



**THE PROBLEMS OF ENGLISH E-MAIL WRITING
AMONG THAI WORKERS IN A LOGISTICS COMPANY**

BY

MR. WIRITHIPA KEPNIL

**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 2020
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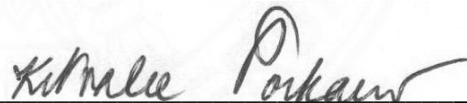
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IN A LOGISTICS COMPANY

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the degree of Master of Arts in Career English for International Communication

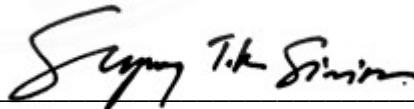
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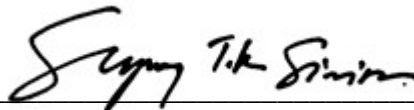
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ABSTRACT

English email writing is one problem for Thai workers in the logistics industry, which limits them on their career path. The present study aimed to examine the problems in email writing and providing suggestions on ways to improve it among Thai workers. The 130 participants, who typically used English to communicate at a logistics company, were obtained using the stratified random sampling method. The participants were asked to complete questionnaires containing four sections in order to explore the problems in email writing and gather suggestions for improvement. The results revealed that the participants' most common problem in writing email was the organization and format, followed by writing grammatically correct emails and word choice. Regarding the suggestions for improving English writing skills, the participants preferred to do self-study and have in-house training in English business writing skill provided by their company.

Keywords: Email, English email writing, Thai workers, Logistics company

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Mr. Wirithipa Kepnil

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

The logistics industry growing not only in Thailand but also in other countries in the world, which is connected to international trade. Within logistics networks there are suppliers, distribution centers, service operators, carriers, freight forwarders, importers, exporters, and more (Vielhaber, 2015).

Electronic mail (Email), electronic messages that are sent from one sender to one or more receivers through the internet, is an aspect of building business relationships and communication (Janfaza, Shahsavari, & Soori, 2014). International organizations have become a global scenario where employees from around the world increasingly interact (Guffey, Du-Babcock, & Loewy, 2016).

Email is widely used in international organizations. Email is an essential device to convey messages within a logistics network. English is used as a lingua franca in email as people come from different settings and social context and have different mother tongues (Guffey et al., 2016).

In Thai companies, most Thai employees can effectively utilize email without difficulties. In the digital era, Shahsavari (2014) states that technology influences communication among the people and facilitates doing business. It is estimated that on average more than 200 billion emails are sent and obtained every single day.

Most Thai employees in logistics companies view that people those who work in international companies should have high capability in English skills and they must communicate within internal and external organizations fluently (Kuntakhiaw, 2011). However, they seem to have some problems, for example, they do not understand how to write in English emails correctly in terms of formatting, content, intonation, netiquette, punctuation, spelling and clarifying when they would like to respond or reply to others. Since a message sent through email has no vocal or nonverbal cues, and people tend to read them more than once, messages “can be easily misinterpreted as being more aggressive than intended” (Friedman, 2003).

1.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study aimed to answer the following research questions.

1.2.1 What are the problems of English email writing among Thai workers in a logistics company?

1.2.2 What are the suggestions to enhance English email writing skills among Thai workers in a logistics company?

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This study had the primary objectives as follows:

1.3.1 To investigate the problems of English email writing among Thai workers in a logistics company

1.3.2 To provide suggestions to improve the English email writing skills among Thai workers in a logistic company

1.4 DEFINITION OF TERMS

To ensure a clear understanding of the particular terms in this study, the following definition of terms are presented.

1.4.1 Email refers to the medium of electronic messages that convey and transmit information from one sender to one or more receiver through an internet network.

1.4.2 English email writing skills refer to the ability to use skillful English email writing techniques including being conversational, professional, and courteous as well as using bias-free language and an appropriate language level.

1.4.3 Thai worker refers to employees in the logistics field working in an international freight forwarding office on Rama IV Road in Bangkok.

1.4.4 Logistics company refers to the workplace involved in the transportation and shipping process in a global environment where English has become the business language or lingua franca.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter reviews the relevant literature to the study on English email writing skills. This chapter is composed of five main ideas as follows. The first section provides a concise idea of email writing aspects including the definitions and viewpoints on using email. The second section discusses writing effective emails in the workplace. The third section provides the concept of effective communication for the logistics industry. The next section discusses the problems of email English writing and suggestions to improve of problems of email English writing. The last section presents the relevant research.

2.1 ASPECTS OF EMAIL

Communication is the key for every business. Communication skills, including writing skills, are one of most important abilities to for employees, both internally and externally among customers, clients, and instructors (Ranaut, 2018).

Is it “e-mail” or “email”? Technically, “e-mail” is correct as it is short for “electronic mail”; however, “email” is widely used and accepted today (Gilling, 2013). Email gained widespread popularity in the 1970s and 1980s, used primarily within administration offices, businesses, and computer science circles. Emails have replaced telephone calls and letters to a certain extent and has created new communication channels (Dürscheid & Frehner, 2013).

Electronic mail (e-mail), which combines features of both spoken and written (Nutpoung, 2013), is a common device not only to convey general information but also business communication. At present, people send emails to connect to others around the world every day . It is more simple, economical and efficient than writing letters to get in touch with someone who is far away, for instance, to exchange information, to submit greetings and invitations, or to send an internet link or some digital data, ranging from simple word documents to photo and videos (Dürscheid & Frehner, 2013).

In international organizations, employees spend a lot of time managing their daily tasks and cooperating with colleagues who are in different places. Using email is

the preferred method of communication in business when face-to-face communication is not available and there is no time to mail a written letter or memo (Hamilton & Kroll, 2017). Effective professional writing should be practical, factual, concise, explicit, and persuasive.

Dürscheid and Frehner (2013) emphasize the importance of using email in business and discussed the reasons why people prefer to use email rather than a letter or calling in particular situations. They summarize their viewpoint to support the framework as follows:

“Indeed, there are some advantages of a letter over email: A letter can transport an object; the receiver might pay more attention to a letter than to an email; a letter can also be received by people who do not use the Internet. How, then, is it that people often choose email to make an appointment or discuss problems? Why would they not phone in such situations? An email does not disturb the recipients at work and permits the senders to think over their word sand modify their sentences. Thus, it is not astonishing that people who work in the same office, for instance, frequently communicate via email. Another advantage is that “[email]” enables people to convey speedily the same information to many others”.

2.2 WRITING EFFECTIVE EMAILS

For effective communication in business, email writing should be practical, factual, concise, explicit, persuasive, and have the basic characteristics of professional writing such as clarity, using active voice, positive tone, completeness, using non-discriminatory language, and confident (Ranaut, 2018).

Hamilton (2017) indicates that even though instant messaging (IM) is often used in workplaces, email is still a better method of communication in a business setting when face-to-face communication is difficult and there is no time to send a written letter or memo. Email is one of the most popular applications in online networks. Employees use email in working life for different purposes because it is very convenient, rapid, low cost, and available for almost everyone who has a smartphone, PC or laptop.

Cullen (2019) points out that in all business writing, the audience is the top consideration. “Who” you are writing for will decide *how* you write your email. The reader will consider the tone, formality and content of the communication. Your email’s

recipient may be your colleague, customer or your employer. Each reader will have different background knowledge. If you understand and know your audience well, you will write a more effective email.

Business emails have a very specific style. They should be professional but brief and with enough information. Guffey et al. (2016) recommend that before sending any email, you must choose a communication channel. Email is appropriate for short paragraphs, include titles and bullets to simplify the feel of a message. It is especially effective for a message to multiple receivers and messages that must be archived. An email is also appropriate as a cover document when sending documents as attachments. Email is the standard form of communication within organizations. However, email is not a replacement for face-to-face conversations, telephone calls, or business letters. Face-to-face conversations or telephone calls are better choices if your goal is to convey enthusiasm or warmth, explain a complex situation, present a persuasive argument, or smooth a strong disagreement (Hamilton, 2017).

2.3 EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION FOR THE LOGISTICS INDUSTRY

The logistics industry is involved in receiving, producing, delivering cargo and products to the right place and in the correct quantities. Logistics includes the process of planning, implementing and manipulating procedures for the effective transportation and storage of cargo. And this includes services and relevant information from the source to consumption for the purpose of fulfilling customer requirements (Muhammad, Saabar, Hasan, Fiah, & Nor, 2014). Logistics industry is a growing industry not only in Thailand but also around the world. In some countries, especially in developed countries such as the United Kingdom, United States of America, Singapore, and Germany, the logistics industries has a crucial factor in international trade as well as globalization (Muhammad et al., 2014).

Logistics companies serves many modes of transport, such as air, water, and land transport, which includes rails or railways, road and off-road transport. Logistics and supply chain management are associated with the needs in the current trends in the industry. An effective communication system is important to support this industry. Good communication helps to make the decision process easier. Information and communication technology (ICT) are the instruments that can help reduce the main

logistics costs. In the logistics industry, ICT is helpful in electronic data interchange, direction and mode planning, electronics identification, electronics communication, managing claims, and tracking and tracing. The system enable the real-time dispatch of actual data. (Pokharel, 2005). Muhammad (2014) asserts that good communication is important in the logistics industry, and information technology is significant as it helps develop logistics operational competency.

2.4 PROBLEMS OF ENGLISH EMAIL WRITING

This section will explain the problems that obstruct businesspeople in using email English in an international workplace. Siripen (2014) states that the most problems about English emails of Thai staff relate to grammatical errors. It can be concluded that Thai staff lack writing skill, which need to be taught and learnt. Other problems are the use of lower cases in place of capitals and abbreviations, which are inappropriate for business situations (Hamilton, Parker, Smith, & Rossi, 1983).

Friedman and Currall (2003) mention that the biggest problem in email writing may be the tone that is used. Readers judge email messages critically, especially if the sender and receiver did not know each other prior to email contact. To reduce tone problems, Guffey et al. (2016) suggest avoiding long email messages, using short paragraphs, and including titles and bullets to simplify the feel of message. Here are just a few thing that can go wrong with email writing (Friedman & Currall, 2003).

It has no subject line to indicate key information.

It was sent from a personal email address with a nonprofessional handle.

It has no greeting or closing.

It has a misspelled word, an incorrect word.

It has negative and accusatory tone that will likely make the receiver angry.

It includes shorthand more appropriate to a text message.

2.5 RELEVANT RESEARCH

Luxsamee (2014) studied problems and needs in business English writing in an electronics company. The research surveyed the problems and needs of 50 participants using a questionnaire. The biggest problems were using correct grammar, sentence structure and a lack of knowledge about business writing. Their participants believed

that their English writing skills could be enhanced through a training class, followed by practicing by themselves. Writing skills, grammar usage and writing for reports, memo, letters or presentation respectively, were the skills they would like to improve.

Paithip (2014) conducted the research on email writing with engineers in Thailand. The results revealed that the participants believed their English email writing was effective and they did not have problem with email because the company has provided standard form to create email. Some of participants admitted that they have problems with grammar, vocabulary and expression. Also, they agreed that they need to train in business writing to write email more efficiently.

Kotisatheankul (2014) investigated errors in English business writing among Thai staff at Mitsui & Co., Ltd. The study employed random sampling and snowball sampling to select 30 participants. The participants were required to complete a questionnaire and the data were analyzed using the program ATLAS.ti. The findings showed that the most problematic aspect in email writing was sentence fragments. The major cause of grammatical errors was breaking long sentences into shorter sentences. The results imply that Thai staff lack writing skill, which needs to be taught and learnt.

Pakornrat (2012) studied problems in communication in English business writing among salespersons working in intercultural companies in Bangkok. The research aimed to identify the problems in English business writing and find out the recommendations to enhance the efficiency of English business writing. A questionnaire was used to collect the data from 120 participants. The results showed that the most of participants admitted that they had grammar proficiency problems that affected their business writing. The researcher recommended that the company offer language training to Thai staff in their organization and encourage English usage in the workplace.

Nutsara's (2016) study found that some employees in educational companies who use business English email in international workplace still lack ability in writing business English emails. The participants admitted that they had problems using correct grammar in English email writing at a high level and they also had word choice and vocabulary problems. The results of this study indicated that the employees need to improve their English email writing skill by themselves, such as reading English news online associated with the business context. The respondents' suggestions regarding

effective ways to improve business English email included self-study in their free time and keep practicing writing in English.



CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research was quantitative and qualitative research. The participants of this study only came from logistics industry in an international office. The researcher used stratified random sampling technique as the methodology. This chapter focuses describes the population and respondents, material, data collection and data analysis respectively.

3.1 POPULATION AND PARTICIPANTS

The population was 184 Thai employees in an international freight forwarding office on Rama IV Road in Bangkok. They used English email to communicate internally and externally non-native speakers and native speakers in. Taro Yamane's formula was used to determine the sample size for the employees according to department, i.e., 70%, resulting in a total of 130 participants.

Table 3.1

Number of participants in each department

Department	Number of workers	Number of participants
Management	17	12
Finances and Accounting	28	20
Sales Management	35	25
Sea freight customer service	61	43
Air freight customer service	43	30
Total	184	130

3.2 MATERIALS

In order to collect the data to answer the research question, the study used a questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to investigate the problems in English email writing and ways to improve English email writing skills. The questionnaire contained of closed-ended statements and an open-ended question adapted from the

studies of Pakornrat (2012) and Luxsamee (2014). The questionnaire was divided into four parts as follows:

Section 1: Participants background information such as gender, age, years of working at this company, departments or section, and who the participants often communicate with.

Section 2: Problems of using English email writing in a logistics office. The degree of the problems was measured with a Likert scale with the following range: Strongly agree = 5, Agree = 4, Neutral = 3, Disagree = 2, Strongly disagree = 1.

Section 3: Improving English email writing of employees. This section sought to detect employees' needs for improving English email writing using closed-ended statements and a five-point Likert scale as follows: 1 = Very little need 2 = Little need 3 = Moderate need 4 = Great need 5 = Very great need.

Section 4: At the end of second section, there was an opened-ended questions asking for participants' recommendations and suggestions in regard to the problems and ways to enhance their English email writing skills.

3.3 PROCEDURES

This section describes procedures for finding the problems of email English writing among Thai workers in a logistics company.

3.3.1 DATA COLLECTION

The questionnaires were provided to 130 participants, who were selected by using stratified random sampling, at a freight forwarding office. After 3-4 days, the questionnaires were picked up by the researcher. In addition, the contact information of the researcher was mentioned on the first page of questionnaire in case of question or confusion about the study. The return rate for the questionnaires was 100%.

A pilot study was conducted before data collection to test the reliability of the questionnaire and the survey distribution procedure (Chiang, Jang, Canter, and Prince, 2008). Ten Thai employees, working in an international freight forwarding office in Bangkok were asked to participate in the pilot test. The questionnaire was then adjusted slightly based on the pilot test in order to increase Cronbach's alpha.

3.3.2 DATA ANALYSIS

The data received from the distributed questionnaires was analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22.0. According to Simasangyaporn (2019), normally means are calculated not only to see the central tendency but also to see data distribution. In APA style, means (*M*) must be accompanied by standard deviation (*SD*). The SPSS program was used to calculate the statistics as follows:

Section 1: The participants' information – gender, age, years of working at this company, departments or sections, which parties that participant often communicate with. – The data computed into percentages and frequencies.

Section 2: Identifying the problems of email English writing of employees in a logistics company. The data were calculated using mean scores based on the responses to the 5-point Likert scale interpreted as follows:

$$\text{Mean Score Range} = \frac{\text{Maximum Score} - \text{Minimum Score}}{\text{Range of level}}$$

Table 3.2

Interpretation of the levels of problems of English email writing

Mean Score Range (\bar{x})	Level of agreement
4.21-5.00	Strongly agree
3.41- 4.20	Agree
2.61-3.40	Neutral
1.81-2.60	Disagree
1.00-1.80	Strongly disagree

Section 3: Identifying the employees need to enhance their English email writing in a logistics company. The data were calculated using mean scores based on the responses to the 5-point Likert scale interpreted as follows:

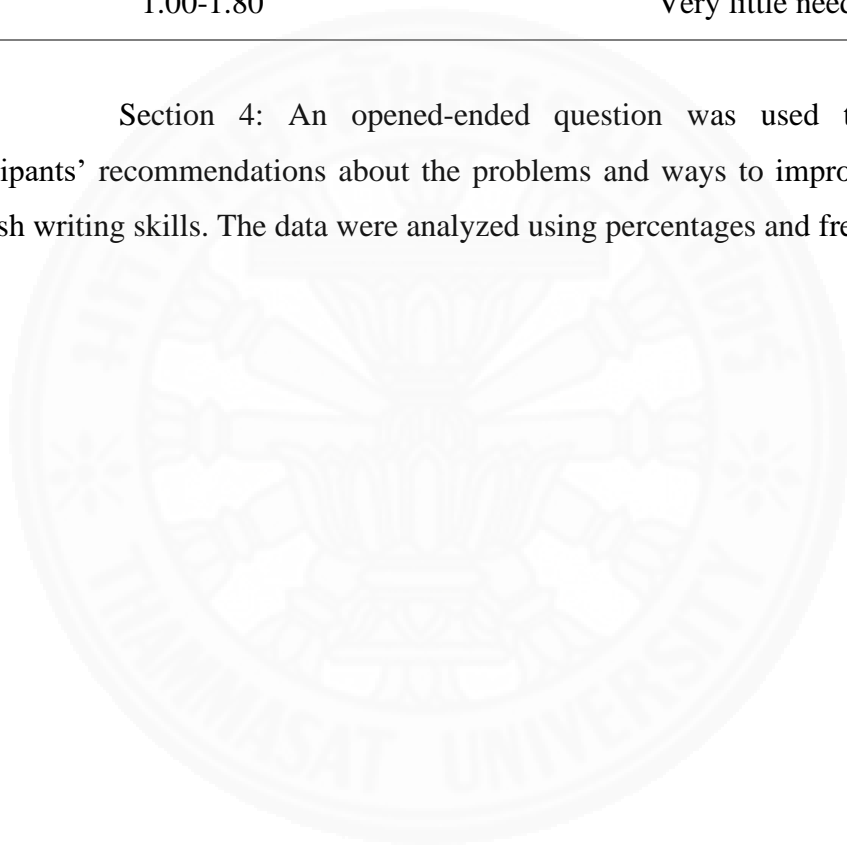
$$\text{Mean Score Range} = \frac{\text{Maximum Score} - \text{Minimum Score}}{\text{Range of level}}$$

Table 3.3

Interpretation of the levels of needs for improving English email writing

Mean Score Range (\bar{x})	Level of agreement
4.21-5.0	Very great need
3.41- 4.20	Great need
2.61-3.40	Moderate need
1.81-2.60	Little need
1.00-1.80	Very little need

Section 4: An opened-ended question was used to gather the participants' recommendations about the problems and ways to improve their email English writing skills. The data were analyzed using percentages and frequencies.



CHAPTER 4

RESULTS/FINDINGS

This chapter reports the results from the study conducted with 130 Thai workers in a logistics company. The results are presented in four sections based on the questions of the questionnaire.

Section 1: Demographic information of participants

Section 2: Business English email writing problems

Section 3: Needs of improving business English email writing

Section 4: Suggestions and ways to improve business email writing

A total of 130 questionnaires were returned and then analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). This study was quantitative and qualitative research. Most of the results in first three sections were interpreted and described as frequency distributions, percentages, averages, and standard deviations. The suggestions from section four were analyzed using percentages and frequencies.

4.1 DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF PARTICIPANTS

The results in this part describe the general information of participants including gender, age, level of education, job title or position, work experience, the number of English emails written in a single day and the purpose of English email writing respectively. The results are shown as descriptive statistics in the form of frequency and percentage.

Table 4.1

Participants' gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Female	98.00	75.38
Male	32.00	24.62
Total	130.00	100.00

Table 4.1 shows the total numbers of participants of the study were 130 workers. Out of 130 participants, the majority of participants were female 98 persons (75.38 %) and the rest were males at 32 persons (24.62%).

Table 4.2

Participants' age

Age (years)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
20-25	22.00	16.62
26-30	30.00	23.08
31-35	10.00	7.69
36-40	30.00	23.08
Over than 40 years	38.00	29.23
Total	130.00	100.00

Table 4.2 shows that most of the participants were over 40 years old, 38 participants (29.23%), followed by 30 participants (23.08%) between 26-30 and 36-40 years old and 10 participants between 31-35 years old (7.69%).

Table 4.3

Participants' education

Education level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
High School Certificate/ Vocational College	20.00	15.38
Bachelor's Degree	90.00	69.23
Master's Degree	20.00	15.38
Others	0.00	0.00
Total	130.00	100.00

Table 4.3 shows that the most of participants had a bachelor's degree (69.23%), followed by a high school certificate or vocational college (15.38%) and a master's degree (15.30%).

Table 4.4

Participants' job position

Job position	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Management	12.00	9.23
Finances and Accounting	20.00	15.38
Sales Management	25.00	19.23
Sea freight customer service	43.00	33.08
Air freight customer service	30.00	23.08
Total	130.00	100.00

Table 4.4 showed that the majority participants worked in sea freight customer service, at 43 participants or 33.08%, followed by air freight customer service, sales management, and finance and accounting at 30 (23.08%), 25 (19.23%), and 20 (15.38%) respectively. The rest of participants, 12 or 9.23%, worked in management.

Table 4.5

Participants' work experience

Work Experience (year)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Less than one year	16.00	12.31
1-3	20.00	15.38
4-6	34.00	26.15
7-10	14.00	10.77
More than 10 years	46.00	35.38
Total	130.00	100.00

Table 4.5 displays the participants work experience; a total of 35.38% had been working more than 10 years, 26.15% of participants had work experience of 4-6 years, followed by 1-3 years (15.38%), less than one year (12.31%), and 7-10 years (10.77%) respectively.

Table 4.6

Frequency of writing English emails

How often do you write emails in English?	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Every day	112.00	86.15
2-3 days a week	12.00	9.23
Once a week	2.00	1.54
More than once a week	4.00	3.08
Total	130.00	100.00

Table 4.6 illustrate the participants' frequency of writing email. The highest level was 86.15 % of the participants always write English email every day. This was followed by 9.23% of participants who normally write English email 2-3 days a week, 3.08% of the participants who write email more than once a week and 1.54% of participants who write email once a week

Table 4.7

Amount of English email writing

How many emails do you write each day?	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Less than 1 email per day	4.00	3.08
1-5 emails per day	22.00	16.92
6-10 emails per day	12.00	9.23
11-15 emails per day	20.00	15.38
More than 16 emails per day	72.00	55.38
Total	130.00	100.00

Table 4.7 illustrates the number of emails written everyday by participants. The highest number of writing English email was more than 16 emails per a single day

55.38% by 72 participants, followed by 1-5 emails per day (16.92%), 11-15 emails per day (15.38%), 6-10 emails per day (9.23%) and 1 email per day (3.08%) respectively

Table 4.8

Participants' purposes for writing English emails

What are the purposes of the English emails you write?	Frequency
To provide/obtain a commercial document	76.00
To provide/obtain a document related to shipping	62.00
To provide important information about a new regulation or policy in the company.	36.00
To update the current shipment status to customers or overseas agents.	56.00
To provide information in response to an enquiry from customers or vendors.	60.00
Others	4.00

Table 4.8 provides the frequency of participants' purposes for English emails in the logistics business. There is highest number of participants at 76 revealed that they used English email for providing and/or acquiring a commercial document e.g. a quotation, invoice likely large level is 62 who write email in order to provide information in response to an enquiry from customers or vendors, and 36 of participants who write emails to provide important information about a new regulation or policy in the company.

4.2 BUSINESS ENGLISH EMAIL WRITING PROBLEMS

The second section reveals the problems of business English email writing of Thai workers in the logistics company. This section is divided into three significant problems, which are organization and format of emails, grammatical structure problems, and word choice and vocabulary problems. The study used a five-point Likert scale to determine the level of agreement. The data is described in the form of frequency distribution, mean (\bar{x}), and standard deviation (*S.D*) and interpreted using the criteria as follows:

Mean Score Range (\bar{x})	Degree of agreement
4.21-5.00	Strongly agree
3.41- 4.20	Agree
2.61-3.40	Neutral
1.81-2.60	Disagree
1.00-1.80	Strongly disagree

Table 4.9

Degree of agreement towards organization and formatting problems in email writing

Item	Description	Min	Max	Mean (\bar{x})	Standard deviation (<i>S.D</i>)	Degree of agreement
1	I feel confident about understanding the structure of an English business email	2.00	5.00	3.35	0.78	Neutral
2	I feel confident about writing a business English email in an appropriate format.	2.00	5.00	3.22	0.92	Neutral
3	I feel confident about writing a well-organized English email.	2.00	5.00	3.23	0.80	Neutral
4	I feel confident about writing brief and concise introductions in business English emails.	2.00	5.00	3.23	0.86	Neutral
5	I feel confident about writing a clear topic sentence to identify the objectives in business English emails.	2.00	5.00	3.32	0.92	Neutral
6	I feel confident about explaining the main idea to	2.00	5.00	3.22	0.84	Neutral

Item	Description	Min	Max	Mean (\bar{x})	Standard deviation (<i>S.D</i>)	Degree of agreement
	readers in the body of business English emails.					
7	I feel confident about writing clear and concise closing paragraphs in business English emails.	2.00	5.00	3.17	0.78	Neutral

As shown in Table 4.9, the items with the highest mean was item 1, which stated that participants felt confident about understanding the structure of an English business email, with the mean of 3.35 ($SD = 0.87$), followed by item 7, which stated that they felt confident writing clear and concise closing paragraphs in business English emails, with the mean of 3.17 ($SD = 0.78$). However, it can be interpreted that the mean score range 2.61-3.40 indicated neutral agreement.

Table 4.10

Degree of agreement toward grammatical structure problems in email writing

Item	Description	Min	Max	Mean (\bar{x})	Standard deviation (<i>S.D</i>)	Degree of agreement
8	I feel confident about using correct grammar in business English emails.	1.00	5.00	2.69	0.86	Neutral
9	I feel confident about arranging words in a grammatically correct way when writing business emails.	1.00	5.00	2.85	0.87	Neutral
10	I feel confident about writing a variety of sentence structures.	2.00	5.00	2.92	0.87	Neutral

Item	Description	Min	Max	Mean (\bar{x})	Standard deviation (<i>S.D</i>)	Degree of agreement
11	I feel confident about using correct subject-verb agreement in business English emails.	1.00	5.00	2.80	0.83	Neutral
12	I feel confident about using auxiliary verbs (helping verbs) in business English emails correctly.	1.00	5.00	2.77	0.84	Neutral
13	I feel confident about using tenses in business English emails correctly.	1.00	5.00	2.88	0.92	Neutral
14	I feel confident about using appropriate prepositions in business English email writing e.g. from, at, on, of, by, and about.	2.00	5.00	3.23	0.94	Neutral
15	I feel confident about using appropriate punctuation in business English email.	1.00	5.00	3.09	1.01	Neutral

As displayed in Table 4.10, these results revealed that degree of agreement had an overall mean of 3.23 ($SD = 0.94$). The highest means was for participants believing that they felt confident about using appropriate prepositions in business English email writing e.g. from, at, on, of, by, and about, followed by item 15 with a mean of 3.09 ($SD = 1.01$) stating that they felt confident about using appropriate punctuation in business English emails e.g. commas, colons, semicolons, hyphens, quotation marks, and full stops. For item 8, the mean was 2.69 ($SD = 0.86$) indicating that a minority of participants were confident about using correct grammar in business English emails.

Table 4.11

Degree of agreement toward word choice and vocabulary problems in email writing

Item	Description	Min	Max	Mean (\bar{x})	Standard deviation (<i>S.D</i>)	Degree of agreement
16	I feel confident about using an appropriate greeting and complimentary close in business English email writing.	1.00	5.00	3.03	0.93	Neutral
17	I feel confident about writing difficult or unusual words without the use of a dictionary in business English email writing.	1.00	5.00	2.89	0.97	Neutral
18	I feel confident about using a wide range of logistics vocabulary in business English email writing.	1.00	5.00	3.00	0.93	Neutral
19	I feel confident about avoiding the use of jargon or unfamiliar words and phrases in business English email writing.	2.00	5.00	2.98	0.85	Neutral
20	I feel confident about using a suitable format and formal or informal words in business English email writing.	1.00	5.00	2.97	0.95	Neutral

As can be seen from Table 4.11, the results showed neutral agreement with all five items. The questionnaire item with the highest mean scores were word were for items 16, 18, and 19 with the means of 3.03 ($SD = 0.93$), 3.00 ($SD = 0.93$), 2.97 ($SD = 0.95$) respectively. Also, the results revealed that the most of participants felt confident about using an appropriate greeting and complimentary close in business English email writing.

4.3 NEEDS OF IMPROVING BUSINESS ENGLISH EMAIL WRITING

The third part investigated the participants' need for improving business English email writing. The study used a five-point Likert scale to measure the degree of need. The findings are reported in the form of frequency distribution, mean (\bar{x}), and standard deviation (*S.D*). The findings was interpreted using the criteria as follows:

Mean Score Range (\bar{x})	Level of agreement
4.21-5.00	Very great need
3.41- 4.20	Great need
2.61-3.40	Moderate need
1.81-2.60	Little need
1.00-1.80	Very little need

Table 4.12

Degree of need for improving business English email writing

Item	Description	Min	Max	Mean (\bar{x})	Standard deviation (<i>S.D</i>)	Degree of agreement
1	I need the company to provide in-house English email writing training to improve my English email writing.	2.00	5.00	3.63	1.00	Great need
2	I need to attend an English training course in a language institution.	1.00	5.00	3.46	1.03	Great need
3	I need a personal tutor to teach me how to improve my English writing.	1.00	5.00	3.40	1.10	Moderate need
4	I need to use English email writing regularly in the company to improve my writing skills.	1.00	5.00	3.66	0.98	Great need
5	I need to spend time learning and practicing the use of English by	1.00	5.00	3.58	1.04	Great need

Item	Description	Min	Max	Mean (\bar{x})	Standard deviation (<i>S.D</i>)	Degree of agreement
	myself using a suitable instructional website and reading English news online.					
6	I need to understand the basic structure of English business emails.	1.00	5.00	3.55	1.06	Great need

Table 4.12 illustrates the participants' need for improving business English email writing. Items 4, 1, and 5 had the highest means. The mean of item 4 was 3.66 ($SD = 0.98$). Item 1 had a mean of 3.63 ($SD = 1.00$), followed by item 5 with a mean of 3.58 ($SD = 1.04$). The top three mean scores suggest the participants had a very great need to improve these particular aspects of English email writing.

4.4 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER WAYS TO IMPROVE ENGLISH EMAIL WRITING

The last section contained an open-ended question, which asked participants to provide some comments or suggestions regarding other effective ways to enhance their English email writing ability. The participants' suggestions were summarized and categorized into five major points.

Table 4.13

Suggestions for further ways to improve English email writing

Suggestion	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Self-study regarding business communication which relates to English emails writing.	5.00	3.85
Need the company to provide in-house English business communication training.	18.00	13.85
Attempt to use English as much as possible in the organization.	2.00	1.54
Self-correction or cross-checking before submitting an email in order to minimize mistakes	5.00	3.85
No suggestion	100.00	76.92
Total	130.00	100.00

Table 4.13 reveals the suggestions for further ways to improve English email writing from the 130 participants. The largest group of participants, 18 participants or 13.85%, wanted the company to provide in-house English business communication training. This was followed by participants who prefer to do self-study regarding business communication which relates to English email writing, such as LinkedIn or the BBC. The same number of participants suggested self-correction or cross-checking before submitting an email in order to minimize mistakes. Finally, two respondents recommended that workers should attempt to use English language as much as possible in the organization.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter provides a summary of the English email writing problems among Thai workers in a logistics company. In particular, this chapter explores the significance of the findings in terms of the theoretical framework, provides a discussion of the results and the conclusion to fulfill the research objectives, followed by the recommendations for future researchers.

5.1 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

This research aimed to explore the problems of English email writing and provide the suggestions to enhance the English email writing proficiency among Thai workers in a logistics company. This part summarizes the purpose, participants materials and procedures of the research.

5.1.1 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

There are two major purposes of the research were as follows:

5.1.1.1 To investigate the problems of English email writing among Thai workers in a logistics company.

5.1.1.2 To provide suggestions to improve the English email writing skills among Thai workers in a logistics company.

5.1.2 PARTICIPANTS, MATERIALS, AND PROCEDURES

The population was Thai employees in an international freight forwarding company. The sample of 130 persons was obtained using stratified random sampling.

The questionnaire designed to investigate the problems in English email writing as well as gather suggestions regarding the improvement of their English email writing skills, was divided into four sections as follows:

Section 1: Personal background information, including gender, age, years of experiences, departments or section, and the purposes for which the participants often used English email writing.

Section 2: The participants were asked to identify the problems and ways improve their email English writing skills. They rated their degree of agreement with the problems using a five-point Likert scale ranging from “Strongly agree to strongly disagree”.

Section 3: The participants were asked to rate their degree of agreement regarding the need for improving English email writing using a five-point Likert ranging from “Strongly agree to strongly disagree”.

Section 4: At the end of second section, there was an open-ended question asking for the participants’ recommendations in regard to the problems and further ways to enhance their English email writing skills.

After completing data collection, the data were analyzed with the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences program (SPSS) version 22.0.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

The results of the study can be wrapped up to answer both of the research questions in this section:

5.2.1 GENERAL INFORMATION OF PARTICIPANTS

There was a total of 130 participants, consisting of 98 (75.38%) females and 32 (24.62%) males. Their ages ranged from 20 to over than 40 years old. Most of the participants (29.23%) were over 40 years old. The largest groups comprised participants (23.08%) between 26 to 30 years old and 36 to 40 years old. More than one-third of the participants (69.23%) had bachelor’s degrees, and one-third (15.38%) had a high school certificate/vocational college or master’s degrees. Forty-three participants (33.08%) were employees in the sea freight customer service section, 23.08% worked in air freight customer service, and 19.23% were employees in the sales department. In terms of their jobs, most participants were sea and air import customer service, inside sales. For the participants’ work experience, 35.38% had been working more than 10 years and 26.15% had work experience of 4-6 years.

5.2.2 CURRENT PROBLEMS IN ENGLISH EMAIL WRITING AMONG THAI WORKERS

All of the participants were Thai nationality who use English as a lingua franca in all social dimensions including the addressee, setting, topic, and function. Regarding the major problems that the participants encountered with English email writing, they admitted that they felt uncomfortable and awkward to use English, even though they had to use it for business.

The findings showed that most participants had problems in writing a clear and concise topic sentence, introduction, and closing paragraph in English email writing. They also had trouble conveying the main idea to readers and using the appropriate structure or format for business emails.

In addition, they also agreed that they had problems using technical logistics terms and choosing appropriate words. They often omitted formal introductory greetings and complimentary closes when they wrote emails. The most frequent problems were grammatical structure errors including tense, subject-verb agreement, auxiliary verbs, appropriate prepositions, and punctuation.

5.2.3 NEEDS OF IMPROVING ENGLISH EMAIL WRITING FOR USE IN THE WORKPLACE

As aforementioned, regarding the problems of English email writing among Thai workers, the participants affirmed that English email writing was very important and required in their career. Regarding the need to develop English email writing skills, they wanted the company to provide in-house English email writing training to enhance their performance.

5.2.4 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER WAYS TO IMPROVE ENGLISH EMAIL WRITING

Some participants provided the further suggestions regarding the improvement of their writing capabilities. They preferred to do self-study on business communication related to English email writing through LinkedIn or the BBC. The same number of participants preferred to do self-correction or cross-checking before

submitting an email in order to minimize the mistakes. Others suggested that employees should attempt to use English language as much as possible in the organization.

5.3 DISCUSSION

This part will discuss the findings as they relate to the theoretical framework and the relevant literature as follows:

5.3.1 What are the problems of English email writing among Thai workers in a logistics company?

The study revealed that the biggest problems of English email writing of Thai works were fundamental email writing problems followed by grammatical errors. The participants never considered their audience and never realized the pitfalls of email writing, leading to errors and problems. This finding accords with Hamilton et al. (1983), who points that when the employees may overlook the misspelling of words, use lower case in place of capitals and shorthand abbreviations used in chat rooms when writing email.

Another problem found in this study was inappropriate tone. Pragmatically, emails contain no vocal or nonverbal cues, and the receiver tends to read them more than once; thus, the reader may be more critical of the sender than if they had known each other before (Friedman & Currall, 2003).

5.3.2 What are the suggestions to enhance English email writing skill among Thai workers in a logistics company?

The participants preferred suggested ways to improve their English email writing skill. According to Guffy and Du-Badcock (2015), writers should avoid long email messages, use short paragraphs, and include titles and bullets to simplify the feel of messages. Also, writers should use a friendly tone. Hamilton et al. (1983) also suggest that to minimize tone problems, the sender should take a professional, friendly approach, double check the receiver list, and proofread before sending emails.

5.4 CONCLUSION

The objective of this study was to investigate the problems of English email writing among Thai workers in a logistics company. The following conclusions can be drawn from the discussion above:

The findings revealed no significant problems in English email writing among Thai workers that affected employees' performance. Nevertheless, the Thai workers did not focus on English grammatical aspect or how to organize or format when writing English email, which can lead to misinterpretations and convey the wrong information. If they could produce grammatically correct sentences and well-organized, professional emails, it would make their business communication more effective.

The participants agreed to moderate extent that they would like the company to provide in-house English communication training in order to enhance their writing skills.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

There are some limitations to the current study and recommendations for future research as follows:

5.5.1 The participants were not representative of the entire population of employees working in the logistics industry in Bangkok. Employees in other companies may have different opinions due to the various ways of writing business emails.

5.5.2 This study focused specifically on English email writing problems with a small sample size. Hence, future studies may focus on other aspects of writing with a larger sample to reveal different findings and improve the validity and reliability of the research.

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APPENDIX

THE PROBLEMS OF ENGLISH EMAIL WRITING AMONG THAI WORKERS IN A LOGISTICS COMPANY

Direction: This questionnaire is a part of an independent study as a partial fulfillment of the requirement for Master of Arts (Career English for International Communication) Language Institute, Thammasat University. The aim of the questionnaire is to investigate the problems English email writing among Thai workers in a logistics company and also to analyze the need to improve English email writing skills. Please answer all questions.

Please be assured that all information provided by respondents will not be published without permission, and will only be used for academic purposes.

The questionnaire is divided into four parts as follows:

- 1: Demographic Information
- 2: Business English email writing problems
- 3: Needs of improving business English email writing
- 4: Suggestions for effective ways to improve your business English email writing

Part 1: Demographic Information

1) Age

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 20-25 years | <input type="checkbox"/> 26-30 years |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 31-35 years | <input type="checkbox"/> 36-40 years |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Over than 40 years | |

2) Gender

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Male | <input type="checkbox"/> Female | <input type="checkbox"/> Others |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|

3) Education

- High School Certificate/ Vocational College
- Bachelor's Degree
- Master's Degree
- Others (Please specify)

4) Position/ Job title (Please specify)

5) Work experience (In year)

- Less than one year 1 – 3 years
- 4-6 years 7-10 years
- More than 10 years

6) How often do you write email in English?

- Everyday 2-3 days a week
- Once a week more than week

7) How many emails do you write each day?

- Less than 1 email per day 1-5 emails per day
- 6-10 emails per day 11-15 emails per day
- More than 16 emails per day

8) What are the purposes of the English email you write? (You can select more than one item)

- To provide/obtain a commercial document e.g. a quotation, invoice, receipt to/from customers or overseas agents.
- To provide/obtain a document related to shipping e.g. a bill of lading, commercial invoice, packing list to/from report and so on to customers or overseas agents.
- To announce important information about a new regulation or policy in the company.
- To update current shipment status to customers or overseas agents.
- To provide information in response to an enquiry from a customers or vendors.
- Other (please specify)

Part 2: Business English email writing problems

Please provide your problem rate for each item below by using 1 – 5 scales

- 5 = Strongly agree
 4 = Agree
 3 = Undecided
 2 = Disagree
 1 = Strongly disagree

Item	Description	Rate scale ranges				
		1	2	3	4	5
Organize and format of English emails writhing problems						
1	I feel confident understanding the structure of an English business email.					
2	I feel confident writing a business English email in appropriate format.					
3	I feel confident writing a well-organized English email.					
4	I feel confident writing brief and concise introductions in business English emails.					
5	I feel confident writing a clear topic sentence to identify objectives in business English emails.					
6	I feel confident explaining the main idea suddenly to readers in the body of business English emails.					
7	I feel confident writing a clear and concise closing paragraphs in business English emails.					
Grammatical structure problems						
8	I feel confident using correct grammar in business English emails.					

Item	Description	Rate scale ranges				
		1	2	3	4	5
9	I feel confident arranging words in grammatically correct order when writing business emails.					
10	I feel confident writing a variety of sentence structures.					
11	I feel confident using correct subject – verb agreement in business English emails.					
12	I feel confident using auxiliary verbs (helping verb) in business English emails correctly.					
13	I feel confident using tenses in business English emails correctly.					
14	I feel confident using appropriate prepositions in business English email writing e.g. from, at, on, of, by, about.					
15	I feel confident using appropriate punctuation in business English email e.g. comma (,), colon (:), semicolon (;), hyphen (-), quotation mark (“”), full stop (.).					
Word Choice and Vocabulary problems						
16	I feel confident using an appropriate greeting and complimentary closing words in business English email writing.					
17	I feel confident writing difficult or unusual words without the use of a dictionary in business English email writing.					
18	I feel confident using a wide range of a logistics vocabulary in business English email writing.					

Item	Description	Rate scale ranges				
		1	2	3	4	5
19	I feel confident avoiding using jargon or unfamiliar words and phrases in business English email writing.					
20	I feel confident using a suitable format and formal or informal words in business English email writing.					

Part 3: Needs of improving business English email writing

Please rate your needs of improving English email writing for each item below by using 1 – 5 from the following scale:

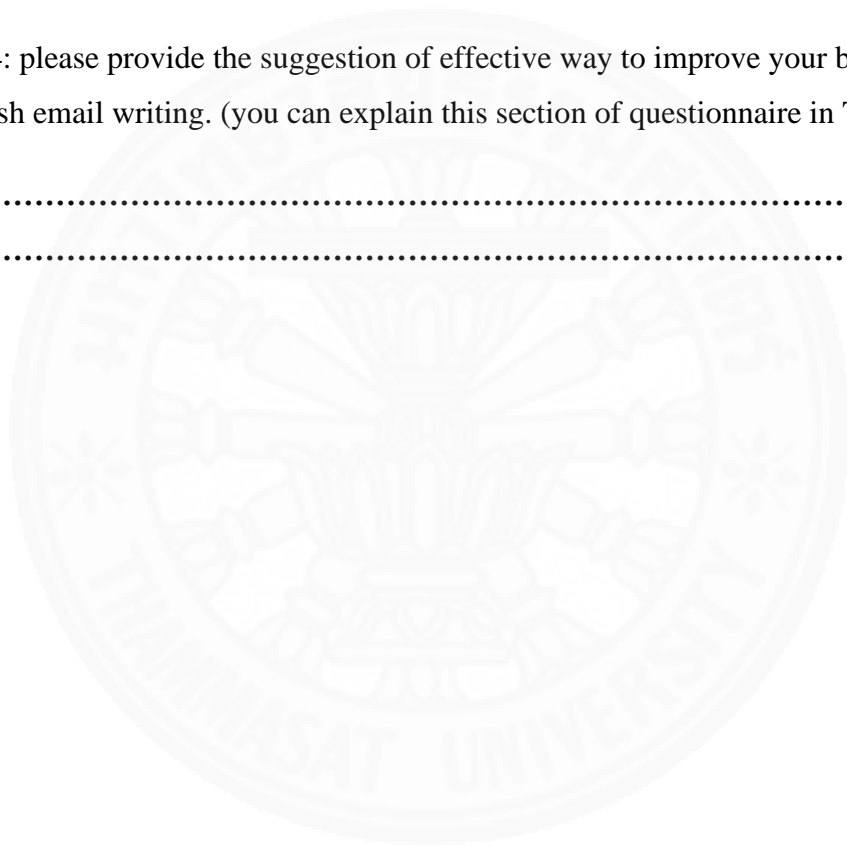
- 5 = Very great need
 4 = Great need
 3 = Moderate need
 2 = Little need
 1 = No need

Item	Description	Rate scale ranges				
		1	2	3	4	5
1	I need the company to provide in-house English email writing training to improve my English email writing.					
2	I need to attend an English training course in a language institution.					
3	I need a personal tutor teaching me to improve my English writing.					
4	I need to use English email writing regularly in the company to improve my writing skills.					

Item	Description	Rate scale ranges				
		1	2	3	4	5
5	I need to spend time learning and practicing the use of English by myself using suitable instructional website and reading English news online.					
6	I need to understand the basic structure of an English business emails.					

Part 4: please provide the suggestion of effective way to improve your business English email writing. (you can explain this section of questionnaire in Thai)

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