



**ATTITUDES OF THAI EMPLOYEES TOWARDS USING
BUSINESS ENGLISH AS A LINGUA FRANCA IN
INTERNATIONAL COMPANIES IN BANGKOK**

BY

MISS TADMALA DHARMAJIVA

**AN INDEPENDENT STUDY PAPER SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL
FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS IN CAREER ENGLISH FOR
INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION
LANGUAGE INSTITUTE
THAMMASAT UNIVERSITY
ACADEMIC YEAR 2017
COPYRIGHT OF THAMMASAT UNIVERSITY**

**ATTITUDES OF THAI EMPLOYEES TOWARDS USING
BUSINESS ENGLISH AS A LINGUA FRANCA IN
INTERNATIONAL COMPANIES IN BANGKOK**

BY

MISS TADMALA DHARMAJIVA

**AN INDEPENDENT STUDY PAPER SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL
FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS IN CAREER ENGLISH FOR
INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION
LANGUAGE INSTITUTE
THAMMASAT UNIVERSITY
ACADEMIC YEAR 2017
COPYRIGHT OF THAMMASAT UNIVERSITY**

THAMMASAT UNIVERSITY
LANGUAGE INSTITUTE

INDEPENDENT STUDY PAPER

BY

MISS TADMALA DHAMAJIVA

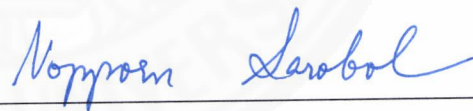
ENTITLED

ATTITUDES OF THAI EMPLOYEES TOWARDS USING BUSINESS ENGLISH
AS A LINGUA FRANCA IN INTERNATIONAL COMPANIES IN BANGKOK

was approved as partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts in Career English for International Communication

on May 24, 2018

Chairman



(Associate Professor Nopporn Sarobol)

Member and Advisor



(Sichon Koowuttayakorn , Ph.D.)

Dean



(Associate Professor Supong Tangkiengsirisin, Ph.D.)

Independent Study Paper Title	ATTITUDES OF THAI EMPLOYEES TOWARDS USING BUSINESS ENGLISH AS A LINGUA FRANCA IN INTERNATIONAL COMPANIES IN BANGKOK
Author	Miss Tadmala Dharmajiva
Degree	Master of Arts
Major Field/Faculty/University	Career English for International Communication Language Institute Thammasat University
Independent Study Paper Advisor	Sichon Koowuttayakorn, Ph.D
Academic Years	2017

ABSTRACT

The study aims to investigate the attitudes of Thai working employees towards using business English as a lingua franca (BELF) in international companies, as well as explore the difficulties they encountered while communicating in English in the workplace. The sample of the study was 53 Thai employees working in various positions, fields, and companies in Bangkok, Thailand. The main instrument of the study was a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire that was distributed to a sample of Thai employees working in international companies by convenience sampling. Generally, the results show that Thai employees in this study had positive attitudes towards using English for business purposes, and they were well aware of the importance of English in business world nowadays. Despite their positive attitudes, the respondents reported having major difficulties with BELF due to insufficient knowledge of business English. They also believed business English language curriculums should cover topics such as intercultural knowledge and technical terms in order to better prepare Thai learners/users for global business communication. The findings of the study can be beneficial for international companies in terms of providing appropriate staff support and training regarding BELF for more effective business interactions.

Keywords: Business English language as a lingua franca (BELF), Lingua franca, Attitude, Thai Employee, International Company



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, I would like to express my deepest gratitude and appreciation to my advisor, Dr. Sichon Koowuttayakorn, who always provided me with valuable advice, assistance, understanding and kind support. Without her, my research would not have been successful. I was truly blessed to have her as my advisor.

Many profound thanks are extended to all the lecturers, teachers, and staff in the Career English for International Communication program, Language Institute, Thammasat University, for passing on their knowledge, experience, and assistance throughout the years of my study.

My appreciation also goes to the participants for their valuable time in answering and giving comments in the questionnaires. I also wish to thank my beloved friends who helped me with the data collection.

Many thanks go to my classmates for their warm friendships during my years of study. I will definitely remember the wonderful times in our classrooms.

Finally, special thanks go to my family for their constant love, support and encouragement, which enabled me to achieve my academic goal.

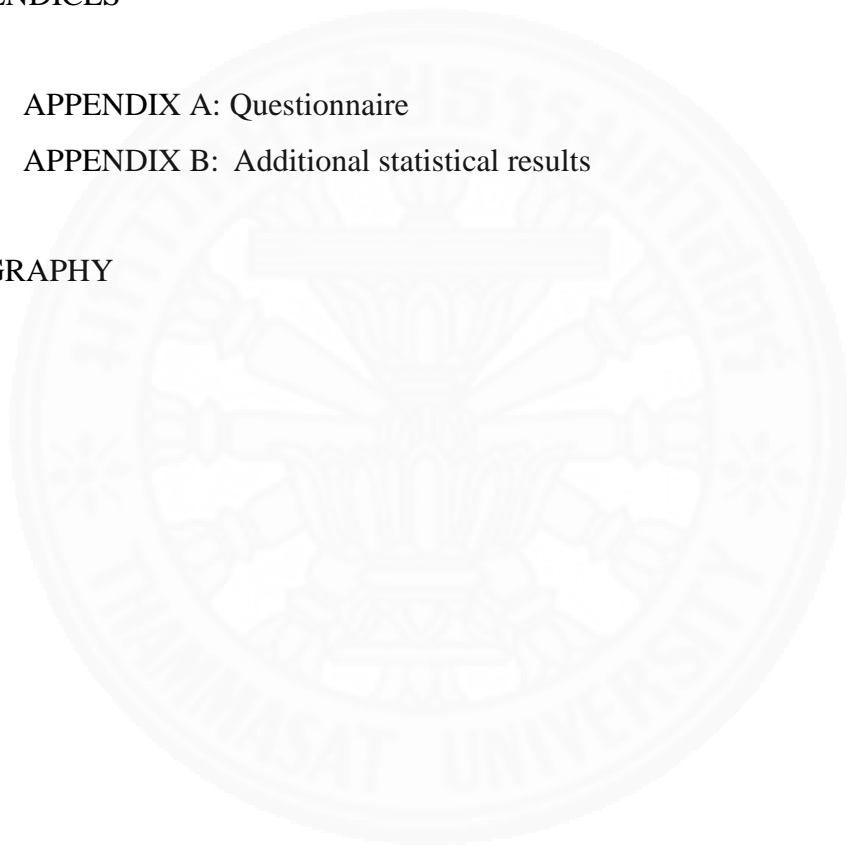
Miss Tadmala Dharmajiva

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
LIST OF TABLES	vii
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	
	1
1.1 Background of the study	1
1.2 Research questions	2
1.3 Research objectives	2
1.4 Definition of terms	2
1.5 Scope of the study	3
1.6 Significant of the study	3
1.7 Limitation	3
CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE	4
2.1 English as a lingua franca	4
2.1.1 Definition and Concept of ELF	4
2.1.2 English as a Lingua Franca in ASEAN	5
2.1.3 The Roles of English as a Lingua Franca in Thailand	7
2.2 Business English as a lingua franca	8
2.2.1 International business	8
2.2.2 Definition and Concept of Business English as a Lingua Franca	9
2.3 Theory of attitude	11
2.3.1 Definition and Concept of Attitude	11
2.3.2 Measurement of attitude	12
2.4 Relevant research	13

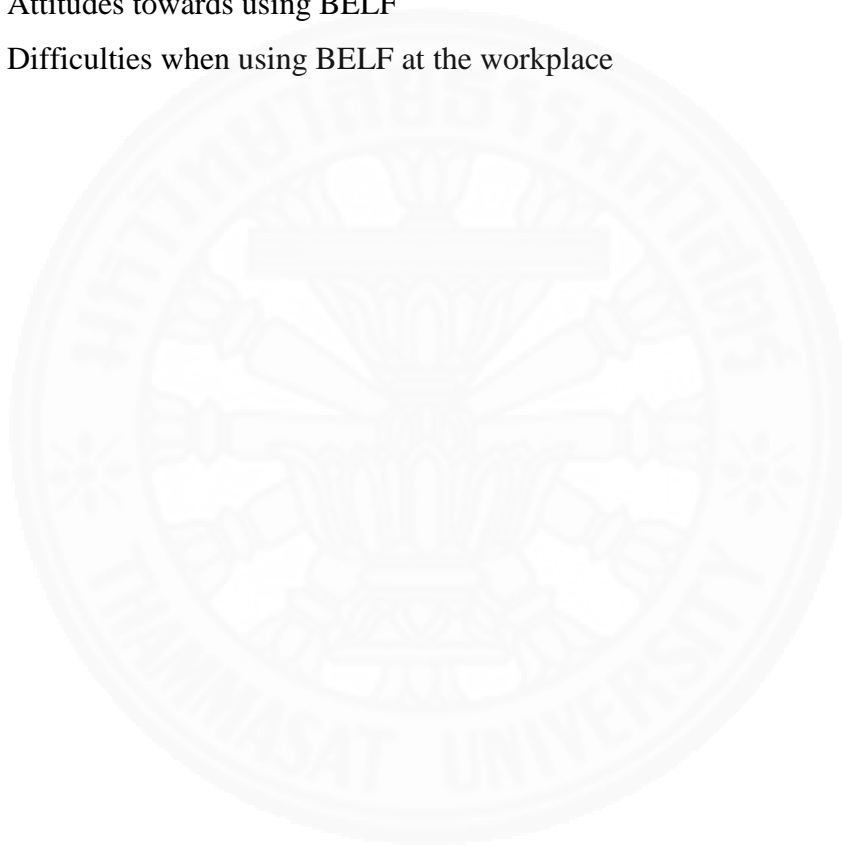
CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	15
3.1 Participants	15
3.2 Research tool	15
3.3 Procedures	16
3.3.1 Data collection	16
3.4 Data analysis	16
CHAPTER 4 RESULTS	18
4.1 Demographic information	18
4.2 Thai employee's attitudes towards using BELF in the workplace	21
4.3 Thai employee's difficulties during using BELF in the workplace	23
4.4 Additional opinions towards using Business English	25
4.4.1 Opinion regarding problems during communication with business partners in English	25
4.4.2 Opinion regarding problems during communication with business partners in English	27
CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS	28
5.1 Summary of the study	28
5.1.1 Objectives of the study	28
5.1.2 Subjects, Material, and Procedures	28
5.2 Summary of the findings	28
5.2.1 Demographic information	29
5.2.2 Frequency of English language use	29
5.2.3 Respondents' English language skills	29
5.2.4 Attitudes towards using BELF in the workplace	29
5.2.5 Difficulties when using BELF in the workplace	30
5.2.6 Additional opinions and suggestions	30
5.3 Discussion	31

5.3.1 Attitudes towards using BELF in the workplace	31
5.3.2 Difficulties when using BELF in the workplace	32
5.4 Conclusion	33
5.5 Recommendations for future study	34
REFERENCES	35
APPENDICES	
APPENDIX A: Questionnaire	40
APPENDIX B: Additional statistical results	44
BIOGRAPHY	48



LIST OF TABLES

Tables	Page
3.1 Rating scores	17
4.1 Demographic Information of the Respondents	18
4.2 Frequency of English language skills used at work	20
4.3 Self-rated English language proficiency by skill	20
4.4 Attitudes towards using BELF	21
4.5 Difficulties when using BELF at the workplace	23



CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

Nowadays, the expansion of global economics is leading to an increasing number of cross-border business partnerships and international business co-operations. This results in more contact between business people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Many languages have been gaining more roles in business professions, especially English. English language is considered a major language for business communication because it is used internationally as a ‘lingua franca’ by both non-native and native English speakers.

Communication in a business context focuses on the achievement of business objectives such as making deals or reaching agreements. Business interactions are mainly in the form of negotiations, presentations, socializing, and meetings. In order to conduct a successful business, effective communication skills are very important. Recently, an English language and business communication researcher introduced a new concept of English as a lingua franca in a business context known as ‘BELF’. BELF is defined as “uses in communication between speakers with different first languages” (Seidlhofer, 2005, p. 229). In brief, it is the use of English as the language of communication between business professionals for whom English is not the first language (Gajst, 2014). It can be interpreted that BELF is the use of English in international business contexts to conduct business between individuals and companies from different parts of the world.

1.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study aims to answer the following questions:

1.2.1 What are the attitudes of Thai employees towards using business English as a lingua franca in international companies?

1.2.2 What are the difficulties that Thai employees encounter while communicating in English in the workplace?

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1.3.1 To investigate Thai employees' attitudes towards using English as a lingua franca as a medium of communication in the workplace.

1.3.2 To examine the obstacles Thai employees encounter while communicating in English for business purposes.

1.4 DEFINITION OF TERMS

The definition of terms of this study is as follows:

Business English language as a lingua franca refers to the use of English as a medium or common language to communicate between Thai employees with foreign business partners in the workplace.

Thai employee refers to a Thai citizen who works either in an international company or in a position in which using English is a requirement for daily business communication.

Attitude of employee refers to the feelings and reactions of Thai employees towards the use of English as a business lingua franca in the workplace.

International companies refer to foreign organizations that have established their headquarters in one country and also set up a branch or business operations in Thailand.

1.5 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of the study was limited to investigating the attitudes of 53 Thai employees who either worked in international companies or were in a position that required them to interact with foreigner business partners outside of Thailand. Their job responsibilities demanded daily business communication with people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and BELF, therefore, was used as a main contact language to manage workflow. The study was also limited to only companies located in Bangkok, Thailand.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The results of this study may be valuable for international organizations or businesses that are characterized by cultural diversity or consist of employees who are from multilingual backgrounds. The findings that reveal the feelings and opinions of Thai employees towards using BELF may help such organizations be aware of the difficulties that their employees frequently face during BELF communication at work. The results of the study, therefore, may benefit such organizations in terms of increasing their employees' positive attitudes towards working in multilingual settings, as well as helping them improve language skills for more effective business interactions. Additionally, the results of the study can be of benefit in terms of helping them understand their strengths and weaknesses in BELF and thus preventing future miscommunication or misunderstandings among multilingual and multicultural English language users. A better understanding of their BELF competency will help them to handle difficulties of communication more effectively.

1.7 LIMITATIONS

The data of the present study drew from a small sample using the convenience sampling technique; therefore, the results might not be representative of the whole population.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter will present the theoretical concepts and definitions of (1) English as a lingua franca (ELF), (2) Business English as a lingua franca (BELF), (3) Attitude, and (4) Relevant studies.

2.1 ENGLISH AS A LINGUA FRANCA (ELF)

2.1.1 Definition and Concept of ELF

The term ‘English as a lingua franca’ or ‘ELF’ is defined by Firth (1999) as ‘a contact language’ between communicators who share neither a common culture nor language background, and whom chose English as a medium of communication. Similarly, Jenkin (2007) defines ELF as a common language choice among different lingua cultural background speakers and as a world language used mainly among non-native speakers, often from different first language (L1) backgrounds. Kirkpatrick (2012) also reconfirms that ELF is the use of English as medium of communication by people who do not speak the same native language, and ELF interactions mostly involve people for whom English is not their L1 or mother tongue.

In brief, ELF is generally understood as the use of English language among speakers who do not share both cultural backgrounds and native languages; thus, English is the first language choice for their communication in different purposes. Because ELF acts as the common language, it does not depend on the correctness of Standard English structure to produce effective communication. The pattern of ELF can be flexible, but the meaning has to achieve the communicative goal and mutual understanding. As Seidhofer (2011) explains, “ELF is not a variety of English with clearly demarcated formal linguistic properties to be set against some institutionalized norm of the so-called standard language, but as the variable exploitation of linguistic resources” (p. 110).

The concept of ELF entails that English in the role of lingua franca can be effectively used without conforming to the norms of Standard English because ELF speakers naturally interpret their assumption based on their own linguistic behavior.

In linguistic studies, there is a common misunderstanding between ELF and the concept of World Englishes; in fact, there is a distinction between them. On the one hand, World Englishes mainly refers to the reflection of local culture and the expression of identity, while ELF emphasizes the mutual understanding among communicators. ELF focuses on the way “people from different lingua-cultural backgrounds appropriate the resources of the language and exploit its virtual meaning potential as required in different contexts and purposes” (Seidlhofer & Guido, 2014, p. 1).

As English is not only used intranationally but also internationally, Seidlhofer (2014) divides English as a lingua franca functions into two levels: a local and a global one. ELF at the local level refers to an official or a common language that citizens use to reach a mutual understanding in one country. The global level, on the other hand, is the use of ELF as a communication tool among communicators from different countries and different first languages. Furthermore, the goal of ELF is to create effective communication without conforming to native speakers’ norms of usage or Standard English (Guido, 2014). ELF users are from different languages and cultural backgrounds, and thus, they naturally interpret and interact according to the norms of communicative behaviors and usages of their own languages and cultures.

Nowadays, the role of English as a lingua franca has expanded enormously. It is used in global business, politics, and other international cooperation. The Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) is a good case study of the use of English as a lingua franca among South East Asian nations.

2.1.2 English as a Lingua Franca in ASEAN

There is increasing interest in ELF in an Asian context in light of the rising role of English in international cooperation (Cheng, 2012). Global business, international organizations, and multinational companies use English as a tool to connect different parts of the world. English is required in the business community as many business partners do not share native languages. Being able to communicate in English removes the barriers, creates effective communication, and contributes to international cooperation in various aspects.

Asia is a region of cultural and linguistic diversity and English often serves as an official or semi-official language in the region. The importance of English has grown rapidly as a lingua franca in Asia, particularly among ASEAN member states. The Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) is a regional cooperation that aims to promote economic, political, and security in South East Asia region. The organization consists of 10 member states: Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Myanmar, Vietnam, Philippines, Brunei, Cambodia, Singapore and Laos. ASEAN has an approximate area of 4,435,670 square kilometers with population of nearly 640 million (Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development, 2017). In 2007, the ASEAN Charter contained an article stating that English should be the only working language of ASEAN. English was finally adopted as the official language of ASEAN after the establishment of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) in 2015.

In contrast with the European Union, where there are more than twenty official languages in the organization, English was chosen as the working language of ASEAN member states. This decision has led to an increasing role for English in the Asia-Pacific Region as an Asian lingua franca (Kirkpatrick, 2012). The official establishment of regional economic integration called the ASEAN Economic Community or AEC is a vital step for the ASEAN member states because it provides an opportunity for a free labour market among the ten ASEAN member countries. Accordingly, skilled and professional workers who have excellent English language proficiency will have more opportunities for job positions within ASEAN countries since English language is required for international communication in both the private and public sectors. For Thailand, Thai people are more concerned about improving their English language skills because well-paid jobs are highly competitive, and it is quite difficult for Thai workers to compete against applicants from the Philippines or Singapore whose English language proficiency is generally higher.

ASEAN is an interesting region for ELF study because of the historical background of its member states. According to Kachru (1985), there are two distinct categories relevant to his theory about the South East Asian region: the outer circle and the expanding circle. Malaysia, Brunei, the Philippines, Myanmar, and Singapore

can be classified as the ‘outer circle’ countries because of their colonial backgrounds. English has played a major role in their cultures as seen in the varieties of English used by the people.

On the other hand, the expanding circle countries include Thailand, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, and Indonesia. Kachru’s formulation describes the Expanding Circle as “the regions where the performance varieties of the language are used essentially in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) contexts” (Kachru, 1985, p. 367). There is obvious evidence that English is playing an increasingly significant role in each country in the expanding circle. That is, English is not only being used in a foreign language context, but also as a lingua franca or a medium of communication between the countries. Moreover, English is obligatory as the first foreign language and a medium of instruction in the expanding circle countries.

Thailand is one of the ASEAN member states and an expanding circle country, which is considered the least familiar with English language due to its historical background. After the official establishment of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) in 2015, Thai employees have to put more effort into learning English since skilled and professional workers with excellent English language proficiency will have more opportunities than other applicants for job positions. Moreover, English language is a requirement for international communication in both the private and public sectors.

2.1.3 The Role of English as a Lingua Franca in Thailand

Thailand is considered a country with a short history of English language involvement compared with many countries in South East Asia because it was never colonized by a European country (Kirkpatrick, 2009). However, English language is currently perceived as an essential lingua franca to link Thailand commercially, culturally and intellectually with other countries, especially among ASEAN members (Baker, 2010). The Ministry of Education has played a significant role in preparing Thailand to be ready for the AEC. The government has implemented many projects to increase Thai citizens’ English language proficiency, particularly their communication skills. With ASEAN awareness and professional qualifications in

mind, the Thai Ministry of Education organized a “Let’s learn English” program to ensure that Thai citizens realize the importance of English language and are eager to improve their language capability. The program especially targets those who have fewer opportunities to move forward with their academic path and who need to prepare themselves to communicate with nearby ASEAN countries (Chongkittavorn, 2012).

For instance, in the Thai tourism business, ELF is an urgent skill that workers should acquire in order to create satisfaction among foreign tourists (Sathiracheewin, 2012). Effective communication in English contributes good image of hospitality and satisfies international visitors. If Thai people lack English communication skills, it is difficult for tourists to understand and to be satisfied with their trips in Thailand (Sittisak, 2013). Tipmontree (2015) discovered that the main obstacles of Thais’ English as a lingua franca were confusing English grammar, low confidence in speaking skill, a lack of understanding, and unfamiliarity with foreign accents. Baker (2012) concluded that as Thais may have to interact with tourists from different cultural backgrounds, improving their English skills is obviously not enough. In order to use ELF effectively, pragmatic competence, linguistic knowledge, and intercultural competence should also be developed in the Thai educational system since they are keys for successful intercultural communication.

2.2 BUSINESS ENGLISH AS A LINGUA FRANCA (BELF)

2.2.1 International business

Economic globalization is leading to an increasing number of cross-border business partnerships and international business co-operations. This also results in increasing contact between business people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Gajst, 2014). Communication in a business context usually focuses on the achievement of business objectives such as making deals or reaching agreements, and thus, business interactions mainly come in the form of negotiations, presentations, socialization and meetings. In order to conduct successful business deals or agreements, effective communication skills are very important for business people to. International business cooperation occurs through numerous communicative channels

such as verbal, print, and digital. International trade and investment entail linguistic demands especially in negotiations. In order to achieve these business goals, English language is adopted as a communicative tool in such contexts. English has been used in the globalization of international acquisitions and mergers since 1980 (Kankaanranta, 2009), and this has led to new types of cross-border businesses and intercultural communication.

The term ‘intercultural communication’ refers to communication among people with different origins and cultural backgrounds. This means that the speakers share neither linguistic nor cultural traditions. During intercultural business communication, when one party is not capable of switching over to another party’s mother tongue, a lingua franca is a preferred choice for effective communication between business partners. In multicultural companies, English is typically used as a lingua franca in the corporate functions of management, communication, finance, and accounting. In many cases, English plays the same role in multicultural organization as a native language does in domestic or monolingual companies as it is widely used to achieve various business goals (Kankaanranta, 2005). The powerful role of ELF in global business has led to a new concept in business communication known as ‘BELF’ or ‘Business English as a lingua franca’, which refers to the use of English in international business to conduct business between individuals and companies from different parts of the world. The definition and concept of BELF will be described in the next section.

2.2.2 Definition and Concept of Business English as a Lingua Franca (BELF)

Recently, English language and business communication researchers have created the new concept of BELF or Business English as a lingua franca. BELF is defined as “uses in communication between speakers with different first language in business context” (Seidlhofer, 2005, p. 229), or the use of English as the language of communication between business professionals whose first language is not English (Gajst, 2014). Therefore, BELF refers to the use of English in international business for interactions between individuals and companies from different parts of the world. Charles and Kanraanranta (2005) add that BELF refers to the use of English as a

neutral and shared communication code. It is considered neutral because none of the speakers can claim it as her/his first language. BELF has three distinctive features:

1. BELF is a neutral and shared communication system for non-native English speakers because it can be used as a common tool for all communicators. BELF language competence is convenient for users to access because it focuses on the effectiveness and accuracy of the communication content and the knowledge of business context rather than on linguistic correctness and Standard English (Salminen, 2005).
2. BELF is extremely practical and uses English as its main way of communicating in business world (Seidlhofer, 2011). Not only has it greatly contributed toward the success of business communication for non-native speakers, it also focuses on comprehension rather than correct usage.
3. BELF has the characteristic of cultural diversity. Although BELF is influenced by various cultural factors, the communication patterns remain the same. The diversity of communicators' backgrounds contributes to communicative achievement since participants acknowledge and adapt to the differences (Kankaanranta & Planken, 2010).

Overall, the three BELF features discussed above show that BELF plays a significant role in the international business because it is used as a communicative tool to connect global businesses. One unique feature of BELF is that Standard English and linguistic correctness do not affect the business communication purposes. Planken (2010) argues that BELF is a practical language tool because it focuses on effective business communication rather than on the linguistic norms of Standard English. In this sense, BELF is seen as a simplified version of Standard English without complicated sentence structures, expressions and grammatical rules (Salminen, 2012). BELF is, therefore, a practical medium for speakers from any linguistic background and level of English proficiency. These features of BELF also facilitate effective communication and interaction among non-native English speakers because they are able to achieve their business goals without worrying about grammatical correctness and linguistic accuracy.

2.3 THEORY OF ATTITUDE

2.3.1 Definition and Concept of Attitude

Attitude is defined as the feeling towards particular persons, objects, and/or events. This evaluation of feeling can result in positive or negative attitudes toward an object (Schneider, 1988). Meyer (1989) explains attitude as favorable or unfavorable feelings toward someone or something. This evaluative reaction is reflected in the thinking or behavior of individuals. Although attitude has been defined in several aspects, the most commonly used definition states that attitude “contains some reference to a persisting tendency to prefer a particular aspect of one’s environment and the tendency can be reflected in the way one thinks, feels, behaves with respect to that point of view” (McDoughall & Munro, 1990, p. 87).

Attitude plays a major role in determining each person’s personality. It affects the way people perceive and act towards others as well as towards objects or events that they participate in. Hogg (1995) adds that attitude is the set of general feelings, beliefs, and social tendencies about particular people, objects, or events in a social perspective. In brief, an attitude is a feeling or positive or negative evaluation that individuals have towards objects, people, issues or events. Previously, the concept of attitude focused only on the study of social psychology, which scientifically investigated how people think, feel, and behave influenced by the imagined, actual, or implied presence of others (Fishbein, 1980). Later on, the study of attitudes was broadly applied to other academic fields to observe expectations as well as positive or negative feelings about particular groups of people, objects, or issues (Petty & Cacioppo, 1981).

In the linguistic field, attitude crucially links language and identity. Linguistic identity is a complex phenomenon that cannot be separated from other linguistic factors such as language attitudes and ideologies, and linguistic power, especially when the relationships among them are becoming more complex in postmodern studies (Pavlenko, 2004). Recently, there has been more research into language and

identity using rating scales to explore language attitudes, for instance, the study of correlations between ethnic identity and language.

2.3.2 Measurement of Attitude

Dawes (1972) defines measurement of attitude as “a joint function of the behavior of the attitudes being assessed and the system proposed by the investigator to assess them” (p. 147). Though difficult to define, attitudes can be measured in a simple way by requiring an individual to respond either in a positive or negative manner to a social object (Allport, 1935). Dawes, therefore, suggests two types of attitude measurements: representational and index measurement. Representational measurement is a process used to predict the behavior of a defined empirical rational system, whereas index measurement mainly focuses on future behavior.

Regarding attitude measurement, Likert (1932) explains that attitude is an assumption made on the basis of a complex of beliefs about particular objects. Thus, Likert (1932) suggests an attitude measuring method called ‘Thurstone’ or a ‘Likert scale’. This measurement is effective because of the low rate of random error variance. The scale is commonly applied in research in the form of questionnaires. Moreover, it is the most commonly-used approach to scaling responses in survey or academic researches. In the preparation of attitude measurement, Gibbon, Henerson and Morris (1987) suggest that because attitudes are complex, researchers should be aware of following:

1. Researchers should rely on inference since it is not possible to measure attitudes directly.
2. Feelings, beliefs and behaviors do not always match. Although, the components can be assumed as a single attitude, a focus only on the manifestation of a case may distort the data.
3. There is no guarantee that one-time measurement is reliable.

2.4 RELEVANT RESEARCH

Hujala (2009) investigated the identity, attitudes, and conception of ELF users. The research was conducted using a qualitative sociolinguistic approach through individual semi-structured interviews with four employees working for a Finnish global corporation. The researcher intended to use a small sample size to concentrate on respondents' personal experiences and attitudes towards using English as a lingua franca at the workplace. The findings indicated that the participants had positive attitudes towards using BELF at the workplace because they thought that ELF was cooperative and a successful communicative tool for business cooperation. Moreover, Finnish employees were willing to improve and to achieve high proficiency or the closest to native speaker level as they could. In regards to communicative difficulty, the respondents reported no serious issues during BELF communication, but there were a few comments regarding the misinterpretation of business terms.

Kankaanranta (2012) investigated English language as an issue in international internal communication. The research was conducted using a mixed-method approach with two main instruments: a questionnaire and interviews. The respondents were 2,000 employees from five companies in the fields of consulting, intelligence service, and logistics in Finland. The findings indicated a contrast between two language strategies, namely corporate language and BELF, in international internal communication. Overall, it seemed that the employees working for non-governmental organizations (NGO) were not satisfied with the multiple language strategy because of unclear and complicated guidelines, such as which, when, how, and why the three languages should be used. The participant perceived this multiple language strategy as a difficulty for communication at the workplace. On the other hand, BELF at the head office was preferable to using multiple languages in the workplace. Lastly, the results showed that both the employees and the organization were satisfied with having English as a business lingua franca.

Frederiksen (2014) researched the authentic use of BELF using the linguistic ethnography method with 200 employees from a multinational corporation in Sweden. The researcher studied all relevant functions and the frequency that the employees

used English on a daily basis. The respondents of the study were chosen by convenience sampling through volunteering. The data were obtained through daily observations during a full working day and interviews were used to complete the gaps. The findings indicated that the respondents used English widely in both work and social contexts. The respondents agreed to use both English and Swedish to better understanding the situations depending on the linguistic backgrounds, education experiences, and the way they were raised, However, they preferred to use Swedish more because they felt more integrated into the Swedish corporate culture and society, particularly at the workplace.

Rajprasit (2015) examined the role of English language using the frame of international workplace communication in the field of computer engineering. The study aimed to investigate the feelings of Thai computer engineers towards the use of English as the medium language in international communication. The study employed a mixed-method approach (i.e., questionnaires and interviews) with 40 respondents who were Thai computer engineers working in a medium-size international company in Bangkok. The findings revealed that the lack of English communication skills negatively affected their job performance because they were required to interact with foreign colleagues and clients. Some of the respondents stated that only technical knowledge was not sufficient in the engineering profession. The researcher, therefore, suggested that English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses should be developed to prepare future engineers to be competent in more than two languages, with English being one of them.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter aims at describing: (1) the respondents, (2) the research tool, (3) the procedure, (4) the data analysis and (5) the limitations of the present study.

3.1 PARTICIPANTS

The objective of this study was to discover the attitudes of Thai employees towards using English as a lingua franca in international companies in Bangkok, as well as to investigate the difficulties they encountered during communication with international business partners using English language. The respondents were 53 Thai employees working at various international companies in Bangkok. The criteria for choosing the participants were that they had to be Thai employees working for an international company where English was required in their daily communication at work. They were from mixed educational backgrounds, genders, ages, companies, and job positions. A quantitative approach was employed since the study aimed to investigate the attitudes of the respondents towards BELF.

3.2 RESEARCH TOOL

A questionnaire in English language related to attitudes towards using BELF was used as the main tool to collect the data. The questionnaire consisted of 38 close-ended question items and two open-ended questions, and it was distributed to the target group of respondents in April 2018. The questionnaire was adapted from the study by McKenzie and Meerleer (2012) and contained both close-ended and open-ended items. The questionnaire was divided into four sections. The first section contained close-ended question items designed to compile the participants' demographic information including their gender, age, job position, company, educational background, and frequency of using English to communicate in the workplace. The second section consisted of close-ended items aimed at exploring the respondents' attitudes towards the use of BELF. In this section, the respondents were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement with 15 statements using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly

agree). The third section asked for the participants' opinions regarding the difficulties they experienced with the use of BELF in the workplace. This last section was open-ended and the respondents were free to provide opinions and suggestions regarding the issue.

3.3 PROCEDURES

3.1.1 Data Collection

The paper questionnaire was administered to the respondents between 1– 30 April 2018. The questionnaire was entirely in English and consisted of 38 close-ended question items and two open-ended questions. It was distributed to the target group of Thai employees working in various international companies and businesses through the convenience sampling method. Before the actual distribution, the researcher conducted a pilot survey with five respondents to verify the quality and correctness of the questionnaire items. There were a few changes made to avoid bias and unclear answers. After the data collection, the researcher checked the questionnaire to ensure that the respondents had completed all of the items before analyzing the data.

3.4 DATA ANALYSIS

The quantitative data from the questionnaires was analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences on Personal Computer (SPSS/PC) as follows:

Section 1: Respondents' background information was analyzed and summarized in frequencies and percentage.

Section 2 and 3: A five-point Likert scale investigating the participants' attitudes in communicating with business partners in English language was interpreted according to the criteria below:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Mean Score Range} &= \frac{\text{Maximum Score} - \text{Minimum Score}}{\text{Range}} \\ &= \frac{5-1}{5} = 0.8 \end{aligned}$$

Table 3.1
Rating Scores

Mean Score Range	Level of agreement (Section 2)	Level of frequency (Section 3)
4.21 – 5.005	Very High	Always
3.41 – 4.204	High	Often
2.61 – 3.403	Moderate	Neutral
1.81 – 2.602	Low	Rarely
1.00 – 1.80	Very low	Never

Section 4: Open-ended questions were used to obtain Thai employees' additional opinions and suggestions regarding effective ELF communication in the workplace. The data was summarized and used to explain the difficulties Thai employees faced during the use of BELF. The findings were categorized according to the themes of major problems that occurred during communication and the most important English language skills that they would like to improve.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This chapter demonstrates the results of the study based on the data that was collected from the questionnaires. The data were analyzed using the SPSS program to find the means and standard deviations. The chapter is divided into three parts based on the three sections of the questionnaire, which were 1) respondents' demographic information, 2) their attitudes towards using BELF, and 3) the difficulties they faced during BELF communication.

4.1 DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

This section reveals the general demographic data of the respondents, which are shown in the following table:

Table 4.1

Demographic Information of the Respondents

Demographic information	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1. Age		
21-30 Years old	19	35.8%
31-40 years old	26	49.2%
41-50 years old	4	7.5%
51-60 years old	4	7.5%
Total	53	100.0%
2. Gender		
Male	11	20.8%
Female	42	79.2%
Total	53	100.0%
3. Highest degree of education		
Bachelor's Degree	23	43.4%
Master's Degree	30	56.6%
Total	53	100.0%
4. Current Job Position		
Accountant	5	9.43%
Administrative Officer	1	1.89%
Analyst	2	3.77%
Assistant Accounting Manager	1	1.89%
Assistant Manager	1	1.89%
Associate Director	2	3.77%
Business Owner	2	3.77%
Business Partner	1	1.89%

Business Coordinator	1	1.89%
Business Development Executive	1	1.89%
Cabin crew	1	1.89%
Ceramic maker	1	1.89%
Communication Consultant	1	1.89%
Diplomat	1	1.89%
Engineer	1	1.89%
English teacher	2	3.77%
General Manager	1	1.89%
Graphic Designer	2	3.77%
Ground Service Officer	1	1.89%
Guest service agent	1	1.89%
Marketing	1	1.89%
Office manager	1	1.89%
Officer	3	5.66%
Online tutor	1	1.89%
Personal assistant	1	1.89%
Press and Public Relations Officer	1	1.89%
Product information officer	1	1.89%
Property Manager	1	1.89%
Recruitment Manager	1	1.89%
Researcher	1	1.89%
Sale Coordinator	1	1.89%
Sale Executive	3	5.66%
Sales Manager	1	1.89%
Secretary	1	1.89%
Senior Human Resources Manager	2	3.77%
Specialist	1	1.89%
Team assistant	1	1.89%
Trade coordinator	1	1.89%
Wellness Trainer	1	1.89%
Total	53	100.0%

Table 4.1 demonstrates the total number of 53 Thai employees who responded to the questionnaire. The majority of the respondents (79.2%) were female, while male respondents accounted for 20.8%. Nearly half of the respondents (49.2%) were between the ages of 31 and 40. The rest were between 21-30 years old (35.8%), 41-50 years old (7.5%), and 51-60 years old (7.5%), respectively. In regard to the respondents' educational backgrounds, they reported having obtained either a master's degree (56.6%) or a bachelor's degree (43.4%). Most of them worked for international companies or organizations in different fields, such as real estate, accounting, and education, while a few of the respondents owned private businesses.

Table 4.2

Frequency of English language skills used at work

Skills used most at the workplace	Frequency	Percent
Listening skill	31	58.50%
Speaking skill	32	60.40%
Reading skill	37	69.80%
Writing skill	37	69.80%
None of them	0	0.00%

Table 4.2 shows the respondents' frequency of the use of English language in the workplace. The results reveal that they used all four English language skills at work. Among these skills, both reading and writing were reported as the most frequently used skills at 69.80%, followed closely by speaking skill (60.40%) and listening skill (58.50%).

Table 4.3

Self-rated English language proficiency by skill

Skill that respondents are good at	Frequency	Percent
Listening skill	29	54.7%
Speaking skill	32	60.40%
Reading skill	27	50.90%
Writing skill	20	37.70%
None of them	7	13.20%

Table 4.3 indicates that the respondents felt most confident in their speaking skill (60.40%), followed by listening (54.70%), reading (50.90%) and writing (37.70%) skills, respectively. Seven respondents (13.20%) reported that they were not good at any of these English language skills.

4.2 THAI EMPLOYEES' ATTITUDES TOWARDS USING BELF IN THE WORKPLACE

Table 4.4

Attitudes towards using BELF

Items	Statements	Mean	SD	Level of Interpretation	Ranking
1	Native English accents are easier to understand than other English accents.	3.2	1.06	Moderate	7
2	If I know English well, I will have better career opportunities.	4.2	1.37	Very high	1
3	Using English effectively creates a good image for business people.	4.2	1.31	Very high	1
4	I want to speak English like native speakers do.	3.8	1.34	High	5
5	Nowadays it is necessary to use English in business contexts.	4.1	1.22	High	2
6	My English skills are sufficient for communication in a business context.	3.4	1.12	High	6
7	English is my first language choice for business communication with non-Thai partners.	3.9	1.31	High	4
8	I am willing to use English at work.	4.0	1.28	High	3
9	Effective communication is more important than linguistic correctness and Standard	3.8	1.16	High	5

	English norms.				
10	When communicating with foreign business partners, I think it is important to understand their cultural backgrounds.	3.9	1.30	High	4
11	English is a useful communication tool to exchange ideas with foreign business partners.	4.1	1.20	High	2
12	I enjoy working in intercultural environments.	3.9	1.20	High	4
13	I keep improving my English skills because they are important for my career advancement.	4.0	1.26	High	3
14	Excellent communication in English can only be achieved by native speakers.	2.5	1.11	Low	8
Total		3.7	1.25	High	1-8

Table 4.4 demonstrates the results of the respondents' attitudes towards using BELF in the workplace. It can be seen that they agreed at a high level that English language was important for career opportunities (mean = 4.2) and that English created a good image for business people (mean = 4.2). The data also indicates that the respondents agreed at a high level that it was necessary to use English in businesses nowadays (mean = 4.1), and that English was a useful communication tool for exchanging ideas with foreign business partners (mean = 4.1). The respondents agreed at a moderate level with the idea that native English accents were easier to understand than other English accents (mean = 3.2). Additionally, they agreed at a low level with the statement that perfect communication in English can only be achieved by native

speakers (mean = 2.5), and they did not feel incapable when communicating with people who speak English fluently (mean = 2.5).

4.3 THAI EMPLOYEES' DIFFICULTIES WHEN USING BELF IN THE WORKPLACE

Table 4.5

Difficulties when using BELF in the workplace

Items	Statements	Mean	SD	Level of Interpretation	Ranking
1	I have communication problems with my foreign business partners.	2.55	0.72	Rarely	6
2	It is easier for me to communicate in Thai than in English at work.	2.94	1.17	Sometimes	2
3	I have to prepare an English script before oral presentations and discussions because I don't feel confident in my English speaking skills.	2.89	1.22	Sometimes	3
4	I want to speak English like native speakers do.	2.58	1.22	Rarely	5
5	I don't feel confident in my business communication skills.	2.25	0.99	Rarely	9
6	I feel embarrassed to communicate in English with Thai colleagues/customers.	2.09	1.05	Rarely	10
7	I misunderstand messages in English.	2.32	0.82	Rarely	8
8	I can understand non-native English speakers' accents more	2.72	0.79	Sometimes	4

	easily than native speakers.				
9	I do not have an opportunity to improve my English skills to reach a business level.	2.02	1.14	Rarely	11
10	I have to revise my reports and/or emails several times before sending them because I am not confident in my English writing skills.	2.51	1.11	Rarely	7
11	The Thai educational system did not provide me with sufficient knowledge in business English.	3.51	1.18	Often	1
12	Foreign business partners ask me to repeat myself because they do not understand what I say.	2.25	0.72	Rarely	9
13	I do not understand English technical terms used in business contexts.	2.58	0.88	Rarely	5
14	I cannot promptly respond to conversations in English because I need time to translate them into Thai.	2.09	0.83	Rarely	10
15	My English language skills have negative effects on my overall work performance.	1.72	0.76	Never	12
Total		2.47	0.97	Rarely	1-12

Table 4.5 reports the difficulties that the respondents faced during their BELF communication in the workplace. The results in this can be categorized into four groups according to the frequency the respondents faced such problems (i.e., often,

sometimes, rarely, or never). First of all, the results indicate that the respondents often felt that the Thai educational system did not provide them with sufficient knowledge in business English (mean = 3.51). This was the only statement that received a mean score higher than 3.41. Second, the respondents sometimes had the following difficulties during their BELF communication: they felt that it was easier to communicate in Thai than in English at work (mean = 2.94); and they had to prepare an English script before oral presentations and discussions (mean = 2.89). In addition, the respondents rarely responded promptly to conversations in English (mean = 2.09); they felt embarrassed to communicate in English with Thai colleagues/customers (mean = 2.09); and they did not have an opportunity to improve their English skills to reach a business level (mean = 2.02). Finally, the respondents never thought that English language skills had negative effects on their overall work performances (mean=1.72).

4.4 ADDITIONAL OPINIONS TOWARDS USING BUSINESS ENGLISH

4.4.1 Opinion regarding problems during communication with business partners in English

This part demonstrates problems the respondents faced during communication with their business partners in English. From the total number of 53 respondents, only one did not answer the open-ended section, which accounted for 2% of the overall respondents. The difficulties that the 52 respondents (98%) described were divided into seven categories: speaking, vocabulary, culture, listening, non-nativeness, writing, and none.

The problem most frequently mentioned by the respondents was listening, especially with non-native English speakers. The majority of the respondents complained that non-native English accents were difficult to understand or to assume the meanings. This obstacle in communication led to missing information and misunderstanding of details in conversations. Vocabulary was the second most commonly mentioned issue among the respondents. Most comments involved the

problem of understanding English slang and idioms because they were not familiar with such English expressions used by the native speakers. As a result, they easily misunderstood conversations or misinterpreted information. In addition, limited vocabulary knowledge was indicated as a major problem by some respondents. They added that they did not know how to select appropriate words to fit the context. Similarly, three of the respondents mentioned their limited knowledge of technical terms. As for speaking, the problem was caused by a lack of confidence in their English accent, pronunciation, or because it took them a long time to respond in English. Moreover, a few of the respondents commented that the problem arose when they had to initiate a conversation with foreign business partners, and they also felt nervous during the conversation.

Some of the respondents highlighted problems regarding different cultural backgrounds. For instance, they did not know how to interact with foreign partners due to their cultural differences, while others misinterpreted the meaning or misunderstood conversations because they lacked cultural knowledge in a given context. A few respondents also mentioned their interlocutors' low level of English proficiency as an obstacle in BELF communication. One of the respondents mentioned that his/her Japanese customer had very low English proficiency, which made it challenging for him/her to create successful communication. This suggests that problems in BELF communication can stem from either Thai employees themselves or their foreign business partners. Some respondents pointed out a problem regarding business English writing, especially because they were worried about correct English structure and grammar. For instance, one of the respondents mentioned that he/she was confused with tenses in English, which are obviously different from Thai. Because they thought that it was important to write correctly in the context of business communication, Thai employees in this study expressed their concern over appropriate writing according to Standard English norms.

4.4.2 Opinions regarding the English language skills for Business English communication that respondents want to improve

This section demonstrates the results of the respondents' opinions towards various BELF skills that they wanted to improve. A total of 50 respondents (94%) answered this open-ended question.

General business writing was pointed out by the majority of the respondents as the most important skill that they wished to improve. The comments indicate that report writing was a requirement for their work on a daily basis, and thus they needed to improve this skill. Similarly, e-mail writing was reported by some respondents as a necessary skill for everyday communication. Besides report and e-mail writing, a few respondents wanted to improve their academic writing and English grammar. The second most selected skill to improve was speaking skill. Many respondents stated that giving business presentations was a truly essential skill to have for every employee. General business conversations and business terms were also mentioned by some respondents as important aspects in regard to improving their speaking skills. Additionally, a few respondents mentioned public speaking as the main skill that they would like to learn more about.

It can be seen from the respondents' answers in this section that speaking skill and general business writing skill were the top two skills that Thai employees in this study were most interested in improving. A few respondents indicated that they would like to improve all four English language skills, while a few of them were already satisfied with their skills and did not need further training. In sum, this chapter presented the quantitative results of Thai employees' attitudes towards using BELF in international companies and businesses. In the next chapter, the discussion, conclusion, and recommendations for further study will be presented.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents (1) a summary of the study, (2) a summary of the findings, (3) the discussion, (4) the conclusion, and (5) recommendations for future research.

5.1 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

This section provides summary of the objectives, subjects, materials and procedures of the study.

5.1.1 Objectives of the study

The purposes of this study were to explore the attitudes of Thai employees towards using BELF at workplace, and to find out difficulties they faced during their interaction with foreign business partners

5.1.2 Subjects, Instruments, and Procedures

In this research, the respondents were Thai employees working in various international companies and businesses in Bangkok, Thailand. A questionnaire was used to evaluate the range of Thai employees' attitudes towards using BELF in the workplace. The questionnaire was distributed to 53 Thai employees during April 2018 through both paper-based and online methods. The questionnaire consisted of four sections asking about the participants' demographic information, as well as their attitudes and difficulties regarding the use of BELF in the workplace. The data were analyzed with the SPSS program and tables of mean scores and standard deviations were used to illustrate the different responses from the respondents.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

The results of the study can be summarized as follows:

5.2.1 Demographic Information

According to the data collected, 42 of the 53 respondents were female. A total of 42.9% of them were between 31-40 years old. More than half (56.6%) of the respondents had obtained a master's degree as their highest level of education. Regarding their occupations, they worked in diverse positions such as accountants, secretaries, and sales people but the majority of them worked in international organizations where interactions and communication in English was required.

5.2.2 Frequency of English language use

Regarding the respondents' frequency of English language use by skill, the results show that reading skill (69.8%) and writing skill (69.8%) were the most used English language skills in the workplace. Speaking skill (60.4%) and listening skill (58.5%) were used less frequently; however, the differences among these four skills were small.

5.2.3 Respondents' English language skills

Regarding respondents' ratings of how confident they were about their English language skills, speaking skill (60.4%) was most selected by the respondents as the English language skill that they were good at. In addition, the respondents also felt confident with their listening skill (54.7%), reading skill (50.9%) and writing skill (37.7%). Only 13.2% of the respondents did not feel confident about any skill.

5.2.4 Attitudes towards using BELF in the workplace

The questionnaire results reveal that the respondents agreed at a very high level that English language is important for career opportunities, and they believed that English creates a good image for business people. They also agreed at a high level that it is necessary to use English in businesses nowadays because it is a useful communication tool for exchanging ideas with foreign business partners. Besides, it was found that Thai employees in this study were willing to use English at work, and they want to improve their English language skills because it is necessary for their career advancement. Additionally, they considered English the first language choice for business communication.

With regard to the cultural aspect, the respondents agreed that understanding their foreign business partners' cultural backgrounds helped achieve effective communication, and that they enjoyed working in intercultural environments. The Thai employees in the present study also felt their English skills were sufficient for business communication. They wanted to speak English like native speakers did; however, they considered effective communication more important than linguistic correctness and Standard English norms. Moreover, the respondents agreed at a moderate level with the idea that native English accents were easier to understand than other English accents, while they agreed at a low level that perfect communication in English can only be achieved by native speakers. Last, but not least, they did not feel incapable when communicating with people who speak English fluently.

5.2.5 Difficulties when using BELF in the workplace

The results reveal that the majority of the respondents often thought that the Thai educational system did not provide them with sufficient knowledge in business English. This led to several difficulties in using BELF at the workplace including the misunderstanding of English business terms and a lack of confidence to communicate in English. In addition, they sometimes felt that it was easier to communicate in Thai than in English because they could communicate more effectively and faster in their mother tongue. The respondents also had to prepare an English script before oral presentations and discussions in English in order to deliver smooth and effective talks.

On the other hand, the respondents mentioned that they had problems responding to conversations in English and they rarely felt embarrassed when using English to communicate with Thai colleagues and customers. The results also indicate that Thai employees in this study spent time improving their English skills to reach a business level and they never thought that their English language skills had negative effects on their overall performance at work.

5.2.6 Additional opinions and suggestions

The major problem that respondents encountered during communication with business partners in English was listening, especially with non-native English

speakers. The respondents revealed that non-native English accents were difficult to understand or to assume meanings. This obstacle in communication led to missing information and misunderstanding details in conversations. Vocabulary was another frequent issue mentioned by respondents. This was due to a lack of understanding of English slang and idioms used by native speakers.

According to the opinions regarding their confidence in language skills, the respondents felt that general business writing was the most important skill that they would like to improve because their jobs required them to write in English on a daily basis. Besides business writing skill, speaking skill was also highlighted by many respondents as an essential skill for every position, particularly skills relating to oral presentations and general business conversations. On the other hand, only a minority of the respondents considered general business reading and listening as English skills that they need to enhance.

5.3 DISCUSSION

The purposes of this study were to investigate Thai employees' attitudes towards using BELF in the workplace, as well as to examine the obstacles they encountered while communicating in English for business purposes. According to the overall findings of the study, the respondents generally had positive attitudes towards using BELF in the workplace, and they were willing to improve their language skills for effective communication. There are two aspects, attitude and difficulty, that need to be discussed in accordance with the researcher's observations and study objectives.

5.3.1 Attitudes towards using BELF in the workplace

Overall, Thai employees in the present study had positive attitudes towards using BELF. The results showed that the respondents agreed at a high level that English language was important for their career opportunities and that English created a good image for business people. The findings, therefore, indicate that Thai employees perceived the importance of English language for their career advancement and success. In contrast, they agreed at a low level that perfect communication in English can only be achieved by native speakers and they did not feel incapable when

communicating with people who speak English fluently. Although Thailand has had little historical involvement with English language (Kirkpatrick, 2009), the results of the study show that they had positive attitudes towards it and were confident in using BELF as a communication medium in the workplace.

The results affirm the findings of Sathiracheewin (2012) that the effective use of English creates a good image for a speaker; this is especially true in business contexts where English can enhance an individual's credibility. In regards to career opportunities, the results of this study are in line with Rajprasit (2015). His participants, who were Thai computer engineers, also reported that they considered English important for their career development as they were required to interact with foreign colleagues and clients. The lack of English communication skills, therefore, could have a negative impact on their job performance and career advancement. All in all, it can be seen that English plays an important role in career growth in various fields of work, from engineering to the business sector in Thailand.

5.3.2 Difficulties when using BELF in the workplace

It can be seen from the results that Thai employees preferred to communicate in their native language more than in English at the workplace. Although the respondents stated that English language skills did not affect their overall work performance, the analysis reveals that using BELF at workplace was still problematic for them in various aspects such as in formal business writing. Similarly, Frederiksen (2014) found that his participants preferred using their native language, Swedish, in the workplace because they felt more integrated into the Swedish corporate culture and society as a whole when using their mother tongue.

The difficulties that the respondents encountered during their BELF communication reflect the fact that the Thai educational system did not provide them with sufficient knowledge in business English. This statement received the highest rate of agreement compared to other statements listed in the questionnaire. Their lack of sufficient knowledge in business English affected their ability to use English effectively for business communication. Their opinions in the open-ended section also

suggest that English education in Thailand should be reformed. As a matter of fact, the Ministry of Education has established several projects to boost Thai citizens' English language proficiency in recent years (Hodal, 2012). These projects aim to help Thai graduates find jobs in today's highly competitive world, as well as prepare them to work in the globalized work environment where English language is a requirement. In the long run, these government projects should be able to support the effective use of English among Thai workers in various fields.

Apart from educational reform, the respondents also suggested that business English language curriculums in Thailand should cover a greater variety of topics including intercultural knowledge and technical terms relating to business contexts. Because of economic globalization, there is an increase in multilingual and intercultural interactions. As a result, in order to achieve communication goals, it is necessary for English language users to understand both the linguistic and cultural backgrounds of communicators from different parts of the world (Gajst, 2014). Language lessons that enhance learners' intercultural awareness would better prepare Thai users of English for effective international business communication.

5.4 CONCLUSION

The study aimed to investigate the attitudes of Thai employees towards using BELF in international companies and to explore the difficulties they encountered while communicating in English in the workplace. The sample of the study was 53 Thai employees working in various positions, fields, and companies in Bangkok, Thailand. The design of the study consisted of collecting data and information regarding Thai employees' attitudes via a 5-point scale.

The main instrument of the study was a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire that was distributed to a sample of Thai employees working in international companies by convenience sampling. According to the results, the respondents had positive attitudes towards using English for business purposes, and they were well aware of the importance of English in the current business world. It is a good sign that Thai people are aware of the importance of improving their English language skills because it is

necessary for their career advancement. Companies may benefit from these findings as they can provide support and training to meet the needs of their employees. This will not only increase the quality of human resources but also lead to more effective communication in the organizations.

Despite their positive attitudes, the respondents reported having major difficulties due to their insufficient knowledge of business English. The results also suggest that they wanted to see English education in Thailand be reformed, and that business English language curriculum should cover topics such as intercultural knowledge and technical terms in order to better prepare Thai learners/users for global business communication.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDY

This research aimed to explore the attitudes of Thai employees towards using BELF at the workplace. It is hoped that the results of this study will be fruitful for both Thai employees and international businesses located in Thailand. Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made for future research:

5.5.1 This present study was conducted with only a small number of Thai employees (N=53); therefore, the results would be more reliable and valid if future studies are conducted with more participants working in more diverse companies.

5.5.2 Due to the limited time, the researcher could only focus on Thai employees' attitudes and difficulties towards using BELF; in fact, there are several factors influencing Thai employees' attitudes, such as culture, confidence, and education. Further studies can undertake more in-depth investigations or expand the scope to include such aspects in order to provide a better understanding and appropriate suggestions on how to overcome BELF difficulties.

REFERENCES

- Baker, W. (2012). English as a lingua franca in Thailand: Characterisations and implications. *English in Practice: Working Papers of the Centre for Global Englishes, 1*, 18-27. Retrieved from:
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/271834538_English_as_a_Lingua_Franca_in_Thailand_Characterisations_and_Implications
- Baker, W. (2015). *Culture and Identity through English as a Lingua Franca: Rethinking Concepts and Goals in Intercultural Communication*. Berlin: DeGruyter Mouton.
- Barančicová., J. & Zerzová, J. (2015). English as a Lingua Franca used at International Meetings. *JoLaCe Journal of Language and Cultural Education, 3*(49), 10-20. doi: 10.1515/jolace-2015-0018.
- Cogo, A. (2010). Strategic use and perceptions of English as a lingua franca. *Poznán Studies in Contemporary Linguistics, 46*(3), 295-312. Retrieved from:
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/268418548_Strategic_use_and_Perceptions_of_English_as_a_Lingua_Franca
- Cheng, L. (2012). The power of English and the power of Asia: English as lingua franca and in bilingual and multilingual education. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development, 4*(33), 370-391.
 doi: 10.1080/01434632.2012.661432.
- Cheung M. & Sung, C. (2016). Does accent matter? investigating the relationship between accent and identity in English as a lingua franca communication. *System, 60*, 55-65. doi:10.1016/j.system.2016.06.002.
- Firth, A. (2009). Doing not being a foreign language learner: English as a lingua franca in the workplace and (some) implications for SLA. *International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching, 47*(1), 127-156.
 doi:10.1515/iral.2009.006.

- Frederiksen, D. (2014). BELF in the workplace: a linguistic ethnographic study : An observation of English as a lingua franca used by employees at a Swedish company (Dissertation). Retrieved from <http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:su:diva-113418>
- Gajšt, N. (2014). Business English as a Lingua Franca – A Cross-Cultural Perspective of Teaching English for Business Purposes. *English Language Overseas Perspectives and Enquiries*, 11(2), 77-87. doi: 11. 77. 10.4312/elope.11.2.77-87.
- Guido, M. & Seidlhofer, B. (2014). English as a lingua franca: theory and practice. *Textus, English Studies in Italy*, 1, 7-16. doi: 10.7370/77482.
- Hélder, M. (2017). Perspectives on business English as a lingua franca in business communication. *Teacher Education and Curriculum Studies*, 2(5), 61-67. doi:10.11648/j.tecs.20170205.11.
- Henderson, M. E., Morris, L. L. & Fitz-Gibbon, C. T. (1987). *How to Measure Attitude*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Hodal, K. (2012, February 14). Thai schools urged to boost speaking. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from: <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2012/feb/14/thailand-speak-english-campaign>
- Jenkins, J. (2007). *English as a Lingua Franca: Attitude and identity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Jenkins, J. (2009). English as a lingua franca: interpretations and attitudes. *World Englishes*, 28, 200-207. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-971X.2009.01582.x.
- Jenkins, J. (2009). Exploring Attitudes towards English as a Lingua Franca in the East Asian Context. *Global Englishes in Asian Contexts*, 10, 40-56. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Kankaanranta, A. (2008). Business English Lingua Franca in intercultural (business) communication. *Language at Work - Bridging Theory and Practice*, 3(4). <https://doi.org/10.7146/law.v3i4.6193>

- Kankaanranta, A. & Salminen, L. (2010). "English? - Oh, it's just work!": A study of BELF user's perceptions. *Journal of English for specific purpose*, 29, 212-224. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.esp.2009.06.004>
- Kirkpatrick, A. (2010). English as a lingua franca and the multilingual model of ELT. *Language Teaching*, 44, 212-224. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444810000145>
- Kirkpatrick, A. (2012). English as an Asian Lingua Franca: the 'Lingua Franca Approach' and implications for language education policy. *Journal of English as a Lingua Franca*, 1, 121-139. doi: 10.1515/jelf-2012-0006
- McKenzie, R. (2007). *A quantitative study of the attitudes of Japanese learners towards varieties of English speech: aspects of the sociolinguistics of English in Japan* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from: <https://www.era.lib.ed.ac.uk/handle/1842/1519>.
- Meerleer, A. (2012). *Beliefs and attitudes towards English as a lingua franca: Native and non-native pronunciation* (Master's thesis). Retrieved from: https://lib.ugent.be/fulltxt/RUG01/001/891/513/RUG01-001891513_2012_0001_AC.pdf.
- Hujala, E. (2009). *English as a lingua franca in the workplace: One-size-fits-all?* (Master's thesis). Retrieve from: <https://jyx.jyu.fi/handle/123456789/22351>.
- Chongkittavorn, K. (2012, November 19). Why Thailand is crazy over AEC. *The Nation*. Retrieved from: <https://www.thaivisa.com/forum/topic/599088-why-thailand-is-crazy-over-asean-economic-community/>
- Rajprasit, K. & Saengchan, H. (2015). The English language & communication in the international workplace: an examination of Thai computer engineering professionals. *English Language Studies*, 21(3), 109-124. Retrieved from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/306030524_The_English_language_communication_in_the_international_workplace_An_examination_of_Thai_computer_engineering_professionals

- Sathiracheewin, J. (2012). *Attitudes of foreign tourists towards the ability of using English by Thais in the tourism industry*. (Master's thesis). Thammasat University Language Institute, English for Careers.
- Selmier, W. & Oh, H. (2012). International business complexity and the internationalization of languages. *Business Horizons*, 65, 189-200. doi: 10.1016/j.bushor.2011.11.006.
- Seidhofer, B. (2011). *Understanding English as a Lingua Franca*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.





APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

**ATTITUDES OF THAI EMPLOYEES TOWARDS USING BUSINESS
ENGLISH AS A LINGUA FRANCA IN INTERNATIONAL COMPANIES IN
BANGKOK**

This questionnaire is a part of a research paper submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master's Degree of Career English for International Communication, Language institute, Thammasat University. English questionnaire is used to measure the attitudes of Thai employees in regard to Business English as a lingua franca on an international company. Your response will be strictly confidential and will be used for academic purpose only.

If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Tadmala Dharmajiva at telephone number 083 635 5356 or e-mail: tadmajiva@gmail.com. Your cooperation in answering this questionnaire is highly appreciated.

This Questionnaire is divided into three sections :

Section 1. Demographic information

Section 2. Problems

Section 3. Opinions and suggestions towards using English as a lingua franca in international companies.

Section 1 : Please provide a response for each of the following questions:

1. Age: 21-30 Years old • 31-40 years old • 41-50 years old •
 51-60 years

2. Gender: • Female Male

3. Highest degree of education

• High School • Vocational School • Diploma
• Bachelor's Degree • Master's Degree

4. Current job position: _____

5. Department: _____

6. How often have you using English in your job?

• 100% Always 95% Almost always • 70% Frequently often

- 50% Sometime 20% Rarely 5% Hardly ever
- 0% Never

7. Which English language skills do you use most frequently at work?

- Listening skill • Speaking Skill
- Reading Skill • Writing Skill

8. Which skills do you think that you are expert in?

- Listening skill • Speaking Skill
- Reading Skill • Writing Skill

Section 2: Please check (✓) your agreement or disagreement with following statement when you interact with foreign communicators in English.

1 = Strongly disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly agree

No	Statement	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagr ee	3 Neutral	4 Agree	5 Strongly disagree
1.	Native English accents are easier to understand than other English accents.					
2.	If I know English well, I will have better career opportunities.					
3.	Using English effectively is a good image for business people.					
4.	I want to speak English like a native speaker does.					
5.	Nowadays it is necessary to communicate in English in business contexts.					
6.	My English skills are sufficient for communication in a business level.					
7.	English is my first language choice for business communication with non-Thai partners.					
8.	I am willing to use English language at work.					

9.	Effective communication is more important than linguistic correctness and Standard English norms.					
10.	When communicating with foreign business partners, I think it is important to understand their cultural backgrounds.					
11.	English is a useful communication tool to exchange idea with foreign business partners.					
12.	I enjoy working in intercultural environments.					
13.	I keep improving my English skills because they are important for my career advancement.					
14.	Perfect communication in English language is conducted only by Native speakers.					
15.	I feel incapable when communicating with people who speak English fluently.					

Section 3: Please check (✓) your agreement or disagreement with following statement when you interact with foreign communicators in English.

1 = Never 2 = Rarely 3 = Sometimes 4 = Often 5 = Always

No	Statement	1 Never	2 Rarely	3 Sometimes	4 Often	5 Always
1.	I have communication problems with my foreign business partners.					
2.	It is easier for me to communicate in Thai rather than in English at work.					
3.	I have to prepare English scripts before oral presentation and discussion because I don't feel confident in my English speaking skills.					
4.	I feel nervous to provide written and spoken information in English.					
5.	I don't feel confident in my business communication skills.					
6.	I feel embarrassed to communicate in English					

	with Thai colleagues/customers.					
7.	I misunderstand messages in English.					
8.	I can understand nonnative English speakers' accents more easily than native speakers'.					
9.	I do not have opportunity to improve my English skills to reach a business level.					
10.	I have to revise my report and/or email several times before sending it because I am not confident in my English writing skills.					
11.	Thai educational system does not provide me with sufficient knowledge in business English.					
12.	My English skills have negative effects on my overall work performance.					
13.	I do not understand English technical terms used in business contexts.					
14.	I cannot promptly respond to conversations in English because I need time to translate them into Thai.					
15.	Foreign business partners ask me to repeat the conversation because they do not understand what I say.					

1. Have you had any difficulties communicating with business partners in English?

Yes No

If yes, please briefly describe some major challenges you have encountered.

2. What do you want to improve in using English at the workplace?

APPENDIX B
ADDITIONAL STATISTIC RESULTS

Table 4.4 Attitudes towards using BELF

Items	Statements	Mean	SD	Level of Interpretation	Ranking
1	Native English accents are easier to understand than other English accents.	3.2	1.06	Moderate	7
2	If I know English well, I will have better career opportunities.	4.2	1.37	Very high	1
3	Using English effectively creates good image for business people.	4.2	1.31	Very high	1
4	I want to speak English like native speakers do.	3.8	1.34	High	5
5	Nowadays it is necessary to use English in business contexts.	4.1	1.22	High	2
6	My English skills are sufficient for communication in a business level.	3.4	1.12	High	6
7	English is my first language choice for business communication with non-Thai partners.	3.9	1.31	High	4
8	I am willing to use English at work.	4.0	1.28	High	3
9	Effective communication is more important than linguistic correctness and Standard	3.8	1.16	High	5

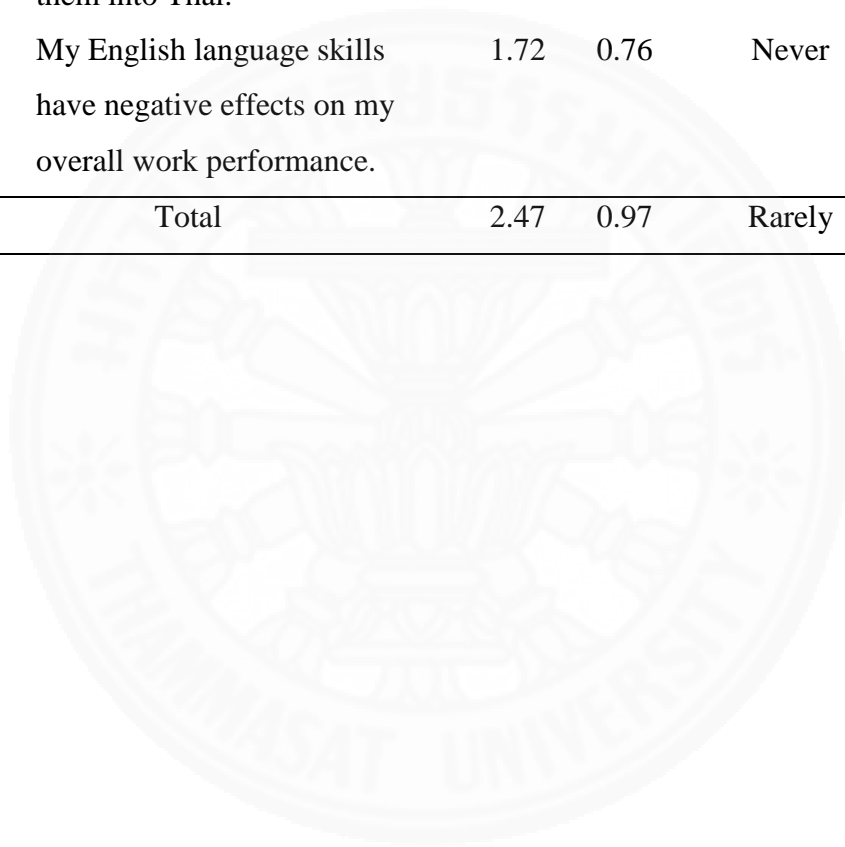
	English norms.				
10	When communicating with foreign business partners, I think it is important to understand their cultural backgrounds.	3.9	1.30	High	4
11	English is a useful communication tool to exchange idea with foreign business partners.	4.1	1.20	High	2
12	I enjoy working in intercultural environments.	3.9	1.20	High	4
13	I keep improving my English skills because they are important for my career advancement.	4.0	1.26	High	3
14	Perfect communication in English is conducted only by native speakers	2.5	1.11	Low	8
Total		3.7	1.25	High	1-8

Table 4.5 Difficulties of using BELF at workplace

Items	Statements	Mean	SD	Level of Interpretation	Ranking
1	I have communication problems with my foreign business partners.	2.55	0.72	Rarely	6
2	It is easier for me to communicate in Thai rather than in English at work.	2.94	1.17	Sometimes	2

3	I have to prepare English scripts before oral presentation and discussion because I don't feel confident in my English speaking skills.	2.89	1.22	Sometimes	3
4	I want to speak English like native speakers do.	2.58	1.22	Rarely	5
5	I don't feel confident in my business communication skills.	2.25	0.99	Rarely	9
6	I feel embarrassed to communicate in English with Thai colleagues/customers.	2.09	1.05	Rarely	10
7	I misunderstand messages in English.	2.32	0.82	Rarely	8
8	I can understand non-native English speaker's accents more easily than the native speakers.	2.72	0.79	Sometimes	4
9	I do not have an opportunity to improve my English skills to reach a business level.	2.02	1.14	Rarely	11
10	I have to revise my report and/or email several times before sending it because I am not confident in my English writing skills.	2.51	1.11	Rarely	7
11	Thai educational system does not provide me with sufficient knowledge in business English.	3.51	1.18	Often	1
12	Foreign business partners ask me to repeat the conversation because they do not understand	2.25	0.72	Rarely	9

	what I say.				
	I do not understand English	2.58	0.88	Rarely	5
13	technical terms used in business contexts.				
14	I cannot promptly respond to conversations in English because I need time to translate them into Thai.	2.09	0.83	Rarely	10
15	My English language skills have negative effects on my overall work performance.	1.72	0.76	Never	12
Total		2.47	0.97	Rarely	1-12



BIOGRAPHY

Name	Miss Tadmala Dharmajiva
Date of Birth	July 17, 1991
Educational Attainment	Academic Year 2014: Bachelor of Political Science International Relations, Comenius University in Bratislava, Slovak Republic
Work Position	Assistant to Diplomats Embassy of the Czech Republic in Bangkok
Scholarship	2010: Scholarships of the Government of the Slovak Republic
Work Experience	2016 – 2018 Regional Coordinator Savills (Thailand) Company Limited 2014 – 2016 Assistant to Diplomats Embassy of the Czech Republic in Bangkok