EXPLORING VOICE IN THAI EFL STUDENTS' PARAGRAPHS

BY

MS. KEWALIN PAWABUNSIRIWONG

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY PROGRAM IN
ENGLISH LANGUAGE STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND LINGUISTICS
FACULTY OF LIBERAL ARTS
THAMMASAT UNIVERSITY
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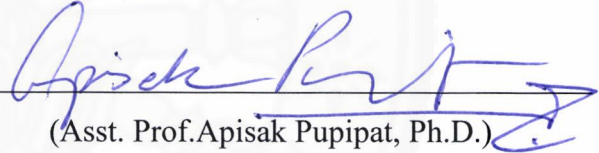DISSERTATION

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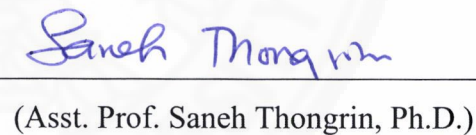
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EXPLORING VOICE IN THAI EFL STUDENTS' PARAGRAPHS

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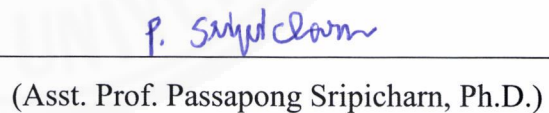
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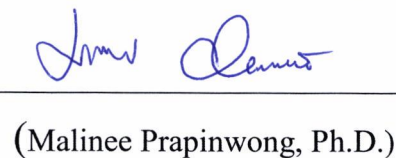(Asst. Prof. Saneh Thongrin, Ph.D.)

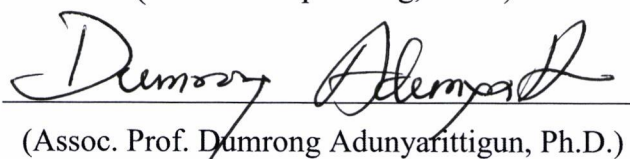Member

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Thesis Title	EXPLORING VOICE IN THAI EFL STUDENTS' PARAGRAPHS
Author	MS. Kewalin Pawabunsiriwong
Degree	PhD in English Language Studies
Major Field/Faculty/University	English Language Studies
	Faculty of Liberal Arts
	Thammasat University
Thesis Advisor	Asst. Prof. Saneh Thongrin, Ph.D
Academic Years	2017

ABSTRACT

The metaphoric 'voice' is germane to good writing, textual quality, and the critical elements in writing instruction and assessment, and advanced academic literacy in a native (L1) English speaking context. The notion of voice, thus, has attracted particular attention among L1 composition scholars and researchers. However, there is still little empirical evidence of the construction of voice among L2 student writers, especially in EFL contexts. Drawing from 70 actual writing samples of opinion and narrative paragraphs, 35 learning reflections written by Thai EFL student writers from two independent groups in conjunction with the course syllabus, quantitative methods of content analysis were employed in this study to scrutinize whether Thai EFL students' written paragraphs show the voice features indicated in the modified rubric, to examine differences between the group of students who were explicitly aware of voice and the group of students who may not have been aware of voice, and to investigate how different text types influence voice in students' written products.

Overall, in opinion paragraphs, the results clearly revealed that student writers in Group 1 who were explicitly aware of voice wrote with a comparatively stronger voice and employed a wider variety of voice features than those in Group 2, who might not have been aware of voice. The statistically significant difference between the compared groups was 0.05. Overall, there were statistical differences between the writing scores of student writers from each group in overall voice strength

($p = 0.025$), in Dimension 2: *manner of idea presentation* ($p = 0.001$) and Dimension 3: *writer and reader presence* ($p = 0.001$), respectively. However, there was no significant difference between the writing scores of student writers in Dimension 1: *presence and clarity of ideas in the content* ($p = 0.206$).

Due to the fact that this current study primarily intends to explore voice in writing by employing the modified analytic rubric of Zhao (2012), it is unfortunate that the modified rubric does not seem to capture voice features that belong to the nature of narrative writing, especially Dimension 1 *(presence and clarity of ideas in the content)*, which assesses the reiteration and directives of written products. This occurs because text types greatly influence voice in students' written products. That is, purpose, register and text structure are the divide between narrative and opinion paragraphs (Coffin, Curry, Goodman, Lillis, & Swann, 2003). Although the modified analytic rubric cannot be appropriately applied to assess voice in narrative paragraphs, possible voice features found in the writing samples will be discussed in detail in Chapters 4 and 5.

This study may serve as a starting point for conducting research on written voice in the EFL context. Apart from shedding light on written voice expressed by EFL student writers, the researcher also hopes that this current study will make the intangible notion of voice more accessible and more easily captured in written discourse. In addition, the results from this study may yield some important implications for L2 writing instruction and assessment and be useful for EFL writing teachers and, in particular, EFL student writers.

Keywords: EFL, written voice, opinion paragraphs, narrative paragraphs

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Conducting research on the notion of voice, which is very novel for many EFL researchers and writing teachers, was a real uphill task for me to perform. Probably due to its elusive and slippery notion, this concept became double challenging from the outset of the dissertation study. Although there were many challenges to overcome while carrying out the research, I always hoped that this work could serve as a small piece of a jigsaw that could lead to great benefits for EFL writing instruction, writing assessment, and particularly our EFL student writers. Without kind assistance and consistent moral support from the following respectful and supportive people, this dissertation study would never have been completed.

First and foremost, I would like to show my sincere gratitude to my advisor, Asst. Prof. Dr. Saneh Thongrin, who is like my second mom. Kindly providing both academic support and guidance throughout my dissertation, she always supports me and gives me a helping hand when I am in need and feel discouraged. Without her kind assistance throughout my PhD studies, I could not have completed my degree. I am deeply indebted to my beloved, respectful, and understanding advisor.

Second, I wish to express my special gratitude to Asst. Prof. Dr. Apisak Pupipat, chair of the dissertation committee, who is very kind, always shows great concern toward me, and never hesitates to give active assistance when necessary. In addition, I have been fortunate to have committee members who are understanding, kind-hearted, concerned and interested. I feel grateful to all committee members, namely Asst. Prof. Dr. Passapong Sripicharn, Asst. Prof. Dr. Kwanjira Chatpunnarangsee, and Dr. Malinee Prapinwong and all supportive lecturers and staff at the Department of English, the Faculty of Liberal Arts, Thammasat University. I really appreciate their kind concern and assistance while studying for my PhD in Bangkok.

Third, thank you to the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at Khon Kaen University and Khon Kaen university, who partially gave financial support for my PhD study. In addition, I would like to especially thank Asst. Prof. Dr. Uthaivan Danvivath and Ms. Suthatip Sophonapinya who are always concerned about me and assist me when in need. Also, thanks a million to my PhD classmates who helped me along the way, especially Dr. Pranee Seenak, who is like my sister, for taking the best care of me

throughout my PhD life here. I am also deeply indebted to her for her dedication and company.

Last but not least, I would like to dedicate my dissertation to my mother and my older brother, who are also supportive, understanding, and patient with me. Without their warm love and spiritual support embracing my heart, I might have given up many times when challenges arose and would not have completed this degree. Also, thank you to those who always encouraged and helped me along my PhD path until I could finally complete my doctorate.

Miss Kewalin Pawabunsiriwong

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Rationale of the Study

"Writing is the painting of the voice."

-- Voltaire

Serving as a powerful means of conveying our thoughts and information across time, effective written communication is increasingly recognized as a paramount consideration for academic, career, and business success as well as leading to more global opportunities (Hamp-Lyons, 2014; Reichelt, Lefkowitz, Rinnert, & Schultz, 2012; Sparks, Song, Brantley, & Liu, 2014; Sainsbury, 2009; Yagelski, 2018). Writing effectively in standard written English is particularly important in higher education (Sparks et al., 2014). With regard to its significance, written competence in English helps increase the number of opportunities for students and scholars wishing to enter the world of globalization, where professional English speakers without a native-speaking background are more and more in demand (Canagarajah & Jerskey, 2009). In addition, writing can be advantageous for those wishing to use other forms of communication, such as giving talks or speeches, filming video clips for online streaming, performing plays on the radio, or making television documentaries (Day, 2013).

We can clearly see that English still plays a prominent role as the major language for communication; those who are skilled in the formal genres of writing will benefit from more global work opportunities. In addition, due to the spread of English around the world and the growing importance of written communications – which range from the informal language of social networks to more formal academic writing in higher education – writing in English as a foreign language (EFL) has gradually received more and more considerable attention (Kramsch, 2014, Lee, 2016; Matsuda, Ortmeier-Hooper, & Matsuda, 2009; Naghdipour, 2016; Weigle, 2013a). Similarly, the Internet has become an influential platform for people to communicate in this era; therefore, written communication plays, and will continue to play, a significant role in the 21st century (Silva, 2016; Weigle, 2013a).

With its long-established role in Thailand, English can be considered of prime importance in Thailand's language education policy because it is deemed the only foreign language which must be studied at both school and university, with graduation from the latter depending on success in English examinations (Baker & Jarunthawatchai, 2017). Furthermore, it plays a crucial role as the official working language of ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations).

The English language is beneficial to Thai students and useful for successfully communicating with others, succeeding in education, finding new knowledge, making a living, and understanding other cultures and how the global community should work; as a result, English is now a compulsory foreign language subject from grade 1 in primary education through level 12 in secondary education (Office of the Basic Education Commission, 2008). In higher education, the Commission of Higher Education has pursued a policy to raise English language standards according to three major aspects: university policy with regard to English language, practices in ELT, and assessment of students' ability with regard to English usage (Baker & Jarunthawatchai, 2017).

Although the English language in Thailand is recognized as having the status of a foreign language, it plays a significant role in an academic milieu and has gradually become the language of business, tourism, social interaction, consumer products, advertising, and other spheres (Chamcharatsri, 2010; Foley, 2005). With the increasing number of companies cooperating with foreigners at both regional and international levels, English has consequently been used as a means to communicate, negotiate, and carry out transactions between Thais and other parties, who are either native English speakers or non-native English speakers (Wiriyachitra, 2002). Like other countries in the Expanding Circle, English mainly serves needs as an international medium in business and commerce, diplomacy, finance, etc. in Thailand (Kachru & Nelson, 2006). In addition to its role as the working language for international organizations, English is widely used in several other domains. It plays the role of a common language used by conference participants, international bankers, and those working in business and commerce. It is used to advertise global brand names, and by actors in TV and film, pop singers, and tour guides. It is the language of universities and other institutes of higher education, and it is used internationally with regard to

safety and law. In the fields of interpretation and translation, it is used as a 'relay language', and in science, technology and the internet, it is used to transfer and disseminate information. (Foley, 2005, p. 226). Proficiency in English is, therefore, a desirable skill that will allow anyone with it to get a better position in a company (Chamcharatsri, 2010).

However, many language teachers are aware that teaching writing is more difficult than teaching other skills, especially to non-native English speakers, because writing is the most demanding of the language skills and requires students to naturally reflect on their speaking, listening, and reading experience in their language as well as syntactic and semantic knowledge (Bowen, Madson, & Hilferty, 1985; Leki, 1991; Watcharapunyawong & Usaha, 2013). It is also an integrated skill compelling students to have adequate knowledge of a large number of components, namely writing patterns, basic structural elements, and vocabulary.

Undoubtedly, writing well in English is not easy and is challenging for most Thai students, who are foreign learners of English. They study English as a Foreign Language (EFL), which means that they do not often speak or write English with their peers outside the classroom but mostly study it at school as a mandatory subject (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996). Thai EFL student writers, as a result, have limited opportunities to be exposed to real world English outside the classroom, as well as little writing experience in their daily lives.

Furthermore, in terms of learning a foreign language, many people pay more attention to learning to speak than learning to write (Dudeney & Hockly, 2010; Padgate, 2008). Likewise, teaching students to write paragraphs has been neglected in many schools because numerous teachers perceive themselves as language teachers rather than writing ones (Padgate, 2008). For this reason, writing English is apparently not paid as much attention as it is supposed to be. However, the ability to write English as a second/foreign language is becoming widely recognized as an important skill for education, business, and personal reasons (Weigle, 2002). Recently, many colleges and universities have started to offer more and more writing courses – such as Writing for Specific Purposes, Academic Writing, and Paragraph Writing – to students who want to improve their writing skills (Watcharapunyawong & Usaha, 2013).

With regard to its importance, it can be seen that paragraph writing courses are indispensable to undergraduate students in Thailand because a number of major public universities provide paragraph writing courses as compulsory subjects for their undergraduate students, especially English majors. However, the names of the courses, such as *English Composition I, Paragraph Writing, English Writing*, etc., may vary according to each institution. Educators and program administrators may consider it necessary to provide these paragraph writing courses for their undergrads in order to lay a strong foundation of writing skills that allow students to go further in other forms of writing.

In my point of view, being able to write a good single paragraph is important and may be considered a good starting point for L2 university students to improve their writing performance. This point is also strongly supported by Grabe and Kaplan (1996) in that EFL students are required to have numerous English writing skills, including skills in simple paragraph writing. The paragraph's importance is defined by the fact that it is like "a convenient unit" that can serve all forms of literary work or be a part of something larger (Strunk & White, 2005, p. 31; Trosky, & Wood, 1972). Writing an effective paragraph can lead on to writing a good essay or in another genre of written language that L2 learners need to acquire: academic, job-related, or personal writing (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010). Writing effective paragraphs, thus, is significant in terms of helping L2 learners succeed in college and advance in their future career.

In the burgeoning information age, skill in writing a good paragraph is particularly significant in terms of knowing how to effectively deliver facts, express one's thoughts and opinions, persuade other people, form an argument, exemplify, etc. (Popescu, Cohen-Vida, & Constantin, 2015). Writing paragraphs is thus essential for students so they can use the writing skills acquired in a writing course to write a wide variety of paragraphs in school, e.g. for answering examination questions, summarizing information, writing reaction essays and short reports, and deploying the skills in other situations as required (Hirvela, Hyland, & Manchon, 2016; Langan, 2012). In addition, writing paragraphs can benefit students in terms of strengthening their skills as readers, for the reason that they have to always be mindful of the ideas that they are trying to convey, as well as prove whether they can provide enough supporting details in that

piece of writing or not. Most importantly, paragraph writing will promote the writer to be a stronger thinker since s/he needs to provide a solidly reasoned paragraph and master all writing skills to share effective paragraphs (Langan, 2012).

Among the writing genres student writers practice in writing classes, writing narrative and opinion paragraphs is vital in terms of laying the foundations for all types of writing. Generally, whenever we talk or write in everyday life, we frequently express our opinions or points of view on various issues (Hogue, 2017). Likewise, all types of writing – including description, exposition, and persuasion – rest on opinion because it "imparts a sense of the writer's voice or authorial presence" in all writing (Wilbers, 2016, p. 167). In this sense, it is to the writers' advantage if they can incorporate information and ideas into written texts and present their opinions with voice effectively.

Generally, what a writer composes is closely associated with the writer's worldview, which is composed of a writer's experience, attitudes, values, assumptions, beliefs, and so on (Johnstone, 2008). With regard to values, other people want to know what we think and how we perceive the world. Similarly, readers want to know what writers think about a subject and what attitudes writers hold toward it. Writers consequently have to decide what they want to impart to readers, how they should organize their thoughts into written texts, what stylistics they should choose to convey their thoughts. Hence, this study focuses on narrative and opinion paragraphs, which encompass the necessary components of paragraphs for beginners or novice EFL student writers to master. The researcher is particularly interested in whether Thai EFL student writers compose their narrative and opinion paragraphs with voice, and if so, what voice features may be discovered in both of those types of writing.

1.2 Statement of the Problems

One of the major drawbacks of living in an EFL environment is that it may hinder EFL students' opportunities for exposure to the target language, namely the English language (McDonough & Fuentes, 2015; Reichelt et al., 2012). With limited opportunities to be exposed to real world English outside the classroom, writing well in English undoubtedly tends to be elusive for many Thai students, who are foreign learners of English mainly studying English in school. The English language has been

accounted as beneficial for Thai students and useful for communicating with others, succeeding in education, looking for new knowledge, making a living, and understanding other cultures and how the global community should work; as a result, English is now a compulsory foreign language subject from grade 1 in primary education through grade 12 in secondary education (Office of the Basic Education Commission, 2008).

When comparing the extent to which EFL student writers encounter the language, we can clearly realize that EFL student writers have fewer opportunities to be exposed to the English language than ESL student writers, who are in English-speaking countries and at least have the opportunity to acquire the second language in their daily lives. In addition, EFL students are likely to acquire much of their English as a foreign language from English classes (school and university). Students learn the English language from the textbooks used in each course, most of which are commercial textbooks. As such, it is essential that writing teachers teach EFL student writers how to use voice in writing and help them develop their voice in writing.

Regarding the learning of a foreign language, many people pay more attention to learning to speak than learning to write (Padgate, 2008). More importantly, Padgate (2008) asserts that the teaching of paragraph writing has been neglected in many schools because numerous teachers perceive themselves as language teachers rather than writing ones. It is apparent that as a result, writing English is not paid as much attention as it is supposed to be. According to the results from Dueraman's study in 2015, Thai EFL undergraduates majoring in English – with approximately 10 years of experience studying English before entering the university – revealed that they had never been taught writing, even in Thai (L1). However, as mentioned earlier, the ability to write English as a second/foreign language is becoming widely recognized as an important skill for education, business, and personal reasons (Weigle, 2002). English majors especially need to write well, since writing skills for work are essential. English majors should be prepared to learn how to successfully and effectively communicate through writing.

As described above, we, as writing teachers, should be aware that writing classrooms for our EFL student writers are the major places where our students can practice and learn to write in English (McDonough & Fuentes, 2015). However, in

many writing classes, writing teachers tend to focus more on grammar. According to Davies and Pearse (2000), the most prevalent writing practice in many English language courses tends to be a combination of learning grammar and function. For instance, writing teachers may provide sentence completion exercises or guided composition for their students. As such, some student writers may primarily focus on accuracy or error-free writing rather than other important writing issues. They may attempt to avoid mistakes that may undermine credibility in their writing. In contrast, practice of higher-level writing skills may involve writing tasks that develop learners' abilities to take examinations at the intermediate and advanced levels, and to write authentically in a business or academic context (Davies & Pearse, 2000).

Returning to the rudiments of writing, writers must bear in mind that concerns regarding language should not take precedence over ideas they intend to express. In order to write well, writers need to think clearly (Gáliková, 2016). Likewise, Babbage (2010) emphasizes that ideas are the essence of writing in terms of strong inspirational sources, the desire to know, performing research, asking questions, and written work. Best thinking, thus, can foreground best writing. Words represent our thoughts; sentences embody our ideas; and paragraphs illustrate perceptions (Babbage, 2010). With regard to the importance of ideas, results from the study revealed, essays rated as having a higher number of ideas which showed flexibility, originality, and elaboration were considered to be of better quality (Crossley, Muldner, & McNamara, 2016). Therefore, the ability to form sound ideas and to express those thoughts effectively in written language is of great significance to writers.

In many writing classrooms in Thailand, error analysis and sentence structure are more emphasized than the content and the voice of student writers. By doing that, student writers who are considered novice writers may lack a sense of being a writer and do not know to use their voice in their written products appropriately. Moreover, not many teachers and students know what voice is and how voice is important for their writing. When scoring students' compositions, five aspects of analytical scoring are frequently employed: content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010). Apparently, the concept of voice, which can strengthen students' written products and can make writing more interesting, engaging, and coherent for the target readers, is ignored.

According to an example in Murray's article (1969), the experienced composition teacher will prioritize logical ideas in student writing rather than grammatical problems in student writing. He further explained that when students developed logic in their writing, it tended to result in the disappearance of grammatical issues (Murray, 1969). Another responsibility of writing teachers is to help their students to learn writing skills and know how to deal with their own problems. In doing so, it helps student writers improve their own writing skills. Furthermore, writing teachers need to find balance with regard to correction of grammatical errors, consideration of culture, choice of genre, motivating students, and focusing on rhetorical structure and content in FL writing instruction (Reichelt et.al. 2012)

It is essential for us to lay the foundations of writing skills, both at a macro level (e.g. forming ideas, critical thinking) and a micro level (e.g. word choice, sentence construction), and teach more complex issues in composition beyond the issues of grammar or sentence level to our EFL student writers, such as the notion of voice, how to develop ideas, etc. Moreover, writing teachers should introduce the concept of a rhetorical situation to student writers so as to help them strengthen their writing ability by analyzing a particular purpose of writing, a target audience, a stance, genre, and a medium in each piece of writing (Bullock & Weinberg, 2009).

Expectations to articulate thoughts into words and write like native-speakers of that target language do are particularly prevalent. This leads to a lot of research on written discourse in second language writing that is likely to pay more attention to **"generalizable discourse features" than to "individual variations" (Matsuda, 2001, p. 35). Those L2 learners may wish to produce written texts which sound reasonable, logical, smart, intelligible, near-native and meet some standards of native-speakers. As a result, there has been a tremendous amount of research in second language studies which are linguistic-oriented and mostly concerned with describing the functions of the target language and its features at a variety of levels — which include sentence, paragraph and discourse as well as features which are specific to a particular genre. Meanwhile, issues which are concerned with different aspects in the practice of discourse – for example, the mode, idiolect, and voice of an individual speaker – have gained more and more attention in L1 written discourse research but have been overlooked in the field of L2 writing research (Matsuda, 2001).

Crossley et al. (2016) suggested that other non-linguistic features of writing – such as firmness of arguments, opinion development, appropriate exemplification, grammatical issues, and mechanics or analytical studies or other distinguishing qualities – needed to be investigated. Those further investigations would help provide more profound insights into more samples of successful writing. Likewise, Leki, Cumming, and Silva (2008) called attention to research on developing personal voice in L2 writing, which is a source of unanswered questions in the field of L2 writing. To fill the gap, the researcher believes that embracing the notion of voice in writing classes can help solve these problems by enabling students to strengthen arguments, develop points of view, use appropriate examples, and provide sample analytic evaluation.

Voice is a fundamental property of good writing. The issue of voice has received considerable critical attention from scholars and researchers in the fields of discourse, literature, composition studies, L2 writing, and language assessment (Hyland, 2008; Zhao, 2016). However, the notion of voice in academic writing remains a controversial concept due to its wide array of meanings and various metaphorical interpretations (Tardy, 2012). Scholars, researchers, and educators explain the term 'voice' in writing in numerous ways depending on what perspective they perceive the written voice from. Some may closely relate voice to style. For example, Gere (1985) describes voice as how writing sounds to the reader and how the writer's choice of pronoun and other words affect the writing. Bowden (1995) points out, voice in writing can be "identified variously as style, persona, stance, or ethos … has never been very clearly defined, and, as a consequence, there has never been a consistent methodology for how to use it in the teaching of writing" (p. 173). Alternatively, Matsuda (2001) states that voice is the combined effect of utilizing features of a discursive and non-discursive nature, purposely or unintentionally chosen by users of the language from a set of devices which are accessible in a social context and always changing. In addition, Hyland (2008) claims that writers often utilize voice to point towards the methods writers use to give opinions, express authority and presence in the text.

Despite the fact that the definition of voice is defined in various ways, it is still vague and perplexes many researchers and teachers who have to explain and teach it to student writers. There is also no consensus on how to put the notion of voice into practice in the classroom, in such a way that contributes to the improvement of students'

writing quality. Many scholars still believe that voice is a key element that foregrounds good writing. For this reason, introducing and teaching the notion of voice in writing classes is valuable in terms of writing instruction and assessment (Zhao, 2016).

As writing teachers of English, we should cultivate a sense of being a writer in our students. We should encourage them to project themselves as the writer in that writing piece; raise awareness of the presence of imagined readers while they are composing; and have them practice negotiating the intended written messages in their writing pieces. Learning to use voice in writing will help strengthen students' written communication as well as improving their writing performance. In doing so, student writers will know how to appropriately and clearly articulate their thoughts in words, which can assist them in successfully communicating with readers.

Interestingly, Spence (2014) points out that students' writing can serve as a window into the world of English learners, particularly when we examine how they write with voice; how they employ literary devices such as figures of speech, alliteration, and repetition; and how their L1 affects their written work. It is interesting to look at the way students uniquely craft their writing through experiences with family members, aspects of their culture, other languages, and events currently taking place, all of which can be regarded as examples of voice in the context of the students' lives, (Spence, 2014). Doing this allows us, writing teachers, and other students studying their peers' writing, to see how individual students perceive the world.

With its great value, the notion of voice has been widely addressed and has played a bigger role in the study of different aspects of L1 writing contexts, in both writing instruction and assessment (Zhao, 2010). Indeed. voice is of paramount importance in terms of the salient features of good writing (Elbow, 2000; Matsuda & Tardy, 2007), the attributes of textual quality (Humphrey, Walton, & Davidson, 2014) and advanced academic literacy (Matsuda & Tardy, 2007; Matsuda & Jeffery, 2012).

Using empirical evidence gathered from L2 research studies which focused on analytic voice rubrics, the measurement of voice in rubric development for EFL student writers, and paragraph writing textbooks in Thailand, as well as observations on common practices of Thai writing teachers, it was found that students are rarely prepared to write with voice. There is no clear guidance that EFL teachers and students can follow to write with voice in order to make their writing more compelling.

Moreover, very few studies have explicitly focused on the teaching of voice for EFL undergraduate writers, or even for writing instruction in Thailand. Probably the concept of voice is rather new for most teachers and students in Thailand.

If we, L2 writing teachers, consider the notion of voice as paramount and germane to the L1 writing contexts, we should introduce the concept and teach our L2 student writers to write with voice. Not only do we prepare our L2 students to perform well in educational contexts where their L1 is used (as cited in Zhao, 2010), we also cultivate the requisite writing skills in our students. Accordingly, the researcher realizes that it is vital to teach ESL/EFL undergraduate students how to construct their voice when writing in writing classes, because students, especially EFL student writers, learn the English language by reading in school and by learning to follow the conventions they encounter in textbooks and classrooms. Zhao (2010) also highlights the need for more research on voice in L2 contexts, in both writing instruction and assessment.

Therefore, the researcher intends to bridge this gap by examining the extent to which Thai EFL students write with voice and exploring voice features expressed in their written paragraphs in this under-represented context. Apart from shedding light on written voice expressed by EFL student writers, the researcher also hopes that this current study will make the intangible notion of voice more accessible and more easily captured in written discourse. This study, therefore, will provide some examples of individual voice features in each voice dimension so that the readers will see an overall picture of how Thai EFL students express voice in their written products.

Based on the conceptual framework developed by Ivanic and Camps (2001), Hyland's (2008) interactional model of voice, Zhao's (2012) revised voice rubric and other relevant models, the researcher investigates ways in which voice can be appropriately expressed in paragraph writing, by Thai EFL students in the EFL context. This study will scrutinize closely the notion of voice, the construction of voice by L2 undergraduate student writers, and more importantly, voice-related features expressed by EFL student writers in the context of an L2 writing classroom. In addition, the researcher will also discuss the notion of voice; what linguistic and non-linguistic features can indicate voice in writing paragraphs; how voice can be constructed for ESL/EFL student writers; and how ESL/EFL student writers can integrate voice in writing paragraphs. It is expected that this research will strengthen students' written

communication as well as improving their writing performance. Also, its applications should be helpful for writing teachers who may wish to integrate the concept of voice into writing classes and to revitalize the construction of voice in students' writing.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The overarching aim of this dissertation study is to shed light on written voice expressed by EFL student writers. Thus, in order to enhance understanding with regard to the notion of voice in the EFL context, the objectives of this study are as follows:

1. to scrutinize whether Thai EFL students' written paragraphs show the voice features indicated in the modified rubric;

2. to examine differences between the group of students who are explicitly aware of voice and the group of students who may not be aware of voice; and

3. to investigate how different text types influence voice in students' written products.

1.4 Research Questions

The current study will seek to address the following research questions:

1. Do students' written paragraphs show the voice features indicated in the modified rubric?

2. Are there any differences between the group of students who are explicitly aware of voice and the group of students who may not be aware of voice? What are these elements?

3. How do text types influence voice in students' written products?

1.5 Significance of the Study

Thinking of written communication as a personal transaction between writers and target readers, writers are advised to write about subjects that convey their thoughts, ideas, and values, and to use language that creates relationships between writers and target audiences (Wilbers, 2016). Writers should bear in mind that they should use language that helps them connect to their readers, and not use language which sounds unauthentic and puts off their audiences (Wilbers, 2016). As a result,

writers should convey a sense of individuality, humanity, and warmth in writing. More importantly, Wilber advises that writers should use language that is congruent with the occasion, and sounds natural and genuine to the writer's ear. In addition, writers should not use language that is overly formal with regard to the occasion and should avoid using writing that appears awkward or needlessly formal. In doing so, writers can better connect to the reader and their written voice will be better heard by the reader accordingly.

Voice is germane to advanced academic literacy (Matsuda & Tardy, 2007; Matsuda & Jeffery, 2012). The notion of voice will help student writers raise their awareness of the power of language, be sensitive to reader expectations, and increase interaction between the writer and the reader throughout the written texts. Based on the concept of the rhetorical stance, Booth elucidates that when making an effort in a communicative context, writers must work with three fundamental elements at the same time: making an argument, capturing the reader's attention, and conveying one's voice (as cited in Pixton, 1988). Kramsch (2014) also agrees that it is important to teach students to manifest their voice through writing and learn to be aware of the global communicative situation, instead of only focusing on error correction in sentences, paragraphs, or other written texts.

At the undergraduate level, is it the appropriate time and is it our responsibility, as writing instructors, to move beyond teaching students how to construct error-free compositions (Craig, 2013) to other important issues that can contribute to the development of the requisite writing skills that student writers may apply in the future? The notion of voice, therefore, can be a potential alternative that writing instructors should pay attention to in order to encourage creativity and a sense of authorship among EFL students. The awareness of voice, which will be raised more explicitly in our writing classes, is aligned with the 21st century skill set which will contribute to facilitating students' learning, supporting students' futures, and preparing them for their future work.

I think in order to fully support our EFL students in ultimately improving their writing skills to reach their full potential, writing teachers need to change their EFL writing classrooms from a place where student writers lean heavily on practicing grammar to ones where students are encouraged to grow as individual student writers

who can ultimately improve their writing skills as well as uniquely crafting their writing. In order to reach that ultimate goal, we need to encourage our students to express their voice through their writing, provide a good understanding of the notion of voice, raise awareness of the essential elements of voice, and equip them with the literary devices and other writing techniques they can apply in the future. Writing with voice will also facilitate our students to open a window to the world, and step into a world of globalization and global opportunities where they can share their experiences, lives, culture, and current events through their writing.

There has been very little research examining voice in EFL students' written products in the EFL context. There is still a call to conduct more research on voice construction in L2 classroom-based assessment settings in order to accumulate additional empirical evidence on voice expressed by L2 student writers (Zhao, 2010). As a response, this dissertation study aims to explore voice in Thai EFL students' written paragraphs by employing a modified rubric specifically tailored for this study. Few attempts have ever been made to formally examine whether voice really exists in Thai EFL students' written products and what voice features appear in such products. Only with the voice rubric can the researcher gain more in-depth information on the empirical evidence of voice features expressed by these Thai EFL student writers in their opinion and narrative paragraphs. In addition, empirical results yielded from this dissertation study may have some important implications for both L2 writing instruction and assessment, especially in the EFL context.

Apart from that, this dissertation study intends to provide EFL writing teachers and student writers with a better understanding of the notion of voice and some examples of voice features that may help to improve writing with voice in English. Like other studies on L2 writing, this study may be another piece of a jigsaw which highlights what learners should learn and what teachers may provide for effective writing instruction on written voice. One of the ultimate goals for teachers of writing is to foster our student writers to be writers. Thus, it is important for writing teachers to teach students how to write, not just what to write (Mora-Flores, 2009). To conclude, writing instruction with voice integrated will contribute to facilitating students' learning, supporting students' futures, and preparing them for their future work.

1.6 Scope and Limitations of the Study

The scope of this study was limited to an exploration of Thai EFL students' written paragraphs which show the voice features indicated in the modified analytic voice rubric, from 2016 to 2017. In particular, this study focused only on the general prose of opinion and narrative paragraphs, not other types of paragraphs or discipline-specific essay writing. Based only on the conceptual framework developed by Ivanic and Camps (2001), Hyland's (2008) interactional model of voice, Zhao's (2012) revised voice rubric and other relevant models, the researcher investigated ways in which voice can be appropriately expressed in paragraph writing by Thai EFL students, in the EFL context.

Thus, the analyzed data in this study were derived from three data sources: 70 students' written products, and 35 class journals written by Thai EFL students enrolled in the paragraph writing course of a large university situated on the outskirts of Bangkok, in conjunction with the course syllabus. Students' written products were derived from 35 opinion paragraphs and 35 narrative paragraphs from two writing sections.

It is a fact that the notion of voice is rather new for EFL contexts/ researchers and I am well aware of this. Although the amount of writing samples was rather small compared to other studies, this study drew samples by its very nature. These samples were authentic, primary data found in real educational contexts at the college level – Thai EFL writing classrooms with different instructors. In addition, these samples were written by Thai EFL student writers, which fits exactly with the major purpose of this study. The primary purpose of this dissertation study is to explore if written paragraphs show the voice features indicated in the modified rubric. Thus, the exploration of these Thai EFL writing samples may help to shed light on the notion of voice in the EFL educational context in a certain dimension.

1.7 Definitions of Terms

Key terms which are employed throughout this dissertation are clarified as follows:

EFL: English as a Foreign Language is abbreviated as EFL — meaning that students study English as a foreign language in a setting where the target language is less widely spoken.

Opinion Paragraphs: Writing an opinion paragraph allows student writers to express how they feel about a subject by using logic. In this study, students were not required to use statements, scientific data or statistics to support their opinions.

Narrative Paragraphs: Writing a narrative paragraph allows student writers to tell personal stories or impart to readers how they reacted to particular experiences.

Written Voice: Written voice can be explained as how writers compose texts, and how they have to simultaneously make sure that ideas are present and clearly presented in such texts, consider how such ideas are presented, and take into account the presence of both writer and reader.

CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter reviews the literature concerned with relevant issues of writing in L2 and the notion of voice. Chapter 2 begins by discussing the foundations of L2 writing, the teaching of writing, writing assessment, good writing, rhetorical situation, reader awareness and paragraph writing. The rest of this chapter contributes to issues of voice in writing and related studies on voice in written discourse. With regard to the notion of voice, the literature review encompasses the origin of voice, various definitions and interpretations of its notion, voice in writing instruction, assessment, voice-related features and ends with related research on voice in written discourse.

2.1 Issues of Writing Instruction

It is axiomatic that we write to express our ideas as written texts, but we primarily use language for communication (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996; Halliday & Hasan, 1989). Writing, thus, is about communicating the writer's ideas and conveying meanings, attitudes, and feelings through written texts. As mentioned previously, we tend to write in order to communicate with others – the readers. For this reason, we should keep in mind that we do not compose a piece of writing so as to just transfer groups of words or sentences to others, but so as to impart meanings to each other instead (Eggins, 2004). To put it another way, we should write something that is meaningful to readers. In doing so, writers have to determine the purpose of writing and have information intended to convey meaning to a specific audience, structuring written products with acceptable "linguistic, psychological, and sociological principles" (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996, p. 41).

2.1.1 Writing in L2

Using English requires knowledge beyond linguistic structure because it also involves an awareness of various situations which allow English to be used in a way that can be and distinguished and predicted, and of the possibilities to shape a response to those who have used the language creatively (Crystal, 2003). Similarly, Wilbers (2016) affirms that writing is multifaceted in a way that writers need to be

keenly aware of different aspects of writing: expression that needs to be appropriately adjusted to the purpose, audience, and material; clarity of the argument; coherence of organization; sufficient support that is pertinent, particular, in detail and convincing; and correctness that conforms to spelling conventions, rules of grammar and punctuation, and typical usage. Indeed, writing well is, therefore, apparently challenging for many people because it encompasses a wide range of multifaceted components, such as knowledge of basic structural elements, genres, an understanding of the topics, the awareness of the readers, and adequate knowledge of vocabulary, and so forth.

With regard to associating writing with cognitive activities, writing is deemed a cognitive skill by some scholars. It incorporates a large number of cognitive activities such as keeping writing purposes in mind, considering one's audience, being concerned about which main points and supporting details to put in the composition, a complete sense of textual organization, and language appropriate to the audience (Weigle, 2005). Alternatively, writing is thought of as a social activity rather than a cognitive skill by some scholars. For instance, Street noted that being able to read was not a self-contained cognitive skill but it was an integral social activity that varied in form with regard to reading practices and necessity in reflecting distinctions of power (cited in Leki et al., 2008). As a result, writing teachers are advised to perceive writing as a social practice rather than skill when teaching academic writing, and this will foreground relevant concepts such as genre or discourse (Street, 2015). However, Graham and Harris (2013) point out that writing is more than a social activity since one is required to apply various processes in cognitive and affective forms because writers have to manipulate substantial skills, knowledge, strategies, and processes.

According to Polio and Williams (2009), second language (L2) writing is deemed a multifaceted process which includes both the series of cognitive actions in second language acquisition (SLA), and the genres, intentions, and principles of the group which takes part in L2 discourse. They further explain that L2 writing embodies (1) L2 acquisition, (2) text creation, and (3) adaptation of texts to a particular group engaging in discourse (Polio & Williams, 2009). As a result, when composing texts, L2 student writers expect to be engaged in "linguistic issues such as accuracy, complexity, the lexicon…fluency and cohesion…higher level matters such as learning the structure

of specific genres, understanding audience conventions, or adapting to cultural writing norms (Polio, 2012, p. 319)."

Many of us realize that although writing is not an innate ability, it is a learnable skill that can be mastered through a process and can be improved by practice (Glau & Jacobsen, 2001; Hogan, 2013; Langan, 2012; Wilbers, 2016). However, concerns regarding how to write English effectively have arisen because language teachers have realized that teaching writing is more arduous than teaching other skills, especially to non-native English speaking students, who are likely to have limited knowledge of the target language and little writing experience. Apart from that, writing is the most demanding language skill, entailing students' natural reflections on their speaking, listening, and reading (Bowen et al., 1985; Leki, 1991). Results from the study by Raimes indicated that L2 student writers frequently struggled more with challenges and problems than L1 student writers did, i.e. manipulating language, having a limited vocabulary, needing more time to compose (as cited in Leki et al., 2008). In fact, L2 learners require increased amounts of everything: they need a larger number of written-text examples to learn from, further practice in writing, better chances to develop writing strategies which work, more knowledge of genre, further practice to improve in vocabulary and grammar, and more opinions given on their writing (Weigle, 2013b). However, Reid (2006) came to an interesting conclusion in that this does not mean that L2 student writers "are any less capable cognitively" than others, but acquisition and usage of a second language, or another language, and writing for readers who had different expectations with regard to linguistics, rhetoric, and culture were incredibly challenging for L2 student writers (p. 87).

2.1.2 Teaching Writing

Apparently, grammar and vocabulary are prioritized at the initial stages of language learning; therefore, language structure or grammar is primarily focused on when teaching writing (Weigle, 2013a). Later, after students have improved in language usage, teaching is increasingly focused on developing content and organization, while particular linguistic aspects of writing are covered less (Weigle, 2013a).

In many writing classrooms, the teachers may view writing as a "conduit metaphor of language" which represents the writer's thoughts which are transformed into words for transferring to the reader, who receives them and finds them as the original thoughts were intended – in other words, the meanings relate to the words and it is readily understood that the writing reflects the meanings rather than building them (Hyland, 2009). Some writing teachers may teach their students to write by not mentioning the context and the reader. Student writers, consequently, may fail to be aware of the need to keep target readers in mind and think about the context while composing written texts.

In general, when designing lessons, writing teachers should provide two types of writing task in their writing classes: formal and informal tasks. Typically, formal writing tasks include personal stories; explanatory or persuasive writing; first- or second-degree research studies; narratives of literacy; or professional writing assignments specific to genre, such as laboratory reports, business plans, legal correspondence, or published reports on real-life situations; while informal writing could include personal blogs or journals; free writing in the classroom; or written assignments to be completed at home (Ferris, 2012). As a result, opinion writing is considered another genre of formal writing tasks important for EFL student writers to learn and practice. Likewise, Hinkel (2015) agrees that students should study the use of writing as a method to offer opinions and support them; show understanding of what they are studying; and convey both real-life experiences and those created by the imagination so as to prepare for college and career readiness. Obviously, point of view often becomes an integral part of all kinds of writing, such as description and exposition, as well as persuasion, because all types of writing make the reader aware of the voice or presence of the author, and in all kinds of writing, point of view can be utilized in a way which benefits the author (Wilbers, 2016). Ferris (2012) suggests that teachers should offer ample opportunities for students to experience and practice various writing tasks, and should provide them with written assignments on various topics that allow them to compose pieces on topics they are interested in.

Another critical factor that contributes to students' writing improvement is teacher feedback. Based on Semke's work, focusing only on errors or grammar when providing feedback did not lead to an improvement in content, although

providing feedback which focused on the intended message helped student writers to lengthen their compositions (as cited in Snyder, Nielson, & Kurzer, 2016). Teachers, as a result, should prioritize ideas, content, and organization over language issues so as to assist students in improving their writing skills.

With regard to composition textbooks, many paragraph writing books pay attention to topic sentences, supporting sentences, concluding sentences, unity, and coherence (Hogan, 2013). However, voice is rarely paid attention to in the teaching of paragraph writing. So far, the researcher has realized that writing classrooms for English L2 student writers and EFL English majors are the main places where EFL student writers can practice writing and learn the English language (McDonough & Fuentes, 2015). It is necessary for writing teachers to teach EFL students about more complex issues in composition, beyond general concerns regarding grammar or sentence level, and raise awareness of such issues.

Inevitably, expectations to articulate thoughts into words and write like native-speakers of that target language do are particularly prevalent for L2 learners. This leads to extensive research on written discourse in second language writing that is likely to pay more attention to generalizable aspects of discourse than it is to differences based on the individual (Matsuda, 2001).

Those L2 learners may wish to produce written texts which sound reasonable, logical, smart, intelligible, near-native and meet standards of native-speakers to a certain extent. As a result, there has been a tremendous amount of research in second language studies which are linguistic-oriented and mostly related to describing features of the language and how it functions at a variety of levels — such as sentence structure, paragraph organization, and discourse in addition to features of a particular genre, while issues surrounding wide-ranging aspects in the performing of discourse – including ways the writer incorporates style, idiolect and voice, which have gained more and more attention in L1 written discourse research – have been overlooked in the field of L2 writing research (Matsuda, 2001).

2.1.3 Writing Assessment

According to Hattie and Timperley (2007), effective teaching operates in concert with both conveying details and understanding to learners (or giving them

constructive assignments, surroundings, and learning opportunities) and assessment and evaluation of how learners comprehend such information. When teaching in classrooms, teachers should inform students of the criteria which will be used to evaluate students' written products. In doing so, students will become familiar with the ways teachers mark and be able to write effectively (Hedge, 2008). Without doing this, students may have problems and be unable to evaluate their own work, and they may feel that their evaluations seldom match those of their teachers (Giridharan, 2012). It is also suggested that teachers should place importance on global issues (such as organization) in early drafts and wait until later drafts to give feedback on local issues (such as grammar and mechanics). In other circumstances, students may think that local issues are more important than global issues (Montgomery & Baker, 2007).

In any assessment, it is crucial that students know "what counts as good" (Smith & Swain, 2016, p. 7). In general, there is a broad range of approaches to grading writing samples. For example, writing teachers may apply analytic or holistic scoring to evaluate students' written products. Holistic rating which can indicate the overall quality of written products is the most prevalent scoring method for large-scale writing assessments; on the contrary, a scoring option such as analytic rating is likely to be chosen in classroom contexts (Grabe, & Kaplan, 1996). Holistic scoring emphasizes the quality of the whole essay rather than the sum of individual facets of writing assessment (Neff-Lippman, 2012). Holistic rubrics put all the features together, whereas analytic rubrics delineate each feature of the writing separately, i.e. content, structure, sentence fluency, and so on (Smith & Swain, 2017).

Analytic rating scales, or analytic rubrics or grading rubrics, remain ubiquitous in grading students' writing and are beneficial for giving feedback on specific areas of writing to student writers (Neff-Lippman, 2012; Grabe & Kaplan, 1996). Analytic scales determine the criteria by which written products will be judged as well as explicating teachers' expectations for that writing. For this reason, analytic scales are useful for classroom purposes with regard to both writing instruction and informational feedback given to student writers (Weigle, 2013a). Descriptors in analytic rubrics help students become clearly aware of what facets of writing they need to improve. As such, using analytic scales is another way to help students improve their writing skills. Their rubric descriptors are useful in terms of serving as the language to

talk about the writing—about what is working as well as what needs improvement. Those responses are meaningful and go beyond what appears in a typical grading rubric.

Each type of rubric has different strengths and weaknesses; however, it is up to teachers to decide which type of rubric is appropriate for evaluating a student's writing. When scoring a writing assessment, writing teachers should take these two aspects into consideration: "(1) designing or selecting a rating scale or scoring rubric and (2) selecting and training people to score the written responses" (Weigle, 2013a, p. 260). More importantly, teachers should carefully design the scoring rubrics to give credit to aspects of writing which are valued, such as creativity and craft, and avoid criteria which could encourage students to write in a set form without originality (Sainsbury, 2009). Although assessing students' writing ability is not an easy task, writing teachers have to specify clear objectives or criteria regarding what aspects of writing skills teachers want to assess in that writing task (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010).

Table 2.1

Taxonomy of Language Knowledge (adapted from Grabe & Kaplan, 1996: 220-1)

I.	*Linguistic knowledge*
A.	Knowledge of the written code
1.	Orthography
2.	Spelling
3.	Punctuation
4.	Formatting conventions (margins, paragraphing, spacing, etc.)
B.	Knowledge of phonology and morphology
1.	Sound/ letter correspondences
2.	Syllables (onset, rhyme/ rhythm, coda)
3.	Morpheme structure (word-part knowledge)
C.	Vocabulary
1.	Interpersonal words and phrases
2.	Academic and pedagogical words and phrases
3.	Formal and technical words and phrases
4.	Topic-specific words and phrases
5.	Non-literal and metaphoric language

    D.   Syntactic/ structural knowledge

       1. Basic syntactic patterns

       2. Preferred formal writing structures (appropriate style)

       3. Tropes and figures of expression

       4. Metaphors/ similes

    E.   Awareness of differences across language

    F.   Awareness of relative proficiency in different languages and registers

II. *Discourse knowledge*

    A.   Knowledge of intrasentential and intersentential marking devices (cohesion, syntactic parallelism)

    B.   Knowledge of informational structure (topic/ comment, given/ new, theme/ rheme, adjacency pairs)

    C.   Knowledge of semantic relations across clauses

    D.   Knowledge of recognizing main topics

    E.   Knowledge of genre structure and genre constraints

    F.   Knowledge of organizing schemes (top-level discourse structure)

    G.   Knowledge of inferencing (bridging, elaborating)

    H.   Knowledge of differences in features of discourse structuring across languages and cultures

    I.   Awareness of different proficiency levels of discourse skills in different languages

III. *Sociolinguistic knowledge*

    A.   Functional uses of written language

    B.   Application and interpretable violation of Gricean maxims (Grice, 1975)

    C.   Register and situational parameters

       1. Age of writer

       2. Language used by writer (L1, L2, …)

       3. Proficiency in language used

       4. Audience considerations

       5. Relative status of interactions (power/ politeness)

       6. Degree of formality (deference/ solidarity)

       7. Degree of distance (detachment/ involvement)

       8. Topic of interaction

       9. Means of writing (pen/ pencil, computer, dictation, shorthand)

       10. Means of transmission (single page/ book/ read aloud/ printed)

    D.   Awareness of sociolinguistic differences across languages and cultures

    E.   Self-awareness of roles of register and situational parameters

Based on "*Assessing writing*" by S. C. Weigle, 2002, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 30-31.

With regard to writing assessment, linguistic or grammatical knowledge, discourse knowledge, and sociolinguistic knowledge are salient aspects that should be taken into consideration (Weigle, 2002.) I, as a result, decided to incorporate the details in Table 2.1, from the Taxonomy of Language Knowledge (by Grabe & Kaplan, 1996: 220-1), in the modified rubric in this present study.

Table 2.2

Language Knowledge

Language knowledge

Grammatical knowledge

- Knowledge of vocabulary
- Knowledge of morphology and syntax
- Knowledge of phonology

    Textual knowledge

- Knowledge of cohesion
- Knowledge of rhetorical or conversational organization

    Functional knowledge

- Knowledge of ideational function
- 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

Based on "Assessing Writing" by S. C. Weigle, 2002, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 43.

In comparison to a holistic scheme in general, an analytic scoring scheme is better in terms of providing more useful details to diagnose students' writing ability (Weigle, 2002). In addition, it is more helpful in rating training, especially the training of inexperienced raters, because such raters find the separate criteria of an analytic scheme easier to understand and apply than that of a holistic scheme (Weigle,

2002). In terms of reliability, an analytic scoring scheme is more reliable than a holistic one. However, an analytic scoring scheme is a lot more time consuming than a holistic one.

2.1.4 Good Writing

When writing, we undoubtedly want to produce a good piece of writing which can achieve the intended purpose of that piece. Good, or effective, writing is a preferable skill that many people want to acquire because it positively helps us succeed in both academic and career life. Sparks et al. (2014) assert the importance of successful communication in that a clear and effective enunciation of ideas, information, or knowledge can assist individuals in interacting successfully with others in the spheres of academia, work, and community.

However, characteristics of good writing are neither universal nor unchangeable; good writing can be perceived differently according to the context in which the writing is situated (Craig, 2013; Hyland, 2003; Kirby & Crovitz, 2013). For example, good writing in the sense of writing good sentences may be represented by sentences without any grammatical or syntactic mistakes. On the contrary, good writing for some people may frequently be a finished written product which is clear, organized, complete, and well developed (Craig, 2013).

Furthermore, Agrey (2014) contends that good writing is associated with comprehension of a genre, expertise in using the right mechanics, in the language, and development of an individual voice. Voice, as such, contributes to the salient quality of good writing and is a noteworthy feature in writing instruction, according to "many state and national testing agencies" (Knowles, 2014, p. 3). As a result, voice is another key feature contributing to good writing (Rai, 2014).

Interestingly, Radaskiewicz (2000) asserts that we don't often ponder over topics to write about, but we are assigned to write according to "the situations" and surrounding people (p. 1). She continues to advise that although we are often assigned to write topics, we need to make our writing interesting by presenting fresh, creative, original ideas which can offer the readers new insights or new perspectives on that topic. By doing so, we can make our writing more effective.

In order to convince the readers to believe in the message, the writer needs to apply three forms of appeal, which are forms of persuasion originally purposed by Aristotle, to the readers: ethos, pathos, and logos. Ethos is associated with the amount of credence the writer gives to authority and personality to convince the readers; pathos is related to connection with the readers' feelings; and logos is about convincing the audience by using logic and reasoning to put forward an argument (Spence & Navarro, 2011).

When producing a paragraph, writers generally have to think about the type of paragraph, the purpose, the audience, and the rhetoric (Juzwiak, 2009). The topic is often expressed in one sentence which is subsequently developed by adding supporting sentences. However, in order to write stylishly, writers should be able to produce written work which is clear, interesting, concise, and "appropriate for their audience" (Strausser, 2009; Walter & Woodford, 2010, p. 44). The best style will differ in accordance with the type of writing one is going to compose. Hedge (2008) introduces two groups of components necessary when producing a good piece of writing. The first group, namely "authoring", is comprised of a sense of purpose; a sense of audience; and a sense of direction. The other group, called "crafting", consists of organizing the content clearly and in a logical manner; manipulating the script; using the conventions; getting the grammar right; developing sentence structure; linking ideas in a variety of ways; and having a range of vocabulary. It is recommended that good writers should first focus on getting the ideas down and leave accuracy until later (Hedge, 2008).

As previously mentioned, good writing is always "contextually variable" (Hyland, 2003, p. 5). In other words, good writing depends on the particular context in which writing occurs: when, where, why, who, and for which audience (Kirby & Crovitz, 2013). This resembles the concept of rhetorical situation, which is comprised of five important components: a particular purpose, a target audience, a stance, genre, and a medium (Bullock & Weinberg, 2009). In the same vein, Crismore and Vande Kopple (1990) point out that effective communication relies on how much the writers understand their rhetorical contexts. Effective writing also depends on being able to arrange facts and arguments according to rhetorical structures (Kubota & Shi, 2005). Fulkerson (1996) supports this point by stating that good writing means writing

that has accomplished the author's aims within the boundaries of a particular rhetorical situation. We can clearly see that many scholars map good writing to achieving writing goals within a rhetorical situation. Thus, the concept of rhetorical situation, in my opinion, is very important for teaching writing; writing teachers should teach this concept to students as it can help them become aware of the writing situations they may encounter in the future and can help them improve their writing skills.

2.1.5 Rhetorical Situations

When we talk about rhetoric, we often think of an artful manifestation of language use in an effective manner. Many people relate rhetoric to the art of using language effectively (Juzwiak, 2009). That is when we write, we need to use the language which is appropriate to the audience and the writing purpose. In doing so, we may put a wide range of rhetorical strategies, or patterns of development, into practice to express our ideas clearly and effectively. Interestingly, it is another factor contributing to effective writing which also relies on arranging facts and arguments according to rhetorical structures (Kubota & Shi, 2005).

Originally, rhetoric meant being able to see the ways persuasion could be used in any context, in accordance with Aristotle (Wink, 2016). However, rhetoric is nowadays defined as an attempt to persuade other people to comprehend and come to terms with one's proposed arguments, and also involves ways that writers can arrange words, make choices which have an influence on an argument, or utilize strategies to construct persuasive arguments (Wink, 2016). As a result, in this study, rhetoric means the way writers effectively manipulate their writing to achieve the writing purpose of each piece of writing.

In some cases, the patterns of development are interchangeably called the modes or rhetorical modes (Juzwiak, 2012). Rhetorical modes can be basically classified as description, exemplification, narration, process, and definition; in more advanced writing, the writing patterns can be developed into cause and effect, comparison and contrast, or argumentation in order to write more effectively (Juzwiak, 2012).

The rhetorical task is frequently categorized as one of the traditional discourse modes of narration, description, exposition, and argument/ persuasion (Mora-

Flores, 2009; Weigle, 2002). Text types are transmitted through specific genres and written structures, and reflect specific aspects, patterns, and detail (Kucer, 2014). Generally, writers draw upon linguistic features in accordance with a text's function and a writer-reader relationship (Cox, Shanahan, & Tinzmann, 1991). In order to write effectively, we should keep the textual voice and other rhetorical contributions that affect it in mind, and we should project our voice in a way which is appropriate for the writing purpose, the occasion, and the readers (Dietsch, 2006).

Whenever one writes, one inevitably encounters a particular rhetorical situation, which consists of a purpose, an audience, a stance, a genre, and a medium (Bullock & Weinberg, 2009). Troyka, and Hesse (2009) use the term 'a writing situation', which means the writer needs to take the topic, purpose, audience, role as a writer, and context into consideration. In fact, the term rhetorical situation was probably first coined by Lloyd F. Bitzer in 1968, according to Hoffman and Ford (2010), in order to identify the purposes of rhetors and how to achieve them. When writers think about rhetorical situation, or occasion (Dietsch, 2006), it helps them determine the writing purpose, audience, topic, and voice. It is certain that when writers compose on different occasions and with different audiences, they have to employ different writing strategies.

Based on Functional Grammar by Halliday, it is assumed that the rhetorical way that people use language — the fact that thinking humans are meant to converse using that language — which includes a labeling system that draws attention to the many purposes words are used for in clauses and the relationships that rely on each other among words, clauses, and other compositions (Carpenter, 2005). Writing should be deemed a way to negotiate in a rhetorical manner so that society has meaning and functions appropriately, not just in a constitutive way but in a performative one too (Canagarajah & Jerskey, 2009). Likewise, according to Woodworth (1994), voice partly consists of choices made rhetorically. Therefore, writing teachers should provide opportunities for their student writers to write on different occasions in order that students learn to control their language by choosing words appropriately and logically, according to the specific situation. By doing so, student writers will gradually improve their rhetorical ability and learn to change their voices in writing on different occasions.

2.1.6 Reader Awareness

The most important aspect of writing is establishing a connection with one's readers (Wilbers, 2016). The writers need to decide what stories they are going to tell, from what perspective they want to share, and in what way they want to present stories to the readers. According to Aristotle's The Art of Rhetoric, knowing one's audience and understanding that audience influences every facet of language are important and will affect not only what one says or writes but how one speaks or writes as well (Williams, 2014).

What the writer writes is closely associated with how the writer perceives the world around them, so writing can reflect his/ her experience, attitudes, values, assumptions, beliefs, etc. (Johnstone, 2008). As a result, others want to know what we think and how we perceive the world around us. Likewise, the reader wants to know what the writer thinks and what his/ her attitudes toward a subject are. The writer consequently has to decide what s/he wants to convey to the reader, how s/he will put his/ her thoughts into written texts, and what stylistics will fit the method chosen by the writer to convey his/ her attitudes and thoughts. Since we may find it unpleasant to write on an old or familiar topic which may have been the subject of many writing classes for years, we need to write with fresh ideas or present a new perspective. Radaskiewicz (2000) emphasizes the fact that the reason readers read is to learn, and get more knowledge and comprehension; therefore, the author's' responsibility is to provide them with something they don't know yet. That means one shouldn't waste the reader's time by giving them information that they already know.

2.1.7 Paragraph Writing

As mentioned in Chapter 1, being able to write a good single paragraph is significant, and undoubtedly a good start for L2 university students who want to improve their writing performance. The paragraph is like "a convenient unit" that can serve all forms of literary work or be a part of something larger (Strunk & White, 2005, p. 31; Trosky & Wood, 1972). In other words, it can be added to and become part of extended forms of writing such as essays, written reports, or letters of correspondence (Hogan, 2013). Apart from acting as the foundation for other types of academic writing,

an effective paragraph can also lead on to other genres of job-related or personal writing that L2 learners may encounter in the future (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010).

With regard to its importance, the ubiquity of paragraph writing is illustrated by university assignment writing at the undergraduate level. Writing paragraphs can be beneficial to students in terms of fostering them to be better writers and stronger thinkers since they have to be aware of the ideas, the structure, and the evidence they have to support the ideas (Hogan, 2013; Langan, 2012). Writing effective paragraphs, thus, is significant in terms of helping L2 learners become better writers and stronger thinkers, and succeed in college and advance their career in the future.

The most important unit of explanatory and persuasive writing in English is a paragraph (Rooks, 1999). A paragraph is defined as a series or a group of related sentences centered on one main idea (Oshima & Hogue, 2006; Reid, 1994). Essentially, "one thought, one paragraph" summarizes the thoughts of O'Collins (2011 p. 38). In addition, there is no break in the paragraph. The paragraph runs continuously from the first sentence to the last sentence with an explicit opening, development in the correct way, and a reasonable ending that connects all parts in a coherent fashion (O'Collins, 2011, Rooks, 1999).

When producing a paragraph, writers generally have to think about the type of paragraph, the purpose, the audience, and the rhetoric (Juzwiak, 2009). The topic is often expressed in one sentence, which is subsequently developed by adding supporting sentences. However, in order to write stylishly, writers should be able to produce written work which is clear, interesting, concise, and appropriate for their target audience (Strausser, 2009; Walter & Woodford, 2010). The best style will differ in accordance with the type of writing one is going to compose.

In general, the paragraph consists of a topic sentence, supporting sentences, and a concluding sentence. The topic sentence is the most important sentence in a paragraph, comprised of two major elements: a topic and a controlling idea. The topic determines the subject of the paragraph, while the controlling idea clarifies the main idea of the topic (Oshima, Hogue, & Curtis, 2014). The rest of the sentences in the paragraph subsequently support the controlling idea.

The topic sentence is often placed at the beginning of the paragraph; it is either the first or second sentence and tells readers what the paragraph is going to be

about. Although some experienced writers may hold off writing the topic sentence until the end, it is still suggested that the best place is at the beginning (Oshima et al, 2014). In doing so, it will help readers understand the paragraph more easily; readers will have a sense of what writers are going to say and how the topic will develop. At the same time, writers can look at the topic sentence as writing back at the supporting sentences. The supporting sentences make up the rest of the paragraph and support the main idea.

The concluding sentence ends the paragraph (Oshima & Hogue, 2006: Reid, 1994). In writing the concluding sentence at the end of an academic paragraph, writers usually use the following techniques: summarizing, offering a solution, predicting, making a recommendation and stating a conclusion (Reid, 1994). Oshima and Hogue (2006) suggest that writers might write the concluding sentence by writing the topic sentence in different words, or summarizing some or all of the main points in the paragraph.

The length of a paragraph – the number of sentences in a paragraph – depends on content and context (Holmes, 2003; Rooks, 1999). However, the average paragraph in English has five to 10 sentences, with 75-150 words (Rooks, 1999). It is certainly true that different types of writing use different types of paragraph; five types of writing that university students frequently produce are academic essays, journals or personal narratives, newspaper articles, and well-liked fictional and nonfictional work (Juzwiak, 2009).

To sum up, the paragraph is a group of sentences about one main idea. The crucial components of paragraph writing are the topic sentence, which states the paragraph's main idea and provides readers with a sense of the direction the writer is going to take; the supporting ideas, which make up the rest of the paragraph and develop the main point; and the concluding sentence, which is the last sentence and ends the paragraph. The sole teaching of paragraph writing may seem bleak or uninteresting for some writing teachers and teachers. However, the researcher still believes that teaching English paragraph writing is a necessity for EFL students in terms of laying a strong foundation for writing other longer pieces of writing and in other writing genres. Writing an effective paragraph which serves as a convenient unit can lead on to the production of other good, high-quality, vivid, and interesting written products.

2.1.8 Paragraph Types

When students learn the foundations of paragraph writing, they learn how to organize different paragraph types. In this dissertation study, narrative and opinion paragraphs are centrally focused on because both narrative and expository genres are particularly prevalent in the classroom (Kent, 1984). Distinguishing the rudimentary differences between opinion and narrative text types is helpful for modifying criteria. When writing functionally appropriate narrative and expository texts, writers have to deal with organizations, patterns of coherence relations, and voice in different ways (Cox et al., 1991).

2.1.8.1 Opinion paragraphs

Writing an opinion paragraph is thought of as being in some way analogous to writing an argumentative paragraph. In fact, opinion writing can be both persuasive and argumentative writing depending on how the writers make a claim or take a position on that subject (Coker & Ritchey, 2015). Opinion writing can be persuasive if the writers convince the readers of feelings or attitudes prompted by feeling, whereas opinion writing can be argumentative if the writers persuade the readers by providing evidence and using logic to support the stance or persuade a reader of its credibility (Coker & Ritchey, 2015). Sometimes, it is not clear cut whether the opinion writing is persuasive or argumentative. In these cases, it is probably a result of combining both forms in one writing piece. As Hamilton (2011) mentions, it is true that the majority of essays contain more than one essay type—they also encompass aspects of other essay forms.

As a rule, the topic sentence has to state the topic and it declares the writer's opinion on the topic (Savage & Shafiei, 2007). However, writing a clear topic sentence at the beginning of a paragraph doesn't guarantee that readers will be convinced by the writer's arguments, unless the writer also provides sufficient and clear examples as proof or support (Long, 2005). It is significant to provide enough supporting details to prove the point that the writer has already made since the beginning. Normally, writers are suggested to support their opinion by using facts, explanations, and personal experiences (Savage & Shafiei, 2007). It is true that supporting their opinion with facts will make their paragraphs stronger and more convincing (Hogue, 2017).

According to Langan (2012), inadequate development of students' writing is commonly found and treated seriously. Student writers may not be able to fully develop the point s/he is trying to make. Some may mistakenly try to use techniques such as repetition and verbosity to fully develop their paragraph. But by doing this, their paragraphs will be underdeveloped. L2 student writers may encounter some challenges in learning to write opinion paragraphs with English as the target language. This may be similar to the situation where Hirvela (2017) uses insightful observations from contexts of intercultural rhetoric to claim that L2 learners may not learn to write argumentatively in their L1 domain. Therefore, Langan (2012) encourages student writers to support the point s/he is making with strong particulars. The student writer is responsible for seeking concrete details which strongly support their writing as evidence in order to convince their readers (Murray, 1969). To sum up, the point that the writer is making needs to be backed up with specific reasons and sufficient details in order to persuade readers to believe or agree with the writer.

Opinion paragraphs tend to follow logical structure, but the employment of the stylistic or rhetorical devices of the writers can influence the macro-structures of texts to some extent (van Dijk, 1973). A narrative text is either based on the actor or the agent, while an expository text is considered to be based on the subject matter at hand (Kent, 1984). According to Table 1.2, the general model of writing discourse (Vahapassi, 1982) illustrated in the work of Weigle (2002), the major reason for writing personal narratives is to communicate the emotions and feelings of the writer (emotive), whereas the main reason for writing about opinions (argumentative/ persuasive writing) is to convince the reader to accept the argument and persuade them to share those opinions with the writer (conative) (pp. 8-9).

2.1.8.2 Narrative paragraphs

Narratives are omnipresent in our everyday lives. Narratives are associated with the verb narrate, and the act of narration can be found in places where a person tells us about something (Fludernik, 2009). These people can be school teachers, television reporters, dining companions, etc., and the narratives can be found in books, culture, artwork, and day-to-day life. There are various forms of narration, such as picture, song, mime, body language, dance, or other forms of speaking and writing (Rudrum, 2005). For many writing teachers, narrative and personal experience

essays are regarded as similar (DiPardo, 1989). Furthermore, personal narratives can promote success at school, social awareness and emotional growth, and self-control (Westby & Culatta, 2016). As such, the act of narrating is important for us; we are inevitably associated with narratives.

By nature, narratives must involve a story that a narrator tells. In that sense, a narrated story traditionally consists of a beginning, a middle and an end of that event in sequence (Altman, 2008; Fludernik, 2009). Altman (2008) emphasizes the fact that texts lacking this fundamental structure are generally "not accepted as narratives" and mentions that the endings of stories have to reiterate the beginnings of stories in a significant way (p. 17). Apart from being based on a beginning-middle-end structure, a narrated story commonly brings about feelings of suspense in the reader due to complex elements in the middle of the story. These feelings eventually subside when the stories behind such elements are revealed at the end. (Fludernik, 2009).

According to van Dijk (1973), a pioneer scholar who worked on macro-structures, macro-structures in a narrative are commonly oriented towards "temporal structures between events (and then...and then...and then);" however, "an incoherent listing of events being part of the larger event told about" may occur at the beginning of a narrative (p. 83). After that, the sequence of the remaining sentences will be arranged in relation to relationships between cause and effect in accordance with inference by deduction or induction (including generalizing, explaining, and making predictions)" (van Dijk, 1973). In addition, sequential structures of a narrative may be affected by the use of stylistic or rhetorical devices that the writers employ. Yet, narratives tend to follow globally coherent sequences.

In narratives, we write like we are telling a story, either from our own experience or from the experience of others. Writing a narrative is always associated with emotions. Once the author starts the topic sentence, s/he needs to elaborate the points by proving vivid details that are linked to that emotion. Therefore, when scoring narrative paragraphs, the rater needs to look for the student writers' topic statement first. After that, the rater will examine how the student writers have developed their narrative paragraphs. The more specific the details the writer adds to the story, the more the writer impresses readers.

The purpose of writing a narrative can be to inform, to persuade, or to entertain. Once writers have determined the major purpose for writing, writers have to be more specific in order to achieve that purpose. Oshima et al. (2014) clarify this point by stating that if writers are writing a narrative to inform, they need to explain things to readers by including specific facts and explaining special words. In contrast, if writers have determined that their narrative is to persuade, they have to try to convince readers to agree with their point of view.

In a narrative paragraph, writers frequently use time order in order to tell what happens first, what happens next, and what happens after that (Oshima et al., 2014). Therefore, writers often use time-order signals in order to "signal the order in which events happen" (Oshima et al., 2014, p. 34). Time-order signals can be words (e.g. first, later, meanwhile, next, soon, finally) and phrases (e.g. before beginning the lesson, in the afternoon, at 8:00, after that, at last). Therefore, a narrative text is frequently connected by some "chronological linkage", whereas an expository text is frequently connected by "logical linkage" (Kent, 1984, p. 235).

(1) The overall structure of narrative

As previously stated, some stories can be completed by having a beginning, a middle, and an end (Labov, 1972). However, Labov suggests that narratives can be fully developed by using the following structure: (1) *abstract,* (2) *orientation,* (3) *complicating action,* (4) *evaluation,* (5) *result or resolution,* and (6) *coda.* The main components of the narrative structure are clarified in Table 2.2 with brief summaries.

Table 2.3

Major Elements of Narratives

Important Elements	Underlining Questions	Details
Abstract	What was this about?	An encapsulation of the point of the story
Orientation	Who, when, what, where?	Details of the time, place and people involved in the event or situation
Complicating action	Then what happened?	The development of the story until the climax or high point of the narrative

Important Elements	Underlining Questions	Details
Evaluation	So what?	Attitude/ emotion of the narrator towards the story
Result or resolution	What finally happened?	A sudden drop in tension
Coda	What was the conclusion?	The closure of the story

Adapted from: Labov, W. (1972). *Language in the inner city: Studies in the Black English vernacular*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. and Özyıldırım, I. (2009). Narrative analysis: An analysis of oral and written strategies in personal experience narratives. *Journal of Pragmatics*, *41*, 1209-1222.

Generally, the narrator starts his/ her story with the abstract, in which the point of the story is summarized in advance or a general proposal is made on what the narrative will illustrate by example (Peterson & McCabe, 1983). Then, the narrator moves on to the orientation part, where the narrator provides details of the setting, time, place, and the situation to the readers. This orientation section helps the readers visualize a detailed picture of the situation. After that, the narrator will develop the main narrative sequence of events until reaching the complicating action. The complication can be a problem, dilemma or change, which increases the readers' interest in the story (Peterson & McCabe, 1983) After reaching the stage of the complicating action, the narrator will make his/ her evaluation of the story that has just been recounted.

Of the six components of the narrative structure, the evaluation is deemed the most salient feature of the narrative because here, the narrator will clarify the point of the story, reveal his/ her attitude toward the narrated story, and show the intention of how s/he wants the narrative to be understood (Labov, 1972; Peterson & McCabe, 1983). The evaluation will show why the narrative is worth being told by the narrator. More importantly, Peterson and McCabe (1983) mention that effectively narrating a story depends on how the narrator uses evaluation. The point of view of the author or the narrator is key to the story. Interestingly, Labov (1972) points out that the same story can be told in different ways in order to vary the point that is being made, or to eliminate making a point at all. For example, when reading or hearing pointless stories, the readers may be doubtful and say, "So what?" Labov, as a result, advises good narrators not to leave the readers asking such questions when their narrative stories are over. The evaluation is important in this sense.

Consequently, the narrator will clarify the outcome, result, or solution – the resolution. However, Peterson and McCabe (1983) add that orientation, complication, and resolution can appear repeatedly in the narrative, while some of those aspects may not even be present. The last component of the narrative structure is the coda. Located at the end of the narrative, the coda are free clauses that serve the purpose of signaling to the readers that the narrative is finished. According to Labov (1972), codas "close off the sequence of complicating actions and indicate that none of the events that followed were important to the narrative" (p. 365). Codas may end the narratives in various ways. For example, some may illustrate the effects of the events on the narrator, some may be strangely disconnected from the main narrative, or some may bridge gaps in the story by reflecting on the beginning.

(2) Hook at the beginning of the memoirs

The study of Wyngaard and Gehrke (1996) was aimed at enhancing a sense of the rhetorical nature of language and writing more effectively in their ninth-grade student writers. They created the Memoir Writing Project, where students composed their memoirs and could learn about the role of audience in their peer review groups through the use of specifically designed rubrics. These audience-centered rubrics were particularly focused on three main areas of writing skills in which responding to an audience is paramount: writing an opening which draws attention; showing the reader something, not telling them; and focused writing. Each area was graded according to one of three levels: excellent, good, or adequate/ ineffective. Wyngaard and Gehrke (1996) provided *the Engaging Opening Rubric* as described below.

Table 2.4

The Engaging Opening Rubric: Engaging Opening

Excellent Writing:	On reading the opening paragraph (or paragraphs), the reader gets hooked because the imaginative writing engages the reader's curiosity and/or resonates within the reader. The reader is excited about this text and stops thinking about other things. The writing speaks to the reader in an original, and/or moving voice. It is transporting; the reader can't put it down.

Good Writing:	The writing is interesting and solid. The author uses a compelling voice and/or some originality but doesn't engage the reader wholeheartedly. The reader might suddenly feel hungry right in the middle of the second paragraph and need to go to the kitchen for a cookie. The reader then comes back and enjoys the rest of the story.
Adequate Writing:	The opening is acceptable but lacks luster. It's missing something special and, thus, it seems a little too ordinary. It doesn't inspire curiosity or resonate within the reader. Ineffective Writing: The opening says nothing new, interesting, or imaginative. The reader may feel that he/she has read this at least ten times before. The reader suddenly feels very hungry, goes to get a cookie, and forgets to come back. The writer hasn't demonstrated enough awareness of audience, purpose, or voice.

Based on "Responding to audience: Using rubrics to teach and assess writing" by S. Wyngaard and R. Gehrke, 1996, *The English Journal, 85*(6), pp. 68-69. doi:10.2307/819830

Wyngaard and Gehrke (1996) found that this project was successful in terms of fostering a sense of audience in their ninth-grade student writers throughout the writing process as well as enhancing their writing skills in those three areas. Students learned to critically and objectively respond to their peers in the role of the reader. In addition, this project also helped to shift the student writers' focus from a teacher audience to a student-peer audience in their mind. By the end, student writers had learned about the rhetorical effectiveness of their memoirs and had improved their writing skills as expected.

(3) Literary devices for narratives

Drawing from their narrative repertoires, writers may use literary devices when writing narratives, such as word choice, sentence variety, simile, metaphor, or personification (Corden, 2007). These literary devices are manipulated in order to "achieve a particular effect" on the readers, and they encompass rhetorical tools, and "symbolic representation such as allegory, alliteration, analogy, anaphora, allusion, climax, euphemism, foreshadowing, hyperbole, irony, metaphor, personification, pun, repetition, rhetorical question, rhyme, simile, synecdoche and so on" (Sirhan, 2014, p. 140).

(4) Focus on voice in personal narratives

In this study, the researcher will examine voice in personal narratives written by Thai EFL student writers in order to explore how students express voice in their personal narratives and what voice features they employ. Personal narratives are "descriptions of real past events, either experienced by a speaker or someone known to a speaker" (Bliss & McCabe, 2012, p. 130). Personal narratives are vital because they help us connect with family and friends, and acquire literacy (Bliss & McCabe, 2012).

In terms of the completeness of a personal narrative, there are three aspects which define how informative something is: (1) expressing the necessary facts of an experience; (2) non-mandatory details that are used to thoroughly develop a narrative; and (3) descriptive statements (e.g., utilizing adjectives or adverbs), action, and assessment (e.g., the subjective importance of an occurrence) (Bliss & McCabe, 2012). They also provide some examples of different ways evaluation can be signaled, such as the use of subjective judgments, exclamations, paralinguistic forms, negatives, causal statements, and intentions (Bliss & McCabe, 2012).

2.2 Issues of Voice in Writing

This section starts with a brief history of voice, and metaphoric terms of voice which open doors to possibilities for an inclusive definition of voice in written discourse. This will help clarify some key terms and concepts involved in written voice. The literature will reveal what features account for voice realization in writing.

Firstly, let me explain why I am interested specifically in the notion of voice. The first time I heard the term 'written voice' was when I was in my PhD class. Since then, numerous questions have remained in my head. With more than 12 years of experience in teaching general English courses to undergraduate students and three years of experience in teaching writing to English majors, I have neither heard the term anywhere nor found it in any English or composition textbooks in Thailand. Instead, many EFL writing teachers, EFL student writers and I are accustomed to 'voice' with regard to active or passive voice in terms of grammar. The notion of voice I questioned at the beginning is definitely not like active and passive voice in grammar.

To seek a clear understanding of the notion of voice, I initially attempted to ask other native-English speakers (NS), just in case that they knew this notion well and could clarify some important points for me. However, not all NS know of this notion and even when some know of it, they still give the meaning differently. Questions regarding the notion of voice, as a result, remain unanswered. The quest to understand this notion partly inspired me to conduct this dissertation study and explore related voice issues, which may be helpful or of benefit to EFL writing teachers and student writers to a certain extent.

Furthermore, some scholars assert that good writing must have the voice of the writer (Barnard, 2014; Elbow, 2007; Knowles, 2014; Rai, 2014; Zhao, 2016). The notion of voice, therefore, is claimed by many scholars and educators to be a good quality for effective writing. Yet, I concluded that there was no consensus on the definition of voice because I found it was defined in various different ways. In addition, there is no clear guidance that EFL/ L2 student writers can follow. Skehan (2002) suggests four kinds of processing must occur for someone to have an aptitude in a second language: "noticing, patterning, controlling, lexicalising or varying the patterns to meet different communicative needs" (as cited in Spiro, 2013, p. 38). This means without a clear explanation of the notion of voice along with concrete examples of voice features, those in EFL may find that the notion of voice is vague. In this study, as a result, all possible voice features are compiled, and the researcher explores whether Thai EFL students write in English with voice or not. And if so, what voice features they express through their written paragraphs.

There is no heuristic guidance on strengthening the writer's written voice that L2 student writers can follow in order to improve their writing skills. Therefore, the researcher hopes this study can help those L2 student writers find solutions. This guidance may not be in the form of a universal formula that can help sharpen the writer's written voice. However, it will provide possibilities for voice to be captured and constructed through three dimensions of the notion of voice that the researcher proposes.

The notion of voice still perplexes many students because some writing teachers may ask them to use their voice in their written products and may tell them to project their voice differently by using an authentic voice, an objective voice, or a

disinterested voice. However, few writing teachers provide students with a profound understanding of what voice is and how they can express voice appropriately in each writing piece (Gere, 1985). In response to this, Leki et al. (2008) point out there is some need to investigate a variety of research issues in L2 writing, including the aspect of personal voice development among second-language learners.

As a result, in this section, the definition of voice has been examined, followed by a compilation of voice features and the framework of this study. The researcher has compiled all the ways that scholars, researchers, and educators define voice, and ways that writers can construct their voice in written products, in order to make the notion of voice crystal clear in this study.

2.2.1 The Brief History of Voice

The notion of voice in writing emerged during the 1960s (Elbow, 2007; Zhao, 2014), and has received particular attention from scholars in the field of first language (L1) composition studies in United States of America since the early 1970s (Bowden, 1995, 2003; Zhao, 2014). According to the account of Darsie Bowden (1995), the term "voice" initially emerged in An Index to English, Porter Perrin's 1939 textbook, as a verb – the verb is in the active voice. Until the late 1960s, voice was literally tapped into by training the speaking voice, which involved "volume, tempo, pitch, and tone with appropriate exercises designed to improve a student's speech and speech-making" (Bowden, 1995, p. 174). However, with respect to the emergence of voice in writing, it first appeared in The Authentic Voice, a 1972 textbook by Donald Stewart, as an authentic voice. The authentic voice in this book is similar to the expressivist perspective in that "our authentic voice is that authorial voice which differentiates one writer from another." Interestingly, Bowden (2003) provides additional information on the emergence of this notion by stating that voice was previously addressed in T.S. Eliot' s 1943 essay, The Three Voices of Poetry. On Poetry and Poets:

> [I]n writing [nondramatic] verse, I think that one is writing, so to speak, in terms of one's own voice: the way it sounds when you read it to yourself is the test. For it is yourself speaking. The question of communication, of what the reader will get from it, is not paramount. . .(p. 100)
>
> (as cited in Bowden, 2003, p. 285)

Furthermore, voice was first chronicled in composition studies at the Dartmouth Conference in 1966, according to Walker Gibson, and attracted increasing attention among American composition teachers, and in passages and essays on 1970s writing and writing classrooms (Bowden, 2003).

2.2.2 Various Definition of Voice

So far, the definition of voice in writing is still vague and perplexes many researchers and teachers who have to explain it and teach it to student writers. Despite the disputes over various definitions of voice and its multiple metaphorical interpretations (Tardy, 2012), it is still valuable to teach the concept of voice in writing classes, in terms of both writing instruction and assessment. In fact, it is considered another essential element of good writing (Zhao, 2016).

Owing to no literal voice in written text, voice in writing can only be "metaphoric in nature"; (Bowden, 1995, p. 185). The voice metaphor can help scholars, educators, and teachers to understand phenomena which lead us to follow certain ideas that seriously limit how we view things. (Bowden, 2003). With its metaphor, scholars conceive disparate ideas of the notion of voice. For example, rhetorical scholars have different views on the same notion (Watts, 2001). As a result, the researcher attempts to compile the ways that voice is defined and how the notion of voice is best explicated in the following section.

Scholars, researchers, and educators explain the notion of voice in writing in numerous ways, which depend on what perspective they perceive written voice from. Some may closely relate voice to style. Metaphorical voice has been perceived as *persona* (Bowden, 1995, Woodworth, 1994), *personal views* (Hyland, 2008), *ethos* (Bowden, 1995, Woodworth, 1994), *attitude* (Woodworth, 1994), *stance* (Bowden, 1995), *authoritativeness* (Hyland, 2008), *writer's presence* (Hyland, 2008), sound (Gere, 1985), *tone* (Culham, 2003, Woodworth, 1994), *style* (Bowden, 1995, Culham, 2003), and *flavor* (Culham, 2003).

The nature of voice metaphor probably allows scholars and educators to capture a distinguishable quality in a written exchange of ideas that can be noticed by readers but is not easy to identify in terms of a sole feature of linguistics or rhetoric (Matsuda, 2001). Likewise, the researcher discovers that the notion of voice includes

all the important features mentioned above. Voice cannot be described as only a single linguistic or rhetorical feature, but it encompasses a wide range of features and dimensions. I will explore this issue in depth later in the section on the modified framework.

It has been found in the literature that a great number of existing research studies on voice are particularly prone to paying considerable attention to the use of metadiscourse markers, across various disciplines. However, the notion of voice has in fact transcended the employment of metadiscourse devices by far. The work of Knowles (2014) highlights the fact that the notion of voice embodies content and style. More importantly, apart from the inclusion of content and style, Zhao's studies on the notion of voice (2010, 2012) also mention interactions with readers.

Even though the metaphoric voice is a desirable characteristic for writing, few scholars have attempted to define it. It is true that the notion of voice has gained more and more attention among researchers in the field of L1 and L2 composition; however, its definitions seem to be equivocal. Woodworth (1994) uses the term "voice" as a combination of all methods of rhetoric and style chosen by a writer, knowingly or unknowingly, for using to express oneself to readers; other related terms, which are not exactly the same, may include personality, distinguishing character, tone, and feeling or emotion toward a subject. However, the definition which has been widely addressed and adopted in composition studies is given by Matsuda (2001): ''Voice is the amalgamative effect of the use of discursive and non-discursive features that language users choose, deliberately or otherwise, from socially available yet ever-changing repertoires''; it is the overall impression associated with particular features that make ''impersonation or 'mimicking' possible'' (Matsuda, 2001, p. 40). Zhao (2016) indicates that Matsuda seems to provide a relative definition in more formal terms for the first time. This definition probably encompasses a wide range of factors that make contributions to building voice in written exchanges of ideas; it influences research in the fields of L1 and L2 composition (Matsuda & Tardy, 2007).

Matsuda and Tardy (2007) elaborate more on Matsuda's (2001) definition, by stating that voice is not only a set of discursive features but voice is what the audience thinks about the writing based on the specific combination of how features which are discursive and non-discursive are utilized. They further explicitly suggest

that discursive features may comprise both form (including sentence formation, organizational structure, the use of words which link sentences and paragraphs, and word choice) and content (including the chosen topic and particular examples, and strategies to argue a point), whereas non-discursive features may involve margin usage, the chosen font face and size, the usage of empty space between words and punctuation marks, in addition to the usage of additional line-breaks in the space that separates paragraphs and block quotes. Most importantly, this definition of voice specifically emphasizes the impact on the audience. Similarly, Hyland (2012) affirms this point by stating that when we write, we need to take care in designing written texts which are appropriate for specific readers, provide sufficient information and meet the rhetorical expectations. In this sense, voice, as a result, is definitely reader-oriented writing. Writers are advised to design written texts that engage with the particular audience in accepted ways.

Furthermore, voice can be associated with an occurrence that can raise awareness of people with regard to issues of feelings and ethics, or actions like the sound of particular encounters experienced in city life (Watts, 2001). At this point, Watt delineates the fact that voice acts like an observable act of speech that allows others to hear problematic issues regarding ethics and obligations incumbent in the community, and provokes frustrations, suffering, and joy in others. This can shift voice from the speaking subject to the marginalized other, such as shifts to the voice of people who are of a different race, ethnicity, gender or sexuality (Watts, 2001).

Adherence to a social constructionist view means our voice is socially constructed. In other words, our voice is considerably influenced by other aspects outside the writer's self, in accordance with our home, workplace, reading choices, and people we have discourse with (Fulwiler, 1990). In the same way, the act of writing results from a set of literacy customs which take place in social and cultural contexts (Weigle, 2005). At this point, Street (2015) suggests that academic writing should be construed as an approach based on social practices rather than mainly focusing on an approach based on skills; as a consequence, relevant ideas such as genre and discourse, which recognize what can be regarded as writing, may become apparent. However, this could vary according to context.

As mentioned above, writing is deemed to be a social practice; therefore, it gives considerable leverage over theoretical ideas regarding communities which engage in discourse, categories of communication, and professional-skill acquisition as well as educational practices (Tardy, 2016). She continues to assert that writing is not solely social, but it is affected by various factors related to the individual writer. Thus, it is important for writing teachers to bear in mind that writing development is contingent upon numerous factors: cognitive, social, linguistic, cultural, and instructional factors (Coker & Ritchey, 2015). Writing teachers should bring the concept of voice into their writing classes in order to help their students learn to use their voice in writing appropriately through significant features of voice: "style, structure, topic, attitude" (Fulwiler, 1990, p. 214).

2.2.3 Voice from Different Perspectives

The notion of voice in writing is perceived in numerous ways, depending on what perspective scholars, researchers, and educators perceive written voice from.

2.2.3.1 Voice from a postmodern perspective

Bryant's work (as cited in Barnard, 2014) supports the fact that we possess multiple voices, which have certainly been developed by writers. She further explains this point by stating that we all basically possess an authentic voice which is unique and true to ourselves, and we also develop other voices which account for our primary voice. As we know, our voices have been shaped by society and other factors; as a result, we all inhabit a world of multiple voices (Barnard, 2014). We sometimes change our voices for different occasions.

Apart from the view of voice as a personal achievement which reflects a set of characteristics which are related to text and dependent on the choice of the writer, voice from the postmodernist perspective can be considered as an achievement with social or cultural connotations that inevitably reflects and results from mediation which is fixed by the society and the culture (Hanauer, 2015). Hanauer (2015) asserts that voice should be deemed a temporary performance of identity directed by linguistics, at a specific time and location, and within a particular context of society and culture, based on the perspectives of Sperling and Appleman (2011),

Matsuda (2011) and Tardy (2012). In this sense, the notion of voice is derived from how a writer or speaker is able to interact in a discriminate way in a group of individuals, according to the accessible linguistic resources and the specific social/cultural context (Matsuda, 2001 as cited in Hanauer, 2015). It seems that numerous voices and a wide range of descriptions relating to what English means (a variety of Englishnesses) have been gradually welcomed in the postmodernist view, (Singleton & Luckhurst, 1996).

Related to the plurality of voices, Spencer (2014) also discovers that student writers may use a variety of voices and experiences when composing a piece of writing. With the realization that students have been through a variety of experiences and come from numerous geographic areas, she started to compile a list of possible voices that may be found in student writing. She claims that although the list of compiled voices is not exhaustive, it is good to initiate the exploration of the possible voices that individual student writers may project in their written pieces. Those voices encompass "the voices of family, peers, school culture, popular culture, political context, …" (Spencer, 2014, p. 25).

Table 2.5

Possible Voices in Writing (Spencer, 2014)

Family Voice	Parent voice	Sibling voice	Home life	Country of origin
Writing which seems like a "performance" by another person in the family	Phrases refer to routines in the home or parental expectations such as, "I only play at home."	Refers to situations or routines in the home. Plural pronouns might indicate parents or siblings or both.	Actions that occur in the home or items found in the home, such as eating dinner, getting ready for school, toys, etc.	Names of countries, states, cities, holidays, traditions, food which originates in the country of origin.
Peers	**Friendships**	**Classmates**	**Groups**	
Writing that takes on the characteristics of informal "child speech" patterns	Dialogue that is written in the style of one child talking to another	Phrases and words that the class has developed as a shared vocabulary	Phrases and words that children use within affinity groups, people who have shared interests	

School Culture	Teacher voice	Curriculum	Unit of study	Policy
Writing that contains language used by the teacher or in the current classroom work	Ways of talking that the teacher reinforces through class discussions	Vocabulary and phrases related to how things are taught in the classroom, such as "my reading buddy"	Vocabulary and phrases related to a particular unit of study, such as "my family tradition"	Words and phrases reinforced through school policy, such as "be respectful, be responsible, be productive"
Popular culture	**TV and movies**	**Video games**	**Songs**	**Name brands**
Writing that contains slogans or words often heard in popular media	Phrases from weekly shows, cartoons, movies, commercials, public service announcements	Words, phrases, and action sequences from gaming devices	Titles, phrases and words heard on the radio, on music players, on television, in movies, in cartoons, on the internet, etc.	Food, clothing, games, toys, etc., such as "Bratz"
Political Events	**News items**	**Laws**	**Policies**	**Economics**
Writing that contains allusions to current or historical events	Recent or historical events which have been popularized or are significant to the community, such as "9/11"	Phrases connected to laws which have become popularized, such as "illegal immigrant"	School level; local, state, or national terms, such as "bilingual classroom"	Words and phrases associated with local or national economic conditions, such as "recession"
Languages	**Native language**	**Regional**	**Blending**	**Approximations**
Writing that contains words or phrases from the native language or a regional dialect	Spanish, Hindi, other European languages, Native American languages, Asian languages, African languages, etc.	Southern English, African-American Vernacular English, mixtures of English with other languages to create unique words and phrases	The native language is either blended with English at the word level or mixed in phrases	Standard English grammar is attempted, but traces of other languages or dialects linger

Based on "Student Writing: Give It a Generous Reading" by L. K. Spence, 2014, Charlotte, NC: Information Age, pp. 25-26.

From Table 2.5 above, we can clearly see that student writers possess different voice types depending on what societies they have been part of or what situations they have been through. These voice types are closely related to content or words that are appropriately used in each situation or community.

2.2.3.2 Voice in relation to political alignments

We can construct our voice to conform to a variety of social and political standpoints and reflect the complicated relationships between them (as cited in Kesler, 2012). This refers to identity politics which inevitably influence which people are allowed to speak, what they have the ability to say, and how someone hears it when they have their say (Bishop & Starkey, 2006). Writers can express themselves according to political meaning; therefore, writers can decide whether to talk about sensitive topics – such as politics, sex, or religion – or ignore them, depending on the specific political act (Kramsch, 2014). Singleton and Luckhurst (1996) proposed an interesting idea which was that writers sometimes write on behalf of others. In other words, some writers may act as the representative of others by way of expressing what others find hard to articulate with regard to politics, in the roles of witnesses and advocates (Singleton & Luckhurst, 1996). By way of a conclusion, it can be said that the notion of voice is also concerned with the boundaries of what the individual can express politically, and sometimes writers may write on behalf of others who feel uncomfortable about saying something.

2.2.3.3. Voiceless

It is true that in some documents voice is not needed, such as in bureaucratic memorandums, technical documentation relating to engineering, much of the social science literature, and many other kinds of textbook, which makes that writing dead (Elbow, 1998). However, other people may try to hide their voice or are unable to get their voice in writing because there are numerous considerations in writing with voice – at least when it comes to your responsibility.

2.2.4 Voice as Attitudes

When someone says, "I can really hear your voice in this piece of writing," it means that he or she has a strong sense of the writer's views (Hyland, 2008). On account of this, our choice of language is partly rooted in our beliefs, interests, and values. Hence, voice and attitudes are related to each other in this sense. People tend to express their attitudes toward linguistic choice, especially through evaluative language. Evaluation refers to the expression of a writer that shows a particular opinion or stance towards, a view on, or feeling toward the thing is in existence or being proposed that

he or she is writing about (Thompson & Hunston, 2003). That attitude may involve certainty or obligation or desirability or values. The expression of the writer's opinion is deemed a salient feature of language.

2.2.5 Voice as Style

Style is categorized into three levels by classical writers: high, low, and middle style. Each one had its right time and place, but high style was the most prestigious (Bishop & Starkey, 2006). Bishop and Starkey (2006) do not stipulate each style level, but state that some beginner writers may be able to accomplish their own style by mimicking the masters of this craft, and later they may move beyond simple imitation by developing their own writing style – incorporating their masters' most admirable traits and combining that with their own particular characteristics.

2.2.6 Voice and Its Relation to the Reader

Writing is considered a social activity which involves an author implying or explicitly stating something for a reader (Graham & Harris, 2013). Kirby and Crovitz (2013) suggest that good writing also contributes to a sense of audience. We write because we want others to read our writing and sometimes we want it to lead to other consequential actions, such as changing their minds, beliefs, attitudes or behaviors. Thus, we need to attempt to compose written accounts that are interesting and sensible in order to catch readers' attention and keep them reading our written texts. In addition, we should provide readers with solid evidence or specific reasons for any point we make (Langan, 2012).

Remember that when we write, we are frequently writing for somebody. In other words, writers need to keep their target readers in mind when writing (Long, 2005). Lavelle (2001) states that the notion of voice is germane to improving skill in speaking to the readership. Once writers have determined their target audience, they have to adjust the use of the language by using appropriate word choice or structure in order to achieve their writing purpose and help their readers understand their written texts.

When writers write with voice, that writing can show the values, attitudes, and feelings of the writer. Most importantly, these essential components must

occur in harmony at the same time: presenting interesting or original content, using specific or artful word selection, and mastering artful grammar. Another way that academic writers can engage with readers is to employ linguistic resources – otherwise known by well-established terms such as evaluation, stance and metadiscourse – to project a position and interact with readers (Hyland & Tse, 2005). Based on the view of Matsuda and Jeffery (2012), voice in writing refers to a metaphorical idea which exhibits the writer's identity and appears when readers interact with the writing. That means the readers significantly contribute to the notion of voice. To sum up, when writers compose a piece of writing, they need to keep their target audience in mind and adjust their written voice through the use of the language, in conjunction with reader engagement through the employment of linguistic resources.

2.2.7 Voice in Writing Instruction

Problems with language structures and rhetorical effectiveness are prevalent in writing by nonnative English–speaking student writers (Reid, 2006). Apart from that, when composing in L2, some L2 writers may struggle to meet expectations such as composing texts which are logical or funny, drawing the readers' attention, staying relevant, or being well-organized because L2 characteristics may differ across cultures (Hirvela, Hyland, & Manchon, 2016). Undoubtedly, some scholars have found the concept of voice vague; teaching voice to their L2 student writers has been problematic because they think that this concept is too close to the Western idea of the individual to be easily accessed by learners from other cultures and those who speak other languages (Zhao, 2014). Therefore, they think it is not appropriate to teach the concept of voice in their L2 composition classrooms.

In addition, some evidence from observational research and autobiographies looks like it suggests that L2 writers, especially those who come from what is regarded as collectivist cultures, often find it more difficult to learn to write with a strong writing voice that is appreciated by the typical Western readers (Zhao, 2014). Seemingly, novice students choose to avoid writing with their individual voice by applying a formal and restrained form of language with abstract and indirect constructions, which can be perceived as a barrier between the writer and the readers (Nevin K. Laib, as cited in Pixton, 1988).

How can L2 student writers develop a unique style and voice? Is it necessary to define clearly what voice is, what components of voice are, or what can indicate voice? Once we know the notion of voice clearly, we can teach and coach our students to strengthen their voice in their writing. Like Kirby and Crovitz (2013), some of our teaching peers have also declared that student writers need to study the rules before they can gain knowledge of how to break them to improve their writing. Interestingly, they mention that when we become more proficient in language use, we accumulate more alternatives with regard to word choice and sentence structure, as well as choices regarding tone and style. At this point, I assume that this certainly happens to L1 writers, but probably challenges L2 ones. How could this happen to L2 student writers who probably have never been introduced to and explicitly taught the concepts of tone or style in their writing classes?

In many countries Hamp-Lyons (2014) worked in and visited, she was worried that she hardly saw writing activities for students' writing development such as informal writing in the discovery of an individual voice or the crucial role of feedback in supporting writers who were trying getting better. These aspects are not evident in other contexts or are passed on indirectly and applied uneasily at best. Moreover, Bryant (as cited in Barnard, 2014) also wants to encourage students to express their own voices in academic discourse where the student's original voice may sometimes be stifled.

It is suggested that writing teachers can teach their L2 student writers to use different voicing strategies appropriately in accordance with their proficiency levels. Teachers may gradually move from the least complex and most straightforward methods of projecting voice, like using first person pronouns, to ways which involve more complexity and sophistication, like incorporating personal asides (Zhao, 2010).

Woodworth (1994) uses the term "voice" as a combination of all methods of rhetoric and style chosen by a writer, knowingly or unknowingly, for using to express oneself to readers; other related terms, which are not exactly the same, may include personality, distinguishing character, tone, and feeling or emotion toward a subject. She suggests that writing teachers can teach the notion of voice to their students by helping them become fully aware of the repertoire of voices and learn to have control

over stylistic techniques, and boosting their confidence to take the opportunity to try varying word choices, sentence formations, and imagined audiences. Drawing from her direct experience in teaching voice, Woodworth chose not to define the term 'voice' at the beginning of the class, but she allowed some time for her students to have enough confidence to take part in the construction of a definition.

However, it might be difficult for FL writing teachers to teach the notion of voice, which seems unmentioned in commercial textbooks, as well as working in the a school which has very different philosophies of teaching and educational values. Hence, what should FL writing teachers do if the notion of voice is neither mentioned in the textbooks nor the national policies or curriculum? Although the concept of voice seems perplexing and difficult to teach to novice L2 student writers, Zhao (2010) still encourages writing instructors to simplify the concept when teaching by highlighting the different components which comprise it, starting by selecting the easier and more accessible voice-feature components and gradually moving on to those involving advanced levels of L2 proficiency. Zhao (2010) gives important and helpful suggestions in terms of the teaching of voice construction: writing teachers should not put emphasis only on the frequency of employing those voice-related features in writing pieces, but should rather "always explain *how* these features could be used to achieve a strong and effective voice in a particular writing context, considering the nature, purpose, and audience of the writing" (p. 142).

2.2.8 Voice Assessment

In many writing studies, formal features of texts can indicate students' writing development; therefore, grammar structure, which can be easily captured and noticed, is often counted and measured to quantify writing improvement. Aspects of grammar such as relative clauses, modal verbs and passive voice are continuously assessed in sequential pieces of writing (Hyland, 2009). However, (the notion of) voice is not as easily noticed as grammar structure or errors. From this perspective, voice is often overlooked in terms of criteria and scoring rubric.

It is interesting that although voice is a noteworthy feature, voice is neither indefinable nor much addressed in assessment (Knowles, 2014). The lack of attention to the inclusion of voice in general writing criteria is probably because voice

is defined in various ways, and the method used to capture and measure voice is not as easy to perform as one used with grammar structure or other grammatical errors.

In order to reach the standards of writing criteria and ubiquity in developing students' writing performance, teachers should pay equivalent attention to each area of criteria – developing ideas, improving organization, and correcting errors – regardless of the notion of voice. Spalding et al. 24 (as cited in Knowles, 2014) elaborate this point by stating that the exact same programs that are available commercially do little or zero to improve this trait, which is difficult to master and is often the difference between 'getting near' a standard and 'reaching' it.

The rubric on voice that the researcher found is the one from *6+1 traits of writing* which is widely used in the primary level in the US as shown in Table 2.6 and Table 2.7 below.

Table 2.6

6+1 Traits Rubric (Taken from Culham, 2003, p. 265)

6+1 Traits		
Analytic Writing Assessment Continuum		
		WOW! Exceeds expectations
	5	STRONG! Shows control and skill in this trait; many strengths present
	4	EFFECTIVE On balance, the strengths outweigh the weaknesses; a small amount of revision is needed.
	3	DEVELOPING Strengths and need for revision are about equal; about halfway home
	2	EMERGING Need for revision outweighs strengths; isolated moments hint at what the writer has in mind.
	1	NOT YET A bare beginning; writer not yet showing any control

Table 2.7

Scoring Guide of Voice

Scoring Guide: Voice		
5. **The writer speaks directly to the reader in a way that is individual, compelling, and engaging. The writer crafts the piece with an awareness of and respect for the audience and the writing's purpose.**	**3.** **The writer seems sincere but not fully engaged or involved. The result is pleasant, or even personable, but not compelling.**	**1.** **The writer seems indifferent, uninvolved, or distanced from the topic and/ or the audience.**
A. The tone of the writing adds interest to the message and is appropriate for the purpose and audience.	A. The writer seems aware of an audience but discards personal insights in favor of obvious generalities.	A. The writer is not concerned with the audience. The writer's style is a complete mismatch for the intended reader, or the writing is so brief that little is accomplished beyond introducing the topic.
B. The reader feels a strong interaction with the writer, sensing the person behind the words.	B. The writing communicates in an earnest, pleasing, yet safe manner.	B. The writer speaks in a kind of monotone that flattens all potential highs or lows in the message.
C. The writer takes a risk by revealing who he or she is consistently throughout the piece.	C. Only one or two moments here and there intrigue, delight, or move the reader. These places may emerge strongly for a line or two, but quickly fade away.	C. The writing is humdrum and "risk-free."
D. Expository or persuasive writing reflects a strong commitment to the topic by showing why the reader needs to know this and why he or she should care.	D. Expository or persuasive writing lacks consistent engagement with the topic or build credibility.	D. The writing is lifeless or mechanical; depending on the topic, it may be overly technical or filled with jargon.
E. Narrative writing is honest, personal, and engaging and makes the reader think about and react to the author's ideas and point of view.	E. Narrative writing is reasonably sincere but doesn't reflect unique or individual perspective on the topic.	E. The development of the topic is so limited that no point of view is present – zip, zero, zilch, nada.

Adapted from *"6+1 traits of writing: The complete guide"* by R. Culham, 2003, New York, U.S.A.: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, p. 109.

However, this rubric is not appropriate for application in this study due to the different level of students and expectations. As a result, the researcher is

seeking a more appropriate rubric. We can clearly see that there are some problems around the issues of the notion of voice. With the disparate definitions of voice, not much attention is paid to approaches regarding how to develop voice to reach the standards of the scoring rubric or how to construct and grade standardized tests when students are unable to identify the nation of voice (Knowles, 2014, pp. 3-4). The notion of voice might be still too challenging for test creators, rubric creators, writing teachers, and test takers. Therefore, the unanswered questions around the issues of the notion of voice can stifle the incorporation of teaching voice into writing classes in an effective way, or make it difficult to put into real practice for many writing teachers.

The notion of voice still confuses many students because some writing teachers may ask them to use their voice in their written products and may tell them to project their voice differently by using an authentic voice, an objective voice, or a disinterested voice. However, many writing teachers fail to provide students with a profound understanding of what voice is and how they can express voice appropriately in each writing piece (Gere, 1985). As a result, in this section, the researcher compiled all the ways that scholars, researchers, and educators define voice and how writers can construct their voice in written products, in order to make the notion of voice crystal clear in this study.

Very few attempts have been made to provide EFL student writers with practical guidelines to follow, with regard to how writers can write with voice. The notion of voice has probably been widely addressed among native-English speakers, especially those in the U.S. As a result, very few sets of linguistic features are explicitly presented in terms of how to write with voice or how to strengthen voice in writing. Thus, this study attempts to seek and compile possible voice features found in written opinion paragraphs, in the hope that this compilation can highlight how the notion of voice can be expressed through written texts and how voice features can be applied in writing. The researcher also hopes that this study will be useful for those who are unfamiliar with voice to a certain extent and may wish to employ voice features in their writing.

With regard to the notion of voice, it is rather new for me, as an EFL researcher. Thus, apart from reviewing literature on the relevant theories, I have attempted to compile samples of its use from voices of authority, from both scholars in

the composition fields and other book authors (most of whom are from America), and from voice reported in the empirical evidence in relevant research studies in order to gain a better understanding of the notion of voice. As a result, in this section, I have compiled some of possible voice features as well as their samples, which might be beneficial for those who are not accustomed with this concept, and may help them (especially those who are EFL student writers) access examples of voice elements and improve their writing skills. It may also help to raise student writers' awareness regarding how they can write with voice as well as continuing to consider rhetorical situation and stance taking while writing with voice. These voice features are categorized into three groups: (1) presence and clarity of ideas in the content, (2) manner of idea presentation, and (3) writer and reader presence.

2.2.8.1 Necessary considerations of voice features for presence and clarity of ideas in the content

Writing is inextricably associated with thinking (Stout, 2011; Strunk & White, 2005). Without thinking, we cannot write; our thoughts are important sources for our writing. Great writing, as a result, originates from great thinking (Babbage, 2010). Content is just as important; it is the primary consideration when we look at voice (Spencer, 2014). Words represent our thoughts, sentences illustrate our ideas, and paragraphs are images of what we perceive (Babbage, 2010; Gáliková, 2016).

When we perceive writing as a social act, it means we write for the readers. Therefore, it is important to keep in mind that the writers should use a writing method that attracts the reader to the sense and essential detail of the text, instead of the mood and disposition of the writers (Strunk & White, 2005). In this regard, writing is deemed a powerful medium of communicating our ideas to others (Yagelski, 2018). Readers, hence, want to know how authors perceive the world, and what subject they want to convey in each piece of writing. By doing this, readers will notice how writers craft their writing, what words writers choose, and what styles they tailor in their writing to articulate their thoughts into written accounts.

In the first dimension, the writer expresses his or her own thesis statement, which is well-developed with sufficient evidence. In addition, s/he may choose to write something that is interesting, original, or unique. Normally,

ideational meanings are meanings about how we represent experience in language (Eggins, 2004).

(1) Voice feature 1: Reiteration

Reiteration is considered a discourse-level element which constitutes how clear and how often the main idea is stated in a written composition, and is additionally a way of projecting a writer's stance (Zhao, 2010). Zhao developed this voice feature from Helms-Park and Stapleton's (2003) *Voice Intensity Rating Scale*, and explains that

"reasons used to support the central point are not considered as articulation or restatement of the central point, unless the central point is re-stated when the reasons were given. For example, if the central point is "I definitely think to do X is important", and the following paragraphs expand on that point by giving readers supporting reasons. So, paragraph 2 concludes with a statement such as "This is why I thought it is important to do X" and paragraph 3 begins with "It is important to do X also because ….", and the last paragraph concludes by restating the point "Therefore, I think to do X is really important" (p. 188).

That is, reiteration of the main point will be counted if it is accompanied with explicit reference to the central point. Similarly, Fordyce-Ruff (2016) emphasizes that all sentences must fit with the topic of the paragraph. In this sense, reiteration is the salient feature in Dimension 1.

(2) Voice feature 2: Directives/ Signposts

According to Hyland (2012), directives are the most frequent devices students employ to initiate reader participation in written texts. They often include verbs of command, modal verbs of obligation or adjectives which convey necessity, which tell the reader to carry out an action or to view things in a way that the author has determined (Hyland, 2012). Zhao (2010) also describes citation of other sources in parentheses, or the usage of language which encourages the reader to think critically, such as "note…", "consider…", "refer to…", "think about…", "let's/ let

us…" and other similar words or phrases that serve as direct reader signposts (such as "here is an example", "for example", etc)" in this subcategory (p. 183). However, transitional words such as first, second, finally, and in conclusion are excluded from these directives.

(3) Detail

Another important element of voice is detail, which involves the facts, observations, and occurrences which help a subject develop (Dean, 2016). Without detail, writing will become dull and uninteresting (Dean, 2016). Writers may strengthen their voice by giving more details in writing. Writers use vivid details to give readers vivid descriptions that will lend credibility to that writing. Vivid details include the language that appeals to the five senses (Long, 2005). By using vivid detail, writers can help readers see, hear, smell, taste, and feel, or more specifically, show readers how the writer sees, hears, smells, tastes, and feels. The way that writers can create pictures through the use of vivid language can help readers create mental images which will help readers better understand the writer's meaning in writing.

It is also advised that writers should write with nouns and verbs, not with adjectives and adverbs (Strunk & White, 2005). Fahnestock (2011) strongly agrees with this point, illustrating that many writers on style consider verbs the most powerful part of a sentence. Clear, interesting writing always relies on strong verbs to express ideas because a verb is the part of speech in a sentence that conveys the subject's action or state of being (Radaskiewicz, 2000). The better a verb describes something, the sharper the picture in the mind of the audience.

(4) Interestingness

Another voice feature is interestingness. Radaskiewicz (2000) mentions that we frequently do not ponder over topics to write, but we are assigned to write by the situational context and surrounding people. Yet, we need to make our writing interesting ("present fresh ideas in everything we write"). Radaskiewicz asserts that every effectively written composition is creative and authentic; it provides the audience with original ideas, perceptions, or mental views on a subject.

Although we may find it unpleasant to write on an old or familiar topic which may have been the subject of many writing classes over the years, we need to write with fresh ideas or present a new perspective. Radaskiewicz (2000) emphasizes the fact that readers read texts to learn about a topic and gain knowledge and understanding of it, so the author is responsible for providing them with knowledge they don't yet have. Writers shouldn't waste the reader's time by giving them information that they already know. Therefore, writers should write something interesting or creative.

2.2.8.2 Necessary considerations of voice features for manner of idea presentation

When we perceive writing as a social act, we write for the readers. Therefore, it is important to keep in mind that writers should write to attract the audience to the sense and content of the composition, instead of to the author's feeling and frame of mind (Strunk & White, 2005). In this regard, writing is deemed a powerful medium of communicating our ideas to others (Yagelski, 2018). Readers, hence, want to know how authors perceive the world, and what subject they want to convey in each piece of writing. By doing this, readers will notice how writers craft their writing, what words writers choose, and what styles they tailor in their writing to articulate their thoughts into written accounts.

Voice-related features that the writers use to present their written texts define how the writer is articulating what he wants to say—assertively, mildly, confidently, tentatively, enthusiastically, or maybe indifferently (Zhao, 2010). According to Broad (2003), when talking about textual criteria, textual criteria are subsumed under two subdivisions: textual qualities and textual features. Voice is an aspect of textual quality, while textual features include features of a text which can be recognized as textual features—and assessed—with just a quick look (Broad, 2003).

(1) Voice feature 3: Hedges

Hedges, or hedging (devices), are voice features that help writers present their written texts. Sometimes they are called diminishers or dowtoners (Biber, Conrad, & Leech, 2002). They are linguistic devices that permit authors move

away from the claims being made; the use of these tools shows the readers that there is some extent of uncertainty regarding such claims, and therefore gives them the space to challenge the claims or use critical thinking to interpret the subject of the presentation (Zhao, 2010). Some of the most commonly found examples of such devices include: *can/could, may/might, perhaps, maybe, probably, possible/possibly, suppose/supposedly, sometimes, seem, appear, relative/relatively, would, tend to, tentatively, likely, about, more or less, to some extent, in some case*, etc.

In written academic English, student writers have to be careful when making generalizations. Student writers are advised to only make generalizations based on any reasonable evidence they have (Hamp-Lyons & Heasley, 2006; Swales & Feak, 2012). If the writers are unsure about making claims, they may use hedges to express the degree of commitment to their claims. This is in line with the Honesty Principle by Hamp-Lyons and Heasley (2006). They suggest that writers should only say or write that for which they have evidence. For example, if writers do not have good evidence for a generalization, they are advised to use hedges. Hyland asserts that hedges sometimes function to express courteous respect or propriety rather than uncertainty (Hyland, 2000).

(2) Voice feature 4: Boosters

Boosters are employed to express a writer's certainty in what is being stated. Zhao (2010) states that application of boosters commonly entails usage of "*very, certainly, clear/clearly, definitely, absolutely, enormously, never, extremely, apparently, indeed*, and *must*, to just mention a few (p. 42). Although universal and negative indefinite pronouns, i.e. "every- and no-words" and "extreme amplifiers as *always* and *never*" are counted as boosters, they are rarely found in academic writing in English (Hinkel, 2005). Therefore, writing teachers should raise this issue with their EFL student writers in writing classes where use of such universal and negative indefinite pronouns, and such overt exaggerations is not considered to be advisable in academic writing in English.

This is in line with *the Honesty Principle* by Hamp-Lyons, and Heasley (2006). They suggest that writers should only say or write that for which

they have evidence. For example, if writers do not have good evidence for a generalization, they are advised to use hedges.

(3) Rhythms

Readers can perceive rhythm and alliteration. The way the writer chooses words and strings them together, and how they sound will affect the reader at a certain level. One may realize that readers read with their eyes, but in fact they hear what they are reading far more than one realizes. Therefore, matters such as rhythm and alliteration are vital to every sentence (Zinsser, 2006).

Zinsser (2006) gives an example of an excerpt on a subject that the reader may not have been interested in. Nonetheless, that piece of writing made the reader retain attention and enjoy reading it because the reader enjoyed the unpretentious and beautiful style of writing, its rhythms, the unexpected refreshing words, and the specific details that the writer put on that paper. The reader was able to appreciate the touch of humanity and feel the warmth in that written piece.

According to Campbell (1998), writers can develop a rhythm by using two sources: consistency and parallelism. One of the most powerful writing techniques writers master is the use of parallelism in writing by expressing coordinate ideas in a similar form, which requires phrases with similarities in substance and functional usage to be similar on the outside. (Campbell, 1998). Similarly, this likeness of form helps readers to more easily recognize such similarities in substance and functional usage (Strunk & White, 2005).

(4) Word choice and language use

Furthermore, Spencer (2014) asserts that writers should employ specific words, particular nouns or verbs (preposition) instead of using adjectives and adverbs to make generalizations with nouns and verbs (Spencer 2014). However, this does not mean the use of too many adjectives and adverbs. Using concrete words helps to increase attention and makes the message more memorable (Young, 2017). Similarly, Campbell (1998) suggests that writers avoid using vague words since those words may invite varying interpretations. Long (2005) gives some examples of how to replace general nouns by using proper names, and specific nouns

and verbs. For example, when writing about hairstyle, writers should be specific by using ponytail, updo, or braid instead.

In order to make writing come alive and be more intriguing, writers are recommended to use action verbs (Strausser, 2016). Since verbs impart actions by communication, it is likely that writers connect readers to the text by way of lively verbs, which are manipulative action verbs; hard-hitting verbs, or descriptive verbs (Strausser, 2016). He advises writers to replace dull and vague verbs with those action verbs. Additionally, the use of strong verbs involves dynamic verbs (Silverman, Hughes, & Wienbroer, 2005) and the use of active voice (Strausser, 2016).

Table 2.8

Replacing General Verbs with Their Substitute Vivid Verbs

Walk	Talk	Look	Listen
stroll	chat	glance	eavesdrop
traipse	belittle	gawk	heed
ramble	debate	gaze	attend
roam	cajole	stare	detect
meander	prattle	peep	overhear
Like	**Run**	**Think**	**Need**
admire	scamper	mediate	covet
cherish	scramble	picture	wish
value	hustle	ruminate	desire
honor	flee	contemplate	fancy
revere	dash	imagine	crave
Help	**Give**	**Stop**	**Come**
encourage	impart	fetter	appear
abet	bestow	desist	emerge
support	beget	check	arise
uphold	confer	arrest	occur
back	donate	curtail	surface
Tell	**Make**	**Show**	**Want**
narrate	endanger	exemplify	aspire
chronicle	coerce	reveal	fancy
announce	produce	divulge	yearn
urge	fabricate	proclaim	covet
deduce	erect	explain	crave

Adapted from "*Painless writing*" by J. Strausser, 2016, 3rd Ed., Hauppauge, NY: Barrons Educational Series, p. 57.

It is advisable to manipulate a variety of sentence structures (Oshima et al., 2014). Writers should learn how to mix both short and long sentences in a piece of writing. In addition, they may employ different types of sentences – simple, compound, and complex sentences. The reason which lies behind the mixture of different types of sentences is that similarity in the length, class, and organization of sentences can lead to a monotonous writing style which can bore readers (Strausser, 2016). Strausser further points out that only short, sentence-packed paragraphs may make writing look childish or unprofessional, while only long, sentence-packed paragraphs may confuse readers. As a result, writers need to balance the variety of sentences in their paragraphs.

Furthermore, Nadell, Langan, and Comodromos (2009) suggest the use of brevity, an interesting technique which can emphasize a sentence, particularly when it is surrounded by longer sentences. The dramatic effect of the final sentence in the following paragraph is an example they provide to illustrate the use of brevity:

"Starting in June, millions of Americans pour onto the highways, eager to begin vacation. At the same time, city, state, and federal agencies deploy hundreds, even thousands of workers to repair roads that have, until now, managed to escape bureaucratic attention. Chaos results."

(Nadell, et al., 2009, p. 119)

It can be clearly seen that the final sentence, which is the shortest one: "Chaos results", stands out from the surrounding longer sentences. Nadell et al. (2009) explain that this emphasis is appropriate because chaos is the result of the aforementioned sentences.

Apart from varying sentence structure, writers should deploy a variety of lengths and types of sentences – simple, compound, and complex — in order to make written pieces look more interesting and catch readers' attention (Nadell et al., 2009). In brief, writers should make their written paragraphs varied in terms of sentence length, type, and structure.

Another voice element is how the writers manipulate syntax, or sentence structure, to form ideas. The use of syntax involves the integral elements of

sentences, word arrangement, length of sentences, and the act of punctuating (Dean, 2016). The way the writers arrange the language in each sentence can create effects for the readers. Experimenting with syntax is another way to play with the foundation of communication.

(5) Fragments: The use of non-sentences

As we know, when we write a sentence in English, we always compose a sentence which contains at least one subject and verb and expresses a complete thought. As a result, when we eliminate either the subject or the verb, that sentence becomes incomplete or is called a fragment (Oshima et al., 2014). To many people, those fragments are likely to be errors. However, using fragments is another way to create rhythm in writing. The use of "non-sentences" or sentence fragments can make that writing more interesting if it can spell something out, particularly when the fragment comes after a long, complicated sentence (Strausser, 2016). The use of sentence fragments helps create emphasis by varying one's rhythm (Wilbers, 2016). They suddenly stop the flow of complete sentences, sharply interrupt the delivery of thought, and incorporate a conversational aspect into the writing (Wilbers, 2016).

Similarly, Kirby and Crovitz (2013) point out that some published writers frequently employ fragments with the intention of creating effects such as tone and mood in their writing. They, as a result, suggest that student writers learn to use fragments for creating effects; fragments should not be present as a consequence of sloppy punctuation in their written products. However, Strausser asserts that fragment techniques may not be appropriate in a scientific paper or in any writing in which readers expect to read only complete sentences. Writers, as a result, need to ponder over which writing is appropriate for using fragment techniques to create writing effects and catch readers' attention. Otherwise, the inappropriate use of devised fragments may be mistakenly understood as errors or sloppy punctuation, and can weaken their writing instead.

(6) The use of punctuation

The way writers decide to use punctuation also indicates how they forge their style. Some examples are given in the literature, such as the usage of a

colon instead of a dash, or a semicolon instead of a period (Bishop & Starkey, 2006). Punctuation and grammar can be used to show feelings and attitude, which is part of a written voice (Spencer, 2014). For example, the dash can convey a sharp interruption suggesting abruptness or annoyance.

(7) Voice feature 5: Attitude markers

According to Hyland (2008), attitude markers illustrate how the author uses emotion, instead of knowledge to perceive propositions, conveying surprise, agreement, significance, dissatisfaction, and so forth, instead of commitment. Normally, attitude markers include verbs, sentence adverbs, and adjectives that show writers' stance.

The Need to Compile a List of Voice Features in Voice Dimension 2

With respect to exploring voice features in Dimension 2 (*manner of idea presentation*), the researcher found at first that identifying hedges, boosters, and attitude markers could be problematic because there were not sufficient examples of hedges, boosters, and attitude markers in the major work of Zhao (2010; 2012). Zhao (2010, 2012) just touches upon the terms of hedges, boosters, and attitude markers, but does not provide a list of their examples. The researcher had to find more examples from other resources.

Therefore, in order to gain a better understanding of this concept and to be certain when coding these voice features, I searched for more examples from Hyland's (2005) list of metadiscourse items. However, although more examples of linguistic items are provided and are rather useful for academic writing in various disciplines, they might not fit the investigation of my study, whose writing samples are relatively non-discipline-specific forms of paragraph writing. The researcher then decided to compile more possible lists of hedges, boosters, and attitude markers that may be found in opinion paragraphs from other sources, e.g. Biber et al. (2002); Crismore and Vande Kopple (1990), Halliday and Matthiessen (2014); Hinkel (2005); Hübler (1983); and Martin and White (2005), as illustrated in Table 2.4.

However, the researcher found some disagreement on the use of some hedges and boosters. For example, Hyland (2005) classifies the words "think"

and "believe" as boosters, but Labov (1984) categorizes "think" as a hedging device which can used to reduce the effectiveness of or restrain universal quantification. Clearly distinguishing between hedging and boosting is sometimes difficult because some words overlap others. Hyland asserts that this distinction is too hard to prove reasonable since modal resources form a measurable gradient, in other words, they appear as continuous variables (as cited in Hood, 2010).

Table 2.9

The List of Hedges, Boosters, and Attitude Markers Employed in This Study

Hedges	Boosters	Attitude Markers
Quantity a few a little a majority (of) a minority a number of few little many much some several	**Quantity** all each every no none not any	
Modal Verbs can, could (not) may, might (not) ought to should (not) would (not)	**Modal Verbs** must (not) will shall have to	
Frequency usual (ly) normal (ly) general (ly) often frequent (ly) sometimes occasional (ly) rare (ly) seldom hardly ever scarcely ever	**Frequency** always never	**Frequency**

Hedges	Boosters	Attitude Markers
Verbs	**Verbs**	**Verbs**
appear	demonstrate	agree
argue	establish	appreciate
assume	find	disagree
believe	know	expect
claim	prove	like
doubt	realize	prefer
estimate	show	surprise
feel		understand
forecast		want
guess		
indicate		
imagine		
seem		
speculate		
suggest		
suspect		
suppose		
tend to		
think		
Adjectives	**Adjectives**	**Adjectives**
apparent	absolute	acceptable
doubtful	aware	afraid
improbable	certain	amazed
likely	clear	amazing
plausible	complete	amazing
possible	deep	annoyed
probable	definite	ashamed
skeptical	doubtless	appropriate
relative	extreme	astonished
typical	evident	astonishing
uncertain	(very) full	bad
unclear	great	curious
unlikely	high	delightful
	indisputable	desirable
	obvious	disgusted
	strong	dramatic
	sure	embarrassed
	(very) thorough	essential
	total	extraordinary
	true	fascinating
	undeniable	fond
	undoubted	fortunate
		glad,
		good

Hedges	Boosters	Attitude Markers
		happy,
		hopeful
		important
		inappropriate
		interesting
		irritated
		nice
		pleased
		preferable
		remarkable
		relieved
		sad
		scared
		shocked
		shocking
		sorry
		striking
		surprised
		surprising
		puzzled
		tragic
		unbelievable
		understandable
		unexpected
		upset
		worried
		worthwhile
		wise
Adverbs	**Adverbs**	**Adverbs**
a bit	actually	admittedly
a little	absolutely	amusingly
about	all	appropriately
almost	a lot	astonishingly
approximately	certainly	cleverly
apparently	clearly	conveniently
around	completely	correctly
basically	conclusively	curiously
broadly	decidedly	desirably
comparatively	deeply	disappointed
enough	definitely	disappointing
essentially	doubtless	disappointingly
fairly	enormously	disturbingly
far from	entirely	dramatically
frequently	extremely	essentially
generally	greatly	even x

Hedges	Boosters	Attitude Markers
hardly	highly	expectedly
just	hugely	fortunately
kind of	indeed,	funnily
largely	indisputably	hopefully
less	inevitably	importantly
maybe	in fact	ironically
mainly	forever	justifiably
merely	for sure	inappropriately
mostly	fully	interestingly
nearly	more	luckily
only	much	rightly
ordinarily	never	preferable
partially	obviously	preferably
partly	of course	remarkably
pretty	really	sadly
plausibly	seriously	sensibly
possibly	sharply	significantly
perhaps	strongly	shocking
practically	so …	shockingly
presumably	such a …	strikingly
pretty	surely	(not) surprisingly
probably	thoroughly	predictably
possibly	too ….	unbelievable
probably	totally	unbelievably
quite	truly	understandable
rarely	undeniably	understandably
rather	undisputedly	unfortunately
relatively	undoubtedly	unjustifiably
roughly	utterly	wisely
simply	vastly	even worse
slightly	well	
sometimes	very	
somewhat		
sort of		
sometimes		
supposedly		
relatively		
technically		
tentatively		
typically		
uncertainly		
usually		
virtually		
Others	**Others**	**Others**
as a rule	beyond doubt	!
certain amount	no doubt	

Hedges	Boosters	Attitude Markers
certain extent certain level from my perspective from our perspective from this perspective in general in many/ some respects in most cases in most instances in my opinion in my view in some case in this view in our opinion in our view more or less on the whole to a certain extent to my knowledge to some extent	no way without doubt	

Adapted from Aull & Lancaster (2014); Halliday & Matthiessen, (2014); Hamp-Lyons & Heasley (2006); Hinkel (2005), Hübler (1983), and Hyland (2005)

2.2.8.3 Necessary considerations of voice features for writer and reader presence

The last subcategory in the modified analytic voice rubric is comprised of two voice features, i.e. *authorial self-mention* and *reader reference*. In this dimension, the writer invites and engages readers with the use of first person pronouns and reader pronouns. This voice feature group is focused on authorial presence and reader presence.

(1) Voice feature 6: Authorial self-mention

The use of the first-person singular pronouns (e.g. I, me, my, and mine) is a way to show/ to emphasize the presence of the writer in the text (Pixton, 1988). Pixton claims that the more pronouns are used, the stronger the presence of the writer is emphasized. Importantly, if the author has control over the pronouns, the writer then has control over their self-emphasis. I-oriented writing can reflect upon one's own experiences, thoughts and feelings (Berge, Evensen, & Thygesen, 2016).

Writing corresponds to two people intimately transacting between each other, on paper, and the transaction will go so well to the extent that it keeps its human nature (Zinsser, 2006). Thus, Zinsser encourages writers to write in the first person: I, me, we and us. Some writers may wonder if they have right to reveal their emotions or their thoughts in the academic world. Therefore, they may use one or the impersonal it is instead. However, he emphasizes that the use of one is boring and suggests replacing it with "I."

Pixton (1988) asserts that the pronoun "I", which is part of a main clause, is more emphatic than "me, my, and mine", which appear in that clause because a pronoun with emphasis is necessary for the function of grammar in a sentence's major clause. However, Hu (2017) argues that the use of too many personal pronouns may weaken written texts. Interestingly, Kirby and Crovitz (2013) indicate that writing with a real voice may not necessarily include the use of the first-person singular pronoun.

(2) Voice feature 7: Reader pronouns

Reader pronoun use is rather straightforward. The most expressive way to refer to readers is by utilizing second person pronouns and possessives such as you, your, and yours. However, the use of "we" (and us, our, ours; which differ here from the "we" used in the stance dimension to refer to the presence of two or multiple authors, or the author and someone else he or she has mentioned previously) is a more implicit way of influencing the reader to share one's opinion (Hyland, 2008, as cited in Zhao, 2010).

To sum up, writing teachers have to encourage student writers to add more specific information where possible. It is suggested that writing teachers can teach their L2 student writers to use different voicing strategies appropriately in accordance with their proficiency levels. Teachers may gradually move on from the least complex and most straightforward methods of projecting voice, like using first person pronouns, to ways which involve more complexity and sophistication, like incorporating personal asides (Zhao, 2010).

2.2.8.4 Other emerging voice features from other studies and suggestions

Apart from the major voice features previously mentioned in all three dimensions, there are still some other aspects that can contribute to voice-related features.

Literary elements

Another element of voice is expressed by literary devices that the writers employ in that piece of writing (Spence, 2014). The use of literary devices is a technique that the writers use to manipulate language in a piece of literary work in order to induce and develop a specific effect, emotion, reaction or reply from the readers (Sirhan, 2014). In addition, literary devices can help to project moods, describe settings, give support to themes, and give the characters life (Medaille, 2007).

Some people can notice the student's written voice has been affected by the use of literary devices in that writing. Those possible literary elements in writing may entail figurative language (e.g. metaphor, simile, synecdoche, hyperbole), other literary devices (e.g. alliteration, repetition, binary opposites, rhyme), and other literary elements (e.g. mood, theme, tension, telling details) (Spence, 2014). It is inferred that literary devices can strengthen voice in writing.

Spence (2014) asserts that we frequently use figurative language, but she still encourages writing teachers to learn the literary craft which makes our writing valuable and beautiful by learning about the many long-standing literary constituents of the language as well as metaphors, symbols, synecdoche, and alliteration. However, her statement makes me think this rather challenging for both nonnative English-speaking (NNS) writing teachers and students. I question whether it is possible that NNS like us can write with strong voice if we do not learn about such figurative language and other literary elements in our English writing classes. As a result, we, as teachers of writing, need to learn about these literary devices and teach them to our EFL student writers.

Spence (2014) proposes possible literary elements in writing, with descriptions and examples illustrated in the Table 2.9.

Table 2.9

Possible Literary Elements in Writing (Adapted from Spence, 2014, p. 28)

Literary Devices	Subcategory	Examples
Figurative Language Expressions where the meaning of the words differs from its literal meaning	**Metaphor** An implied comparison between two different things or ideas	It was a *heavenly* day.
	Simile An expressed comparison of two different things or ideas	She ran *like the wind*.
	Synecdoche Expressions where a part is substituted for the whole or the whole for a part	He longed for the comfort of *the hearth*.
	Hyperbole Exaggeration for effect	My suitcase weighs *a ton*.
Other Literary Devices	**Alliteration** The repetition of the same first sound in a group of words	The dark, dank dungeon.
	Repetition Using a word or phrase two or more times for effect	Sarah, oh *Sarah*!
	Binary opposites Opposite pairs of words	The lights *in the night*.
	Rhyme The repetition of the ending sound in a group of words	The *lights* in the *night*.
Other Literary Elements	**Mood** Words and phrases used to portray feeling	A dreary *gloom* pervaded our travels.
	Theme An implied or expressed topic	It was my *best day* ever.
	Tension A point in a story which contributes to a strained quality	She didn't hear the stranger's step behind her.
	Telling details Simple, yet descriptive, words that add to the mood or theme of the story	The *little* turtle was caught.

Based on "*Student Writing: Give It a Generous Reading*" by L. K. Spence, 2014, Charlotte, NC: Information Age, p. 28.

2.3 Previous Studies on Voice in Writing

The elusive and slippery understanding of the notion of voice means that most of articles in the existing literature on voice in written discourse are likely to be more focused on theoretical issues than research ones. However, those theoretical issues and academic articles help novice researchers like me gain a better understanding of the notion of voice in terms of its definitions, concepts, and interpretations, which can vary

depending on what views researchers and teachers hold. Interestingly, teachers and researchers, in fact, often hold a particular view but are easily convinced to change that view by others (Matsuda, 2015). However, conceptions on voice drawn from academic articles still remain abstract in a sense of deciding what features in written texts exactly indicate voice expression; how voice can be taught in EFL writing classes; and above all, how voice strength can be measured. Although a few studies have illuminated suitable application of the notion of voice in writing instruction and writing assessment, this section attempts to provide an overview of research issues in the study of the notion of voice in written discourse.

2.3.1 Voice as a Social Construct

In Chapter 7: The Origins of Discoursal Identity in Writers' Experience (1998), Roz Ivanič introduces the variety of devices and skills which authors use when actually writing — the 'voices', in Bakhtin's terms — have their foundations in the authors' experience, and specifically in their meetings with actual people and genuine texts (p. 181). Based on Vygotsky's theory of the social nature of cognitive development, Ivanič (1998) ascribes a writer's autobiographical self to the sum of all they have experienced in the past and all encounters in their abundance and complication, made into what they are by the opportunities and limitations of society, which covers interests; formulated thoughts, attitudes and commitments; voices; self-esteem; and practices, which include practices related to literacy.

From her perspective, the term *voices* is sometimes equated with ideas and opinions, but voices can refer ways that people use words, speak in accents, form grammatical structures, make lexical and wide-ranging discoursal decisions, and feel comfortable with specific genres and discourses, all of which are focused on in this dissertation (Ivanič, 1998). In her study, Ivanič draws on some instances of how her co-researchers took their voices into consideration when composing a particular academic essay. She describes and discusses how her co-researchers select words, syntactic structure, argumentation strategies or structuring devices, in conjunction with extracts from their interviews. According to Ivanič (1998), writers are positioned by their prior experience with these discourses incorporated in real people, their voices and their compositions. She further emphasizes the fact that access to discourses is systematic

and subject to social restrictions: individuals do not have equivalent chances to listen to, read, test and incrementally take up discourses and their related identities. In conclusion, drawing from examples and discussions by Ivanic, writers can project their voices by choosing words, syntactic structure, and lexis from their available discoursal resources to serve their intention in composing written texts.

2.3.2 Research on Voice Features

Some researchers view written voice as something that can be expressed through some metadiscourse devices. On account of this, there is substantial empirical evidence of variations in voice features which are closely associated with metadiscourse devices. This section will start with a study of Hyland (2008), who is an influential scholar in the field of L2 writing and has conducted extensive research on metadiscourse devices, especially in various forms of disciplinary writing. Subsequently, other studies on metadiscourse devices which contribute to expression of voice in written products will also be studied.

2.3.2.1. Hyland's (2008) interactional model of voice

According to Hyland (2008), voice refers to how authors give their opinions, show their authority, and make their presence felt. Hyland proposes an interactional model of voice which can capture voice features. The interactional model of voice is composed of two major aspects of voice: *stance*, which represents the author's writing 'voice' or personality as regarded by the community, pertains to attitude, and is a writer-centered function concerned with how authors present themselves and impart their evaluations, views, and commitments to their audience, and *engagement*, which is how authors can recognize reader presence with regard to rhetoric, how authors help readers keep up with the argument, how authors assist readers with regard to discourse participation, and how authors show readers the way toward interpretations" (Hyland, 2008). Stance entails *hedges, boosters, attitude markers*, and *self*-mention, whereas engagement includes *reader mention, directives, questions, knowledge references*, and *asides*, as illustrated in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1 *Hyland's (2008) Interactional Model of Voice*
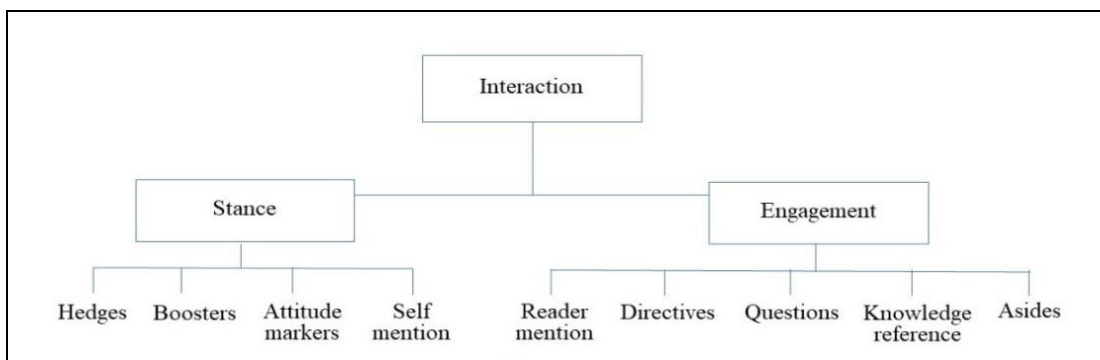
Adapted from "Disciplinary Voices: Interaction in Research Writing" by K. Hyland, 2008, *English Text Construction, 1*(1), p. 8.

        In order to understand terms employed in Hyland's (2008) model, the researcher provides a brief description of each term from Hyland's original account. Besides the descriptions, some explicit examples of each term's linguistic features are also in Table 2.2 below.

        Below is the description of Hyland's (2008) Academic Interaction Model.

Table 2.11

Hyland's (2008) Academic Interaction Model

		Academic Interaction Model (Hyland, 2008)	
Stance (the writer-oriented voice features)	1.Hedges	- don't fully commit to a proposition, and permit information to be presented as a view instead of a fact - a claim is made by using reason that is worthy of belief instead of particular knowledge … shows how much confidence it might be a good idea to attribute	*possible, may, could, a strong tendency*
	2. Boosters	express surety, topic relevance & unity with the readers (Hyland, 2005)	*of course, should be, must definitely, nobody*
	3.Attitude markers	- The author's emotions impart surprise, agreement, significance, annoyance, and so on.	*Interesting, I believe that, extraordinary, The worry I have,*

		Academic Interaction Model (Hyland, 2008)	
		- Attitude is most explicitly conveyed by using attitude verbs, sentence adverbs, & descriptive words.	
	4. Self-mention	relates to the usage of *first person pronouns* and *possessive adjectives* to impart details	*We, our,*
Engagement (the reader-oriented voice features)	5. Reader mention	invite the audience to join a discourse by utilizing you, the reader, we, or other possessive pronouns	*You* and *your* are rare in research articles; a separation between participants, rather than seeking connections; high use of the inclusive *we, our*
	6. Directives	Imperatives and modals of obligation facilitate readers to participate in three major types of activity: – *textual acts* point the audience toward a different part of the text (e.g. see Smith 1999, refer to Table 2, etc.) – *physical acts* tell the audience how to perform a real-world action (e.g. open the valve, heat the mixture) – *cognitive acts* tell the audience how to understand the meaning of an argument, by offering encouragement to *note*, *concede* or *consider* an argument or assertion made in the composition.	*See Smith 1999, refer to Table, open the valve, heat the mixture*
	7. Personal asides	are used as a direct way to address an audience	I believe many *TESOL professionals*
	8 Appeals to shared knowledge	their explicit signaling, which asks the audience to regard something as well-known or accepted, is their trademark	*of course*, *obviously*
	9. Questions	part of the main plan behind getting a dialogue's participants involved, which entails inviting participation, fostering the desire to know and bringing the dialogue's participants into a place where they can be pulled towards the author's viewpoint (Hyland 2002b).	What do these two have in common, one might ask?

Adapted from "Disciplinary Voices: Interaction in Research Writing" by K. Hyland, 2008, English Text

Construction, 1(1), pp. 9-12.

Hyland (2008) developed and proposed the interactional model of voice, which is composed of stance and engagement. Stance construes the writer's textual voice and personality; it is a writer-centered function based on attitude which is concerned with how authors present themselves and impart their evaluations, views, and commitments to the audience. On the contrary, engagement is concerned with how authors can recognize reader presence with regard to rhetoric, how authors help readers keep up with the argument, how authors assist readers with regard to discourse participation, and how authors show readers the way toward interpretations (Hyland, 2008). This model helps researchers and others capture voice more systematically. However, it only consists of linguistic devices and may fail to capture other dimensions of voice. Furthermore, Hyland's model (2010) does not elucidate ways that these linguistic devices can be utilized to accomplish a strong writing voice and simply implies that how often these linguistic devices are used in a composition might have an effect on the actualization of voice (Zhao, 2010). The researcher, therefore, looked for a more practical rubric that could be applied in this study.

As mentioned earlier, voice in writing can be expressed through some metadiscourse devices. On account of this, there is substantial empirical evidence of variations in voice features which are closely associated with metadiscourse devices, especially after the interactional model of voice was proposed by Ken Hyland (2005, 2008). Drawing on Hyland's interactional model, both interactive and interactional metadiscourse resources have been a major influence on research into voice features in writing.

2.3.2.2 Voice as metadiscourse devices

Ho and Li's (2018) study explores the pattern of the employment of metadiscourse in persuasive arguments in the writing of first-year university students. In this study, 181 timed argumentative essays of first-year Chinese students from different faculties and schools at a university in Hong Kong were collected and analyzed through the analytical framework of Hyland's (2005) interpersonal model of metadiscourse. The findings highlighted the significant difference between low-rated essays and high-rated ones: the low-rated essays utilized fewer metadiscourse devices and had trouble with using metadiscourse in writing persuasive arguments. Regarding hedging and boosting, Ho and Li's (2018) study

yielded results showing that the freshmen employed hedges more than boosters. These matadiscourse markers help writers depict their stance and are effective as a way to make the written texts more persuasive. As a result, the findings also inferred that these first-year Chinese students were aware that using hedges more than boosters would indicate some level of certainty and uncertainty about their claims to the readers. The study suggests that metadiscourse should be taught and learned directly and explicitly in secondary school and at the beginning of tertiary levels so that students are able to use metadiscourse effectively in constructing persuasive arguments in written academic English.

In Aull and Lancaster's (2014) work, the corpus-based study was conducted to scrutinize linguistic expressions of stance in argumentative essays composed by incoming first-year university students, compared with the written prose of upper-level undergraduates and published academics. In this study, the first-year and advanced-level students' written texts were drawn from two U.S. universities. The corpus of freshman writing comprised 4,032 essays selected as part of each university's "direct self-placement (DSP) process", while the upper-level corpus included 615 papers composed by "advanced undergraduate and first-year to third-year" graduates at the same two universities (Aull & Lancaster, 2014, p. 156). The researchers' analytic procedures entailed the employment of AntConc (Anthony, 2011), focusing only on the examination of three subdivisions of metadiscourse which encompassed "(a) hedges and boosters that express extent or likelihood, (b) code glosses, and (c) adversative/contrast connectives" (Aull & Lancaster, 2014, p. 159). The findings revealed there were significant differences in the use of linguistic stance markers between freshman writers and upper-level student writers. For example, regarding the use of hedging, in the WFU-FY corpus, some writers used the modal verb *may* "six to seven times in a single essay," whereas in the UM-FY corpus, some employed *"may or seem(s)* as many as 16 times in a single essay under 1,000 words" (Aull & Lancaster, 2014, p. 160).

2.3.3 Voice in Writing Instruction

Although the concept of voice seems perplexing and difficult to teach to novice L2 student writers, Zhao (2010) suggests that writing instructors employ the

analytic voice rubric, which can be divided into its different constituents and used in instruction. Doing this can help instructors in explicitly teaching salient features of voice in each writing task and make voice more accessible for student writers to pay attention to. Furthermore, Zhao (2010) gives some important and helpful suggestions in terms of the teaching of voice construction, namely that writing teachers should not put emphasis only on the frequency of employing those voice-related features in writing pieces, but should rather explain every time how such features may be utilized to accomplish a voice which is strong and effective in a specific writing context, taking into account the type, purpose, and readership of the text.

The more we practice writing, the more we sharpen our thinking skills. While composing written pieces, we need to take numerous things into consideration, e.g. rhetorical situations. In doing so, we do not only improve our confidence in writing, but we also learn to control what we should put in writing to make it more successful. This can help us gain more confidence in writing and learn how to strengthen our written voice as well (Dietsch, 2006). We will be more aware of what thoughts should be put on paper and of how to write and organize such thoughts in that piece of writing so that readers will be interested in reading it. We do not put every idea on paper, but we carefully select some ideas and words, using a variety of structures to communicate our ideas effectively to our intended audience.

2.3.4 Voice Assessment

Two studies (Helms-Park & Stapleton, 2003; Zhao, 2010; 2012) are worth reviewing since they have a significant impact on subsequent studies on voice assessment in written discourse. Helms-Park and Stapleton (2003) explore the connection between L2 academic writing caliber and L1 voice characteristics. Writing samples from 63 non-native-English-speaking students in an intensive writing course for first-year students were scored by three raters to measure individualized voice. At this stage, the raters employed a special *Voice Intensity Rating Scale* encompassing four elements (assertiveness; self-identification; reiteration of central point; and authorial presence and autonomy of thought) which was specifically tailored for this study. In addition, these three raters assessed overall writing quality utilizing Jacobs et al.'s (1981) ESL Composition Profile. In a comparison of the overall quality scores with the

overall voice intensity scores for the whole group, the results revealed that there was no correlation between quality and any of the four subcategories: assertiveness, self-identification, reiteration of central point, or authorial presence. That is, neither the results from the Chinese university students, nor the overall results, found any relationship between voice intensity and overall quality.

Another study on voice assessment is the work of Zhao (2010, 2012). Her study is claimed to be the first to explore the interplay between voice and quality in a writing test, i.e. a high-stakes L2 writing assessment, and to create a rating scale that measures strength of voice. With the use of a mixed-method approach, Zhao (2012) designs and confirms the validity of a set of measurements for determining voice strength in L2 argumentative writing. In other words, Zhao's study develops and formally validates three-dimensional analytical voice rubric, built upon relevant theories and empirical-evidence studies.

Drawing from 400 TOEFL iBT writing samples, this study conducts factor analysis of ratings obtained from six raters of voice strength in concert with qualitative analysis of the data in an in-depth think-aloud of four raters' and their interviews. While the creation of the three-dimensional analytic voice rubric is influenced by several related studies, it relies most heavily on Hyland's latest model. Authorial voice in writing is primarily realized through these three dimensions: (1) *the presence and clarity of ideas in the content*; (2) *the manner of the presentation of ideas*; and (3) *the writer and reader presence*.

The researcher assumes that Zhao (2010) has an understanding of the differences in the perception of writing quality and voice intensity because she continually reminds raters in her study to be aware that they are supposed to judge and rate for 'voice intensity,' not writing quality, and emphasized that the raters should strive to put aside their sense of the caliber of the writing when considering voice intensity. This is because the format of some TOEFL iBT essay sampling may appear strange, and it implies that one component of writing quality can contribute to the format of the written text.

Based on the results derived from the revised rubrics, the written products in her study tend to not require the use of source texts when a student is simply required to elucidate an opinion on a given topic. As a result, this affected the selection

of criteria for her rubric. With its theory-based scale, the model is possessed of reliability and validity and becomes the model that this study mainly relies on.

2.3.5 Voice in Narrative Paragraphs

I am well aware of O'Hallaron and Schleppegrell's (2016) suggestion that there is a divide between the sum of ideas with regard to voice in narrative texts and that of voice in non-narrative texts, or opinion paragraphs. Yet, after attempting to find a review of literature on voice in written narratives, I found that there were very few studies analyzing or assessing voice in narrative written texts. Existing research on narrative writing tends to pay more attention to analyzing narrative paragraphs in terms of its structure, the use of verb tenses, the use of descriptive and sensory details, and so on. Furthermore, some research is related to narrative analysis in ethnographic research or uses narrative accounts in qualitative research.

With respect to voice in narratives, the concept of narrative voice is often related to the point of view the writer takes in his/ her writing, and this results in a reflection consisting of a first-person narration, a third-person narrator, the use of the first person (*I, we*), the second person (*you*), and the third person (*he, she, they, it*). Unfortunately, the previously mentioned studies seem irrelevant with regard to the focus of my study. However, I found some studies focusing on voice in narrative texts as follows.

Humphrey, Walton, and Davidson's (2014) study pays special attention to authorial voice, a writing feature which refers to the unique, individual style that allows the audience to sense who the writer is—the characteristic which makes us feel like we are on personal terms with our favorite writers. The authors explored associations among authorial voice, writing mechanics, and academic performance in personal narratives written by primary school students. There were two measures of mechanics, namely clarity and convention, and there were four measures of authorial voice, which encompassed expressive language, metanarrative awareness, emphasis markers, and language of cultural communities. The results showed that authorial voice could be reliably measured, but mechanics, not voice, predicted academic performance. They explained that the possible reason why teachers focused on conventions of writing – namely grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling – more than voice might

was due to the culture of high-stakes standardized testing. They suggested that government standards with a focus on mechanics discourage written voice (Humphrey et al. 2014).

Their study can provide some insight into how written narrative voice can be assessed and how students can employ strategies to increase voice in narrative writing. In their study, there were four attributes in assessment of voice – expressive language, metanarrative awareness, emphasis markers, and language of cultural communities. In their study, expressive language refers to written expression that is vivid and forceful. In using expressive language, writers may choose to use figurative language devices, such as hyperbole, irony, metaphor, and simile. In addition, the planned use of indirect speech, especially dialogue, and meticulous word choice, particularly the usage of high-level or uncommon vocabulary contribute to increasing the expressiveness of that writing (Humphrey et al., 2014)

Metanarrative awareness means writing with a strong authorial voice and using explicit remarks for the readers, or the process of storytelling. Metanarrative comments occur when the authors show self-awareness as writers, for example, '*I hope you like my story that I am going to tell you about,*' or engage in the process of telling a story, e.g., '*Well that's my story and it's all 100% true!*'' (Humphrey et al., 2014, p. 115).

Another voice attribute is the use of emphasis markers. Emphasis markers, which function to put emphasis on particular parts of the story, include the use of intensifiers and the employment of orthographic devices such as exclamation points, repeated words, and capital letters. Humphrey et al. (2014) assert that these emphasis markers are able to make readers more engaged and interested and allow readers to sense that they are able to hear the writer's narration. The last voice attribute in their study is *language of cultural communities*, which is the way that authors reveal themselves as members of particular sociocultural groups. Authors may express language of cultural communities through colloquialisms and idiomatic expressions. Humphrey et al. (2014) suggest that these devices help writing become more engaging and unique.

Although few researchers have directly addressed the issue of voice assessment in narrative writing, I found that the study of Wolfe, Bolton, Feltovich, and

Niday (1996) touched slightly upon assessment of written voice. In fact, the aim of their study was to compare essays written with pen and paper for a direct writing assessment to those composed with a word processor by students who had different levels of experience regarding use of word processors for writing. The narrative essays by secondary school students were scored on a six-point holistic scale, but the researchers also performed content analysis by scrutinizing how the text looked, how much text was written, how accurate the mechanics were, and what style of writing was used in each piece (Wolfe et al, 1996). Voice was subsumed under the category of style, which encompassed the text's sentence structure, tone, and voice. Descriptors are presented below. The attribute of voice was evaluated on a two-point rating scale; writers were deemed to either have a *strong voice* (i.e., interesting, unique, informative, and reflective) or a *weak voice* (i.e., lacking emotion and similar to other authors) (Wolfe et al, 1996). Voice was described as referring to the individual who is behind the words we read; it is the personality of long-form writing and can be assessed as either strong or weak on a rubric. The findings revealed that word-processed essays produced a more formal tone and a weaker voice than those produced with pen and paper.

2.3.6 The Framework of This Dissertation Study

Since the prime consideration of this study is examining written voice expressed by student writers, the researcher first adapted the model of three types of subject-positioning, initiated by Ivanic and Camps (2001). They assert that all writing embodies voice as in the Bakhtinian idea of going back and emphasizing 'kinds of voice', which places their users with culture and history in mind (Ivanič, & Camps, 2001).

Ivanic and Camps (2001) classify three types of positioning grounded in Halliday's (1985) three macrofunctions of language: positioning of how the writer represents the world (ideational positioning); positioning of how the writer establishes a relationship and interacts with readers (interpersonal positioning); and positioning how the writer negotiates meanings and shapes written text (textual positioning).

In the model of Halliday's three macrofunctions, identity creation is only an aspect of the interpersonal function of language; on the contrary, Ivanic and Camps put an argument forward that identity creation belongs to all three

macrofunctions of the completely integrated language system. They provide a brief overview of three types of positioning contributing to subject-positioning, as illustrated in Figure 3. and elucidate those types of positioning respectively.

Table 2.12

Three Simultaneous Types of Subject-Positioning

Types of Positioning	In Relation To	Linguistic Realizations
Ideational positioning	• Different interests, objects of study, methodologies; 1. Different stances on topics, values, beliefs and preferences; 2. Different views on knowledge-making	1. Lexical choice in noun phrases 2. Classificatory lexis, 3. Generic reference, 4. Evaluative lexis, 5. Syntactic choice, 6. Verb tense, 7. Verb type, 8. Reference to human agency, 9. Generic or specific reference, 10. First person reference
2. Interpersonal positioning	(1) Different degrees of self-assurance and certainty; (2) Different power relationships between the writer and the reader	1. Evaluation, 2. Modality, 3. First person reference, 4. Mood, 5. First person reference
3. Textual positioning	(1) Different views of how a written text should be constructed	1. Noun phrase length, 2. Mono- vs multi-syllabic words, 3. Linking devices, 4. Semiotic mode

Adapted from "I am how I sound: Voice as self-representation in L2 writing" by R. Ivanič and D. Camps, 2001, *Journal of Second Language Writing*, *10*, p. 11.

In my opinion, it is a good idea to start exploring voice features in written texts by employing the model of three types of subject-positioning proposed by

Ivanic and Camps (2001). This model makes me aware that writers can draw on the repertoire of voice through their lexical, syntactic, and rhetorical choices. I particularly like the third column of Fig. 3., which clarifies linguistic realizations related to each positioning and helps me develop a better understanding of voice- related features. Yet, I, as an EFL researcher, need more examples of voice features in order to better comprehend the notion of voice and facilitate the modification of the scoring rubric. Therefore, I continue to seek more examples of voice features from other models.

The next model related to the construction of voice in written discourse I adapted is from the interactional model created by Hyland (2008). Based initially on Hyland's (2008) model, research on voice in academic writing from different disciplines has been extensively conducted (Stock & Eik-Nes, 2016). As mentioned previously, this interactional model proposes linguistic features subsumed under stance (writer-oriented features) and engagement (reader-oriented features); therefore, it is advantageous to a large number of researchers who are particularly interested in academic written voice. However, when we ponder over the notion of voice, content or what the writer says is of paramount importance. Stock and Eik-Nes (2016) point out that overemphasizing linguistic features, such as usage of first person pronouns, carries the risk that studies on voice ignore features associated with content that may have more relevance in building a voice. I do agree with their point that Hyland's (2008) interactional model is beneficial in terms of systematically capturing written voice through linguistic features, but "content-related features" should be taken into careful consideration as well. In this study, I continue looking at other models that may contribute to the examination of voice-related features, including both content-related features and linguistic features.

The last model is Zhao's (2010, 2012) three-dimensional analytic voice rubric which assesses both the substance of preposition and aspects of metadiscourse. Zhao's (2010, 2012) analytic voice rubric is composed of three voice dimensions to be assessed, namely *presence and clarity of ideas in the content, manner of idea presentation*, and *writer and reader presence*. The first dimension is regarding presence and clarity of ideas in the content which will be assessed for substance of preposition of the author. Furthermore, the other two dimensions, i.e. manner of idea

presentation, and writer and reader presence, involve aspects of metadiscourse which are also measured in the modified rubric.

After reviewing literature on the notion of voice, I fully realized that voice features in written texts are associated with both the substance of preposition and aspects of metadiscourse, which are two indispensable components of a written text (Intaraprawat & Steffensen, 1995). With respect to such considerations, Zhao's (2010, 2012) analytic voice rubric could meet this aspect of written voice assessment. In addition, this modified voice rubric also provides very clear descriptors of each voice feature in an individual voice dimension. Therefore, I included Zhao's (2010, 2012) three-dimensional analytic voice rubric in the framework of this dissertation study.

To sum up, this research could initiate a specific interest in voice because some researchers claim that voice is a good characteristic of good writing. However, there are few writing rubrics which include a voice criterion in Thailand, or in other EFL contexts, for scoring student paragraphs in writing classes. As a result, the researcher has attempted to seek voice rubrics at any level of writing classroom. It has been discovered that a voice criterion is considered a prominent feature in some writing rubrics in the US. Such rubrics are mainly for native English speakers and at the primary or secondary school levels. After taking the notion of voice into consideration, I clearly realized that all voice features can contribute to sharpening up both the writers' skills in composing and use of the devices which show the writers' doubts, confidence, and attitudes, both of which signal their authorial presence to the readers and involve their readers in their written texts. Thus, the researcher decided to investigate ways in which voice can be appropriately expressed in paragraph writing by Thai EFL students, in the EFL context, based only on the conceptual framework developed by Ivanic and Camps (2001), Hyland's (2008) interactional model of voice, Zhao's (2012) revised voice rubric and other relevant models.

2.3.7 Conclusion

Understanding the concept of voice in writing seems to be so difficult to grasp that it cannot be defined in a simple manner (Zhao, 2016). The concept of voice is broader in scope than the concept of either tone or stance, and elusive (Jacobs, 1996).

Yet, it has received considerable critical attention among writing teachers and researchers (Matsuda & Jeffery, 2012).

The metaphoric voice is a salient feature for good writing. Undoubtedly, the notion of voice has received great attention among L1 composition scholars for its significance with regard to the study of writing instruction (Zhao, 2010). Furthermore, it is noticeable that research on voice has been actively conducted in the USA, or by scholars who were educated in the USA. The underlying reason for this is that the notion of voice first emerged in the 1960s and has received particular attention from scholars in the field of first language (L1) composition studies in the USA since the early 1970s (Bowden, 1995, 2003; Zhao, 2014). Consequently, it has played an important role in many aspects of the American education system.

Unlike the field of L1 writing, there is still little empirical evidence of the construction of voice among L2 student writers, especially in EFL contexts (Knowles, 2014). A search of the related research databases such as ERIC and PsycInfo revealed that according to Zhao (2010), there are not many pieces of research which have involved direct or indirect empirical investigations on the significance of voice in a variety of writing contexts. This is probably a result of the elusiveness of voice, which means that voice is incomprehensible to L2 educators, teachers, and students.

Unsurprisingly, the notion of voice has perplexed me since the first time I heard of it in my PhD class. Since then, numerous questions have remained in my head. With more than 12 years of experience teaching general English courses to undergraduate students and three years of experience teaching writing to English majors, I have neither heard it anywhere nor found it in any English or composition textbooks in Thailand. Instead, many EFL writing teachers, EFL student writers and I are accustomed to 'voice' with regard to active or passive voice in terms of grammar. The notion of voice I questioned at the beginning is definitely not like active and passive voice in grammar. Initially, I attempted to ask other native-English speakers (NS), just in case that they knew this notion well and could clarify some important points for me. However, not all NS know of this notion and even when some know of it, they still give the meaning differently. As a result, this partly inspired me to begin working on exploring the notion of voice. The researcher, therefore, decided to examine the notion

of voice in a systematic way and would like to seek more empirical evidence to gain a better understanding of this notion.

CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology of this study. It includes the conceptual framework, research methods, data source, research instruments, procedures of data collection and data analyses.

This study was conducted to answer the following research questions:

1. Do students' written paragraphs show voice features as indicated in the modified rubric?

2. Are there any differences between the group of students who are explicitly aware of voice and that of students who may not be aware of voice? What are these elements?

3. How do text types influence voice in students' written products?

3.2 Context of the Research

Due to very little previous research examining voice in EFL students' written products in the EFL context, there is a call for conducting more research on voice construction in L2 classroom-based assessment settings in order to accumulate additional empirical evidence on voice expressed by L2 student writers (Zhao, 2010). In response to that requirement, this dissertation study is conducted in Thailand, in the EFL context.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, paragraph writing courses for undergraduate students in Thailand are regarded as indispensable. Educators and program administrators may consider it necessary to provide these paragraph writing courses for their undergrads in order to lay a strong foundation of writing skills that allow students to go further in other forms of writing. Hence, a large number of universities provide paragraph writing courses as compulsory subjects for their undergraduate students. However, the names of the courses, such as *English Composition I, Paragraph Writing, English Writing*, etc., may vary according to each institution.

In this study, 70 paragraphs written by Thai EFL students were scrutinized to explore voice features in their writing. Those 70 paragraphs were written products of

students who were enrolled in Paragraph Writing and had already been given their course grades. This study, therefore, would not cause any significant further harm those student writers.

3.3 Research Design

So far, there have still been very few studies on voice in writing, especially in the EFL context. This current study aimed to explore if Thai EFL student writers had voice in writing.

3.3.1 Theoretical Frameworks/ Conceptual Frameworks

Further investigation into the notion of voice expressed by EFL students' writing in the EFL context is clearly warranted. The study will be conducted based on the conceptual framework derived from Zhao's (2012) revised voice rubric, Hyland's (2008) model of voice, Ivanic and Camps (2001) and other relevant studies. As a result, this dissertation study pays particular attention to the three essentials of the notion of voice: (1) *presence and clarity of ideas in the content*, (2), *manner of idea presentation* and (3) *writer and reader presence*. It is assumed that voice in each written piece is the result of the interplay between those three voice dimensions.

3.3.2 Quantitative Methods

This study employed quantitative methods of content analysis to explore the use of voice features in two types of written product: opinion and narrative paragraphs. Since the primary objective of this dissertation study is to scrutinize whether students' written paragraphs show voice features as indicated in the modified rubric, I performed content analysis in this study. According to Bordens and Abbott (2014), the employment of content analysis has the advantage of analyzing written samples for the frequency or occurrence of specifics or events. Doing content analysis, therefore, helped the researcher systematically assign the occurrences of voice-related features to subcategories of the three voice dimensions and accurately analyze the data.

Subcategories of voice dimensions allowed the researcher to try distinguishing the voice-related features of both types of paragraph – opinion and

narrative. The voice-related features of both opinion and narrative paragraphs were specifically examined with respect to each voice dimension.

3.4 Data Sources

In order to answer the three research questions related to the exploration of voice features in Thai EFL students' writing, the research data were drawn from three sources: (1) students' written products and (2) student learning reflections composed by Thai EFL students enrolled in the paragraph writing course of a large university situated on the outskirts of Bangkok, in conjunction with (3) the course syllabus. In total, this content analysis encompassed data based on 70 students' written products from two writing sections (35 opinion paragraphs and 35 narrative paragraphs) together with 35 students' learning reflections, and the course syllabus. Permission to analyze such written paragraphs was given by the instructor of a section studying Paragraph Writing.

Figure 3.1

Four Sets of Writing Samples

In Group 1, the opinion and narrative paragraphs along with their journal entries were composed by undergraduate students mostly studying political science, law, and commerce and accountancy, while those of Group 2 were written by those studying political science, and commerce and accountancy. All of them were non-English majors and there was a mix of male and female Thai EFL student writers. At first glance, the amount of writing samples might seem rather small compared to other studies; however, this dissertation study drew samples by its very nature. As previously mentioned, the primary purpose of this study is to explore if written paragraphs show

the voice features indicated in the modified rubric. Thus, the exploration of these Thai EFL writing samples could help to shed light on the notion of voice in a certain dimension of the EFL educational context and reveal what voice features these EFL student writers expressed in their written opinion and narrative paragraphs.

3.4.1 Students' Written Products

The first data source was derived from 70 paragraphs written by the students who were enrolled in EG 231 Paragraph Writing and had already been given their course grades as per the university's actual practice. Given that the use of rubric, either created or modified, in assessing Thai students' writerly voice has not been conducted, a new treatment for doing so could affect students' regular study no matter how the research is carefully designed. This research consequently focuses on the evaluation of writerly voice through the use of paragraphs written by the students, once they have gotten their course grade in order that the use of the modified rubric does not affect the students' learning results.

3.4.2 Students' Class Journals

Like diaries, journals serve as places where students can reflect on their learning experiences, and record their responses and their own particular understanding of information (Williams, 2003). In addition, it can help students develop critical thinking and yield better academic productivity (Esposito & Freda, 2016). Realizing such benefits, many writing teachers ask their students to keep writing journals in order to practice writing skills through free writing. Free writing allows students to write down anything which comes into their mind – without being concerned about spelling, grammar, and organization – and to communicate with themselves as writers (Langan, 2012; Nadell, Langan, & Comodromos, 2009).

Thus, in order to examine possible factors that affect student writers when constructing their voice in writing, the second data source type came from student writers' learning reflection, where they often wrote about what they had learned and their attitudes toward their learning. The data regarding the factors related to writerly voice were expected to be drawn from the class journals the students wrote throughout the semester.

3.5 The Research Instrument

Questions of voice assessment in writing are often raised in relation to what components should be included in the voice rubric. At first, the researcher attempted to modify an analytic voice rubric. However, although voice is of paramount importance in terms of the salient features of good writing (Elbow, 2000; Matsuda & Tardy, 2007), the attributes of textual quality (Humphrey et al., 2014) and advanced academic literacy (Matsuda & Tardy, 2007; Matsuda & Jeffery, 2012), voice is neither indefinable nor much addressed in assessment (Knowles, 2014). Humphrey et al. (2014) confirm this point that there have been very few assessments of writing that are comprised of voice measurement. That is, voice measurement is often included as an overall rating for each written piece. They also claim that there is no published work that explains measurement where a writer's voice is separated into particular, measurable constituent parts.

The underlying causes of why the inclusion of voice in general writing criteria has been paid scant attention to is probably because voice is defined in various ways, and the method used to capture and measure voice is not as easy to perform as one used with grammar structure or other grammatical errors. With regard to the notion of voice, it is rather new for me, as an EFL researcher, and I am well aware of this. Thus, I decided to modify Zhao's (2010, 2012) three-dimensional analytic voice rubric as the research instrument in my dissertation study for three major reasons.

First, I realized that voice features in written texts were associated with both the substance of preposition and aspects of metadiscourse, which are two indispensable components of a written text (Intaraprawat, & Steffensen, 1995). Therefore, a voice measurement should assess both the substance of preposition and aspects of metadiscourse. With respect to such considerations, Zhao's (2010, 2012) analytic voice rubric could meet this aspect of written voice assessment. To put it another way, this modified analytic voice rubric is composed of three voice dimensions to be assessed, namely *presence and clarity of ideas in the content, manner of idea presentation*, and *writer and reader presence*. The first dimension is regarding *presence and clarity of ideas in the content* which will be assessed for substance of preposition of the author. Furthermore, the other two dimensions, i.e. *manner of idea presentation*, and *writer*

and reader presence, involve aspects of metadiscourse which are also measured in the modified rubric.

Second, Zhao's modified rubric is the three-dimensional rating rubric, which better predicts writing quality than the impressionistic, overall voice rating. As mentioned earlier, in comparison to a holistic scheme in general, an analytic scoring scheme is better in terms of providing more useful details to diagnose student writers' writing ability (Weigle, 2002). Moreover, in terms of reliability, an analytic scoring scheme is more reliable than a holistic one, even though it is a lot more time consuming than the other one.

Finally, Zhao's (2010, 2012) analytical voice rubric, which was adopted in this present study, was a reliable instrument because it had been validated and had built upon relevant theories and empirical-evidence studies. In addition, this modified voice rubric also provided very clear descriptors of each voice feature in an individual voice dimension. Indeed, these detailed descriptors helped me and the other rater have a better understanding of the notion of voice and the rating task. In fact, this adopted analytic voice rubric has enlightened us with regard to the ways that voice can be captured in written discourse, and helped make the intangible notion of voice more accessible.

To sum up, after taking the notion of voice into consideration, I clearly realized that all voice features can contribute to sharpening up both the writers' skills in composing and use of the devices which show the writers' doubts, confidence, and attitudes, both of which signal their authorial presence to the readers and involve their readers in their written texts. Thus, Zhao's (2010, 2012) modified three-dimensional analytic voice rubric was employed in this current study.

3.5.1 The Modified Analytical Voice Rubric Employed in the Main Study

As mentioned above, at first, the researcher intended to modify the analytic voice rubric for both opinion and narrative paragraphs. However, there have been very few assessments of writing that comprise measures of voice in the existing literature, particularly the analytic voice rubric. Some researchers view written voice as something that can be expressed through some metadiscourse devices, Therefore, it has been found in the literature that a great number of existing research studies on voice are

particularly prone to paying considerable attention to the use of metadiscourse markers, across various disciplines. Nevertheless, the notion of voice has in fact transcended the employment of metadiscourse devices by far. The work of Knowles (2014) also highlights the fact that the notion of voice embodies content and style. With respect to such considerations, I finally adopted Zhao's (2010, 2012) analytic voice rubric which assessed both the substance of preposition and aspects of metadiscourse to employ as the research instrument in this study. This modified three-dimensional rating rubric was reliable, validated, and built upon relevant theories and empirical-evidence.

In order to modify the aforementioned rubric, I first asked an expert in English writing assessment who has approximately 20 years of experience in English writing teaching and has conducted research on written voice to check whether Zhao's (2010, 2012) analytic voice rubric could possibly assess written voice in students' opinion paragraphs. Certainly, this analytic voice rubric can measure voice in written products. However, the expert suggested that the original format of the voice rubric, which was three pages long, was rather inconvenient for assigning scores in each voice dimension. As a result, the researcher reduced the length of the tabulated voice rubric from the original three pages to just one page (see Appendix A). In addition, the assessment of overall voice strength in the last part of the original was excluded in the modified rubric since the notion of voice was rather new to both EFL raters. In this case, I felt that both raters should carefully rate voice strength in students' paragraphs according to the detailed descriptors in each rating scale of all three voice dimensions.

In this study, in both types of paragraph, the order that written voice was explored was arranged in relation to existing empirical evidence on written voice measurement. Because this present study adopted Zhao's (2012) analytic voice rubric as the research instrument, opinion paragraphs were first scrutinized based on voice assessment. Subsequently, narrative paragraphs were explored by using the adopted rubric. This was all done despite the fact that there has been very little research carried out which examines written voice in both argumentative and narrative essays.

3.5.2 The Pilot Study

In order to test the modified rubric, approximately five writing samples of Thai EFL students were employed in a pilot study. Conducting the pilot study helped

the raters become familiar with the rubric and its application. This was because, in the current study, voice strength in writing samples was scored by two raters: the researcher and the other rater. Certainly, the instructions for the raters and descriptors of each voice feature had to be clear and detailed so that the raters had a good understanding of the notion of voice and the rating task. As a result, after modifying the rubric, the two raters tested the modified rubric. When misunderstandings or problems arose, regarding either the rubric descriptors or the judgments, we discussed them and reached an agreement on those problematic issues.

While testing the modified rubric, I found that voice features in Dimension 2 (*manner of idea presentation*) – namely *hedges, boosters*, and *attitude markers* – could be problematic for both raters because there were not enough examples of those stance markers in the major work of Zhao (2010; 2012). Zhao (2010, 2012) touched slightly upon the terms of hedges, boosters, and attitude markers, but provided very few examples of those metadiscourse devices. She probably assumed that native English speakers might be accustomed to those three types of voice features and could possibly distinguish them. However, there were some doubts cast as to whether many non-native English-speaking teachers, educators, or researchers would be able to identify those stance markers. The researcher, as a result, realized the necessity of finding more examples of these three voice features from other resources.

Therefore, in order to gain a better understanding of this concept and to be certain when coding these voice features, I searched for more examples from Hyland's (2005) list of metadiscourse items. However, although more examples of linguistic items are provided and are rather useful for academic writing in various disciplines, they might not fit the investigation of my study, whose writing samples are relatively non-discipline-specific forms of paragraph writing. The researcher then decided to compile more possible lists of hedges, boosters, and attitude markers that may be found in opinion paragraphs from other sources, e.g. Biber et al. (2002); Crismore and Vande Kopple (1990), Halliday and Matthiessen (2014); Hinkel (2005); Hübler (1983); and Martin and White (2005), as illustrated in Table 2.4. With a new compiled list of these voice features, both raters could employ the rubric more consistently when assessing student writers' voice strength (see Appendix B).

3.5.3 Problems Which Arose Around the Modified Analytical Voice Rubric in Narrative Paragraphs

Due to the fact that this current study primarily intends to explore voice in writing by employing the modified analytic rubric of Zhao (2012), the researcher tried to assess written voice in narrative paragraphs written by Thai EFL student writers with another rater. Unfortunately, the modified rubric did not seem to capture voice features that belonged to the nature of narrative writing, especially Dimension 1: *Presence and clarity of ideas in the content,* which assessed reiteration and directives of written products. Although the modified analytic rubric could not be appropriately applied to assess voice in narrative paragraphs, the researcher still explored possible voice features found in the writing samples. The results will be discussed later.

In this study, narrative and opinion paragraphs are mainly focused on because both narrative and expository genres are particularly prevalent in the classroom (Kent, 1984). Distinguishing the rudimentary differences between opinion and narrative text types is helpful for modifying criteria. When writing functionally appropriate narrative and expository texts, writers have to deal with organization, patterns of coherence relations, and voice in different ways (Cox et al., 1991).

As we know, genre can have a great impact on a writer's choice of language usage. However, apart from genre, there are other factors that a writer needs to take into consideration when composing a piece of writing such as 'social and psychological factors' or 'the rhetorical situation' (Kaufer, Ishizaki, Butler, & Collins, 2004, p. 229).

Opinion paragraphs tend to follow logical structure, but the employment of the stylistic or rhetorical devices of the writers can influence text macro-structures to some extent (van Dijk, 1973). A narrative text is considered agent- or actor-oriented, while an expository text is deemed "subject-matter-oriented" (Kent, 1984, p. 234). According to Weigle (2002), the dominant purpose of personal stories is to convey emotions and feelings (emotive), whereas the dominant purpose of opinions (argumentative/ persuasive writing) is to convince and persuade (conative) (pp. 8-9).

With the employment of the modified analytic voice rubric from Zhao's (2012) work, voice features in opinion paragraphs were easily measured in

accordance with the adopted rubric. However, problems arose when narrative paragraphs were scored by using the adopted rubric. Yet, the voice features in Thai EFL narrative paragraphs will still be examined thoroughly in this study.

To conduct analysis on written voice exhibited by student writers, I decided to follow the Humphrey et al. (2014) framework of voice assessment in narrative writing. There are four things which contribute to this aspect: expressive language, metanarrative awareness, emphasis markers, and language of cultural communities.

The first attribute is *expressive language,* which refers to vivid and forceful written expression. Strategies to use expressive language involve the use of figurative language devices, such as hyperbole, irony, metaphor, and simile; the use of reported speech; and especially, the use of advanced, unusual, and careful word choice. In the present study, the findings show that student writers in both groups rarely used figurative language devices, and some student writers were aware of using advanced, unusual, and careful word choice. Examples in this study are presented below:

Inter-Rater Reliability

Each writing sample was rated twice; once by the researcher and once by the other rater who was a writing instructor with at least five years of experience teaching English writing at the university level. Inter-rater reliability in the voice ratings was measured by examining agreement between the researcher and the other rater as a percentage. Interrater reliability represents the extent to which two raters assign the exact same score to the exact same work, independent of each other (Douglas, 2010).

In terms of estimating inter-rater reliability, Cronbach's alpha was employed in this study. Cronbach's alpha for interrater reliability was reported as 0.901 in the current study, as presented in Table 4.3. This statistic, thus, can be interpreted that two raters consistently assigned scores in the writing samples of these two groups. Therefore, it implies that high interrater reliability was achieved in this study.

3.6 Data Collection

In order to answer the three research questions related to the exploration of voice features in Thai EFL students' writing, the researcher collected data derived from three data sources: students' written products, students' learning reflections and the

course syllabus. In total, this content analysis contains data for 70 students' written products from four writing sections (35 opinion paragraphs and 35 narrative paragraphs) in conjunction with 35 students' learning reflections and the course syllabus.

Table 3.1

Research Questions and Data Sources

Research Questions	Students' Written Paragraphs	Students' Learning Reflections	Course Syllabus
1. Do students' written paragraphs show voice features as indicated in the modified rubric?	✔		
2. Are there any differences between the group of students who are explicitly aware of voice and that of students who may not be aware of voice? What are these elements?		✔	✔
3. How do text types influence voice in students' written products?	✔		

In response to Research Question 1, writing samples composed by Thai EFL student writers from two independent groups were scored by using the modified three-dimensional rating rubric. In doing so, it helped clarify whether students' written paragraphs showed any of voice features as specified in the modified rubric. After that analytic voice rubric. To answer Research Question 2, content analysis on students' learning reflections and the course syllabus were conducted in order to identify differences between the group of students who were explicitly aware of voice and that of students who might not have been aware of voice. Finally, to explain Research Question 3, the researcher had to compare how student writers in each group expressed their written voice in opinion and narrative paragraphs.

3.6.1 Students' Written Products

Initially, research was conducted by rating 70 writing samples of paragraphs written by Thai EFL student writers who had been enrolled in EG 231 Paragraph Writing and had already graduated. Samples of student writers' opinion and

narrative paragraphs were collected, and a comparison was made between the written voices expressed in their writing. Regarding the topics of the opinion paragraphs, a wide range of topics were covered by students in Group 1, including imagined identity, problem solving, the King's speech, Thai society, and the importance of education. The topics covered by Group 2 encompassed public transportation vs private transportation, grades vs intelligence, relaxing places, final exams, and girlfriends. In regard to the topics of narrative paragraphs, it seemed that student writers in Group 1 had opportunities to choose their own topic of interest since the topics of the writing samples encompassed the most memorable day, first love, commitment, counting one's blessings, life stories, hurtful words, challenging/ shocking experiences, a dream trip, learning to give, forgiving, a turning point, university life. On the contrary, the topics of those in Group 2 only focussed on the narratives of the Pink Panther.

3.6.2 Students' Learning Reflections

After exploring the voice features in the students' written paragraphs, the researcher closely scrutinized the learning reflections of both student writer groups in order to examine possible factors that affect student writers' construction of voice in writing.

3.7 Data Analyses

The analysis was derived from two major data sources: Thai EFL students' written products and students' learning reflection. The research data was analyzed by focusing on the exploration of voice-related features expressed by L2 undergraduate student writers in their written products.

Table 3.2

Data Analysis in Each Research Question

Research Questions	Students' written paragraphs and unit of analysis	Students' learning reflection and unit of analysis	Course Syllabus and unit of analysis
1. Do students' written paragraphs show voice features as indicated in the modified rubric?	t-test used to examine the difference between two raters evaluating paragraphs written by students		
2. Are there any differences between the group of students who are explicitly aware of voice and that of students who may not be aware of voice? What are these elements?		Students' learning reflection**s** analysed through content analysis	The course outline analysed through content analysis
3. How do text types influence voice in students' written products?	Students' paragraphs of different text types analysed through content analysis		

   In response to Research Question 1: a *t*-test was performed to examine the difference between voice strength in paragraphs written by Thai EFL students from two independent groups. Voice scores were assigned by two raters in order to increase reliability in rating the students' paragraphs. Next, in order to examine differences between the group of students who were explicitly aware of voice and the group of students who may not have been aware of voice, students' learning reflections and the course outline were analysed through content analysis. With regard to answering to the third research question, students' paragraphs of different text types were also analysed through content analysis.

- **Use Human Rating, Not Corpus**

   Regarding the assessment of voice-related features in a sample of EFL students' written products, human raters, not corpus or computerized procedures, were required in this study. My consideration of human raters was based on advice from Ädel

(2006) and Weigle (2013b). Ädel (2006, p. 52) points out that "if the mean sentence length varies across corpora (or essays), the results will be skewed." Corpus, thus, may not facilitate counting of voice features at the discourse level. In addition, Weigle (2013b) supports the idea that such assessment based on rhetorical aspects such as argumentation and voice, or even linguistic features, should use human judgments. In this present study, voice-related features could be captured at various levels: word, phrase, sentence, and discourse; as a result, human raters were necessary in this sense.

Under the dimension of *writer and reader presence* (,i,e. Dimension 3), words like we, which is recognized as another voice feature, can be easily counted. However, the researcher needed to look carefully whether such usage of we characterized authorial self-mention or reader-pronoun use. Furthermore, when raters found some modal verbs like can or could, they had to recheck if those modal verbs indicated voice features – a level of uncertainty of the writer, not in the sense of being able to.

When scoring the first dimension – *presence and clarity of ideas in the content*, raters needed to carefully examine the whole written discourse. Ädel (2006, p. 52) points out that "if the mean sentence length varies across corpora (or essays), the results will be skewed." Corpus, thus, may not facilitate counting of voice features at the discourse level. As such, both scoring written products and counting frequencies of voice-related features in students' writing had to be undertaken by human raters.

- **Scoring Methods**

In the current study, voice strength in writing samples was scored by two raters, the researcher and the other rater. Certainly, the instructions for the raters and descriptors of each voice feature had to be clear and detailed so that the raters had a good understanding of the notion of voice and the rating task. Clearly, judgments made on written voice were based on actual writing samples of EFL student writers.

Due to the fact that the modified three-dimensional analytic voice rubric was employed in this study. Writing samples were rated on a five-point scale for each voice dimension, namely *presence and clarity of ideas in the content, manner of idea presentation, and writer and reader presence,* accounting for 15 points. In Zhao's scheme, each voice dimension is given equal weight. Each dimensional rating was

based on a scale of 0-5; as a result, the sum of the dimensional voice ratings fell into the range of 0-15 points.

The subcategories of voice features under the first dimension consist of (1) *reiteration* and (2) the use of *directives.* Reiteration of the main point is counted if it is accompanied by explicit reference to the central point. Similarly, Fordyce-Ruff (2016) emphasizes the fact that all sentences must fit with the topic of the paragraph. In this sense, reiteration is the salient feature in Dimension 1. In Dimension 2 (*manner of idea presentation*), voice features entail *hedges*, *boosters*, and *attitude markers*. In fact, these three features are writer devices to express a stance on the topic of the composition. Raters also count frequencies how often student writers employ those voice features in this dimension. Lastly, the last subcategory in the modified analytic voice rubric is comprised of two voice features, i.e. authorial self-mention and reader reference. In this dimension, the writer invites and engages readers with the use of first person pronouns and reader pronouns. This voice feature group is focused on authorial presence and reader presence.

When scoring a writing assessment, writing teachers should take two aspects into consideration: "(1) designing or selecting a rating scale or scoring rubric and (b) selecting and training people to score the written responses" (Weigle, 2013, p. 260). As a result, the other rater was trained through a two-hour rater-training session in order to become accustomed to the adopted analytic voice rubric employed in this study. The rater was first introduced to the analytic voice rubric and then carefully read descriptors of individual voice dimensions and voice features. If problems arose during the training, the rater and the researcher immediately discussed them.

- **The *t*-test**

The *t*-test was the statistic employed in this study so as to determine significant differences between two means (Nunan & Bailey, 2009). It is appropriate for dealing with small data sets. Furthermore, when the difference between the means of two separate groups is being evaluated, an independent, or uncorrelated, t-test is employed – the independent samples t-test.

3.7.1 Students' Written Products

More specifically, my analysis in this section considered how Thai EFL students writers expressed their voice in the written paragraphs. This analysis was noteworthy in terms of exploration of EFL students' writing in the EFL context as well as adding empirical-based evidence in the field of L2 writing. In order to check reliability, an inter-rater who is an expert in marking students' written products, and the t-test was used to examine the consistency of the scores given by two raters. With regard to the features of voice as stated in Research Question 2, the content analysis was applied with the same set of 70 written paragraphs.

3.7.2 Students' Learning Reflection

After exploring voice features in students' written paragraphs, the researcher closely scrutinized student writers' learning reflections in order to examine possible factors that affected how the student writers constructed their voice in writing. Approximately, 35 actual class journals, written by Thai EFL student writers from two groups, were closely examined. Group 1 represented student writers who were explicitly aware of voice and those of Group 2 represented student writers who might not be aware of voice. This was achieved through the use of content analysis

3.8 Conclusion

Due to its paramount significance, further investigation into the notion of voice expressed in EFL students' writing in the EFL context clearly deserves attention. For this reason, this dissertation study aims to examine whether EFL Thai students write paragraphs with voice and what voice features students express through their opinion and narrative paragraphs. In the hope of providing empirical evidence for research in the field of L2 writing, this study will be noteworthy for its exploration of voice features in English paragraphs by employing the modified analytical rubrics.

Because writing is not an innate ability, we have to learn and practice it (Wilbers, 2000). This is particularly axiomatic in that EFL student writers have to study to write in English, which is not their mother tongue, so as to be able to compose written English texts more effectively. Moreover, writing skills can be improved with practice (Hogan, 2013; Langan, 2012). The researcher believes that the findings yielded from

this study can contribute in some way to L2 writing pedagogy, in terms of providing a more comprehensive understanding of the notion of voice in conjunction with offering practical guidance on the construction of voice/ how to strengthen voice in writing, which EFL writing teachers and students may wish to follow.

CHAPTER 4
RESULTS

The overarching aim of this dissertation study is to shed light on written voice expressed by EFL student writers. Thus, in order to enhance understanding of the notion of voice in the EFL context, the objectives of this study are to scrutinize whether students' written paragraphs show voice features as indicated in the modified rubric; to examine differences between the group of students who are explicitly aware of voice and that of students who may not be aware of voice; and to investigate how different text types influence voice in students' written products

First of all, this chapter compares voice strength in the writing scores of two groups of Thai EFL student writers and subsequently discusses the findings. Next, the comparison drawn between both groups of students clarifies the mean scores of the measurement of voice strength in all of three dimensions, namely *presence and clarity of ideas in the content, manner of idea presentation*, and *writer and reader presence*. Finally, the researcher distinguishes and examines differences between both groups with regard to the voice features found in the writing samples of opinion and narrative paragraphs. In addition, this chapter also provides some brief examples of individual voice features to use in the content analysis in order to ground the discussion in voice features employed by Thai EFL student writers in different text types. I hope that the results and discussion drawn from this chapter will provide the readers with an overall picture of how Thai EFL students express voice in their written products.

4.1 Research Question 1

Do students' written paragraphs show voice features as indicated in the modified rubric?

In response to Research Question 1, the modified three-dimensional analytic voice rubric was employed in this study. Writing samples were rated on a five-point scale for each voice dimension, namely *presence and clarity of ideas in the content, manner of idea presentation*, and *writer and reader presence*, accounting for 15 points. In Zhao's scheme, each voice dimension is given equal weight. Each dimensional rating was based on a scale of 0-5; as a result, the sum of the dimensional

voice ratings fell into the range of 0-15 points. Zhao (2010) claims that this three-dimensional rating rubric better predicts writing quality than the impressionistic, overall voice rating.

4.1.1 Opinion Paragraphs

By employing the modified three-dimensional analytic voice rubric, written voice in 35 actual writing samples of opinion paragraphs, written by Thai EFL student writers from two groups, were assessed. In this study, writing samples of Group 1 (n = 17) represented student writers who were explicitly aware of voice and those of Group 2 (n = 18) represented student writers who might not be aware of voice. Each sample was rated twice, once by each of the two raters in order to yield better inter-reliability. As a primary objective of this study, it scrutinized whether students' written paragraphs show voice features as indicated in the modified rubric and examined differences between the two groups. The means of the opinion paragraphs of both groups are illustrated in Figure 4.1 below.

Figure 4.1 Voice Strength in the Opinion Paragraphs of Each Group
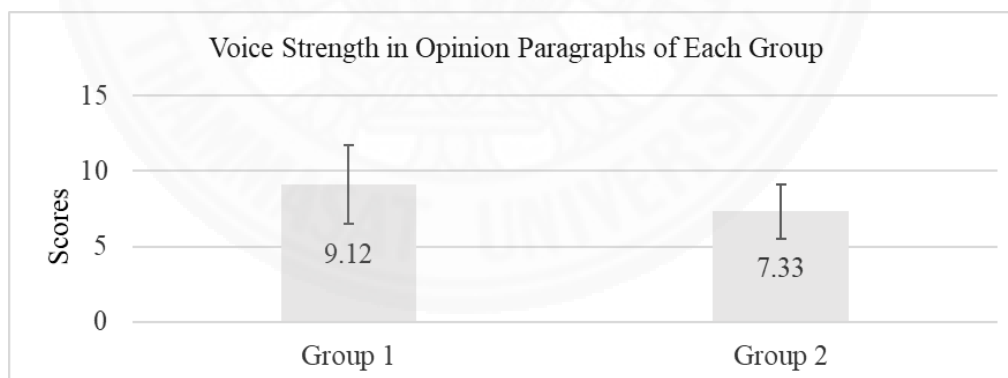
As previously stated, writing samples in this study were comprised of 17 opinion paragraphs from Group 1, and 18 from Group 2. The data in Figure 4.1 revealed that the average score of student writers in Group 1 was 9.15 out of 15 points, while that of students in Group 2 was 7.33 points. Evidently, there was a significant difference between the means of both groups, as seen Table 4.1. However, the standard deviation of Group 1 was rather higher than that of Group 2.

Table 4.1

Independent Samples Test of the Opinion Paragraphs of Group 1 and 2

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.631	.433	2.354	33	.025	1.784	.758	.242	3.326
Equal variances not assumed			2.330	28.32	.027	1.784	.766	.216	3.352

In response to Research Question 1, the measurements of voice strength in opinion paragraphs written by Thai EFL students from two independent groups were compared by employing the independent-samples *t* test. After performing the *t*-test, the results showed that t = 2.354 and Sig. = 0.025, which was less than α (0.05) and rejected H_0. (the null hypothesis) for the assumption of homogeneity of variance. It was concluded that there was a significant difference between the two group's variances. Therefore, the statistically significant difference between the compared groups was 0.05. Overall, this can be interpreted that EFL student writers in Group 1, who were explicitly aware of voice, could write with stronger voice than those in Group 2, who might not have been aware of voice, as presented in the descriptive statistics of these two groups in Table 4.1 above.

Due to the fact that this study employed the modified three-dimensional analytic voice rubric to examine voice strength in each dimension – namely *presence and clarity of ideas in the content, manner of idea presentation, and writer and reader presence* – comparisons of voice scores in each dimension between the two groups were conducted respectively. The results from performing the *t*-test on the writing scores of both groups are illustrated in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2

Voice Strength in the Opinion Paragraphs of Each Group

Dimension	Group 1 (n=17) Mean (Std. Deviation)	Group 2 (n=18) Mean (Std. Deviation)	t	*p*-value
Overall	9.12 (2.62)	7.33 (1.81)	2.354	0.025*
Dimension 1	3.18 (1.19)	2.78 (0.81)	1.302	0.206
Dimension 2	3.18 (0.81)	2.94 (0.73)	4.283	0.001*
Dimension 3	2.76 (1.09)	1.61 (0.70)	4.678	0.001*

*$p < 0.05$

To analyze the data in Table 4.2, the voice scores of each group were compared according to dimension. Overall, there are statistical differences between the writing scores of student writers from each group in overall voice strength ($p = 0.025$*), in Dimension 2: *manner of idea presentation* ($p = 0.001$*) and Dimension 3: *writer and reader presence* ($p = 0.001$*), respectively. However, there is no significant difference between the writing scores of student writers in Dimension 1: *presence and clarity of ideas in the content* ($p = 0.206$).

In terms of estimating interrater reliability, Cronbach's alpha was employed in this study. In the current study, Cronbach's alpha for interrater reliability was reported as 0.901, as presented in Table 4.3. This statistic, thus, can be interpreted that two raters consistently assigned scores in the writing samples of these two groups. Therefore, it implies that high interrater reliability was achieved in this study.

Table 4.3

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.901	2

Intraclass Correlation Coefficient

	Intraclass Correlation[b]	95% Confidence Interval Lower Bound	Upper Bound	F Test with True Value 0 Value	df1	df2	Sig
Single Measures	.804[a]	.637	.898	10.055	34	34	.000
Average Measures	.892[c]	.778	.946	10.055	34	34	.000

Two-way mixed effects model where people effects are random and measures effects are fixed.
a. The estimator is the same, whether the interaction effect is present or not.
b. Type A intraclass correlation coefficients using an absolute agreement definition.
c. This estimate is computed assuming the interaction effect is absent, because it is not estimable otherwise.

Figure 4.2 Comparison of Each Voice Dimension in Opinion Paragraphs
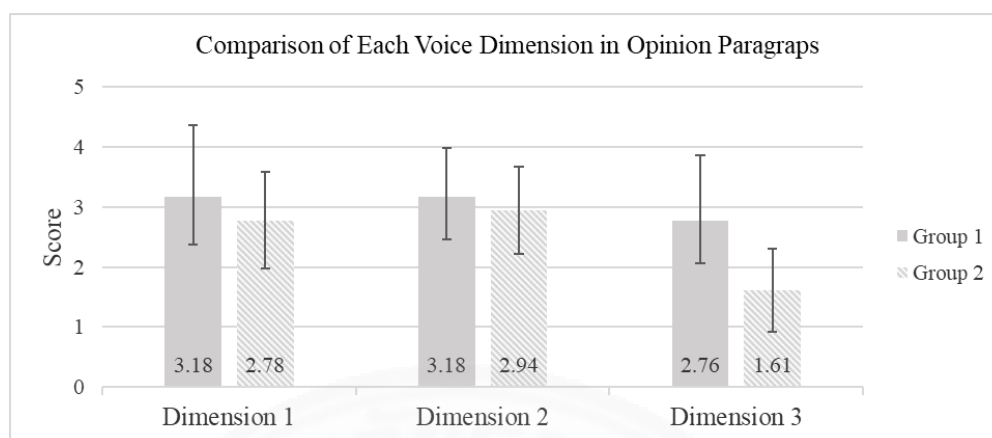
As previously mentioned, the rating scale of each voice dimension ranged from 0 to 5 points, and the sum of all voice dimensions accounted for 15 points. When scores were compared across the three dimensions of voice, Figure 4.2 disclosed that student writers of Group 1 received higher scores than those in Group 2, in every dimension. To put it another way, student writers of Group 1, who were explicitly aware of voice, could employ voice features better than those of Group 2, who might not have been aware of voice. Particularly in Dimension 3, students in Group 1 received much greater scores than those of Group 2. Interestingly, the mean score of *presence and clarity of ideas and contents* (i.e., Dimension 1 ratings) was most strongly and positively associated with that of *manner of idea presentation* (i.e., Dimension 2 ratings). See detailed statistics in Table 4.4 below.

Table 4.4

The Scores of Voice Strength: Highest to Lowest Scores

Highest to Lowest Scores	ID	Dimension 1	Dimension 2	Dimension 3	Total (15 points)	No. of Words	
H1	Gr 1_O1	4.5	4.5	3.5	12.5	487	(Long 2)
H2	Gr 1_O4	4	4.5	3	11.5	536	(Long 1)
H3	Gr 1_O10	3	3.5	5	11.5	267	
H4	Gr 1_O11	3.5	4	3	10.5	348	
H5	Gr 1_O2	3.5	3.5	3	10	348	

Highest to Lowest Scores	ID	Dimension 1	Dimension 2	Dimension 3	Total (15 points)	No. of Words	
L5	Gr 2_O32	2	3	0.5	5.5	169	
L4	Gr 2_O21	1.5	2.5	1	5	153	
L3	Gr 2_O30	1.5	2.5	1	5	133	(Short 3)
L2	Gr 2_O35	2	2	1	5	125	(Short 2)
L1	Gr 2_O23	1.5	2	1	4.5	152	

As illustrated in Table 4.4, the results revealed that voice strength does not necessarily depend on the length of the paragraphs or written prose. That is, student writers who wrote longer paragraphs or used more words did not express better voice strength. For example, the student who composed the longest prose was not guaranteed to be able to express the strongest voice. Likewise, the student who produced the shortest essay did not necessarily receive the lowest score on voice strength. That is because voice can be expressed through different ways, such as commitment to the topic, interesting and sophisticated ideas and word choice, writing style, and the extent of the interaction between the writer and the reader (Bowden, 2012; Zhao 2012). These factors all contribute to voice expressed in writing.

4.1.2 Narrative Paragraphs

After having attempted to search for more information and empirical studies related to voice in written narratives, I found that there were some rare existing studies which explicitly indicated either voice in written texts or voice assessment in written texts. Although some scholars state that voice can be expressed well in narratives, there is very little empirical evidence to support assessment on the notion of voice in written narratives (Humphrey et al. 2014). Narrative writing, in my point of view, is probably related to expressive writing, which fits with the perspective of expressivists. Those who hold expressivist views value expressive writing as an achievement in projecting individual voice which is original, unique and interesting. Creativity seems to play a major role in this sense. Thus, if writing teachers who espouse expressivist views do not teach voice in their writing classes, assessment on voice may be ignored accordingly as a consequence.

However, since this current study primarily intends to explore voice in writing by employing the modified analytic rubric of Zhao (2012), the researcher tried to assess written voice in narrative paragraphs written by Thai EFL student writers with another rater. Unfortunately, the modified rubric did not seem to capture voice features that belonged to the nature of narrative writing, especially in Dimension 1: *Presence and clarity of ideas in the content*, which assessed reiteration and directives of written products. That is probably due to the nature of writing opinion paragraphs, in which students need to give reasons to support the thesis statement in the hierarchical organization of their paragraphs; reiteration can frequently take place in this sense. However, due to the nature of narratives, students just narrate a series of events in a logical way where the hierarchical organization structure is rarely found.

Furthermore, based on Zhang's (2016) "multidimensional analysis of register variation of metadiscourse markers across the press, general prose, academic prose and fiction in the Freiburg update of the Lancaster-Oslo/Bergen Corpus of British English," the appropriateness and the extent to which metadiscourse devices are employed is closely associated with the register (p. 204). The results reveal that metadiscourse markers are likely to be more frequently utilized in more informational and abstract registers, e.g. academic and general prose, particularly when functioning in a text presentation role, whereas metadiscourse devices are rarely found in narrative and concrete registers, e.g. fiction and press, and tend to be utilized to guide the audience (Zhang, 2016). This may be another reason underlining why the modified analytical rubric employed in this study was not fit to explore voice features in narrative paragraphs. Yet, although the modified analytic rubric could not be applied appropriately to assess voice in narrative paragraphs, the researcher still explored possible voice features found in the writing samples. The results will be discussed later.

4.1.3 Summary of the First Question

Clearly, judgments on written voice were based on the actual writing samples of Thai EFL student writers. The results from this present study indicated that the mean scores of student writers in Group 1 were higher than those in Group 2, at the 0.05 level of significance. Student writers in Group 1 obtained higher scores than those of Group 2 in all of three voice dimensions – *presence and clarity of ideas in the*

content, *manner of idea presentation*, and *writer and reader presence*. Furthermore, with respect to voice expressed in students' paragraphs, student writers in Group 1 employed a wider variety of voice features than those in Group 2. To conclude, this can be interpreted that EFL student writers in Group 1, who were explicitly aware of voice, could write with stronger voice than those in Group 2 who might not have been aware of voice.

4.2 Research Question 2

Are there any differences between the group of students who are explicitly aware of voice and that of students who may not be aware of voice? What are these elements?

4.2.1. Dimension 1: Presence and Clarity of Ideas in the Content

Writing is inextricably associated with thinking (Stout, 2011; Strunk & White, 2005). In other words, without thoughts, we cannot write. Great writing, as a result, inevitably originates from great ideas (Babbage, 2010). Under the notion of voice, content is the primary consideration when we examine voice (Spencer, 2014). Words represent our thoughts, sentences illustrate our ideas, and paragraphs are overviews of what we perceive (Babbage, 2010; Gáliková, 2016).

In the first dimension, Zhao (2012) embodies the following descriptors at the highest level of presence and clarity of ideas in the content.

- The reader feels a clear presence of a central idea throughout the text.
- The writing shows a strong commitment to the topic through full development of the central idea with adequate use of effective examples and details.
- The reader feels that he or she is being invited to participate in the discussion of the topic and the construction of an argument through the author's use of directives when presenting ideas.
- The idea, and the use of examples and details in the writing are unique, interesting, and engaging, indicating sophisticated thinking behind the writing.

The subcategories of voice features under the first dimension consist of (1) *reiteration* and (2) the use of *directives*.

4.2.1.1 Reiteration

Reiteration is considered a discourse-level element which constitutes how clear the central point of a written text is and how often it appears, and is another way of depicting a writer's stance (Zhao, 2010). Zhao developed this voice feature from Helms-Park and Stapleton's (2003) *Voice Intensity Rating Scale*. Zhao explains that the reasoning which supports the main point of the composition is not regarded as articulating or repeating the main point, unless one restates the main point when one is proposing such reasoning. For instance, if the main point is "I'm sure that doing X is crucial", and the subsequent paragraphs elaborate that point by providing the audience with supporting reasons. Therefore, paragraph 2 ends with a statement like "That's why I believed it was crucial to do X" and paragraph 3 begins with "I also think it is crucial to do X because ….", and the final paragraph finishes by repeating the main point, "So, I think that doing X is extremely important" (p. 188). That is, reiteration of the main point is counted if it is accompanied by explicit reference to the central point. Similarly, Fordyce-Ruff (2016) emphasizes the fact that all sentences must fit with the topic of the paragraph. In this sense, reiteration is the salient feature in Dimension 1.

4.2.1.2 Directives/ signposts

According to Hyland (2012), directives are the most frequent devices students employ to initiate reader participation in written texts. They often include verbs of command, modal verbs of obligation or adjectives which convey necessity, which tell the reader to carry out an action or to view things in a way that the author has determined (Hyland, 2012). Zhao (2010) also describes citation of other sources in parentheses, or the usage of language which encourages the reader to think critically, such as "*please remember….*", "*consider…*", "*see Table 4…*", "*think carefully about…*", "*allow us to….*" and other similar words or phrases that serve as direct reader signposts (such as "*look at this example*", "*for instance*", etc.) in this subcategory (p. 183). However, transitional words such as *first, second, finally,* and *in conclusion* are excluded from these directives.

Table 4.5

Group Statistics of Both Groups for Dimension 1 (Presence and Clarity of Ideas in the Content)

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Group A	17	3.18	1.19
Group B	18	2.78	0.81

In Dimension 1 (*presence and clarity of ideas in the content*), the mean scores of student writers in Group 1 ($M = 3.18$, $SD = 1.19$) were higher than those of their counterparts ($M = 2.78$, $SD = 0.81$), as shown in Table 4.5. However, this study found no significant difference between the writing scores of both groups in the first voice dimension ($p = 0.206$). Nonetheless, there were statistical differences between the writing scores of student writers from each group in overall voice strength ($p = 0.025$), as presented in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6

Independent Samples Test of Both Groups for Dimension 1
(Presence and clarity of ideas in the content)

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	9.911	.003	1.326	33	.194	2.229	1.681	-1.192	5.649
Equal variances not assumed			1.302	23.16	.206	2.229	1.711	-1.310	5.768

Figure 4.3 The Overall Picture of Voice Features in Dimension 1, Employed by Students in Both Groups
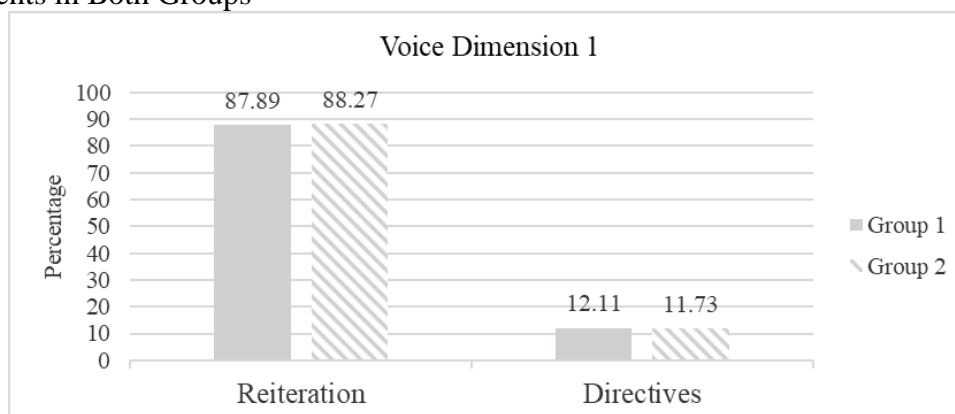
In Dimension 1, students of both groups evidently expressed more frequent reiteration than the use of directives (see Figure 4.3). This can imply that student writers paid great attention to developing the central ideas with sufficient and relevant evidence. On the contrary, the employment of directives was rather minimal.

Student examples in this study

Here are two instances of the use of directives from the same student writer in this study. Of course, the student scored highly in Dimension 1.

> [6] *To illustrate*, *you can travel to far place conveniently and reach your real aim places, ...* (Group 2_O10_27)
>
> [9] *To demonstrate*, *you do not need to wait for transport in a long line of people in rush hours and you can sit in a car very comfortably ....* (Group 2_O10_27)

Another interesting directive in a student sample is presented below:

> [11] *Second,* *dare to solve problem* *with positive mind is the joint to achievement.* (Group 1_O8)

Evidently, it is clearly seen that EFL student writers could also write with voice if they were composing a piece on a topic of interest, or were explicitly taught how to write each text type or genre in English. Looking at the results of the students' journals, it can be seen that both groups revealed that their writing teachers had taught them to provide sufficient and interesting supporting details to support their main point and develop the topic they were composing.

As we know, L2 student writers are likely to have trouble with syntax, vocabulary, and spelling, which can hinder their ability to think about the topic of a composition. Hence, writing teachers should ask students to write on a topic of interest or involve them in deciding what topic to compose on. As such, it will help them diminish the cognitive excess that affects novice L2 writers' ability to say what

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[1] Note that a superscripted number placed in front of each example sentence indicates the order of sentence in that student's actual paragraph.

they are thinking in a foreign language (Carroll, Blake, Camalo, & Messer, 1996). At the same time, students will have more opportunities to express themselves with voice.

Here is an example of an excerpt of journal from Group 1

....." (the teacher) assigned us to read four different stories of the beaches. I learned the most important part of ToMEC was the organizing bridge or the controlling idea. It would give us the clearer reason which we called "Meat" in ToMeC paragraph. If I write the proper controlling idea in the paragraph, I will write and give the proper reasons as well as the related examples. So, the controlling idea is the must for writing ToMeC paragraph. Today, I learned the full structure of ToMEC paragraph. It was very special for this class because the teacher gave us more three elements that could add up into HToMEcC paragraph!!! **"Oh my god! HToMEcC!?"** *I was completely shocked. At first, I had no idea about HToMEcC but later on I could list those elements separately. H for Hook at the beginning of paragraph. To is Topic sentence with organizing bridge. M for the meat or the reason. Ec, E comes from the example of the meat and the little c is the conclusion of the example. And, C, the conclusion of the paragraph. That was a big new thing for me and I had never learned about that before! Thanks Ajarn Saneh very much for teaching students about HToMEcC. It was such an amazing structure!!! Then I learned about three ways how to put specific point. The first way is up to the writer because the point had equal importance. The second way is listing the points from the lease to the most important. The last way is listing the points from the most to the least important. In my view, I thought the second way is the best way to list specific points. After learning about this, I know how and where to place or emphasis the important reason in the proper place. However, I have to practice the skills a lot for better writing. Then, we read the paragraph titled "Wildlife Worthy". It was a very good paragraph because it consisted of the structure of HToMEcC paragraph."*

The following is an example of a highly rated opinion paragraph by a student writer from each of the groups, Group 1 and 2, respectively.

The more problems, the more you get success

"The secret of our success is that we never, never, never give up" said by Wilma Mankiller, the powerful activist and native leader in United States of America. I couldn't agree more with her statement.so I totally agree with the approach of seeing problems in positive ways. When people decide to face problems with positive mind, it's a practical way to reach the aim of success. This main idea can be supported by three reasons. First of all, problems are unavoidable but our mind is controllable. Problems is inevitable phenomenon, it's the truth of life that problems always happen to us in our everyday life. Therefore, choosing way to see problems in positive view is a tool for our daily life, in order to let us have good mood through a week or month that is good for your health. For instance, tourism information officers in Japan were trained to solve problems with positive mind, because this can reduce their work stress a lot. So problems help them succeed in work and mental health balance. Second, dare to solve problem with positive mind is the joint to achievement. When we face problems, it means that our path way to accomplish something is interrupted by our ignorance or lack of ability. If we don't turn our back on problems and try our best to solve it, it will be better including ourselves, because your lacked ability will be improved as well. For example, Thomas Alva Edison who never gave up on his invention experiment, every single time when he failed, yet he learnt so much and then his ignorance was fulfilled by correct ways to invent innovation. He absolutely succeeded in the way for inventing. Last but most important, when we confront problems, it's the way that we encourage ourselves for stepping out of a vulnerable zone and let ourselves get stronger through problems. Oprah Winfrey, declared in her TV show, once was a victim of sexual harassment, but one day she

changed her view toward her problems with her positive mind, and decided to encourage herself for solving her mental wound. Then she got stronger and learnt so much from her bad experience. Now she has become successful in her famous TV show and she is the woman who calls for stopping violence in girls, children, women in United States of America. It's a great helpful impact toward her society that came from her positive mind for solving problems. *This proves that positive view is so useful for solving problems because its result leads people to successful aim with optimistic hope in our mind.* Therefore try your best to solve complex problems and learn from them as much as we can. *The more we solve problems with positive view, the more we learn from them, the more we get success.* (Group 1_O8)

In addition, here is another example from Group 2:

Are Public Transportations Better Than Private Ones

From my point of view, private transportations are much better that pubic transportations. The first and most significant point is that people can sharply choose their own ways to the destination. For example, there are various ways to each destination so *people can freely choose the best way with no bad traffic to the destination.* Unlike public transportations, most of public vehicles travel on fixed paths, such as bus, train, van. Regarding taxi, taxi drivers sometimes cheat the passengers by taking a detour, pretending like they misunderstand the passenger's destination, Modifying the fare meter to illegally get more fare. The second reason is that *private transportations allow people to travel comfortably because all things in private vehicles are usually more comfortable than public vehicles.* For instance, *people can sit on a soft seat, relax, turn the radio on, park their vehicles anywhere and do whatever they want.* In contrast, buses are usually full of passengers in the morning and evening. Therefore, some people have to stand, hold the dirty steel bar and feel other people's breath

on the bus. The last point is that <u>people do not even have to wait for</u>
<u>any public vehicle because they can start their vehicles and leave each</u>
<u>place anytime.</u> <u>People would not miss any public vehicle and get more</u>
<u>chance to arrive at their destinations on time.</u> Moreover, people can
earn some money by using an application called "LILUNA" to pick up
others that go on the same route and drop them off at their
destinations. Because of these reasons, I prefer private transportations
more.   (Group 2_O5_22)

4.2.2 Dimension 2: Manner of Idea Presentation

Voice features in Dimension 2 (*manner of idea presentation*) entail *hedges*, *boosters*, and *attitude markers*. In fact, these three features are writer devices to express a stance on the topic of the composition. According to Gray and Biber (2012), the writer's stance involves assessments of individual attitude (attitudinal stance) and evaluations of how sure one is (epistemic stance)" (p. 15). Thus, major voice features in Dimension 2 encompass stance devices which indicate the level of certainty and doubt – boosters and hedges – and which show attitudes towards the proposition – attitude markers.

In the second dimension, Zhao (2012) embodies the following descriptors at the highest level of the manner of idea presentation.

• The writer presents ideas and makes claims with language that shows authority and confidence.

• The reader feels that the writer has a clear stance on and a strong attitude toward the topic under discussion.

• The tone of the writing shows personality, adds life to the writing, and is engaging and appropriate for the intended reader.

• Word choice, and language use by extension, is varied, often interesting, sophisticated, and eye-catching to the reader.

4.2.2.1 Hedges

In academic settings, writers need to be cautious and critical about the claims they make. With the help of a special language, called "hedges", writers can soften their statements to avoid criticism for being radical or overconfident. In academic

writing, it is crucial to teach student writers to make "good judgment" and "good presentation of judgment" on a claim or information they have (Swales, & Feak, 2012, p. 156). Students should learn to be cautious and critical about claims they are going to make. Therefore, it is important to teach or increase student awareness of the need to be cautious, by encouraging students to have absolutely no doubt. This requires student writers to possess resources which allow them to show such caution linguistically (as cited in Swales, & Feak, 2012). These linguistic resources relate to the use of hedges and boosters.

Table 4.7

Top 20 Hedges Employed by EFL Student Writers in Groups 1 and 2 in Opinion Paragraphs, according to Frequency

Hedges			
Group 1		Group 2	
some (24.2%)	believe (1.9%)	some (14.9%)	in my opinion (1.4%)
think (9.3%)	several (1.9%)	many (8.8%)	from my point of view (1.4%)
can (8.7%)	feel (1.2%)	would (6.8%)	much (1.4%)
many (7.5%)	maybe (1.2%)	think (5.4%)	several (1.4%)
just (6.8%)	much (1.2%)	believe (4.1%)	usually (1.4%)
may (6.2%)	often (1.2%)	may (3.4%)	almost (1.4%)
could (5.6%)	regularly (1.2%)	might (3.4%)	can (0.7%)
might (5.6%)	in my opinion (0.6%)	feel (3.4%)	seem (0.7%)
would (5.0%)	in my point of view (0.6%)	just (2.7%)	in my point of view (0.7%)
a little (2.5%)	suggest (0.6%)	could (2.0%)	likely (0.7%)

In examining frequencies of hedges employed by Thai EFL student writers in this current study, the researcher followed the study of Hinkel (2005) which analyzes the types and frequencies of hedging devices and intensifiers utilized in academic compositions written by native English speakers (NS) and non-native English speakers (NNS) which were incorporated into a corpus of L1 and L2 students' academic writing (Hinkel, 2005).

As presented in Table 4.7, which details the top 20 hedges by frequency in opinion paragraphs of both groups, the employment of hedging devices presents a mixed picture. The hedging device EFL student writers utilized most is the assertive pronoun *some*, which includes *something, someone, sometimes,* and *somewhere*. According to Channel, generally assertive pronouns, e.g. "*anybody, anything, someone*, and *something*" seem unclear to readers and may be inappropriate for academic writing (as cited in Hinkel, 2005, p. 43). Examples of the use of such devices are presented below.

[10] When you study ***something*** you are not passionate about, you are

very less likely to get motivated   (Group 2_O7_24)

[6]*But for **someone** who can tolerate with the pain, they will be strong and not afraid of problems that will happen in the future.*

                                                                               (Group 1_O9)

Similarly, *only* and *just* are among the top 20 hedges by frequency, which strongly relate to casual and conversational forms of discourse and infrequently appear in written academic prose (Hinkel, 2005). However, these writing samples are general English writing by nature – not disciplinary prose; as a result, writing with some assertive pronouns or using *just* or *only* can be acceptable if student writers do not rely too much on these vague and conversational assertive words. In addition, this current study yielded some similar hedges frequently used in Aull and Lancaster's (2014) work. That is, *often* and *usually* are among the top 20 hedges by frequency in this current study, similar to those in Aull and Lancaster's (2014) corpus. Furthermore, their corpus also revealed that some writers employed the modal verb *may* "six to seven times in a single 800-word essay" and some used *"may* or *seem(s)* as many as 16 times in a single essay under 1,000 words" (Aull & Lancaster, 2014, p. 160). The results from this present study likewise indicated that EFL student writers reported a preference for the use of *may* and *seem(s)* as shown in Table 4.6.

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[1] Note that a superscripted number placed in front of each example sentence indicates the order of sentence in that student's actual paragraph.

Yet, it might be useful for writing teachers to provide EFL student writers with a clear list of hedging devices and explicitly teach them how to employ those hedging devices appropriately in general writing and in formal written academic prose. As such, students will have more alternative hedges to draw upon from their linguistic repertoires and may appropriately deploy them with greater variety.

Examples of hedges used by student writers in this study

[8] *For Thai society, there was teaching about the readiness for changes which **can** happen at any time in the Sufficiency Economy of the King.*

(Group 1_O7)

[6] *If you are satisfied with your life, you **could** overcome anything you are facing.* (Group 1_O2)

[11] *Furthermore, solving problems with positive ways **would** bring about motivation to solve problems.* (Group 1_O2)

4.2.2.2 Boosters

Boosters, or amplifiers or intensifiers (Biber et al., 2002), are employed to express a writer's certainty in what is being stated. Zhao (2010) states that boosters commonly entail "*very, certainly, clear/clearly, definitely, absolutely, enormously, never, extremely, apparently, indeed, and must*, to just mention a few (p. 42).

Based on the fact that the writing samples in this dissertation study are paragraphic examples of general English and don't tend to be focused on a particular discipline, boosters student writers used in their opinion paragraphs hardly included "*evident, justify, prove, verify,* or *validate*" like in the list of boosters for academic writing in many pieces of work, such as Demir, 2017; Hyland, 2005. Therefore, the researcher tried to discover what boosters Thai student writers most frequently employed.

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[1] Note that a superscripted number placed in front of each example sentence indicates the order of sentence in that student's actual paragraph.

Table 4.8

Top 10 Boosters Employed by EFL Student Writers in Groups 1 and 2 in Opinion Paragraphs, according to Frequency

Boosters	
Group 1	Group 2
will (45.51%)	will (44.4%)
every (17.9%)	have to (17.3%)
all (11.5%)	every (11.1%)
never (10.3%)	all (7.4%)
must (9.0%)	no (7.4%)
know (7.7%)	always (4.9%)
always (7.7%)	very (3.7 %)
have to (7.1%)	never (2.5%)
very (3.2%)	must (2.5%)
no (3.2%)	absolutely (2.5%)

As seen in Table 4.8 of the top 10 boosters of Group 1 and 2, it is surprising that student writers of both groups employed almost virtually the same boosters. That is, out of 10 boosters which were frequently used, the same eight boosters were utilized, namely *will, every, all, never, must, always, have to, very,* and *no,* but with differences in frequency of occurrence. Surprisingly, both groups most often used '*will'* as one of their booster resources. Furthermore, students in Group 2 tended to use 'have to' more than their counterparts. Apart from top 10 boosters on the list above, both student writers in fact also utilized other boosters, for example, *really, totally, completely, absolutely, definitely, a lot,* and *indeed.* However, student writers in Group 1 tended to employ a wider variety of boosters than those in Group 2. On account of this, some boosters which can show that writers compose with confidence were not found in the samples of Group 2, e.g. *especially, certainly, strongly, extremely, realize, shall, obviously, of course,* and *strongly*.

When comparing the employment of boosters by student writers in this study to that of the other study, it was found that some of the top 10 boosters in

the writing samples of this study were similar to ones in the results of Yoon's (2017) research which presented the top 20 boosters occurring in EFL argumentative essays. Some of those boosters were *have to, very, must, know, no, never,* and *every*. However, compared the writers in the study of Yoon (2017), Thai EFL student writers in this study did not use *firmly,* or *by far.* Likewise, Biber, Conrad, and Leech' s (2002) suggest that *very* and *so* are the two most common boosters in both conversation and academic writing. Results revealed that student writers in both groups also employed *very* in their written paragraphs. In fact, *very* was the most frequently utilized booster in the work of Aull and Lancaster (2014). On the contrary, it is surprising that students in both groups hardly utilized *so* as one of their boosting devices. Yet, they often used *so* as a conjunction.

Example of boosters in this study are as follows.

Without doubt*, I **strongly** recommend everyone to think positively.*

(Group 1_O10)

*Her words **totally** create something in my mind that my imagined self wants to travel. [4] **Definitely**, I would like to be a backpacker for several reasons.* (Group 1_O1)

4.2.2.3 Attitude markers

In academic writing, both writers and readers focus on opinions and views on information instead of exchanging feelings and attitudes with each other, like that which takes place in conversation (Biber et al., 2002). As a result, a writer must display or have a stance on an assessment of the information in academic prose. According to Hyland (2008), attitude markers illustrate that the author's emotions impart surprise, agreement, significance, annoyance, and so on. Generally, attitude is most explicitly conveyed by using attitude verbs, sentence adverbs, and descriptive words to show writers' stance.

According to Hyland (2008), attitude markers illustrate "the writer's affective, rather than epistemic, attitude to propositions, conveying surprise, agreement, importance, frustration, and so on, rather than commitment" (p. 10).

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[1] Note that a superscripted number placed in front of each example sentence indicates the order of sentence in that student's actual paragraph

Normally, attitude markers include verbs, sentence adverbs, and adjectives that show writers' stance.

An example of an opinion paragraph in which the writer expressed a variety of attitude markers pointing toward the subject matter, and was able to get a high score – a strong voice – is presented below.

Table 4.9

Top 10 Attitude Markers in the Opinion Paragraphs of Group 1 and 2 in Decreasing Order of Frequency

Attitude Markers	
Group 1	Group 2
positive (ly) (13.1%)	good/ better/ best (20.8%)
good/ better/ best (7.5%)	private (8.2%)
important (ly) (5.9%)	hard (er) (5.7%)
bad (4.5%)	important (ly) (3.8%)
easy/ easier/ easily (2.7%)	want (s/ ed) (3.8%)
(dis) agree (d) (2.4%)	new (3.1%)
new (2.4%)	bad (2.5%)
want (s/ ed) (2.1%)	high (er) (2.5%)
big (er) (2.1%)	(dis) agree (d) (1.9%)
happy (1.9%)	comfortable (ly) (1.9%)

Examples of attitude markers in this study:

*[5] Pain causes many people to **give up**. [6]But for someone who can **tolerate** with the pain, they will be **strong** and **not afraid of** problems that will happen in the future.* (Group 1_O9)

*[3]So I totally **agree** with the approach of seeing problems in **positive** ways.* (Group 1_O8)

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[1] Note that a superscripted number placed in front of each example sentence indicates the order of sentence in that student's actual paragraph.

[6] *Second, thinking **positively** with the problems helps you cope with them **easily**.* (Group 1_O10)

4.2.2.4 A variety of word choice

As mentioned earlier, the use of a variety of word choice also contributes to voice strength. In this study, student writers who attempted to employ a variety of vocabulary and synonyms are likely to receive high scores in Dimension 2. For instance, student writer #27 employed interesting word choice in the same paragraph, such as *preferable, on account of, shortcuts, adjustable, illustrate, demonstrate, conveniently,* and *flexibility*.

Another example of powerful word choice is:

[4] *Definitely, I would like to be a backpacker for several reasons.* [5] *First of all, being a backpacker will give **a thirst for adventure**.* [6] *I think I am someone who has **the wanderlust, the strong desire for traveling**.* (Group 1_O1)

Another voice element is how the writers manipulate syntax, or sentence structure, to form ideas. The use of syntax involves "sentence part, word order, sentence length, and punctuation" (Dean, 2016, p. 9). The way that writers arrange the language in each sentence can have effects on the readers. Experimenting with syntax is another way to play with the foundation of communication.

Table 4.10
The top 10 Hedges, Boosters, and Attitude Markers in Opinion Paragraphs of Group 1 and 2, according to Frequency

Hedges		Boosters		Attitude markers	
Group 1	Group 2	Group 1	Group 2	Group 1	Group 2
some (24.2%)	some (14.9%)	will (45.51%)	will (44.4%)	positive(ly) (13.1%)	good/ better(20.8%)
think (9.3%)	many (8.8%)	every (17.9%)	have to (17.3%)	good/better (7.5%)	private (8.2%)
can (8.7%)	would (6.8%)	all (11.5%)	every (11.1%)	important(ly) 5.9%	hard (er)(5.7%)
many (7.5%)	think (5.4%)	never (10.3%)	all (7.4%)	bad (4.5%)	impornt(ly)(3.8%)
just (6.8%)	believe (4.1%)	must (9.0%)	no (7.4%)	easy (ly) (2.7%)	want (s/ed) (3.8%)
may (6.2%)	may (3.4%)	know (7.7%)	always (4.9%)	dis/agree(d)(2.4%)	new (3.1%)
could (5.6%)	might (3.4%)	always (7.7%)	very (3.7 %)	new (2.4%)	bad (2.5%)
might (5.6%)	feel (3.4%)	have to (7.1%)	never (2.5%)	want(s/ed) (2.1%)	high (er) (2.5%)
would(5.0%)	just (2.7%)	very (3.2%)	must (2.5%)	big (er) (2.1%)	dis/agree(d)(1.9%)
a little(2.5%)	could (2.0%)	no (3.2%)	absolutely(2.5%)	happy (1.9%)	comfortable(ly)(1.9%)

Figure 4.4

The Overall Picture of Voice Features in Dimension 2, Employed by Students in Both Groups
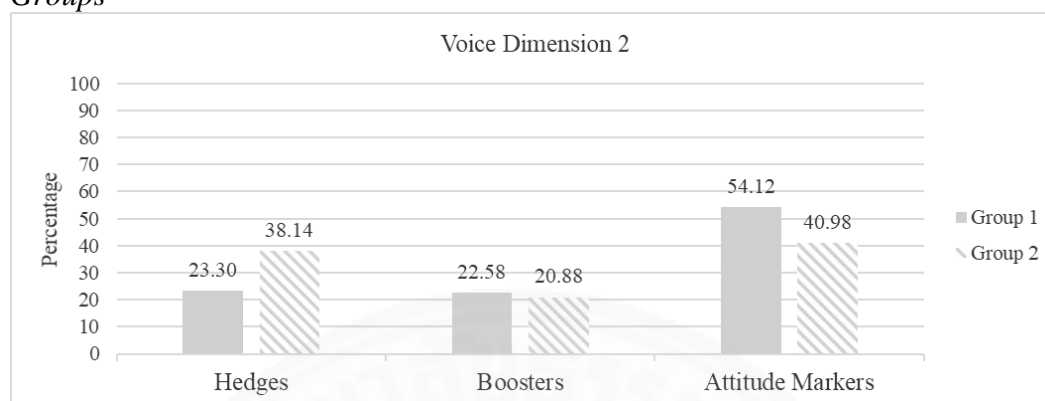
In Dimension 2, it is clearly seen that attitude markers were the predominant voice features in both groups (see Figure 4.4). Probably due to the nature of the paragraphs, students could express their ideas as much as they wanted to persuade readers to agree with their stance. This supports the research by Zhao (2010) in that it is necessary to consider "the nature of each individual voice category in relation to the nature of the writing task" (p. 49). Student writers, thus, actively expressed voice through attitude markers more than hedges or boosters.

However, regarding hedging and boosting, studies by Lee and Deakin (2016) and Ho and Li (2018) likewise indicates that university student writers employed hedges more than boosters. These writer-oriented features help writers show their stance and the way that they decide to present the written text. In addition, these matadiscourse devices were effective in a way that make the written texts more persuasive (Ho & Li, 2018). The findings from this current study also confirmed that EFL student writers of both groups were aware of voice through the use of hedges more boosters which indicate some level of certainty and uncertainty about their claims to the readers.

It is axiomatic that the English language proficiency of student writers can affect the employment of voice features in English writing, especially proficiency in English syntax. The empirical results from Zhao's (2010) work confirm the point that intermediate-level L2 writing students used voice in a much less sophisticated manner when writing than advanced-level authors of academic work.

The following are examples of the highly rated opinion paragraphs of student writers in both groups in Dimension 2. Please note the highlighting of hedges (dotted underline), boosters (bold type and underline), and attitude markers (underline).

My Imagined Identity

*"To travel is the way to open your eyes." I heard this sentence for the first time when I was **very** young and I **completely** agreed with it. It was said by my cousin who lives far away from me but her words have **strongly** impacted my childhood until now. Her words **totally** create something in my mind that my imagined self wants to travel. **Definitely**, I would like to be a backpacker for several reasons. First of all, being a backpacker **will** give a thirst for adventure. I think I am someone who has the wanderlust, the strong desire for traveling. I want to go to the different places around the world to see different people and cultures. For instance, trekking to the unique and the mystique place as Machu Picchu in Peru or going to the peaceful place like Luang Prabang in Laos **will** give me a sense of powerful adventure. Also, I can eat and taste the deliciousness of cultural cuisines. No matter wherever I explore, I will **always** be happy and relaxed as long as I travel to my destination. It is worth getting the new adventures. Second, being a backpacker **will** challenge me to learn the new skills. To illustrate, going to some countries that you **have to** deal with unfamiliar languages **will** encourage you to learn at least its basic words in order to survive in those places. Furthermore, you **will have to** face and deal with any unexpected situations **especially** if you are traveling alone. The problems happening on your journey make you smarter and stronger as you can overcome and cope with the obstacles by your own strategies. Last but most important, in my perspective, being a backpacker **will amazingly** bring the philosophy of living into my life. I **will** see what is going on around me as I wander from one place to another. Understanding the differences is the key to accepting the diversity on the earth. **Exactly**, wherever I go, I **will** learn to*

*understand the differences between places. Moreover, it **<u>will</u>** teach me to accept the cultural diversity as well as <u>improve</u> the way I have been looking at the world on reality. The journey allows people to discover the world and themselves as well. Thus, travel shall help me learn who I really am. **<u>Indeed</u>**, being a backpacker as my imagined identity will fulfill my own needs and desires to travel across the world. A backpacker is not a career such as a doctor, an accountant or an engineer that people will receive monthly income. Nevertheless, it has the special value as the way to <u>develop</u> spiritual growth because a life after a journey has changed without knowing it. Thus, these three <u>good</u> reasons to wander around the world stuck in my mind fora <u>long</u> time to <u>inspire</u> me as one day <u>many</u> <u>countless</u> trips will be the **<u>strongly</u> <u>important</u>** parts of my life.* (Group 1_O1)

Obviously, this student writer preferred to use boosters and attitude markers rather than hedges. S/he really employed a variety of boosting devices, e.g. *completely, strongly, totally, definitely, indeed.* In contrast, s/ he hardly used hedges in this written piece. This demonstrates that this student composed the paragraph with high confidence and, certainly, could explicitly present his/ her strong voice. Apart from the employment of various boosters, s/ he also presented a strong attitude toward the topic by means of different attitude markers which really made her writing interesting and compelling. More importantly, this student seemed to use a wide range of words which made the piece rather unique compared to other students writing. This is one of the most outstanding pieces of EFL student paragraphs in this dissertation study.

Here is an example paragraph written by a student writer in Group 2, showing voice features in Dimension 2 (*hedges, boosters*, and *attitude markers*). The highlighting of *hedges* (dotted underline), *boosters* (bold type and underline), and *attitude markers* (underline) should be noted.

Is the Public transportation Better than the Private One?

As far as I am <u>concerned</u>, the private transportation, namely private car is <u>more preferable</u> than the public transportation, such as bus, sky train, and subway on account of three advantages. Firstly, private transportation has <u>adjustable</u> routes. You can go anywhere you <u>want</u> and you can *avoid traffic jam by driving your car in shortcuts. Whereas, you **<u>have to</u>** follow routes public transportation allows you to go and change several transports in order to going to some destinations. Secondly, driving your own cars suits long distance and unlimited time travelling. To illustrate, you can travel to <u>far</u> place <u>conveniently</u> and reach your real aim places, <u>conversely</u>, going to <u>hard to reach</u> places like mountains by public transportation use <u>more</u> time and <u>more difficult</u>, you <u>need</u> to take a bus for <u>many</u> hours and find local transports in order to reach a mountain. Moreover, you can come back home at height <u>safely</u> or use a car in emergency situations <u>instantly</u>. Lastly, travelling by private transportation is <u>more convenient</u>. To demonstrate, you do not need to wait for transport in a <u>long</u> line of people in rush hours and you can sit in a car very <u>comfortably</u>, while, you crowd in <u>scramble</u> public transports. To sum up, I choose the public transportation because of its flexibility, ready to go and comfort.* (Group 2_O10_27)

In the excerpt from Group 2, student writers employed more boosters and attitude markers than hedges. This author used hedging devices very sparingly. It showed that instead, this student writer wrote with confidence, and did not hesitate to express assessments on the topic s/he was composing. S/he was probably attempting to convince the readers how public transportation is better than the private one. In fact, this student writer was able to achieve his/ her writing goal.

To conclude, in conversation, we tend to pay attention to the feelings and attitudes of one another On the contrary, in academic writing, both writers and readers focus more on how we feel about specific information (Biber et al., 2002). As a result, the writer must take a stance on an assessment of information in academic

prose, and use voice features such as hedges, boosters, and attitude markers as important linguistic devices that help them express their stance in written products.

4.2.3 Dimension 3: Writer and Reader Presence

The last subcategory in the modified analytic voice rubric is comprised of two voice features, i.e. *authorial self-mention* and *reader reference*. In this dimension, the writer invites and engages readers with the use of first person pronouns and reader pronouns. This voice feature group is focused on authorial presence and reader presence.

In the third dimension, Zhao (2012) embodies the following descriptors at the highest level of the manner of idea presentation.

• The writer reveals him- or herself in the writing, either directly or indirectly, giving the reader a clear sense of who the writer is as a unique individual.

• The reader feels that the writer is aware of and able to engage the reader effectively in a direct or subtle way.

• The sharing of personal backgrounds and experiences, if any, is effective, genuine, and engaging the reader.

4.2.3.1 Use of the first-person singular pronouns

The use of the first-person singular pronouns (e.g. *I, me, my,* and *mine*) is a way to show/ to emphasize the presence of the writer in the text (Pixton, 1988). Pixton claims that the more pronouns are used, the more the presence of the writer is emphasized. Taking control of the pronouns is therefore an important way that the author can take control of self-emphasis (Pixton, 1988). I-oriented writing can reflect upon one's own experiences, thoughts and feelings (Berge, Evensen, & Thygesen, 2016).

Composing pieces of writing leads to a close connection between two people, which occurs on paper, and even though it is just a piece of writing, it keeps that human aspect within (Zinsser, 2006). Thus, he encourages writers to write in the first person: *I, me, we* and *us*. Some writers may wonder if they have the right to reveal their emotions or their thoughts in the academic world. Therefore, they may use *one* or the impersonal *it is* instead. However, Zinsser (2006) emphasizes that the use of *one* is boring and suggests replacing it with "*I.*"

Pixton (1988) asserts that the pronoun *"I",* which is part of a main clause, is more emphatic than "*me*, *my*, and *mine*", which appear in that clause because "an emphatic pronoun has an essential grammatical function in the main clause of a sentence" (p. 40). However, Hu (2017) argues that the use of too many personal pronouns may weaken written texts. Interestingly, Kirby and Crovitz (2013) indicate that writing with a real voice may not necessarily include the use of the first-person singular pronoun.

4.2.3.2 Use of reader pronoun

Reader pronoun use is rather straightforward. It is deemed that "the most explicit way of reader reference is by the use of second person pronouns and possessives such as *you, your, and yours*. But the use of "*we*" (and *us*, *our*, *ours*; here different from the "we" used in the stance dimension to refer to the presence of two or multiple authors or the author and someone else he or she has mentioned previously) is a more implicit way of incorporating the reader's opinion into the argument (Hyland, 2008 as cited in Zhao, 2010).

Table 4.11

Group Statistics of Dimension 3 Divided between Students in Groups A and B

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Group 1	17	2.76	1.09
Group 2	18	1.61	0.70

In Dimension 3 (*writer and reader presence*), the mean scores of student writers in Group 1 (M = 2.76, SD = 1.09) were higher than those of their counterparts (M = 1.61, SD = 0.70), as shown in Table 4.11. The following is a graph showing occurrences of voice features of Dimension 3, i.e. *authorial self-mention* and *reader reference,* employed by student writers in both groups.

Figure 4.5 The Overall Picture of Voice Features in Dimension 3, Employed by Students in Both Groups
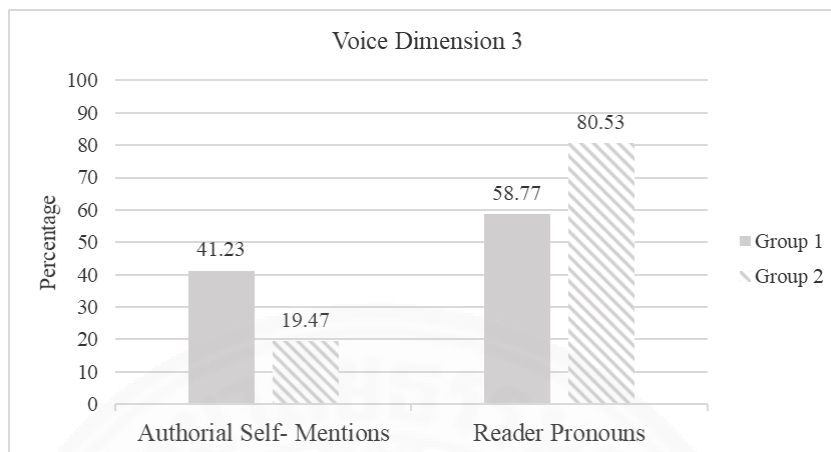
The data from Figure 4.5 illustrated that in both groups, the employment of *reader pronouns* was greater than the use of *authorial self-mentions*. Student writers in Group 1 used both authorial self-mentions and reader pronouns in the same amount, 42.23% and 58.77%, respectively. In contrast, students in Group 2 often used reader pronouns (80.53%) but infrequently used authorial self-mentions (19.47%).

Surprisingly, the findings of this study revealed that Thai EFL student writers infrequently employed the second person pronoun *you*. This probably has links to the power relationship between the writers – student writers and the targeted reader, who was their teacher. Student writers probably projected themselves as junior to their teachers and tried to show respect – deference – through their written texts as well. See the examples from this study below.

> [3]*First, if **we** are in bad situation we may lose consciousness and **we** may not know how to solve the problem.* [4] *One thing that helps **us** concentrate again is "think positively".*　　　　(Group 1_O10)

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[1] Note that a superscripted number placed in front of each example sentence indicates the order of sentence in that student's actual paragraph.

*²**We** unavoidably confront with problems all the time for the rest of our life. ³ For that reason, **we** had better know how to deal with them.* (Group 1_O13)

*¹⁰ No matter wherever **I** explore, **I** will always be happy and relaxed as long as I travel to my destination.* (Group 1_O1)

Obviously, student writers in Group 2 hardly used the first pronoun 'I.' They often used the second person pronoun 'you' or the first-person pronoun 'we', which means the readers. The following are examples of such usage.

Grade does not represent *your* intelligence but represent *your* perseverance. ⁷ If *you* work hard, you can get A from some subjects.
(Group 2_O7_24)

*¹ The future is uncertainty and **I** think **we** should save money for the future for these reasons. ² First, **we** should save money for emergency situation.* (Group 2_O13_30)

The following are examples of opinion paragraphs written by student writers from the two groups. These writing samples obtained high scores in dimension 3. In fact, overall, most student writers in this study received rather low scores in this dimension. However, the paragraphs presented below gained the best score in Dimension 3. Let' s look at them.

A paragraphic example from Group 1:
Why I face problems positively?
I always face problems in many positive ways. There are some reasons for it. First, every problem has solutions. Maybe the solution is easier than you thought, sometimes you have to calm down and think carefully. Second, problems make life challenge. Life is just like a game, problems are like the quests. This means, once you pass the

*quest, <u>you</u> earned experiences. Last and most important, facing problems negatively won't help <u>you</u> solve them. Meanwhile, it wares <u>you</u> both physically and mentally. That is why I face **my** problems positively, because it helps **me** to learn and gain experiences in life and improve **my** overall health.* (Group 1_O5)

This student writer was able to balance the use of both first person pronouns and second person pronouns. Doing this can help the writer engage the reader in his or her writing. The reader may feel invited to discuss the topic.

An example from Group 2:

Does your Grade Represent your Intelligence?

*Many people often say that if <u>you</u> get a good grade, it means <u>you</u> are genius. In <u>**my**</u> point of view, <u>**I**</u> totally disagree with it for the following reasons. First, most subjects are based off of memorization. Many exams require studying lots of information by hard that the person who has a better memory has a much higher chance of getting better grades. If <u>you</u> hate memorizing stuff then there is a great possibility that <u>you</u> will forget things on exams and get bad grades. Second, grade does not represent your intelligence but represent <u>your</u> perseverance. If <u>you</u> work hard, <u>you</u> can get A from some subjects. Some subjects, <u>you</u> never go to class but <u>you</u> can read books before final exam so <u>you</u> can get A too. Lastly, <u>**I**</u> believe that passion is more important than intelligence. When <u>you</u> study something you are not passionate about, <u>you</u> are very less likely to get motivated. <u>You</u> will get better grade on the subjects <u>you</u> love or at least the ones <u>you</u> don't hate. In summary, <u>**I**</u> absolutely disagree with representing <u>your</u> intelligence by <u>your</u> grades.* (Group 2_O7_24)

This student was able to use an equal mixture of both the first person pronoun *I*, to present the writer, and the second person pronoun *you*, to involve

the readers in the written product in an appropriate way. This really helped emphasize the third voice dimension: *the writer-reader presence*.

4.2.4 Other Emerging Voice Features

Apart from the voice features that were assessed by the modified voice rubric, there are other interesting voice features which have emerged in this study. Some student writers attempted to employ a variety of voice features in order to increase interest in the paragraphs and to create a relationship between the writer and the reader. Also, I found that these emerging voice features were able to catch my interest – an example of having effects on the reader.

4.2.4.1 Rhetorical or audience-directed questions

Surprisingly, student writers also used rhetorical or audience-directed questions to engage the readers in their written texts. This was able to add voice to writing. Here is an example.

[10] ***Have you ever wondered why?*** (Group 1_O9)

[7] *I have thought about problems as my mysterious friend who usually gives me a complicated life lesson.* [8] ***Why?*** (Group 1_O11)

[2] ***What's wrong with our society that made our country still far behind, and full of many problems that obstruct the way to be developed country for long times****?* (Group 1_O4)

4.2.4.2 Use of quotation marks

The following are examples of the use of quotation marks, which can be a great hook at the beginning of paragraphs.

[1] ***"I have many problems in my life. But my lips don't know that."*** – *They always smile.* [2]*A message from Charlie Chaplin, a man who makes your laugh louder than your problems.* (Group 1_O2)

---

[1] Note that a superscripted number placed in front of each example sentence indicates the order of sentence in that student's actual paragraph.

[1]"There was never a night or a problem that could defeat sunrise or hope." [2] This saying of Bernard Williams is really touch my heart. [3] When I have problems, I never avoid them. I try to solve them and learn from them. (Group 1_O3)

4.2.4.3 Other literary devices

Another element of voice can be expressed by the literary devices that the writers employ in that piece of writing (Spence, 2014). The use of literary devices is a technique that the writers use to manipulate language in a literary piece of work in order to "influence and work towards a particular effect, feeling, reaction or response" from the readers (Sirhan, 2014, p. 140). In addition, literary devices can help to "establish moods, depict settings, support themes, and make the characters come alive" (Medaille, 2007, p. 86).

Some student writers use literary devices in their writing. Those possible literary elements in writing could entail figurative language (e.g. metaphor, simile synecdoche, hyperbole), other literary devices (e.g. alliteration, repetition, binary opposites, rhyme), and other literary elements (e.g. mood, theme, tension, telling details) (Spence, 2014). It is inferred that literary devices can strengthen voice in writing

In the following instance, the writer compared his or her problems to either *a big monster* or *a mouse with no harm*, which I think shows a very creative imagination and powerful written language that can indicate strong voice. It is true that words are powerful and less is more, like in the following example.

*[7]When you got problems, you may imagine **a big monster** in your mind but if you think positively, a big monster will become **a mouse with no harm.*** (Group 1_O10)

In addition, in the closure, this writer ended with, "*If you think positively, a big monster in your mind will become **a torch to navigate your life**.*" This really left an impression on me as the reader.

Another interesting example is the following.

*¹ Problems are **like a game of Whack-A-Mole;** one is gone, suddenly, another arises.* (Group 1_O13)

*¹⁵**Like a wound,** without being treated, it will get an infection, hurt even more badly and finally kill us.* (Group 1_O13)

Some student writers use proverbs, such as the following:

⁴ Two heads are always better than one. (Group 2_O15_32)

In some cases, students used the technique of repetition to put the emphasis on that word or sentence. Although the use of repetition is not included in the rubric escriptors, it really helps add voice in writing, as in the following example.

*¹ "The secret of our success is that we **never, never, never** give up" said by Wilma Mankiller, the powerful activist and native leader in the United States of America.* (Group 1_O8)

***Some** people might get hurt from that, **some** people might get a happy moment, **some** people might get lose something when it comes.*

(Group 1_O11)

*¹⁸Living with the problem needs a **learning** curve. ¹⁹**Learning** from it will improve our life skills which makes us go through it **easier and easier** each time.* (Group 1_O13)

*²¹On the contrary, if we never learnt anything, our life would be really frustrating from facing the same old problem **again and again**.*

(Group 1_O13)

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[1] Note that a superscripted number placed in front of each example sentence indicates the order of sentence in that student's actual paragraph.

4.2.5 Comparison between Highest- and Lowest-rated Opinion Paragraphs

The researcher compares the writing of students who were explicitly aware of voice to those who might not have been aware of it. Student writers in Group 1 employed a much wider variety of voice features than those in Group 2. In addition, we can see they were more aware of the audience because they employed voice features more frequently, such as the use of reader pronouns, questions, and other emerging voice features to interact with their readers. Intaraprawat and Steffensen (1995) yielded similar results in that good paragraphs displayed a greater variety of voice features within each category than the poor ones. They assert that poor writers don't have the ability to be considerate when writing texts (Intaraprawat & Steffensen, 1995). Furthermore, the use of a variety of words also contributes to voice strength. In this study, student writers who attempted to employ a variety of vocabulary and synonyms were likely to receive high scores in Dimension 2. For instance, student writer #27 employed interesting word choice in the same paragraph, such as *preferable, on account of, shortcuts, adjustable, illustrate, demonstrate, conveniently,* and *flexibility*.

Narrative Paragraphs

In terms of scoring narrative paragraphs, a story that student writers narrate must achieve a narrative continuity which at least includes a beginning, a middle, and an end – the foundation of the act of narration.

When the point of the story is not stated clearly at the outset of the narrative, it is hard for the reader to follow the sequence of the story and understand the point that the narrator wants to make. This happened to some student writers who failed to clarify the main point of the story at the beginning of the paragraph. As a consequence, they seemed to get lost or to get distracted from fully developing their story. In this sense, the paragraphs which did not contain the main point apparently received low scores on Dimension 1, which consists of reiteration and directives.

In addition, some paragraphs had an interesting main idea and a good concluding sentence. Unfortunately, their main narrative sequence of events did not go with the beginning and the ending. It seems that there were two stories in those paragraphs. Undoubtedly, those paragraphs were rated lowly on reiteration as well.

4.2.6 Voice in Narrative Paragraphs

To conduct analysis on written voice by student writers, I decided to follow the Humphrey et al.'s (2014) framework of voice assessment in narrative writing. There are four contributions to this aspect: expressive language, metanarrative awareness, emphasis markers, and language of cultural communities.

The first attribute is *expressive language,* which refers to vivid and forceful written expression. Strategies to use expressive language involve the use of figurative language devices, such as hyperbole, irony, metaphor, and simile; the use of reported speech; and, especially the use of advanced, unusual, and careful word choice. In the present study, the findings show that student writers in both groups rarely used figurative language devices, and some student writers were aware of using advanced, unusual, and careful word choice. Examples in this study are presented below:

Although contractions are often seen as too conversational, most writers, even in formal contexts, will contract the negative *not* in such words as *don't* and *can't:*

- **Use of reported speech:**

[9] **"***Sure! I really want to be in Thammasat University, and this is the only way to reach my dream***"** (Group 1_N4)

- **Use of advanced, unusual, and careful word choice**

[6]*Theep's parents were very active in their **foster** home, and they arranged to deliver clothing and food donations to a foster home in a **deeply impoverished** area on the mountains, **a four-hour drive** from Ubon Ratchathani.* (Group 1_N3)

[1] *Pink Panther will never forget **a fascinating spell of love** that changed is life forever.* (Group 2_N1_18)

[6] *She was **desperate** because she had no money and felt **condemned** about her looks.* (Group 2_N6_23)

*¹ Pink Panther found a magic wand **coincidentally** and gave a **shabby** girl **fascinating** night*   (Group 2_N10_27)

Second, another category of voice assessment is *metanarrative awareness.* Metanarrative awareness represents writing with a strong authorial voice and making explicit remarks to the readers, or the process of storytelling. Metanarrative comments occur when the authors are self-aware and show this to the readers, for example, *'I hope you like my story that I am going to tell you about,'* or with regard to the process of telling the story, e.g., *'Well that's my story and it's all 100% true!"* (Humphrey et al., 2014). In the current study, students used indirect questions to interact with readers.

³ Have they ever thought of feeling of listeners while speaking?

(Group 1_N5)

In the third voice attribute, the use of *emphasis markers* puts emphasis on particular parts of the story, and includes the use of intensifiers and the employment of orthographic devices such as exclamation points, repeated words, and capital letters. Peterson and McCabe (1983) suggest that writers elongate particular words as a way of emphasizing. Humphrey et al. (2014) assert that these emphasis markers "can make writing more engaging and interesting and give readers the sense that they can hear the author telling the story" (p. 113). With respect to intensity, Labov (1984, p. 43) presents "a set of adverbs that code intensity directly" such as *really, so*, and *very*.

In this present study, student writers in Group 1 employed more emphasis markers than those in Group 2. Student writers in Group 1 sometimes used exclamation points, repeated words, and capital letters, while students in Group 2 employed a smaller variety. Surprisingly, the use of exclamation marks only appeared in a piece by one student writer in Group 2. Examples of the use of emphasis markers are illustrated below:

- **Use of intensifiers**

*¹ Pink Panther will **never** forget the unexpected night that **completely** changed his life **forever**.*   (Sec 2_N8_25)

*[16] I found that skiing was **so much** fun and made winter in Pyrenees **much more** enjoyable.* (Group 1_N6)

- **Use of orthographic devices**
  (1) Exclamation points*:*

*[13]"**Hey!** [14]The result was announced!" my friend said in an exciting* voice. (Group 1_N1)

*[23]"**Aha!**" I gasped. [24] "I got accepted to Thammasa**t!**" [25] I screamed* out loud. (Group 1_N1)

*[31] Unfortunately, he shot the wrong one**!*** (Group 2_N17_34)

(2) Repetition:

*[7]"**Yeahhhh**"* (Group 1_N2)

*[5]When I had free time I was read more, and **repeated more and more**.* (Group 1_N4)

*"**I'm afraid, I'm afraid, I'm afraid** so bad" I said.* (Group 1_N6)

(3) Capital letters:

[16]While I was walking on the street, I saw the quote on the wall *"FIND THE WAY YOU ARE".* (Sec 1_N14)

Finally, the last voice attribute from the Humphrey et al. (2014) framework is *language of cultural communities,* which is a way that authors reveal themselves as members of particular sociocultural groups. Authors may express language of cultural communities through colloquialisms and idiomatic expressions. Humphrey et al. (2014) suggest that these devices help writing be more engaging and unique. In this present study, students hardly used language of cultural communities. Yet, one student used "ka", which is a Thai particle.

Apart from the voice features found in accordance with the framework of Humphrey et al. (2014), the results show some interesting voice features were present in the writing samples.

- **Use of quotations from people of authority or famous people**

"Commitment is what transforms a promise into reality." [2] *I really appreciated this quote not because it was once said by Abraham Lincoln, the America's greatest president, but because the experience that I learned in the last summer.* (Group 1_N2)

- **Beginning with lyrics**

"Count your blessings, name them one by one,
Count your blessings, see what God has done!"
(Johnson Oatman, 'Count Your Blessings') (Group 1_N3)

- **Use of "*how…*"** (which may not be found in academic writing)

[17]*How could I forget that!* (Group 1_N1)

4.2.7 Summary of the Second Research Question

Overall, the writing samples from the present study revealed that Thai EFL students could write with voice. However, student writers in Group 1, who were explicitly aware of voice, wrote with a comparatively stronger voice and employed a wider variety of voice features than those in Group 2, who might not have been aware of voice. For example, student writers in Group 1 often began their paragraphs with hooks to initiate reader participation in the written texts and ended with related quotations to catch the reader's attention. Indeed, these techniques made their writing more interesting. Furthermore, some of them used rhetorical questions as a way to engage the readers.

In narrative writing, the students in Group 1 employed a number of voice devices, such as the use of reported speech, the use of emphasis markers like exclamation points, repeated words, and capital letters. In fact, student writers in Group

2 could express with voice but employed voice features less frequently than those in Group 1. Interestingly, student writers in Group 2 hardly expressed evaluative language, which is another salient feature of narrative writing. They recounted what they had done but did not express what they thought about it. If they had included their evaluations in the stories, their narrative writing would have been more compelling and interesting.

Drawing data from student reflections, it was found that the teaching techniques and methods, and the characters of the teachers highly influenced the way students wrote with voice, especially those in Group 1. Presumably, the teacher of Group 1 cultivated the notion of voice in her students throughout the whole course and also provided students with strategies on how to write with voice. Students in Group 1, as a result, could create compelling pieces of writing. As Barkaoui (2007) stated, skilled writers are more concerned with their readers, so they employ different strategies to interact with them. The researcher found that employment of various voice features does increase voice strength in writing and does make written products more interesting and compelling.

4.3 Research Question 3

How do text types influence voice in students' written products?

In this study, narrative and opinion paragraphs are mainly focused on because both narrative and expository genres are particularly prevalent in the classroom (Kent, 1984). As we know, genre has had a great impact on the writer's choice of language usage. However, apart from genre, there are other factors that the writer needs to take into consideration when composing a piece of writing, such as factors related to society and psychology and the context of rhetoric (Kaufer et al., 2004).

Opinion paragraphs tend to follow logical structure, but the employment of the stylistic or rhetorical devices of the writers can have an influence on text macro-structures to some extent (van Dijk, 1973). A narrative text is considered agent- or actor-oriented, while an expository text is deemed "subject-matter-oriented" (Kent, 1984, p. 234). Weigle (2002), states that the dominant purpose of personal stories is to convey emotions and feelings (emotive), whereas the dominant purpose of opinions (argumentative/ persuasive writing) is to convince and persuade (conative) (pp. 8-9).

Due to the fact that this study adopted the analytic voice rubric from Zhao (2012), voice features in opinion paragraphs were easily measured in accordance with the adopted rubric. However, problems arose when narrative paragraphs were scored by using the adopted rubric.

4.3.1 Dimension 1: Presence and Clarity of Ideas in the Content

Regarding the divide between narrative and opinion paragraphs, the researcher followed three major dimensions of text types as proposed by Coffin, Curry, Goodman, Lillis, and Swann's (2003) work. Specifically, each text type differs in terms of rhetorical *purpose*, *register* and *text structure*. These differences certainly influence, to some extent, the voice student writers express in their written products.

With regard to the difference in text structure between narrative and opinion paragraphs, this undoubtedly affects the way student writers express their written voice in Dimension 1 (*presence and clarity of ideas in the content*) when they compose narrative and opinion paragraphs. The nature of opinion paragraphs means student writers followed a logical structure accordingly. They generally started by addressing the main idea at the beginning, then developed the central idea with supporting details, and ended with a concluding sentence. The reiteration, or the central-point articulation, of student writers' opinion paragraphs received credit if it was accompanied with an explicit reference to the central point. As a result, student writers could earn high scores if they often reiterated the main point.

That emphasis on reiteration is due to the nature of writing opinion paragraphs, in which students must give reasons to support the thesis statement in the hierarchical organization of their paragraphs; reiteration can frequently take place in this atmosphere. However, due to the nature of narratives, students simply recount a series of events in a logical way where a hierarchical organizational structure is rarely found. Thus, it could be problematic when narrative paragraphs were scored in Dimension 1 by using Zhao's adopted voice rubric. Below are examples of opinion and narrative paragraphs written by student writers in this study. Let's compare these two paragraphs.

Consider an example of an opinion paragraph as follows.

…. <u>When people decide to face problems with positive mind, it's a practical way to reach the aim of success.</u> This main idea can be supported by three reasons. First of all, problems are unavoidable but our mind is controllable. Problems is inevitable phenomenon, it's the truth of life that problems always happen to us in our everyday life. Therefore, <u>choosing way to see problems in positive view</u> is a tool for our daily life, in order to let us have good mood through a week or month that is good for your health. For instance, tourism information officers in Japan were trained <u>to solve problems with positive mind, because this can reduce their work stress a lot</u>. So problems help them succeed in work and mental health balance. Second<u>, dare to solve problem with positive mind is the joint to achievement</u>. When we face problems, it means that our path way to accomplish something….

<div align="right">(Group 1_O8)</div>

Later, let's compare with an example of a narrative paragraph.

I was never impressed with the lyric by Johnson Oatman until that day, when I went to my friend's house. Theep, who is my best friend often complained about his lack of wealth to his parents, who often replied that he had no idea what it means to be poor and that someday they'd show him what poverty was really like. As his friend, I disagreed with them, but one day, they proved that I was wrong. They showed me just how right they were. I did see, and the images from that day still remained in me. Theep's parents were very active in their foster home, and they arranged to deliver clothing and food donations to a foster home in a deeply impoverished area on the mountains, a four-hour drive from Ubon Ratchathani ... (Group 1_N3)

We can clearly see that reiteration can take place in an opinion paragraph, while this rarely occur in a narrative paragraph. Although narrative paragraphs followed a temporal structure, or a logical structure, like opinion

paragraphs, and could be completed by having a beginning, a middle, and an end, it was difficult to score reiteration, which required students to repeat the same main idea accompanied with evidence. The adopted voice rubric, therefore, could not be applied to assess the written voice in narrative paragraphs. To sum up, the variations in text structure between narrative and opinion paragraphs established a significant contrast in how EFL student writers constructed their written voice and employed voice-related features in Dimension 1.

4.3.2 Dimension 2: Manner of Idea Presentation

Apart from the difference on text structure, narrative and opinion paragraphs also differ in *rhetorical purpose* and *register* (Coffin et al., 2003). By *register,* Coffin et al. (2003) take "the vocabulary and sentence structures which students are expected to use in written texts" into consideration (p. 14). In narrative paragraphs, one writes like s/he is telling a story, either from her/his own experience or from the experience of others. The main purpose of personal stories, therefore, is to convey emotions and feelings. Once the author starts the topic sentence, s/he needs to elaborate the points by providing vivid details that are linked to that emotion. Therefore, when scoring narrative paragraphs, the rater needs to look for the student writers' topic statement first. After that, the rater will examine how the student writers have developed their narrative paragraphs. The more specific the details, the more impressive the writing.

In this sense, student writers tended to use more attitude markers than other voice features and used more speech-like language, which was considered informal language and the use of which was not advised for opinion paragraphs. For example, student writers employed *expressive language,* such as the use of reported speech, and the use of advanced, unusual, and careful word choice; and *emphasis markers,* such as exclamation marks, repeated words or phrases, and capital letters. These voice features are characteristic of writing narratives; therefore, they can be expected in students' narrative paragraphs. However, these voice features do not seem to be acceptable when writing opinion paragraphs. Let's compare the example sentences from an opinion and narrative paragraphs respectively.

Opinion paragraphs:	*So I totally **agree** with the approach of seeing problems in **positive** ways.* (Group 1_O8)
Narrative paragraphs:	*"**Hey!** The result was announced!" my friend said in an exciting voice.* (Group 1_N1)

I'm afraid, I'm afraid, I'm afraid so bad" I said.

(Group 1_N6)

Based on Zhang (2016), the appropriateness and the extent to which metadiscourse devices are employed is closely associated with the register. The results reveal that metadiscourse markers are likely to be more frequently utilized in more informational and abstract registers, e.g. academic and general prose, particularly when functioning in a text presentation role, whereas metadiscourse devices are rarely found in narrative or concrete registers, e.g. fiction and the press, and tend to be utilized to guide the audience. To conclude, regarding the use of voice features in Dimension 2 in order of frequency, student writers were likely to employ attitude markers, boosters, and hedges respectively in their narrative paragraphs, whereas they tended to utilized attitude markers, hedges and boosters in their opinion writing.

4.3.3 Dimension 3: Writer and Reader Presence

In opinion paragraphs, student writers in both groups used both first and second person pronouns. Being able to use an equal mixture of both the first-person pronoun *I,* to present the writer, and the second person pronoun *you,* to involve the readers of the written product in an appropriate way clearly emphasizes the third voice dimension: *the writer-reader presence*. See an example below.

[1] *The future is uncertainty and **I** think **we** should save money for the future for these reasons.* [2] *First, **we** should save money for emergency situation.* (Group 2_O13_30)

On the contrary, in narratives there were some differences in the use of person pronouns between the two groups depending on the perspective through which they narrated their stories and which narrative voice they used to tell their stories. In other words, student writers in Group 1 frequently used the first-person pronoun *I* throughout their stories because narrative, by nature, is a method of recounting and recapitulating the past experience of the author. They sometimes employed the first-person pronoun *we.* This ran contrary to the use of reader pronouns, which were rarely used by student writers to engage the readers. However, student writers in Group 2 did not use any of the first-person pronouns *I* or *we*, but they employed the third-person pronouns (*he, she, it, they*) instead. Indeed, this difference in the use of the person pronouns happened because student writers of both groups used different narrative voice in narrating their stories. Let's consider the examples of narratives written by student writers from both groups.

An excerpt of narrative paragraphs from a student writer in Group 1:
*The trains is one of the things that **I** love so much. When **I** was kid, **I** was exited every time **I** saw the trains. **I** had dreaming of traveling by train from Bangkok to Chiang Mai once time in **my** life. Finally, at the beginning of this past year, **my** dream came true! **I** had the opportunity to experience the cold weather with friends at Chiang Mai by train. "Poon Poon" The train ran from Bangkok Station around 2 PM.*
(Group 1_N7)

An excerpt of narrative paragraphs from a student writer in Group 2:
*Pink Panther will never forget a fascinating spell of love that changed is life forever. One night, a witch came to town. **She** was a little drunk so **she** dropped her magic wand by accident. Then, Pink Panther found the wand and began to cast the spell on everything. After that, he met a poor girl. **She** wanted to enter a beauty contest but **she** did not have enough money to afford a dress….* (Group 2_N1_18)

From the above examples of narratives, we can clearly see that when the student in Group 1 narrated his/ her story from the perspective of first-person narration, s/ he tended to use the first-person pronouns *I* and a possessive such as *my* accordingly. On the other hand, when the student in Group 2 told his/ her story through a perspective of a third-person narrator. Therefore, that student employed the third-person pronouns (*he, she*) instead.

With respect to voice in narratives, the concept of narrative voice is often related to the point of view the writer takes in his/her writing, and this results in a reflection consisting of a first-person narration, a third-person narrator, the use of the first person (*I, we*), the second person (*you*), and the third person (*he, she, it, they*). In Group 1, student writers used a first-person narration to recount and recapitulate a past experience of their own. They, as a result, used both the first-person pronouns (*I, we*) and the second-person pronoun (*you*). On the other hand, in Group 2, student writers used a third-person narrator to describe what they had seen (the Pink Panther movie). They subsequently employed the third-person pronouns (*he, she, it, they*) to tell their stories. In addition, they tended to solely summarize what happened in the story and did not include their attitudes or feelings – the evaluation – toward the story they narrated. Therefore, they did not use any of the first-person pronouns (*I, we*) in their written narratives. In short, the different text type absolutely affects the way student writers use voice features in Dimension 3 (*writer and reader presence*).

4.3.4 Summary of the Third Question

To conclude, it is certain that text types greatly influence voice in students' written products since purpose, register and text structure are the divide between narrative and opinion paragraphs (Coffin et al., 2003). Student writers have to adjust their writing style and language usage according to the text type they compose, as they do with the voice features they decide to employ. In Dimension 1(*presence and clarity of ideas in the content*), text structure affected the way student writers expressed their written voice in narrative and opinion paragraphs. That is, the nature of opinion paragraphs that allows students to give reasons to support their thesis statement in a hierarchical organization of their paragraphs, also permits frequent reiteration.

However, due to the nature of narratives, students merely narrated a series of events in a logical way that rarely found any hierarchical organizational structures.

In Dimension 2 (*manner of idea presentation*), rhetorical purpose and register of each text type influenced voice in students' written products. In opinion paragraphs, student writers employed voice features, namely *hedges*, *boosters*, and *attitude markers* to express a stance on the topic of the composition. These voice features indicate the level of certainty and doubt – boosters and hedges – and showcase an attitude towards the proposition – attitude markers. Therefore, in order of frequency, student writers were likely to employ attitude markers, hedges, boosters respectively in their opinion paragraphs. On the contrary, in narratives students tell their stories, either from their own experience or from the experience of others. The main purpose of personal stories, therefore, is to convey emotions and feelings. Once the author starts the topic sentence, s/he needs to elaborate the points by providing vivid details that are linked to that emotion. Thus, in order of frequency, student writers tended to utilized attitude markers, boosters, and hedges in their narrative stories, respectively.

Finally, in Dimension 3 (*writer and reader presence*), student writers in both groups used both the first-person pronoun *(I, we),* to present the writer, and the second person pronoun *(you, we),* to involve the readers in opinion paragraphs. In contrast, in narratives, the use of the person pronouns between the two groups differed according to what narrative voice student writers used to tell their stories. If student writers described their stories in a first-person narration, they preferred to use a first-person narration (*I, we*), to recount and recapitulate their own past experiences. However, if they narrated their stories with a third-person narrator, they were likely to employ third-person pronouns (*he, she, it, they*) to tell their stories. By far, we can clearly see that text types have a significant impact on how student writers expressed their voice in individual written texts.

CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Due to its paramount significance, further investigation into the notion of voice expressed in EFL students' writing in the EFL context clearly deserves attention. As previously mentioned, this dissertation study aims to examine whether EFL Thai students write paragraphs with voice and what voice features students express through their opinion and narrative paragraphs. In the hope of providing empirical evidence for research in the field of L2 writing, this study will be noteworthy for its exploration of voice features in English paragraphs by employing the modified analytical rubrics.

This chapter first discusses whether Thai EFL students' written paragraphs show the voice features indicated in the modified rubric and elucidate later what voice features appeared in Thai EFL students' written paragraphs in individual voice dimensions. After that, implications for pedagogical practices and the limitations and recommendations for further studies are presented respectively.

5.1. Voice in Thai EFL Students Writers' Paragraphs

In this study, I employed the modified three-dimensional analytic voice rubric, in which voice with Dimensions 1, 2, and 3 deals with (a) *presence and clarity of ideas in the content,* (b) *manner of idea presentation*, and (c) *writer and reader presence*, respectively. Writing samples were rated on a five-point scale for each voice dimension accounting for 15 points. In Zhao's scheme, each voice dimension is given equal weight. Each dimensional rating was based on a scale of 0-5; as a result, the sum of the dimensional voice ratings fell into the range of 0-15 points.

When comparing opinion paragraphs of these two groups by using the *t*-test, the student writers in Group 1 obviously received higher scores of voice strength in every dimension. That means, student writers in Group 1 could present clear opinion development with appropriate exemplification which was rather more interesting and sophisticated that those in Group 2. Furthermore, in Dimension 2 *(manner of idea presentation)*, student writers in Group 1 could present their ideas with more confidence and engagement. They were able to show a clear stance and use a great number of attitude markers, which evidently demonstrated a strong attitude toward the topic under

discussion. More importantly, they attempted to choose words which would stand out and certainly capture the attention of the reader (not the plain, same old word choice.) In addition, some student writers also learned to use a variety of sentence structures: simple, compound, and complex sentence structures which were able to create rhythm in their writing and definitely resulted in strengthening written voice.

However, the results illustrated a big difference in Dimension 3 (*writer and reader presence*) between these two groups. That is, student writers in Group 1 could actively invite the audience into their writing by using a dynamic blend of both authorial self-mentions and reader pronouns. On the contrary, student writers in Group 2 had hardly any tendency to use reader pronouns in any great number. Indeed, voice features in Dimension 3 really help writers create successful effects on reader involvement.

Regarding assessing voice in narrative paragraphs, it is unfortunate that the modified rubric does not seem to capture voice features that belong to the nature of narrative writing, especially Dimension 1 *(presence and clarity of ideas in the content),* which assesses the reiteration and directives of written products. This occurs because text types greatly influence voice in students' written products. The nature of opinion paragraphs requires student writers to follow a logical structure accordingly. They generally started by addressing the main idea at the beginning, then developed the central idea with supporting details, and ended with a concluding sentence. The reiteration, or the central-point articulation, of student writers' opinion paragraphs received credit if it was accompanied with an explicit reference to the central point. That emphasis on reiteration is due to the nature of writing opinion paragraphs, in which students must give reasons to support the thesis statement in the hierarchical organization of their paragraphs. Reiteration, therefore, can often take place in this atmosphere.

However, due to the nature of narratives, students simply recount a series of events in a logical way where a hierarchical organizational structure is rarely found. Thus, it could be problematic when narrative paragraphs were scored in Dimension 1 by using Zhao's adopted voice rubric. Although narrative paragraphs followed a temporal structure, or a logical structure, like opinion paragraphs, and could be completed by having a beginning, a middle, and an end, it was difficult to score reiteration, which required students to repeat the same main idea accompanied with

evidence. The adopted voice rubric, as a result, could not be applied to assess the written voice in narrative paragraphs.

Moreover, Zhang (2016) asserts that metadiscourse markers are likely to be more frequently utilized in more informational and abstract registers, e.g. academic and general prose, particularly when functioning in a text presentation role, whereas metadiscourse devices are rarely found in narrative and concrete registers, e.g. fiction and press, and tend to be utilized to guide the audience. This may be another reason underlining why the modified analytical rubric employed in this study was not fit to explore voice features in narrative paragraphs. Yet, although the modified analytic rubric could not be applied appropriately to assess voice in narrative paragraphs, the researcher explored possible voice features found in the writing samples, and the results were presented in the Section 4.2.6.

5.2 Discussion of the Findings

The notion of voice in this current study is much influenced by the modified analytic voice rubric by Zhao (2012) which was established upon and extended the work of Helms-Park and Stapleton (2003) together with Zhao and Llosa (2008) in conjunction with the basis of Hyland's (2008) interactional model. Thus, voice features in written texts are associated with both the substance of preposition and aspects of metadiscourse, which are two indispensable components of a written text (Intaraprawat & Steffensen, 1995).

Content is the primary consideration when we look at voice (Spencer, 2014). When composing a written product, writers have to think about the subject or story they want to tell, share it with the readers, and manipulate the written texts to be understood by the readers. In this sense, writing for audience and writing to tell a story are inseparable (Lavelle, 2001). In terms of interaction between the writer and the reader, metadiscourse devices such as the use of directives, questions, and reader pronouns are effective in the way that they can engage the readers and hold the readers' interest in the written texts. As such, all voice features contribute to both sharpening the writers' ideas on the subject of composing and the devices which show the writers' doubts, confidence, and attitudes, and which signal their authorial presence to the readers and involve their readers in their written texts.

5.2.1 Voice Features Found in Opinion Paragraphs
5.2.1.1 Voice in Dimension 1

In paragraphs that received high ratings from raters regarding reiteration, the student writers frequently repeated their central point along with providing interesting and unique examples and details. Although some writers wrote long essays, they were not assigned high scores if they did not repeat the central point or if they included irrelevant examples. Briefly, highly rated essays result from reiteration in conjunction with sufficient examples and details which are effective, relevant, and interesting. Like Siew Mei and Allison (2005), all the highly rated paragraphs had a restatement of the writer's position in the concluding of their paragraphs, and most importantly, they varied their word choice. This partially indicated the use of strong voice in their writing.

On the contrary, those who were assigned low ratings in the first dimension failed to restate or echo their position like they did at the beginning of the paragraph. To put it another way, the low-rated paragraphs did not have a restatement of the writer's position statement. For example, at the outset of the paragraph, this student writer began with, "*From my point of view, public transportation is better than private one. The first reason is that…*" However, at the closure of the paragraph, it seemed that this student had failed to reiterate their position and ended with, "*Because of these reasons, I am in favor of using public transportation.*" If this student had reiterated and elaborated more about the previous reasons why he or she preferred to use public transportation, at the closure, this paragraph would have been complete and have shown a stronger voice of the writer. This is in line with what Siew Mei and Allison (2005) emphasized, in that lack of reiterated closure would weaken the writer's stance and seems incomplete in a sense of writing an expository text.

Another interesting finding is that some student writers attempted to provide strong and sufficient evidence in the body – which was full of reiteration, but unfortunately irrelevant to the central idea and the concluding statement. This kind of paragraph certainly received low scores because the writers did not write a clear thesis statement at the beginning. In the first dimension, it is necessary that the writer should express his or her own thesis statement, which is well-developed with sufficient evidence. In addition, s/he may choose to write about something that is interesting,

original, or unique. Normally, ideational meanings are meanings regarding how we represent experience in language (Eggins, 2004).

From the results of voice features in Dimension 1, it can be seen that some Thai EFL student writers could clearly express their central ideas in conjunction with presently sufficient, strong evidence. It can be implied that they also have reiteration in writing, which is another important salient contribution to the notion of voice. However, the situation was totally different when looking at the occurrences of the second voice element – directives. Evidently, Thai EFL student writers rarely employ directives. This case, from my point of view, may derive from two possible underlining assumptions.

The first assumption may be one which results from writing instruction. These students may not know how to incorporate directives into their writing if they are not explicitly taught how to in their writing classes. They may be hesitant to put those directives in their writing. The second assumption may be related to their culture – consideration and the respect for the superior, e.g. parents, teachers, the elderly, and bosses (Cooper, 2008). As we know, students have their teachers as the target audience. Therefore, it might be impolite to use imperatives or employ directives to direct their teachers to read their writing or ask them to focus on a specific point, unless students are taught or trained to use this voice feature. This is similar to the ideas of Kauferet et al. (2004), who mention that apart from genre and the rhetorical situation, 'social and psychological factors' have also had a great impact on the writer's choice of language usage.

5.2.1.2 Voice in Dimension 2

Dimension 2 relates to the manner of idea presentation. Writers employ voice features, namely *hedges, boosters,* and *attitude markers*, as a way to present their written texts. These writer-oriented features help writers show their stance and the way that they decide to present the written text. Hyland (2007) asserts that the use of hedges and boosters is another way to reveal the writer's attitude towards written propositional content and to the readers. Writers use hedges and boosters to weaken or strengthen statements in writing.

Hedging devices, like *possible, might,* and *perhaps*, show clear exemplification of the author's commitment, uncertainty, and indications that the

details are given as opinion instead of certified credible fact (Hyland, 2007). Hedges allow writers to distance themselves from the claims, and the use of these hedging devices indicate some level of uncertainty about these claims to the readers.

Student writers in Group 1, who were explicitly aware of voice, could establish and negotiate their positions more effectively for an audience than those in Group 1, who might not have been aware of an audience. The results in this study confirm Zhao's (2010) work in that high-rated voice strength can be influenced by certain voice features, such as a large number of boosters or increased use of attitude markers. In addition, Zhao (2010) suggests that the usage of *boosters* is the strongest and most positive indication of the quality of compositions.

In academic writing, both writers and readers focus on their feelings toward pieces of information rather than their attitudes or feelings toward one another, like that in conversation (Biber et al., 2002). As a result, a writer expressing a stance on an assessment of the information is expected in academic prose. In my point of view, boosters, hedges, and attitude markers are important devices which help writers express their voice in a written text. Particularly important is the employment of boosters which show the writers' certainty and attitude markers conveying how the writer perceives the world through their experience, attitudes, values, assumptions, beliefs, etc. (Johnstone, 2008). The more the writers express their attitudes, the more those written pieces become compelling.

5.2.1.3 Voice in Dimension 3

Under the dimension of writer and reader presence, two voice features, i.e. *authorial self-mention* and *reader reference* belong to this voice dimension. In opinion paragraphs, student writers in both groups used employed the first and second person pronouns. Being able to use an equal mixture of both the first-person pronoun *I,* to present the writer, and the second-person pronoun *you,* to involve the readers in the written product in an appropriate way really helped emphasize the third voice dimension: the writer-reader presence.

Surprisingly, the findings of this study revealed that Thai EFL student writers infrequently utilized the second person pronoun *you.* This is probably linked to the power relationship between the writers – in this case the student writers – and the targeted reader, who is the lecturer of the class. Student writers project

themselves as junior to their teachers and show respect – or deference – through their written texts as well. The results indicate that students in both groups had a much higher percentage of occurrences of reader reference than those of authorial self-mention.

5.2.1.4 Other emerging voice features

Apart from the voice features in the first three dimensions that were assessed by the modified voice rubric, there are other interesting voice features which have emerged in the analysis of this study. Some student writers attempted to employ a variety of voice features in order to increase interest in the paragraphs and to create a relationship between the writer and the reader. Also, I found that these emerging voice features were able to catch my interest – an example of having effects on the reader (see Section 4.2.4).

The first emerging voice feature is the employment of rhetorical or audience-directed questions to engage the readers in their written texts. This strategy was able to add voice to writing. In addition, many student writers from Group 1 also used quotation marks, which can be a great hook at the beginning of paragraphs. In some cases, students used the technique of repetition to put the emphasis on that word or sentence. Moreover, some student writers use literary devices, e.g. figurative language and repetition in their writing. These literary devices can strengthen voice in writing (Spence, 2014).

5.2.2 Voice in Narrative Writing

Narrative prose can be either real, appealing and amply reflective, or limited and dull (DiPardo, 1989). As previously stated in Chapter 2, some narrative stories can be completed by having a beginning, a middle, and an end (Labov, 1972). However, Labov suggests that narratives can be fully developed by using the following structure: (1) *abstract,* (2) *orientation,* (3) *complicating action,* (4) *evaluation,* (5) *result or resolution,* and (6) *coda.*

However, the *evaluation* is deemed the most salient feature of the narrative because here, the narrator will clarify the point of the story, reveal his/ her attitude toward the narrated story, and show the intention of how s/he wants the narrative to be understood (Labov, 1972; Peterson, & McCabe, 1983). The evaluation will show why the narrative is worth being told by the narrator. More importantly,

Peterson and McCabe (1983) mention that effectively narrating a story depends on how the narrator uses evaluation. The point of view of the author or the narrator is key to the story.

Thus, without evaluation, the narrated story would turn out to be a common summary. Others want to know what the author thinks about the story they are telling. Therefore, any written narratives which lack the evaluation part are apparently uninteresting. For example, based on sample writings of Group 2, it seemed that students practiced narrating what they had seen (the Pink Panther movie). However, they tended to solely summarize what happened in the story and did not include their attitudes or feelings – the evaluation – toward the story they narrated. This subsequently caused the story to appear uninteresting. To conclude, expressing attitudes toward the stories – using evaluative language – is key to making narratives much more interesting.

Furthermore, findings from other empirical studies on exploring voice in narrative writing disclosed that using other literary devices, such as figurative language or metaphors, helps add voice strength in that written piece. However, results in this dissertation study showed that few student writers used figurative language or metaphors in their written narrative stories. In my point of view, even though it is suggested that student writers should use more figurative language and metaphors to express a stronger voice in their narrative stories, it does not mean that they should focus more on literary devices than they focus on the actual narrated stories.

5.2.3 Interest and Interaction with Readers

Based on the modified rubric employed in this study, it is clearly shown that the words *unique, interesting*, *sophisticated*, and *engaging to the reader* are included in the description of the highest level of voice criteria. That is, uniqueness, interestingness, sophistication, and interaction between the writer and the reader are germane to the attributes of written voice. As mentioned in Chapter 2, authors frequently write for others – the target audience, and the effect on the audience is the salient feature of voice in writing (Elbow, 2000; Intaraprawat & Steffensen, 1995; Matsuda & Tardy, 2007). Apart from reader awareness when composing, writers should

develop the main point in their opinion paragraphs with relevant and sufficient evidence which is unique, interesting, and sophisticated. This will help them write with voice.

It is axiomatic that the English language proficiency of student writers can affect the employment of voice features in English writing, especially proficiency in English syntax. The empirical results from Zhao's (2010) work confirm the point that intermediate-level L2 writing students used voice in a much less sophisticated manner when writing than advanced-level authors of academic work.

5.2.4 Summary

Evidently, EFL student writers in this study wrote with voice. In this present study, how much the students wrote paragraphs with voice was validated by the students' course journals, in which all in Group 1 always wrote after every session, whereas those in Group 2 summarized what they had learned in their class summary. The intense amount of voice expressed in paragraphs could be explained by some factors. That said, the phenomenon perhaps came from within individual students themselves, and may partly be due to teaching techniques and methods in instruction, and teachers' characters. Without receiving appropriate guidance on how to write with voice, writing with voice may be impossible for EFL students who only study English in formal education and have limited exposure to the English language outside the classroom.

It is true that written voice can be achieved individually among L1 writers and some proficient L2 writers. However, how the notion of voice, which is derived from L1 English writing, could be instilled in L2 student writers is still uncertain. Undoubtedly, writing teachers play a major role in developing students' writing skill in this sense. This can be confirmed from the results of the student reflections, which was another data source.

Results from reflections in Group 1 disclosed some insights about what students had been able to learn from their writing class and what the writing teacher had taught them. Based on student reflections, the teacher initially taught the notion of voice to her students by introducing the concept of rhetorical situation, by realizing text, writer, and reader, and introducing three types of appeals: logical, emotional, and personal appeals, which students could apply when writing. In addition, the teacher

emphasized that they need to be aware of the audience. Due to this, students always kept their readers in mind when writing and learned to interact with them. She also equipped them with useful tips on how to strengthen voice in writing, such as using a hook at the beginning of the paragraph and writing the local language in italics.

Another way that I found her teaching method helpful was when the instructor in this group showed examples of well-written stories and not-so-well written stories to students. This way had a relatively great impact on individual students' writing improvement. Well-written stories were lively and interesting due to the way the authors wrote and due to the careful word choices they made. Showing such good examples was able to help cultivate the notion of voice among students. Through examples, students could learn what techniques they could apply, what style they might follow, or what writing matters they should avoid. Showing examples, in my opinion, is another effective way of teaching students to write in L2. This resembles the way we learn vocabulary; L2 learners need input from good reading. In writing, students also want to see examples of what is good and examples they can follow as well.

Apart from writing skills and knowledge, the teacher in Group 1 also tried to encourage students to be active thinkers. In fact, the teacher drew students' attention by asking them to choose whether they wanted to be a follower, a knower, or a combination of a knower and an asker – an initiator. Doing this helped boost students' confidence and creativity in writing. More importantly, apart from the teaching techniques and methods, the teachers' characters also contribute to writing with voice.

Some students disclosed that they were happy and felt comfortable that their writing teacher did not focus on grammar at first, but had them revise accuracy and grammar later. Doing it this way allowed students to gain more confidence in writing, which meant they dared to take more risks in language employment as well as their creativity. As previously mentioned in Chapter 2, it has also been suggested that teachers should focus mainly on global issues (such as organization) in early drafts and wait until later drafts to give feedback on local issues (such as grammar and mechanics). Otherwise, students may think that local issues are more important than global issues (Montgomery & Baker, 2007). It can be concluded that, as previously mentioned, teachers' characters and teaching techniques and methods strongly influence individual

student writers' development in writing skills and writing with voice. It is axiomatic that teachers exert a strong influence on students and their academic performance.

In my opinion, before composing a piece of writing, writers need to take a particular rhetorical situation, i.e. the topic, the purpose, the intended audience, a stance, a genre, and a medium (Bullock & Weinberg, 2009; Troyka, & Hesse, 2009) and come to an understanding of it. Understanding what kind of particular rhetorical situation the writer is going to be involved with helps the writer determine their voice in that piece of writing.

For example, in this dissertation study, when student writers were considering the rhetorical situation that they had to think about when they were going to compose an opinion paragraph, students had to think about what topic they were interested in composing a piece of writing on or what topic they had been assigned to write. Next, students had to think about what genre they were going to compose. Certainly, they were composing opinion or narrative paragraphs which required them to look at the necessary characteristics of that prose. Basically, a paragraph entails the topic sentence, supporting point, and the conclusion. Regarding the mode, they needed to type or write accordingly to complete the assignment, and find out what fonts they were allowed to use and were appropriate in that assignment. After that, they needed to have a purpose and intended audience in mind. At this point, they needed to think about how they would show their stance on the topic, what style they could use, and how they would interact with the reader in order to achieve this writing purpose. We can see that all the elements in the rhetorical situation contribute to the determination of voice – how the writer decides to control their written voice in each piece of writing. To sum up, the understanding of the rhetorical situation in each piece of writing is important to the extent that the writers will express their voice towards that topic in their writing.

5.4 Implications for Pedagogical Practices

This study may serve as a starting point for conducting research on written voice in the EFL context. Results from this study have yielded some important implications for L2 writing instruction and assessment. This section discusses these implications in detail.

Although most previous studies on voice in written discourse have revealed that L2 student writers can write with voice, they failed to elucidate how voice could be captured and expressed through those written texts, and what voice features could indicate voice strength. Thus, the notion of voice seems very challenging for many EFL writing teachers and student writers.

5.4.1 The Effectiveness of Voice-Scoring Rubrics

In this present study, Zhao's (2012) modified three-dimensional analytical voice rubric was adopted. I found that this modified voice rubric provided very clear descriptors of each voice feature in individual voice dimension. Indeed, these detailed descriptors helped raters have a better understanding of the notion of voice and the rating task. In addition, this adopted analytic voice rubric has enlightened me of the ways that voice can be captured in written discourse and helped make the intangible notion of voice more accessible.

It is suggested that the criteria employed should be adjusted according to the nature of written text types. Therefore, when we expect student writers to write with voice, we have to put those expectations in our grading criteria. Analytic scales determine the criteria by which written products will be judged as well as explicating teachers' expectations for that writing. They are beneficial for giving feedback on specific areas of writing to student writers (Neff-Lippman, 2012; Grabe & Kaplan, 1996). For this reason, analytic scales are useful for classroom purposes in both writing instruction and informational feedback given to student writers (Weigle, 2013). Descriptors in analytic rubrics help students become clearly aware of what facets of writing they need to improve. Teachers may use the descriptors in the rubrics to give meaningful responses and use them as the language to talk about the writing—about what is working as well as what needs improvement. These responses go beyond what appears in a grading rubric. As such, it is another way to help students improve their writing skills. Still, there are some calls for more rubrics on written voice assessment.

5.4.2 The Teaching of the Notion of Voice in Writing Classrooms

So far, it is imperative that the notion of voice should be taught. Voice is a fundamental property of good writing. As we know, the issue of voice has received

considerable critical attention from scholars and researchers in the fields of discourse, literature, composition studies, L2 writing, and language assessment (Hyland, 2008; Zhao, 2016). In addition, with regard to successfully learning a second language, it is necessary for ESL student writers to learn to practice writing for readers have different expectations with regard to language, rhetoric and culture (Reid, 2006). The notion of voice will be beneficial to EFL student writers in terms of more sensitivity to the genre of that text type, reader awareness, reader engagement, and written language manipulation.

Evidently, results from this present study revealed that students who were explicitly aware of voice could produce more interesting and engaging work than those who might not have been aware of it. They could produce reader-based paragraphs which had interaction between the writer and the reader. Apart from attempting to use interesting and sophisticated word choice, student writers in Group 1 learned to employ a variety of voice features in their writing, such as the use of hedging devices, boosters, attitude markers, first and second person pronouns, rhetorical questions, etc. An awareness of audience is not the only key to creating successful texts, but the writer needs to carefully think about the subject s/he is going to write about and to appropriately use other voice features to engage the readers in writing. This can be accomplished through the notion of voice.

Writing is both process and product (Halliday & Hasan, 1989; Schatzberg-Smith, 1987). In regard to the teaching of voice construction, it is advised that writing teachers should not put emphasis only on the frequency of the employment of those voice-related features in writing pieces, but should rather explain how those features could be employed effectively so that students can achieve a strong and effective voice in a particular rhetorical situation, i.e. a purpose, audience, stance, genre, or medium (Reid, 2006; Zhao, 2010).

Similar to what Reed (2009) mentions, another obstacle that may hinder non-native English learners from developing voice in English writing is not having the full set of linguistic devices that is required for complete individual expression in English. Dean (2016) also advises that writers have to be aware of such tools and know how to utilize them to good effect. It is suggested that writing teachers can teach their L2 student writers to use different voicing strategies appropriately in

accordance with their proficiency levels. Teachers may gradually move from the least complex and most straightforward methods of projecting voice, like using first person pronouns, to ways which involve more complexity and sophistication, like incorporating personal asides (Zhao, 2010). Alternatively, writing teachers can teach the notion of voice to their students by helping them become fully aware of the repertoire of voices and learn to have control over stylistic techniques, and boosting their confidence to take the opportunity to try varying word choices, sentence formations, and imagined audiences (Woodworth, 1994). Certainly, it takes time and writers need to practice, but it infers that writing teachers should explicitly teach students how to use those voice features in order to help them express voice appropriately through their writing. By practicing to use their writing tools, student writers can gradually improve their own expertise with language.

Therefore, the notion of voice deserves more studies and should be taught to EFL student writers. Writing teachers should help their students develop a strong and proper voice in relation to their audiences. In this sense, it will be more helpful to equip EFL student writers with effective written-voice strategies so that they can overcome such challenges when they have to compose written texts on their own. Research on how to help L2 writers write with voice is still missing in this body of literature (Zhao, 2010). Thus, studies on how to integrate voice in writing instruction, as well as how to construct a written voice rubric which can help guide instruction that encourages students' creativity and voice in writing are much needed.

5.4.3 Ideas regarding Grammar Correction

It is a good idea for writing teachers to allow students to write and explore ideas without paying much attention to grammar or error correction at the initial stage of teaching. Generally, content is the primary consideration when we look at voice (Spencer, 2014). As a result, writing teachers should first focus more on content than error correction. Otherwise, if teachers put too much emphasis on error correction, students may not dare to take risks in using the language to produce their written pieces, and that can probably hinder students' creativity.

Although there have been a number of drives to improve correction in EFL student writing, Trustcott (1996) strongly refutes the idea of grammar correction,

which seems to be deeply entrenched in many writing classrooms. He claims that grammar correction is not helpful for improving writing skills. Thus, writing teachers should shift the focus from grammar to other writing skills such as the notion of voice, and should put emphasis on the content first and save grammar or correctness for later in the revision process. In doing so, students will be able to write with more confidence, creativity, and a stronger voice.

5.4.4 More Open for Creativity

It is axiomatic that teachers exert a strong influence on students and their academic performance. Like many scholars, teachers are often criticized in the role of the students' real audience for writing assignments because they are likely to be overly strict regarding correctness of grammar and mechanics, and disinterested in the fundamental ideas of the written text or essay development, and definitely will not be keen to engage in a form of discourse with the writer (Intaraprawat & Steffensen, 1995).

However, in this study, this is not true for EFL student writers of Group 1, according to their revelations about their writing teacher in journal entries. Some students disclosed that they were happy and felt comfortable that their writing teacher did not focus on grammar at first but had them revise accuracy and grammar later. In doing so, students gained more confidence in writing and tended to take more risks in language employment as well as with creativity. It can be concluded that, as previously mentioned, teachers' characters, and teaching techniques and methods strongly influence individual student writers' development in writing skills and writing with voice. Writing teachers should be more open to students' creativity in writing.

5.5 Limitations and Recommendations for Further Studies

The current study primarily intends to shed light on the notion of voice, which seems too slippery to be captured in any simple definition, more inclusive than the concept of either tone or stance, and elusive for many researchers and writing teachers. Voice is considered a good attribute in English writing; however, it seems to be an unfamiliar concept for many L2 writing teachers and student writers. Now that research has been conducted on this issue, this study provides some useful insights into the notion of voice in paragraph writing – opinion and narrative paragraphs. However,

this is one of the very first attempts to explore and measure written voice in the EFL context, so there are still some limitations on conducting such research, as follows:

Due to the small number of writing samples analyzed in this current study, the results cannot be generalized. Thus, in order to achieve generalization, more writing samples should be collected. In fact, this current study only allowed us to scrutinize written voice in the final products of students' writing samples. This limited chances to see evidence from the students' writing process, in which some alterations for strengthening voice could be shown. Therefore, further research may examine voice through the writing process to see how voice could be improved during each stage of it.

Furthermore, in order to yield more insightful understanding of the notion of voice among EFL student writers, data should be collected from multiple sources of data – data triangulation. For example, data from interviews with student writers or students may be convergent and support each other as a data source. This can improve reliability and confidence in study conclusions.

In fact, voice is embedded in all writing. In other words, voice can be expressed in various ways, i.e. through ideas, linguistic features, word level, or metadiscourse devices (Bowden, 2012). However, this study followed the work of Zhao's (2012) in measuring written-voice strength through adjectives, adverbs, quantifiers, and verbs, but excluded an examination on nouns. Such a limitation on voice-related noun investigation may result in further research.

5.5.1 The Modified Analytic Voice Rubric

Zhao's (2010) three-dimensional analytical voice rubric, which was adopted in this present study, was a reliable instrument because it had been validated and had built upon relevant theories and empirical-evidence studies. In fact, this adopted analytic voice rubric has enlightened us of the ways that voice can be captured in written discourse and helped make the intangible notion of voice more accessible. However, I found that there are still some more important voice features that should be included in the voice rubric.

For example, the dimension of textual presentation should be separate from Dimension 2: *Manner of idea presentation*. That is because the descriptors should

also address the engaging hook at the beginning and the satisfying concluding sentence at the end in order to increase the interestingness of the paragraph. In addition, other features such as variety of syntax and sentence length, which are attributes that can add voice, should be included in the rubric descriptors. Otherwise, both writing teachers and students may not pay attention to certain aspects of the writing process which are not assessed. Some students may probably be aware of a variety of sentence types and length but may not try to consider them in practice because they know that they will not earn any extra score for such an attempt. Hence, relevant important voice features must be included in the descriptors of the rubric, which will beneficial for both assessment and instructional purposes.

5.5.2 Call for More Voice-Scoring Rubrics

The criteria employed should be adjusted according to the nature of written text types. Most writing teachers expect their student writers to write better or more effectively; however, we may sometimes fail to put those expectations into words in our grading criteria (Flateby, 2010). Therefore, when we expect student writers to write with voice, we have to put those expectations in our grading criteria. It is prevalent for EFL/ ESL teachers, or even native English-speaking teachers, to adopt the ESL Profile or other criteria when grading, which encompass 1. content, 2. organization, 3. vocabulary, 4. language use, and 5. mechanics. Analytic rating scales are beneficial for giving feedback on specific areas of writing to student writers (Neff-Lippman, 2012; Grabe & Kaplan, 1996). Analytic scales determine the criteria by which written products will be judged as well as explicating teachers' expectations for that writing. For this reason, analytic scales are useful for classroom purposes in both writing instruction and informational feedback given to student writers (Weigle, 2013a). Descriptors in analytic rubrics help students become clearly aware of what facets of writing they need to improve. Teachers may use the descriptors in the rubrics to give meaningful responses and use them as the language to talk about the writing—about what is working as well as what needs improvement. These responses go beyond what appears in a grading rubric. As such, it is another way to help students improve their writing skills. Still, there are some calls for more rubrics on written voice assessment.

5.5.3 Call for Research on Voice

So far, we may well be aware that voice is not a unitary construct that can be adopted across text types, genres, or disciplines. Thus, in line with the study of O'Hallaron and Schleppegrell (2016), it is absolutely imperative that further research is conducted on creating or developing rubrics for assessing voice appropriate to text type, genre, or discipline so as to benefit writing instruction and help students develop to write with voice in different ways.

For future research, researchers may investigate ways in which voice can be appropriately expressed in paragraph writing, and how an analytic voice rubric can be constructed. Furthermore, it might be a good idea for future research to develop and validate an analytic voice rubric that can be introduced to teachers with writing classes. It is expected that writing instruction with voice integration, aligned with the 21st century skill set, will contribute to facilitating students' learning, supporting students' futures, and preparing them for their future work. In addition, writing teachers will be exposed to the teaching of voice, and in particular some alternative methods to encourage creativity and a sense of authorship among EFL students.

Alternatively, textbooks are also important resources for L2 student writers learning to write. As a result, it might be useful to explore the notion of voice in writing textbooks, which could be either in-house or commercial textbooks employed in writing classes.

5.5.4 Summary

With the understanding that the concept of voice is in the main, a social construct rather than individual, authors must have awareness of their communities, and disciplines, and adapt their persuasive writing techniques accordingly in order to accomplish their writing goals and be able to write in an effective manner (Hyland, 2008). It is important to bear in mind that we have to recognize the features which are commonly seen in specific writing disciplines and text types. On this account, writing teachers should help student writers control valued writing techniques in a better way. They may teach students persuasive techniques to make them well equipped for various types of writing.

Although this present dissertation study is a small-scale piece of research, the researcher intends to make this slippery notion of voice accessible as it may not be reducible to a simple, concrete and easy-to-follow definition for many scholars, researchers, and teachers. In fact, there were many challenges to overcome while carrying out the research, the researcher nonetheless hopes that this small piece of the jigsaw can lead to great benefits for EFL writing instruction, writing assessment, and particularly, our EFL student writers.

As we know, voice is of paramount importance in terms of the salient features of good writing (Elbow, 2000; Matsuda & Tardy, 2007), the attributes of textual quality (Humphrey et al., 2014) and advanced academic literacy (Matsuda & Tardy, 2007; Matsuda & Jeffery, 2012). In addition, the notion of voice also helps writers to create more reader-oriented prose which actively engages the audience in the written texts and makes writing more interesting and compelling. Thus, the notion of voice should be incorporated into writing instruction and taught to EFL student writers. It can be another potential alternative that writing instructors should pay attention to in order to encourage creativity and a sense of authorship among EFL students. In addition, the awareness of voice that will be raised more explicitly in our writing classes is aligned with the 21st century skillset, which will contribute to facilitating students' learning, supporting students' futures, and preparing them for their future work. To conclude, it is still valuable to teach the concept of voice in writing classes, in terms of both writing instruction and assessment, and the notion of voice deserves more studies and integration into EFL writing instruction.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
MODIFIED ANALYTIC RUBRIC

Scoring Criteria for the Assessment of Voice Strength in Students' Paragraphs

Points / Criterion	4-5	2-3	0-1
Dimension 1: Presence and clarity of ideas in the content D1 = _____ pts. • A clear central point is articulated ___ times in the paragraph. • *Directives* are used _____ times in the paragraph.	• The reader feels a clear presence of a central idea (point of view) throughout the text. • The writing shows a strong commitment to the topic through full development of the central idea (point of view) with adequate use of effective examples and details. • The reader feels that he or she is being invited to participate in the discussion of the topic and the construction of an argument through the author's use of directives phrases when presenting ideas. • The idea (point of view) and the use of examples and details in the writing are unique, interesting, and engaging, indicating sophisticated thinking behind the writing.	• The reader feels that there is a central idea (point of view) in the text, but it is not fully developed. • The writing shows some commitment to the topic with proper use of some supporting examples and details. But the examples are not always appropriate or effective. • The reader occasionally feels that he or she is being invited to participate in the discussion of the topic; but more often, the reader feels a lack of interaction with the writer. • The idea (point of view) and the use of examples and details in the writing are safe and general, lacking uniqueness, sophistication, or thoughtfulness.	• The reader cannot find a consistent central idea (point of view) in the text. • The writing does not show any commitment to the topic; rather, it is only an attempt (or a failed attempt) to answer a question. No examples or details are used to develop the topic. • The reader feels that the writer is not concerned with the reader, and the writing is a confusing monologue instead of a clear dialogue between the writer and the reader. • The writing is generic and lifeless.
Dimension 2: Manner of idea presentation D2 = _____ pts. • *Hedges* are used _____ times in the paragraph. • *Boosters* are used _____ times in the paragraph. • *Attitude markers* are used ___ times in the paragraph.	• The writer presents ideas and claims with language that shows authority and confidence. • The reader feels that the writer has a clear stance on and a strong attitude toward the topic under discussion. • The tone of the writing shows personality, adds life to the writing, and is engaging and appropriate for the intended reader. • Word choice, and language use by extension, is varied, often interesting, sophisticated, and eye-catching to the reader.	• The writer presents ideas and claims somewhat mildly with frequent use of unnecessary hedges; only occasionally does the writing show some degree of authority and confidence. • The writer seems to have a stance on the topic under discussion, but no strong attitude is revealed in the writing. • The tone of the writing is appropriate for the intended reader and the purpose of the writing, but lacks personality and liveliness. • Occasional interesting word choice and language use may catch the reader's attention, but the effect is inconsistent.	• The writer presents ideas and claims very mildly, showing a lack of authority and confidence in what he/she is writing. • The writer seems indifferent and does not have a clear stance on or attitude toward the topic under discussion. • The writer writes in a monotone that does not engage the reader at all; oftentimes the reader find him- or herself drifting off while reading the text. • Word choice or language use is flat, general, and dull, and thus unable to catch the reader's attention.
Dimension 3: Writer and reader presence D3 = _____ pts. • 1st person pronouns are used _____ times in the paragraph. • Reader pronouns are used _____ times in the paragraph.	• The writer reveals him- or herself in the writing either directly or indirectly, giving the reader a clear sense of who the writer is as a unique individual. • The reader feels that the writer is aware of and able to engage the reader effectively in a direct or subtle way. • The sharing of personal backgrounds and experiences, if any, is effective, genuine, and engaging to the reader.	• The writer reveals him- or herself in the writing to some extent, leaving the reader with some sense of who he/she is. • The reader feels that the writer is aware of and trying to engage the reader in a way, but with limited success. • The sharing of personal backgrounds and experiences, if any, is genuine but not so engaging or effective to the reader.	• The reader has little or no sense of who the writer is as a unique individual instead of a generic, faceless person. • The reader feels that the writer is not concerned with the reader or completely fails to engage the reader in any way. • The sharing of personal backgrounds and experiences, if any, is generic, ineffective, and even inappropriate, making the reader feel annoyed.

Adapted from: Zhao, C. G. (2012). Measuring authorial voice strength in L2 argumentative writing: The development and validation of an analytic rubric. *Language Testing*, *30*(2), 201-230.

APPENDIX B
THE LIST OF HEDGES, BOOSTERS, AND ATTITUDE
MARKERS (VOICE FEATURES IN DIMENSION 2)

Hedges	Boosters	Attitude Markers
Quantity a few a little a majority (of) a minority a number of few little many much some several	**Quantity** all each every no none not any	
Modal Verbs can, could (not) may, might (not) ought to should (not) would (not)	**Modal Verbs** must (not) will shall have to	
Frequency usual (ly) normal (ly) general (ly) often frequent (ly) sometimes occasional (ly) rare (ly) seldom hardly ever scarcely ever	**Frequency** always never	**Frequency**
Verbs appear argue assume believe claim doubt estimate feel	**Verbs** demonstrate establish find know prove realize show	**Verbs** agree appreciate disagree expect like prefer surprise understand

Hedges	Boosters	Attitude Markers
forecast guess imagine indicate seem speculate suggest suspect suppose tend to think		want
Adjectives apparent doubtful improbable likely plausible possible probable skeptical relative typical uncertain unclear unlikely	**Adjectives** absolute aware certain clear complete deep definite doubtless extreme evident (very) full great high indisputable obvious strong sure (very) thorough total true undeniable undoubted	**Adjectives** acceptable afraid amazed amazing amazing annoyed ashamed appropriate astonished astonishing bad curious delightful desirable disgusted dramatic embarrassed essential extraordinary fascinating fond fortunate glad, good happy, hopeful important inappropriate interesting irritated nice pleased preferable

Hedges	Boosters	Attitude Markers
		remarkable
		relieved
		sad
		scared
		shocked
		shocking
		sorry
		striking
		surprised
		surprising
		puzzled
		tragic
		unbelievable
		understandable
		unexpected
		upset
		worried
		worthwhile
		wise
Adverbs	**Adverbs**	**Adverbs**
a bit	actually	admittedly
a little	absolutely	amusingly
about	all	appropriately
almost	a lot	astonishingly
approximately	certainly	cleverly
apparently	clearly	conveniently
around	completely	correctly
basically	conclusively	curiously
broadly	decidedly	desirably
comparatively	deeply	disappointed
enough	definitely	disappointing
essentially	doubtless	disappointingly
fairly	enormously	disturbingly
far from	entirely	dramatically
frequently	extremely	essentially
generally	greatly	even x
hardly	highly	expectedly
just	hugely	fortunately
kind of	indeed,	funnily
largely	indisputably	hopefully
less	inevitably	importantly
maybe	in fact	ironically
mainly	forever	justifiably
merely	for sure	inappropriately
mostly	fully	interestingly

Hedges	Boosters	Attitude Markers
nearly	more	luckily
only	much	rightly
ordinarily	never	preferable
partially	obviously	preferably
partly	of course	remarkably
plausibly	really	sadly
possibly	seriously	sensibly
perhaps	sharply	significantly
practically	strongly	shocking
presumably	so …	shockingly
pretty	such a …	strikingly
probably	surely	surprisingly
possibly	thoroughly	predictably
probably	too ….	unbelievable
quite	totally	unbelievably
rarely	truly	understandable
rather	undeniably	understandably
relatively	undisputedly	unfortunately
roughly	undoubtedly	unjustifiably
simply	utterly	wisely
slightly	vastly	even worse
sometimes	well	
somewhat	very	
sort of		
sometimes		
supposedly		
relatively		
technically		
tentatively		
typically		
uncertainly		
usually		
virtually		
Others	**Others**	**Others**
as a rule	beyond doubt	!
certain amount	no doubt	
certain extent	no way	
certain level	without doubt	
from my perspective		
from our perspective		
from this perspective		
in general		
in many/ some respects		
in most cases		
in most instances		

Hedges	Boosters	Attitude Markers
in my opinion in my view in some case in this view in our opinion in our view more or less on the whole on the whole to a certain extent to my knowledge to some extent		

Adapted from Aull & Lancaster (2014); Halliday & Matthiessen, (2014); Hamp-Lyons & Heasley (2006); Hinkel (2005), Hübler (1983), and Hyland (2005)
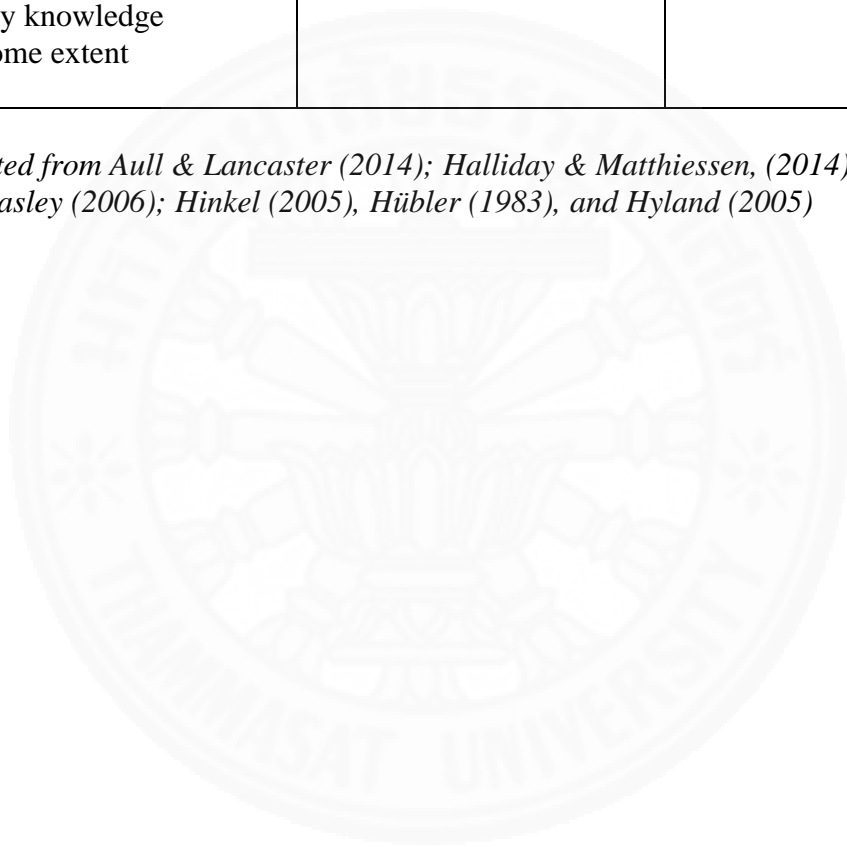
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