ENGLISH SPEAKING ANXIETY OF THAI TAX CONSULTANTS IN AN INTERNATIONAL ACCOUNTING COMPANY

A MASTER'S PROJECT

BY

KANPHASSORN CHOTWATHANA

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the

Master of Arts Degree in Business English for International Communication

at Srinakharinwirot University

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AN ABSTRACT

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This study aimed to investigate the level of English speaking anxiety and the main cause of the speaking anxiety of Thai tax consultants in an international accounting company. The participants were 36 Thai tax consultants in an international accounting company. The instrument used in this study was a questionnaire adapted from Communication Anxiety Inventory by Booth-Butterfield and Gould (as cited in Rubin, Palmgreen, & Sypher, 1994, p. 111-113). The data were collected in June 2015, and then were analysed by using frequency, percentage, mean, followed by summarize open-ended question.

The results revealed that the level of English speaking anxiety of Thai tax consultants was a moderate level. The findings also revealed that lack of practice and lack of confidence are the main causes of their English speaking anxiety.

ความวิตกกังวลในการพูดภาษาอังกฤษของผู้ให้คำปรึกษาทางด้านภาษีอากรที่เป็นคนไทย
ในบริษัทบัญชีต่างชาติ

บทคัดย่อ
ของ
กัญจน์ภัสร โชติวรรธน์

เสนอต่อบัณฑิตวิทยาลัย มหาวิทยาลัยศรีนครินทรวิโรฒเพื่อเป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษา
ตามหลักสูตรปริญญาศิลปศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต สาขาวิชาภาษาอังกฤษธุรกิจเพื่อการสื่อสารนานาชาติ
สิงหาคม 2558

กัญจน์ภัสร โชติวรรธน์. (2558). *ความวิตกกังวลในการพูดภาษาอังกฤษของผู้ให้คำปรึกษาทางด้านภาษีอากรที่เป็นคนไทยในบริษัทบัญชีต่างชาติ.* สารนิพนธ์ ศศ.ม. (ภาษาอังกฤษธุรกิจเพื่อการสื่อสารนานาชาติ). กรุงเทพฯ: บัณฑิตวิทยาลัย มหาวิทยาลัยศรีนครินทรวิโรฒ. อาจารย์ที่ปรึกษาสารนิพนธ์: อาจารย์ปิยวรรณ์ กุลมัย.

สารนิพนธ์ฉบับนี้มีจุดประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาระดับของความวิตกกังวลในการพูดภาษาอังกฤษของผู้ให้คำปรึกษาทางด้านภาษีอากรที่เป็นคนไทยในบริษัทบัญชีต่างชาติ โดยมีกลุ่มประชากรในการตอบแบบสอบถาม คือผู้ให้คำปรึกษาทางด้านภาษีอากรในบริษัทบัญชีต่างชาติจำนวน 36 คน เครื่องมือที่ใช้ในการศึกษาครั้งนี้เป็นแบบสอบถามที่ดัดแปลงมาจาก เครื่องมือในการวัดความวิตกกังวลในการสื่อสารของ บูธ บัตเตอร์ฟิลล์และโกลว์ (ตามที่ได้คัดลอกมาจาก รูบิน, แพรมกรีน, และไซเฟอร์ ปี 1994, หน้า 111-113) ข้อมูลในการวิจัยได้ถูกรวบรวมในเดือนมิถุนายน 2558 และนำมาวิเคราะห์โดยการใช้สถิติได้แก่ การแจกแจงความถี่ ค่าร้อยละ ค่าเฉลี่ย และกล่าวสรุปในเนื้อหาในส่วนของการได้ให้ผู้ตอบแบบสอบถามแสดงความคิดเห็น

ผลจากการศึกษาพบว่าผู้ให้คำปรึกษาทางด้านภาษีอากรมีความวิตกกังวลในระดับกลาง นอกจากนี้ผลจากการศึกษายังพบว่าการขาดการฝึกฝนและขาดความมั่นใจคือสาเหตุหลักของความวิตกกังวลในการพูดภาษาอังกฤษ

The Master's Project

titled

"English Speaking Anxiety of Thai Tax Consultants in an International Accounting Company"

by

Kanphassorn Chotwathana

has been approved by the Graduate School as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts Degree in Business English for International Communication of Srinakharinwirot University.

……………………………………….. Dean of Graduate School

(Assoc. Prof. Dr. Somchai Santiwatanakul)

August ...., 2015

Master's Project Advisor	Oral Defense Committee
……………………………………	…………………………………..Chair
(Ms. Piyawan Kullamai)	(Ms. Piyawan Kullamai)
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	(Asst. Prof. Nattha Kaewcha)

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Kanphassorn Chotwathana

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

In 2015, the economics of 10 ASEAN member countries, including Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam will be integrated and created a competitive market due to the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) agreements. The establishment of the AEC will lead to the free flow of goods, free flow of services, free flow of investment, free flow of capital, and skilled worker (Christopher, 2012). The AEC will bring about a new era of economics cooperation among all member countries, such as skilled workers to move across borders freely among member countries (Suwannaset, 2013). The AEC is expected to improve competitiveness by transforming the economic group among member countries and building a strong economy in the ASEAN region.

However, all of the ASEAN member countries have their own native language for communication so it might be an obstacle for communication among member countries. In the Roadmap for ASEAN community 2015, English is promoted to use as an international business language (Roadmap for an ASEAN Community, 2009-2015). Deerajviset (2014) states that English is now considered as an international language and become increasingly important in ASEAN countries. Saraithong and Chancharoenchai (2012) claim that English proficiency is one of the most important factors in order for Thailand to become a successful part of the AEC. However, an Education First (EF) survey found out that Thailand was ranked 42nd out of 44 countries in terms of adult

English proficiency; lower than both Vietnam (39) and Indonesia (34) with Malaysia (9) as the highest level of adult English proficiency in the ASEAN community (Bangkok Post, 2012). In this regard, Thailand must increase the level of English language skills and competencies of Thai people.

When English has been selected as the common language among ASEAN countries, the English language will play a crucial role in all kind of businesses among ASEAN member countries. Lairat and Viriya (2012) claim that Thai people lack of competence in English speaking skills, and anxiety is one of the main problems that Thai people face in terms of English communication. In addition, Peansiri (1999) also mentions that conversation anxiety is another important factor that influences English speaking effectiveness for Thai people. Since AEC is approaching, it will be impossible to avoid using English language when communicating with people from different countries.

As anxiety might happen in communication, several studies have defined the terms of anxiety in various definitions. For example, Booth-Butterfield (1991) indicate that "communication anxiety is an unpleasant emotional state or condition which is characterized by subjective feelings of tension, apprehension, and worry which happens when message/meaning are being transmitted to another one" (as cited in Peansiri, 1999, p.10). Spielberger (1972) defined anxiety as "an unpleasant emotional state or condition which is characterized by subjective feelings of tension, apprehension, worry, and by activation or arousal of the autonomic nervous system" (p.482). Furthermore, Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) defined anxiety as "the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with the arousal of the autonomic nervous system" (p.125). Therefore, communication anxiety might be incurred from many factors such as low English speaking skills, people lack of self-confidence or ability to communicate with others.

A number of research regarding anxiety in the workplace has been conducted in order to determine the extent of the anxiety levels of workers. For example, Peansiri (1999) conducted a study of speaking English and anxiety levels among salespeople in the duty-free section of Bangkok International Airport and found that the higher the level of English use, the more English speaking anxiety they have. Additionally, level of education also affects the English communication skills of the salespeople and may increase their level of English speaking anxiety in terms of willingness to speak English at workplace. Champathong (2009) researched on the crisis communication anxiety experienced by Scandinavian Airlines staff in Bangkok during the evacuation of the Tsunami victims. The results revealed that Scandinavian Airlines employees experienced anxiety during the evacuation process and had difficulty communicating during the crisis, resulting in delayed action. The results also showed the importance of minimize anxiety in order to communicate more effectively. Therefore, it is important to minimize anxiety in order to communicate effectively. Lairat and Viriya (2012) examined Thai employees' English speaking anxiety and their willingness to communicate with foreigners in Thammasat University. The results showed that most of the respondents suggested that they should have more practice on vocabulary, grammar, speaking, listening and writing to reduce their anxiety. Additionally, Thammasat University should also provide English training courses for employees in every positions free of charge in order to help staff increase their confidence in speaking English. Therefore, it can be concluded from the studies cited above that anxiety is a natural response to any unpleasant situations. People may feel anxious when they have to communicate in English and are worried about how to speak English properly in a particular situation.

Statement of the Problem

With the establishment of the AEC in 2015, skilled workers from all member countries will be allowed to work freely in other ASEAN countries. There are eight groups of professionals who are allowed to work freely within the AEC, including engineering services, nursing services, architectural services, surveying qualifications, medical practitioners, dental practitioners, tourism services and accountancy services.

As mentioned, accountancy services are one of the eight professional services allowed to work freely in the member countries, accountants / accounting consultants can also have an opportunity to provide their professional services to ASEAN member countries. Normally, accountancy services will provide expert skills performed by a professional accountant /accounting consultant including accounting services, assurance, financial management services, and investment advice. Furthermore, accountancy services will also provide financial reporting, financial planning, as well as clients' also seeking advice on various business transactions issues. Mostly, they are dealing with commercial issues or taxation issues. Currently, most of accounting companies in Thailand also provide tax consultancy services. Tax consultancy services can be considered one of integral parts of accountancy services. Thus, tax consultants who work in accounting companies should also have sufficient knowledge in accounting in order to assist clients in both accounting and taxation.

As response to the roadmap of AEC, English is promoted as the international business language and the standard workplace language for ASEAN countries. Thai employees who work in an international accounting company will have more opportunities to meet foreigners and communicate in English. However, Thai people often experience tension, nervousness or anxiety when they speaking English with foreigners. As quoted, Lairat and Viriya (2012) claim that anxiety is one of main problems for Thai people in the English communication skills, this will lead to the serious problem in proficiency in English communication for Thailand especially Thai people who work in international companies. There are not any previous studied focused on English speaking anxiety in an international accounting company. Thus, this study is to examine the English speaking anxiety of Thai tax consultants in an international accounting company.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were to examine the level of anxiety and the causes of the speaking anxiety of Thai tax consultants in an international company.

Research Questions

1. To what extent do Thai tax consultants experience in speaking anxiety?
2. What is the main cause of speaking anxiety?

Significance of the Study

This study aimed to investigate the English speaking anxiety of Thai tax consultants in an international accounting company and what is the main cause of speaking anxiety. As mentioned, people may be anxious when they have to communicate in English and are worried about how to speak English properly in a particular situations. If Thai tax consultants are able to reduce or cope with their English speaking anxiety and have a good command in English communication skill, they may have a greater chance of being promoted to a higher level position and will have more opportunities to work in ASEAN member countries. Furthermore, the findings of the study may also be useful for international companies to identify the existing problems regarding English speaking anxiety experienced by Thai tax consultants in an international accounting company and the research findings may be beneficial for further studies in developing English speaking skills of Thai tax consultants in an international environment.

Scope of the Study

This study attempted to examine the English speaking anxiety of Thai tax consultants in an international accounting company. Data collected from 36 Thai tax consultants working in an international accounting company. The instrument of this study was questionnaire adapted from Communication Anxiety Inventory by Booth-Butterfield and Gould (as cited in Rubin, Palmgreen, & Sypher, 1994, p.111-113). The five-level Likert scale rating would be applied to the questionnaire.

Definition of Terms

Speaking anxiety refers to feeling of tension, worry, fear of speaking or uncomfortable reaction which happen when message are being transmitted to another one

International accounting company is a company that operates in more than two countries or a firm that operates businesses in many different countries

Thai tax consultants is a person who can perform in both accounting and tax functions such as audits, financial statement analysis and taxation

Organization of the Study

This study is divided into five chapters. Chapter I introduces the background of the study, a statement of the problem, the objectives of the study, the research questions, the significance, the scope of the study, and a definition of terms. Chapter II provides a review of the literature. Chapter III describes the methodology of the study. Chapter IV presents the results of the study, and Chapter V contains a conclusion, a discussion of the findings and recommendations for further studies.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter is divided into five parts. The first part presents definitions of anxiety. The second part is the definitions of communication anxiety and speaking anxiety. The third part describes the conceptualization of speaking anxiety. The fourth part identifies description of tax consultants, and the last part is previous related studies.

Definitions of Anxiety

It is important to comprehend what anxiety is and how it is related to English speaking anxiety. The definitions of anxiety have defined by many researches. The University of Cambridge Counseling Service (2012) defines anxiety as a common emotional response to threatening. The level of anxious depends on past experience, beliefs and attitudes in situations. Spielberger (1972) defines anxiety as "an unpleasant emotional state or condition which is characterized by subjective feelings of tension, apprehension, and worry, and by activation or arousal of the autonomic nervous system" (p.482). In addition, Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) indicate that "anxiety is the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system" (p.125). Stephan and Stephen (as cited in Gudykunst& Kim, 1992, p.4) state anxiety refers to feelings of being uneasy, tense, worried, or apprehensive about what might happen in a particular communication encounter". Furthermore, Sarason (1980) points out that anxiety is a characteristic that most individuals experience at some times, and its effect may not always be negative. For example, early work in evaluation anxiety showed that a moderate level of anxiety may provide heightened motivation and result in improved performance (as cited in Booth-Butterfield, 1991, p.3). In addition, Booth-Butterfiled (1991) states that anxiety is aroused when person perceived his or her ability to cope with a task demand as unsatisfactory is unable to understand what is going on in a situation, or is uncertain about the consequences of inadequate coping.

Therefore, anxiety mostly refers to feelings of tension, nervousness and worry that might happen in unpleasant emotional conditions. Anxiety is an individual experience but it is not bad and might happen when a person perceived their ability are insufficient to cope with the task. It is likely to happen in being be to communicate in the manner that the other persons to understand.

Definitions of Communication Anxiety and Speaking Anxiety

In the context of oral communication, anxiety can be viewed as communication anxiety and speaking anxiety. Booth-Butterfiled (1991) mentions that communication anxiety is an unpleasant emotional condition which is characterized by subjective feeling of tension, apprehensive and worry and by activation or arousal of the autonomic nervous system, which happen when message are being transmitted to another one. Peansiri (1999) defines that communication anxiety is an unpleasant situation in communication with others that might be caused when person's lack of self-confidence or slow English language skills. Besides, Gudykunst and Kim (1997) add, "If anxiety is too high, we will be too preoccupied with managing our anxiety to communicate effectively," (p.270).

In terms of speaking anxiety, Tasee (2009) mentions that speaking anxiety refers to the feeling of apprehension, nervousness and worry. Mohamed and Wahid (2012) also define that speaking anxiety is a panicky feeling associated with physical sensations that are all too painfully familiar to those affected including with heart breathing rates or over-rapid reactions. In addition, Bashor (1996) defines speaking anxiety as a fear of speaking or uncomfortable reaction to speak in a group at a time. Also, Ayres and Hopf (1993) state that "speaking anxiety refers to situations when an individual reports he or she is afraid to deliver a speech" (p.2).

As anxiety is mostly referred to feeling of tension, worry or a natural response to any unpleasant situations in communication and can happen in a particular communication encounter. Communication anxiety refers to feeling of tension or worry and affect in communication. Speaking anxiety refers to a fear of speaking or uncomfortable reaction to speak with others. Therefore, communication anxiety and speaking anxiety are similar in certain ways such as fear in communicating with others or lack of proficiency in speaking. In other words, persons who have high anxiety are likely to lack confidence when they have to communicate with others in any particular situations.

The Conceptualization of Speaking Anxiety

The theories related to this study are the theory of Anxiety Uncertainty Management (AUM) and the Communication Apprehension (CA).

Anxiety Uncertainty Management (AUM)

Anxiety Uncertainty Management (AUM) theory was introduced by Dr. William B. Gudykunst to define how humans effectively communicate based on their balance of anxiety in social situations. According to Stephan, Stephan, and Gudykunst (1999), Anxiety Uncertainty Management (AUM) theory is designed to explain effective interpersonal and intergroup communication. Yoshitake (2002) mentions that the AUM theory aims to enhance effective communication by reducing anxiety. Yip (2010) states that when we interact with strangers, there will always be a sense of anxiety. In order to communicate effectively we need to manage anxiety appropriately.

Anxiety refers to the feeling of being uneasy, tense, worried, and apprehensive about what might happen. Berger and Calabrese (1975) notes that managing anxiety is fundamental processes influencing the effectiveness of communication with others. For example, individual communication effectively to the extent that they are able to manage their anxiety and by accurately predicting and explaining the attitudes, feelings and behaviors.

Communication Apprehension

Communication Apprehension (CA) is a widely used term to examine anxiety experienced in communicative situations. McCroskey (1977) defined Communication Apprehension as “an individual's level of fear or anxiety associated with either real of anticipated communication with another person or person,” (p.78). Communication apprehension has been the subject of extensive study within the field of communication as Daly and McCroskey (1984) state that communication apprehension hasbeen studied in the field of interpersonal communication such as social anxiety, reticence, shyness, unwillingness to communicate, and social-communicative anxiety. There are four different types of communication apprehension which including traitlike CA, Generalized-context CA, Person-group CA and Situational CA.

McCroskey (1977) states that Traitlike CA is a “relatively enduring personality-type orientation toward a given mode of communication across a wide variety of contexts,” (p.16). Secondly, Generalized-context CA consists of four varieties of communication: public speaking, meetings, group discussions and interpersonal communication. This view recognizes that people can be highly apprehensive about communicating on one type of context while having less or even no apprehension about communicating in another type of context. McCroskey (1977) defines that Personal-group CA is the reactions of an individual to communicating with a given person or group. Lastly, Situational CA is an emotional of an individual to communicating with a given individual or group of individuals at a given time, for example, during job interview or verbal communication with strangers.

According to Lazarus as cited in Champathong (2009), Communication Apprehension can be distinguished into state anxiety and trait anxiety. State anxiety is defined an unpleasant emotional arousal in face of threatening demands. In contrast, trait anxiety reflects the existence of stable individual differences in the tendency to respond with state anxiety in the anticipation of threatening situations. To be able to measure speaking anxiety, an inventory was developed by Booth-Butterfield and Gould (as cited in Rubin, Palmgreen, & Syper, 1994, p.109), and is called Communication Anxiety Inventory ("CAI") which was developed from "Personal Report of Communication Apprehension" (PRCA-24).

Anxiety/Uncertainty Management (AUM) theory aims to enhance effective in communication by reducing anxiety. Communication apprehension is a type of concepts characterized by fear or anxiety about communicating with people. Both theories are related in the ways that when people have anxious in communication, they may realize how effectively communicate based on their balance in situations.

Previous Related Studies

This study was examined English speaking anxiety of Thai tax consultants in international companies and what is the main cause of speaking anxiety. The following outlines related research studies of English speaking anxiety.

Lairat and Viriya (2012) examined Thai employees' English speaking anxiety and their willingness to communicate with foreigners in Thammasat University. The purposes of this study were to explore the frequency of anxiety and the willingness to communicate of staff. The data were collected with the use of self-administrated questionnaire, consisting of closed-ended and open-ended questions. The closed-ended part was 5-likert scale questions, adjusted from Gardner's mini-AMTB (Attitude / Motivation Test Battery). The result showed that the level of the staff's anxiety and willingness to communicate was moderate. The outcome of this research study reflected the Thai context, with respondents often hiding their true feelings by choosing the middle way to protect them from being different from others.

Pongpun and Sarobol (2012) examined student's anxiety in English at Wall Street institute. The participants were 60 students from 16 years and above with intermediate level of English. The instrument for this study was questionnaire which adapted from the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS). The results showed that students feel nervous when they unable to understand every word the English teachers say while participating.

Champathong (2009) conducted crisis communication anxiety encountered by Scandinavian Airlines employees in Bangkok. The instrument for this study was questionnaires. A questionnaire was constructed based on certain areas which focused on crisis communication, anxiety and how anxiety affected in communication. The result showed that anxiety was the primary negative influence on the accurate communication of information. In addition, Scandinavian Airlines employees encountered anxiety during evacuation process, they had difficulties communicating during the crisis, resulting in delayed action. Therefore, it is important to minimize anxiety in order to communicate effectively.

Peansri (1999) studied English speaking anxiety among salespersons in the duty-free section at Bangkok International Airport. The purposes of this study were to investigate speech anxiety problems between Thais salesperson and English speaking customers in the duty-free and tax-free shops at Bangkok International Airport. The questionnaire was used as an instrument for the data collection. The results showed that salespersons who do not have enough English speaking skill that have to speak with the customer, they will have high level of English speaking anxiety.

Tasee (2009) investigated factors affecting English major students' anxiety about speaking English. The participants were 963 Rajabhat University students in English program. The questionnaire and interview were employed to collect the data. The statistics used for analyzing data were percentage, mean, standard deviation and chi-square tests. The research revealed that the students' anxiety about speaking English was at a moderate level. However, there were statistically significant difference in the overall aspect such as gender, perceived speaking ability and perceived self-personality.

The previous studies focused on speaking anxiety in various types of businesses. There are limited studies have been done on English speaking anxiety in the business context, and none has been found in the context of tax consultants. This study, therefore, aim to examine the English speaking anxiety of Thai tax consultants in an international accounting company and how these employees can cope with their anxiety about speaking.

Summary

In this chapter, the definitions of anxiety, definitions of communication anxiety and speaking anxiety, the conceptualization of speaking anxiety, job descriptions about tax consultants and the related research have been presented. The methodology of this study will be presented in Chapter III.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the methodology and the procedures used in this study. It is divided into four sections: participants of the study, instrument, data collection procedures and data analysis.

Participants of the Study

The participants of this study were 36 Thai tax consultants who currently work in an accounting company in Bangkok. As shown in table 1, the level positions of professional staff in the company, the researcher chose the target participants in this company because of its well-known reputation, and this company is one of the biggest audit firm in Thailand and also have network in more than 150 countries. Furthermore, the participants are faced with clients directly.

Tax Consultants

There are various definitions of consultants. Reynolds (2014) defines consultant as a person who provide expert advice professionally, technical assistance in order to help clients make the best possible choices. Macalam (2009) mentions that consultants have to provide suitable suggestions and recommendations in order to assist client's business run effectively. Furthermore, consultant is an individual who possesses special knowledge or skills and help businesses find and implements solutions in variety of problems, including business start-up, marketing, strategy or organization structure, etc. (Krow & Media, 2014).

In the business environment, consultants can be categorized by types of businesses. For example, investment consultants are licensed professionals to help companies decide whether an investment is appropriate or not. IT consultants will provide technical expertise in areas of information system design, software programming and development. Legal consultants are helping companies solve legal issues such as labor law, litigation or commercial contract. ("Nine Types of Consultancy Businesses," 2015).

Tax consultants are different from other consultants in specially providing commercially-focused tax advice and tax services to a wide range of clients. They work continually to help businesses and individuals create strategies for dealing with tax issues. Furthermore, tax consultants are the experts in providing opinion and consult with clients about tax legislation, ensure businesses and assets are properly structured to minimize the incidence of taxation. ("Tax adviser and consultant," n.d.).

In Thailand, there are many tax consulting firms but the well-known leading firms in the accounting and consulting areas are called "Big 4 auditing firms" which are PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC Thailand), Ernst & Young Corporate Services Limited (EY), Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu Jaiyos Advisory Co., Ltd., and KPMG Phomchai Tax Ltd. These four firms are reputable consulting firms in Thailand and their employees are required to communicate well in English with their clients or in workplace in order to serve clients' requirements.

The selected accounting firm to conduct the research in this study is one of the biggest audit firms in Thailand and also have network firms in more than 150 countries. This is because this company provide wide range of accounting and tax services to multi-national companies. The employees, therefore, are required to communicate well in

English. They have to be able to speak with their colleagues in different countries and clients who come from multinational companies.

The following details are job descriptions of tax consultants in the selected biggest accounting firm in Thailand:

- Providing assistance to Managers in handling client's assignments
- Researching and analyzing a wide range of tax issues in English
- Demonstrating required knowledge and an understanding of client's organization and business/regulatory environment
- Strategizing with clients to minimize tax liability
- Providing guidance about taxation legislation to Thais and foreign clients
- Communicating with clients, both Thais and foreigners, to explain tax issues
- Attending the meetings
- Conducting presentations in English
- Conferencing with multinational clients via telephone
- Preparing reports in English

Attending the meeting with foreign clients will require tax consultants to communicate in English during the meeting in order to provide and explain of various tax issues. Moreover, tax consultants have to prepare minutes of meetings, preparing reports and presentations in English including telephone conference or various discussions with foreign clients.

Consultants are expert who provide advice to their clients in order to assist clients' business to run effectively. They may be anxious when they speak English or are worried about how to speak English properly with clients or in workplace. These problems may affect their work performance if they are not be able to cope or reduce their speaking anxiety.

Table 1: Levels of professional staff

Level / Position	**Education Background**
Associate – Junior Staff	Graduated with Bachelor's degree
Consultant – Senior Consultant	Graduated with Bachelor's degree
Manager – Senior Manager	Graduated with Bachelor's degree and Master's degree with experienced
Director – Partner	Graduated with Master's degree with experienced extensive

* *Source from Human Resources Department of one accounting company in Thailand*

In this study, the participants in the survey were selected from the level of associate – senior manager and graduated from universities in Thailand. The participants of the study were 36 Thai tax consultants. The researcher selected 12 Thai tax consultants from each level of staff based convenience basic approaching.

Instrument

The questionnaire were used as research instrument of this study. The questionnaire consisted of three parts as follows:

Part I: Demographic Information of the Participants

The first part contained questions about demographic information of the participants, which included age, gender, education background and work experience.

Part II: How Thai tax consultants experience in speaking anxiety

The second part consisted of 20 questions about Thai tax consultants experienced in speaking anxiety. Participants were to describe how they felt when they communicated in English. The scale / inventory were adapted from Communication Anxiety Inventory (Booth-Butterfield & Gould, 1986, as cited in Rubin, Palmgreen, & Sypher, 1994, p.111-113). The five-level Likert scale rating would be applied to the questionnaire. The interpretation for the scales would consist as follows: 5 (strongly agree), 4 (agree), 3 (neutral), 2 (disagree), and 1 (strongly disagree).

Part III: The main cause of speaking anxiety

The last part surveyed what is the main cause of speaking anxiety of Thai tax consultants. The questionnaire were reviewed by three experts to ensure the validity and appropriateness of the content. Then the questionnaire were translated into Thai and sent back and reviewed by experts again in order to ensure that it was cleared and understandable.

Data Collection Procedures

The questionnaire were distributed to target participants in an international company in June 2015. The researcher has asked for permission from the Head of Tax Department. After getting permission, the researcher distributed the questionnaire to Thai tax consultants in the company. The respondents were asked to complete the questionnaire within one week. After one week, the questionnaire were collected. Each item in the questionnaire was checked in order to verify the information. After all data was verified, the questionnaire was proceeded for data analysis.

Data Analysis

The data collected from the participants was analyzed by using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) program. The demographic information of the respondents was analyzed in the form of frequency and percentage and showed in tables below. Then the results of the study of English speaking anxiety of Thai tax consultants in international company were presented by using means scores and percentage.

According to Pisarnbut (2007), the criteria for rating scale will be determined by the mean scores as detailed in Table 2.

Table 2: The Interpretation of Score

Score	Meaning
4.21-5.00	Highest
3.41-4.20	High
2.61-3.40	Moderate
1.81-2.60	Low
1.00-1.80	Lowest

Summary

The methodology of the study was analyzed by using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) program. In this chapter, the participants, instrument, data collection procedures and data analysis were described. After data analysis completed, the findings were presented in the tables follow by explanation in Chapter IV and conclusion in Chapter V.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

This chapter contains results of the study. The first part presented demographics information of Thai tax consultants in an international company. The second part examined how Thai tax consultants experienced in speaking anxiety. The last part explored the main cause of speaking anxiety. The data gathered were analysed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS), presented in terms of frequency (F), percentage (%), and mean ($\overline{X}$).

Demographic Information of the Participants

This section presents the data of demographic information classified by gender, age, education background and working period. The data were summarized and presented in frequency and percentage as shown in table 3.

Table 3: Demographics Information (N=36)

Gender	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Male	14	38.89
Female	22	61.11

Table 3: (continued)

Age	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
25-30 years	14	38.89
31-35 years	10	27.78
36-40 years	8	22.22
Over 40 years	4	11.11
Education Background	**Frequency (n)**	**Percentage (%)**
Doctoral Degree	-	-
Master’s Degree	12	33.33
Bachelor’s Degree	24	66.67
Working Period	**Frequency (n)**	**Percentage (%)**
Less than 3 years	20	55.56
3 years and more	16	44.44

As shown in Table 3, the findings shown that from 36 participants, 14 of them were male (38.89%) while 22 were female (61.11%). The majority of the participants (38.89%) were 25-30 years old. For their education backgrounds, 12 participants (33.33%) had a Master’s degree whereas 24 participants (66.67%) had a Bachelor’s degree. It was also found that 20 participants (55.56%) have been working in the company less than 3 years, and 16 participants (44.44%) have been working for 3 more than 3 years.

How Thai tax consultants opinion about English speaking anxiety

This section presents respondents' opinion concerning how Thai tax consultants felt about English speaking anxiety. There were 20 questions in this part that explored about the experience in speaking anxiety and feeling while communicating. The finding are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Level of English speaking (Negative statements)

Feelings		Level
I always avoid speaking English with clients or in workplace (i.e. with bosses or colleagues).	3.03	Moderate
I am worried when speaking English with clients or in workplace (i.e. bosses or colleagues).	3.20	Moderate
I feel tense when I have to speak English without preparing myself. (in the meeting or telephone discussion).	3.50	High
I find myself speaking faster or slower than usual when speaking English with clients (i.e. with bosses or colleagues).	3.29	Moderate
I feel stress when speaking English with clients or in workplace (i.e. with bosses or colleagues).	3.05	Moderate
I feel nervous when I have to conduct a presentation in English.	3.78	High
I always avoid speaking English with clients by conference.	2.82	Moderate
I could not answer in English continually while attending conference	2.64	Moderate
I have low English speaking skill in communicating by conference.	2.83	Moderate
Total	3.13	Moderate

Table 5: Level of English speaking (Positive statements)

Feelings		Level
I feel self-confident when speaking English with clients or in workplace (i.e. with bosses or colleagues).	2.60	Low
I can make good impression when speaking English with clients or in workplace (i.e. with bosses or colleagues).	2.91	Moderate
I feel that I am fluent in speaking English with clients or in workplace (i.e. with bosses or colleagues).	2.85	Moderate
I can control my nervousness while I speak English with clients and in workplace (i.e. with bosses or colleagues).	2.98	Moderate
I enjoy speaking English with clients and in workplace (i.e. with bosses or colleagues).	2.73	Moderate
I have skill enough for conducting presentation in English.	3.02	Moderate
I feel self-confident while conducting presentation in English.	2.56	Low
I can make a good impression while conducting presentation. in English	2.79	Moderate
I have knowledge in English skill enough in responding to queries while conducting presentation.	3.01	Moderate
I feel confident if I have to speak English with clients by conference.	2.84	Moderate
I have knowledge in English enough to provide opinions to clients by conference.	3.31	Moderate
Total	2.87	Moderate

As presented in table 4, the negative statements of Thai tax consultants on English speaking anxiety was at a moderate level ($\overline{X}$ = 3.13). For positive statements, English speaking anxiety was also at a moderate level ($\overline{X}$ = 2.87) as presented in table 5.

The high level ranking of negative statements were feeling tense when speaking English without preparing and nervous when speaking English. In addition, Thai tax consultants respond the questionnaire at low level of positive statements in self-confident which mean that they don't have much confidence when speaking English to clients, in workplace and when having presenting in English.

What is the main cause of speaking anxiety?

Thai tax consultants were asked to identify the single cause that the most intense anxiety while speaking. The finding are outlined in Table 6.

Table 6: The main cause of speaking anxiety

Causes of Anxiety	**Percentage (%)**
Lack of confidence in speaking English	25.00
Lack of practice in speaking English	19.44
Fear of making mistakes when speaking	11.11
Feel nervous when speaking English with foreigners	13.89
Cannot think words properly while speaking English	11.11
Low English skill	5.56
No preparation	8.33
Grammatical problems	5.56

As illustrated in table 6, the main cause of the respondents in speaking anxiety was lack of confidence in speaking English which was 25% against the number of the respondents. While 19.44% of the respondents concerned on the lack of practicing in speaking English. 13.89% identified that they felt nervous when speaking English with foreigners. 11.11% were fear of making mistakes when speaking and cannot think words properly while speaking English. 8.33% concerned on the preparation for meeting or discussion and 5.66% felt that low English skill and grammatical problems were the cause of anxiety.

Summary

The objectives of this study were to (1) examine the English speaking anxiety of Thai tax consultants in an international accounting company; (2) what is the main cause of speaking anxiety. The findings show that most of the participants were female. The majority were at the age of 25-30 years old. Most of them held bachelor's degree. The findings of the study show that Thai tax consultants had a moderate level in English speaking anxiety. The findings also revealed that lack of confidence is the main cause of their speaking anxiety. Conclusion and discussion of the findings are presented in Chapter V.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

This final chapter presents the conclusion of the study, discussion of the findings and the limitations of the study. In addition, recommendations for further studies are also provided.

Conclusion

This study aimed to examine the level of English speaking anxiety of Thai tax consultants in an accounting company and what is the main cause of their speaking anxiety.

The participants were 36 Thai tax consultants in an international accounting company in Bangkok. The instrument of this study was a questionnaire adapted from Communication Anxiety Inventory by Booth-Butterfield and Gould (as cited in Rubin, Palmgreen, & Sypher, 1994, p.111-113). The questionnaires were distributed to Thai tax consultant in June 2015. To standardize the questionnaire, the researcher asked three experts who are Tax Director in an international accounting company, Aj, Aranya Srijongjai, and Aj. Piyawan Kullamai to review the questionnaire, and give suggestions in order to develop a better version. The data was analyzed by using frequency, percentage and mean scores.

Discussion

The findings were discussed based on the research questions of the study as follows:

Research Question 1

To what extent do Thai tax consultants' opinion about English speaking anxiety.

According to the results of the study, the overall English speaking anxiety of Thai tax consultants were at moderate level. When considering the answers from the questionnaire against the job descriptions of tax consultants; speaking English with clients or in workplace, conducting presentation in English and speaking English with clients by conference, it was found that English speaking anxiety was at moderate level.

The result of the finding from negative statements showed that feeling tense when they have to speak English without preparing themselves was at high level. This possibly indicated that if they could prepare themselves before attending meetings or discussing with clients such as know the topics or problems, they may have knowledge to respond to clients or provide proper solutions better than without preparing themselves.

Feeling nervous when conducting a presentation in English was also at high level. These could explain that Thai tax consultants who do not have enough English speaking skill and have to conduct presentation in English, would have high level of English speaking anxiety. Therefore, if the company could provide English training course in conducting English presentation this would help to increase the level of proficiency in English.

From positive statements, level of confidence when speaking English was rated at low level. It can be implied that if they have more confidence in their English speaking, the anxiety may decrease which would reflect in better work performance. Similarly, level of confidence while conducting presentation in English was at low level. By doing so, making sufficient preparation, rehearsal on the topics or attending English training course would be the way to increase their confidence.

Furthermore, Thai tax consultants should also practice in the impromptu response or discussion and rehearsal before conducting presentation in order to help them increase the level of proficiency in English, reduce or cope with their anxiety and increase their confidence in speaking English.

In moderate level ranking of the overall response, the top five scores selected from mean scores revealed that not enough knowledge in English to provide opinion was ranked first. Second rank was on the speed of speaking English i.e. speaking faster or slower than usual. Worried on speaking English with client, feel stress when speaking English with clients were ranked third and fourth respectively. Lastly, the respondents always avoid English speaking with clients or in workplace was ranked fifth. It can be implied that Thai tax consultants still have anxiety when speaking English. However, the anxiety might not be at high level. Therefore, if Thai tax consultants have more knowledge in English skill and more confidence this would help to increase the level of proficiency in English and reduce their anxiety while speaking.

Research Question 2

What is the main cause of speaking anxiety?

The result of this study indicated that the main cause of anxiety in speaking English is the lack of confidence while speaking English. It was 25.00% of the total score which was ranked at the highest score. This finding was in accordance with Peansiri (1999) which indicated that communication anxiety might be caused when person lack's of self-confidence or has low English skills. Therefore, this study suggests that company should provide training courses or counselling session. In industry practice, the international accounting company always provides training courses both in technical and soft skill for employees to develop themselves in order to provide a better consultancy services so that Thai tax consultants are well prepared enough when they have to communicate in English. These well-equipped knowledges provided to the employees should be able to help them to reduce or cope with their anxiety while speaking English at their work environments.

The result also indicated that the low level of English speaking practice was ranked at the second top high score. This finding was also relevant to Lairat and Viriya (2012) which indicated that anxiety might be happen when a person lacks practice in speaking English. In order to lower the anxiety in English speaking, Thai tax consultants may need to increase practice in speaking English which also help increase the level of proficiency in English and reduce their anxiety.

Feeling nervous, fear of making mistakes when speaking English, cannot think of appropriate words and no preparation were ranked at the third, fourth and fifth of scores respectively. In addition, Thai tax consultants should have more practice on vocabulary, grammar, speaking including listening and writing to reduce their anxiety and company should also provide English practicing opportunities courses for employees in order to help staff increase their confidence in speaking English.

Limitations and Recommendations for Further Studies

This study has some limitations. Firstly, the participants of the study were only 36 consultants who work in one of international accounting company in Bangkok, so the findings did not investigate English speaking anxiety of tax consultants in other international accounting companies. Therefore, future studies should select participants from different international accounting companies, and increase the number of participants. Secondly, this study used only a questionnaire to collect data. In order to gain more information, accuracy, future research could include interviews with Thai tax consultants. Using various research methods will generate more information from respondents. Besides, future studies could investigate other departments in international accounting companies in order to find out level of English speaking anxiety in various businesses such as administration or auditing team.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE (ENGLISH VERSION)

Questionnaire

This questionnaire is part of a study for a Master of Arts Degree in Business English for International Communication at Srinakharinwirot University, Bangkok. Your responses will be kept strictly confidential and used only for academic purposes.

Part I: Demographic Information of the Participants

Directions : Please complete the following information.

1. Gender ☐ Male ☐ Female

2. Age ☐ 25-30 years ☐ 31-35 years
☐ 36-40 years ☐ over 40 years

3. Educational background
☐ Doctoral degree
☐ Master's degree
☐ Bachelor's degree
☐ Other (please specify) ____________________

4. How long have you been working with this organization?
☐ Less than 3 years ☐ 3 years and more

Part II: How Thai tax consultants opinion about English speaking anxiety

Directions: Please check (✓) to indicate your opinion on the following statements which you agree.

Statements	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
1. I always avoid speaking English with clients or in workplace (i.e. with bosses or colleagues).					
2. I am worried when speaking English with clients or in workplace (i.e. bosses or colleagues).					
3. I feel tense when I have to speak English without preparing myself. (i.e. with bosses, colleagues or in the meeting)					
4. I feel self-confident when speaking English with clients or in workplace (i.e. with bosses or colleagues).					
5. I can make good impression when speaking English with clients or in workplace (i.e. with bosses or colleagues).					
6. I find myself speaking faster or slower than usual when speaking English with clients (i.e. with bosses or colleagues).					
7. I feel that I am fluent in speaking English with clients or in workplace (i.e. with bosses or colleagues).					
8. I can control my nervousness while I speak English with clients and in workplace (i.e. with bosses or colleagues).					
9. I feel stress when speaking English with clients or in workplace (i.e. with bosses or colleagues).					
10. I enjoy speaking English with clients and in workplace (i.e. with bosses or colleagues).					
11. I have skill enough for conducting presentation in English.					

Statements	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
12. I feel self-confident while conducting presentation in English.					
13. I feel nervous when I have to conduct a presentation in English.					
14. I can make a good impression while conducting presentation in English.					
15. I have knowledge in English skill enough in responding to queries while conducting presentation.					
16. I always avoid speaking English with clients by conference.					
17. I feel confident if I have to speak English with clients by conference.					
18. I have knowledge in English enough to provide opinions to clients by conference.					
19. I could not answer in English continually while attending conference.					
20. I have low English speaking skill in communicating by conference.					

Part III: What is the main cause of speaking anxiety?

Directions: Please check (✓) to indicate your opinion on the following statements which you agree.

Statements	Agree
1. Lack of confidence in speaking English	
2. Lack of practice in speaking English	
3. Fear of making mistakes when speaking English	
4. Feel nervous when speaking English with foreigners	
5. Cannot think words properly while speaking English	
6. Low English skill	
7. No preparation	
8. Grammatical problems / vocabulary	

Thank you for your kind assistance to complete the questionnaire

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE (THAI VERSION)

แบบสอบถาม

แบบสอบถามนี้เป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษาวิจัยในระดับปริญญาโท หลักสูตรภาษาอังกฤษธุรกิจเพื่อการสื่อสารนานาชาติ มหาวิทยาลัยศรีนครินทรวิโรฒ กรุงเทพมหานคร ความคิดเห็นของท่านจะถูกนำไปวิเคราะห์เพื่อจุดประสงค์ทางการศึกษาวิจัยเท่านั้น.

ส่วนที่ 1: **ข้อมูลทั่วไปของผู้ตอบแบบสอบถาม**

คำชี้แจง : กรุณากรอกข้อมูลดังต่อไปนี้

1. เพศ ☐ ชาย ☐ หญิง

2. อายุ ☐ 25-30 ปี ☐ 31-35 ปี

   ☐ 36 – 40 ปี ☐ มากกว่า 40 ปี

3. ระดับการศึกษา ☐ ปริญญาเอก

   ☐ ปริญญาโท

   ☐ ปริญญาตรี

   ☐ อื่นๆ (โปรดระบุ) ________________

4. ประสบการณ์ทำงานในการเป็นผู้ให้คำปรึกษาในองค์กร

   ☐ น้อยกว่า 3 ปี ☐ 3 ปี หรือมากกว่า

ส่วนที่ 2 : ข้อมูลเกี่ยวกับความวิตกกังวลในการพูดภาษาอังกฤษ

คำชี้แจง : ให้ผู้ตอบแบบสอบถามพิจารณาว่าข้อใดตรงกับความเป็นจริงของท่าน โดยทำเครื่องหมาย (✓) ในช่องที่ตรงกับความเห็นของท่านมากที่สุด

ข้อความ	เห็นด้วยอย่างยิ่ง	เห็นด้วย	เฉยๆ	ไม่เห็นด้วย	ไม่เห็นด้วยอย่างยิ่ง
1. ฉันหลีกเลี่ยงที่จะพูดภาษาอังกฤษกับลูกค้าหรือในสถานที่ทำงาน (เช่นกับเจ้านายหรือเพื่อนร่วมงาน)					
2. ฉันกังวลเมื่อต้องพูดภาษาอังกฤษกับลูกค้าหรือในสถานที่ทำงาน (เช่นกับเจ้านายหรือเพื่อนร่วมงาน)					
3. ฉันเครียดเมื่อต้องพูดภาษาอังกฤษกับลูกค้าหรือในสถานที่ทำงาน (กับเจ้านาย, เพื่อนร่วมงานหรือในที่ประชุม)					
4. ฉันมั่นใจเมื่อต้องพูดภาษาอังกฤษกับลูกค้าหรือในสถานที่ทำงาน (เช่นกับเจ้านายหรือเพื่อนร่วมงาน)					
5. ฉันสามารถสร้างความประทับใจที่ดีให้กับลูกค้าหรือในสถานที่ทำงาน (เช่นกับเจ้านายหรือเพื่อนร่วมงาน) เมื่อต้องพูดภาษาอังกฤษ					
6. ฉันพบว่าตัวเองจะพูดช้าหรือเร็วมากกว่าปกติเมื่อต้องใช้ภาษาอังกฤษกับลูกค้าหรือในสถานที่ทำงาน (เช่นกับเจ้านายหรือเพื่อนร่วมงาน)					
7. ฉันคิดว่าตัวเองสามารถพูดภาษาอังกฤษกับลูกค้าหรือในสถานที่ทำงาน (เช่นกับเจ้านายหรือเพื่อนร่วมงาน) ได้คล่องแคล่ว					
8. ฉันสามารถควบคุมความประหม่าขณะพูดภาษาอังกฤษกับลูกค้าหรือในสถานที่ทำงาน (เช่นกับเจ้านายหรือเพื่อนร่วมงาน)					
9. ฉันรู้สึกเกร็งเมื่อต้องพูดภาษาอังกฤษกับลูกค้าหรือในสถานที่ทำงาน (เช่นกับเจ้านายหรือเพื่อนร่วมงาน)					

ข้อความ	เห็นด้วยอย่างยิ่ง	เห็นด้วย	เฉยๆ	ไม่เห็นด้วย	ไม่เห็นด้วยอย่างยิ่ง
10. ฉันชอบเมื่อต้องพูดภาษาอังกฤษกับลูกค้าหรือในสถานที่ทำงาน (เช่นกับเจ้านายหรือเพื่อนร่วมงาน)					
11. ฉันมีความเชี่ยวชาญเพียงพอที่จะนำเสนอผลงานเป็นภาษาอังกฤษ					
12. ฉันมีความมั่นใจในขณะที่นำเสนอผลงานเป็นภาษาอังกฤษ					
13. ฉันประหม่าเมื่อต้องนำเสนอผลงานเป็นภาษาอังกฤษ					
14. ฉันสามารถสร้างประทับใจที่ดีเมื่อต้องนำเสนอผลงานเป็นภาษาอังกฤษ					
15. ฉันมีความรู้และทักษะในการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษเพียงพอที่จะตอบคำถามเป็นภาษาอังกฤษขณะนำเสนอผลงาน					
16. ฉันมักหลีกเลี่ยงที่จะสนทนาภาษาอังกฤษทางโทรศัพท์					
17. ฉันมีความมั่นใจเมื่อต้องสนทนาภาษาอังกฤษผ่านทางโทรศัพท์					
18. ฉันมีความรู้ทักษะเพียงพอที่จะสามารถให้ความคิดเห็นกับลูกค้าผ่านการสนทนาทางโทรศัพท์					
19. ฉันไม่สามารถโต้ตอบภาษาอังกฤษได้อย่างต่อเนื่องเมื่อต้องสนทนาทางโทรศัพท์					
20. ฉันมีความเชี่ยวชาญในการพูดภาษาอังกฤษน้อยเมื่อต้องสนทนาทางโทรศัพท์					

ส่วนที่ 3 : สาเหตุของการเกิดความวิตกกังวลในการพูดภาษาอังกฤษ

คำชี้แจง : ให้ผู้ตอบแบบสอบถามพิจารณาว่าข้อใดตรงกับความเป็นจริงของท่าน โดยทำเครื่องหมาย (✓) ในช่องที่ตรงกับความเห็นของท่านมากที่สุดเพียงหนึ่งข้อ

ข้อความ	เห็นด้วย
1. ขาดความมั่นใจในการพูดภาษาอังกฤษ	
2.ขาดการฝึกฝนในด้านการพูดภาษาอังกฤษ	
3. กลัวเกิดการผิดพลาดเมื่อต้องพูดภาษาอังกฤษ	
4. รู้สึกกังวลเมื่อต้องพูดภาษาอังกฤษกับชาวต่างชาติ	
5. ไม่สามารถคิดคำศัพท์ได้อย่างเหมาะสมเมื่อต้องพูดภาษาอังกฤษ	
6. มีความชำนาญทางภาษาอังกฤษน้อย	
7. ไม่มีการเตรียมตัว	
8. ปัญหาทางด้านไวยากรณ์ / คำศัพท์	

ขอบคุณทุกท่านสำหรับการให้ความร่วมมือในการตอบแบบสอบถาม

VITAE

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