

EMAIL WRITING PROBLEMS AND STRATEGIES USED TO SOLVE THE
PROBLEMS BY THAI EMPLOYEES COMMUNICATING WITH NATIVE AND
NON-NATIVE ENGLISH SPEAKERS IN AN INTERNATIONAL WORKPLACE



Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Master of Arts Degree in English
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This study investigated the problems and strategies writing email in English, to both native and non-native speakers, experienced by Thais in an international workplace in Bangkok, Thailand. The study also examined differences in the writing problems and strategies of Thai employees when communicating in English with native as compared to non-native speakers. There were 100 participants randomly from various departments and split into two groups of 50 each. Group 1 were those whose communication was regularly with native speakers, and Group 2 those whose communication was with non-native speakers. A questionnaire was used to collect the data.

The results showed that problems encountered by Group 1 included: (a) using the same style of writing, and (b) not being able to write good emails or review their own writing. Group 2 encountered a wider variety of problems, including a lack of confidence, and the need to have emails reviewed by co-workers or supervisors. Group 2 also encountered problems using the same style of writing, and concerns about using culture of receivers. The most common strategies used by both groups included practicing writing regularly, using a spell-checker, and consulting the dictionary for unknown words. An independent-sample *t* test showed that the two groups faced similar problems writing email in English, but there were statistically significant differences in the strategies used by the two groups to solve these problems.

ปัญหาและกลวิธีที่ใช้ในการแก้ปัญหาการเขียนจดหมายอิเล็กทรอนิกส์ภาษาอังกฤษของ
พนักงานไทยในสถานประกอบการนานาชาติที่สื่อสารกับผู้ใช้ภาษาอังกฤษและไม่ใช้ภาษาอังกฤษ
เป็นภาษาที่หนึ่ง



เสนอต่อบัณฑิตวิทยาลัย มหาวิทยาลัยศรีนครินทรวิโรฒ เพื่อเป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษา
ตามหลักสูตรปริญญาศิลปศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต สาขาวิชาภาษาอังกฤษ
สิงหาคม 2560

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อิเล็กทรอนิกส์ภาษาอังกฤษของพนักงานไทยในสถานประกอบการนานาชาติที่สื่อสารกับผู้ใช้
ภาษาอังกฤษและไม่ใช้ภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาที่หนึ่ง ปรินทิพย์ ศศ.ม. (ภาษาอังกฤษ).

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งานวิจัยนี้มีจุดประสงค์ เพื่อศึกษาการปัญหาและกลวิธีที่ใช้ในการแก้ปัญหาการเขียนจดหมาย
อิเล็กทรอนิกส์ภาษาอังกฤษของพนักงานไทยในสถานประกอบการนานาชาติที่สื่อสารกับผู้ใช้
ภาษาอังกฤษและไม่ใช้ภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาที่หนึ่ง นอกจากนี้มีการสำรวจหาค่าความแตกต่าง
ของปัญหาและกลวิธีที่ใช้การแก้ปัญหาของสองกลุ่ม กลุ่มตัวอย่างในการทำวิจัยนี้ประกอบด้วย
พนักงานคนไทยจำนวน 100 คน เลือกโดยการสุ่มจากแผนกต่างๆ และแบ่งเป็น 2 กลุ่ม กลุ่มละ 50
คน กลุ่มที่ 1 คือ ผู้ที่สื่อสารกับชาวต่างชาติที่ใช้ภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาที่หนึ่ง กลุ่มที่ 2 คือ ผู้ที่
ติดต่อกับชาวต่างชาติที่ไม่ใช้ภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาที่หนึ่ง มีแบบสอบถามที่ให้พนักงานประเมิน
ปัญหาและกลวิธีที่ใช้ในการแก้ปัญหาในการเขียนจดหมายอิเล็กทรอนิกส์ของตนเอง

ผลการวิจัยในครั้งนี้พบว่าพนักงานในกลุ่ม 1 มีปัญหาในการเขียน อาทิเช่น ใช้รูปแบบในการ
เขียนแบบเดิมๆ และไม่สามารถเขียนจดหมายที่ดีได้และต้องมีการอ่านซ้ำก่อนการส่งจดหมายใน
กลุ่มที่ 2 พบปัญหามากกว่ากลุ่มที่ 1 อาทิเช่น ขาดความมั่นใจในการส่งและนอกจากนี้ยังพบว่า
กลุ่มที่ 2 มีปัญหาเกี่ยวกับรูปแบบในการเขียนและมีปัญหาเกี่ยวกับวัฒนธรรมของผู้รับ ต้องได้รับ
การตรวจทานจากเพื่อนร่วมงานหรือผู้บังคับบัญชาก่อน และใช้การเขียนแบบเดิมๆ วิธีการแก้ปัญหา
ของทั้งสองกลุ่ม อาทิเช่นการฝึกฝนการเขียนและใช้สื่ออิเล็กทรอนิกส์ในการค้นหาคำศัพท์ที่ไม่
คุ้นเคยเมื่อเปรียบเทียบกับปัญหาพบที่มีความคล้ายคลึงกัน แต่กลวิธีในการแก้ปัญหพบในกลุ่มที่สอง
มากกว่าอย่างมีนัยสำคัญในเชิงสถิติ

The thesis titled
“Email Writing Problems and Strategies Used to Solve the Problems by Thai Employees
Communicating with Native and Non-Native English Speakers
in an International Workplace”

by

Saisamorn Pimthong

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

.....Dean of Graduate school

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I THE PROBLEM AND ITS BACKGROUD.....	1
Introduction.....	1
The English Email Writing Problems of Non-Native Speakers.....	3
The Strategies Used to Solve the Problems in English Email Writing.	5
Purpose of the Study.....	7
Research Questions.....	8
Significance of the Study.....	8
Method.....	9
Selection of the Company.....	9
Selection of the Participants.....	10
Instrumentation.....	10
Data Collection Procedures.....	11
Data Analysis.....	11
Confidentiality of Participants and Their Response.....	12
Limitation of the Study.....	12
Definition of Terms.....	12
Electronic Mail.....	12
Native English Speakers.....	13
Non-Native English Speakers.....	13
Thai Employees.....	13
The International Workplace.....	13
Organization of the Study.....	14

TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

Chapter	Page
II REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE.....	15
General English Problems for Non-Native English Speakers.....	15
Communications Methods in the International Workplace.....	19
The Importance of Email in Workplace.....	25
Problems Experienced by Thai Employees Writing Email in English.....	28
Strategies Used to Overcome Problems Writing Email in English	32
Related Research about Problems Writing Email in English and Used to Solve the Problems.....	41
Summary.....	48
III METHOD.....	49
Participants.....	49
Selection of the Company	49
Selection of the Participants.....	50
Instrumentation	51
Questionnaire.....	51
Data Collection Procedures.....	54
Data Analysis.....	54
Summary.....	55
IV RESULTS.....	57
Demographic Characteristics of the Participants	57
Results.....	60
Research Question 1.....	60

TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

Chapter	Page
Research Question 2.....	63
Research Question 3.....	66
Research Question 4.....	67
Summary.....	68
V DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS	
Research Question 1.....	71
Result Research Question 1.....	71
Discussion Research Question 1.....	72
Research Question 2.....	73
Result Research Question 2.....	74
Discussion: Research Question 2.....	74
Research Questions 3	74
Results: Research Questions 3	74
Discussion: Research Questions 3	75
Research Questions 4.....	76
Results: Research Questions 4	76
Discussion: Research Questions 4.....	76
Conclusion.....	77
Recommendation for further Studies.....	79
REFERENCES.....	80
APPENDICES.....	88
APPENDIX A: Letter Asking for Information.....	89
APPENDIX B: Questionnaire	92

TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

Chapter	Page
VITAE.....	100



LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Participants by Group.....	52
2. Questionnaire Description Part II.....	53
3. Demographic Characteristics of the Participants	59
4. The English Email Writing Problems Encountered by Thai Employees Communicating with Native English Speakers.....	62
5. The Email Writing Strategies Employed by Thai Employees Communicating with Native English Speakers and by Thai Employees Communicating with Non-Native English Speakers	65
6. The <i>t</i> -Test Analysis: Comparison of the Problems Faced by Both Groups of Thai Employees.....	67
7. The <i>t</i> -Test Analysis: The Strategies Used to Solve Problems by Both Group..	68

CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND ITS BACKGROUND

Introduction

In order to participate in the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), Thai people are expected to communicate in English with both native and non-native speakers, rather than in the native languages of the AEC countries. This will provide Thais with better opportunities to work in international companies, many of which are seeking to establish offices in Thailand due to the comparatively lower labor costs. Today, the number of non-native English speakers far exceeds the number of native speakers in the business world (Carrio Pastora & Calderonba, 2012). English is necessary for professionals who want to work in global business and international trade or for international companies. English is required for meetings and communication among people from different cultural and language groups (Rogerson-Revell, 2007). Therefore, Thais should develop at least a functional command of English in order to survive and prosper in the business world.

Nowadays, email is the most widely used form of communication in organizational settings or companies. Most workplaces prefer email as a medium of business communication. The benefit of email is that it can be composed, edited, appended, and conveyed to many people simply by clicking a mouse. Email is also synchronized, meaning, it can be sent and received at different times, so, unlike in a telephone conversation, participants do not need to communicate at the same time. In recent years, email has come to replace telephone calls and live meetings as the most popular form of communication in the workplace (Balter, 1998). Email software has also achieved filing-cabinet efficiency. It can be increasingly filtered, stored, sorted, and searched for messages and attachments. It is also possible to search for information more

rapidly and effectively than is the case with paper-based memos (Hill, 2009).

Furthermore, an email is preferable to a hard copy. Unlike surface mail, email can be received without the risk of being delayed or lost in transit, and email systems can also show whether or not the recipient has received or opened a message. Some systems automatically make a back-up copy of sent and received email on the hard drive. They are also easy to copy or forward and can be automatically stored for documentation (Fynn & Flynn, 2013). Email is also widely used for personal communication. People of all ages from all over the world use email daily to contact their friends, relatives, teachers, and others, preferring it to other forms of communication. This is because they wish to save time or money, as email is cheaper than the telephone and faster than surface mail.

Email is ideally suited for business purposes, especially for people who live in different regions and time zones. Email is particularly useful for employees and employers in achieving their business targets and effectively performing their duties (Muhl, 2003). For example, employees in multinational companies can communicate with people in different time zones despite the time difference. They can also send documents, files, and photographs (Flynn & Flynn, 2003). There are no limitations on email in terms of time or place, nor can messages be lost, unlike letters, which must be physically copied and filed (Davies & Dick, 1995).

In Thailand, as in many other countries, email is more convenient and more commonly used than surface mail. Furthermore, unlike a conventional letter, email is instantly transmitted to the sender, and unlike international telephone calls, email is cost-effective (Flynn & Flynn, 2003). Also, email in English can be easier than face-to-face communication, which can lead to difficulties and misunderstandings especially among non-native speakers (Davies & Dick, 1995).

The English email writing problems of non-native speakers.

In business, email is a significant tool for international communication, having become the most popular and practical method of communication in the workplace. For many, email is preferable to live or face-to-face conversations or meetings. Email is one of the most important communication tools in business, and users should be highly organized in order to extract the key details from the large amounts of email they send and receive (Balter, 1998).

Pettersson (2015) showed the forms of greeting and closing English email by non-native English writers who use English as a second language and communicate in a foreign language with managers in an international company. The findings of this study showed that informal language was acceptable in business email involving different nationalities and cultures. Furthermore, non-native English speakers were likely to use their style of writing to make readers understand. However, this research could not confirm whether or not there were formal differences in their business email. In addition, cultural awareness in the intercultural business setting required the awareness that language used in business emails varied.

Calderon & Carrio Pastor (2012) examined the lexical variations in the email of non-native employees who learnt English as a second language and non-native speakers who used English as a foreign language. These employees had been working in a global workplace and communicating with native English speakers. The study revealed that writers who used English as a foreign language had more problems than the ones who used English as second language. These were caused by cultural and sociolinguistic influences. Non-native speakers who used English as a foreign language had difficulty with the following: complex noun phases, compound sentences, creating new words to replace those from their mother tongue, discourse variation, lexical features, varying their

use of English, suffering in their linguistic production, and direct and imperative writing styles.

In Thailand, there have been several studies which confirm the notion that Thai employees make errors when writing emails for business purposes. For instance, one study revealed that the Thai administrative staff at an international school made frequent grammatical errors when writing emails due to their lack of knowledge of English grammar (Nutpoung, 2013). Their six main grammatical problems were: (a) English grammatical structures, (b) tenses and subject-verb agreement, (c) sentence fragments and auxiliaries, (d) interrogative sentences, (f) Thai particles, and (g) plural nouns. These grammatical errors caused problems for the Thai administrative staff because English is a foreign language in Thailand and not their mother-tongue. Therefore, the Thai administrative staff were unaware of having made any errors and only applied a minimal knowledge of English grammar when writing emails. The wording they used in email was informal. They also did not spend much time writing emails, so their messages were short and concise. Hence, this study is concerned with the importance of increasing the English grammatical knowledge of Thai administrative staff. It is also necessary for them to realize that a lack of grammatical knowledge can lead to miscommunication.

Other studies have shown that grammatical errors can also be found in business emails among Thai who learnt English as a foreign language (Sirijorn, 2013). These errors included the following: (a) punctuation usage, (b) comma splices, (c) subject-verb agreement, (d) verb tense, (e) spelling, (f) prepositions, and (g) fragments and sentence structure. In addition, factors contributing to participants' difficulty with writing business email were: (a) vocabulary knowledge, (b) limited writing time, (c) the expectations of the readers, (d) active-passive voice adjective, (e) compound sentences, (f) punctuation

usage, (g) nouns, (h) preposition usage, (i) types of messages, (j) comma splices, and (k) fragments.

Furthermore, according to Siripraparat (2011), Thai employees in an international setting were asked questions concerning their problems in writing business email in English. They presented that timing of readers consumed was unable to control. Moreover, the lack of verbal cues in writing email may lead to misunderstanding and hinder effective communication.

In addition, some Thai employees have difficulties with the amount of time spent composing emails. Grammar review, word choice, and careful sentence structure are time-consuming. When it was suggested that they did not use proper grammar and tone for business email, some disagreed. Also, their understanding of the content of email, including jargon, was limited by their educational background, knowledge of English fundamentals, and their basic level of function in English.

It can be concluded that non-native English speakers have difficulties writing emails in English. The main problems appear to be poor grammar, a lack of appropriate vocabulary, problems with clarity of expression, cultural awareness, time lost composing email, relationships, their position in the organization, slang, unclear messages, run-on sentences, style of writing, and email formality.

The strategies used to solve the problem in English email writing.

Generally, the purpose of writing email is for the sender to effectively transmit a message to the reader(s). While many Thai workers use the modern and standard email writing styles, some of them are still using inappropriate or outdated formats and writing styles (Sangthong, 2013). As a consequence, training in writing business email in English should be provided for Thai employees in international companies to increase their knowledge and enhance their email writing skills by using the most up-to-date format and

style. Other types of writing courses are also essential for both teachers and learners who are non-native speakers and need to improve their writing skills (Channa et. al., 2013).

AlAfnan (2014) also mentioned that most direct politeness strategies were used by close colleagues without considering the colleague's position or level, but employees were less polite with their distant colleagues. This showed that culture influenced the politeness strategies used by employees.

In addition, according to Sriripraparat (2011) claimed that Thai employees who works in an international organization agreed that training, revising emails, and using a grammar and/or spelling checker would result in greater productivity and efficiency for Thai employees writing emails in English. A conversational tone should also be used for English business email. These practices will contribute to a significant reduction of errors in email and help improve Thai employees' level of communication in the international workplace.

Moreover, according to Wongworawan (2011) there are three email writing strategies that will would help Thai employees write effective email. First is the direct approach, which is getting right to the point to make the message clear. Second, the indirect approach should be used to give bad news, and it is better to give the reason at the beginning of the message. Last, the persuasive approach should be used when writing to management to get approvals, including attaching supporting documents and additional data.

Similarly, according to Thammasorn and Somsin (2013), Thai members of the faculty Business Management at an unnamed university agree that reviewing before sending email can reduce errors in emails or letters. In addition, practicing writing English every day and getting training from good instructors will improve their educational background and level of proficiency in English.

In conclusion, writing strategies are useful in dealing with the difficulties in email writing, especially for non-native speakers of English. In addition, writing strategies offer guidelines and instructions that help solve communication problems and help employees explore and develop their writing skills. Employees can adopt strategies to solve writing problems that could cause misunderstanding between writers and readers, and ensure that communication is effective. Additionally, writing strategies can save time while increasing productivity and efficiency (Siripraparat, 2011).

Purpose of the Study

In international companies located in Bangkok, Thai employees are expected to communicate by email in English everyday with co-workers who are either native or non-native speakers. The ability to write emails in English is a requirement for Thai employees, who are also expected to have a high degree of English proficiency in listening, speaking, and reading. This is strongly confirmed by a review of the research and a survey of Thai employees working in an international setting who had problems writing email in English. There have been many studies on email communication in business, but there is a limited amount of research on Thai employees in international companies using email to communicate in English with both native and non-native speakers. Furthermore, existing research on the email writing skills of Thai employees based in Bangkok petroleum companies could not be found.

Thus, this study investigated the English email communication problems and strategies used by Thai employees in an international companies. This research also explored whether there were significant differences between strategies used to communicate in English via email with native speakers as compared to strategies used to communicate with non-native speakers. Consequently, the findings of the study may be useful for employees or students seeking to improve their own English competency and

for organizations who would like to provide more specific training courses for their employees.

Research Questions

The research questions are as follows:

1. What problems were experienced by Thai employees at an international company communicating in English by email with native and non-native speakers?
2. What strategies were used by Thai employees at an international company to solve problems communicating through email in English with native and non-native speakers?
3. Were there any significant differences between the English email writing problems experienced by Thai employees at an international company in terms of communicating through email with native and non-native English speakers?
4. Were there any significant differences between the English email writing strategies used by Thai employees to communicate with native English speakers and non-native English speakers?

Significance of the Study

This study investigated the problems experienced by Thai employees writing email in English, as well as strategies used to communicate in English with both native and non-native speakers, at an international petroleum company in Bangkok, Thailand. This research also attempted to identify and explore the significant differences between English email writing strategies used by Thai employees when communicating with native versus non-native speakers. This analysis can help the company provide more specific and practical training in writing business email in English. This study also hopes to provide Thai employees guidance in writing effective business email and increasing their productivity by reducing time wasted writing ineffective email. Also, these findings

could contribute to the development of the English proficiency of Thai employees in both private and public organizations and in preparation for the ASEAN community and global labor market.

Method

Selection of the company.

The company was selected for this study based on four criteria. Firstly, it is an international workplace, one of the largest petroleum companies in the world, with head offices in the Asia-Pacific region, Europe, and North America. Secondly, both native and non-native English-speaking countries are represented, with an office in Bangkok, Thailand, and global affiliates in the United States, Australia and New Zealand, Singapore, Malaysia, and India. Thirdly, English is the core language used in this company for communication purposes and a variety of other functions, despite the fact that it is not their mother tongue. Additionally, the company use a lot of communication tools such as telephone call, fax, internal mail, letter, Skype, video call and face to face meeting. However, the most popular tool is email communications in English and they use email to communicate within their organization and externally for suppliers. Lastly, the researcher is familiar with and has access to the company in order to facilitate data collection. The researcher has worked for the company since 2005.

The results of this study could be of particular benefit to the Training Center of this and other petroleum companies. Because this is a major petroleum company with head offices consisting of native English speakers from the aforementioned countries, and uses English as a global language, it meets the requirements of an international workplace (Crystal, 2003).

Selection of the participants.

The participants of this study included 100 Thai employees from an international workplace who performed a variety of functions. The selection of the participants depended on the willingness of the company to allow their employees to participate in this study. The survey asked whether or not they had problems writing email in English. The participants who answered in the affirmative were selected to take part in the survey. There were some employees who provided services to native English speakers from the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, as well as to non-native speakers from Malaysia, Singapore, India, and other countries. The participants in this study were asked to give the data to answer three research questions.

Instrumentation.

The key instrument used in this research was a questionnaire developed by the researcher. The questionnaire includes both closed- and open-ended questions, which were self-administered by the participants. The participants were asked about their demographic and educational background, years of work experience, problems encountered communicating with foreign customers and colleagues, and strategies used to solve these problems.

The closed-ended questionnaire was divided into three parts. Part I gathers demographic information about the participants. Part II concerns the ability of respondents to write email in English. Part III addresses the strategies participants used when facing problems writing email. A five-point Likert rating scale (Likert, 1932) was used to rank problems experienced and strategies employed by participants when writing email in English to native and non-native speakers. The participants were asked to rate their problems by selecting one of the following five items on the Likert scale: Strongly Agree = 5, Agree = 4, Moderately Agree = 3, Disagree = 2, and Strongly Disagree = 1.

Open-ended questions were added to Part II and Part III in order to gain more in-depth information about the problems Thai employees faced writing email in English, and strategies used to facilitate communication with foreign customers and colleagues. The participants were also asked for comments on any issues which were not addressed in the close-ended questions.

The researcher adapted problems and strategies found in previous studies to develop the question in the questionnaire.

Data collection procedures.

Before the survey, the researcher asked for permission to collect data through a questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed to participants in November 2015, who were given one week to complete it and return it to the researcher. A letter of consent and the contact information of the researcher were attached to the questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed to all participants through the internal mail system of the company in order to obtain data. To allow ample time to complete the questionnaire, participants were given one week to complete it.

Data analysis.

The data from the questionnaire were analyzed in order to answer the four research questions. Findings were interpreted, categorized, and presented in tables and figures with full explanations of the descriptive analysis. Results were also calculated into statistical values, according to the following procedures:

1. Information referring to the general background of the participants was presented in the form of a percentage.
2. A five-point Likert scale was used to score the participant's level of agreement with the English email writing problems and strategies used in communication

with foreign customers and colleagues: Strongly Agree = 5, Agree = 4, Moderately Agree = 3, Disagree = 2, Strongly Disagree = 1.

3. The levels of agreement among the participants regarding their email writing problems and strategies were analyzed in terms of a mean score (*M*) and standard deviation (*SD*). A higher mean score indicated more problems writing email in English and an increased use of problem-solving strategies, while a lower mean score indicated fewer problems writing email in English and a decreased use of problem-solving strategies.
4. A *t* test was administered to ascertain whether there were significant differences in problems and strategies used by Thai employees in an international workplace to communicate in English with native as compared to non-native speakers.

Confidentiality of Participants and Their Responses

The identities of the participants were not revealed and the questionnaires were destroyed on completion of the study. If the participants had questions, they were advised to ask the researcher directly.

Limitations of the Study

The participants in this study were limited to Thai employees with limited functions who worked in an international workplace in Bangkok and were willing to participate in the study. The participants who were not willing to participate were replaced by anyone willing to take part.

Definition of Terms

The study uses the following specific terms:

1. Electronic mail

In this study, electronic mail or “email” is a communication tool used by Thai

employees of international companies to communicate in English with native and non-native speakers. The email messages were sent via the Internet on the company server.

2. Native English speakers

According to Kachru (1985), the “inner circle” of English speakers refers to traditional native English speakers who use English as a first language. The countries included in this circle are Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, South Africa and the U.K. In these countries, both colleagues and clients speak English as their first language.

3. Non-Native English speakers

According to Krachu (1985), in the “outer” or “extended circle” which includes China, Hong Kong, India, the Philippines, and Singapore, English is used as a second language. The expanding circle consists of countries that use English as an international language because these countries are dependent on native English speakers or they teach or speak English as a foreign language.

4. Thai Employees

The Thai employees are the participants in this study who work with their colleagues in their second language. Their mother tongue is Thai, but they use English as a language of communication with colleagues and customers and with native and non-native speakers via email.

5. The international workplace

In this study, the international workplace signifies the branches of foreign companies in Thailand which also provide services to affiliates in base countries. They use English as a lingua franca for the purpose of communication.

Organization of the Study

This study consists of Chapter I, which presents the background of the study and research questions. Chapter II provides a review of the relevant literature. Chapter III is concerned with the methodology used in this study. Chapter IV reports the findings, while Chapter V consists of a conclusion, a discussion of the findings, and recommendations for further studies.



CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter reviews related literature and previous, relevant studies. This chapter contains the following aspects of the study:

1. General English problems for non-native English speakers
2. Communication methods in the international workplace
3. The importance of email in the workplace
3. Problems experienced by Thai employees writing email in English
5. Strategies used to overcome problems writing email in English
6. Related research about problems writing email in English and the strategies used to solve the problems
7. Summary

General English Problems for Non-Native English Speakers

According to Papko (2015), “communication” is the best word to describe the progress and advance in business, and most of that communication is in English. English is now the global language of business. A good knowledge of English helps achieve faster, more efficient results. There are many international organizations that use English as the main language of business, and the communication skills of employees play an important role in the success of the organization (Hamilton & Parker, 1997; Witchaiyutphong, 2011). Using English for business is not easy in non-native countries, but for companies to succeed in the global economy, the problems in language use must be overcome. For a successful international company, English will become the common language in daily work. For workers, knowledge of English opens up more job opportunities, and is important in understanding other cultures. English has become

almost a necessity for those who want to work in the global economy (Dennis & Jampa, 2016; Papko, 2015).

Furthermore, Kertzner (2009) showed that English is the main language in global companies, and this requires non-native English speakers to have an advanced level of English. These employees may have high test scores, an advanced education, technical capability, and a successful professional background, but lack confidence because they cannot communicate clearly and precisely in English, or have heavy accents and awkward speech patterns. This can lead to significantly negative feedback for the company and co-workers have often been frustrated with the ignorance and lack of expertise in English among non-native speakers. In addition, isolated work patterns and an avoidance of criticism caused a lack of confidence. For example, employees wrote shorter sentences to avoid grammar errors.

However, the findings of Carrio Pastora and Calderonba (2012) examined lexical variations in email writing among non-native employees who learned English as a second language (ESL), and non-native speakers who used English as a foreign language (EFL). These employees have also been working in an international workplace and communicate regularly with native English speakers. The study also revealed that writers who use English as a foreign language have more problems than those who use English as a second language. This is due to a range of cultural and sociolinguistic factors. The problems faced by non-native speakers of English as a foreign language were of the following types: using complex noun phrases and compound sentences; creating new words from their mother tongue; varying their discourse; using vocabulary correctly; varying quality in their use of English; anxiety in speaking; and using direct and imperative writing styles.

Pettersson (2015) explored the forms of greeting and closing emails, used by non-native speakers using English as a second language, while communicating with their managers in an international company. The findings of this study revealed that informal language is acceptable in business email between people of different cultures and nationalities. Furthermore, most employees were likely to use their writing style to help make readers understand. This research could not confirm whether or not writing more formal business email makes a difference in clarity and effectiveness. In addition, cultural awareness in an intercultural business setting is important to determine appropriate language use in a variety of circumstances.

The problems of non-native English speakers have been discussed in many studies. Ashraf, Bilal and Fareed (2016) carried out a study of major problems writing English in undergraduate students of English as a Second Language (ESL). They determined that there was a lack of appropriate vocabulary and difficulties with grammar and syntax. Students also made errors in subject-verb agreement, pronunciation, verb tense, articles, prepositions, and forming complete sentences using basic sentence structures. "Writing problems" refer to difficulties in one or more writing skills, such as correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling. When facing such problems students fail to produce mistake-free writing. The most common problems were grammatical, including the incorrect use of verb tense, prepositions, syntax, subject-verb agreement, and articles (Albalawi & Younes, 2015).

The researcher identified and discussed the following sources and degree of error:

1. Verb tense errors occur because the mother language does not use the verb *to be*.
2. Prepositions are omitted, improper, or redundant.

3. Syntax errors include omission of the plural ending “s,” misusing the plural ending “s,” or incorrectly using the progressive.
4. Subject-verb agreement is not well-understood and often done incorrectly.
5. Articles were often used incorrectly, including incorrect or redundant articles, or replacing correct articles with incorrect ones.
6. Punctuation included: (a) absence of the capital letter at the beginning of new sentences, (b) proper nouns rarely capitalized, (c) incorrect use of the colon, (d) omission of the semicolon, (e) absence of the exclamation mark where required, (f) run-on sentences without full stops, (g) poor or no revision of what is written and not enough spaces between words, (h) lack of question marks and hyphens, (i) omission of the comma after introductory elements.
7. Spelling mistakes were observed, such as: (a) substitution errors including substituting one letter or more for another, e.g. an *e* for the *i* in *big* (“beg”), (b) the omission of one or more letters, as in the letter *f* in the word *affect* (“afect”), (c) the addition of an extra letter or letters to a word, as in adding a letter *i* to the word *all* (“aill”), (d) mis-ordering letters, as in “becuase” (instead of *because*), (e) segmentation errors, writing one word as two, or segmenting the word, e.g. “some times” (*sometimes*), (f) unreadable or unrecognizable words, such as “doib”. This category was a catch-all for such words.

Prachanant (2012) studied the use of English among Thais in the tourism industry in Thailand and found the following major problems:

1. Listening problems occurred when the foreigner speaks too fast or with an accent, and the listener cannot understand or does not know the meaning of the words. Listeners lack opportunities to hear English spoken.

2. Speaking problems occurred when speakers were unable to pronounce English words, or use words and expressions correctly. They often lacked knowledge of grammar and structure, and lacked confidence speaking.
3. Reading problems occurred when passages were too long, or the words were unfamiliar due to insufficient vocabulary.
4. Writing problems included poor grammar and vocabulary, and the lack of opportunities to write.

In summary, English is widely used as the key language in multinational companies or workplaces. Non-native English speakers encounter problems in speaking, writing, listening, and reading. Despite using English every day, many non-native speakers had problems with grammar, writing in an academic setting, and writing email. The influence of the mother tongue may lead to problems. Students with high English language test scores still reported difficulties writing English. Difficulties writing English can result in a lower production of reports and other documents, and waste the time of coworkers as they try to decipher the unclear writing of the non-native. When writing email in English, writers often struggle to explain problems without offending the reader.

Communication Methods in an International Workplace

A multinational corporation can be defined as “an enterprise that engages in foreign direct investment (FDI) and owns or controls value-added activities in more than one country” (Zekos, 2005). Hunya (2012) stated that a major development over the last twenty years has been the internationalization of business. Consequently, the corporate structure of the world economy of 2010 is quite different from that of 1990. For example, trade has risen due to increased production and the distribution of stages of production among a company’s subsidiaries, or among corporate networks.

A study was conducted on workplace writing practices in eight international workplaces in Greece (Machili, 2014). There were two parts of the research. The first part showed that writing practices varied for inter- as compared to intra-company communications. Business email tended to be informal, but workplace writing was treated as a high-risk activity, as a permanent record was made of all transactions and communications involving staff. There was variation in processes and practices in different settings and atmosphere, and a special concern for what constituted formal writing. The study also revealed that company size and the grade of employees and work experiences affected writing practices. Employees were asked to rate their use of email at work on two scales, one measuring formality, from least to most formal, and on whether the communication was more “transactional” or more “relational”. Their comments aligned with the results of the linguistic analysis. The data also indicated the impact of employee writing practices on the global socioeconomic activities in modern organizations. The participants in this research worked in languages and in business activities which cut across national and professional boundaries. Language training and specifically the teaching of writing in an academic context were described as complex choices and in a different context. There were items questioning the accelerating pace of changes in the socio-economic environment and the consequences they had for the fate of corporations in Europe and across the world. Globalization has led many businesses to expand their trade to other countries; formerly individual enterprises have made multinational alliances, and have employees from many different types of organizations, and have to deal with issues such as immigration, relocation, and business collaboration. The study implied that the members of organizations created multilingual atmospheres, employing a multilingual workforce and were required to use a range of languages to do business.

The manual *Internal Communications* reminds managers that different workgroups or different situations require different approaches to communications, and that communications technology is no substitute for face-to-face meetings. Regular meetings are crucial, especially for important or complicated messages, and should always be followed up with printed version for reference (Alexander Finch & Hansen, 2010).

After studying ten international companies and conducting an exhaustive literature review, one international company identified the following four communication-related factors that help organizations achieve their goals:

1. Formal face-to-face meetings help employees understand their department's goals and how their work fits into the big picture. These meetings can be conducted on an annual basis to communicate information about the business plan. Meetings are also a good way to communicate information with department-wide implications such as a reorganization, auditors' statements, or accountability reports.
2. Telephone call-in is good for emergency situations (storms, floods, fires, etc.), or when offices are closed for shutdowns or scheduled maintenance. All management and staff are provided with a telephone number they can call for information. Telephone call-in can be used regularly or just for emergencies. All staff may call one number, such as a call center, or they may call a supervisor or manager. The information could come from a live operator or from a voice mail message.
3. Telephone call-out is suitable for alerting employees to department news, and an efficient way to send routine messages and updates. It can also be a follow-up or reinforcement of an important message delivered in a meeting. In a call tree, a

manager calls two people, who also call two people, and so on, or through a voice-mail distribution list. Employee phone numbers can be programmed into the system and management can initiate the phone tree from off-site.

Information about work stoppages, office closures, and scheduled maintenance can be quickly and easily delivered to employees.

4. A newsletter can be used to distribute information to all employees in the company no matter their unit or location. Newsletters are a good way for employees to learn about the other units of the company, and employees can make their own contributions. Newsletters allow employees to see their role, or the role of their unit, in the big picture, and learn about each other personally and professionally.
5. Bulletin boards are an easy way to reach all employees with news and information. Reinforcement of messages from meetings and events can also be posted there.
6. A suggestion box can boost company morale as management and employees can remain anonymous while suggesting improvements in production and working conditions.
7. Email is a fast, easy and inexpensive way to communicate with a large organization, and messages can be prepared in advance and scheduled for delivery at a later time or date. Employees can respond to email messages (although this feature can be turned off), and email can include attachments or links. While email is a cheap, easy way to send concise, timely information to a large staff, it is not appropriate for sending lengthy attachments that must be printed or read online. The sender may believe it is cheaper to send information electronically to avoid printing costs, but the cost of printing tens, hundreds, or

even thousands of individual copies on laser printers can be much higher than the cost of photocopying and distributing the document. Email is also used widely in companies for communicating with customers, and for spreading information among employees. The workday of each employee starts with reading his or her email. All important information for colleagues or customers usually goes in email. At some companies, product certificates can be first sent in scanned versions to the customer, and the customer receives the originals later by post. This way the customer doesn't have to wait for 2-3 days to start or continue work on a project (Maina, 2013; Denisova, 2007)

8. An intranet is a helpful tool for posting company-wide information on a website accessible only to employees. Usually intranets can only be accessed by computers in the company network because it is behind a firewall on the company's servers. The use of intranets has changed over the years. At first the intranet might be used simply as a company bulletin board or newsletter, but today the intranet is integral to the day to day operations of many companies, a useful platform for many of the company's internal functions.
9. Instant message can provide significant return on investment for organizations, with lower costs and less hassle than face-to-face meetings. Meetings held by instant message not only save on long distance charges and travel expenses, but also tend to be more efficient. Because of the greater effort to type, meetings held by instant message are less prone to straying off topic (Maina, 2013).
10. Skype Messenger is commonly used to communicate with colleagues, whether they are in the same office or in different countries. Skype Messenger is inexpensive and easy to use, and for employees that need information urgently, Skype Messenger can be used to call or message co-workers. It is also possible

to transfer files using Skype Messenger and chat with several people at the same time. In many companies messengers are prohibited, because people tend to waste time with them, but if properly managed, Skype messenger can be a very useful tool in the workplace (Denisova, 2007; Katerina, 2013).

In conclusion, business requires the strategic use of communication methods and solutions that meet the specific communications requirements of an international workplace. All phases of a business rely on effective communication, including product development, public relations, customer service, and human resources. Employees also serve as an important public relations element of business, as employees talk about and represent the company in the community, and are an important initial audience for an employer's communications efforts. If communications within the company are strong, and employees are knowledgeable and involved, communications with other companies and the public are likely to follow suit. Better communications improve teamwork and get all employees working in unison toward the company's goals, no matter their level within the company. In addition, strong communication in a company helps resolve conflicts and problems, giving employees a positive work environment and the knowledge and structure they need to feel comfortable and work efficiently. Project groups and teams also must have effective communication tools in order to work together effectively, including chat tools and Skype. Tracking the progress of work groups is much easier if companies provide workgroups with a platform or designated space for collaboration. This shared space makes workgroups more effective and makes tracking and reporting progress easier. In addition, productivity is improved through increased use of email. Email can also be an efficient sales tool, as increasingly companies are marketing through email, and using email to identify and communicate with their target markets.

The Importance of Email in the Workplace

Due to the fact that Thailand is an AEC (ASEAN Economic Community) member country, multi-national companies have been established in Thailand, and English is the primary language in use in those companies. English is widely used in global business and multi-national corporations (Hart-Rawung, 2008). Governments worldwide must now devote resources to teaching English as a fundamental part of education. Student achievement, however, has been limited, although Thai students do seem to understand that the English language is an effective tool for personal economic advancement.

According to the ethnographic research of Waldvogel (2005), different workplaces have different communication styles. This study compared a manufacturing plant and an educational setting. The research explored the relationship between the role email played in organizational life, and the email writing style employees typically used. The researcher focused on the specific functions of email as another means of communicating at work, and how it was perceived by users and recipients in comparison to other means of communication. The means of communication employees typically used, and the style in which they communicated, were the focus of the study. This study also examined the effects of employees various social backgrounds on their writing style. The pragmatic theories framework were analyzed from a social interactionist and social constructionist perspective. Over five hundred emails were examined in the study and two employees were asked to keep journals and record their communications over the course of one working day among four employees. Employees regarded the purpose of the message, at first, in order to gauge the effects on readers, as some messages had to do not only with specific business activities but also with employee motivation and encouragement. Participants were also asked to trace email threads to show collaborative

thinking among employees and how solutions were developed through email threads. The study claimed that there was little difference between the two organizations in terms of the communicative functions for which email is used. In both, the transmission and seeking of information was predominant and followed by making requests. The business and academic settings did seem to use email in fundamentally different ways, however, and it was evident that email is an essentially white-collar business practice. Although email is used widely in educational workplace, face-to-face communication is the preferred method. The type of organization also seems to affect the way in which email messages are written. Employees in manufacturing facilities wrote email with more similar style and content than did educators. There was a much higher use of greetings in these messages, more direct language forms and the emails tended to be longer. The feminine and the masculine styles were compared in two workplaces. It was revealed that in terms of educational organization, women wrote longer messages and applied more affective features than male staff in terms of writing. Direct forms of spoken communication and indirect forms were both used. The study revealed that in terms of communicative functions, email is a tool for knowledge creation in an organization. Furthermore, email can be used as a tool in communication relevant to the function and performance of an organization. This was implied in the way that email messages were written.

According to the findings of Moninoor Roshid, (2012) there have been vast changes in the linguistic choices people make in writing email. There were also no problems in terms of effective communication. The language typically used in emails was quite flexible, informal and personalized. Email language was not threatening, but rather another variety of the English language (Crystal, 2003). Email is a communication

process, involving a sender and receiver, a message, a channel, noise, feedback and a setting (Suwanpakdee, 2012).

As a result of globalization, the number of international companies has increased sharply and unpredictably. As a result, business communication with people from other countries is on the rise. In such intercultural communication, a common language must be used. English is mostly used in international firms, and is the primary language of global business. Most employees of international firms communicate in English with international coworkers whose native language differs from their own (Pettersson, 2015). Thus, English is the *lingua franca* of internet-based communication (Crystal, 2004) and a very common channel for communication in the global environment. The internet is a very effective form of communication. Email is costly only with regard to Internet access, which is already widely used in business organizations. Email can be printed out, but it also can be archived and users can easily retrieve it (Moninoor Roshid, 2012).

There are several benefits to email as the main tool of communication in the workplace. With email, a user can send a message anytime and anywhere. The same message can also be sent to several recipients. It can be used to forward data or information to colleagues without replying. The time is reduced due to the fact that email is fast, usually taking not more than a few minutes to reach the recipient. Once the recipients have the email or related documents, they can either edit or return the revised versions quickly. An email can be sent around the world, so it makes it easy to communicate with co-workers in a different time zone. Email also plays a role as a powerful business communication tool (Moninoor Roshid, 2012). The key factors for email communicative tools is that there are no time constraints and that they are retained and archived. In addition, English email writing is not limited only to business firms, but is also useful in the academic or healthcare context. Therefore, English email writing in

the workplace can expand this knowledge to include a variety of business people and factors such as the impact of globalization and success in terms of career goals. Email is simply the exchange of messages by computer, and usually describes the personal exchange of messages between private users through their own mailboxes, as opposed to public communications or chat (Crystal, 2004).

In summary, email plays an important role in international settings and effective communication. Email is used in every organization to communicate both externally and internally and for the purposes of documentation. Emails is often used in place of written memos, the telephone, and face-to-face meetings, and familiarity with and efficient use of email can greatly improve staff performance. Email communication facilitates quick and efficient business activity across national borders and time zones, and modern communication technology allows companies of all sizes to trade and profit internationally.

Problems Experienced by Thai Employees Writing Email in English

Due to the globalization of education, many more students are studying at universities where English is the language of instruction. Universities around the world in English-speaking and non-English-speaking countries provide programs for international students (Lakaisone, Lin, Srikrai & Sirinthorn, 2012).

There have been a number of studies exploring the difficulties faced by Thai employees in using English. Pawapatcharandom (2007) reported that writing skills were the most significant problems among Thais learning English. By contrast, intercultural communication was the least significant problem. The main purpose of email writing is effectively transmitting messages to readers. While many Thai workers use the modern standard email writing styles, some still use inappropriate or outdated formats and writing styles (Piamsai, 2017; Sangthong, 2011).

Witchaiyutphon (2011) reported that many Thai employees had problems with written communications. Thai employees were unable to use a wide variety of vocabulary without consulting a dictionary, their grammar was poor, and half of the participants were unable to convey a message concisely or accurately. As a result, they had to use many words or sentences to express their ideas rather than selecting an exact word. Also, Thai employees reported that they had limited knowledge of vocabulary to convey written messages and used inappropriate terminology that did not suit the context. Incomplete sentences, they found, were their least significant writing problem. The main problem was caused by an inability to apply correct grammar, technical words, idiomatic expressions, slang, and an unfamiliarity with pronunciation (Winuwat 2011).

Nutpoung (2013) conducted a study and found that email writing is one of problems Thai EFL learners face in their daily work. This study found that the staff administrator in one of the International schools in Bangkok made many errors when composing email. The Thai staff was unable to use correct English grammar and lacked knowledge of English usage. This research found the following six English grammar problems: verb tense, subject-verb agreement, sentence fragments, auxiliary verbs, interrogative sentences, Thai particles, and plural nouns. Similarly, Ratnasari (2009) conducted a study showing that the English NS teacher's main obstacles to teaching speaking skills were as follows: the number of students, student inhibition and lack of participation, use of the mother tongue, and English grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. The factors causing these problems were that while English was not their mother tongue, neither did they have extensive educational background in English. There was also a lack of practice as they used English grammar only when writing emails. This study showed that Thai staff should develop greater skill in English grammar to prevent miscommunication.

Similarly, some writing problems faced by Thai EFL students were due to the interference of Thai, their first language. The writing problems were found in the three genres of narrative, description, and comparison/contrast. The participants were forty second-year Thai students majoring in English error analysis was used in this study. The interference of Thai was found to be a major factor in student writing problems. These problems, in order of frequency, were as follows: verb tense, word choice, sentence structure, articles, prepositions, modal/auxiliary verbs, singular/plural forms, fragments, verb forms, pronouns, run-on sentences, infinitives/gerunds, transitions, subject-verb agreement, parallel structure, and comparison structure. There was some variation in the types and frequency of errors depending on the genre in which the student wrote. Narration tended to produce the following errors (in order of frequency): verb tense, word choice, sentence structure, preposition, and modal/auxiliary verbs. Description and comparison/contrast tended to produce the following errors (in order of frequency): articles, sentence structure, word choice, singular/plural forms, and subject-verb agreement. Some of the results were counterintuitive. For example, the comparison structure error was rarely found in narration and description, but in comparison/contrast, it was the tenth-most common error. Genre is predictive of certain mistakes because the different genres have characteristic features. ESL teachers should note that awareness of genre and the influence of the mother tongue might help improve grammar and usage (Watcharapunyawong, 2012).

One study identified significant problems and suggestions to improve the business English writing skills of Thai employees in Bangkok. The study adopted purposive and quota sampling and questionnaires were used to collect data. The study included thirty respondents who worked in sales and marketing, logistics, accounting, and production, i.e. those departments in the company which usually use English. Due to

limited time, this study focused on finding the problems in writing emails, letters and reports. The study showed that the most common problem in writing business email in this company was writing grammatically correct emails, followed by inadequate vocabulary for business English email. The most common problem in writing business letters was in writing clear and precise letters, followed by the inability to manage time to write letters properly. The most common problem in writing business reports was incorrect sentence structure, followed by incorrect paragraph structure. Employees' suggestions to improve English writing skills included self-study, in-house training provided by the company, and courses at a language institute (Decharojanawirun, 2015).

In the Thai workplace, Hiranburana (2017) discussed the fact that the large number of errors in usage in the English samples studied rarely caused problems in the running of a business. The reason for this was Thai business people use the move/step structure in their e-mails, along with other communications strategies, and follow-up inquiries for clarification. Many had trouble organizing their writing, so it lacked coherence, consolidation of knowledge, and formal transitional and cohesive devices. The most commonly found error in the written English of Thai employees were unclear information in email to international customers, and difficulty communicating some technical business English vocabulary with Thai locals for whom English is not a first language. Thai and English technical terms have typically been used when writing email on investment or contract materials in English.

The study concluded that the most serious problems faced by the participants were grammatical, as they were unable to complete their sentences, but they also struggled with vocabulary, word choice, idiom, and slang. In contrast, Siripraparat (2011) questioned Thai workers in international companies to discuss the use of email in the workplace and how they improved their email writing as part of their daily work. The

questionnaire surveyed one hundred Thai employees in six international companies in Bangkok. The study revealed that the top three problems of business English email users were: (a) the inability to read email messages accurately, (b) the inability to understand cues in email, causing misunderstanding and inhibiting effective communication, (c) the lack of immediate response from the recipient. The lack of knowledge in English writing skills was less an issue in email communications in international organizations.

Strategies Used to Overcome Problems Writing Email in English

When writing to an unknown person in a different workplace, a formal email style should be used. For friends and co-workers, less formal emails should be employed. If the writers are unsure, a semi-formal style is suggested, and a template of appropriate writing styles were provided (Oxford University Press, 2009).

According to Gilling (2013) in order to send an email, the writer should include the following:

1. The date and subject of the message
2. A formal salutation and a friendly tone
3. Double- or single-spacing depending on context
4. Correct grammar
5. A formal closing
6. A review of recipients before sending

Email messages should be brief and concise, that the subject of the email should also include the key ideas and, most importantly, the greeting should be friendly. It is recommended to avoid jargon and to use appropriate language. The writer should review the distribution list and also proofread it before sending the email. According to Spencer (2016) all good business email writing should adhere to the following rules:

1. The subject line should be concise and specific, as this is the readers first impression of the email.
2. The salutation greets the recipient of the email, and should vary depending on the formality or informality of circumstances.
3. The body text is the main part of email and includes an introduction and conclusion. The body text should be written in one or two short paragraphs. To improve clarity, bullet points and numbered lists can be used.
4. The signature can be formal or informal, depending on the writer's relationship to the recipient.

In addition, email sent to people outside the company are usually formal, while internal email can be informal. If the receiver is unknown, a semi-formal signature is appropriate, or one can simply follow the style of the person who will be the receiver (Oxford University Press, 2009). The style of email openings and closings vary with different levels of formality, as in the following:

1. Formal email are done in a style similar to letters sent to unknown people:
 Opening: *Dear Sir* or *Madam*, *Dear Sir/Madam* (UK)
 Closing: *Sincerely* (US) or *Your faithfully* (UK)
 If the receiver's name is known to the writer:
 Opening: *Dear Mr Thomas* or *Dear Ms Smith* (use for married or unmarried woman)
 Closing: *Regards* (US), *Yours sincerely* (UK), or *Sincerely* (US)
2. Semi-formal email should be written as in the following:
 Opening: *Dear John* or *Dear Olivia*
 Closing: *Thanks*, *Best Regards* or *Yours*
3. Informal email is sent to friends or colleagues in many workplaces:

Opening: *Hi John or Hello Olivia, John, J.*

Closing: *Best wishes, All the best, Thanks, John, J.*

Structural Elements of Email

The structural elements of an email must be included in email messages. These structural elements include the header, greetings, farewells, the body of the message, and the closing (Crystal, 2004).

Headers.

Email has come to take the place of traditional letters and memos, and contains all the elements and performs all the tasks of these traditional forms of communication. There are two parts to the usual “new mail” screen. On the top there is a header, with an area below for the message itself. If the sender wants to include an attachment, there is an additional area on the screen where an icon will appear representing the attachment. It is important to take time composing a header, as the recipient will get his or her first impression from the subject line. The recipient will decide based on the header whether to prioritize the message, or to read it at all.

Greetings and farewells.

If a recipient is responding promptly to a message from someone he or she knows, or when the communication is part of a multi-message interaction, the recipient will not typically include a greeting in the reply. The farewell is important, as it provides a divider between messages that are part of a multi-message exchange, and the recipient can know when to stop scrolling down in reading the current message. The other value of the farewell is it provides space for advertisements and other automatically generated messages like virus check information or confidentiality statements.

The body of message.

It's very important to write messages that clearly and easily bring across the point to the reader, and there are many books describing how this is done. Most of this material can be found in traditional books on style in business communication.

Closing.

There has been much interest lately in the development of contemporary email writing styles, including the use of contractions, loose sentence construction, and subject ellipsis (as in, *Will let you know*). Also popular are colloquial abbreviations like *bye*, *cos*, *v slow*, *s/thing*, and acronyms like *LOL*, and *CU*. But many messages do not use these forms, and they represent only a small part of email use as a whole.

Tone of business email.

There are reference books on business communication which focus on five ways of setting the right tone in email writing (Dumbrava & Koronka, 2006). To set a proper tone in a business email, the writer should use the same tone he or she would use in speaking to the recipient in person. To write professional sounding email, the following steps can help:

1. Write carefully, stay calm, and choose words carefully. Losing control in an email can have serious repercussions.
2. The greeting and closing are very important. The reader gets his or her first impression through the greeting, and makes a decision about his relationship to the writer. *Hi* or *Hello* followed by the recipient's first name, as in, *Hello Fred*, is a good way to open a business email. Starting with the first name only is acceptable. *Dear* is still often used, and is not just an old fashioned formality. Use the name of the group in the greeting when writing to a group. Do not begin your message with *Hi guys*, or *Everybody*. These greetings sound friendly and

casual, but they are too vague. Greetings should be as specific as possible, as in, *Dear Leadership Team*, or *Hello, Interns*. The closing is an important part of the message because it reinforces the tone and reminds the receiver of the important points and any requests for action. It also makes it easier to find the end of the message. An action-based close can be useful under certain circumstances, as in, *I'll call you on Tuesday to schedule the meeting*. The writer may also use a more graceful close, such as *Thanks for your help*, or *I look forward to meeting you*.

3. Personal pronouns give email a more personal tone, and the pronoun *you* allows the writer to address the reader more directly. It is more direct to write, *You may use the Executive Health Club on weekends*, than it is to write, *Employees may use the Executive Health Club on weekends*. The pronouns *I* and *we* are appropriate when the writer is referring to him or herself or the writer's organization. It should be written, *I discovered that our mailroom clerks were throwing away most of the promotional fliers*, instead of, *It was discovered that most of the promotional fliers were being thrown away*. It is preferable to write, *because you used the product incorrectly we will not refund your money*, rather than, *Mannheim Manufacturing cannot refund your money because the product was used incorrectly*.
4. The active voice is clearer and more direct, and is more effective than the passive voice, which tends to have a bureaucratic tone. For example, one should write *We will gladly provide funding and materials just as soon as the foundation accepts your proposal* instead of writing *Funding and materials will be provided promptly when the proposal has been accepted*.
5. The order in which information is presented can help to maintain a professional tone and helps emphasize content. If the most important information is presented

first, the email takes on a more direct tone. Even if the news is bad, begin with it anyway. If the bad news is buried in the middle, readers may miss it or not understand its importance.

As explained in Didiot-Cook et al (2000), when evaluating recruits, companies must ask whether the recruit will be able to thrive in their organization at their level of English proficiency. In addition, Graham and Perin (2007) believe that there are eleven elements of effective adolescent writing instruction. The article makes the following suggestions to help adolescent students write more correctly and effectively:

1. Writing strategies to help students organize, outline, edit, and revise their written work.
2. Summarizing is an important skill that should be taught through regular classroom practice.
3. Students should be encouraged to work together to organize, revise, and edit written work. This can be facilitated through classroom activities.
4. Specific goals with respect to content, organization, and style should be set for all student writing assignments.
5. Computer and word processing skills should be developed to help students research and complete writing assignments.
6. Learning the skill of combining sentences will help students write more complex, nuanced, and interesting sentences.
7. Prewriting will help students generate and organize ideas.
8. Specific writing tasks should be given which require students to process information and interpret research in a meaningful way.
9. Writing workshops should be organized that combine longer writing projects for a wider audience, as in the whole school or community, individualized instruction,

and practice in the phases of good writing, including research, drafting, and revising.

10. Models should be given to students for practice in reading, analyzing, and imitating effective writing.
11. Writing can be a useful device to help students learn subject matter.

Furthermore, Kertzner (2009) presented strategies for companies to provide training for more advanced level non-native English speakers, from which they might benefit in several tangible ways. These valued employees contributed more and came closer to their full potential as their confidence in using English increased. Although they still made mistakes, these employees were more active participants in meetings and conference calls. They were able to communicate more clearly, concisely, and coherently. Their presentations were more well-organized and informative. Also, employees fit into the workplace better as their English improved, including speech and manners that allowed them to acclimate socially and culturally, including how to handle awkward interactions like interrupting for clarification, making statements of intention, or small talk. Learning also includes expectations for the format, content and delivery of Western-style presentations. Coworkers save time and effort when non-native English speakers can write more organized notes, research, and other documents. Corporate language programs allow non-native speakers to get practice and feedback to help them with their everyday language struggle. These courses helped the communication skills of employees in a more general sense, focusing less on grammar and linguistic rules and more on natural language use.

One helpful practice is for managers or colleagues to ask non-native English speakers to summarize activities, issues, procedures, or projects. Also, managers can point out confusing language to the non-native speaking employees. Employees were

shown the difference between what they thought they heard and what they actually heard. Most non-native English speakers genuinely appreciated such specific feedback. Also, non-native English speaking employees may ask for a “rehearsal,” or ask a colleague to review the remarks that they plan to make in a meeting.

It is a difficult challenge to learn a second or third language and an acknowledgement of the efforts made and the little reward it offers, outside of doing one’s job well, would help these employees. Also, training in communication is necessary, including email writing and the important reminders that go with such training, including how to revise, and remembering to use spelling and grammar checkers. This will help employees use email more effectively to improve communication, and all these efforts will be a long-run benefit to the company.

Basic suggestions for writing email include writing simply, correctly, and for a wide audience. Email is not a good vehicle for personal or confidential messages. As in a newspaper article, give a summary at the beginning of any longer messages. It’s also important to control one’s emotions, and not use email to “vent”. Be selective and pare down the recipient list to just those who need to hear the message. (Flynn and Flynn, 1998: 14; quoted in Crystal, 2004:108)

To help employees write better email and advance their careers, The British Council suggests the following: checking email addresses, using appropriate greetings, using correct layout and punctuation, organizing your inbox, requesting recipients’ availability when organizing meetings, and using times and verb tense carefully to avoid confusing meeting attendees.

Cicerchia (2016) offered the following tips to improve English writing skills:

1. Mind maps help the writer develop ideas and identify the English words needed to express those ideas. The writer should list all of his or her prior knowledge on

a given topic in bullet points, along with other important facts or comments.

This might also include a list of vocabulary words that will help clarify the main ideas.

2. Outlines can make writing less intimidating getting the basics onto the page and give an idea of where to start. Blanks for the introduction, body paragraphs of support, and a conclusion, can be filled in with ideas from the mind-map.
3. Learning how to type helps ideas flow more smoothly.
4. Revising is an important part of writing, as well as re-reading whole paragraphs to check for context and flow.
5. Native English speakers should be asked to proofread the writer's work, as native speakers can also identify unidiomatic phrasing and help with usage and clarity.
6. Spelling and grammar checkers should always be used.
7. Improving vocabulary to make the right words come readily to mind is important in learning to write good English.
8. Reading as much English material as possible helps develop more detailed and expressive English writing skills.
9. Writers should become familiar with different kinds of texts. A newspaper article which focuses on facts, an email to a potential employer, or an essay for a class in school, all require different styles and use different principles of organization.

Writing email in English can be intimidating for non-native speakers, and poses a different set of challenges than speaking everyday English. But with effort and some useful practices, the process can be made easier. Academic writing skills are what students need for success, and some non-native speakers acquire excellent skills through effort, experience, and good guidance. Writing practice is the most important thing in

developing ready access to ideas and getting them efficiently and accurately on paper. Writers who are good in their native language also tend to become good writers of English. The methods that good writers use in any language are the same ones that will help them write good English. Classes and other forms of professional instruction can also help writers develop more strategic approaches to their writing tasks.

Related Research about Problems Writing Email in English and Used to Solve the Problems.

There have been a number of studies carried out examining email writing problems and strategies. Pawapatcharaudom (2007) also claimed that the participants who worked in an international setting employed the most strategies, such as relying on context to figure out the meanings of unfamiliar words in the text, and most frequently using metacognitive strategies. Also, Champavan et al (2008) conducted a study to explore the achievement levels of first year Thai undergraduate students in English after one semester of email exchange with respondents in United States. The results showed that email exchanges between both groups motivated them to engage in an atmosphere of authentic language learning communication. These email exchanges influenced them to learn and try to be more culturally aware, and showed that email exchange could lead to mastery among both the ESL and EFL learners as the program motivated them to acquire the skills required for more effective communication.

Champavan et al (2008) surveyed two groups of ESL learners, those that used email regularly and those that did not, and those that used email regularly reported that their email exchanges were helpful in developing their writing, reading, and computer skills, as opposed to those surveyed who rarely used email and reported no such improvements. This finding shows that practice can provide opportunities to learn and develop language and computer skills.

Ratnasari (2009) showed how teachers solved learning problems by dividing the students into several work groups. The students were asked to speak in English for as long as they could, and asked to minimize use of the local language. English grammar classes took place once a month and error correction was directly performed with particular students. There were problems with students being taught by a native English-speaking teacher, the biggest of which was inhibition, followed by having nothing to say, and the use of their mother tongue interfering with their English communication. The next most frequent problem was a low level of participation and difficulties developing native English pronunciation. The strategies they employed to solve inhibition-related problems included talking to friends and improving their vocabulary. To solve the problem of having nothing to say, they joined a work group and consulted their teacher about their problems. In solving problems related to mother tongue use, they forced themselves to speak English during class and frequently referred to the dictionary. Moreover, in terms of low or uneven participation, they motivated themselves and consulted their friends and teachers about their problems. Finally, they directly discussed their difficulties with friends and teachers, and asked their non-native teacher to help them solve problems with the pronunciation of native English speakers. The writer concluded that there were still some problems faced by both native English speaking and non-native English learners in speaking class, despite the fact that they had tried the solutions suggested by the theory. Therefore, there were both strengths and weaknesses in native English-speaking instructors teaching English. In terms of language skills improvement, Thai employees asked the company to communicate with various multinational staff members, have conversations, and become more familiar with their accents. Furthermore, they asked if the foreigners they worked with could edit, proofread and provide feedback. It could also be an effective way of mastering and improving their

written English work. They also requested training sessions in language courses that were compatible with their needs. All these were strategies to help them get the job done properly (Winnuwat, 2011).

Moreover, Siripraparat (2011) claimed that Thai employees who worked in international organizations agreed that training, the revision of emails, and the use of a grammar or spelling checker, are useful for Thai employees when writing emails in English. This will also result in greater efficiency and productivity at work. They should use a conversational tone for business English emails. This type of support can lead to a significant reduction in email errors and helps to improve the level of communication among Thai employees in the international workplace.

Wongworawan (2011) stated that the three email writing strategies used for Thai employees to write effective emails were to make the message clear, direct, and to the point. They also used an indirect approach for delivering bad news at the beginning of the message and to provide reasons. Finally, the results of the study suggested this persuasive approach was employed when writing to management to request approvals, with supporting documents and additional data attached to the message.

The findings of Mehrpour and Mehrzad (2013) revealed the comparative generic and lexico-grammatical levels of business emails composed by non-native English speakers and native English speakers. The number of emails included sixty groups. The results explored the ways in which these emails were employed for the same communicative purposes, such as asking for information, providing information, or requesting an action. The same basic structure to exchange information, according to the study, was used by non-native English speakers and native English business correspondents. Furthermore, non-native English speakers preferred lexico-grammatical expressions that assisted them in demonstrating respect for their partners by not allowing

them to lose face, while the native English speakers encouraged a friendly atmosphere. The investigation revealed the structures and characteristics of the English language used in the business workplace for commercial purposes. This study offered a number of implications for business English teaching staff, material developers, and business negotiators. The study proposed to make a small contribution to the research into the structures and characteristics of the English language as realized in the business setting. Consequently, it offers a number of implications for business English teaching staff, material developers and business negotiators. Drawing on the results of the genre studies of this kind, English as a Foreign Language and English for Specific Purposes can raise awareness among students with regard to email message conventions. The study will be useful in creating business English textbooks and classes that teach non-native students to recognize language patterns and conventions that will help them imitate native speakers, as well as those forms that might inhibit communication or even pose a threat to their employment. The factor of cultural awareness was also identified in this study, with reference to non-native speaking staff whose reaction to pressure tactics was far stronger than their English counterparts, causing some native social and cultural traits to emerge.

Similarly, Somsin and Thammasorn (2013) explored an idea put forward by the Thai staff from the Faculty of Management of an unnamed university that reviewing an email before sending can reduce errors in emails or letter writing. In addition, practicing writing English every day and training from good instructors will also be helpful for employees of any educational background or level of English proficiency.

Similarly Alafnan (2014) also mentioned that direct politeness strategies were mostly used by close colleagues, regardless of level or position. Conversely, negative politeness was used with distant colleagues. The implication is that ethnicity influences the use of politeness strategies.

As a consequence, training in business email writing should be provided for Thai employees in international companies to increase their knowledge and enhance their email writing skills by using the most up-to-date format and style. Other types of writing courses are also essential for both teachers and learners who are non-native English speakers and need to improve their writing skills (Channa et. al, 2013).

Hemchua et al (2014) explored the use of the English language prior to and during the employment of Thai novice engineers, including their experiences and needs. The participants of this study included 260 graduate students who were non-native English speakers and novice engineering students. Among the participants, sixty percent worked for local companies, while forty percent worked in an international setting. The results revealed that most of the participants had a high level of need for English skills. The most necessary skill was reading, while writing, speaking and listening were also required for novice engineers. With regard to writing skills, Thai engineers tended to require more English writing skills in their jobs, such as the ability to take notes, write reports, send business emails, and compose reports. This study showed the need for more relevant and useful English classes to improve the communication of non-native speakers at work.

Additionally, there are strategies that can decrease the time spent writing and to increase productivity and work efficiency (Siripraparat, 2011). The teacher needs to provide English for Specific Purposes material and prepare the students for English proficiency before they become businesspeople in either the international or domestic settings of the company where English is the main language (Hemchua, Kulsiri, Pratoomrat, Rajprasit & Wang 2014). Besides, Thai employees asked the company if they might have conversations with multinational staff members and become more familiar with their accents. Another common practice was asking the foreigners they worked with to edit, proofread, and provide feedback on their writing. This is also an

effective way to improve their written English work. They also requested training sessions in language courses that were compatible with their needs so that they might work more effectively and efficiently (Winnuwat, 2011). This result was similar to that of Champavan, Lorber, and Al-Batainah (2008), who stated that email communication, when the internet is available, is a good opportunity for ESL students to learn English. English language proficiency matters greatly in the global economy, and can be considered a key factor in the success of certain professionals, including engineers. However, there have been a number of complaints about the gap between what is taught in university language courses and the communication used in the workplace. This research deals with how Thai novice engineers use language prior to and during their employment. It was found that the courses had not provided enough language skills pertinent to novice engineers, and that they had not enhanced students' confidence in oral proficiency or reading skills (of articles, manuals, minutes and annual reports). It is critical for teachers to improve English courses for engineering students immediately, in particular non-native English speakers, to become well-qualified future members of the global workforce.

Decharotchanawirun (2015) conducted a study investigating problems in the business English writing skills of Thai employees at unnamed Company. The purposive sampling method was used to survey thirty employees from the following departments: Sales and Marketing, Logistics, Production, and Accounting. Employees in these four departments were chosen because they were Thai and used their English writing skills more often than those in other departments. Their jobs require that they write emails, memos, and reports in English to communicate internally and with other companies, with both Thais and foreigners. The questionnaire surveyed significant problems and asked for suggestions to improve English writing skills in this company. Due to limited time,

this study focused on finding problems in writing emails, letters, and reports. The study showed that the most common problem in writing business email in English at unnamed company was writing grammatically correct emails, followed by insufficient vocabulary. The most common problem in writing business letters in this company was in writing clear and precise letters, followed by the inability to manage time to write letters properly. The most common problem in writing business reports in this company was in using correct sentence structure, followed by an inability to structure paragraphs correctly. The respondents' suggestions for improving English writing skills emphasized self-study, in-house training provided by the company, and courses at a language institute.

The English language has an important place in global communication, hence both oral and written English skills are essential around the world. For many, however speaking English is a challenging task. Since the aim of English education is not only to develop a knowledge of grammar and skill in writing, but also to develop oral English skills, the lack of student achievement in speaking English must be addressed. The aim of this study was to discover if adult learners of English experience problems in speaking English, and if so, the types of problems and their causes. In addition, the interest in English language media has become stronger, and another goal of the study was to learn if this has created pressure for English studies and for what type of accent the learner should develop.

In conclusion, writing strategies are useful when dealing with difficulties writing email in English, especially for non-native speakers. In addition, writing strategies refer to both the guidelines and instructions provided by writers to solve communication problems, and to effectively explore their writing skills. The adaptation of strategies may solve problems and ensure effective communication and avoid misunderstandings for readers.

Summary

Email is an important communication tool in business and in the global marketplace. English writing skills are a requirement for effective communication and achieving financial and career goals in a multicultural environment. In a global business environment where effective communication and a good command of English are an important measure of performance, writing effectively in English is a key to professional development. Many studies were examined to investigate problems Thai employees experienced writing email in English, and the strategies they used to solve them. It is also worth noting that communication strategies are not only useful in coping with difficulties writing email in English, but can also effectively enhance communication in general and help ensure that businesses run smoothly.

Finally, there have been many research studies on writing email in English. As of this writing, there is no known study investigating the problems experienced by Thai employees in an international petroleum company based in Bangkok, Thailand. Therefore, the results of this study have implications for speakers or learners who need to improve their written English proficiency and for companies wishing to design an effective English training course for their employees.

CHATER III

METHOD

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss in detail the research methodology employed in this study. This discussion begins with the research design, the selection of the participants, the research instruments, and the collection and analysis for data, and the confidentiality of participants. The data analysis procedure is presented at the end of the chapter.

Participants

Selection of the company.

This study was conducted in the head office and branches of an international company in Bangkok. This company provides operations support around the world in more than 20 countries in 6 continents including Thailand in the Asia-Pacific region. In Thailand, this company has been growing for more than 100 years. They conduct business as the petroleum company, and have support offices in many provinces of Thailand. This company has also established business support centers to serve their global affiliates. The company was selected for this study based on the following criteria:

1. It is an international workplace, one of the largest petroleum companies in the world, with head offices in the Asia-Pacific region, Europe, and North America.
2. Both native and non-native English-speaking countries are represented, with an office in Bangkok, Thailand, and global affiliates in the United States, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, Malaysia, and India.
3. English is the core language used in this company for communication purposes and a variety of other functions, despite the fact that it is not their mother tongue.

The company also supported the employees in terms of English language to increase the productivity and improve the English proficiency to their employees.

4. The company use a lot of communication tools such as telephone call, fax, internal mail, letter, Skype, video call and face to face meeting. However, the most popular tool is email communications in English and they use email to communicate within their organization and externally for suppliers.
5. The researcher has worked in the company for more than 10 years and is familiar with and has access to the company, making it convenient to distribute the questionnaire and collect the data.

Selection of the participants.

The criteria for the selection of participants depended on the willingness of the company to allow their employees to participate in the study. Participants were asked to participate and those who answered in the affirmative were selected to take part in the survey. Thai employees in this study used many communication methods in their daily work including telephone, Skype, letter, fax and face-to-face meetings. Skype is a popular tool for meetings because employees can display the meeting on their desktop while they make calls and send texts. The telephone is used within the country or with remote countries that have a poor internet connection. However, email is also used in supporting countries in different time zone, thus, employees must respond to email in English to make their operations run smoothly. In this study, all 100 employees in various positions and functions were asked to participate by answering four research questions. Participants were divided into two groups. There were two groups of Thai employees, the first group provides services to native English speakers from the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, and a second group who interface with non-native speakers from Malaysia, Singapore, India and other countries. Group 1 consisted of 50 Thai employees who work with native English speakers, and another 50 who communicate with native English speakers. Their educational background varied: some

had a Bachelor's and/or Master's degree from Thailand, others had a Bachelor's and/or Master's degree from abroad. Most respondents in this study however graduated with a bachelor's degree from Thailand. Most participants are at a moderate or advanced level of English proficiency, with TOIEC scores of 600 or higher, and most participants in this study have worked with this company for more than 3 years. The main task of these 100 Thai employees is to work in English everyday with native and non-native speaking customers from around the world, so writing email in English is for them a primary tool of communication. They must respond to inquiries, make requests, and provide information in the following areas:

1. Payables
2. Procurement
3. IT Services
4. Lubricants and Supply
5. Human Resources
6. Others

This helped the researcher collect data from Thai employees on problems and strategies they apply at work every day.

Instrumentation

Questionnaire.

The key instrument used to collect the data in this study was a questionnaire developed by the researcher. The questionnaire included both closed- and open-ended questions and was self-administered by the participants. The participants were questioned about their demographic and educational background, years of work experience, problems encountered communicating with foreign customers and colleagues, and strategies used to

solve these problems. The problems found in a previous study were used to adapt the questionnaire to make it more suitable.

The researcher asked project advisors to review the questionnaire to determine its suitability for the study. The researcher also asked a native speaker, an expert in English working at Srinakharinwirot university to check whether or not the language was suitable for the participants. The comments and the suggestions from advisors and a native speaker were useful in revising the questionnaire to ensure that the content was valid and appropriate.

The closed-ended questionnaire was divided into three parts as follows: Part I gathered demographic information about participants such as gender, educational background, work experience, department and function, and the countries for which the employee is responsible.

Part I: Demographic information about the participants

Table 1

Participants by Group (N=100)

Item Number	Demographic Data
1	Gender
2	Education Background
3	Working Experience
4	Current Department/Function
5	Responsibilities Countries

Part II was focused on the English email writing abilities of the respondents while communicating with clients or external suppliers.

Part II: The English email writing abilities of the respondents

Table 2

Questionnaire Description Part II

Items Number	Problems with English Email Writing
7-9	Vocabulary
10-21	Grammar
22	Style of Writing
two3-24	Time Consuming
25	Cultural Awareness
26-28	Other Problems

Part III was concerned with the strategies used by participants when having problems writing email. In Parts II and III, using the Likert scale of agreement (“strongly agree, moderately agree, disagree, and strongly disagree”), employees were asked if they agreed with statements describing their difficulties writing email and strategies they used to resolve them.

Open-ended questions were added to Parts II and III to gain more in-depth information about the problems Thai employees faced writing email in English, and the strategies they used to facilitate communication with foreign customers and colleagues. In this section, participants were asked for comments on any issues not addressed in the closed-ended questions. Four participants provided answers to these open-ended questions, which are also discussed in the findings.

Data collection procedures

The data was collected in November of 2015 following the distribution of the questionnaire. Before the survey, the researcher asked for permission to collect data through a self-designed questionnaire. A letter of consent and the contact details of the researcher were attached to the questionnaire. 100 and thirty questionnaires were distributed to all participants through the internal mail system of the company in order to obtain the data. 100 completed questionnaires were returned, and the Thai employees obtained additional data for the researcher. They were informed of the concern over Thai employees problems communicating by email in English with native and non-native speakers. There were direct questions asked about the strategies they employed to overcome these problems. The participants had enough time to complete the questionnaire by the end of the day, but were asked not to take longer than a week.

Data Analysis

The data from the questionnaire were analyzed in order to answer the four research questions. Findings were interpreted, categorized, and presented in tables and figures with full explanations of the descriptive analysis. Results were also calculated into statistical values, according to the following procedures:

1. Information referring to the general background of the participants was presented in the form of a percentage.
2. The five-point Likert scale (Likert, 1932) was used to score the participant's level of agreement with the email writing problems and strategies used for communication with foreign customers and colleagues:

5 = Strongly Agree

4 = Agree,

3 = Moderately Agree,

2 = Disagree,

1 = Strongly Disagree

3. The levels of agreement among the participants regarding their email writing problems and strategies were analyzed in terms of a mean score (*M*) and standard deviation (*SD*). A higher mean score indicated more problems writing email in English and an increased use of problem-solving strategies, while a lower mean score indicated fewer problems writing email in English and a decreased use of problem-solving strategies.
4. A *t* test was administered to ascertain whether there were statistically significant differences of 0.05 or more in problems and strategies used by Thai employees to communicate in English with native as compared to non-native speakers in an international workplace.

The results are provided in tables with figures and given a full descriptive analysis. At the end of the chapter, there is a summary, discussion, and recommendations for further studies. Answers to the open-ended questions are also discussed.

Summary

This chapter discussed the research methodology, the context of the study, the research design, and the participants. The data collection procedure and data analysis were also presented. The results are reported in the next chapter.

There were 100 participants, consisting of Thai employees in an international company who communicate in English with native and non-native speakers.

The research instrument was developed by the researchers and adapted from a previous research study. The questionnaire was reviewed by a native speaker and expert in English to ensure that questions were valid and appropriate, and was adjusted based on this reviewer's comments and feedback from thesis advisors.

The questionnaire consisted of three parts and included closed- and open-ended questions requesting demographic information, information on problems writing email in English and on strategies used by Thai employees to resolve these problems. The findings of the questionnaire were analyzed to answer four research questions. Results were calculated, interpreted, categorized, and presented in tables. A descriptive analysis was given to explain and analyze data on problems experienced and strategies used by Thai employees while writing email in English.



CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Demographic Characteristics of the Participants

The first section described non-native speakers of English at an international company, including factors such as educational background, gender, and work experience. The researcher calculated this data into a percentage shown in Table 3.

Also as shown in Table 3, the group of Thai employees working with native speakers of English were mostly female (39 %), as compared to male (11%). Most of them held a Bachelor's degree from Thailand (23%), followed by a Master's degree from Thailand (16%), a Master's degree from another country (10%), and other (1%). The participants in this group, most had over 6 years work experience (32%), followed by two to three years (8%), four to five years (7%), and less than 1 year (3%). Most of the participants were from the Payables division (24%), followed by Lubricants and Supply (11%), Procurement (7%), IT Services (5%), Human Resources (2%), and others (1 %)

Furthermore, the participants in Thai employees working with non-native speakers of English were mostly female (37%), as compared to male (13%). With respect to college degrees, the largest percentage held a Bachelor's degree from Thailand (25%), followed by a Master's degree from Thailand (17%), a Master's degree from another country (6%), and a Bachelor's degree from another country (2%). The largest percentage had over 6 years work experience 30%), followed by two to three years (11%), four to five years (4%), and less than 5 year (3%). The Lubricants and Supply Division had the highest representation in this group (17%), followed by Payables (12%), Procurement (9%), Human Resources (6%), IT Services (5%), and other (1%).

In summary, the findings showed that this international company used email communication for a major portion of their daily tasks, which consisted primarily of interactions with foreign clients. Thai employees whose main tasks were to provide support, do troubleshooting, and answer email queries from both internal and external foreign customers, used email to correspond with them. Others whose main tasks included meeting via telephone or Skype, and training internal clients in English, also communicated with clients via email.

Employees sampled in this international company were divided into two groups based on the countries they served. There were 50 % of the sample, were responsible for English-speaking countries, including the United States, Australia, Canada and New Zealand, and these employees communicated with native English speakers. The other 50 % of the sample, were those responsible for non-native English-speaking countries, including Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, India, and China. These employees communicated with non-native English speakers.

Table 3

Demographic Characteristics of the Participants (N = 100)

	Group 1		Group 2	
	Number (n)	Percentage (%)	Number (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender:				
Male	11	11	13	13
Female	39	39	37	37
Education Background:				
Bachelor's degree (in Thailand)	23	23	25	25
Bachelor's degree (in another country)	0	0	2	2
Master's degree (in Thailand)	16	16	17	17
Master's degree (in another country)	10	10	10	10
Others	1	1	0	0
Working Experience with this Company:				
Less than 1 year	3	3	4	4
2-3 years	8	8	11	11
4-5 years	7	7	5	5
More than 6 years	32	32	30	30

(continued)

Table 3 (Continued)

Demographic Characteristics of the Participants (N = 100)

	Group 1		Group 2	
	Number (<i>n</i>)	Percentage (%)	Number (<i>n</i>)	Percentage (%)
Current Function or Division:				
Payables	24	24	12	12
IT Services	5	5	5	5
Human Resources	2	2	6	6
Procurement	7	7	9	9
Lubes & Supply	11	11	17	17
Others	1	1	1	1

Results

This section gives a descriptive analysis of responses to the four research questions. The researcher analyzed and calculated the responses using a Mean Score (*M*), Standard Deviation (*SD*), and the *t*-test analysis. There were 50 employees of Thai employee communicating with native speakers of English, and 50 employees of Thai employees communicating with non-native English speakers.

Research Question 1.

What were the problems experienced by Thai employees in an international company communicating by email in English with native and non-native English speakers?

Results.

As shown in Table 4, the findings revealed that Thai employees communicating with native English-speaking clients, agreed that they encountered only two critical problems (7%) of the twenty-eight listed in the questionnaire.

They also agreed that they encountered the following problems writing email in English: (a) using the same style of writing ($M = 3.52$), and (b) not being able to write good emails or review their own writing ($M = 3.45$). This group moderately agreed that they experienced difficulty with only three problems (10%) out of twenty-eight when communicating with non-natives, including (a) concern about the cultural background of the readers ($M = 2.80$), (b) not being to write good emails and asking colleagues to review them ($M = 2.80$), and (c) inability to correctly use idiom ($M = 2.74$). However, the participants disagreed with the majority of the items, which indicated that they did not have critical problems with them.

In contrast, Thai employees communicating in English with non-native speakers, experienced a wider variety of problems than Thai employees communicating in English with native speakers of English. They agreed that they encountered two critical problems (7%) out of 28. The most critical were lack of confidence and always having emails reviewed before sending ($M = 3.88$). They were also using the same style of writing ($M = 3.56$), and they moderately agreed that they had nine critical problems (9%) out of 28. The most critical problems for this group were concern about the cultural of the readers ($M = 3.28$), and the fact that they were unable to write good email messages and asked their colleagues to review before sending emails in English ($M = 3.24$). With regard to vocabulary, their problems included the inability to use proper vocabulary ($M = 2.66$), the inability to understand words with multiple meanings ($M = 2.62$), and the inability to use idioms correctly ($M = 3.08$). Thai employees also had problems with grammar and usage,

and were unable to avoid repeating the same words and phrases ($M = 2.72$), unable to write emails quickly and easily ($M = 2.84$), unable to plan ahead or compose drafts of email messages ($M = 2.78$), and spent a lot of time composing emails ($M = 2.70$).

Table 4

The English Email Writing Problems Encountered by Thai Employees Communicating with Native English Speakers and Non-Native English Speakers (N=100)

Problems	Group 1 <i>n</i> = 50		Group 2 <i>n</i> = 50	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Other problems				
Low confidence about emails writing always review it before sending	3.45	0.98	3.88	0.75
Using the same style of writing	3.52	0.89	3.56	0.95
Concern about the cultural background of the readers	2.80	0.97	3.28	1.07
Low confidence about emails writing always ask colleague before sending	2.80	0.97	3.24	1.04
Spending a lot of time to compose emails	2.54	0.86	2.70	0.84
Vocabulary				
Unable to use idioms correctly	2.74	1.12	3.08	0.97
Unable to write email messages quickly and easily	2.58	0.93	2.84	0.87
Unable to use, and lacking knowledge of, common expressions and vocabulary	2.32	0.98	2.66	0.96
Unable to understand words with multiple meanings	2.32	0.91	2.62	0.90

(continued)

Table 4 (Continued)

The English Email Writing Problems Encountered by Thai Employees Communicating with Native English Speakers and Non-Native English Speakers (N=100)

Problems	Group 1 <i>n</i> = 50		Group 2 <i>n</i> = 50	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Email Formats				
Unable to plan ahead or compose drafts when writing emails	2.54	1.15	2.78	1.00
Grammar				
Do not know how to avoid repeating the same words and phrases	2.54	0.91	2.72	0.95
Total	2.30	0.90	2.49	0.80

Research Question 2.

What were the strategies used by Thai employees at an international company to solve problems communicating by email in English with native and non-native speakers?

Results.

Table 5 below contained all of the strategies employed by the participants to make their email communication more efficient and effective. In terms of strategies used, Thai employees communicating with non-native English speakers almost agreed the strategies listed in questionnaire 12 out of 14. The strategies with higher mean score at the agreed level rated by Thai employees in this group included using spelling-checking program ($M = 4.02$), using spelling checker program ($M = 4.02$), consulting dictionary for unknown word ($M = 3.96$), consulting online tools ($M = 3.78$), asking colleagues to identify unknown words ($M = 3.74$), listing related vocabulary in the business context ($M = 3.68$), using the wordlist for the appropriate context ($M = 3.60$), using email templates

($M = 3.60$), making a list of commonly used phrases and sentences ($M = 3.60$), keeping it short and simple ($M = 3.56$), and listing the most frequently misuse words ($M = 3.50$).

The employees indicated a moderate level of agreement regarding the use of other strategies, which included attending the courses for business writing email writing ($M = 3.36$) and requesting supervisor/managers to review ($M = 2.64$).

Similar to Thai employees communicating with native speakers of English, the results from Table 5 revealed that Thai employees in this group were rated the strategies in the agreed level, those strategies included practicing writing regularly basis ($M = 3.54$) and consulting a dictionary for unknown words ($M = 3.52$). Thai employees also moderate agreed to employ strategies and dealt with the writing problems were using a spelling checker to reduce errors ($M = 3.30$), keeping email short and simple to reduce errors ($M = 3.24$), asking colleagues to identify unknown words ($M = 3.20$), consulting online tools ($M = 3.18$), using a wordlist for the appropriate context ($M = 3.18$), attending training courses for business email writing ($M = 3.16$), using email template ($M = 3.12$), listing related vocabulary in the business context ($M = 3.06$), listing the most frequently misused words ($M = 3.06$), making a list of commonly used phrases and sentences ($M = 2.96$), asking colleagues to proofread before sending email ($M = 2.56$).

Only one strategies was rated at disagreed level by employees communicating with native speakers but moderate agreed by employees communicating with non-native speakers included requesting supervisor/managers to review ($M = 2.64$).

Table 5

The Email Writing Strategies Employed by Thai Employees Communicating with Native English Speakers and by Thai Employees Communicating with Non-Native English Speakers (N=100)

Strategies	Group 1 <i>n</i> = 50		Group2 <i>n</i> = 50	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Practicing writing regularly	3.54	1.21	4.02	0.87
Using a spell-checking program to reduce errors	3.30	1.31	4.02	0.87
Consulting online dictionary for unknown words	3.52	1.33	3.96	0.97
Consulting online tools	3.18	1.20	3.78	0.97
Asking colleagues to identify unknown words	3.20	1.18	3.74	0.85
Listing related vocabulary in the business context	3.06	1.11	3.68	0.91
Using a wordlist for the appropriate context	3.18	1.14	3.60	0.86
Using email templates	3.12	1.17	3.60	0.99
Making a list of commonly used phrases and sentences	2.96	1.18	3.60	0.89
Keeping it short and simple to reduce errors	3.24	1.22	3.56	1.31
Listing the most frequently misused words	3.06	1.13	3.50	0.84
Attending training courses for business email writing	3.16	1.30	3.36	1.31
Requesting supervisor/managers to review	2.26	1.05	2.64	1.00
Asking colleagues to proofread before sending email	2.18	1.05	2.56	0.93
Total	3.07	0.09	3.54	0.93

Research Question 3.

Were there significant differences for Thai employees at an international company in the problems communicating by email in English with native as compared to non-native speakers?

Result.

An independent-sample *t* test was employed to compare the problems encountered by both groups of Thai employees. These identified the different problems writing email in English to native English speakers as compared to non-native English speakers. These differences were not statistically significant at a level of 0.05. As indicated in Table 4, Employees communicating with non-native English speakers had more and a greater variety of problems ($M = 2.49, SD = .441$) than Thai employees communicating with native speakers ($M = 2.30, SD = .571$), $t(100) = 1.82, p = .08$.

These results revealed that both groups of Thai employees encountered problems writing email when communicating in English with native and non-native speakers. The mean score indicated that Thai employees communicating with non-native speakers of English had more problems than employees communicating with native speakers.

Table 6

The t-Test Analysis: Comparison of the Problems Faced by Both Groups of Thai

Employees (N=100)

Group of employees	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Employees Communicating with Native English Speakers	50	2.30	.517	1.82	.08
Employees Communicating with Non-Native English Speakers	50	2.49	.441		

$p < .05$

Research Question 4.

Were there significant differences in strategies used by Thai employees at an international company writing email in English to native as compared to non-native speakers?

Results.

These results revealed that Thai employees communicating with native speakers used a different level of email writing strategies than Thai employees communicating with non-native speakers. However, the mean scores indicated that employees communicating with non-native speakers used more strategies than Thai employees communicating with native speakers. Table 5 below showed the level of difference between both groups of Thai employees. An independent-sample *t* test was employed to compare the different strategies used by employees communicating with native speakers and employees communicating with non-native speakers to solve problems writing email in English. As indicated in Table 5, employees communicating with native speakers and employees communicating with non-native speakers used significantly different strategies ($M=3.07$, $SD = .91$) than Employees

communicating with native English Speakers ($M = 3.54$, $SD = .55$), $t(100) = 2.43$, $p = .02$). There was a statistically significant difference of 0.05.

Table 7

The t-test Analysis: The Strategies Used to Solve Problems by Groups 1 and 2

($N=100$)

Group of employees	<i>Strategies to solve the problems in email writing</i>				
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Employees communicating with Native English Speakers	50	3.07	.911	2.43*	0.02
Employees communicating with Non-Native English Speakers	50	3.54	.545		

* $p < .05$

Summary

This chapter shows qualitative results of the study based on responses to four questions. The data collected included demographic information on the participants, problems encountered writing email in English to native and non-native speakers, and strategies used to solve these problems. The purpose of the study was to discover the problems of Thai employees writing email in English, and strategies they used to solve these problems. The data was analyzed using the SPSS program and showed mean scores and standard deviation. Moreover, this study investigated whether there were significant differences between the problems they had and the strategies they used. The data was analyzed using the t test to present the differences. Research results showed that both groups of Thai employees had problems writing email in English. The differences however were not statistically significant at a level of 0.05. However, Thai employees communicating with non-native speakers gave English language email writing problems

higher mean scores than Thai employees communicating with native speakers. Problems common to both groups included low confidence writing email, and the need to have email reviewed before it was sent to clients. Another common problem was a repetitive style of writing, and both groups also moderately agreed they were concerned about lacking knowledge of their correspondents' cultural backgrounds. Both groups also moderately agreed having difficulty with the correct use of idioms. While employees communicating with non-native speakers had more problems than Thai employees who communicating with native speakers, they all moderately agreed to have weak vocabulary, being unable to write email messages quickly and easily, lacking knowledge of common vocabulary and expressions, and being unable to understand words with multiple meanings. They also moderately agreed to spending too much time composing and formatting email, being unable to plan ahead or compose email drafts, and using incorrect grammar. It was found that there was no statistically significant differences in the email writing problems of the two groups.

Besides, there were three questionnaire provided the additional problems in open-ended question. It was revealed that one comment from employees communicating with native English speakers experienced the problems about the unknown background of clients. Another two comments from Thai employees in Thai employees communicating with non-native speakers of English revealed that they were unable to write the email shortly, simply and precisely. Also, one of problems was that the repetitive sentences have been used.

Both groups of Thai employees employed strategies to solve problems and reduce errors writing email in English. Strategies common to both groups included regular writing practice and consulting the dictionary. Both groups moderately agreed that they attended training courses for business email writing to improve their English proficiency.

The findings revealed that to deal with problems writing email, both groups used avoidance, compensation, or reduction strategies. Thai employees communicating with non-native speakers and Thai employees communicating with native speakers moderately agreed that its strategies included, in order of frequency of use, (a) using a spell checker and other online tools, (b) asking colleagues to identify unknown words, (c) listing appropriate vocabulary for use in a business context, (d) keeping a list of context-appropriate words, (e) using an email template, (f) making a list of commonly used phrases and sentences, (g) keeping it “short and simple” to reduce errors, and (h) listing the most frequently misused words.

Furthermore, it was also found that employees communicating with non-native English speakers applied almost all of the strategies presented in the questionnaire, and that both group practiced writing email in a business context to improve their email writing in English. Both groups also used a spell-checking program to reduce errors and consulted a dictionary for unknown words in order to reduce their rate of errors.

Both groups also found that online tools and consulting with colleagues were useful solutions when they were unable to define a word. It was found that Thai employees communicating with non-native speakers asked their supervisors or managers to proofread, whereas Thai employees communicating with native speakers did not use this approach.

Finally, based on mean scores it was clear that Thai employees who communicated with non-native speakers used the strategies at a higher level than Thai employees who communicated with non-native English speakers at a lower level of language use. This result implies that they spent more effort writing email in English. It was also found that there were statistically significant differences in the strategies used by the two groups of employees.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Research Question 1

What were the problems experienced by Thai employees in an international company communicating in English by email with native and non-native English speakers?

Results: Research Questions 1

The result revealed that Thai employees communicating with both groups of Thai employees perceived problems communicating by email with their foreign clients. However, this research explored the idea that Thai employees communicating with non-native English speakers, had many more problems than Thai employees communicating with native English speakers. They had two problems at agreement level out of 28 problems (7 %) listed in the questionnaire. The most problems both groups encountered included: (a) lacked the confidence to write email messages, and (b) used the same style of writing.

In contrast, the most critical problems for Thai employees communicating with – non-native English speakers in terms of other problems. They had critical problems at the moderate agreed level were concerning about the cultural of the readers, and the fact that they were unable to write good email messages and asked their colleagues to review before sending emails in English. In terms of vocabulary, their problems included the inability to use proper vocabulary, the inability to understand words with multiple meanings, and the inability to use idioms correctly. Thai employees also had problems with grammar and usage, and were unable to avoid repeating the same words and phrases, unable to write emails quickly and easily, unable to plan ahead or compose drafts of email messages and spent a lot of time composing emails.

Discussion: Research Question 1.

Both group of Thai employees in this study explored that they encountered problems during write email in English to their foreign clients. The findings of this study are consistent with previous studies (Nutpoung, 2013; Sirijorn, 2013; Siripraparat, 2011) showing Thai employees' problems writing email in English. The most general problems included: (a) grammatical errors, (b) the time required to review, (c) a lack of knowledge of grammar, (d) an inability to use the proper words, (e) the influence of the Thai language, (f) limited vocabulary, (g) the expectations of readers, and (h) using informal language. Thais admitted that they encountered problems sentences structure errors, connection word errors, subject verb agreement error, word choice errors and word order errors. Also, this study suggests that the writing problems of these Thai employees should be addressed and improved. However, the result of this study explored that both groups of Thai employees perceived problems communicating by email with their foreign clients. Thai employees communicating with non-native speakers of English had many more problems than those communicating with native English speakers in the agree level. Furthermore, the employees in Thai employees communicating with non-native English speakers also had problems writing email in English, such as insufficient knowledge of English vocabulary, vocabulary confusion because of multiple meanings, spending a lot of time composing emails, the inability to write emails quickly and properly, concerns about using the correct cultural forms, and inability to compose email messages. However, the problems to both groups were that they lacked confidence to write email messages and use the same style of writing

These problems could have several causes. Firstly, most Thais do not communicate every day by email in English, but only for a specific purpose and in a specific setting. They had no exposure to use English in daily life and lack of opportunity

to practice English writing skills. This is especially true for government and local businesses, which use email in Thai, or other channels of communication such as the telephone. This has led to insufficient practice writing English. Also, Thai employee English writing skill is limited to a business context. They almost never write in any other context. Also, most of the sampled employees held a bachelor's degree from Thailand, where English education is not as rigorous. Participants in the study who took degrees overseas may have gotten used to writing in English. Hence, the majority of Thais lack competence writing email in English. Also, this may lead to problems in terms of grammar usage according to Thai think about Thai and translate the response into English. Thus, they always use the repeat wording and format when writing in English. The cause of error may be from Thais mother tongue interference. A final reason could be that Thai teachers do not teach their students a varied vocabulary, such as antonyms, synonyms, or vocabulary items with multiple meanings. Graduates of such programs could only recognize high frequency words and would be unable to identify any other words when using email in English.

Thus, it can be concluded that there is still opportunities for these employees to improve their English to be more effectively. In order to overcome these problems, Thai employees should have more opportunities to practice their English. Additionally, English training class both emersion or group session with emphasize on email writing and grammar usage for each working areas would be helpful for Thai employees. Also,

Research Question 2.

What were the strategies used by Thai employees at an international company to solve problems communicating by email in English with native and non-native speakers?

Results: Research Questions 2.

Both groups agreed that they applied strategies to overcome the problems writing email in English, although they used these strategies at different levels. Thai employees communicating with non-native English speakers, utilized more strategies than the group communicating with native English speakers.

Discussion: Research Question 2.

To overcome these problems, participants should practice writing English every day. It would also be helpful for these employees to take email writing courses with a qualified instructor (Thammasorn & Somsin 2013). Moreover, the company should assign Thai staff to attend English-language business writing classes with native speaking instructors to improve their written communication with foreign clients or colleagues. Moreover, Thai instructors or teachers should focus on English for Specific Purposes in writing to reduce the level of word choice confusion when Thai employees write emails in a business context. This may result in Thais developing a higher level of proficiency in English and increasing their level of confidence in communicating by email in English. More years of work experience may also help employees improve their English level.

Research Question 3.

Were there significant differences for Thai employees at an international company in the problems communicating by email in English with native as compared to non-native speakers?

Results: Research Question 3.

Both groups of Thai employees had a moderate level of agreement about the problems they faced writing email in English and the strategies they used to achieve their business goals and reduce their error rate. Thai employees who communicated with non-

native English speakers, had more problems with English email writing than Thai employees who communicated with native English speakers.

Thai employees who communicated with native English speakers, used different strategies in order to solve their problems. Thai employees who communicated with non-native English speakers also used more writing strategies than Thai employees who communicated with native English speakers.

Discussion: Research Questions 3.

These findings were similar to those of Nutpoung (2013) who pointed out that English is a foreign language in Thailand and not the mother tongue. Therefore, Thai employees had only a minimal knowledge of English grammar when writing emails and were often unaware of their errors. The findings also revealed that Thai employees who communicated with non-native English speakers used more strategies to solve their problems than the Thai employees who communicated with native English speakers. In addition, the group of employees who communicated with native English speakers had fewer problems than the employees from other groups. This shows a high level of confidence and a willingness to reduce errors and improve communication by writing more effective email. Thai employees need to review their work in order to reduce their rate of errors in email or letter writing. In addition, daily practice in writing English, and training from a qualified instructor, would increase their English proficiency (Thammasorn & Somsin 2013). It will help international companies achieve their business targets if they improve their employees' ability to communicate in English with non-native speakers. The proper training will help develop their employees' English proficiency.

Thai employees communicating with non-native English speakers, however, had additional problems writing email in English, including insufficient knowledge of English

vocabulary, vocabulary confusion because of multiple meanings, excessive time spent composing emails, the inability to write emails quickly and properly, concerns about using incorrect cultural forms, and the concern that their mother tongue would lead them to code switching between Thai and English.

Research Question 4

Were there significant differences in strategies used by Thai employees at an international company communicating by email in English with native as compared to non-native speakers?

Results: Research Question 4.

The result was revealed that there was significant different between the strategies used to solve the problems by Thai employees when they were difficulties with English email writing. These findings suggested that Thai employees who worked with non-native English speakers delivered the more strategies to use when encountered with the problems in English email writing. Besides, the rated of level of agreement is higher than Thai employees who communicate with native speakers, this could imply to they put more effort to use the strategies to overwhelm the English email writing problems.

Discussion: Research Questions 4.

The finding indicated that Thai employees in this study delivered the strategies to solve the problems to reduce the errors. It should be summarized that while writing an email in English, Thai employee applied the online tools for help such as grammar checking, online dictionary and spelling-checker in order to make the email correctly and clearly understand. Using a word list was included in the strategies they used. This also indicated that they intended to improve their email writing and enhance the effective communication to success in business (Murphy, 2014).

Moreover, the level of agreement regarding to strategies used to solve English email writing for Thai employees in this study and it presented that they delivered the technique to overcome the writing problem instead of avoidance. They tried to make their email short and simple to avoid an errors instead. The strategies commonly used they used the wordlist and email template to help their writing easily and quickly. These method could help them to reduce time consuming. They also employed the strategies in terms of asking colleagues to proofread before sending. This implied that they were aware of miscommunication to avoid complaint from the clients that could improve their performance in terms of effective writing and communication.

In summary, the open-ended questioned in the section of strategies that Thai employees in this company agreed that used the template and useful wordlist is a good ideas and it would be help to write email easily. Furthermore, another comments that Thai employees advised that read article in English and try to follow the structure and apply it in email writing it will be help. The overall results of this study implied that Thai employees in this international company were competent in English and mostly were competent in communications. They could solve the problems with the effective strategies. Accordingly to **Murphy** (2014) efficiency is a skill to be mastered and the success of the individual and the organization depends on effective communication.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings show that Thai employees in this international setting had trouble writing emails in English, particularly those that had to frequently communicate with non-native English speakers. They had many problems writing, and they employed strategies to solve them before sending their emails. The study also showed that participants used different strategies to solve their writing problems depending on their work experience.

According to Sangthong (2013), training in writing business email should be provided for Thai employees in international companies to increase their knowledge and improve their skill in using the most up-to-date formats and styles. The results show that the participants need training to improve their grammatical knowledge and their ability to write English. It is recommended that they practice writing English every day, and obtain training from a qualified instructor, which should improve their English proficiency.

Besides, Thai employees who are non-English major, they don't familiar with English in daily life and not great opportunity to learn English from a native speaker. Classroom teaching in Thai and the instruction in Thai and English is not the main language in daily life. Many Thai schools use a simple rote instructional method that students must follow closely in order to receive passing marks. Teachers don't often stray from the books. Instead, teachers are typically instruments through which English lessons are passed down from a more formal source, like an approved curriculum or publication. In general, English grammar and conversation lessons are simply comprised of a worksheet or a list of rules with examples that students must memorize and copy. Thus, they may not have interactive opportunities to make English their own and learn it in an individualized way.

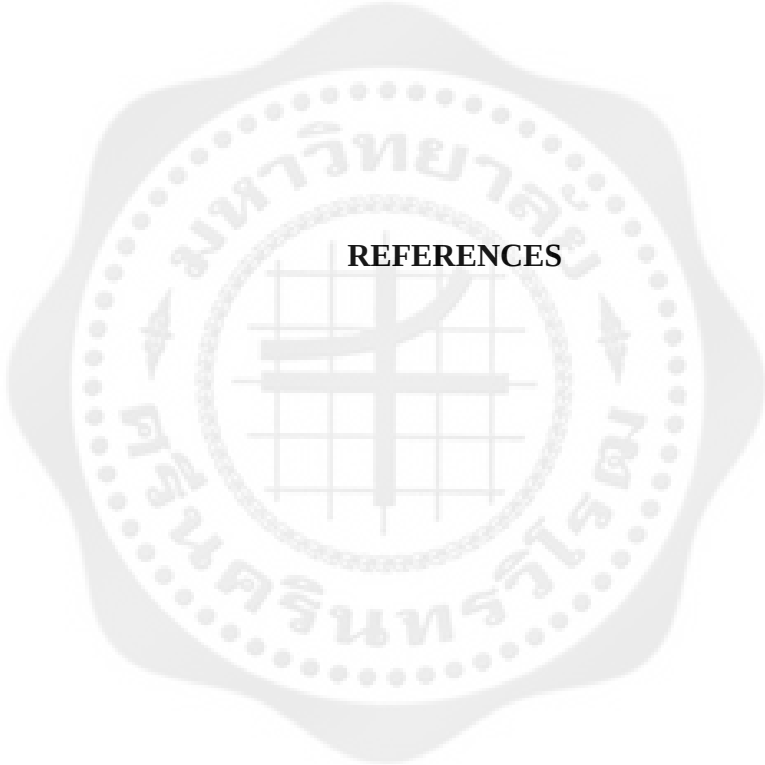
In Thailand, email has only recently been introduced into the private sector, and Thai staff have little experience with it, so they lack the confidence to write good email in English. Also there are no courses in email-writing at the educational institutes in Thailand. Business English courses have in fact been included in the curriculum, and these teach general business writing but such courses do not teach the methods specific to writing email. Writing email can differ from general business writing with respect to technical terms and jargon. Nor does email writing get emphasis in high school English classes, and English grammar and structure have been of the standard classroom type, and

students have had little opportunity to practice the conventions of email. In high schools, students typically learn how to write by following institutions and teachers without thoroughly learning the means and methods to do it, and do the work mostly for the grade. Most high school students do not grasp the importance of learning to write for college and career, or to use good English grammar, style, or usage. This often leads to problems in business when they write email without any real confidence in their ability to write good English. Thus, many Thai students and staff avoid writing in English at all, unless it is for work or for some other specific purpose.

Recommendation for further Studies

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the researcher has the following recommendations:

1. The participants in this study were limited to Thai employees with limited functions, who worked in an international workplace in Bangkok. The findings were not applied to participants who were non-native speakers in various functions to take part in the research.
2. In further studies, email written by the participants should be analyzed to identify the problems with their writing. Only this way would it be possible to analyze the problems in depth and determine a way to solve these problems.
3. The study was limited to one company. Multiple companies could be selected in further studies in order to identify different problems in different businesses.
4. The study did not specific the education background of participants to be English major and non-English major to see more differentiate between both groups.
5. There was not a large group of participants in the study compared to the total number of Thai staff members in Bangkok.



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November 03' 2015

Dear participants,

My name is Saisamorn Pimthong and I am studying for a Master's degree in English at Srinakharinwirot University. I would like to invite you to participate in my research study "Email Writing Problems and Strategies Used to Solve the Problems by Thai Employees Communicating with Native and Non-Native English Speakers in an International Workplace."

In this study, a questionnaire will be used as a tool to collect data. The identities of the participants will remain confidential and the results of this study will be used for academic purposes only.

Please complete the form below to confirm your willingness to be a part of this study. After completing this form, please fill out the questionnaire and return it to me at the 17th floor of the SIO-VTT building by November 25, 2015. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at SIO extension 24910.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Yours faithfully

Saisamorn Pimthong

My name is _____

☐ I am willing to participate in this study

Research Questionnaire

Email Writing Problems and Strategies Used to Solve the Problems by Thai Employees Communicating with Native and Non-Native English Speakers in an International Workplace

The aim of this questionnaire is to survey the email writing problems experienced by Thai employees in an international workplace and the strategies that they used to communicate more effectively with both native and non-native English speakers. Any information provided by the participants will remain confidential and be used for academic purposes only.

Please complete the following questionnaire about the problems faced by Thai employees in an international company and the strategies that you use to overcome these obstacles will be beneficial in terms of an improvement in the clarity and quality of the English email writing skills of Thai employees working in international companies. Your response to this questionnaire is highly appreciated. Please send the completed questionnaire back to the 17th floor of the SIO-VTT building by November 28th 2015.

If you have any questions regarding this questionnaire, please contact me at SIO Extension 24910.

Faithfully yours,
Saisamorn Pimthong

APPENDIX B
QUESTIONNAIRE

Part I: Demographic Data

Directions: Please answer the following questions by making a check mark (✓) in the spaces provided for your answers.

1. My gender is_____

☐ Male

☐ Female

2. My education background is

☐ Bachelor degree (in country)

☐ Bachelor degree (oversea)

☐ Master Degree (in country)

☐ Master Degree (oversea)

☐ Other, pls specify.....

3. I have been working with this company for _____.

☐ Less than 1 year

☐ 2-3 years

☐ 4-5 years

☐ More than 6 years

4. My function in my current department or division is_____.

☐ Bangkok Payables Center

☐ Procurements

☐ Information and Technology

☐ Lubricants and Supply

☐ Human Resources

☐ Other, pls specify.....

5. My duties involve responsibility for the following countries_____.

(You may select more than one country)

I communicate with Native English Speakers Countries from.....

☐ The United States of America

☐ The United Kingdom

☐ Australia

☐ New Zealand

☐ Other, please specify.....

6. I communicate with Non-Native English Speakers Countries from.....

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| ☐ Singapore | ☐ Malaysia |
| ☐ Canada | ☐ India |
| ☐ China | ☐ Other, please specify |



Part II: Problems with English Email Writing

Instructions: Please answer all of the questions below by making a check mark (√) for each statement that most accurately reflects the level of your agreement with each of the following English email writing problems.

(5= Strongly Agree, 4= Agree, 3= Moderately Agree, 2= Disagree, 1= Strongly Disagree)

Problems with English Email Writing	Level of Agreement				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Email Formats					
1. I do not know how to compose a subject header for an email message					
2. I do not know how to use greetings or farewells in the body of an email message					
3. I do not know how to use the appropriate form of address to reflect the position or status of the recipient in an email message					
4. I do not know how to arrange an email message in logical order.					
5. I do not know how to close an email message appropriately.					
6. I never plan ahead or compose drafts when writing emails					
Vocabulary					
7. I have difficulty writing email messages because I do not know enough expressions and lack adequate vocabulary.					
8. I am confused by words with multiple meanings because I do not know how to use them in a specific context in an email message.					
9. I am unable to use the idioms commonly used in Native English speaking countries in an email message.					
Grammar					
10. I do not understand how to use numbers as expressions of time in an email message					
11. I am unable to use different tenses (past, present, and future) in in an email message					
12. I am unable to use the active and passive					

Problems with English Email Writing	Level of Agreement				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
voice correctly in an email message					
13. I do not understand how to use sentence functions in an email message					
14. I do not know how to use conjunctions to link words, phrases, clause elements and sentences in an email message					
15. I do not know how to use the singular and plural and frequently make mistakes with noun phrases in email messages					
16. I do not know how to use other constructions (prepositions, comparatives, etc.) in an email message					
17. I do not know the different types of pronouns (subject, object, verb, etc.) in an email message					
18. I do not know how to use prepositions of time and place in an email message					
19. I do not know how to use the correct capitalization and punctuation in an email message					
20. I have difficulty writing concise, grammatically correct sentences in an email message.					
21. I repeat the same wording and phrases in all of my email messages					
Others Problems					
22. I use the same style of writing in email messages to native and non-native English speakers					
23. I am unable to write email messages quickly and easily.					
24. I am concerned about the cultural background of the readers					
25. I spend a lot of time composing emails in English					
26. I am not confident that I write good emails, so I consult my colleagues before sending emails in English					
27. I am not confident that I write good emails, so I always review my emails before sending them					

Problems with English Email Writing	Level of Agreement				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
28. I make code switching errors (Thai and English confusion) in my email writing					

Other problems with English email writing (Please specify.)

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Part III: Strategies to solve the problems in English email writing

Instructions: Please answer all questions below by making a check mark (✓) for each statement that most accurately reflects the level of your agreement with each of the following English email writing strategies.

(5= Strongly Agree, 4= Agree, 3= Moderately Agree, 2= Disagree, 1= Strongly Disagree)

If you have a problem writing emails in English to communicate with native or non-native English speakers, what do you do?

Email Writing Strategies	Level of Agreement				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. A template is useful for me when writing emails.					
2. A list of related vocabulary is useful for me when writing emails.					
3. A list of the most frequently misused words is useful for me when writing emails.					
4. A word list is useful for me if I do not know the most appropriate word to use when writing emails.					
5. I use a spell checking program to reduce my rate of errors when writing emails.					
6. I make a correction of commonly used phrases, cross words and sentences for my convenient use.					
7. I consult dictionary when I do not know the meaning of words.					
8. I consult online tools to support me while writing emails.					
9. When I do not know appropriate words I ask my colleagues who are good at English.					
10. I join a training course for business email writing.					
11. I find that the more practice I have the better email writer I will become.					
12. I request my supervisor/managers to review my email before communicate to clients.					
13. I ask my colleague to proofread before sending email.					
14. I keep my email short and simple to reduce errors.					

Other English email writing strategies (Please specify.)

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VITAE

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2003 Bachelor of Arts (English)
From Mahasarakham University
2017 Master of Arts (English)
From Srinakharinwirot University

