 4.11 – Table 4.13 outlined the benefits of employing genre knowledge of structural moves to assess e-mail writing ability. The genre knowledge showed the two-layer relationship between macro- and micro-linguistic devices as a means to achieve effective communicative purpose of text construction. Figure 4.1 and Figure 4.2 demonstrated how the raters code the appearance and disappearance of the moves in the students' e-mail writing as a means to evaluate the students' e-mail writing ability. The occurrence of the move is embedded in the modified CLB (2000) integrated scoring scheme within "Organization" criterion. This criterion allows the raters to distinguish

between good and poor student as illustrated in Figure 4.1 and Figure 4.2. The results of raters rating and grouping the students in Table 4.11 – Table 4.11 demonstrated positive advantage of blending genre analysis to determine language for specific purpose ability because to become legitimate membership in the travel agency business, the members require acquisition of the four-move structure of business e-mail of negotiation. In addition, the raters showed agreement in rating the same writing script when relatively high degree of correlation coefficient value was reported at .76 ($p \leq .01$). Moreover, the modified CLB (2000) rating scales, in favor of diagnostic approach, allow benefit advantages for the teachers to arrive at comprehensive understanding about strengths and weaknesses in the students' e-mail writing ability as indicated above.

The students' e-mail writing abilities were holistically outlined in Table 4.11 – Table 4.13. The next section reveals the analytic analysis of the students' e-mail writing ability. The micro analysis results shown in Table 4.14 – Table 4.17 were derived from the analytic criteria which include Appropriateness, Vocabulary, and Grammatical accuracy within the modified CLB (2000) integrated scoring scheme proposed in this study.

Tables 4.14 – Table 4.17 above show the distribution of types of errors found across the three e-mail tasks as a means to evaluate the students' e-mail writing ability with regard to accuracy criteria (micro features) using the analytic criteria in the modified CLB (2000) integrated scoring scheme proposed in this study. The types of errors were observed by two raters and summarized in move sequence in Table 4.14 in percentage figure, but Table 4.15 – Table 4.17 outlined detailed analysis of the students' e-mail writing errors following three analytic scoring category, that is, Appropriateness, Vocabulary, and Grammatical accuracy.

To begin with, the students' errors observed by the raters with regard to Appropriateness included; for example, incorrect greeting and ending format appeared mainly in Move 1 and Move 4, which are considered greeting and ending ritual in the business e-mail correspondence. Inappropriate choices of greeting and ending patterns commonly used in business e-mail writing were found greatly across three e-mail tasks as outlined in Table 4.15 – 4.17.

Vocabulary scale indicated vocabulary inadequacy of the students' linguistic repertoire. For example, Table 4.15, the student used a wrong word choice "comeback" in place of the word "return" in an act of requesting confirmation utterance "Please confirm comeback to..." The student should have written "Please confirm in return by…" The student showed inadequate access to the word "return" but the student chose to use a more familiar word "comeback". This interlanguage phenomenon indicated the use of compensation strategies (Oxford, 1990). In addition, the students seemed unequipped with specific vocabulary repertoire when using an alternative form "postpone" as in sentence, "I would like to postpone the day… in place of "amend" which is considered more precise vocabulary for this situation.

Finally, Grammatical accuracy criterion also indicated that the students lacked the basic grammatical knowledge of Standard English. For example, the use of "we are come from… We would to book room…" indicated that the students were in a confusing state about sentence structure and the would-like request expression in Standard English. Types of errors in this category involved ineffective word choice, confusing verb forms, sentence fragments, and confusing sentence structure. The students unlikely paid attention to spelling and capitalization convention. The students clearly held inadequate knowledge about business e-mail correspondence even though their study profile indicated that they had passed at least two or three English courses involving Business Communication and Tourism throughout their four-year study plan.

These linguistic errors were found across Move 2 and Move 3 in all of the three e-mail tasks. The findings lead to the conclusion that the language knowledge of this group of students is pretty low. This assumption is linked in accord with the sum of their e-mail writing mean score which was homogeneously close to the mean score in both good and poor students, that is, 27.38 (45.63%) judged by the two raters (See Table 4.7).

In sum, the three e-mail test tasks can serve the intended purpose to evaluate the 4th year tourism industry students' e-mail writing performance. The students' e-mail writing outcome illustrates their e-mail writing ability in two dimensions. The first aspect was their e-mail writing ability with regard to their score which show that this group of students is considered homogenously low in their e-mail writing ability. The second dimension was the evidence of their interlanguage showed in the forms of errors found across the three e-mail tasks. The students' interlanguage evidence brought to the assumption that the students need more exposure and practice both language forms and functions in order to attain accuracy and effectiveness attributes of the discourse pattern which is still considered highly respected in the business e-mail correspondence (Gains, 1999; Talbot, 2009; Geffner, 2010).

Moreover, according to Douglas (2000: 35), specific purposes language ability comprises three linguistic components including language knowledge, background knowledge, and strategic competence. The language knowledge involves the language building block that formulates the discourse structure, while background knowledge fuels the knowledge of the insider of specific speech community through the word choice and linguistic pattern choice e.g. grammar. In addition, strategic competence or strategies can serve as lubricating mechanism that allows the language and background knowledge to work in harmony to meet the intended purpose of the discourse. So, the next section reported the findings with regard to Research Question 3 about the 4th year tourism industry students undertaking their e-mail writing strategies during their e-mail writing process.

4.3 Research Question 3 “What are the e-mail writing strategies used by Chiangrai Rajabhat University 4th year tourism industry students?”

The previous section portrayed the students’ e-mail writing performance. But to provide the clearer picture about the students’ writing process, the study was also aimed to indicate the students’ e-mail writing strategies. So, this section showed the results of students’ e-mail writing strategies used during the process of their e-mail writing.

According to Douglas (2000: 282), for any specific purposes language test to examine how well the individuals can use language in specific contexts of use, the test must address both their language knowledge and their background knowledge, and their use of strategic competence that work in harmony to formulate the successful communication of the specific purpose language abilities in the target language use situation. Strategic competence involves the abilities to evaluate, plan, and execute the language knowledge plus background knowledge to complete the task (Douglas, 2000: 28-29). In addition, Strategic competence or often known as learning strategies played an important role to empower the second language student writers to become the proficient writers because writing is a complicated process (Petric, B. & Czarl, B., 2003: 188), and many researchers are in consensus to claim that writing strategies allow an access to distinguish a successful writer from a less successful writer (Mu, 2005).

To illustrate, Weigle (2002: 42-44) exemplified the task the language learner engaged in a task that required the strategic competence in scaffolding the language knowledge and the external situation as well as some individual characteristics such as background knowledge to get any language related tasks done and to achieve its communicative purpose as she wrote:

> "*…in the example of writing a letter to the editor, accomplishing this task requires a number of factors other than language knowledge. To begin with, one would need knowledge of the subject under discussion (topical knowledge), and one would need to feel strong enough about the topic to write about it (affective). Furthermore, one's personal characteristics (e.g. experience with letters to the editor, degree of extroversion) may influence the choice of content and language, as well as whether one actually follows through with the plan to write the letter"*.

Likewise, the needs analysis results in this study showed the e-mail extract that illustrated how the reservation staff in the travel agency engaged in employing strategic competence as a mean to manipulate language knowledge and background knowledge to complete the e-mail task to request accommodation booking. The extract demonstrated how the reservation engaged in the evaluating, planning, and executing processes underpinning strategic processes outlined by Douglas (2000, 40) as follows:

> *From our conversation over the phone, please book and confirm 1 DBL Beach Front Bungalow (1st – 3rd row) with ABF from 26 Dec'10 – 04 Jan'11 (9 nts) for ROBINSON Mr/Ms as per our contract rate at THB x,xxx net/room/night (incl.ABF). Compulsory grand dinner on 31Dec'10 at THB x,xxx net/pax.*

According to the above e-mail extract, the e-mail writer engaged in drawing various types of knowledge i.e. language, background, and strategies. For example, for language knowledge, the writer acquired the use of a simple phrase like "*From our conversation over the phone*" to function as the reference point between the use of telephone and e-mail. The reservation staff sometimes chose to use telephone first and then e-mail for proof of evidence and follow-up records. The use of this expression requires not only the language knowledge about the form as prefabricated expression, but also the understanding about the way business is handled in the travel agency which is linked directly to the background knowledge of this business. In addition, the use of the prefabricated chunk "*From our conversation over the phone*" perfectly serves as the mediating function to the main purpose of this e-mail, that is, to request accommodation booking. After the expression, the reservation directly outlined the imperative statement "*book and confirm*" which are distinct keywords to determine the overall purpose of the task requesting accommodation booking. The reservation also employed the mitigation device using "please" to tone down the request effect in a more courteous and tactful manner. This requires strategic competence in good judgment about vocabulary, phrase, sentence choices, the right order of these linguistic choices, and the knowledge of procedural work pattern in this travel agency in order to complete the task's purpose.

Strategic competence is somewhat implicit (Douglas, 2000:38), but still observable, and Douglas (2000: 28) affirmed that strategic competence is central to LSP tests as he wrote:

> *…this cognitive aspect responsible for assessing the characteristics of the language use situation (including the language user's own background and language knowledge, as well as, subsequently, assessing the success of the communicative response to the situation), setting communicative goals, planning a response in light of the goals, and controlling the execution of the plan.*

So, to investigate e-mail writing strategies, the strategies framework set fort by O'Mallay and Chamot (1990: 137-139) was employed as the constructs for the development of interview questions in this study because it corresponds to the four-group strategies classification scheme. In addition, its metacognitive sub-strategies descriptions (planning, monitoring, evaluating) also reflect the stages in the writing process that includes pre-writing, writing and revising (Petric, B. & Czarl, B., 2003:190) as well as the rest of strategies categories corresponds with strategic competence stages outlined by Douglas (2000: 40). However, only three types of strategies were selected for this study including metacognitive, cognitive, and affective because the social affective is considered irrelevant for testing situation. The controlled retrospective interview was conducted with two groups of the 4th year tourism industry students, good and poor students, one day after they finished the e-mail writing tasks. The overview about e-mail writing strategies of the students is outlined in two dimensions, that is, descriptive statistics and interview report. Table 4.18 shows the frequencies of the strategies used by the two groups of students.

Table 4.18: The strategies used in e-mail writing tasks

Strategies	**Good Students (N=10)**		**Poor Students (N=10)**	
	Frequency	**%**	**Frequency**	**%**
1. Metacognitive Strategies	**29**	**96.67%**	**25**	**83.33%**
1.1 Planning	9	90%	10	100%
1.2 Self-monitoring	10	100%	8	80%
1.3 Self-evaluation	10	100%	7	70%
2. Cognitive Strategies	**35**	**87.50%**	**37**	**92.50%**
2.1 Summarizing	9	90%	10	100%
2.2 Substitution	8	80%	9	90%
2.3 Translation	8	80%	10	100%
2.4 Deduction	10	100%	8	80%
3. Affective Strategies	**20**	**100%**	**15**	**75%**
3.1 Self-reinforcement	10	100%	8	80%
3.2 Self-talk	10	100%	7	70%
Summary of Strategies	**84**	**93.33%**	**77**	**85.55%**

From Table 4.18, the findings illustrated the distribution of e-mail writing strategies used when the two groups of students (good and poor) were completing the e-mail test tasks. Through the summary of strategies, the good students accounted for 93.33% of the frequencies of the strategies used across the three types of the strategies, while the poor students employed only 85.55% of the strategies used during the e-mail writing process. This figure, however, indicated the minimal difference (7.78%) in the use of e-mail writing strategies of the two groups of students in all three test tasks.

The following section incorporates the interview report and the frequencies of the strategies used by both groups of students. The incorporation of the students' oral responses serves the qualitative purpose of the study. The results are portrayed in ascending order of three main types of e-mail writing strategies – Metacognitive, Cognitive, and Affective.

Metacognitive strategies involve three sub-processes including: planning, self-monitoring, and self-evaluation. The students' interview results reported the use of this type of strategies greatly, for example, the good students accounted for 96.67% in the overall use of this type of strategy, while the sub-types frequency results were also reported including 90%, 100%, and 100% in the planning, self-monitoring, and self-evaluating processes. Likewise, the poor students reported the overall use of this type of strategy at 83.33% and the sub-processes at 100%, 80%, and 70% respectively. Although the frequency discrepancy between the good and poor students was 13.34%, both groups of students reported similar behaviors in the use of metacognitive sub-processes. This phenomenon is observed and discussed through the students' responses in ascending order following the metacognitive sub-processes.

Planning: Both, good and poor, students shared similar behaviors in this process through the occurrence of their words such as "**identifying keywords, sequencing thoughts, and taking notes for outlining**" which are considered key steps in the planning process, for example:

Student 1 reported the steps taken in the planning process including "…before writing I always <u>**identify keywords to sequence the thoughts**</u> to meet purposes of the test prompts…"

Student 2 clearly pointed out the planning tools such as "…before writing I use planning techniques like <u>**taking notes or making an outline**</u> in the paper or using Microsoft Word before the actual writing…"

Self-monitoring and self-evaluation: The two sub-processes underlying the recheck processes while writing. Both groups, good and poor, students adhered to these two processes as crucial steps to proofread the writing outputs and as a means to maximize accuracy quality in their writing, for examples:

Student 1 reported the steps in these two processes including "…when I write I usually <u>**recheck**</u> if there might be some mistakes and etc…"

Student 2 reported similar behaviors as in Student 1 like "…when and after writing I sometimes <u>**add**</u> some more words to make better meaning or <u>**take out**</u> some of the unclear…"

Cognitive strategies include four sub-processes: summarizing, substitution, translation, and deduction. Like the metacognitive strategies, the students' interview results revealed the use of this type of strategies greatly, for example, the poor students accounted for 92.50% in the overall use of this type of strategy, while the sub-types frequency results were also reported including 100%, 90%, 100%, and 80% in the summarizing, substitution, translation, and deduction processes. However, the good students reported the minimally lower use of this type of strategy at 87.50% and the sub-processes at 90%, 80%, 80%, and 100% respectively. Although the frequency discrepancy between the poor and good students was 5.00%, both groups of students reported similar behaviors in the use of cognitive sub-processes. This phenomenon is observed and discussed through the students' responses in ascending order following the cognitive sub-processes.

Summarizing: Both good and poor students shared similar manners in this process through the occurrence of their words such as "**summarizing main points (keywords) that detail the needs of the clients**" which is considered a key step in the summarizing process. In addition, this process is closely linked with the planning process in metacognitive domain, for example:

Student 1 pointed out that "…when I reply the client's e-mail, I read the whole e-mail text to summarize the key words that detail the client's needs…"

Student 2 noted with emphasis that "…spell out the main points in the client's e-mail message allow clear response when replying…

Substitution: Both good and poor students shared similar behaviors in this process through the occurrence of their words such as "**use alternative words from my memory**" which corresponds to compensation strategy in SILL Model of Oxford (1990) cited in Dornyei (2005: 182). For example:

Student 1 noted the situation of lexical items shortage that "…avoid unfamiliar or inappropriate and use alternative words that retain the same meaning…"

Student 2 pointed out the vocabulary techniques that "…use easy-to-recognize-and-understand words in place of difficult word, for example, use client for customer…"

Translation: Both, good and poor, students performed similarly in this process when observed the occurrence of their words such as "**think in Thai first then translate into English**". The students' utterance reflects the translation strategy as a means to render ideas from the mother tongue to the target language in a relative verbatim manner (O'Mallay and Chamot, 1990: 142). For example:

Student 1 noted the use of translation technique to overcome difficulty in writing that "…I usually formulate my thoughts in Thai first and then translate them into English. It is slow but it works for me…"

Student 2 pointed out with emphasis that "…because Thai is my mother tongue so I need to sequence my thoughts in Thai first and then encode them into English and sometimes Google Translate is considered a facilitative machine translation tool…"

Deduction: Both good and poor students performed similarly in this process when observing the occurrence of their words such as "**try to use new language forms in my e-mail writing**". For example:

Student 1 noted the use of translation technique to overcome difficulty in writing that "…I usually notice new vocabulary from the e-mail and try to use them in my reply…"

Student 2 pointed out with emphasis that "…sometimes I try to be creative by using newly language forms in my e-mail writing…"

Affective strategies include two sub-processes: self-reinforcement and self-talk. Like other types of strategies, the students' interview results revealed the use of this type of strategies greatly, for example, the poor students accounted for 75.00% in the overall use of this type of strategy, while the sub-types frequency results were also reported including 80% and 70% respectively. However, the good students reported 100% use of this strategy. The students seemed well-equipped with what they need to do to create affective environment for themselves in order to overcome tension in the test situation.

In sum, this section reported and discussed the use of e-mail writing strategies found in the 4th year tourism industry students' e-mail writing. The students' e-mail writing strategies information was derived from a structured interview. The strategy model proposed by O'Mallay and Chamot (1990) was used as a theoretical framework underpinning the development of e-mail writing strategy questions. This framework outlined four groups of strategies including: metacognitive, cognitive, social, and affective. However, only three types of strategies were used in this study including metacognitive, cognitive, and affective because the social affective is considered irrelevant for the testing situation in this study.

The findings indicated that the good students accounted for 93.33% of the frequencies of the strategies used across the three types of the strategies, while the poor students employed only 85.55% of the strategies used during the e-mail writing process. This figure, however, indicated the minimal difference (7.78%) in the use of e-mail writing strategies by the two groups of students in all three e-mail test tasks.

The interview results also indicated the students applied various types of strategies during their writing process. The reported keywords described what metacognitive, cognitive, and affective abilities were involved when completing the e-mail test tasks including considering main points, identifying keywords, summarizing key ideas, using synonyms, etc.

For example, in Table 4.15, the student showed the evidence of using compensation strategy (sometimes known as substitution or avoiding strategy). The student used wrong word choice "comeback" in place of the word "return" in an act of requesting confirmation, and wrote "Please confirm comeback to..." Instead, the student should have written "Please confirm in return by replying back to…" Obviously, the student lack the knowledge of using the word "return" but use a more common word "comeback". This interlanguage phenomenon indicated the use of compensation or substitution strategies (Oxford, 1990). In addition, the student seemed unequipped with technical vocabulary in the travel agency business when using an alternative form "postpone" in place of "amend" in the sentence "I would like to postpone the day… The word "amend" is considered more precise vocabulary for this business situation.

Although the discrepancy figure differentiating the frequency of strategies used between good and poor students was not substantial, the findings showed that the good students (96.67%) incorporated metacognitive strategies more than poor students (83.33%). This perhaps led to the conclusion that the good students were better equipped with metacognitive strategies than the poor students and therefore they could gain better score results.

Summary, implications, recommendations of the study are presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter reinstates in brief about the background of the study and the summary of the study covering three research questions in an effort to investigate 1) e-mail writing ability constructs; 2) students' e-mail writing ability; and 3) students' e-mail writing strategies. The final part of the section also includes implications and recommendations for further study.

5.1 Summary of the study

The problem underpinning the rationale of this study derived from Cosh & Assenov (2007: 500) when they asserted that e-mail has become a default communication tool for today's infomediary-based travel agency, but the e-mail writing ability deficiency of the staff in this emerging e-tourism context was observed and reported. So, this problem may be fixed by analyzing the target language use characteristics and tasks in order to arrive at the assumption of the expected abilities that the staff should attain to become effective e-mail writers in this working environment. In addition, the results of the analysis can be used as a test construct or blueprint to develop an effective e-mail test tasks and/or an e-mail writing training course to support this immediate needs for the staff as Weigle (2002: 1) maintained that "wherever the acquisition of a specific language skill is seen as important, it becomes equally important to test that skill.

Therefore, in an attempt to bridge the gap, the researcher set out three research questions following the Specific Purposes Language Ability Model (Douglas, 2000: 35) in an effort to find out 1) e-mail writing ability constructs; 2) students' e-mail writing ability; and 3) students' e-mail writing strategies. The Douglas (2000)'s model was set as a framework to determine the language ability definition because Douglas (2000: 35) asserted that specific purposes language ability comprises three components including language knowledge, background knowledge, and strategic competence. The language knowledge includes the knowledge about the linguistic properties such as word, sentence, and discourse structures as well as the appropriate use with the audience and situations. The background or topical knowledge indicates the precise knowledge determining the insidership of a language user in a specific speech community through the use of technical terms and grammatical choices such as the use of legalese or legal language in the lawyer and courtroom community. Strategic competence or strategies serves as a link that facilitates the language and background knowledge to work in harmonious manner to meet the intended purpose of the language use. So, the specific purposes language ability model serves as one of the theoretical foundations to develop the constructs of the e-mail writing ability.

5.1.1 Defining e-mail writing ability (Language Knowledge)

Defining e-mail writing ability paves the way to formulate the e-mail test constructs. In this study, two approaches within the framework of discourse analysis were involved to frame the construct definition of the e-mail test. The two approaches included identifying the context of culture and situation of the target language use situation and tasks, and identifying language components needed to serve the communicative purposes of tasks in that particular context.

The first step was carried out through identifying the tasks that are most commonly found in this particular context. The basic concept in identifying tasks as the primary step comes from the notion outlined by Weigle (2003: 3) that writing varies within contexts and situations in which a single definition of language ability cannot cover all situations. So, Weigle (2002: 4) proposed that for validity purpose of defining writing ability in a specific target language use situation, it is useful to frame the way in which people use second language in general and second-language writing in particular, and the writing types that are found in using that particular target language situation to define writing ability. The situation analysis using needs analysis questionnaire administered with ten travel agencies in Bangkok reported three main e-mail tasks in the travel agency business including, Accommodation Booking, Service Confirmation, and Service Amendment.

The second step was completed using the genre analysis framework which places emphasis on the analysis of a discourse pattern within two layers including macro (move-step) and micro (lexico-grammatical) structures. The macro analysis serves as a means to outline the whole structure of the text in question which highlights the schematic structure in which the members of that target language use community must acquire. The micro analysis reveals the specific grammatical patterns and vocabulary that allow easy access for and be recognized by the members of that target language use community.

This core concept of genre analysis precisely concurs nicely with the Language for Specific Purposes Model (Douglas, 2000: 7-8) which stated that the technical language which has specific characteristics and communicative functions within that field defines the boundary between general and specific purposes of the language use. The results of the two-layer analysis serve as a blueprint to determine the pattern of the discourse (genre) in question in which this case is e-mail writing in Thai travel agency context.

The two layers of genre analysis following the Santos (2002)'s modified framework of Business E-mail of Negotiation (BEN) revealed that, at the macro level, the three tasks showed the 4-move structure including Move 1 Establishing the negotiation chain, Move 2 Providing Information/answers, Move 3 Requesting Information/actions, and Move 4 Ending. At the micro level, the main features for Move 1 include appropriate greeting forms and clear subject line; Move 2 and Move 3 serve as the core functions for this typical genre in providing and requesting functions which are the defining features of the negation discourse in business correspondence; Move 4 serves the ending ritual marking the polite ending of the discourse. While Move 1 and Move 4 serve the common greeting and ending ritual of this type of discourse, Move 2 and Move 3 incorporate two significant linguistic features to realize the communicative function of the moves. Declarative was reported as a key linguistic feature of Move 2: Providing Information/answers, while imperative was observed as a significant feature of Move 3: Requesting Information/actions. The sequence of Move 2 and Move 3 is flexible depending on the needs of the writer.

The results from the genre analysis were used as a blueprint to formulate the construct definition of the three e-mail test tasks and the rubrics to assess and evaluate the students' e-mail writing ability.

5.1.2 Students' e-mail writing ability

Investigating the students' e-mail writing ability involves two main processes of test development and test administration. The test development was reported in Section 5.1. The test administration process involved 29 fourth-year tourism industry students at Chiangrai Rajabhat University as the whole population. According to their four-year (8-semester) study plan, these students are subjected to finish ten English courses, which accumulate the 30 credits for English subjects, namely English for Tourism I-VI, English for Hotel I-II, Business Communication English I-II.

The instrument investigating the students' e-mail writing ability included three e-mail test tasks and e-mail writing ability scoring rubrics. The three test tasks included: 1) Accommodation Booking, 2) Service Confirmation, and 3) Service Amendment, and twenty was the full score for each of the e-mail tasks. The modified CLB (2000) integrated scheme blending holistic (macro) and analytic (micro) approaches to determine the e-mail writing ability was employed as a means to assess the students' e-mail writing performance. The modified CLB (2000) scoring rubrics used 4-band scale and five assessment criteria including Effectiveness, Accuracy, Appropriateness, Organization, and Vocabulary, and the two-trained raters rated each of the students' writing outcomes. The scores assigned for each of the components was then accumulated the total score in each of the three test tasks which indicated the student's e-mail writing ability.

The students' e-mail writing performance results revealed that the scores judged by two raters held the total correlation coefficient value at .76 ($p \leq .01$) meaning that they agreed in judging the e-mail writing ability of the 4th year tourism industry students. For the 4th year tourism industry students' e-mail writing performance on all three e-mail test tasks, the score results were close to 50% of the total score (twenty points). That is, the students' mean scores were 9.48, 8.38, and 9.52. Remarkably, some students could obtain high scores from 17 to 19 points in all three tasks; however, the lowest scores from 5 to 6 points were similarly reported in all three tasks by the two raters. The distribution of the scores was interpreted from the Standard Deviation values which were 3.08, 3.28, and 3.82 for the first rater and 2.56, 2.28, and 3.17 for the second rater in rating Task 1, 2, and 3. In summary, it could be concluded that the 4^{th} tourism industry students at Chiangrai Rajabhat University e-mail writing performance was homogeneous. They were low achievers judging from the mean scores in all three e-mail tasks which were below 50% of the total score. The SD values indicated the homogeneity of the students' e-mail writing ability in that the Standard Deviation was minimal even though some students could gain high scores.

On the four-band scale of four levels of performances (Adapted from CLB, 2000: 47) proposed in Chapter 3, Table 3.12, the students can be grouped into four levels on the 1 to 4 scale in which 1 for unsatisfactory (Initial) with the score less than 50%, 2 for below average (Developing) with the score 50-69%, 3 for satisfactory (Adequate) with the score 70-80%, and 4 above satisfactory performance (Fluent) with the score more than 80% respectively. The cut-off level for this study was set at Band 3 (Adequate) with score 70-80% of the total score following the purpose of the test in that the test aims at assessing the students' ability in writing effective business e-mail of negotiation to meet the purpose of the given task. Brown (1996: 259) asserted that the cut-point often relates to the purposes of the test which also claims validity aspect of the test in that the test measures the what it is designed to measure. So, according to the four-band scale (CLB, 2000), the 4^{th} year tourism industry students e-mail writings fall within band 1 (Initial), and according to the proposed cut-off point at 70-80% at band 3 the students was unable to meet the 70-80% benchmark.

The findings somewhat corroborated Cosh & Assenov (2007: 500)'s study when they pointed out that e-mail has become the default communication tool for today's infomediary-based travel agency, but the staff's e-mail writing ability in this context was still inefficient. The results could, therefore, lead to the needs to empower the e-mail writing ability of the 4^{th} year tourism industry students at Chiangrai Rajabhat Univeristy even though they have been exposed to extensive English courses throughout their study plan. The students are graduating from the university, and they become the workforce for the Thai tourism industry business circle. So, the proposal includes, for example, the e-mail writing ability workshop or the training course with an aim to enhance the students' specific ability that equips them to meet the needs of the real-world situations.

5.1.3 Students' e-mail writing strategies

The students' e-mail writing ability also indicated through the students' e-mail writing strategies. The findings indicated that the good students accounted for 93.33% of the frequencies of the strategies used across the three types of the strategies, while the poor students portrayed only 85.55% of the strategies used during the e-mail writing process. This figure, however, revealed minimal difference (7.78%) in the use of e-mail writing strategies among the two groups of students in all three e-mail test tasks.

The results indicated that both groups of the students were active e-mail writing strategies users; however, their score results were pretty low. The outcome of strategies report could lead to the assumption that the use of e-mail writing strategies was somewhat ineffective. The ineffectiveness seems to be affected from factors involving linguistic and background knowledge. According to Douglas (2000: 35), the specific purpose language ability includes three components i.e. language knowledge, background knowledge, and strategies. They work in harmony to drive the specific purposes language ability outcome. Strategies or strategic competence function as a mediating factor fueling the functioning link between the language and background knowledge. If this is the case, when the students lack both of language and background knowledge, the use of strategies was perhaps ineffective. As Hawkins in Hinkel (2005: 34) noted Jimenez, Garcia, and Pearson (1996)'s study and reported the results of the study that aimed at examining factors contributing to the reading proficiency (in English) of Latino children. The study also included investigating the learners' strategies, text interactions, and transfer of skills across languages, and attitudes. In their words, the results clearly pointed out the missing link between linguistic and background knowledge and thus resulted in poor performance of successful and less successful readers on the reading test, as they wrote:

> *"…more successful (Anglo and Latino) readers* ***"could access well-developed networks of relevant prior knowledge"*** *(1996: 91) and encountered fewer unfamiliar vocabulary words and concepts, thus enabling them to attend more to comprehension."*

> "*…their test performance was adversely affected by their limited prior knowledge of certain test topics, their poor performance on the scriptally implicit questions (which required use of background knowledge), their unfamiliarity with vocabulary terms used in the test questions and answer choices… (1996: 371)"*

In this study, the Chiangrai Rajabhat University 4th year tourism industry students' strategies information was derived from a structured interview. The O'Mallay and Chamot (1990)'s strategy model was incorporated as a theoretical framework underpinning the development of e-mail writing strategy questions. This framework outlined four groups of strategies including: metacognitive, cognitive, social, and affective. However, only three types of strategies were used in this study including metacognitive, cognitive, and affective because the social affective is considered irrelevant for testing situation.

5.2 Implications of the findings

In an attempt to find out some practical solutions to serve the needs in the Thai travel agency context concerning the e-mail writing ability, this study has shed some light on practical implications.

Firstly, the study re-proposes the fine blending manner of two main theoretical frameworks including Language for Specific Purposes (LSP) Model and Genre Analysis. The two frameworks underpin the careful consideration to define the e-mail writing ability construct which has been used as a blueprint for developing the three e-mail test tasks and scoring rubrics as the main instrument determining the students' e-mail writing ability in this study. The Language for Specific Purposes Model (Douglas, 2000) allows the researcher to obtain the language ability components that include language knowledge, background knowledge, and strategic competence. However, it is an uneasy task to define the language knowledge both at the macro and micro levels as well as the relationship between language, background and strategic knowledge. The complex business of defining language ability as Schoonen in Hinkel (2011: 701) pointed out in his words that:

> *…the term "language ability" is considered a common practice of language assessment but it seems there is no common practice because the assessment of language ability is too complex to be captured in one common practice. Language ability per se is a complicated, multifaceted construct, consisting of many interdependent or independent sub-skills, and each sub-skill can be operationalised in many different ways. Moreover, language ability is assessed for many different purposes, and these purposes affect decisions about how language tests are designed.*

However, the Santos (2002)'s Business Letter of Negotiation (BLN) model, the product from the genre analysis studies, is considered practical a means for analyzing business e-mail discourse because the genre analysis has led the researcher to examine both language features and patterns needed to perform the tasks effectively in the target language use situation. In addition, the two-level (lexico-grammatical and schematic pattern) analysis of the genre framework has paved the way to ease perplex issues regarding "what is being measured?" or the way in which what kinds of language abilities are defined. That is, the genre analysis results of the e-mail in the Thai travel agency situation revealed that this kind of genre involves the 4-move structure and the linguistic features such as declarative and imperative functions which are key elements to serve the communicative purposes of the e-mail tasks in this situation. In addition, the analysis results also indicated some specific vocabulary that reflects precision knowledge or technical terms commonly used by the members in this speech community; for example, the use of specific verb forms such as book, amend, and confirm. So, the 4-move structure, declaratives, imperatives, and specific vocabulary are key linguistic features that the researcher can use to formulate the constructs of the e-mail writing ability and therefore the scoring rubrics of the e-mail test tasks.

To illustrate, the results from Chapter 4 indicated the benefits of fine integration of Genre Analysis (Wang, 2005; Santos, 2002) and Language for Specific Purpose (LSP) Ability Model (Douglas, 2000) through the formulation of the modified CLB (2000) scoring scheme. The integration of genre analysis and CLB (2000) scoring favor diagnostic capability to assess language for specific purpose ability within two dimensions, that is, macro and micro as discussed in Chapter 4, Table 4.11- Table 4.13.

Secondly, the e-mail writing ability constructs, tasks, and the scoring rubrics can be used as resources for e-mail writing training workshops or courses for tourism industry students. The e-mail writing constructs, tasks, and rubrics showed the authenticity of situations and interactions in that the results of the e-mail analysis came from the real e-mail samples that were used in the real e-mail business correspondence in the Thai travel agency context. In addition, the e-mail tasks involve the authenticity of interactions in that the test takers must read the e-mail test prompts and perform the tasks indicated in the prompts. This process resonates with the real working situation of the staff in the travel agency sitting in front of the computer checking their e-mails for e-mail requesting for information or services from their clients.

Finally, the revealed insignificant difference among good and poor students in their strategies used perhaps implies the effectiveness use of the strategies resulted from the interaction between language knowledge and background knowledge. So, in the case that if language learners lack such knowledge, strategies training alone may not lead to the intended purpose of enhancing the language proficiency.

5.3 Recommendations of the study

The main focus of this study places upon the business e-mail negotiation genre and its writing abilities. However, other types of genre are also available for an investigation, for example, hotel contact rates correspondence between the hotel and the travel agency. The hotel contract communication between hotels and travel agencies are considered the landmark that identifies the degree of relationship between the two business partners. This is because it requires several steps to convince the hotels to issue the contract rates for the travel agencies especially the newly established ones. When the hotel contract has been issued, it has validity bounding for expiry in an annual term. The renewal and follow-up tasks come in to play for the travel agencies to convince the hotels again to renew the following year of the hotel contract rates. This process is an ongoing task for the people in this specific business. The linguistic knowledge found from the genre analysis may shed some light for the SMEs especially the newly established small-size travel agencies in the Thai tourism industry.

In this study, the controlled retrospective interview was selected for the strategies investigation to maximize the validity and reliability purposes, for example, the interview questions were developed with some established concepts that are linked with the strategies model proposed by O'Malley and Chamot (1990). So, the interview questions may only be limited to only the aspects of the strategies use indicated in the proposed strategies model. To get the more in-depth knowledge in the strategies investigation, the unstructured interview is also considered a challenging means to examine the interviewee's real and in-depth knowledge regarding the strategies used during the writing process through the open-ended responses under a more relaxed atmosphere. In addition, apart from the unstructured interview, the think-aloud protocols can also be employed to maximize the rich information about the strategies and cognitive processes as Hurd and Lewis (2008: 226) maintained that think-aloud protocols offer the most detailed information of all because the student can describe strategies while doing a language task.

Regarding the teaching and learning process, the teachers of e-mail writing classes can enhance their students' both e-mail and language abilities in many ways. For instance, the students can be grouped according to their cut-off scores from the results of e-mail writing tasks. Also, the weaknesses of the students in each band can be diagnosed. In addition, the teachers can prepare electronic supplementary materials for each band corresponding to the analyzed weak points. Finally, before taking the final exam, practice tests similar to the authentic e-mail writing tests can be given to the students to assist them so that they can successfully accomplish the course and meet the set standard.

Finally, this study was in an attempt to maximize the situations and interactions authenticity of the test by taking several steps to incorporate the authentic properties in the target language use situations and tasks into the test such as analyzing the situations and tasks characteristics, analyzing the e-mail genre, and investigating the strategies used during the writing process. However, the context of the study was partially authentic because the e-mail test was administered with the students not the real working people. So, this study can also be replicated in the workplace settings. The test scores can be used to serve several assessment and evaluation purposes such as the placement purpose to recruit new staff or the diagnostic purpose to assess the staff e-mail writing ability. In addition, replication of this study in the workplace settings can serve as a means to expand and reaffirm the assessment knowledge from the classroom setting to the real world situation, and may lead to the discovery of new and interesting patterns of rhetorical and social behaviors. The replication of the study in research context is accepted as a means to continue the research tradition, to verify validity and reliability of the previous research, and to expand the knowledge (Brown in Hinkel, 2011: 199). In the Thai context, several points mentioned above can be implemented not only at Chiangrai Rajabhat University, but also at other university teaching ESP.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Questionnaire for Stakeholders in Tourism Intermediary Business about Email Writing Ability

Part 1: Demographic & email writing in tourism intermediary business

A: Demographic information

1. **Name:**__________________________ **Last name:** _______________________
2. **Position:**_____________________________
3. **Company:**___________________________

B: Email writing in tourism intermediary business

4. **Do you use email English writing in your business correspondence?**

   ☐ Yes

   ☐ No

5. **In the box☐, please enter number orderly (e.g. 1, 2, 3,…) according to the importance of the common tasks for the Reservation staff handling bookings via email correspondence?**

   ☐Give quotations

   ☐Book accommodations

   ☐Book services from other suppliers

   ☐Amend services

   ☐Confirm services with customers

   ☐Others, please specify …………………...

Part 2: Opinions of English competence for effective tourism intermediary business email writing.

1. **Please identify the percentage of "Effectiveness" and "Accuracy" in effective email writing. The total percentage of the two criteria is 100%. For example, if you give 50% for "Effectiveness" and another 50% for "Accuracy", it means that you justify the two criteria as equally importance.**

Criteria for effective intermediary business email writing	Percentage (100%)
1. Effectiveness means the global purpose of communication is achieved.	________________________%
2. Accuracy means the quality of the writing such as organization, appropriateness of style, register, text layout, text format, grammar, vocabulary, mechanics, cohesion, relevance and adequacy of content	________________________%

Additional information supporting your stance:

*****Thank you for your kind cooperation and participation*****

Appendix B: Interview Sheet Identifying Writing Strategies in Email Writing for Tourism Industry 4th Year Student at Chiang Rai Rajabhat University (แบบสัมภาษณ์การใช้กลยุทธ์การเขียนจดหมายอิเล็กทรอนิกส์)

Name:__________________________________ **Date:** _________________________________

Below are the interview questions about email writing strategies. Please put (✓) in the box that tells what you actually do when you are writing English email messages. There is no right or wrong answer to these questions. กรุณาเลือกกลยุทธ์ที่ใช้ในการเขียนจดหมายอิเล็กทรอนิกส์ภาษาอังกฤษ แล้วทำเครื่องหมาย (✓) ในช่อง "ใช้" หรือ "ไม่ใช้" ให้ตรงกับความเป็นจริงจากการเขียนจดหมายอิเล็กทรอนิกส์ของท่าน

1. Metacognitive Strategies (กลยุทธ์อภิปริชาน)	**Yes (ใช้)**	**No (ไม่ใช้)**
1.1 Do you use planning strategy? ท่านใช้กลยุทธ์การวางแผนหรือไม่ For example, before I start writing or replying an email, I write down the outline of main ideas either mentally or physically on paper. **ยกตัวอย่างเช่น** ข้าพเจ้าจะเขียนโครงร่างประเด็นสำคัญๆ ไว้ในใจหรือร่างไว้ในกระดาษ ก่อนเริ่มการเขียนตอบจดหมายอิเล็กทรอนิกส์ **Please explain how you use this strategy./โปรดอธิบายวิธีการใช้กลยุทธ์นี้** -- --	☐	☐
1.2 Do you use self monitoring strategy? ท่านใช้กลยุทธ์การตรวจสอบแก้ไขหรือไม่ For example, while writing email messages, I check my writing styles to make it suitable for the reader. **ยกตัวอย่างเช่น** ระหว่างการเขียนตอบจดหมายอิเล็กทรอนิกส์ ข้าพเจ้าตรวจสอบความถูกต้องของภาษาและรูปแบบงานเขียนพร้อมแก้ไขให้เหมาะสมสอดคล้องกับสถานการณ์และผู้รับ **Please explain how you use this strategy./โปรดอธิบายวิธีการใช้กลยุทธ์นี้** -- --	☐	☐

1.3. Do you use self-evaluation strategy? ท่านใช้กลยุทธ์การประเมินตนเองหรือไม่ For example, before I click "Send" the email message, I check the accuracy and/or appropriateness of the language used in my email messages. **ยกตัวอย่างเช่น** เมื่อเขียนตอบเสร็จแล้ว ก่อนคลิ๊ก "ส่ง" จดหมายอิเล็กทรอนิกส์ ข้าพเจ้าจะตรวจสอบความถูกต้องเหมาะสมของไวยากรณ์และตัวสะกดคำผิดให้เรียบร้อย **Please explain how you use this strategy./โปรดอธิบายวิธีการใช้กลยุทธ์นี้** -- --	☐	☐
2. Cognitive Strategies (กลยุทธ์ปริชาน)	**Yes (ใช้)**	**No (ไม่ใช้)**
2.1 Do you use summarizing strategy? ท่านใช้กลยุทธ์การสรุปความหรือไม่ For example, I summarize what has written in the email message that I received before writing my response. **ยกตัวอย่างเช่น** ในการเขียนตอบจดหมายอิเล็กทรอนิกส์ ข้าพเจ้าจะสรุปความจากข้อความของผู้ส่งก่อนที่จะเริ่มลงมือเขียนตอบจดหมายอิเล็กทรอนิกส์ **Please explain how you use this strategy./โปรดอธิบายวิธีการใช้กลยุทธ์นี้** -- --	☐	☐
2.2 Do you use resourcing strategy? ท่านใช้กลยุทธ์การใช้สื่อประกอบหรือไม่ For example, I use dictionaries, Business English textbooks or other written materials as the model and references when writing email messages. **ยกตัวอย่างเช่น** ในการเขียนตอบจดหมายอิเล็กทรอนิกส์ ข้าพเจ้าจะใช้สื่อประกอบ เช่น พจนานุกรม หนังสือเกี่ยวกับการเขียนจดหมายธุรกิจ หรือหนังสือเกี่ยวกับจดหมายอิเล็กทรอนิกส์ เพื่อใช้อ้างอิงและเป็นตัวอย่าง	☐	☐

Please explain how you use this strategy./โปรดอธิบายวิธีการใช้กลยุทธ์นี้ -- --		
2.3 Do you use substitution strategy? ท่านใช้กลยุทธ์การใช้คำเหมือนหรือการอธิบายคำศัพท์หรือไม่ For example, if I don't know a word in English, I use a similar one or explain what I mean. **ยกตัวอย่างเช่น** ในการเขียนตอบจดหมายอิเล็กทรอนิกส์ เมื่อข้าพเจ้าไม่สามารถหาคำศัพท์ภาษาอังกฤษที่เหมาะสมได้ ข้าพเจ้าจะใช้คำที่มีความหมายเหมือนหรือคล้ายกัน หรือใช้วิธีการเขียนคำอธิบายแทน **Please explain how you use this strategy./โปรดอธิบายวิธีการใช้กลยุทธ์นี้** -- --	☐	☐
2.4 Do you use translation strategy? ท่านใช้กลยุทธ์การแปลหรือไม่ For example, when I write email messages, I write what I mean in my native language first and then translate it into English. **ยกตัวอย่างเช่น** ในการเขียนตอบจดหมายอิเล็กทรอนิกส์ ข้าพเจ้าจะเขียนจดหมายอิเล็กทรอนิกส์เป็นภาษาไทยก่อนแล้วค่อยแปลเป็นภาษาอังกฤษ **Please explain how you use this strategy./โปรดอธิบายวิธีการใช้กลยุทธ์นี้** -- --	☐	☐
2.5 Do you use deduction strategy? ท่านใช้กลยุทธ์การเชื่อมโยงสิ่งที่เรียนมาแล้วกับสถานการณ์ใหม่หรือไม่ For example, I try to use new or learned vocabulary and expressions in my email messages. **ยกตัวอย่างเช่น** ในการเขียนตอบจดหมายอิเล็กทรอนิกส์ ข้าพเจ้าพยายามใช้คำศัพท์หรือวลีใหม่ที่ข้าพเจ้าได้เรียนรู้หรือพบเห็นมา	☐	☐

	Yes (ใช้)	No (ไม่ใช้)
Please explain how you use this strategy./โปรดอธิบายวิธีการใช้กลยุทธ์นี้ -- --		
3. Affective Strategies (กลยุทธ์ทางอารมณ์)	**Yes (ใช้)**	**No (ไม่ใช้)**
3.1 Do you use self-reinforcement strategy? ท่านใช้กลยุทธ์การให้กำลังใจตนเองหรือไม่ For example, I am confident that my writing is understandable. **ยกตัวอย่างเช่น** ในการเขียนตอบจดหมายอิเล็กทรอนิกส์ ข้าพเจ้ามั่นใจว่าผู้อ่านเข้าใจงานเขียนของข้าพเจ้า หรือ I feel encouraged when I do well in writing an email message. ข้าพเจ้ารู้สึกดีกับตัวเองเมื่อทำได้ดีในการเขียนตอบจดหมายอิเล็กทรอนิกส์ **Please explain how you use this strategy./โปรดอธิบายวิธีการใช้กลยุทธ์นี้** -- --	☐	☐
3.2 Do you use self-talk strategy? ท่านใช้กลยุทธ์การขจัดความวิตกกังวลด้วยตัวเองหรือไม่? For example, I can overcome anxiety about my English ability when I write e-mail messages. **ยกตัวอย่างเช่น** ในการเขียนหรือตอบจดหมายอิเล็กทรอนิกส์ ข้าพเจ้ามีวิธีจัดการความวิตกกังวลเกี่ยวกับความสามารถทางด้านภาษาอังกฤษของข้าพเจ้า **Please explain how you use this strategy./โปรดอธิบายวิธีการใช้กลยุทธ์นี้** -- --	☐	☐

Suggestions (ข้อเสนอแนะ)

Thank you for your cooperation. / ขอขอบคุณที่ให้ความร่วมมือตอบแบบสัมภาษณ์

Appendix C: Examples of students' writing performance in three e-mail tasks. (In ascending order, one of the good and another from the poor student)

Task1:Chompunuch Jeerapanya

1

Dear the reservation staff of Le Meridien Chiangrai Resort.

2

I'm a reservation staff of Chiangrai Travel & Leisure - a local travel agency in Chiangrai,Thailand. I wanna book a room at your hotel for 3 nights from 24-26 December 2011.~~Request~~ a Deluxe Garden View Room for 2 persons and the room rates of this room type per room per night with breakfast[ABF] and provides the clients free airport-hotel transfer.

4000

My clients'names and flights details as follows:

Passengers: Mr. Robert ROBINSON/Mrs. Lucy ROBINSON

Flights: TG131 24 DEC BKK CEI 0835 0955
TG135 26 DEC CEI BKK 1545 1705

3

Please confirm the room and the room rate right away.In the E-mail message provide all relevant and important information.

4

Thank you.

Missing 4000

Criteria	Score			
1. Effectiveness	1	2	3	4
2. Accuracy	1	2	3	4
3. Appropriateness	1	2	3	4
4. Organization	1	2	3	4
5. Vocabulary	1	2	3	4
Total	17/20			

Tast1 : Jutamat Kampang

1

To Le Meridien Chiang Rai Rosort
I would like to ~~reservation~~ ~~to~~ a room at Le Meridien Chiang Rai Resort for 3 night from 24-26 December 2011

2

and I would like to the Deluxe Garden View Room for 2 ~~person~~ people at our contracted. ~~Rate~~ per 4000 THB per room per night with breakfast (ABF). Contracted Rate
and there are details for your clients names and flight as follow

Passengers : Mr. Robert ROBINSON/Mrs. Lucy ROBINSON

Flights : TG130 24 DEC BKK CEI 0835 0955
TG135 26 DEC CEI BKK 1545 1705

3

4

Criteria	Score			
1. Effectiveness	1	2	3	4
2. Accuracy	1	2	3	4
3. Appropriateness	1	2	3	4
4. Organization	1	2	3	4
5. Vocabulary	1	2	3	4
Total	10/20			

✓

Task2: Kitiya Kornrat

T2H

To..Pinker

I would like to tell you about reservation a room from Le Meridien Chiang Rai Resort.
The Deluxe Garden View Room for 3 nights from 24-26 december 2011 for Mr./Mrs. ROBINSON can be confirmed.

Please ask for his returning confirmation to issue the invoice.If your clients changing tell me about that againt.
please payment about 4,000 BTH before 10 July 2011.

Thankyou.
Kitiya Kornrat
Chiang Rai Travel & Leisure.

Best so far

Criteria	Score			
1. Effectiveness	1	2	3	4
2. Accuracy	1	2	3	4
3. Appropriateness	1	2	3	4
4. Organization	1	2	3	4
5. Vocabulary	1	2	3	4
Total	18 /20			

task:2

T2L

ทิพวัลย์ ทาแก้ว

Confirmation bookking room 24-26 december 2011 for 3 nights for mr./mmrs robinson is available
ok tote price 4,000 during the nights 3 nights 12,000 THB per room per night

Criteria	Score
1. Effectiveness	1 2 3 4
2. Accuracy	1 2 3 4
3. Appropriateness	1 2 3 4
4. Organization	1 2 3 4
5. Vocabulary	1 2 3 4
Total	5/10

Task. 3 Jugkrit Simiwanit

T3 H

(1) To Le Meridien Chiangrai Resort Reservation Department.

(2) For our booking room <Deluxe Garden View Room at 4,000 THB./room/night with ABF. At 24-26 December 2011>. Now our clients need to extension from 24-26 December 2011 to 24 December 2011 - 1 January 2012 <8 nights>of the same price and room. (3) If you can provide and confirm the room at that time is available, please reply our request soon. For the clients airport-hotel transfer the clients's details as follow:

Passanger: Mr.Robert ROBINSON/Mrs.Lucy ROBINSON
Flight: TG131 24 DEC BKK CEI 0835 0955
TG135 01 JAN CEI BKK 1545 1705

P.E. We hope to get your confirm soon. Not needed

P.S.

(4) Sincerely yours.

< >

Coalahmix Tour Manager

Criteria	Score			
1. Effectiveness	1	2	3	4
2. Accuracy	1	2	3	4
3. Appropriateness	1	2	3	4
4. Organization	1	2	3	4
5. Vocabulary	1	2	3	4
Total	19/20			

Needs some grammar work

but well organ!!!

Task3:Benjamat Khwandee

T3L

0 To at Le Meridien Chiang Rai Resort

From last book a room at at Le Meridien Chiang Rai Resort for 3 nights from 24 -26 December 2011

2 the clients request a Romantic Room for 4 persons 2 room. The contracted rate of this room type for family
is 4,000 THB per room night with breakfast and the clients free ariport-hotel

I want to change the check in dates of your stay . on 25 December because clients busy

I hope you to me What

Amending services isn't part of this email also details are incorrect or missing

from Benajamat who

Thank you so much

Criteria	Score
1. Effectiveness	1 2 3 4
2. Accuracy	1 2 3 4
3. Appropriateness	1 2 3 4
4. Organization	1 2 3 4
5. Vocabulary	1 2 3 4
Total	6/10

Appendix D: The list of experts involved in the content validation and inter-rater reliability process

Names	Institution	Qualifications	Instrument Validation
1. Assistant Professor Dr. Piyatida Changpueng	King Mongkut's University of Technology North Bangkok	ESP Specialist	Needs Assessment Questionnaire
2. Dr. Natjiree Jaturapitakkul	King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi	Assessment and Evaluation Specialist	Needs Assessment Questionnaire /E-mail Test Tasks/Scoring Rubrics
3. Dr. Pornpilai Termsinsawadi	Rajamangala University of Technology Phra Nakhon (RMUTP) North Bangkok Campus	ESP Lecturer	Strategies Interview Questions
4. Dr. Nisa Vongpadungkiat	Tate Learning Centre Co., Ltd.	ESP/Assessment and Evaluation Specialist	E-mail Test Tasks/Scoring Rubrics/Strategies Interview Questions
5. Dr. Prateep Kiratibodee	Burapha University, Chon Buri Campus	ESP/Assessment and Evaluation Specialist	E-mail Test Tasks/Scoring Rubrics/Strategies Interview Questions

6. Mr. Pitanu Boonyaratvej	Arlymear Travel Co., Ltd.	Product Manager	Needs Assessment Questionnaire
7. Mr. Christopher McCowan	Chiangrai Rajabhat University	Lecturer (English Composition)	Inter-rater reliability

BIOGRAPHY

Natthaphon Santhi was born in 1975 in Chiangrai. He received a Bachelor of Education, majoring in English from Chiangrai Rajabhat Institute in 1999. He obtained his M.A. and Ph.D. in English as an International Language (EIL) from Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok in 2006 and 2012 respectively. His work experiences include publishing, IT, and tourism industries during the 11-year living in Bangkok. He is currently working as a lecturer in the Western Languages Program at Chiangrai Rajabhat University. His research interests lie in the areas of language testing, language learning and technology, and discourse analysis.