



**A STUDY OF ENGLISH COMMUNICATION  
PROBLEMS OF THAI EMPLOYEES IN A  
MULTINATIONAL COMPANY**

**BY**

**MISS WARANYA SANJIT**

**AN INDEPENDENT STUDY PAPER SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL  
FULFILLMENT OF  
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH FOR CAREERS  
LANGUAGE INSTITUTE  
THAMMASAT UNIVERSITY  
ACADEMIC YEAR 2015  
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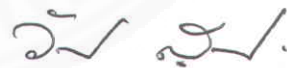
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A STUDY OF ENGLISH COMMUNICATION PROBLEMS OF THAI  
EMPLOYEES IN A MULTINATIONAL COMPANY

was approved as partial fulfillment of the requirements for  
the degree of Master of Arts in English for Careers

on August 14, 2016

Chairman



(Assistant Professor Watjana Suriyatham, Ed.D.)

Member and Advisor



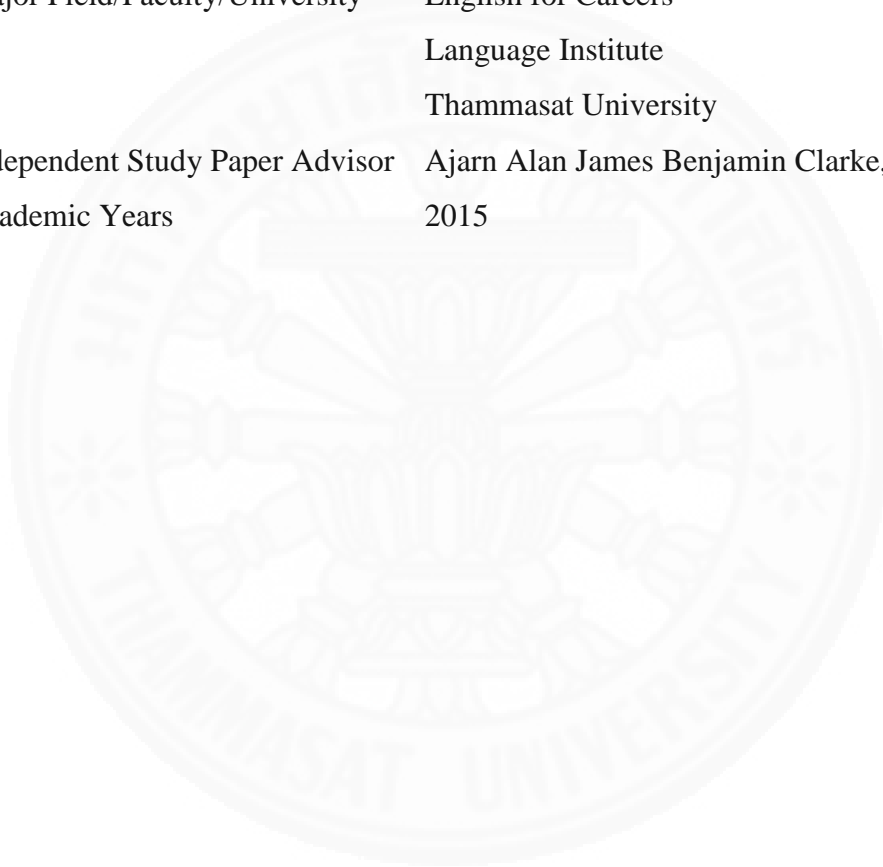
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## ABSTRACT

This study aimed to investigate English communication problems of Thai employees in a multinational company. A total of 30 Thai employees, working full-time at ABB Limited, Saraburi branch, completed a research questionnaire designed to elicit information about problems in English and also a standardized test of English competency, with three components: listening, reading, and vocabulary.

The findings revealed that listening and vocabulary were the most problematic areas for the participants. Regarding their actual competency level, the Thai employees were weakest on vocabulary skills, while both listening and reading skills were at the average level. The results also indicated a strong relationship between self-rated problems in English and competency on the English test, but only for the listening component. Self-reported reading and vocabulary skills did not correlate significantly with the corresponding test score. Some possible reasons for not obtaining this relationship are discussed further, with recommendations that the sample size should be increased as well as the number of items in the English test. Speaking and writing components were also recommended to provide a more rounded and comprehensive assessment of multinational employees communication skills in English.

**Keywords:** English language competency, English problems, Thai employees, multinational company

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Ms Waranya Sanjit

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the study

In today's Thailand there are many multinational companies around the country, especially in the central region which has a high concentration of foreigners. The increasing number of multinational companies means that foreign investors need to deal with local people (i.e., Thais) when managing and producing their range of products and services. Harrison, Dalkiran, and Elsey (2000) claim that multinational companies want to extend to more markets by having machines, labor, local know-how, and facilities in that particular country. According to Root (1990), a multinational company will be under control from a central headquarters for business decisions. One important point when multinational companies locate to other countries is that they have to focus on different cultures because this can provide convenience in doing business and help in understanding and adjusting to the new business environment that international trade has as a role in the business. In this context, competency in the English language is necessary to ease communication between people who want to conduct business because without appropriate and accurate communication, the business is less likely to thrive in an international context.

Communication has always been important for humankind since prehistoric times. Humans generally do not live alone, so they tend to communicate together to accomplish tasks. In the past, humankind connected with each other through symbols, paintings, and ideograms. Afterwards, human communication progressed to the writing system and later came a technology breakthrough which resulted in more effective communication through radio, telephone, and the internet. Humankind gradually became globally connected with the ability to send messages and information globally, and with the ability to share art and culture which helped accelerate global commerce. According to Hamilton and Parker (1997), communication is a transfer of messages, ideas, and emotions between people to clearly understand and receive accurate information. The purpose of the present study was to obtain a rigorous review of current English competency skill levels among employees in a Thai multinational company in

addition to identifying problems in English communication, with the view to comparing between them. The findings will be submitted to the higher management for review and help identify and concentrate improvements in specific areas of listening, reading and vocabulary in the English language. The findings of this study should help to further increase the satisfaction level in customers, supplier and employees alike when doing business internationally for this particular company and, potentially, for other multinational companies in Thailand.

## **1.2 Research Questions**

This study aims to answer the following questions:

- 1.2.1 What are the English communication problems of Thai employees in ABB limited?
- 1.2.2 What is the English competency level of Thai employees in ABB limited?
- 1.2.3 What is relationship between the employees' opinions and their actual ability in English?

## **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

This study has the following objectives:

- 1.3.1 To investigate the problems of ABB employees in English communication.
- 1.3.2 To determine the English competency level of ABB employees.
- 1.3.3 To understand the relationship between ABB employees' opinions and their ability in English.

#### **1.4 Definition of terms**

The following terms are used throughout this research, and defined as follows:

**Thai employee** refers to a person who is full-time working in a multinational company and uses the English language in their work.

**English language** refers to the preferred language which is used globally for business communication. In this context, it is concerned with four important aspects: listening, reading and vocabulary.

**Communication** refers to the method to convey the message or interact with other people through listening, reading and vocabulary in the English language.

**Problem** refers to something that is occurring and negatively affecting the understanding of communication.

**Multinational company** refers to the company that has been established through direct foreign investment in Thailand. In this context, Thai people work in conjunction with other nationalities.

#### **1.5 Scope of study**

This study focuses on Thai employees who work full-time in ABB Limited branch in Saraburi, a multinational company where employees often use the English language in their line of work and are seeking to improve their English to increase their competency to communicate within the organization.

#### **1.6 Significance of the study**

The research is significant in attempting to understand the relationship between employees' self-rated English competency level and their performance in an actual English test. In addition, this study examines the cause of English communication problems of Thai employees who often use English in their line of work at ABB Limited and also determines their competency level in English, with the purpose of improving their competency in English for the workplace. This is important as employees' might not realize which part of the English language (i.e., listening, reading, or vocabulary)

requires improvement. Further, upper management of ABB limited are expected to find this study useful by identifying critical problems that require most attention to increase the employees' productivity level. Upper management might also better understand the relationship between the Thai employees' opinion and actual ability in English skills.

### **1.7 Organization of the study**

The study of English communication problems of Thai employees in a multinational company is divided into five chapters. The first chapter introduces the background of the study, including the objectives of the study, the definition of terms, and the scope and significance of the study. The second chapter provides the literature review and discusses the concepts of communication, communication problems, characteristics of multinational companies, differences in culture, and language barriers. The third chapter provides the research methodology and details the participants, materials, procedures, and data analysis of the study. The fourth chapter contains the results and discussion of this study, while the fifth chapter concludes the study and provides recommendations.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

This chapter considers various theories of the study of English communication problems of Thai employees in a multinational company. Chapter 2 is divided into five main areas and also includes a summary: 1) concept of communication, 2) communication problems, 3) language barriers, 4) cultural differences, and 5) language competency.

#### **2.1 Concept of communication**

From the past communication has been a significant part of human life. Humankind initially communicated by symbols, images, and soon after has developed many tools for convenient communication such as mobile phones, computers, and video-conferencing. Hamilton and Parker (1982) defined that communication is the way or method to deliver information, text, ideas, and even the senses from a person to other persons through a communication tool such as smart phone, teleconferences and other applications to display face-to-face interaction, facial expressions, body languages to help in the transfer of complete messages.

In the business world, communication has played an important role because global communication has been able to help in conducting businesses easily across great distances. McShane and Von Glinow (2003) explained that when people exchange messages between themselves through the communication process, the sender and receiver have to correctly receive and understand the messages. Berko et al. (1995) stated that communication can be demonstrated in verbal or non-verbal messages which will be interpreted by communicators. Moreover, Scott (2005) mentioned that communication in the workplace can be efficiently carried out if the communicators get clear and precise information that will bring effective communication which will be advantageous to an organization. Olanvoravuth (1999) pointed out that professional communication can be practically used in business to resolve difficult situations for great accomplishments in the business world. Additionally, proper communication



encourages effective work processes. Nelson (2010) described that the style of communication affects the ability to expand the organization in this competitive world. As discussed above, the concept of communication is the sharing of ideas, emotions, and messages from person to others which makes communication an important tool to human life in performing at the workplace and environment around them. In the next section, the study will describe the communication problems faced.

### **2.2.1 Communication problems**

In the modern era, we communicate in many ways using tools such as the telephone, teleconferencing, internet, video conferences and many others. If communication is done smoothly, businesses is likely to be successful but when communication is not done well, businesses often find that there will be difficulties to overcome. Comstock (1985) claimed that communication problems happen from misunderstandings of meaning in conversations because one common word can have several meanings that are learnt through the backgrounds and experiences of each person. Vaara (2003) pointed out that employees may receive faulty information or rumors in the company which can lead to misunderstandings and affect morale, causing unneeded stress and potentially sparking conflict. Furthermore, Crystal (1997) stated that in the tourism industry many communication problems occur with respect to arranging transportation and accommodation. For example, a tour company will often have to discuss about specific travel itineraries with foreign tourists and they may need to use difficult English words when communicating with tourists which can lead to misunderstandings. Clearly, communication problems are an issue that can impede employees' competency in the organization and most organizations have a responsibility to improve and develop their employees' potential.

## **2.2 Language barriers**

Language is clearly an important aspect of communication. Any potential language barrier will certainly decrease the potential of employees in a multinational

organization leading to issues for a particular company. A mistake in communication may cause the business to lose money and experience unnecessary high costs.

The lack of good and effective communication will become troublesome for businesses to respond to customer's needs which could cause a shift to competitors. The main cause of the lack of effective communication is language barriers. A misinterpreted message could result in costly delays; poorly written reports could lead to wrong decisions being made; complicated instructions may cause damage, damage to expensive equipment or the loss of an important customer. English is now seen as one of the skills that businesses need to manage effectively and efficiently in order to maximize their competitive advantage in the marketplace (Erreygers & Jacobs, 2006).

Blundel (1998) argued that communication barriers in humans arise due to psychological factors, physiological factors, social factors, cultural and political barriers, and technological barriers including technical failure, selecting an inappropriate channel, or failing to use it effectively. Blundel proposed a three-part solution, which involved considering the receiver, thinking clearly, and delivering the message skillfully, in order to overcome language barriers. Thus, the code used to transfer the message is clearly important. As stated by Krizan et al. (2002, p.31), "the main language barriers can occur by different accents, word choice, denotative versus connotative meaning and grammar, spelling, punctuation and sentence structure". Another factor which affects efficiency in communication is cultural differences. These will be discussed in the next section.

### **2.3 Cultural differences**

Culture is one important aspect in communication and was defined in the previous section. The world contains various people from different continents, traditions, and beliefs who can work together harmoniously. While performing business abroad can be quite difficult to manage in terms of structure, politics and economics, cultural differences remain quite a sensitive issue in international organizations. Bovee and Thill (2005) claimed that cultural differences can cause people to have confusion in communication. Neuliep (2003) asserted that cultural differences may cause people to misinterpret the message when the words are spoken in the same language but are

misconstrued due to facial expressions, voice and gestures. Bovee and Thill (2005) stated that overcoming cultural differences is essential to learn before operating in a multinational company. They discuss six main types of cultural differences: contextual, legal and ethical, social, nonverbal, age, and gender. These are discussed further below.

### **2.3.1 Contextual differences**

Contextual differences with respect to culture can be divided into two main types: *low-context culture* and *high-context culture*. Low-context cultures favor the use of verbal communication but high-context cultures favor the use of non-verbal communication such as actions and environmental setting to convey the meaning. For this present study, Thais are considered a high-context culture.

### **2.3.2 Legal and ethical differences**

Legal and ethical differences in people could depend on the people coming from different countries and cultures which can be separated to low-context culture or high-context culture. For low-context cultures, people prefer the written words and laws as they are crucial. On the other hand, in high-context cultures, people tend not to focus on such ethics. According to Bovee and Thill (2005), “when conducting business contracts, an American would negotiate with all the concise details before signing the contract. In Asian cultures, the manager would first sign the contract as agreement to do business and later start to negotiate the details of the contract” (p. 72).

### **2.3.3 Social differences**

In some cultures, people can work hard to achieve a higher level position. While in a male-dominated society, it is known that high level positions are for men only. When contacting with persons of different culture, we have to know their social background. For example, a person in a low-context culture might concentrate on only one job during each scheduled period and be able to adequately control the time. By contrast, a person in a high context culture is usually more flexible with time that is used to focus on the business relationship.

### **2.3.4 Non-verbal differences**

Non-verbal communication is the sending and receiving of messages through body language. People of different countries may convey the same or different meanings through non-verbal communication. For example, “OK” is a sign of acceptance or approval in many western countries, but in France, it means zero or worthless.

### **2.3.5 Age differences**

Some countries treat seniority as important in a person to respect and listen for advice, but in other countries they would communicate as equals with no regard to age. Culturally, in Thailand, it would be expected for younger western colleagues to sit and listen to older Thais first as a sign of respect. Western colleagues who do not know this cultural aspect might find difficulties in doing business, and could accidentally be seen as rude by Thai colleagues. On the other hand, conversations follow social hierarchical terms as Thais are more likely to follow business advice from older colleagues; it might be that in western contexts younger people are confident in giving advice to older people without them being seen as rude. Thai employees in the same situation might find themselves being unable to voice their opinions without being seen as challenging the advice of older foreign customers. This means that Thais will know very well the age relationships, whereas a western colleague might not conduct themselves in the same way. This could lead to communication problems.

### **2.3.6 Gender differences**

Men are treated as superior in some countries and chosen as leaders perhaps more easily and more frequently compared to women. However, in other countries men and women are treated as equal as the focus is on fostering cooperation and creating a good working environment.

## 2.4 Language competency

As mentioned above, cultural differences may impede communication when working for a multinational company, because people from different countries are attempting to work together effectively in an international environment. Overcoming cultural differences is necessary and language competency is one important aspect that may go a long way in determining whether communication is impaired or obstructed.

According to Quinn et al. (1990), English language competency among employees is one important skill in workplace in order to cooperate and deal with their customers, colleagues and suppliers. Many projects and business deals would fail if the employees simply cannot be understood and instructions are misread. Furthermore, employees have to show their competency in their work through the use of the English language together with their technical skills and other aspects. Hence, language competency is an important skill for working in a multinational company, especially competency in the English language because it is used mainly for business communication.

Manitoba (2009) argued that a great sign of linguistics usage is the language competency found in a person. A person can increase their English language competency through continued everyday usage of English in their daily conversations. Hemerka (2009) mentioned that language competency is the person's correct use of the language and how it is applied in workplace tasks. Staff will become competent when they learn communication etiquette so as not to sound crude and also to be clearer in their messages.

Similarly, Hymes (1972) explained that language competence is applicable in different communicative situations. Thus, a high level of competence is needed in technical discussion meetings which requires very specific words to have a mutual understanding. Richards and Rodgers (2001) stated that language competency is based on good communication by the receiver anticipating the result in communication which has a suitable message from the sender. In short, language competency is a significant part of business communication so it is inevitable that it needs to be focused on in the present study.

## 2.5 Previous related studies

Various studies in the field of English communication problems of Thai employees in a multinational company have been conducted. There are four previous related studies that have a direct bearing on the current research. These are discussed in turn below.

Nimmuch (2011) investigated English communication problems influencing Thai people to take English courses at language institutions. The participants were 120 English students at the Language Institute, Thammasat University (LITU) and American University Alumni Language Center (AUA). Respondents completed four-part questionnaires consisting of personal information, English usage problems, needs for English improvement and suggestions or additional comments. The findings revealed that the main problems in English communication were listening problems due to unfamiliarity with accents and pronunciation. Regarding reading, the main problems were being able to understand essence of the message and the meaning of general words, with respondents also confused about idioms and words having several meanings. Nimmuch's study was important for the present research in that it helped inform the research methods and the structure of the questionnaire used.

Charunsri (2011) investigated the needs and problems of front office staff in a hotel in Chinatown, Bangkok. A total of 60 respondents completed questionnaires containing three sections. The results of the study indicated that the main listening skill problems were having conversations by telephone as well as listening to different accents in English and listening to customer complaints. Also high levels of needs were found for reading e-mails, customer documents, business letters and faxes. The recommendations of this study were that the questionnaire should be more specific about English language requirements including studying needs and problems in using English language skills for front office staff in other areas. Charunsri's work was noted in creating this study's questionnaire by creating three sections. Further, recommendations were followed by not generalizing the questionnaire to clearly identify problems faced and by invited participants from the various divisions of ABB limited, a company which has hundreds of employees.

In Sangsook's study (2007), an investigation was carried out about the needs of employees for English communication in their careers at Bangkok Produce Merchandising Public Company Limited. The participants of this study were 125 employees of this company, with random stratified sampling employed to divide the sample into four departments: 1) production, 2) engineering, 3) QA, QC, Lab, R&D, and 4) supporting departments. The findings of this study revealed that respondents strongly agreed that they needed to improve speaking, listening and writing skills for more effective communication in the business.

Finally, Saetae (2010) conducted a survey of the opinions of Thai employees in a multinational company in Bangkok concerning their ability to use English for work and working with foreigners. A total of 100 Thai employees working in multinational enterprises in Bangkok completed a survey questionnaire. The findings of this research showed that writing skills were a weakness which should be improved, followed by speaking and listening skills. However, it also appeared that cultural attitudes and values affected respondents more than language ability. Conversing by speaking in English was more significant to their work than writing as different accents can affect their understanding with foreigners. Different pronunciations of words would have employees embarrassingly asking foreigners with strong accents to repeat themselves or to speak slower many times. The recommendations of this study were that employees needed more help improving their listening skills than they did their reading skills. Also, we can note that employees might develop a culture in dealing with foreign colleagues by preferring to write e-mails than taking the trouble to make phone calls.

In summary, the previous related studies reviewed above are all concerned with English communication problems in multinational companies. They are quantitative research studies which use the statistical method to report the findings. The findings revealed that employees in the companies were quite focused on the four main English skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. These studies greatly helped in designing the research instrument for the present research, which focused on listening, reading, and vocabulary. Most of the results were shown that problems with listening skills happens when meeting with different accents as different ways of pronouncing words can make it more difficult to clearly understand. Specific reading problems tend to occur with idioms, when reading official business documents in, and with words

having several meanings. This finally led to developing my research methodology to getting closer in understanding the participant's major English language problems and also to assessing their English competency in a work-related context.





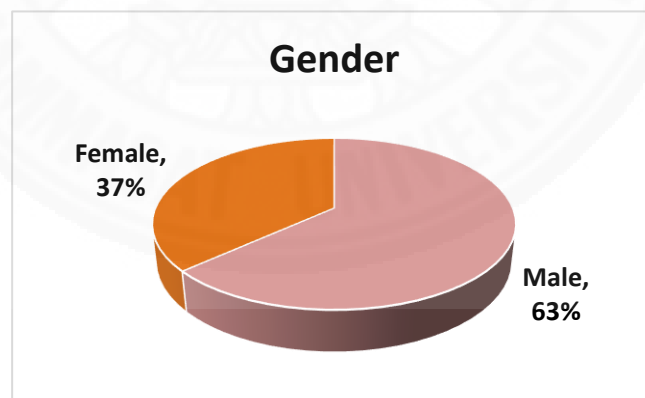
## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Chapter 3 describes the research methodology which was employed to investigate English problems and English competency of Thai employees in ABB Limited, Saraburi branch. Chapter 3 describes the participants, materials, procedures, and data analysis used in the present study.

#### 3.1 Participants

The total participants of this study are 30 Thai employees working full-time in ABB Limited, Saraburi branch. The sample consists of 19 males and 11 females, mostly aged between 21-30 years, with most having a minimum education level of a bachelor's degree (see Figure 1). The sample was obtained using convenience sampling to facilitate the rapid collection of data through the use of a questionnaire and also an English test to examine their competence.



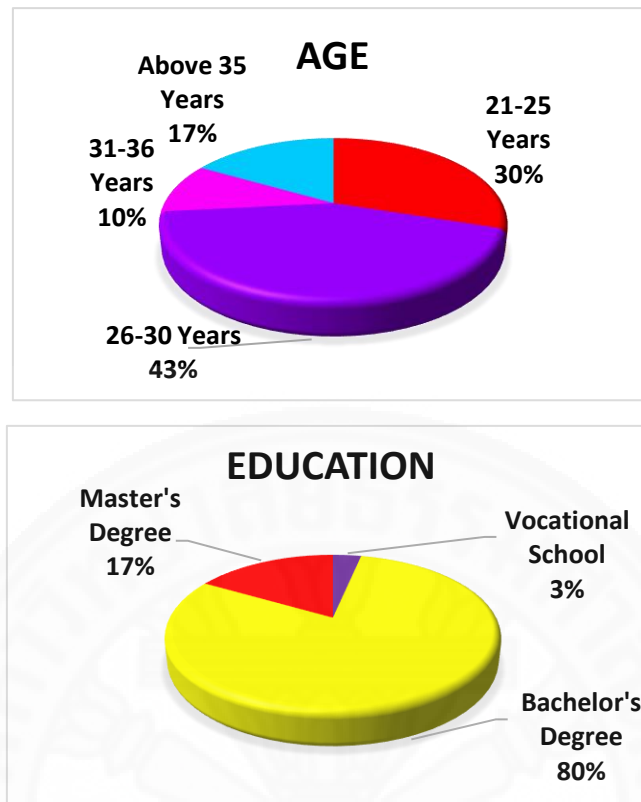


Figure 1. Gender, age and education background of the research participants.

### 3.2 Materials

This study uses the quantitative method to collect the data. The research instrument consisted of a survey questionnaire which was divided into two parts: Part 1 refers to personal information of the participants which includes gender, educational background, work position, number of working years, frequency in using English at work, and Part 2 refers to the English language skill background of the participants, which comprises 24 questions items focused on English language proficiency across three skills: listening (8 items; e.g., *I can easily follow English conversations on the phone in listening skill*), reading (8 items; e.g., *I can understand English announcements from my company in e-mail format*), and vocabulary (8 items; e.g., *I know a lot of engineering-related vocabularies and terminology in vocabulary skill*). The participants recorded their responses using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 2 = *disagree*, 3 = *neutral*, 4 = *agree*, 5 = *strongly agree*). All scores were

interpreted for the mean ( $\bar{x}$ ) by the interval scales of 0.8. The details of each score are listed below (see Table 1).

**Table 1 Level of mean score in questionnaire**

Mean	Description
4.21 – 5.00	Excellent
3.41 – 4.20	Good
2.61 – 3.40	Average
1.81 – 2.60	Fair
1.00 – 1.80	Poor

*Note.* Scale interpretation taken from Allen (2007) and Black (2009).

The second part of the study used the TOEIC preparation test as a test of English competency in the workplace. The test was divided into three parts: listening (10 questions), reading (10 questions), and vocabulary (10 questions) with a total of 30 points. A table of the level of mean score in English test was split into five descriptive levels: poor, fair, average, good, and excellent (see Table 2).

**Table 2 Level of mean score in English test**

Mean	Description Level
8.01 – 10.00	Excellent
6.01 – 8.00	Good
4.01 – 6.00	Average
2.01 – 4.00	Fair
0.00 – 2.00	Poor

*Note.* Scale interpretation taken from Allen (2007) and Black (2009).

### 3.3 Procedure

The procedure of this study began with a pilot study where the questionnaire was distributed to three Thai employees who worked in ABB Limited. The purpose of the pilot study was to determine whether the questionnaire items were appropriate or not. Some revisions were then made to the questionnaire items before distributing the finalized research instrument to the 30 participants in April 2016. The participants were given two weeks to complete it before returning the questionnaire to the researcher. The participants taking the English test were separated into two groups. Each group contained 15 persons and the test took around 40 minutes to complete.

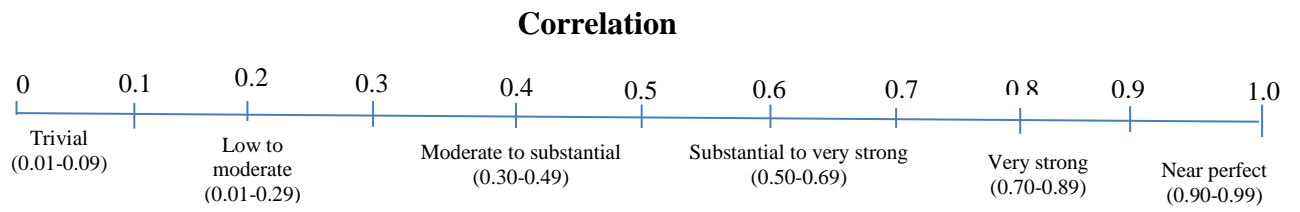
The test was implemented in the same manner for both Group 1 and 2. Both groups started with the listening test with 10 audio clips, then the reading test with 10 items that consisted of incomplete sentences, memos, advertisements, e-mails and a letter. The last part was the vocabulary test with 10 items.

After the allotted time, the English test was sent to the researcher to check the score in each part. The data from the questionnaires were extracted and put into the SPSS program to analyze and then compared to generate the real score from English test. After data analyses were performed, participants were informed about their test scores and debriefed as to the purposes of the study.

### 3.4 Data analysis

The data were compiled and then analyzed using the SPSS Program (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) in the following manner:

- Descriptive tables by using frequencies in the first section of the questionnaire on the personal information of participants.
- Descriptive table by using percentages, means ( $\bar{X}$ ), standard deviations (S.D.), correlations ( $r$ ), and a scale that shows an analysis on English communication problems and the score of the English test.
- The sample dataset has test scores (out of 24 points for questionnaire and out of 30 points for test of competency) for three areas: listening, reading, and vocabulary.



*Figure 2.* Scale of strength of association between two variables (Vaus, 2002).



## **CHAPTER 4**

### **FINDINGS**

This chapter reports the results of the study of English communication problems of Thai employees in a multinational company. A total of 30 participants responded to the questionnaire, and with the same 30 participants also completing the TOEIC English test. The results are shown in the form of frequencies and percentages, means and standard deviations (S.D.).

A short description of personal information of participants is given such as income and types of jobs. Following this, five tables are presented showing problems with listening, reading and vocabulary, summary total score of the English test by skill, and correlation between self-rated problems in questionnaires against the English test.

#### **4.1 Personal information of participants**

The first part of the questionnaire elicited information about the participants' background, including gender, age, education, income per month, job position, period to working in company and frequency to use English in work. The respondents indicated that most of them had an income of between 20,001-30,000 baht (57%) per month. Just over a third of the sample were service engineers (33%), while just under a quarter of the sample were sales engineers (23%). The majority of the sample had worked in the company for 1-5 years (77%) and used English language in their work every day (77%).

#### **4.2 English language skill background**

The second part of the questionnaire contained 24 questions designed to elicit further details about problems in listening, reading, and vocabulary skills. Summary statistics are provided for each skill separately in Tables 3-5 below.

**Table 3 Problems in listening skills**

Listening skill	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	M	S.D.	Level
1. I find it easy to understand English speakers in business meetings	1 (3.3%)	13 (43.3%)	10 (33.3%)	6 (20%)	0 (0%)	3.30	0.84	Average
2. I can easily follow English conversations on the phone.	1 (3.3%)	8 (26.7%)	11 (36.7%)	9 (30%)	1 (3.3%)	2.97	0.93	Average
3. I find it hard to understand company news in English.	1 (3.3%)	8 (26.7%)	12 (40%)	6 (20%)	3 (10%)	3.07	1.02	Average
4. I find it hard to understand English speakers during training courses or seminars.	1 (3.3%)	12 (40%)	7 (23.3%)	7 (23%)	3 (10%)	2.97	1.1	Average
5. I sometimes ask English speakers to speak slower or repeat words I don't understand.	5 (16.7%)	14 (46.7%)	8 (26.7%)	1 (3.3%)	2 (6.7%)	2.37	1.03	Fair
6. I have difficulties understanding different accents of foreign customers.	5 (16.7%)	9 (30%)	11 (36.7%)	4 (13.3%)	1 (3.3%)	2.57	1.04	Fair
7. I can understand in basic conversations with my foreign co-workers.	5 (16.7%)	17 (56.7%)	7 (23.3%)	1 (3.3%)	0 (0%)	3.87	0.73	Good
8. I can easily comprehend the content of business meetings.	2 (6.7%)	9 (30%)	16 (53.3%)	3 (10%)	0 (0%)	3.33	0.76	Average
<b>Total Average</b>						<b>3.05</b>	<b>0.71</b>	<b>Average</b>

Listening skill problems are illustrated in Table 3. As can be seen, the majority of responses averaged between fair and good ( $M = 2.37 - M = 3.87$ ). The highest ranked listening item (good) identified that the participants could understand basic conversations with their foreign co-worker ( $M = 3.87$ ) while the lowest ranked item (fair) indicated that they sometimes asked English speakers to speak slower or repeat words they do not understand ( $M = 2.37$ ) and having difficulties understanding different accents of foreign customer ( $M = 2.57$ ). The overall total mean for listening skills ( $M = 3.05$ ) indicates that listening skills were average for the overall sample.

**Table 4 Problems in reading skills**

Reading skill	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	M	S.D.	Level
1. I find it easy to read and understand work reports in English.	5 16.7%	14 46.7%	9 30%	2 6.7%	0 0%	3.73	0.83	Good
2. I have many problems in reading and understanding e-mails in English.	1 3.3%	4 13.3%	9 30%	13 43.3%	3 10%	3.43	0.97	Good
3. I find easy to read and understand the minutes of a meeting in English.	4 13.3%	13 43.3%	10 33.3%	3 10%	0 0%	3.60	0.86	Good
4. I can understand English announcements from my company in e-mail format.	5 16.7%	14 46.7%	10 33.3%	1 3.3%	0 0%	3.77	0.77	Good
5. I find it easily read and understand business letters in English.	5 16.7%	12 40%	11 36.7%	2 6.7%	0 0%	3.67	0.84	Good
6. I find to hard read technical engineering textbook in English.	6 20%	10 33.3%	5 16.7%	8 26.7%	1 3.30%	2.60	1.19	Fair
7. I find it difficult to understand English e-mails written from the suppliers.	0 0%	7 23.3%	11 36.7%	9 30%	3 10%	3.27	0.94	Average
8. I find easily to read and understand English service reports.	7 23.3%	12 40%	9 30%	2 6.7%	0 0%	3.80	0.89	Good
<b>Total Average</b>						<b>3.48</b>	<b>0.66</b>	<b>Good</b>

Reading skill problems are illustrated in Table 4. As can be seen, the majority of responses averaged between fair and good ( $M = 2.60 - M = 3.80$ ). Many reading skills were ranked high (good) as the questionnaire identified that participants found it easy to read and understand English service reports ( $M = 3.80$ ), easy to read and understand work reports in English ( $M = 3.73$ ), have many problems in reading and understanding e-mails in English ( $M = 3.43$ ), easy to read and understand the minutes of meetings in English ( $M = 3.60$ ), can understand English announcements from company in e-mail format ( $M = 3.77$ ), easy to read and understand business letters in English ( $M = 3.67$ ), and easy to read and understand English service reports ( $M = 3.80$ ). The lowest ranked item (fair) indicated that they found it harder to read technical



engineering textbooks in English ( $M = 2.60$ ). The overall total mean for reading skills ( $M = 3.48$ ) indicated overall good reading skills for the participants.

**Table 5 Problems in vocabulary skills**

Vocabulary skill	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	M	S.D.	Level
1. I know a lot of engineering-related vocabularies and terminology (i.g. maintenance, overhaul).	6 20%	9 30%	9 30%	6 20%	0 0%	3.50	1.04	Good
2. I can use my vocabulary knowledge in many communicative situation (i.g. producing a sentence.)	4 13.3%	9 30%	15 50%	2 6.7%	0 0%	3.50	0.82	Good
3. I use appropriate vocabulary to correctly communication (i.g. spelling, pronunciation.)	2 6.7%	7 23.3%	14 46.7%	7 23.3%	0 0%	3.13	0.86	Average
4. I have good knowledge of formal vocabulary use in communication (e.g. business letters, minute of meetings.)	3 10%	7 23.3%	13 43.3%	7 23.3%	0 0%	3.20	0.93	Average
5. I am often confused about to using the vocabularies in communication (i.g. I have little knowledge of synonym.)	2 6.7%	11 36.7%	12 40%	3 10%	2 6.7%	2.73	0.98	Average
6. I have good knowledge of informal vocabularies use in communication. (i.g. small group discussion.)	4 13.3%	5 16.7%	18 60%	3 10%	0 0%	3.33	0.84	Average
7. I often have to check the meaning of the vocabulary in communication (e.g. open dictionary online.)	5 16.7%	9 30%	10 33.3%	5 16%	1 3.3%	2.60	1.07	Fair
8. I have difficulties guessing unknown words or phrases easily during communication.	5 16.7%	4 13.3%	15 50%	4 13.3%	2 6.7%	2.80	1.1	Average
<b>Total Average</b>						<b>3.10</b>	<b>0.61</b>	<b>Average</b>

Vocabulary skill problems are illustrated in Table 5. As can be seen, the majority of responses averaged between fair and good ( $M = 2.60 - M = 3.50$ ). Also, the two highest ranked items (good) identified that participants knew a lot of engineering-

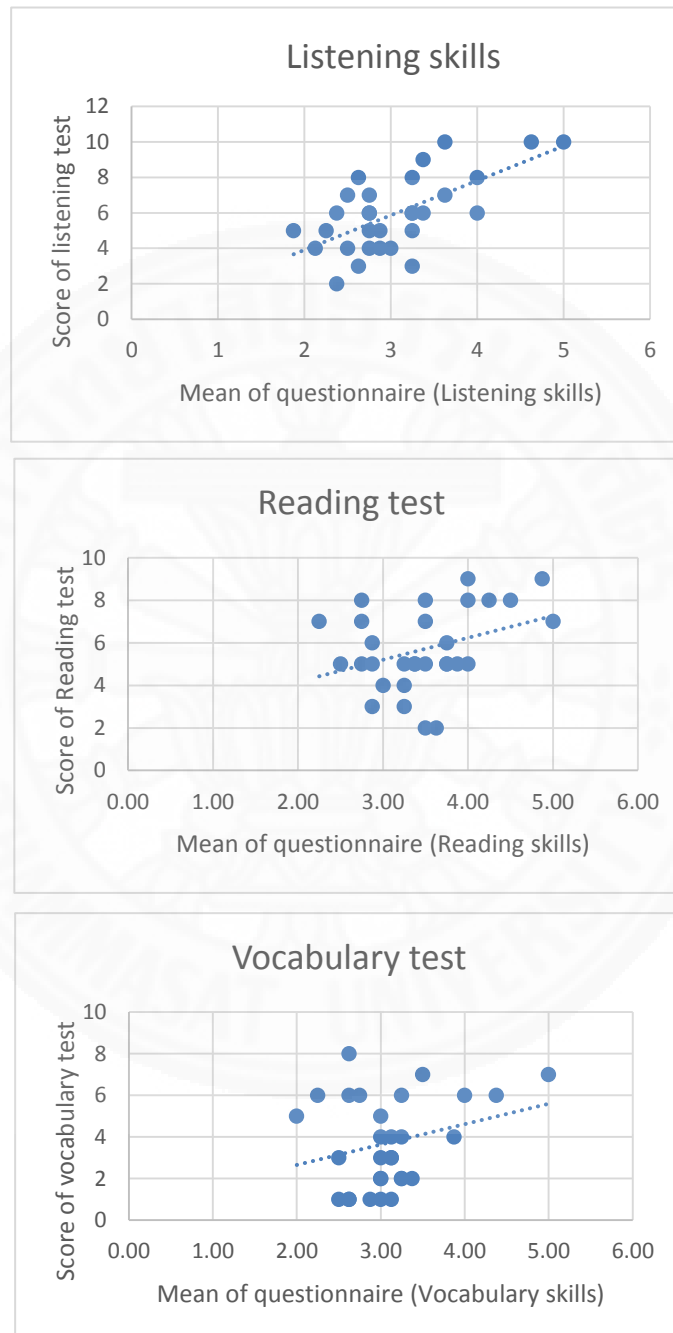
related vocabularies and terminology ( $M = 3.50$ ) and that they could use their vocabulary knowledge in many communicative situations ( $M = 3.50$ ). By contrast, the lowest ranked item (fair) indicated that the participants had to check the meaning of vocabulary in communication ( $M = 2.60$ ). The overall total mean for vocabulary skills ( $M = 3.10$ ) indicates that vocabulary skills were average overall for the participants.

**Table 6 Average score on the English test by skill (listening, reading, and vocabulary)**

<b>Skill</b>	<b>Total Score (Out of 300)</b>	<b>Total Mean (Out of 10)</b>	<b>Total S.D.</b>	<b>Total Level</b>
Listening	179	5.97	2.13	Average
Reading	171	5.70	1.93	Average
Vocabulary	112	3.73	2.16	Fair
Total Average	154	5.13	2.07	Average

Table 6 reveals that participants score on the English test was at the average level overall. Regarding each component, participants produced average scores on both listening ( $M = 5.97$ ) and reading ( $M = 5.70$ ), but only reached a fair level for the vocabulary section ( $M = 3.73$ ). It appears that participants were somewhat weaker in vocabulary knowledge than they were in the language skills of listening and reading.

### 4.3 Relationships between self-rated problems in listening, reading and vocabulary skills and their corresponding scores on the English Test



*Figure 3.* Scatter plots showing relationships between self-reported listening, reading, and vocabulary skills and their corresponding test scores.

The scatter plots shown in Figure 3 indicate the relationships between two variables: self-rated mean score of English skills and the employees' corresponding test scores. The scatter plots illustrate linear relationships of varying degrees of strength between each individual component of the questionnaire and the English competency test.

For the listening component of the test, the scatterplot shows a strong, positive, linear form. The data points are relatively close to, but not exactly on, a straight line. This suggests that one variable can be somewhat predicted from the other with a reasonable degree of accuracy. In other words, it appears that the respondents have a reasonably accurate understanding of their competency in listening in English.

For the reading component of the test, the scatterplot shows a weak, positive, linear form. The data points are more widely scattered around the straight line. This suggests that one variable can be predicted from the other with less degree of accuracy as seen in the listening test. In other words, there appears to be relatively less correspondence between respondents' self-reported reading scores and their performance on the reading component of the English test.

For the vocabulary component of the test, the scatterplot illustrates a weak, positive, linear form. The data points seem mostly scattered around the mean score of 3 but converge less on the straight line in comparison to listening described above. This suggests that one variable can be predicted from the other with less degree of accuracy than seen in the listening test. It appears that there is relatively less correspondence between respondents' self-reported vocabulary scores and their performance on the vocabulary component of the English test.

To determine the relationship between self-reported problems in language skills and actual performance in the English test, Pearson correlation coefficients were computed.

Table 7 shows that there was all relationships were positive between the self-rated problems on the questionnaire and the English test (all  $r_s > 0$ ), with varying levels of significance. Listening skills correlated positively and quite strongly with the listening test [ $r = 0.648$ ,  $n = 30$ ,  $p. < .01$ ]. This indicates that fewer self-reported listening problems were associated with higher listening test scores. That is,

participants were very accurate in rating themselves as their questionnaire score strongly correlates with their test score.

**Table 7 Correlations between self-reported problems on the questionnaire and the English test**

Variables	Listening test	Reading test	Vocabulary test
Listening problems	0.65**	0.39*	0.45*
Reading problems	0.57**	0.35	0.04
Vocabulary problems	0.48**	0.36	0.28

*Note:* \*\*p. < .01, \*p. < .05

While the reading test is positively correlated with reading problems ( $r = 0.35$ ,  $n = 30$ ,  $p. > .05$ ), the results show no statistical significance. Similarly, vocabulary test scores were positively correlated with listening problems ( $r = 0.28$ ,  $n = 30$ ,  $p. > .05$ ) but the relationship was not statistically significant.

An interesting but unexpected finding was that the listening test was found to correlate significantly with all three skills of the questionnaire (all ps. < .01). Thus, respondents who rated themselves positively in listening, reading, and vocabulary problems also obtained higher scores in the listening test. Another unexpected finding was that the reading test scores ( $r = 0.39$ ,  $n = 30$ ,  $p. < .05$ ) and vocabulary test scores ( $r = 0.45$ ,  $n = 30$ ,  $p. < .05$ ) were moderately but significantly correlated to listening problems. This suggests that perceptions of listening ability are closely related to actual English test performance.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This chapter summarizes the study and its findings, then discusses the findings and their implications, before providing a conclusion and recommendations for future studies.

#### **5.1 Summary of the study**

This section summarizes the objectives of the study, the participants, the materials, and procedures used to collect the data.

##### **5.1.1 Objectives of the study**

This study aimed to investigate the problems of Thai employees in English communication in the workplace and also determine the relationship with their actual English competency level. A final objective was to determine whether ABB employees' self-rated opinions correlated with their actual ability in English.

##### **5.1.2 Participants, materials and procedure**

The participants of this study were 30 Thai employees working full-time in ABB limited, Saraburi branch. After the initial pilot study, the research questionnaire was distributed to 30 participants to complete with their background information and details about their English language background, specifically the problems they perceive to have with listening, reading, and vocabulary skills. The questionnaire contained two parts: personal information and English language background. The latter was sub-divided into three skills with a total of 24 items (listening, 8 items; reading, 8 items; vocabulary, 8 items). Participants indicated their agreement with items on the questionnaire by responding to a 5-point Likert scale. Participants undertook the English test in two separate groups, with 15 participants per group. The English test took around 40 minutes to complete and contained three parts (listening, 10 items; reading, 10 items; vocabulary, 10 items). The English test was based on the TOEIC

preparation test. After collecting data from all participants, scores were computed and then analyzed and interpreted in the form of frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations, correlations using the analytical software SPSS.

## **5.2 Summary of the findings**

### **5.2.1 Personal information and English language background of the participants**

The key findings for the first two parts of the questionnaire are presented below. The demographic data from Part 1 of the questionnaire showed that respondents were mostly of middle class income, mostly engineers and generally used English in their daily work. Of the 30 participants who are currently working at ABB Limited, 19 respondents or 63 % were male. This group of participants were very educated with all having pursued tertiary education (i.e., most of the respondents obtained a Bachelor's degree, 80%). Just under half of the respondents were young at 26 to 30 years old (43%) and just over a third were service engineers (33%). The majority of the sample had an income range of 20,001 to 30,000 Baht (57%). Most have worked between 1 to 5 years (77%). Lastly, 23 or 77% of respondents used English every day.

In Part 2 of the questionnaire, respondents indicated how much they agreed with statements on problems with listening, reading, and vocabulary skills. Regarding listening skills, the majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed they could understand basic conversations with foreign co-workers. On the other hand, around a third of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that they could follow English phone conversations and follow trainings done in English.

Regarding reading skills, two thirds of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed they can read and understand English work reports and English company email in announcement form. However, more than half the sample had problems reading and understanding English longer more complicated emails.

Regarding vocabulary skills, half of the respondents indicated that they knew a lot of engineering-related vocabularies and terminology. However, just under a quarter of the respondents indicated that they could not use appropriate vocabulary to correctly

communicate and did not have good knowledge of formal usage of the English vocabulary.

### **5.2.2 Correlation between self-reported problems on the questionnaire and the English test**

Regarding the TOEIC English test that all participants completed in the current study, the results indicated quite average overall competency for ABB employees. In fact, while the participants scored at an average level on both the listening and reading components of the English test, they only reached a fair level on the vocabulary test. Overall, these results suggest that the participants were quite not particularly strong in English.

Regarding the relationships between self-reported problems in English and actual English test performance, there were several interesting findings. As seen from the scatter plots, the linear relationships show varying degrees of strength. The key findings showed that the listening test had a strong correlation with all English problems on the questionnaire (i.e., listening, reading, and vocabulary). Secondly, while the relationships between reading and vocabulary and their corresponding tests scores were not significant, surprisingly listening test performance correlated significantly with all three components of the questionnaire. These findings are discussed in further detail below.

## **5.3 Discussion**

In this section, the findings and implications of the current research study are discussed further, particularly in relation to previous studies and theories of communication in multinational companies as outlined in Chapter 2.



### **5.3.1 The findings from the questionnaire and English test.**

#### **First objective**

The first objective was focused on finding English communication problems of Thai employees in ABB limited. From the finding of this study using instruments such as the questionnaire and English test, employees mostly need to improve their reading and vocabulary skills. Although, participants did well for listening, more than half agreed they sometimes ask English speakers to speak slower or repeat words they do not understand. Alarmingly, more than half also report difficulty understanding business meetings. Cultural and tonal factors may play a crucial part in their listening skills.

Also, the respondents reported finding it easy to read work reports but hard to read technical engineering textbooks in English. This shows that even with 80% of respondents having a bachelor's degree and half are engineers, simple English was preferred. A main factor to this could be most were locally trained in the Thai language. They likely learned English words on the job while conversing with non-Thai colleagues.

For vocabulary problems, respondents gave conflicting answers compared to reading problems. More than half agreed or strongly agreed that they understood engineering related vocabularies and terminologies but still found it difficult to read engineering textbooks.

In summary, it was found that listening and vocabulary were a larger problem than reading.

#### **Second objective**

The purpose of the second research question was to determine the actual English competency level among Thai employees from the English test. The overall results indicated that the score in vocabulary was at a fair level which confirms low competency in vocabulary among the participants. The low competency can be explained as the Thai language is still widely used in the respondents' line of work and English is occasionally used. Without constant practice in English, there will be

difficulties constructing sentences with correct grammar and limitations in using vocabulary. The company could provide bilingual dictionaries to improve their vocabulary.

However, listening and reading skills were of average competency. The majority of respondents were unfamiliar with different accents thus they would likely have to listen very closely for pronunciation of words. A sizeable number of participants do not use English daily as 23% use English less than 4 times a week. Participants should be encouraged to use English more frequently and practice among colleagues in the workplace.

Overall, participants needed help greatly in vocabulary skills which is closely linked to listening.

### **Third objective**

The purpose of the last research question was to determine whether there was a relationship between the Thai employees' opinions and their actual ability in English skills. The results indicated that self-rated listening skills were significantly related to performance on the listening component of the English test. In other words, if a participant rated their listening skills highly they also performed well on the actual listening part of the test. However, self-rated reading and self-rated vocabulary were not related to their corresponding test components, a result that was quite surprising given the relationship between self-rated listening and the corresponding listening test score discussed above. One possible interpretation of this result is that the sample size of 30 needs to be larger, increase questions in both the questionnaire and test exam or a new model must be applied. It can be noted that the sample size of 30 was due to the test taking quite a long time to complete at 40 minutes.

The difference for reading and vocabulary could have possibly been because of the design of the questionnaire that was not clarified, not specifying details and hard to understand when participants completed the questionnaire. As the questionnaire was only available in English, participants could have misunderstood the meaning without clarifications being made by the researcher.

In addition, it is plausible that there were difficulties in interpretation of questions, which could have been because the questionnaire was not available in Thai. After all, performance on the English test was only average (fair for vocabulary) suggesting only fairly basic competency in the English language. As seen above, the results show very little distinction between the three self-reported English skills on the questionnaire and the correlations with test performance. Therefore, it is possible that respondents interpreted the questions as general English questions rather than questions relating to the particular language skills, as originally planned in the outset of the study. The relatively strong relationships between overall perceptions of ability on the questionnaire and performance on each component of the English test appear to support this claim. That is, there seems to be a general relationship between perceived ability in English and actual test performance rather than a specific one as was anticipated.

### **5.3.2 The findings in relation to previous studies**

The findings from four different previous studies reviewed in Chapter 2 are now compared with the results of the current study.

Nimnuch (2011) provided a great guideline for the structure for this study. She performed the study with four times as many participants as this study (120). Also, she conducted the study at two places instead of one at Language Institute, Thammasat University (LITU) and American University Alumni Language Center (AUA).

Respondents completed four-part questionnaires consisting of personal information, English usage problems, needs for English improvement and suggestions or additional comments. Whereas, two instruments were used for this study using a questionnaire and an English test. This study reduced in scope to study 3 instead of 4 English skills. This reduction is needed as great effort is used for the test exam and allow for a timely completion.

Interestingly, Nimnuch's findings is opposite to this study on average as we found listening to be the highest competency in the questionnaire and test. It is unclear that students of learning institutions would have most problem in listening but employees

of a multinational company like ABB Limited are strongest in their English listening skills. In both studies reading was considered important after listening.

Charunsri (2011) studied about the needs and problems of hotel front office staff in Chinatown, Bangkok as her study indicated there were reading problems in reading e-mail, customer's documents, business letters and faxes. She had double the number of participants when compared (60). This study is similar as only one area was chosen for the participants. Also, both have three different sections. Similar to Nimnuch (2011), respondents found difficulty in listening and speaking with persons having different accents. It can be noted that the questionnaire was based from the template of Charunsri's study.

Sangsook (2007) similarly studied one area at the Bangkok Produce Merchandising Public Company Limited. This study had roughly four times the number of participants (125). She concentrated her study in four different departments whereas this study provided questionnaires and test exam to various persons regardless of department. Sangsook (2007) found all three skills at speaking, listening and writing to be equally as important for improvement.

Saetae (2010) conducted a survey instead of instruments such as questionnaire and test exam to review for the opinions of Thai employees in a multinational company in Bangkok concerning their ability to use English for work and working conditions with foreigners indicating that cultural attitudes and values made it hard for Thai employees to effectively understand and communicate. She had more than three times the number of participants (100) and as her study used one instead of two instruments. Thus, it can be difficult to get enough participants when the second instrument being the test exam requires more time than a simple survey or questionnaire. Saetae (2010) found writing to be the weakest English skill which is not part of this study. Her study was more of a reference and does not share much similarity.

## 5.4 Conclusion

The main purpose of the current research was to examine English communication problems among Thai employees in a multinational company. Three skills (listening, reading, and vocabulary) used in the employees' line of work were focused on, and the study also evaluated English competency through a standardized English test based on the TOEIC preparation test.

The key findings indicated that this study could partly find which parts of the questionnaire can be used for concentrating on English skill improvements. The findings suggests to create improvement by looking into training programs done in English at ABB Limited as many are unable to follow.

This study provided a great experience in design process for data collection methods such using the questionnaire and English test, use of analytical software SPSS, interpreting data quantitatively and qualitatively, and finding points for recommending specific English skills for highest priority improvements.

This study should be able to provide the basic format for creating great improvements in what many multinational companies are suffering in terms of maximum effectiveness in the English language usage for the international business environment. Multinational companies can now concentrate on improving specific English skills in the busy lives of employs who are unable to improve all areas at the same time. It is believed this would provide maximum resource location for great business effectiveness.

The main problems of this study found are weak vocabulary and listening. Also, key findings of the English test showed average performance by employees of ABB Limited. Respondents could listen to basic conversations with foreign co-workers but improvement is needed at improving English phone conversations and for trainings done in English. The majority of the sample could read internal ABB Limited communication in English but found difficulties in reading emails in English. Respondents knew a lot of engineering-related vocabularies and terminology but admitted to having poor English vocabulary.

There seems to be a relationship between perceived English ability and actual performance, although it is not distinct for each language skill at the questionnaire level.

Also, there are possible weaknesses in the questionnaire design or problems in interpretation.

As participants who took the test are now aware of the English skills, they can better concentrate on their weaknesses. The human resources department can be involved if necessary to arrange training programs. Upper management can then conduct their own test and repeat them every month to track their progress.

This study has shown close and different relationships between the Thai employees' opinion and their actual ability in English skills. Their self-rated listening skill showed correlation between the questionnaire and test exam. However, reading and vocabulary skills were not closely correlated between the questionnaire and test exam. Therefore, data from reading and vocabulary results are not significant enough to be analyzed. Further future studies can be done to examine the reading and vocabulary skills among Thai employees.

## **5.5 Recommendations for further study**

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study the following recommendations are made for further study.

5.5.1 Further studies should increase the sample size from 30 respondents because the present findings are probably not generalizable to multinational companies in Thailand.

5.5.2 Future studies might consider increasing the number of items in the English test, and also include speaking and writing components with interviews as more personal. Also, questionnaire items could be further explained when respondents are confused in order to obtain more accurate data.

5.5.3 The findings of this research are recommended to be informed to upper management to seek an increase in productivity in today's ever competitive market. The human resources department could be involved to provide specific English training packages to suit the employees' immediate needs. Bilingual dictionaries can also be provided to improve their vocabulary, although this would require high levels of motivation from the employees.

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**APPENDIX**



## APPENDIX A

### Questionnaire on English Background

The questionnaire is part of the research requirements for completing a Master of Arts in English for Careers, Language Institute Thammasat University. The purpose of this questionnaire is investigate the problem of Thai employees in English communication. All answers provided will be held in the strictest confidence, and used in this research study only.

The questionnaire has two parts:

Part One : Personal Information

Part Two : English Language Background

**Instruction** : Please tick (✓) in the appropriate brackets or fill in the space provided.

#### Part one : Personal Information

1. Gender           ( ) Male ( ) Female
2. Age             ( ) 21-25 years old   ( ) 26-30 years old  
                      ( ) 31-35 years old   ( ) Above 35 years old
3. Education      ( ) Vocational School       ( ) Bachelor's degree  
                      ( ) Master's degree  
                      ( ) Other (Please specify).....
4. Income / Month   ( ) 10,000 – 20,000 Baht  
                          ( ) 20,001 – 30,000 Baht  
                          ( ) 30,001 – 40,000 Baht  
                          ( ) 40,001 – 50,000 Baht  
                          ( ) More than 50,000 Baht
5. Job position     ( ) Sales Engineer   ( ) Services Engineer  
                          ( ) Manager           ( ) Admin  
                          ( ) Other (Please specify) .....
6. Period of working in company  
                          ( ) Less than 1 year   ( ) 1-5 years

( ) 6-10 years      ( ) More than 10 years

7. How often do you use English language in your job

( ) Every day      ( ) Once a week

( ) twice a week      ( ) Three time a week

( ) other (Please specify).....

### Part Two: English Language Background

English Usage	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>Listening Skill:</b>					
1. I find it easy to understand English speakers in business meetings.					
2. I can easily follow English conversations on the phone.					
3. I find it hard to understand company news in English.					
4. I find it hard to understand English speakers during training courses or seminars.					
5. I sometimes ask English speakers to speak slower or repeat words I don't understand.					
6. I have difficulties understanding different accents of foreign customers.					
7. I can understand in basic conversations with my foreign co-workers.					
8. I can easily comprehend the content of business meetings.					
<b>Reading Skill:</b>					
9. I find it easy to read and understand work reports in English.					

10. I have many problems in reading and understanding e-mails in English.					
11. I find it to easy to read and understand the minutes of a meeting in English.					
12. I can understand English announcements from my company in e-mail format.					
13. I find easily read and understand business letters in English.					
14. I find it to hard read technical engineering textbook in English.					
15. I find it difficult to understand English e-mails written from the suppliers.					
16. I find easily to read and understand English service reports.					
<b>Vocabulary Skill:</b>					
17. I know a lot of engineering-related vocabularies and terminology (i.e., maintenance, overhaul).					
18. I can use my vocabulary knowledge in many communicative situation (i.e., producing a sentence).					
19. I use appropriate vocabulary to correctly communication (i.e., spelling, pronunciation).					
20. I have good knowledge of formal vocabulary use in communication (e.g., business letters, minute of meetings).					
21. I am often confused about to using the vocabularies in communication (i.e., I have little knowledge of synonym).					

22. I have good knowledge of informal vocabularies use in communication (i.e., small group discussion).					
23. I often have to check the meaning of the vocabulary in communication (e.g., open dictionary online).					
24. I have difficulties guessing unknown words or phrases easily during communication.					



## APPENDIX B

This English test is part of the research to conduct “A Study of English Communication Problems of Thai Employees in A Multinational Company.”

*Ref : <https://www.englishclub.com/esl-exams/ets-toeic-practice-1.htm>*

### TOEIC Practice (Listening Part)

#### Photographs

Look at a photograph and listen to four statements. Choose the one that best describes what you see in the picture.

1.



A.      B.      C.      D.

2.



A.      B.      C.      D.

Ref : <https://www.englishclub.com/esl-exams/ets-toeic-practice-2.htm>

### **Question-Response**

First you will hear a question. Then you will hear three answer choices. :

3.    A.      B.  
      C.      D.
4.    A.      B.  
      C.      D.
5.    A.      B.  
      C.      D.
6.    A.      B.  
      C.      D.

### **Short Conversations**

Hear a short conversation and read three questions and choose the best answers:

#### **Conversation 1**

7. What are the man and woman mainly discussing?
- A) A vacation  
B) A budget  
C) A company policy  
D) A conference

8. How is the woman traveling?
- A) By plane
  - B) By bus
  - C) By taxi
  - D) By car
9. Why aren't the man and woman going together?
- A) The woman needs to arrive earlier.
  - B) The man has to work overtime.
  - C) The woman dislikes air travel.
  - D) The man has to go to the bank first.

### **Conversation 2**

10. What does the man have to do today?
- A) Visit his lawyer
  - B) Get a massage
  - C) Go to the doctor
  - D) Make an appointment

Ref. : <https://www.englishclub.com/esl-exams/ets-toeic-practice-3.htm>

### **TOEIC Practice (Vocabulary Part)**

#### **Business Expression 1**

11. They went ....business shortly after their children had left home and got married.
- A. in                      B. out
  - C. into                    D. on
12. We really can't delay any more with our plants and must ... down to business as soon as possible.
- A. cut                      B. find
  - C. set                        D. get



13. Despite all the alterations that are taking place in the department store, the management wanted to explain it was business as ...
- A. usual      B. practical  
C. common    D. frequent
14. Shortly after he was dismissed from the firm he decided to ... himself up in his own business.
- A. place      B. set  
C. hold       D. put
15. I heard of a new company today with which we should co-operate and ... business with.
- A. create      B. have  
C. make       D. do
16. As soon as they heard what had happened, they ... it their business to find out the truth.
- A. called      B. tried  
C. made       D. managed
17. I would ask you kindly not to interfere with what I'm doing as in all honesty it's .... of your business.
- A. nothing    B. no  
C. none       D. nor
18. When the bomb went off, most of the injured were just ordinary people going ... their business.
- A. across     B. along  
C. about      D. through
19. She knew that there was some kind of ... business going on because strange things were happening.
- A. weird      B. stupid  
C. unusual    D. funny
20. Although they had high hopes that they would be successful, they ... out of business within six months.
- A. came       B. turned  
C. fell        D. went

REF. <http://www.dailyenglish.in.th/toEIC-vocabulary-test-business-expressions-1/>

### **TOEIC Practice (Reading Part)**

#### **Incomplete Sentences**

Read a sentence choose the word or phrase that best fits into the blank.

21. Despite having four years of experience in software programming, Mr. Jones hadn't used a word processing program \_\_\_\_\_.
- A) prior
  - B) advanced
  - C) previous
  - D) before
22. The person who is taking the minutes will be seated \_\_\_\_\_ the chairman.
- A) from
  - B) to
  - C) next
  - D) by
23. The employees \_\_\_\_\_ about the closure before the announcement was made public.
- A) know
  - B) known
  - C) knew
  - D) have known
24. \_\_\_\_\_ it was a holiday, the doctor performed the emergency surgery on the heart patient.
- A) During
  - B) Even
  - C) Although
  - D) So

**Reading Comprehension****Example 1: Memo****Memorandum**

To: Supervisors

From: Judy Linquist, Human Resource Manager

Sub: Probation periods

As of January 1st all new employees will be subject to a 3 month probationary period. Medical, holiday, and flextime benefits will not apply to new staff members until the full 3 months have expired. After the three months have been completed, please contact your employees and inform them that their probationary period has ended. The HR department will contact you by email 2 days in advance to remind you of the date. Thank you for your cooperation.

25. What is the main purpose of this memo?
- A) To inform all employees of a new expiration date.
  - B) To put staff members on probation.
  - C) To introduce the HR department.
  - D) To inform supervisors of a change in policy.
26. When does the change come into effect?
- A) Today.
  - B) In 2 days.
  - C) In 3 months.
  - D) On January 1st

## Example 2: Advertisement

### FREE SUNGLASSES AND CASE



Purchase a 12 month subscription to *Vacation the Nation* today and receive a free pair of Sunnies Sunglasses with your very own soft leather case.\* To get your free Sunnies follow these 3 easy steps.

1. Purchase a copy of *Vacation the Nation*, New York's #1 Travel magazine.
2. Fill out the application card (found in the center of the magazine)
3. Mail the card and \$21. 95 US to the address provided

\*This is a limited time offer only. Application and funds must be received no later than Dec 1st 2004. Canadian residents should add \$3 US for shipping. Offer not available for residents outside of North America.

27. What is this advertisement for?
  - A) A summer trip.
  - B) A travel company.
  - C) A special deal.
  - D) A free magazine.
28. How much do the sunglasses cost?
  - A) They are free with a subscription.
  - B) They cost \$1.
  - C) They cost \$3 Canadian.
  - D) They cost \$21. 95 US.
29. Who cannot benefit from this special deal?
  - A) Canadians.
  - B) UK residents.
  - C) North Americans.
  - D) US residents.

**Example 3 (double passage): E-mail and Letter**

**To:** "The Shoe People" <inquiries@shoepeople.com>  
**Cc:**  
**From:** "John Trimbald" <jtconstruction@img.com>  
**Subject:** Customer Complaint

To Whom it May Concern,

I have trusted the Shoe People to protect the feet of my employees for over ten years now. I recently purchased a few pairs of boots from your company for my crew. Though my men were initially satisfied with the boots, the soles began to fall apart on them after just twelve weeks. This was extremely surprising considering they came with a six year warranty. The boots are unsafe to wear because my men are pouring hot concrete. Please respond as soon as possible with instructions on how I can return the boots and receive a refund.

Thank you,  
 John Trimbald

John Trimbald, Foreman  
 JT Construction

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**The Shoe People**  
**22 Circular Rd.**  
**Castlerock, Northern Ireland**  
**BT51 6TP**

John Trimbald  
 JT Construction  
 22 Mark Lane Rd.  
 London, England  
 EC3R 4BT

**January 3rd, 2008**

Dear Mr. Trimbald,

Thank you for your e-mail concerning the poor quality of our rubber soled black workboots. A representative will be by your office next week to pick up the damaged boots. We apologize for any inconvenience this has caused you and your crew. Along with five new pairs of workboots for your crew (we included one extra pair), we have enclosed a free year's supply of sole protector spray. In our retail stores, this spray is always recommended to buyers who work on heated floors. This should have been brought to your attention at the time of your initial order (received by telephone on October 12, 2007). Please excuse our oversight. To date we have had no complaints about these workboots from customers who have used the protector spray. However, should you use the spray and find that you are still unsatisfied with the boots, please return the boots and spray for a full refund. Thank you for supporting The Shoe People. Have a Happy New Year.

Sincerely,  
 Stan Mason, President

30. Which company was unsatisfied?

A) Stan Mason's company.

B) The Shoe People.

C) JT Construction

D) The sole company.

Ref. : <https://www.englishclub.com/esl-exams/ets-toeic-practice-7.htm>

**.....Thank you for your participation.....**



## **BIOGRAPHY**

Name	Ms. Waranya Sanjit
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Work Position	Senior Sales Administrator, ABB Limited

