

A STUDY OF ENGLISH READING AND WRITING PROBLEMS OF A BANK'S
INTERNATIONAL TRADE OFFICERS



Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Master of Arts in Business English for International Communication
at Srinakharinwirot University

November 2015

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This study was conducted to explore reading and writing problems of 40 international trade officers of a bank when reading or writing English work-related documents. It also investigated solutions applied to overcome the problems. The research design was quantitative in which the questionnaire was used to collect the participants' responses on how often they faced the reading and writing provided, and how often they used the solutions offered to cope with the problems. Regarding reading problems, the result revealed that, the participants generally encountered problems from lack of vocabulary and grammar competence at moderate level. Specifically, their four most encountered problems were, limited vocabulary knowledge leading to inability to understand difficult words, long or complex sentences, English idioms, and being unable to figure out the meaning of the words being read. Regarding the solutions, they asked for advice from the boss or co-workers, searched for more information from the Internet, used electronic dictionary, guessed the word meaning from the context, and referred to the manuals of International trade rules and practices. Regarding English writing problems, the participants overall faced a problem of transference of native language at high level. Specifically, they faced problems like unnatural English writing due to Thai construction and using only simple words or repetition at high level. Moreover, there were three more writing problems that they faced at moderate to high level: literal translation, inability to think of appropriate vocabulary, and prolonged sentences due to being unable to find the exact word. For methods of solution to writing problems, the

study pointed out that using formulaic sentences, asking the boss or the co-workers, referring to the manuals, and using electronic dictionary were used at high level.



การศึกษาปัญหาทางการอ่านและการเขียนภาษาอังกฤษของพนักงานฝ่ายการค้าต่างประเทศที่
ธนาคารแห่งหนึ่ง



บทคัดย่อ
ของ
สัญลักษณ์ เสวตศิลา

เสนอต่อบัณฑิตวิทยาลัย มหาวิทยาลัยศรีนครินทรวิโรฒ เพื่อการส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษา
ตามหลักสูตรปริญญาศิลปศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต สาขาวิชาภาษาอังกฤษธุรกิจเพื่อการสื่อสารนานาชาติ
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การวิจัยครั้งนี้จัดทำเพื่อสำรวจปัญหาการอ่าน และ การเขียนของพนักงานฝ่ายการค้าต่างประเทศจำนวน 40 คนของธนาคารแห่งหนึ่ง เมื่อต้องอ่านหรือเขียนเอกสารที่เกี่ยวข้องกับการทำงาน รวมไปถึงการศึกษารูปแบบที่พนักงานเหล่านี้ใช้แก้ปัญหาที่เกิดขึ้นเหล่านั้น งานวิจัยที่จัดทำขึ้นเป็นงานวิจัยเชิงปริมาณ โดยมีเครื่องมือหลักคือแบบสอบถาม แบบสอบถามถูกใช้เพื่อเก็บข้อมูลที่เกี่ยวข้องกับความสม่ำเสมอในการพบปัญหาการอ่าน และ การเขียนภาษาอังกฤษของพนักงานฝ่ายการค้าต่างประเทศเมื่อต้องอ่าน หรือ เขียนเอกสารที่เกี่ยวข้องกับการทำงาน และ ความสม่ำเสมอในการเลือกวิธีแก้ปัญหาที่นำเสนอให้แบบสอบถาม ผลการวิจัยพบว่า โดยทั่วไปแล้ว ผู้ร่วมการวิจัยเผชิญกับปัญหาการอ่านที่สืบเนื่องมาจากการขาดความสามารถด้านคำศัพท์และไวยากรณ์ภาษาอังกฤษในระดับปานกลาง ปัญหาที่พบมากที่สุด 4 ประการ คือ ความรู้คำศัพท์น้อยจนทำให้ไม่เข้าใจคำศัพท์ที่ยาก ประโยชน์ยาว หรือ ซับซ้อน ไม่เข้าใจสำนวนภาษาอังกฤษ และ ไม่ทราบความหมายของคำศัพท์ที่พบ สำหรับวิธีการในการแก้ปัญหาการอ่านนั้น ผู้ร่วมการวิจัยใช้วิธีดังต่อไปนี้ในระดับสูง สอบถามผู้บังคับบัญชา หรือ ผู้ร่วมงาน ค้นหาข้อมูลเพิ่มเติมจากอินเทอร์เน็ต ใช้พจนานุกรมออนไลน์ เดาความหมายจากบริบท และ อ้างอิงจากคู่มือและการปฏิบัติด้านการค้าต่างประเทศ สำหรับปัญหาเรื่องการเขียนภาษาอังกฤษพบว่า โดยทั่วไปแล้ว ผู้ร่วมการวิจัยพบปัญหาเนื่องจากการแทรกแซงของภาษาแม่ในระดับสูง หากกล่าวโดยเฉพาะเจาะจงจากการวิจัยครั้งนี้ พนักงานฝ่ายการค้าต่างประเทศพบปัญหา เช่น โครงสร้างประโยคภาษาไทยส่งผลให้การเขียนภาษาอังกฤษไม่เป็นธรรมชาติ และ การใช้แต่คำศัพท์ง่าย หรือ คำซ้ำๆเมื่อเขียนภาษาอังกฤษในระดับสูง นอกจากนี้ยังพบปัญหาด้านการแปลภาษาไทยไปภาษาอังกฤษแบบคำต่อคำ ความไม่สามารถคิดถึงคำศัพท์ที่เหมาะสม และ ประโยคเยิ่นเย้อในระดับกลางถึงสูง สำหรับวิธีการแก้ปัญหาการเขียนนั้น ผู้ร่วมการวิจัยใช้วิธี นำรูปแบบประโยคที่เก็บไว้เป็นแนวทางในการเขียน สอบถามจากผู้บังคับบัญชาหรือเพื่อนร่วมงาน อ้างอิงจากคู่มือและการปฏิบัติด้านการค้าต่างประเทศ และ ใช้พจนานุกรมออนไลน์ในระดับสูง

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Officer

By

Thanyalak Savetsila

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
1 INTRODUCTION	1
Background of the Study.....	1
Objectives of the Study.....	5
Research Questions.....	5
Significance of the Study.....	6
Scope of the Study.....	6
Definition of terms.....	7
Summary of the Chapter.....	7
2 LITERATURE REVIEW	9
Factors Influencing Reading in English.....	9
English Reading Problems.....	10
Factors Influencing Writing in English.....	16
English Writing Problems.....	17
Solutions to English Reading and Writing.....	22
Related Research about English Reading Problems, Writing Problems and Solutions to the Problems.....	25
Summary of the Chapter.....	28
3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	29
Context of the Study.....	29

TABLE OF CONTENTS (Continued)

Chapter	Page
3 (continued)	
Research Design.....	30
Participants.....	30
Research Instrument.....	30
Data Collection.....	33
Data Analysis.....	33
Summary of the Chapter.....	34
4 FINDINGS.....	35
Demographic Characteristics of the Participants.....	35
The Participants English Reading Problems and the Solutions to the problems.....	39
The Participants English Writing Problems and the Solutions to the Problems.....	44
Summary of the Chapter.....	48
5 CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION.....	50
Conclusion of the Study.....	50
Discussion.....	51
Reading problems of international trade officers.....	52

TABLE OF CONTENTS (Continued)

Chapter	Page
5 (continued)	
Solutions to reading problem of international trade officers.....	54
Writing problems of international trade officers.....	55
Solution to writing problem of international trade officers	57
Implications of the Study.....	58
Limitations of the Study.....	59
Recommendations for Further Studies.....	60
REFERENCES	62
APPENDIX	68
VITAE	85

LIST OF TABLES

Tables	Page
1 Demographic Characteristics of the Participants.....	36
2 The Level of Reading Problems the Staff Faced While Reading English Work-Related Documents (By Components).....	40
3 The Level of Reading Problems the Staff Faced While Reading English Work-Related Documents (By Items).....	41
4 Level of Use of Solutions to Solve Reading Problems While Reading Work-Related Documents.....	43
5 The Level of Writing Problems the Staff Faced While Writing English Work-Related Documents (By Components).....	44
6 The Level of Writing Problems the Staff Faced While Writing English Work-Related Documents (By Items).....	45
7 Level of Use of Solutions to Solve Writing Problems While Writing Work-Related Documents	48

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1 Gender of the Participants.....	37
2 Age of the Participants.....	38
3 Educational Level of the Participants.....	38
4 Working Period of the Participants.....	39



CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

English is the most commonly spoken language throughout many parts of the world. The language is the bridge between people who do not share the same native language: the lingua franca. Therefore, it is considered a standard language for computers, education, media, diplomacy, and international business (Nunan, 2003). International trade, which is a form of overseas business dealings, is crucial to Thai economy as it brings considerable income to the country and pushes the economy forward. In 2014, Thai main export and import goods are electronics, vehicles, machinery, equipment; and fuel, electronics, machinery appliances respectively. Our main trading partners are Japan, China, the European Union, the United States of America and Malaysia (“Thailand Balance of Trade,” n.d.). English is, inevitably, the mean of communication between Thai and these said countries’ business people.

Since international trade is prosperous in Thailand, most banks have an International Trade Department in order to facilitate exporters and importers in their business struggling. The bank in this study has set up the department to give advice and help their clients to understand trading process more clearly and more thoroughly. The staff in the department primarily deal with written English shipping documents, and are required to know the international practices regarding these documents and trade finance. Therefore, knowledge of English is vital for their work. Reading and writing have become the most and the second most important English skills since the international trade officers must read international trade documents such as letter of credits, invoices,

bills of lading, insurance policies, contracts, SWIFT (Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication) messages, and e-mails. Additionally, staff must gain knowledgeable subjects on international trade, foreign rules and regulations, or perspectives about global economy written on various platforms; many of them are in English. In addition, writing skill emerged as essential since it is a must-have skill to communicate with people living in the distance. So, the staff must occasionally compose SWIFT messages responding to overseas banks and e-mails to contact with customers and foreign banks. International trade officers who fail to understand the documents correctly, or fail to write precisely in response to the overseas bank will cause financial loss to their clients, and will undermine the bank's reputation.

It is not only their jobs that require them to have English proficiency but the arrival of AEC as well. AEC (Asian Economic Community), approaching by the end of 2015 helps accentuate the importance of English language. Its objectives are to leave tax barriers, and to create a single market base with much greater free flow of capital, goods, services, and labour among ASEAN countries. Since the export sector has already accounted for 70% of national GDP in the recent years, and foreign investors, especially the Chinese and the Japanese, are eyeing Thailand as a trade center for assembly of products and a product-distributing hub in the region (Anantarangsi, 2011), the adoption of AEC is going to enhance foreign investment in Thailand, and is going to bring in more international transactions to Thai banks, and more written English international trade documents for bank employees to tackle with. Tongurai Limpiti, Deputy Governor of Bank of Thailand, mentioned in her speech titled 'Future of Thai Banking System: the Road towards AEC 2015' (2012), that the AEC will offer many opportunities to financial institutions such as market expansion and more cross-country financial and trading activities. However, there will be threats, such as more competitions, as well. Thus,

readiness for changing environment is required. English skills will be an important factor to maintain or increase international competitive edge. Therefore, the pivotal need was to assess and improve the language proficiency of international trade staff. For them, reading and writing skills are important in communicating effectively with people from other AEC countries.

In the past, the bank in this study recruited many English major graduates to work in the department so that their English reading and writing abilities would be put into good use. However, later, the higher management and the Human Resource Department seemed to think that being tactful or having business related knowledge was also valuable. Therefore, they have recruited more of finance and business administration students and less of English major graduates recently. Moreover, the recent candidates did not have their English ability judged adequately. The HR Department does not ask for score of standardized English tests that are commonly required in business industry such as the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC), nor do they interview the candidates in English to measure their ability despite the fact that the job description indicates that bank's international trade officers must have good command of English and must possess proficiency in reading and writing business letters. In addition, the paper for the candidate test only includes an English multiple choices exam that only stresses on English for general use. This creates hardship for some candidates when they get accepted later on since their work relies on English reading and writing ability.

There are various works related documents that the bank's international trade officers have to deal with. Each of them has its pattern and contains some specific sets of vocabulary. The officers have to read, for example, a letter of credit -which is an agreement given by a bank on behalf of an importer that if an exporter presented documents stipulated in the letter of credit, the bank will undertake a payment to

exporters. A letter of credit is divided into many fields, such as field 44E port of loading, field 44F port of discharge, or field 48 period of presentation. In addition, it contains specific terms such as advising bank (a bank that accepts a letter of credit from the issuing bank, and forwards it to the beneficiary), beneficiary (the party who receives the payment upon presenting stipulated documents), or clean draft (A bill of exchange that does not come with additional documents). The officers have to examine other documents such as a bill of lading (the documents issued by a carrier, describing details of shipment), an insurance policy, and a certificate of origin (the document certifying that goods are produced or manufactured in a particular country).

In addition, they must have knowledge about general practices of international trade that are stated in the Uniform Customs and Practice for Documentary Credits (UCP), the set of general rules governing the issuance, the use of letter of credit, and letter of credit transactions. Moreover, they must aware of rules manifested in the International Standard Banking Practice (ISBP), the set of more specific rules and greater details of what are left unexplained in the general principles of UCP. Since there are many rules and regulations, they are not able to learn them by heart, so they might need to reread and refer to UCP and ISBP often. Due to the fact that these general practices are written in English, the officers would inevitably need a good command of English reading.

Dealing with work related document is not limited to reading, but also composing them on occasions. The international trade officers are also required to write SWIFT which is a form of communication on a secure platform among financial institutions. The officers must write SWIFTs to communicate with overseas banks to inform them about any discrepancy which appears in documents specified in a letter of credit, to dispute about discrepancies, to advise due dates , or to make general correspondences.

Therefore, the officers must have knowledge about English language and knowledge about international trade in order to write the said documents.

Using English as a foreign language, approximately 40 international trade employees in the import and the export division of the bank in this study, whose work deals with reading and writing work-related documents, encounter many difficulties and challenges on daily basis. Upon recognizing the problems, the officers have to find various ways to cope with them. Therefore, this research was to study what problems the employees faced upon reading and writing work-related documents and how they solved the problems.

Objectives of the study

The main objectives of this study were

1. To investigate the problems of reading English work-related documents as perceived by international trade staff a bank, and find out the solutions to the reading problems.
2. To investigate the problems of writing English work-related documents as perceived by international trade staff a bank, and find out solutions to the writing problems.

Research Questions

This study attempted to answer two research questions as follows:

1. What were the problems the bank's international trade officers encountered while reading English work-related documents and the solutions they generally applied to solve their reading problems?

2. What were the problems the bank's international trade officers encountered while writing English work-related documents and the solutions they generally applied to solve their writing problems?

Significance of the Study

There have been various studies about English reading problems among professionals, and there is a study undertaken on the reading problems of a bank's international trade staff. However, there might not be a study investigating English writing problems among them; hence, this research disclosed interesting and worthy aspect. Furthermore, there has not been any study conducted on samples from the bank where the researcher is currently working. Therefore, the result was valuable to the researcher and the organization.

In addition, studying about this issue is important since an international trade officer who is not able to understand terms and conditions in documents and fail to carefully and correctly correspond with customers and other overseas banks could cause problems like delayed transportation of goods, delayed payment, unsettlement of goods or services, and eventually discredit the bank's reputation. So, these problems should be studied so that the suggestions would be made to improve the bank's international trade officers' English skills, to prevent the aforementioned unwanted consequences, to help reduce workloads of the superior, and to help expedite the work process.

Scope of the Study

This study was conducted with 40 international trade staff at a state-owned bank. The staff comprised employees working for the import and export division. The aim of

this study was to investigate English reading and writing problems the staff had while working and what were the solutions to their problems.

Definition of Terms

International trade officers refer to people working in the import and export division in the head office of the bank of the study, which is situated in Bangkok. They have responsibility to examine work related documents.

Documents or work related documents refer to documents concerning with international trade such as letter of credits, bills of exchange, invoices, insurance policies, and SWIFTs.

Reading refers to an ability to understand meaning and comprehend information in the work related documents.

Reading problems refer to difficulties in reading arising when reading the work related documents.

Writing refers to an ability to communicate and convey messages in their work related documents.

Writing problems refer to difficulties in writing arising when writing the work related documents.

Summary of the Chapter

This chapter discussed the background of the study including the importance of English language, especially for international trade officers, and the works that the international trade officers have to deal with in general. Also, the justification to conduct the study was provided; the objectives, research questions, significance and scope of the

study were presented. Various definitions of terms specifically used in this research were presented in the last section of the chapter.



CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The research aims to investigate reading and writing problems of the international trade officers while dealing with work related documents and their methods of solution.

The purposes of this chapter are to review related literature and to present previous related studies. The chapter is divided into six parts as follows:

1. Factors influencing reading in English
2. English reading problems
3. Factors influencing writing in English
4. English writing problems
5. Methods of solutions to English reading and writing
6. Related research about English reading problems, writing problems and solutions to the problems.

Factors Influencing Reading in English

According to Richek, Caldwell, Jennings and Learner (1996), reading was defined as the mental process of creating readers' own version of reading materials; they created the meaning of the text constructed by their background knowledge, attitudes, interests, abilities, and situations that they were in. Some readers believed that reading was only about getting all the words right or simply pronouncing words. However, what was also important in reading is constructing meanings of and comprehending the materials. Comprehension could be categorized into many levels ranging from perceiving facts to making inferences and pondering about texts critically.

Yimwilai (2008) stated that reading was a complex thinking and communicating process that readers used to interact with the world. It was an active process of comprehending written messages in a text by employing prior knowledge, past experience, and other information resources to understand and interpret the text.

According to Wongwaiyut (2011), three major factors that influence reading in second language were vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structure. Vocabulary was important in understanding the meaning of a text, and gaining sufficient size of vocabulary to make sense of the texts read could enhance or impede reading comprehension. Grammar could help determine the meaning of a text as well; the long or complicated sentences could cause problems to readers since they required readers to have higher understanding about syntax which was how sentences were organized and related to one another.

As reading is a complicated mental process that requires many factors such as knowledge about a language, knowledge about a subject, and interests, readers are going to face problems when they are deprived of these factors.

English Reading Problems

There are areas of general problems of reading which were the problem of recognizing letters and how they sound (emergent literacy), the problem of not being able to recognize words accurately (word recognition accuracy), the problem of not being able to identify words quickly (words recognition fluency), the problem with comprehension, the problem with language and vocabulary meaning (Richek, Caldwell, Jennings & Learner, 1996). Gunning (2002) found that reading problems might stem from lack of attention or concentration, inability to encode words, limited vocabulary, lack of

grammar knowledge, absence of prior knowledge, and lack of sense of self-efficacy. The study by Ghanaguru, Liang, and Kit (2003), exploring the main reading problems among the students of one experienced teacher, revealed that the read aloud problems, problems about vocabulary, lack of background knowledge, lack of interest and motivation were found

Yorio (1971) conducted a study to find out reading problems among second language learners by distributing questionnaire to 30 Spanish students at the English Language Institute to identify their common reading problems. The results showed that the students thought vocabulary was the biggest difficulty for them, preventing them from understanding a text. The second most found problem was that their short memory span made them forget the story they had read, or made them unable to predict what would come next upon recalling the past cues. The last problem was syntactic, semantic and phonological problems, resulting from their native language interference. Although many reading problems were mentioned in this study, vocabulary seemed to be the biggest problem for them since the mean was high ($M = 3.23$).

The importance of vocabulary knowledge was further confirmed by other studies. Guo and Roehrig (2011) examined the effect of general knowledge, which was metacognitive awareness of reading strategies; and a L2 specific knowledge, consisting of vocabulary knowledge and syntactic awareness on L2 reading comprehension. The results demonstrated that 87% of the variance in reading was explained by both general and specific L2 knowledge. However, specific L2 knowledge appeared to be a more powerful predictor since the path from the L2 specific knowledge to L2 reading comprehension was significant while metacognitive awareness of reading strategies was not. Moreover, the results were the same among the participants who are good and poor

L2 reading. This indicated that good strategies could not compensate poor specific L2 skills.

Amjomshoa and Zamanian (2014) studied the relationship between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension Iranian EFL learners in Kerman Azad University. The result demonstrated that there was a modest significant positive relationship between the knowledge of vocabulary and reading comprehension ($r = .599, p < 0.01$), implying that more vocabulary the participants knew, the better they understood the text they read.

Up to this point, one will be able to see that lack of vocabulary knowledge creates reading comprehension problem. It can be said that words are the smallest meaningful unit in a sentence that contributes to overall understanding of readers. Knowledge of vocabulary plays an important role in getting meaning and understanding messages in a text, and insufficient acquisition of it creates problems for them in text reading comprehension.

Alderson (2000) also stressed that knowledge of vocabulary was a significant predictor of reading test performance, and facing difficulty from unknown words affected understanding of a text and pleasure from reading. He said that other factors such as knowledge of text types, and reading motivation could enhance or obstruct reading comprehension. Familiarity with the genre of reading materials promoted reading comprehension, while unfamiliarity hindered successful reading. He also pointed out that motivation could affect reading achievement, since studies of poor readers in first and second language showed that the readers were void of motivation to read, or to improve their reading skill. Readers would be able to improve their reading skill by learning new vocabulary and complicated syntax existing in texts. However, if they avoided reading, they would end up learning nothing. It became a vicious cycle of not wanting to read, not

having ability that might be improved from more reading, and having piled up difficulties in reading comprehension.

Nezami (2014) found that vocabulary, spelling, and pronunciation problems faced by the students of preparatory year and community college in Saudi Arabia stemmed from the students' lack of attention, and motivation to do self-study and additional reading although they got a challenging task. When they did not prepare themselves or did further study, their insufficient knowledge added up and they were further disheartened upon encountering a new text with unknown words.

Therefore, lack of motivation is one of reading problems identified in the studies mentioned above. Motivation is the force that drives readers to exert their effort to understand a reading material. Lack of motivation, on the other hand, impedes their reading comprehension. If readers feel de-motivated, they might not pay attention to the text, or they might give up halfway reading and eventually fail to read and improve their reading ability.

Besides lack of vocabulary knowledge and lack of motivation, problems about grammar are also noticeable. The study conducted by Akbari (2014) on 120 Persian medical students showed that students raised lots of problems concerning their English textbook comprehension resulting from inadequate knowledge about syntax. The problems included the following inabilities: inability to understand different kinds of phrases and clauses, to determine head noun and words' grammatical functions, to understand complex sentences, to understand passive structured sentences, to understand roles of conjunctive adverbs, and lack of knowledge about phrasal verbs, collocations and idioms. In the study, the students then were helped to overcome the problems by various grammar teaching techniques. It could be concluded that lack of grammar knowledge

hinders reading comprehension. If readers' grammar knowledge increases, the level of reading comprehension is higher.

The study mentioned formerly revealed that grammatical competence was also required for successful reading comprehension since readers used their grammar knowledge to assist them in decoding materials and to help them identify the meaning of words depending on their part of speech. Chaichanasiri (2007) stated that it was misleading to believe that knowing lots of vocabulary was adequate to understand a text. Because there were cases that readers knew the meaning of every word, yet they could not grasp the message at all. Grabe (2004) stated that both language knowledge namely vocabulary and grammar and understanding of the main ideas and how they are related in a text, were important to the text comprehension.

The unique contribution of grammar on reading comprehension was further confirmed in Shiotsu and Weir (2007)'s study. They declared that there were lots of studies showing the importance of vocabulary knowledge to reading comprehension, but a little had been done with syntactic knowledge. Therefore, they conducted three rigorous successive studies in which results indicated that both syntax and vocabulary were important predictors of reading comprehension performance, yet syntax overruled vocabulary as a stronger predictor.

Aside from three English reading problems listed above, there is another problem that one should be aware of: lack of background knowledge. As Alderson (2000) contended that limited background knowledge could also be a factor constituting reading problems, Carrell's schemata theory (1983) can help explain this fact. Background knowledge was also defined as schemata, representing stored information of readers' knowledge about something. Upon reading a text, the new information is picked up and is combined with existing schemata, rendering readers to recognize information and

understand a text better. Knowledge of genre or text type, and knowledge of topic and subject matter are also parts of a person's schemata. Knowing text type refers to knowing how a particular genre of text was organized; what sort of information to expect in a particular place, or where to look for the key idea. For example, readers' schemata of a simple story consists of a setting, a beginning, a development, and an ending. This schemata guides the readers to read through text smoothly. Recognizing where to look for information needed, or what is the less important idea obviously helps the process of reading. Furthermore, prior knowledge about topic definitely facilitates reading comprehension. Readers will find it easier to read a text they have known about or have read before. These two kinds of background knowledge were named formal schemata, and content schemata by Carrell (1987).

International trade officers, just like other people, would be affected by background knowledge. They will poorly understand their work-related documents if they are not frequently exposed to written genre of their work and topics. Another source of their background knowledge is the international trade practices. The staff refers to the Uniform Customs and Practice for Documentary Credits (UCP) and International Standard Banking Practice (ISBP) upon examining and validating work-related documents. The one lacking the knowledge of practices will find it hard to understand the documents, and is not be able to verify them properly.

From the researcher's experience, apart from all aforementioned factors and problems, ones should also consider the importance of specific set of vocabulary like technical terms used in their work. In almost every profession, there is a set of special words that only people in such field will understand. This kind of words can pose a problem for people who are unfamiliar with the language in the domain, and make them

unable to understand a message. Failure to understand the meaning of technical words constitutes inability to comprehend a text and recognize mistakes in their work.

In short, it could be said that the recurring reading problems from the literatures are problems about limited vocabulary knowledge, lack of grammatical competence, inadequate background knowledge, and void of motivation.

Factors Influencing Writing in English

Writing is regarded as one of the most difficult English skills that second language learners must acquire since the skill cannot be learnt without organized and formal teaching (Emig, 1977), and its acquisition depends on other three skills: listening, speaking, and reading (Klimova, 2014). One must integrate said skills along with other competencies such as cognitive, syntactic, and socio-cultural competencies to transform their thoughts into written form. The written form that is the final result of one's effort and competencies can serve many objectives according to the writer's intention. Some write for a living and some write for pure pleasure.

Knodt (1986) said there were four main goals why people wrote in business and academic settings. Firstly, they write to inform, to explain ideas, or to present facts. Secondly, they write to back up their points; and to prove that their opinions are valid. Thirdly, they write to assess whether a thing was good or bad. Lastly, they write to persuade or to give suggestions to people so that they will take a particular action or think in the way the writers want them to.

People in business setting mostly write letters to ask readers to comply to their needs, so the writers must be able to provide information, make a request, or give suggestions appropriately. Even though most English business letters are ritualized and

have a specific form to follow, the writers still need to communicate precisely, clearly, effectively and promptly; otherwise, goodwill between business partners and benefits might be negatively affected (Jenkins and Hinds, 1987). In achieving the said style of writing, the writers must possess writing capability so that readers can grasp the message the writers try to convey.

Marius (1995) contended that those abilities also include using words efficiently and writing clearly. Good writers use short and few words as they can manage, yet they are words that express meaning they intended to send. Nevertheless, it does not mean that the writers must employ only easy words. They must be able to use complicated language when it is required. In short, they must possess word accuracy, which is the knowledge about what kind of word or language to write in a specific context. Furthermore, they must write direct or easy-to-understand sentences. Those sentences should begin with a subject and tell readers about the action the subject took immediately. Good writers do not write incomplete sentences, run-on sentences, unnecessary long and confusing sentences. In other words, good writers are those who have good knowledge of grammar. Moreover, a good writer must be able to communicate clearly and effectively (Kelsch and Kelsch, 1981). To be able to communicate, vocabulary and grammatical competence are not enough; a writer must have good knowledge about the subject he or she is going to write about so that the content will be correct.

English Writing Problems

According to Chen (2002), there were lots of difficulties second language learners encountered when writing in English. Chen asked the participants, who were 28

Taiwanese freshmen and sophomore in university level, to write self-reports on English writing problems. After that, an error analysis on those self-reports was carried out to find most problematic areas in the participants' writings. Results of the self-reports showed that the most perceived difficulties were word usage, limited word bank, grammatical errors, L1 interference, and lack of subject knowledge respectively.

From the study, it was found that 18 out of 28 participants had been unable to use words precisely or properly on a given context. They put words that were unfit in a situation; for example, one of them did not have any idea to describe a woman who had the inner beauty as a 'beautiful' person, so he/she used the word 'pretty' instead. The word 'pretty' only conveyed a superficial charm like appearance, not what was inside the heart and the mind. Another of them was uncertain about choosing the words with similar meanings to use in the context. For example, when the participant wanted to explain that a person spoke in anger, he/she was confused about which words to choose between 'roar', 'bellow', 'shout', 'yell', or 'cry.' Because of the uncertainty about word choice, the participants resorted to repetitive words in their writing.

Choosing the right word to express thoughts and feeling in writing is important. Normally, if people are not very accurate or fluent in speech, the tone of voice and body language might aid the communication. However, the case of writing is different. Writers must express themselves accurately since there are only written words that function. They must be sure that the words they chose convey what they intended to mean since this action enables writers to be able to express themselves effectively and correctly (Kelsch & Kelsch, 1981). Choosing wrong or inappropriate words leads to communication failure and incorrect comprehension.

Besides the problem of not being able to choose the right words to fit the context, there is another problem concerning vocabulary: shortage of vocabulary. Kelsch and

Kealsh divided vocabulary into two distinct sets of words: active vocabulary and passive vocabulary. Active vocabulary is the set of ordinary words people use to express themselves in daily lives, while passive vocabulary make up of words people do not normally use, yet they understand when they hear or see them. The writers said that passive vocabulary is much larger than active one. Therefore, people find their writing easier and more accurate when they transfer the passive one to active one by learning and remembering those words. Upon more availability of vocabulary, people's writing becomes more effective. From this notion, it can be said that people who are short of vocabulary perceive their writing materials to be arduous and less effective.

The problem of vocabulary shortage was also found in other studies. Al-Khairi (2013) and Javid and Umer (2014) conducted studies on Saudi EFL learners and revealed that the most problematic factor both male and female participants had found in their writing was vocabulary. They ranked their knowledge about vocabulary as their weakest area as they did not have adequate vocabulary reservoir. Therefore, they could not find necessary one to express what they thought about or intended to write. The limited size of their vocabulary hindered their writing success, and it affected their effectiveness of studying in the English program.

Writing a complete sentence does not require only a specific size of vocabulary and how to use it in a particular context, grammar, or how words are strung together to make an understandable sentence is also important. Several Asian students perceived that grammar was a must learn subject for a person studying a new language. They said that if a person was not equipped with grammar knowledge, the person would not be able to organize sentences, leading to writing incorrectly and being unable to convey messages to others appropriately. Some of them disclosed that grammar was important, especially in writing as knowing it was the way to improve their writing ability. They

believed better grammar would result in better writing. Because writing in a longer sentence or a paragraph needed writers to apply many grammatical rules, and knowing these rules helped them pinpoint mistakes and be able to correct them accordingly (Pazaver & Wang, 2009)

Some studies, as well, help support that lack of grammar knowledge is a prevalent problem. Hammad (2014)'s research found out that 83 percent of his participants who were students had problems with grammar: the most difficult area they had to tackle with. They experienced problems with tenses, phrasal verbs, prepositions, and articles. The participants who were native instructors also recognized that their students share the same grammatical problems. The results were similar to Chen (2003)'s research in which the participants reported that the particular problem was the use of tenses. They also made a lot of mistakes in singular/ plural, punctuation, the definite article 'the.'

In addition, these two studies showed that the participants had to struggle to write due to the lack of the content knowledge. They found themselves with empty paper since they could not generate relevant ideas or find supports for their ideas. They did not know what to write due to their unfamiliarity or inexperience with the topic. The participants said they did not have enough critical or independent thinking, so they did not know what kind of opinion they should put forth. Moreover, they did not have enough understanding about the subject, so they could not write clearly.

Although a person might be competent in terms of vocabulary and grammar, writing might be a laborious task if that person does not have any background knowledge of the topic he/she is going to write. Therefore, International trade officers must have content knowledge about the international rules and practices about import and export. If they do not understand or have sufficient knowledge about the topics, they are not able to

correspond with overseas banks or to find supports when the banks argue about the correctness or incorrectness of documents sent for examination.

Another arising and worth mentioning problem that appears in other studies as well is interference of a native language. EFL writing problems might root from Inter-lingual and Intra-lingual transfer. According to Brown (1994) Inter-lingual transfer was a result from interference of a person's native language to his/her second language while Intra-lingual transfer was a result from inadequate learning or difficulty in a language itself. According to Kaweera (2013), Thai EFL students were found to exhibit errors that were influenced by the said transferences. The writing errors found in the review were based on three aspects of Inter-lingual transfer and seven aspects of Intra-lingual transfer. Because of them, the students showed problems about misuse of vocabulary, grammar, and organization at a discourse level.

Mohan and Lo (1985) said that lots of second language learners writing in English faced difficulties with vocabulary, grammar, and organization, and many researchers had tried to indicate that interference of native languages is the cause. However, they stated that people should not consider it to be the main reason of writing problems. It could be but, in some cases, it did not always cause disadvantages. When a native language is similar to the target language, it facilitates positive transfer; writers find it easier to write and adapt to the rules due to similarities. When a native language is different from the target language, it causes negative transfer; writers commit mistakes due to unfamiliarity of the system and the rules. Nevertheless, Thai language has many rules differing from English that might intervene with the process of writing.

Bennui (2008) studied the interference of Thai language in the writing of Thai EFL students, and revealed that the native language caused negative transfer in most cases. He found many problems such as literal translation from Thai to English and some

Thai sentences cause problems in the students' writing. The students did word-to-word translation, resulting in misuse of words. For example, when they wanted to express that they had acquired, gained or obtained knowledge from reading books, they wrote a sentence like 'I get knowledge without the teacher' or 'I receive the knowledge and experience for my job.' They literally translated the word 'get' or 'receive' from the Thai word 'dai' which are unsuitable to use with the word 'knowledge.' They used the word 'serious' to explain the state of being stressful rather than other context-suitable words which resulted in awkward English. For instance, one of them wrote 'I usually have some questions but I don't (feel) serious about it because I have the book that it has the answer for me.' Moreover, one of students literally translated the word 'a text' (a book used in studying) from Thai to English as 'study book.'

Another example from Bennui's study was that they borrowed a Thai sentence construction in their writing. Consequently, their writing was unnatural and ungrammatical. They used 'there have ...' instead of 'there +verb be,' as the meaning of the former one stated is equivalent to Thai structure 'mi: + noun.' The Thai students also used preposition incorrectly; they substitute the prepositions 'at' with the preposition 'with' since its meaning is 'kab' in Thai, so they write 'I stay with home.'

In conclusion, there are many problems arising while second language writers are trying to write namely word usage, shortage of vocabulary, lack of knowledge about the subject, lack of grammatical competence, and the native language interference.

Solutions to English Reading and Writing Problems

As the international trade officers are not the English native speakers, they find difficulties in reading and writing in the language on the daily basis. The problems

cannot be ignored since English abilities are related to their work. Therefore, they must find various ways to cope with them to enhance their performance. There are literatures citing methods to deal with languages' problems, including language learning strategies.

According to Chamot and Kupper (1989), to understand, keep and remember new skills and information, students applied learning strategies. They were tips and tricks that helped develop their English skills, and solve language problems. Likewise, people in general can deploy these strategies to solve problems while people are engaging in English tasks in daily life.

Chamot and Kupper and O'Malley and Chamot (1990) conducted the study of language learning strategies through read-aloud interviewing ESL students and foreign language students of Spanish and Russian. They asked if the students had special things they had done or tricks they had employed while learning the languages. The researchers found lots of strategies that the learners used to enable them to be successful language learners, and categorized them into three types, which were metacognitive, cognitive and social/affective strategies.

1. Metacognitive strategies involve planning and thinking about the learning process, directing attention to a specific detail, understanding and controlling language's ability to maximize the performance, monitoring understanding about tasks, and evaluating how well the performance is against rules of languages' accuracy.

2. Cognitive strategies relate to interactions with learning materials such as repeating for better comprehension of materials, using references like dictionaries or textbooks, grouping and classifying words, taking notes, applying rules to understand language, substituting alternative words or phrase to complete tasks, relating prior knowledge with new ideas, making a summary, translating, making use of prior knowledge to guess meanings of words or usage of languages.

3. Social and affective strategies involve working with or consulting another person to solve problems, asking for explanation, talking to oneself or motivating oneself by setting a reward if a goal is achieved.

Moreover, the researchers discovered in the longitudinal studies of the foreign language students that in the writing task, which was writing about pictures, they applied the strategies namely checking and correcting their performance (self-monitoring), relating new information to existing knowledge (elaboration), planning, evaluating, summarizing, using alternative words or phrases they know to accomplish tasks (substitution). Furthermore, when the students faced the language constraint because of unfamiliar vocabulary, they resorted to guess the meanings using available information (inferencing), elaboration, and using learned or self-made rules.

According to Gosden (1996)'s research, the participants, who were novice English scientific article authors, normally consulted Japanese-English reference books on writing English academic research for science students when they faced writing problems or made mistakes. Some of them looked up to English language manuals that were suggested by their advisors. Some novice writers depended on manuals intendedly written for native speakers, while some relied on those intended for non-native speakers. Moreover, they collected sophisticated vocabulary, well-written expressions or short formulaic phrases, and borrowed them in their works. For examples, they copied the phases 'proceeded cleanly' or 'there has been much interest.'

Okumura (2006) noted that his participants who were Japanese scientists, writing English scientific articles had two methods of dealing with writing difficulties. The first method was called subject knowledge oriented strategies. The scientists who resorted to this method needed to gain just enough writing skills for writing articles, and needed to save their time on writing. Normally, they would read as many articles of their field as

possible to be familiar with writing styles, to get used to arguments and to collect useful phrases to use in their writing.

The second method was named language-oriented strategies. The scientists who employed this method tried to improve their use of the language and aimed at a native-like writing. They read articles of able and famous writers both inside and outside their field. Also, they asked for explanation and verification from the experts on English language like English teachers and/or English speaking co-workers about the language usage.

All in all, there are many approaches based on the aforementioned literatures that the international trade officers might use to cope with problems arising while reading and writing in English such as asking clarification from their superiors and experts, referring to the manuals of International trade rules and practices, consulting dictionaries, guessing from contexts, and applying formulaic phrases they collected.

Related Research about English Reading Problems, Writing Problems and Solutions to the Problems

Wongwaiyut (2011) conducted a study among 30 international trade staff at Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation (SMBC) to find their English reading problems and how they solve the problems. The study found that the employees faced a problem about general vocabulary at a high level upon reading documents related to their work while they faced grammar, complex sentence structure, and lack of knowledge in subject matters at the relatively low level. Their highest chosen method of solution was asking advices from their superiors or co-workers.

Pangasapa (2012) carried out a study about reading problems, reading strategies and strategies to overcome the problems among Thai editorial staff at GM Multimedia Public Company Limited. The questionnaire was distributed and the semi-interview was held to find out the results. It revealed that the participants reported four main problems, which are inability to understand meaning of technical terms, not being able to know the word meaning, finding difficulty with long and complicated sentences with many dependent clauses and paragraph, and finding unfamiliar words. They encountered these problems at the medium level. The participants used memory strategy, that was imagining the story in mind and cognitive strategy that was underlining and highlighting important words or parts, in their reading at the high level. Upon facing problems, they reread, consulted a dictionary, guessed from the context, and asked for help from their peers at the high level. The interview of 11 participants helped confirm the result found in the questionnaire.

Prachanant (2012) studied the needs analysis on English language use of 40 tourism employees in the industry. The questionnaire was provided to ask the participants their need for English skill in doing their work, ask them to name the three functions of the skill they mostly use, and problems they faced while using the skill to communicate with foreign tourists. The results showed that the participants rated the need for listening, speaking, reading, and writing at the high level with the mean scores above 3.50. They mostly used the skills in providing information, providing services, and offering help. The most severe problems they found while listening and speaking to foreign tourists were inability to comprehend the accents, and using unsuitable words and expression on a given situation. The most serious problems they encountered while reading and writing for their work were having inadequate knowledge of vocabulary, and lacking knowledge of grammar.

Okamura (2006) carried out a research on 13 Japanese researchers, who wrote scientific and engineering articles, regarding their English writing difficulties and the ways to cope with them. The participants were divided to three levels; five of them were junior-leveled researchers, another five were middle-ranking, and 3 were established researchers. They took part in the semi-structured interview in Japanese. The transcribed records showed that all researchers revealed that vocabulary was the problem when they tried to explain the results of their studies. Another difficulty was their preoccupation with grammatical correctness. Junior and middle-ranking were obsessed with accuracy that they often did not consider about their target audience. Four middle-ranking and three junior researchers said that to cope with the writing problems, they just wrote patterned statements they had encountered numerous times (Subject knowledge-oriented strategies). They accepted the fact that their English writing skill was limited. In addition, they showed no interest to master the language since they must complete their piece of writing in short span of time. Only Five from 13 participants tried to expand their writing skill by reading the works of famous authors outside their field, and contacted native speakers about the English usage in writing (Language-oriented strategies). They tried to acquire mastery of the English writing. The interview also pointed out that none of the participants translated Japanese to English while writing. Junior and middle-ranking researchers either thought mainly in Japanese, or thought in English and Japanese, then wrote in English. Only three established reseachers thought and wrote in English.

Summary of the Chapter

This chapter presented the literature review for readers to understand the objectives and the purpose of the study. The researcher summarizes various works regarding factors influencing reading and writing, English reading and writing problems, and methods of solution to English reading and writing problems. Moreover, the researcher reviewed various previous studies in regards to English reading, writing problems and the methods to overcome them among professionals both in foreign countries and Thailand.



CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter of the present study presents data collection procedures which comprises context of the study, research design, participants and research instrument. Also the procedure of data analysis is displayed at the end of the chapter.

Context of the Study

This study was conducted in the head office of a bank, situated in Bangkok. The main objectives of the study were to investigate English reading and writing problems faced by the international trade officers while dealing with work related documents and how they dealt with the problems. The employees comprised front office staff whose job was primarily interacting with Thai customers, back office staff whose job concerned examining trade documents, administrative staff whose jobs was providing clerical support to people in the department, and customer information staff whose job was sorting and keeping the record of customers' transactions, deputy heads of department, and the head of department.

The participants in the study, who were the back office staff, came from various fields of study. Many employees in the department graduated from business administration, finance, accounting, and marketing field. Only handful of them was English major students. Many of them did not take TOEIC test since the bank did not require it upon applying for the job, and the job interview was not conducted in English. However, the written exam included a multiple-choice English examination regarding English in daily use.

Research Design

The study was exploratory research, presenting quantitative data collection and analysis. To collect the data, the questionnaire was distributed to find out about reading and writing problems and solutions to reading and writing problems of the international trade staff encounter when reading or writing work related documents.

Participants

The researcher made an observation that international trade officers usually struggled with reading and writing for their work. Some even expressed their concern about their abilities. Therefore, the study was carried out to find roots of the problems, and the ways they dealt with the problems. The participants in this research were collected through purposive sampling method. Forty international trade officers who were working in the back office were asked to join the research since their work required them to read and write in English, unlike those who worked in the front office, those whose work related to managing customers' information or those who did administrative jobs.

Research Instrument

In this study, the questionnaire developed by the researcher was used as a method of data collection. The content of the English reading problems was adapted from Julo (2003, cited in Pangsapa, 2012), the content of English writing problems was adapted from Farooq, Uzair-Ul-Hassan, and Wahid (2012), and the content of solutions to the reading and writing problems was adapted from Wongwaiyut (2011). To ensure the validity of the questionnaire, its content appropriateness was reviewed and revised by the

project advisor and the head of the International Trade Department. The items that did not measure what it should or contained ambiguity were removed. Initially, there were 20 items in both reading and writing problems part. However, the experts considered some of them were redundant and vague so they were removed from the questionnaire. Therefore, there were 18 items in the reading problem part, and 17 items in the writing problem part.

Then the questionnaire was tried out in a pilot study before it was used in the research. The participants of the pilot study were five international trade officers working in a different bank from the participants in the main study. The researcher made sure that the participants in the pilot study were similar to the real participants in terms of education, work experiences, and English proficiency. Although the participants in the pilot study did not show any sign of not being unable to understand the items, the researcher thought it was a good idea to put the meaning of 'passive voice' which means 'a grammatical construction where the subject of the sentence is the recipient of an action' in the questionnaire distributed to the real participants to prevent any confusion, as some of them might be not really familiar to the term.

The questionnaire utilized in this study comprised three main parts. The participants were asked to complete every part of the questionnaire by filling in the boxes provided. The second and third part instructions had mini scenarios included helping the participants to be able to think about the problems they faced easier. The first part contained questions about demographic characteristics of the participants (genders, ages, highest education, and working periods).

The second part consisted of items of reading problems and solutions to reading problems. The reading problem part consisted of 18 items; these items contained four components such as six items of lack of vocabulary competence, five items of lack of

grammatical competence, four items of lack of background knowledge competence, and three items of lack of motivation. The participants were required to identify how often they encountered the items of reading problems provided. The solutions to reading problems consisted of nine items. In this part, the participants were asked to identify how often they use the items regarding solutions provided to solve the reading problems.

The third part consisted of items of writing problems and solutions to writing problems. The writing problem part consisted of 17 items. These items contained five components such as two items of word usage, three items of vocabulary shortage, six items of insufficient grammar knowledge, four items of lack of content knowledge, and two items of interference of the native language. The participants were required to identify how often they encountered writing problems provided in each item. The solutions to writing problems consisted of nine items. In this part, the participants were asked to identify how often they employ the methods to solve the writing problems.

The second and third part responses were measured by the five-point Likert scale with frequency ranging from always (5), often (4), sometimes (3), seldom (2), and never (1). Blank statements in these two parts were also provided in case that the participants would like to specify other reading and writing problems, and solutions to cope with reading and writing problems that were not included in the close-ended questions.

The questionnaire used in the study was in Thai since the participants' native language is Thai. Reading a long questionnaire in their second language might render the feeling of mental exhaustion and boredom that would eventually lead to inaccurate data.

Data Collection

The researcher contacted the head of the department to ask for the permission to conduct the research with the staff. Each questionnaire was attached with a cover letter asking for consent from each participant, and ensuring confidentiality of the participant's information and answers. The participants were asked to complete the questionnaire and return it in three days. After that, all collected copies were analyzed by the researcher.

Data Analysis

The responses to the questionnaire were analyzed by SPSS (The Statistical Package for the Social Science) after the researcher collects the completed questionnaires from the participants. The results were demonstrated by descriptive statistics. The responses to the first part of the questionnaires (the demographics) were illustrated in terms of frequency and percentage. In the second and the third part, mean scores and standard deviations were utilized to show the reading, writing problems and solutions employed by the staff to cope with them. The value of mean scores will be interpreted using the ranges as follows (Pisarnbut, 2007):

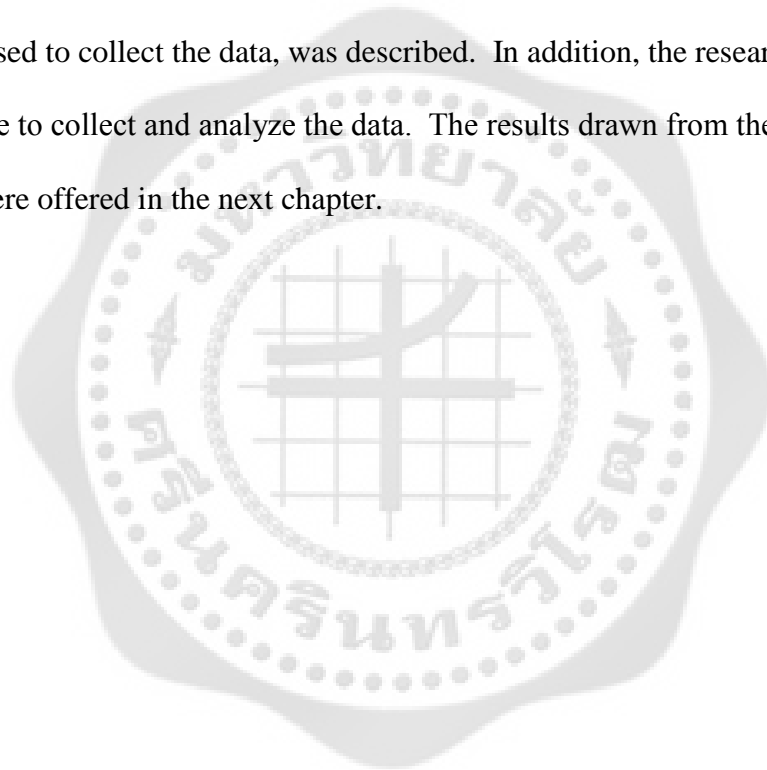
- 1.00 - 1.80 = very low
- 1.81 - 2.60 = low
- 2.61 - 3.40 = Moderate
- 3.41 - 4.20 = High
- 4.21 - 5.00 = Very High

Responses from the participants in the blank statements, if stated by them, were described in the finding. The responses that were closely related would be grouped together to make the data interpretation easier to read and understand

All collected data were used to answer the research questions, and were presented in the following sections.

Summary of the Chapter

The chapter discussed the research methodology including the context of the study, the research design and the participants. The research instrument, the questionnaire developed by the researcher and adapted from pre-existing questionnaires which was used to collect the data, was described. In addition, the researcher presented the procedure to collect and analyze the data. The results drawn from the participants' responses were offered in the next chapter.



CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The purposes of the present study were to find out problems of reading and writing English work-related documents of the international trade officers and the solutions to their problems. This chapter of the research presented the findings from quantitative data gaining from the questionnaires. The data collected included demographic information of the participants, how often they encountered the items of reading problems provided while reading the work related documents, how often they use the solutions provided to solve the reading problems, how often they encountered the items of writing problems provided while writing the work related documents, and how often they use the solutions provided to solve the writing problems. The data was analyzed by using SPSS program and presented in terms of frequencies, percentage, mean scores and standard deviations. The findings were divided into three parts in accordance with the questionnaire: demographics of the participants, the English reading problems and the solutions, and the English writing problems and the solutions.

Demographic Characteristics of the Participants

The first section shows the general information of 40 participants who were back-office international trade staff of the bank in the study, concerning gender, age, education and working period. The researcher counted the frequency of each item provided, and then calculated them into percentage. The data were presented in the percentage as shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of the participants

Demographic Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Gender:		
Female	33	82.5
Male	7	17.5
Total	40	100
Age:		
21-29 years old	10	25
30-39 years old	3	7.5
40-49 years old	11	27.5
50-60 years old	16	40
Total	40	100
Educational level:		
Below bachelor's degree	2	5
Bachelor's degree	27	67.5
Master's degree	11	27.5
Doctoral degree	0	0
Total	40	100

Table 1 (continued)

Demographic Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Working period:		
Less than a year	4	10
1-3 years	5	12.5
4-6 years	4	10
7-9 years	1	2.5
10 years and more	26	65
Total	40	100

According to the responses, the majority of the participants, 33 of them (82.5%), were female, and the rest, which were seven of them (17.5%), were male. Figure 1 below is a pie chart showing the percentage of the participants' gender.

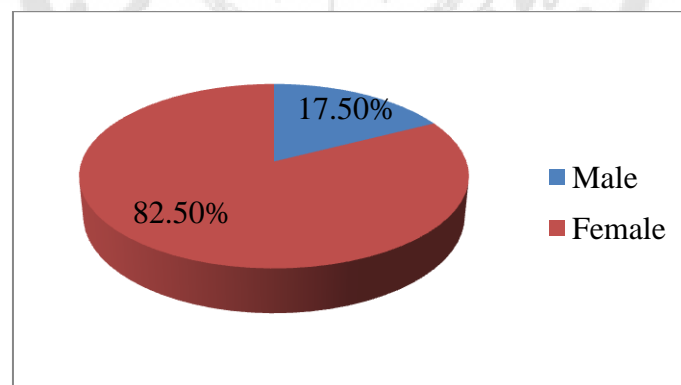


Figure 1. Gender of the Participants

Regarding age, almost half of the participants fell into 50 to 60 years category (40%). Eleven participants (27.5%) and ten of them (25%) were in the age range from 40 to 49 and 21 to 29 years old respectively. Only a handful of them (7.5%) were in the age range from 30-39 years old. Figure 2 demonstrates the percentage of the participants' age.

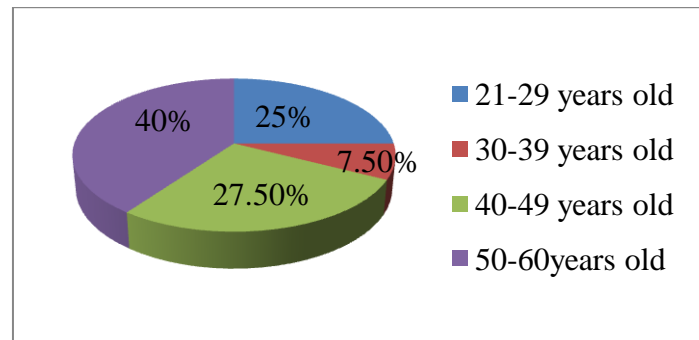


Figure 2. Age of the Participants

In terms of educational level, more than half of them (67.5%) earned a bachelor's degree. Some of them, 11 participants, (27.5) held a master's degree; while educational levels of a few people were lower than a bachelor's degree (5%). Figure 3 illustrates the percentage of educational level.

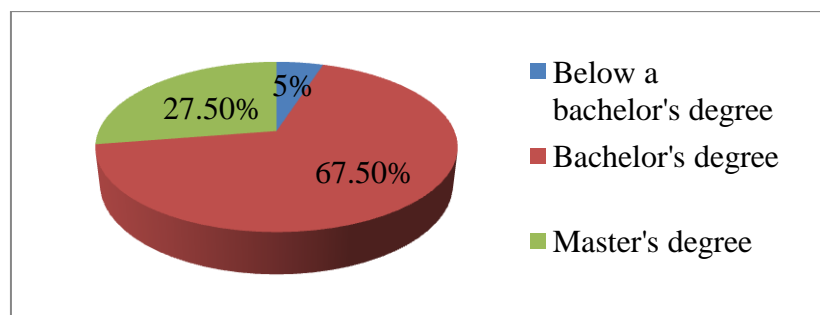


Figure 3. Educational Level of the Participants

With regard to working period, 26 of them (65%) worked as international trade staff for 10 years or more, while 5 of them (12.5%) worked between 1 to 3 years. Four of them (10%) worked as the staff between 4 to 6 years and other 4 worked for the department less than a year. Only 1 participant (2.5%) worked between 7-9 years.

Figure 4 below illustrates the percentage of the participants' working period.

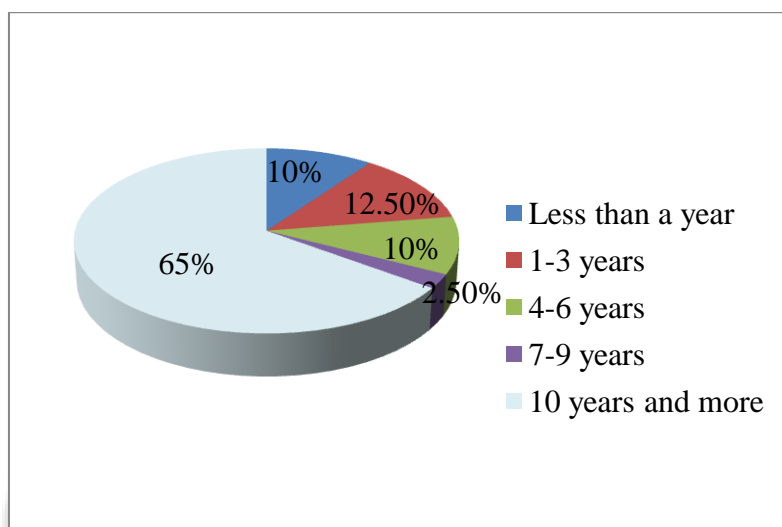


Figure 4. Working Period of the Participants

The Participant's English Reading Problems and the Solutions to the Problems

The results in this section aimed to address the following research question: *What were the problems the bank's international trade officers encountered while reading English work-related documents and the solutions they generally applied to solve their reading problems?*

According to the findings of this study, when the researcher combined mean score of each component to find the overall picture of the participants English reading problems, it was found that generally they moderately encountered problems of

vocabulary ($M = 2.99$, $SD = 0.49$) and grammar ($M = 2.82$, $SD = 0.51$) components, while they faced problems of the other two components at low level. Facing the problems at low level indicated that they did not frequently meet with these problems (See Table 2).

Table 2

The Level of Reading Problems the Staff Faced While Reading English Work-Related Documents (By Components)

Reading Problem Components	Level of Reading Problems		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Level
Lack of vocabulary competence	2.99	0.49	Moderate
Lack of grammatical competence	2.82	0.51	Moderate
Lack of background knowledge	2.48	0.50	Low
Lack of motivation	1.75	0.65	Low

In terms of English reading problems by items in each component, there were 12 problems that the participants encountered at moderate level. However, the four most encountered problems, which the means exceed 3.00 were, 'I feel that I have limited vocabulary knowledge so I do not understand difficult words.' ($M = 3.20$, $SD = 0.79$), 'I do not understand long or complex sentences.' ($M = 3.10$, $SD = 0.74$), 'I have insufficient understanding of English idioms.' ($M = 3.10$, $SD = 0.74$), and 'I cannot figure out the meaning of the words I read.' ($M = 3.05$, $SD = 0.68$). The least three problems that the participants found all belong to motivation component: 'I do not like what I must read'

($M = 2.01$, $SD = 0.78$), 'I feel that I gain nothing from reading' ($M = 1.60$, $SD = 0.81$), and 'I do not feel the need to improve my English reading skill.' ($M = 1.55$, $SD = 0.85$) as table 3 shows below.

Table 3

The Level of Reading Problems the Staff Faced While Read English Work-Related Documents (By Items)

Reading problems	Level of Reading Problems		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Level
I feel that I have limited vocabulary knowledge so I do not understand difficult words.	3.20	0.79	Moderate
I do not understand long or complex sentences.	3.10	0.74	Moderate
I have insufficient understanding of English idioms.	3.10	0.74	Moderate
I cannot figure out the meaning of the words I read.	3.05	0.68	Moderate
I have inadequate knowledge of antonyms.	2.95	0.60	Moderate
I have inadequate knowledge of synonyms.	2.95	0.55	Moderate
I meet unfamiliar words.	2.95	0.78	Moderate
I have a problem with technical terms when I read the work related documents.	2.85	0.74	Moderate
I know little about grammar so I incorrectly interpret or misunderstand things I read.	2.75	0.59	Moderate
I am confused with sentences in passive voice form.	2.68	0.76	Moderate

Table 3 (continued)

Reading problems	Level of Reading Problems		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Level
I have inadequate knowledge about the subject I read.	2.65	0.58	Moderate
I have little knowledge of international trade's rules and practices.	2.60	0.67	Moderate
The texts I must read are too difficult.	2.50	0.72	Low
I cannot identify part of speech of words in the sentence. (e.g. nouns, prepositions, adjectives)	2.48	0.64	Low
I am not familiar with the text type I must read.	2.15	0.53	Low
I do not like what I must read	2.10	0.78	Low
I feel that I gain nothing from reading	1.60	0.81	Very low
I do not feel the need to improve my English reading skill.	1.55	0.85	Very low

Regarding the solutions the participants applied when they encountered reading problems, the study revealed that the participants resorted to these five solutions at high level as follows: asking for advice from the boss or co-workers ($M = 3.68$, $SD = 0.97$), searching for more information from the Internet ($M = 3.50$, $SD = 0.88$), using electronic dictionary ($M = 3.50$, $SD = 1.18$), guessing the word meaning from the context ($M = 3.48$, $SD = 0.85$), referring to the manuals of International trade rules and practices ($M = 3.48$, $SD = 1.01$) (See table 4).

Table 4

Level of Use of Solutions to Solve Reading Problems While Reading Work-Related Documents

Methods of Solution to Reading Problems	Level of Solution Application		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Level
Ask for advice from the boss or co-workers	3.68	0.97	High
Search for more information from the Internet	3.50	0.88	High
Use electronic dictionary	3.50	1.18	High
Guess the word meaning from the context	3.48	0.85	High
Refer to the manuals of International trade rules and practices	3.48	1.01	High
Ask for advice from professionals in the related field	2.93	1.05	Moderate
Use online translator	2.75	1.28	Moderate
Consult a dictionary	2.38	1.17	Low
Skip the complicated part	2.38	1.00	Low

The Participant's English Writing Problems and the Solutions to the Problems

The findings in this section was obtained from the third part of the questionnaire and aimed to answer the following research question: *What were the problems the bank's international trade officers encountered while writing English work-related documents and the solutions they generally applied to solve their reading problems?*

The results of writing problems by component indicated that the participants faced only problems of transference of the native language at high level ($M = 3.50$, $SD = 0.80$), they faced problems of other components at moderate or low level. (See table 5)

Table 5

The Level of Writing Problems the Staff Faced While Writing English Work-Related Documents (By Components)

Writing Problem Components	Level of Writing Problems		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Level
Transference of the native language	3.50	0.80	High
Vocabulary shortage	3.28	0.64	Moderate
Word usage	2.91	0.62	Moderate
Lack of content knowledge	2.69	0.74	Moderate
Insufficient grammar knowledge	2.52	0.62	Low

In terms of English writing problems by items in each component, according to the research findings, there were 2 problems that the participants encountered at high

level: ‘Due to the influence of Thai construction, my English writing sounds unnatural.’ ($M = 3.63, SD = 0.81$), and ‘My vocabulary skill is limited, leading to using only simple words or repetition of the words used.’ ($M = 3.63, SD = 0.74$). There were three worth-mentioning problems that the participants found at moderate level which means exceed 3.00: ‘I think in Thai and then translate the message to English.’ ($M = 3.38, SD = 1.05$), ‘I cannot think of appropriate vocabulary.’ ($M = 3.15, SD = 0.70$), ‘My sentences are unnecessarily long since I cannot find the exact word to use.’ ($M = 3.08, SD = 0.92$). In addition four items from insufficient grammar knowledge were the least found problems for them (See table 6.)

Table 6

The Level of Writing Problems the Staff Faced While Writing English Work-Related Documents (By Items)

Writing Problems	Level of Writing Problems		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Level
Due to the influence of Thai construction, my English writing sounds unnatural.	3.63	0.81	High
My vocabulary skill is limited, leading to using only simple words or repetition of the words used.	3.63	0.74	High
I think in Thai and then translate the message to English.	3.38	1.05	Moderate
I cannot think of appropriate vocabulary.	3.15	0.70	Moderate

Table 6 (continued)

Writing Problems	Level of Writing Problems		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	LEVEL
My sentences are unnecessarily long since I cannot find the exact word to use.	3.08	0.92	Moderate
I am confused with applying tenses in a sentence.	2.95	0.88	Moderate
When there are words that are similar in meaning, I am confused which one I should use.	2.93	0.66	Moderate
I feel that the words used do not convey what I intended to mean.	2.90	0.71	Moderate
I have little knowledge of what I must write about.	2.83	0.81	Moderate
I face a problem when I have to write a sentence that is in passive form.	2.78	0.89	Moderate
I have little knowledge of International trade rules and practices.	2.70	0.82	Moderate
The things I must write about are too difficult.	2.68	0.86	Moderate
I have not had any knowledge of topics I must write about.	2.58	0.87	Low
I cannot use indefinite articles (A, An) and definite article (The) correctly.	2.38	0.93	Low

Table 6 (continued)

Writing Problems	Level of Writing Problems		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	LEVEL
I cannot use singular and plural forms of the words correctly.	2.38	0.81	Low
I cannot compose a sentence.	2.33	0.86	Low
I am confused with punctuation marks.	2.33	0.83	Low

In terms of methods of solutions the participants applied when encountered writing problems, the study demonstrated that the participants applied four solutions at high level as follows: using formulaic sentences collected as a guideline ($M = 3.80$, $SD = 0.91$), asking for advice from the boss or the co-workers ($M = 3.78$, $SD = 0.83$), referring to the manuals of International trade rules and practices ($M = 3.55$, $SD = 0.90$), and using electronic dictionary ($M = 3.55$, $SD = 1.13$) (See table 7)

Table 7

Level of Use of Solutions to Solve Writing Problems While Writing Work-Related Documents

Methods of Solution to Writing Problems	Level of Solution Application		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Level
Use formulaic sentences collected as a guideline	3.80	0.91	High
Ask for advice from the boss or the co-workers	3.78	0.83	High
Refer to the manuals of International trade rules and practices	3.55	0.90	High
Use electronic dictionary	3.55	1.13	High
Search for more information from the Internet	3.38	0.87	Moderate
Ask for advice from professionals in the related field	3.08	1.00	Moderate
Use online translator	2.73	1.24	Moderate
Skip the complicated part	2.50	0.99	Low
Consult a dictionary	2.45	1.24	Low

Summary of the Chapter

To summarize, this chapter presented the results obtained from the questionnaire on English reading problems, writing problems, and solutions to the problems of international trade officers. It was revealed that majority of them were female. Almost half of the participants were in the age range from 50 to 60 years old, held a bachelor's degree, and worked in the department for 10 years or more. In relation to reading

problems, it was found that overall the participants faced problems from lack of vocabulary and grammar competence at moderate level. Specifically, their four most encountered problems were, limited vocabulary knowledge leading to being unable to understand difficult words, being unable to understand long or complex sentences, insufficient understanding of English idioms, and being unable to figure out the meaning of the words being read. In relation to the solutions to reading problems, they asked for advice from the boss or co-workers, searched for more information from the Internet, used electronic dictionary, guessed the word meaning from the context, and referred to the manuals of International trade rules and practices. Regarding English writing problems, the participants overall confronted a problem of transference of native language at high level. Specifically, they faced problems like unnatural English writing due to the influence of Thai construction and using only simple words or repetition due to limited vocabulary skill at high level. Moreover, there were three more writing problems that they faced at moderate to high level: literal translation, being unable to think of appropriate vocabulary, and prolonged sentences due to being unable to find the exact word. For the solutions to writing problems, the study indicated that using formulaic sentences collected as a guideline, asking for advice from the boss or the co-workers, referring to the manuals of International trade rules and practices, and using electronic dictionary were applied at high level.

In the following chapter, the findings are discussed. Additionally, limitations, implications of the study and recommendations for further study are also offered.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The aims of the present study were to explore problems of reading and writing English work-related documents of the international trade officers and the solutions to their problems from 40 international trade officers in the bank of the study, who were the participants. This chapter comprises five main sections: conclusion of the study, discussion of the major findings, implications of the present study, limitations of the study, and recommendations for further studies.

Conclusion of the Study

The study focused on the investigation of reading and writing problems of 40 international trade officers when reading or writing English work-related documents, and the exploration of methods of solution applied to them. The questionnaire used in this study focused on asking the participants how often they faced the reading and writing provided, and how often they used the method of solutions offered to cope with the problems. The questionnaires were directly administered by the researcher; and the participants were asked to complete the questionnaires and returned them in three days. After that, the data gathered from the questionnaires were analyzed to answer each research question.

The first research question aimed at finding out what their reading problems the staff encountered while reading English work-related documents, and what their means to cope with the problems were. The study revealed that generally, they faced the problems of vocabulary and grammar at moderate level. Among all problems proposed by the

questionnaire, there were four main reading problems that the officers faced when they read English work-related documents: 'I feel that I have limited vocabulary knowledge so I do not understand difficult words.', 'I do not understand long or complex sentences.', 'I have insufficient understanding of English idioms.', and 'I cannot figure out the meaning of the words I read.' To solve these problems they applied the following solutions: asking for advice from the boss or colleagues, searching information from the Internet, using electronic dictionary, guessing from the context, and referring to the trade manuals.

The second research question aimed to investigate what their writing problems the staff encountered while writing English work-related documents, and what their solutions to the problems were. The study showed that generally the participants encountered problems of transference of the native language at high level. The main problems that the officers faced proposed by the questionnaire while writing work-related documents were as follows: 'Due to the influence of Thai construction, my English writing sounds unnatural.', 'My vocabulary skill is limited, leading to using only simple words or repetition of the words used.' 'I think in Thai and then translate the message to English.', 'I cannot think of appropriate vocabulary, 'My sentences are unnecessarily long since I cannot find the exact word to use.' The main solutions they employed were using formulaic sentences, asking for advice from the boss or the co-workers, referring to the trade manuals, and using electronic dictionary.

Discussion

In this section, the findings in regards to the reading problems, the solutions to the reading problems, the writing problems, and the solutions to the writing problems of international trade officers in the bank of the study were discussed.

Reading problems of international trade officers.

According to the study, it was found that the officers mainly faced problems about vocabulary because of their limited word bank. However, the technical terms seemed not to be a big problem to them. In addition, they mainly had grammar problems because of complexity of sentences and lack of English idiom knowledge. The results were partly consistent to those of Wongwaiyut (2011), who carried out his research on the international trade officers of Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation to find out their reading problems and solutions to those problems, that general vocabulary was the largest problem the participants confronted. However, Wongwaiyut's participants encountered this problem at high level while this study's participants encountered the problem at moderate level. Despite the difference in degree of severity of the problems, vocabulary problem was still one of the problems preventing the participants to understand English documents. This was consistent with Guo and Roehrig (2011) and Amjoashoa and Zamanian (2014)'s notion that vocabulary knowledge was important for understanding texts; the less readers know about vocabulary, the less they acquire meaning from texts; while the more they know, the better they understand messages written.

In addition, the current study's participants did not face a lot of problems about technical terms, compared to general vocabulary, which was similar to Wongwaiyut's study. Due to their exposure to technical terms, the participants found repeated technical terms stated in work-related documents on daily basis, so they only reported moderate level of technical terms problem. However, Wongwaiyut's participants showed little problem with technical terms since they faced it at low level. The reason why there was a difference in level of severity was that Wongwaiyut's examples of technical terms in the questionnaire, namely 'letter of credit', 'stale bill of lading', and 'letter of indemnity',

which are very basic terms regarding international trade, when in fact there are many more difficult terms used in the field such as ‘deadfreight,’ ‘CAD’, ‘ad valorem,’ or ‘commercial attaché’. Therefore, Wongwaiyut’s participants, presented with basic terms, might forgot to think the existence of other difficult glossary in the field, leading to report lesser degree of problem.

Moreover, the participants in this study faced the problem of long and complex sentences moderately while Wongwaiyut’s participants confronted it at low level. Wongwaiyut claimed that writing styles used in the work-related documents were simple and mostly repetitive; for example, ‘The documents must be sent to the issuing bank in one lot by courier service.’ Despite the fact that writing styles used are often patternized, they are not always short and simple; they are also complicated sentences that might confuse the international trade officers; for example, ‘In the event we decide to take up documents despite the fact that the letter of credit has been already overdrawn or documents have been presented after the expiry date, an additional fee may be deducted from the payment.’ Even though this kind of sentences does not show up as much as simpler writing style, it still contributes to difficulty in understanding, hence the moderate level of long and complex sentences problem of the present study’s participants.

Also, the international trade officers encountered lack of knowledge about English idioms at moderate level. The officers might find idioms problematic since they are groups of words that they cannot guess the meaning from each individual word. Moreover, idioms are not normally written in certificates or letters of credit which are documents the officers tend to read every day, so they are not exposed to English idioms that often. Due to the lack of exposure, idioms might pose a problem for them when they read free-form narratives that might contain idioms like SWIFTs or e-mails.

The international trade officers faced all problems about motivation problems at low or very low level. This is understandable since reading and examining work-related document is a requirement of their work which links to their benefits and earnings. In other words, they might be well-motivated as it is the way to earn a living.

Solutions to reading problems of international trade officers.

According to the study, it was revealed that the participants solved the problem by asking for advice from the boss and co-workers, searching for more information from the Internet, using electronic dictionary, guessing the word meaning from the context, referring to the manuals of International trade rules and practices at high level while the least preferred method is skipping complicated parts. The findings, again, are similar to Wongwaiyut's study (2011) where asking advices from the superior and colleagues was the most preferred and skipping complicated part was the least preferred. The international trade staff tended to seek help from people around them since more than half of them has long work experience; 65% of the international trade officers have worked in the department for 10 years or more. Therefore, the participants believed that the superior and co-workers were reliable sources of information, and they were always ready to help so it was a convenient solution. Also, it was the result of time-constraint that prompted the officers to work quickly, so they resorted to the fastest way to solve the problems.

Other methods they had applied helped confirm the fast paced nature of their work: search information from the internet, guessing from the context, and using online dictionary. Relying on these solutions, they spent less time coping with their problem than consulting a dictionary or asking experts in related field. Nevertheless, referring to

the International trade rules and practices is still a norm since correctness in reading and examining work-related documents is required; even they ask suggestions from their boss and colleagues, they might need to double-check with the manual again to ensure their writing because there is no room for errors.

Writing problems of international trade officers.

According to the study, the participants found transference of native language and vocabulary shortage the most troublesome for them. They faced the problem of awkward writing due to Thai construction at high level and literal translation at moderate-high level. These findings are in line with those of Bennui (2008) and Hammad (2014) that native language transference was one of the major causes of writing problem. Bennui found that word order of Thai structure had negative impact on students' English writing. The students misused the English structure of modification (modifier + head noun) because of Thai structure of modification (head noun + modifier); for example, 'I'll have knowledge better...' instead of 'I'll have better knowledge.' They omitted prepositions when they are required in English construction but are not required in Thai construction; for example, 'When I was young I studied primary school...' instead of 'When I was young I studied in primary school.' They put adjectives instantly after subjects without using linking verbs. This problem also was found in Iamsiu's study (2014) where her participants used adjectives as main verbs since Thai adjectives can be used like verbs; for example, 'It easy for children to learn about it.' Additionally, the studies mentioned above revealed the word-by-word translation was the problems. The participants in Bennui and Iamsiu's studies used English words which had the same meaning in Thai without concerning appropriateness to the contexts or correctness. For example, 'They

take money to the casino.’ instead of the correct ‘They bring money to the casino.’ Although readers normally understand what writers of this kind of sentences try to convey, it nevertheless sounds strikingly awkward and nonnative-like in English.

Similar to the studies of Chen (2002), Prachanant (2012), and Hammad (2014), the present study showed that the participants were bothered by their shortage of vocabulary. They reported the problem of using only simple words at high level. Moreover, they found the problem of being unable to think of appropriate vocabulary and prolonged sentences due to inability to find the exact terms. Their limited word bank caused negative effect on writing their English work-related documents. The international trade officers, who were the participants, usually used words that are easy and common which made their writing repetitive. It could be argued that the causes of their writing problems are lacking of exposure to other kinds of English texts and lack of English writing practice. Due to work loads and lack of free time, the international trade officers do not have enough time to expose themselves to other kinds of English texts, such as, English news and articles that would grant them linguistic development and insights of how to write like native speakers. In addition, the officers do not have sufficient writing practice since they tended to rely a lot on formulaic sentences. These mentioned causes were similar to the causes for the participants’ English essays writing problems in Hammad’s study which were lack of conscious read in practice and lack of writing practice.

The researcher also made an assumption that because of the participants’ vocabulary shortage, it might lead to word-by-word translation method. When they could not think of the exact word to use in a sentence, they substituted that exact word with English words translated directly from Thai words.

Moreover, it is justifiable why some of the current study's participants found the use of articles, singular and plural form, and punctuation marks at low level while in other studies, they were considered problematic. A work-related document like a letter of credit clearly has a pattern that should be strictly followed, so officers do not have a chance to improvise it on their own hence lesser writing problems. Moreover, work-related documents, for instance, a SWIFT do not require grammatical precision like students' essays submitted for grades. The point is to communicate and to be understandable to an extent. Therefore, minor mistakes that do not affect overall meaning of sentences are not considered much of a problem to them.

Solutions to writing problems of international trade officers.

The solutions chosen to cope with writing problems the participants applied were quite similar to those of reading problems in the way they implied that the international trade officers have to rush to get their work done due to the time constraint. The most preferred solution was using formulaic sentences collected as a guideline which is the solution found in Okumura (2006)'s research in which the participants were Japanese researcher writing scientific works. Okumura contended that as research writing was patternized, and the participants must race against time to get their work published, some of them resorted to borrow well-written or sophisticated phrase for the works. Similarly, when international trade officers write work-related documents often, they will start to see that there are a lot of patterns to follow. For example, when they want to simply inform overseas banks of a due date of a usance bill, they can use a formulaic sentences 'At maturity, I.E. DD/MM/YYYY, we shall remit the proceeds as per your instruction,' or when they want to inform the banks of a remittance, they can applied a sentence 'To

date, we have remitted the proceeds to your account through XX for USD XXXXX.’ If there are similar cases of informing due dates or international remittance, the international trade officers are able to use these formulaic sentences to form new ones that fit their purpose.

Asking advice from the boss and co-worker were used among the international trade officers at high level as well. The reason might be similar to why they chose it as the solutions to reading problems; the boss and co-workers have a lot of experience, are willing, and ready to help. Moreover, the boss must review and revise English messages the officers had wrote before they are sent off to overseas banks or customers. Since the written works need approval from the boss, it makes sense to ask for their superior’s help with the problems since they will be corrected on spot hence it shortens work time.

Similar to solutions to reading problem, the international trade officers chose to use electronic dictionary and refer to the manuals of International trade rules and practices at high level as well. Using electronic dictionary helps them find definitions of words in short time and they refer to the manuals to make sure that they do follow the international trade rules and practices.

Implications of the Study

This study has provided many useful implications to the bank of the study, especially to the Human Resources department. Firstly, the international trade officers should be trained appropriately. Instead of giving them only a training course on the International Trade rules and practices, an English business reading course and writing course should be provided so that they can sufficiently practice their writing and learn more about vocabulary outside their field of expertise.

Secondly, it seems that the international trade officers look up to the boss whenever they have reading and writing problems; the boss is their personal English consultant. Therefore, a person who will be promoted as the boss needs to not only be knowledgeable of international trade practices or to have a lot of work experience, but also needs to be well-versed in English.

Last but not least, it is important to provide the adequate sources of solution to reading and writing problems. As the international trade officers often refer to the manuals of International trade rules and practices whenever they have problems, copies of the manuals should be sufficed to their demand. Also, these manual are frequently updated by competent authorizers. Therefore, the newest version of the manuals should be offered.

Limitations of the Study

The current study has the limitations as follows:

1. The participants were selected purposively to fit the purposes and the research questions. Forty participants were limited to international trade officers at the bank of this study. Therefore, the result should not be mindlessly generalized to international trade officers working in other banks.
2. The study mainly investigated the reading problems, writing problems, and the solutions to the problems when the international trade officers read or write work related documents. Therefore, the results could not be applied to other types of texts, or represent their reading or writing problems in general.
3. The instrument in this study is self-rating questionnaire. Even though this method gives readers the direct access to participants' perceptions, it relies heavily on the

participants' honesty. So, even the researcher has tried the best to prevent inaccurate data, readers should bear in mind the strengths and weakness of the chosen research methodology.

Recommendations for Further studies

This research has the following recommendations for further studies:

1. The further studies should be conducted with international trade officers working in other banks to see if the results are similar or not. As the bank in the study is a state-owned bank. It is interesting whether, for example, data from participants working in private-owned banks will bear the same findings since recruitment methods and job qualifications are different.
2. The further studies should be conducted with other professionals whose works also involve with reading and writing English such as columnists, doctors, or lawyers. The results gained can pinpoint problems they face and appropriate suggestions can be made to improve their reading and writing skills.
3. If there is any attempt to replicate the present study, if possible, interviewing method should be incorporated to find out reason why the participants choose each method of solution since in this study their reasons of choosing solutions were based on the researcher's observation and deduction. Therefore, interviewing the participants will give more credibility to the research. Also, if allowed, researchers of further studies should have experts on English language to judge the participants' English reading and writing skills to confirm their perceptions about their reading and writing problems. For examples, the expert can examine the participant's writing to check if the problems they report in self-rating questionnaire are consistent with their real piece of writing or not.

4. The further study should explore the relationship between some demographic characteristics and reading and writing problems; for example, there should be a study about relationship between educational level and reading and, writing problems.





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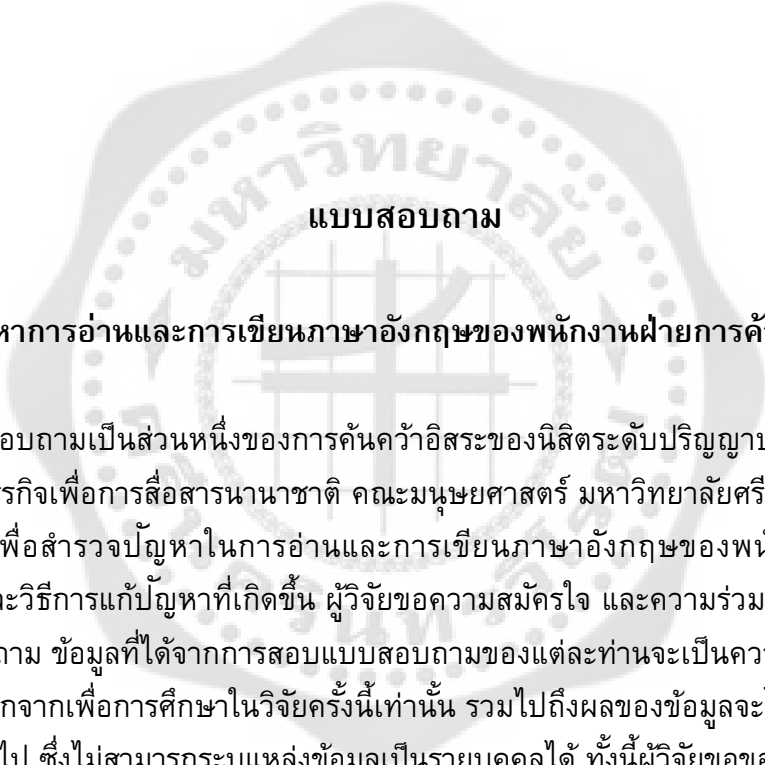
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แบบสอบถาม

เรื่อง ปัญหาการอ่านและการเขียนภาษาอังกฤษของพนักงานฝ่ายการค้าต่างประเทศ

แบบสอบถามเป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการค้นคว้าอิสระของนิสิตระดับปริญญาบัณฑิตในหลักสูตรภาษาอังกฤษธุรกิจเพื่อการสื่อสารนานาชาติ คณะมนุษยศาสตร์ มหาวิทยาลัยศรีนครินทรวิโรฒ ซึ่งมีจุดประสงค์เพื่อสำรวจปัญหาในการอ่านและการเขียนภาษาอังกฤษของพนักงานฝ่ายการค้าต่างประเทศและวิธีการแก้ปัญหาที่เกิดขึ้น ผู้วิจัยขอความสมัครใจ และความร่วมมือจากท่านในการตอบแบบสอบถาม ข้อมูลที่ได้จากการสอบถามของแต่ละท่านจะเป็นความลับและไม่ถูกใช้ในการใดๆ นอกจากเพื่อการศึกษาในวิจัยครั้งนี้เท่านั้น รวมไปถึงผลของข้อมูลจะได้รับการอภิปรายในภาพรวมทั่วไป ซึ่งไม่สามารถระบุแหล่งข้อมูลเป็นรายบุคคลได้ ทั้งนี้ผู้วิจัยขอขอบคุณทุกท่านที่ให้ความร่วมมือในการตอบแบบสอบถามเป็นอย่างดี

รายละเอียดทั่วไปของแบบสอบถาม

แบบสอบถามชุดนี้ประกอบไปด้วยข้อมูลส่วนต่างๆดังต่อไปนี้

ส่วนที่ 1 ข้อมูลทั่วไปของผู้ตอบแบบสอบถาม

ส่วนที่ 2 แบบสอบถามเกี่ยวกับปัญหาในการอ่านภาษาอังกฤษและวิธีการแก้ปัญหาการอ่านภาษาอังกฤษ

ส่วนที่ 3 แบบสอบถามเกี่ยวกับปัญหาในการเขียนภาษาอังกฤษและวิธีการแก้ปัญหาการเขียนภาษาอังกฤษ

ส่วนที่ 1 ข้อมูลทั่วไปของผู้ตอบแบบสอบถาม

คำชี้แจง โปรดทำเครื่องหมาย / ในกล่องสี่เหลี่ยมที่จัดไว้ให้

1. เพศ ชาย หญิง
2. อายุ

<input type="checkbox"/> 21-29 ปี	<input type="checkbox"/> 30-39 ปี
<input type="checkbox"/> 40-49 ปี	<input type="checkbox"/> 50-60 ปี
3. ระดับการศึกษาสูงสุด

<input type="checkbox"/> ต่ำกว่าปริญญาตรี	<input type="checkbox"/> ปริญญาตรี
<input type="checkbox"/> ปริญญาโท	<input type="checkbox"/> ปริญญาเอก
4. ระยะเวลาในการทำงานในฝ่ายการค้าต่างประเทศ

<input type="checkbox"/> น้อยกว่า 1 ปี	<input type="checkbox"/> 1-3 ปี
<input type="checkbox"/> 4-6 ปี	<input type="checkbox"/> 7-9 ปี
<input type="checkbox"/> 10 ปีหรือมากกว่า	

ส่วนที่ 2 ปัญหาในการอ่านเอกสารภาษาอังกฤษและวิธีการแก้ปัญหาการอ่านภาษาอังกฤษ
คำชี้แจง โปรดระบุว่าท่านพบปัญหาดังต่อไปนี้บ่อยครั้งเพียงใดเมื่ออ่านเอกสารภาษาอังกฤษที่เกี่ยวข้องในการทำงาน เช่น เมื่อต้องอ่านเลตเตอร์ออฟเครดิตและตรวจความถูกต้องของเอกสารทางการเงิน (shipping document) หรืออ่าน SWIFT ที่ธนาคารในต่างประเทศติดต่อมา โดยทำเครื่องหมาย / ในช่องว่างที่ตรงกับความเห็นของท่าน หรือเขียนปัญหาเพิ่มเติมที่ไม่ได้ถูกระบุไว้ในช่อง 'อื่นๆ' ที่จัดเตรียมไว้ให้

ปัญหาในการอ่าน

เมื่อฉันอ่านเอกสารภาษาอังกฤษที่เกี่ยวข้องกับการทำงาน ฉันพบว่า

คำถาม	ความสม่ำเสมอในการพบปัญหา				
	ไม่เคย	นานๆครั้ง	บางครั้ง	บ่อยครั้ง	เสมอ
ปัญหาด้านคำศัพท์					
1. ฉันพบคำศัพท์ที่ไม่คุ้นเคย					
2. ฉันไม่ทราบความหมายของคำศัพท์ที่พบ					
3. ฉันรู้สึกว่าตนเองมีความรู้ด้านคำศัพท์ในระดับที่น้อย ทำให้ไม่เข้าใจคำศัพท์ที่ยาก					
4. ฉันมีปัญหากับคำศัพท์เฉพาะทางเมื่อต้องอ่านเอกสารที่เกี่ยวข้องกับการทำงาน					
5. ฉันไม่มีความรู้ด้านคำที่มีความหมายเหมือนกัน(Synonym)อย่างเพียงพอ					
6. ฉันไม่มีความรู้ด้านคำตรงกันข้าม (Antonym)อย่างเพียงพอ					
ปัญหาด้านไวยากรณ์					
1. ฉันมีความรู้ด้านไวยากรณ์ไม่เพียงพอ ทำให้ตีความหรือเข้าใจสิ่งที่อ่านผิด					
2. ฉันไม่เข้าใจประโยคที่ยาวหรือมีโครงสร้างซับซ้อน					
3. ฉันรู้สึกสับสนเมื่อประธานของประโยคอยู่ในรูปถูกกระทำ** (Passive voice)					
4. ฉันมีความเข้าใจเรื่องสำนวนภาษาอังกฤษ(Idioms)ที่ไม่เพียงพอ					

คำถาม	ความสม่ำเสมอในการพบปัญหา				
	ไม่เคย	นานๆ ครั้ง	บางครั้ง	บ่อยครั้ง	เสมอ
5. ฉันไม่สามารถระบุได้ว่าคำแต่ละคำในประโยคทำหน้าที่ใด (เช่น คำนาม คำบุพบท คำคุณศัพท์ เป็นต้น)					
ปัญหาด้านความรู้พื้นฐาน					
1. ฉันไม่คุ้นเคยกับประเภทของเอกสารที่ฉันต้องอ่าน					
2. ฉันมีความรู้เกี่ยวกับกฎและข้อปฏิบัติด้านการค้าต่างประเทศ					
3. ฉันมีความรู้ในหัวข้อที่อ่านไม่เพียงพอ					
4. ฉันรู้สึกว่าการอ่านยากเกินไป					
ปัญหาด้านแรงจูงใจ					
1. ฉันรู้สึกว่าการอ่านไม่ให้อะไรกับฉัน					
2. ฉันไม่ชอบสิ่งที่ต้องอ่าน					
3. ฉันไม่มีความต้องการที่จะพัฒนาความสามารถในการอ่านภาษาอังกฤษ					
อื่น ๆ (โปรดระบุ)					

**ประโยคที่ประธานอยู่ในรูปผู้ถูกกระทำ หรือประโยคกรรมวาจก (Passive voice) หมายถึง โครงสร้างทางไวยากรณ์ที่ประธานเป็นผู้ถูกกระทำกิจกรรมนั้นโดยผู้อื่นหรือสิ่งอื่น เช่น “เขาถูกแม่ตี” หรือ “เอกสารถูกส่งไปแล้วตั้งแต่วันที่สองวันก่อน”

วิธีแก้ปัญหาคำอ่านเอกสารภาษาอังกฤษที่เกี่ยวข้องกับการทำงาน

เมื่อฉันพบปัญหาคำอ่าน ฉันมักจะ.....

วิธีแก้ปัญหา	ความสม่ำเสมอในการนำไปแก้ปัญหา				
	ไม่เคย	นานๆ ครั้ง	บางครั้ง	บ่อยครั้ง	เสมอ
1. สอบถามผู้บังคับบัญชาหรือเพื่อนร่วมงาน					
2. สอบถามผู้เชี่ยวชาญอื่นๆในสาขาที่เกี่ยวข้อง					
3. อ้างอิงจากคู่มือกฎและการปฏิบัติด้านการค้าต่างประเทศ					
4. ใช้พจนานุกรมฉบับที่เป็นเล่ม					
5. ใช้พจนานุกรมออนไลน์					
6. เดาความหมายจากคำหรือข้อความแวดล้อม (บริบท)					
7. ข้ามส่วนที่ซับซ้อน					
8. ใช้โปรแกรมแปลภาษาออนไลน์					
9. ค้นหาข้อมูลเพิ่มเติมจากอินเทอร์เน็ต					
10. อื่น ๆ (โปรดระบุ).....					

ส่วนที่ 3 ปัญหาในการเขียนเอกสารภาษาอังกฤษและวิธีการแก้ปัญหาการเขียนภาษาอังกฤษ
คำชี้แจง โปรดระบุว่าท่านพบปัญหาดังต่อไปนี้บ่อยครั้งเพียงใดเมื่อเขียนเอกสารภาษาอังกฤษที่
 เกี่ยวข้องในการทำงาน เช่น เมื่อท่านต้องเขียน SWIFT เพื่อติดต่อกับธนาคารในต่างประเทศ โดย
 ทำเครื่องหมาย / ในช่องว่างที่ตรงกับความเห็นของท่าน หรือเขียนปัญหาเพิ่มเติมที่ไม่ได้ถูกระบุไว้
 ในช่อง ‘อื่นๆ’ ที่จัดเตรียมไว้ให้

ปัญหาในการเขียน

เมื่อฉันเขียนเอกสารภาษาอังกฤษที่เกี่ยวข้องกับการทำงาน ฉันพบว่า.....

คำถาม	ความสม่ำเสมอในการพบปัญหา				
	ไม่เคย	นานๆ ครั้ง	บางครั้ง	บ่อยครั้ง	เสมอ
ปัญหาในเลือกใช้คำศัพท์					
1. เมื่อมีคำศัพท์ที่มีความหมายใกล้เคียงกัน ฉันสับสนว่าควรเลือกคำใด					
2. ฉันรู้สึกว่าการใช้คำศัพท์ที่ไม่ตรงกับสิ่งที่ต้องการจะสื่อ					
ปัญหาด้านคำศัพท์					
1. ฉันนึกคำศัพท์ที่เหมาะสมไม่ออก					
2. ความรู้ด้านคำศัพท์มีจำกัด จึงใช้คำซ้ำๆหรือแค่เพียงคำง่ายๆในการเขียน					
3. ประโยคของฉันสั้นเยื่อ เนื่องจากไม่สามารถหาคำศัพท์ที่ตรงกับความต้องการได้					

คำถาม	ความสม่ำเสมอในการพบปัญหา				
	ไม่เคย	นานๆ ครั้ง	บางครั้ง	บ่อยครั้ง	เสมอ
ปัญหาด้านไวยากรณ์					
1. ฉันไม่สามารถเรียงเรียงคำให้เป็นประโยคได้					
2. ฉันสับสนเรื่องการใช้เครื่องหมายวรรคตอน					
3. ฉันพบปัญหาเมื่อต้องเขียนประโยคที่ประธานของประโยคเป็นฝ่ายถูกกระทำ (Passive voice)					
4. ฉันไม่สามารถใช้รูปเอกพจน์ หรือ พหูพจน์ได้อย่างถูกต้อง					
5. ฉันไม่สามารถใช้คำนำหน้านามแบบไม่เฉพาะเจาะจง (A, An) และแบบเฉพาะเจาะจง (The) ได้ถูกต้อง					
6. ฉันสับสนกับการใช้คำกริยาในกาล (Tenses) ต่างๆ					

คำถาม	ความสม่ำเสมอในการพบปัญหา				
	ไม่เคย	นานๆ ครั้ง	บางครั้ง	บ่อยครั้ง	เสมอ
ปัญหาด้านเนื้อหา					
1. ฉันมีความรู้เกี่ยวกับเรื่องที่จะเขียนน้อย					
2. ฉันมีความรู้เกี่ยวกับกฎและข้อปฏิบัติ ด้านการค้าต่างประเทศไม่เพียงพอ					
3. ฉันไม่มีความรู้เกี่ยวกับเรื่องที่ต้องเขียน มาก่อน					
4. ฉันรู้สึกว่ายาวนานที่ต้องเขียนยากเกินไป					
ปัญหาด้านการแทรกแซงของภาษาแม่					
1. ฉันคิดประโยคเป็นภาษาไทยก่อนแล้ว จึงแปลเป็นภาษาอังกฤษ					
2. โครงสร้างประโยคภาษาไทยส่งผลให้ ประโยคภาษาอังกฤษที่เขียนไม่เป็น ธรรมชาติ					
อื่น ๆ (โปรดระบุ).....					

วิธีแก้ปัญหาคือการเขียนเอกสารภาษาอังกฤษที่เกี่ยวข้องกับการทำงาน

เมื่อฉันพบปัญหาคือการเขียน ฉันมักจะ.....

วิธีแก้ปัญหา	ความสม่ำเสมอในการนำไปแก้ปัญหา				
	ไม่เคย	นานๆ ครั้ง	บางครั้ง	บ่อยครั้ง	เสมอ
1. สอบถามผู้บังคับบัญชาหรือเพื่อนร่วมงาน					
2. สอบถามผู้เชี่ยวชาญอื่นๆในสาขาที่เกี่ยวข้อง					
3. อ้างอิงจากคู่มือกฎและการปฏิบัติด้านการค้าต่างประเทศ					
4. ใช้พจนานุกรมฉบับที่เป็นเล่ม					
5. ใช้พจนานุกรมออนไลน์					
6. นำรูปแบบประโยคที่ได้รวบรวมไว้มาแนวทางในการเขียน					
7. ข้ามส่วนที่ซับซ้อน					
8. ใช้โปรแกรมแปลภาษาออนไลน์					
9. ค้นหาข้อมูลเพิ่มเติมจากอินเทอร์เน็ต					
10. อื่น ๆ (โปรดระบุ).....					

Questionnaire

English reading and writing problems of international trade officers

This questionnaire is a part of an individual study of a graduate student under Business English for International Communication program of the Faculty of Humanities, Srinakharinwirot University. It was designed to investigate English reading and writing problems of the international trade officers and their methods of solution. The researcher would like to ask for your co-operation and consent to answer this questionnaire. The individual data will not be used for any other purpose except for this research. In addition, the results of the data will be discussed generally; your responses will not be in any way associated with you. Thank you very much for your kind co-operation.

General information of the questionnaire

The questionnaire comprises 3 parts as follows:

Part 1: General background of the participants

Part 2: questionnaire eliciting responses about English reading problems and the methods of solution

Part 3: questionnaire eliciting responses about English writing problems and the methods of solution

.....
 ...

Part 1 General background of the participant

Instruction Please read and mark / the appropriate information in the boxes provided

1. Gender Male Female

2. Age

<input type="checkbox"/> 21-29 years old	<input type="checkbox"/> 30-39 years old
<input type="checkbox"/> 40-49 years old	<input type="checkbox"/> 50-60 years old

3. Highest education level

<input type="checkbox"/> Below a bachelor's degree	<input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's degree
<input type="checkbox"/> Master's degree	<input type="checkbox"/> Doctoral degree

4. Working period as an international trade officer

<input type="checkbox"/> Less than 1 year	<input type="checkbox"/> 1-3 years
<input type="checkbox"/> 4-6 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 7-9 years
<input type="checkbox"/> 10 years or more	

Part 2: Questionnaire eliciting responses about English reading problems and the methods of solution

Instruction Please indicate how often you encounter the problems provided upon reading the work related documents e.g. when you read a letter of credit and examine correctness of shipping documents or when you read a SWIFT sent by an overseas bank by marking / in the blanks that fit your opinions, or write other problems unidentified in the box ‘others (please specify).’

Reading problems

When I read the English work related documents, I find that

Questions	Frequency in finding the problems				
	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
Lack of vocabulary competence component					
1. I meet unfamiliar words.					
2. I cannot figure out the meaning of the words I read.					
3. I feel that I have limited vocabulary knowledge so I do not understand difficult words.					
4. I have a problem with technical terms when I read the work related documents.					
5. I have inadequate knowledge of synonyms.					
6. I have inadequate knowledge of antonyms.					
Lack of grammatical competence component					
1. I know little about grammar so I incorrectly interpret or misunderstand things I read.					
2. I do not understand long or complex sentences.					
3. I am confused with sentences in passive voice form.**					
4. I have insufficient understanding of English idioms.					
5. I cannot identify part of speech of words in the sentence. (e.g. nouns, prepositions, adjectives)					
Lack of background knowledge component					
1. I am not familiar with the text type I must read					
2. I have little knowledge of International trade’s rules and practices.					

** Passive voice is a grammatical construction where the subject of the sentence is the recipient of an action e.g. “He was hit by his mother” or “Documents have been sent for 2 days.”

Questions	Frequency in finding the problems				
	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
3. I have inadequate knowledge about the subject I read.					
4. Texts I must read are too difficult.					
Lack of motivation component					
1. I feel that I gain nothing from reading.					
2. I do not like what I must read					
3. I do not feel the need to improve my English reading skill.					
Others (Please specify)					

Solutions to English reading Problems of the work related documents.

When I find reading problems, I will

Methods of solution	Frequency in applying the solutions				
	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
1. ask for advice from the boss or co-workers					
2. ask for advice from professionals in the related field					
3. refer to the manuals of International trade rules and practices					
4. consult a dictionary					
5. use electronic dictionary					
6. guess the word meaning from the context					
7. skip the complicated part					
8. use online translator					
9. search for more information from the Internet					
10. Others (Please specify).....					

Part 3: Questionnaire eliciting responses about English writing problems and the methods of solution

Instruction Please indicate how often you encounter the problems provided upon writing the work related documents e.g. when you write SWIFT to communicate with an overseas bank by marking / in the blanks that fit your opinions, or write other problems unidentified in the box ‘others (please specify).’

Writing problems

When I write the English work related documents, I find that

Questions	Frequency in finding the problems				
	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
Word usage component					
1. When there are words that are similar in meaning, I am confused which one I should use.					
2. I feel that the words used do not convey what I intended to mean.					
Vocabulary shortage component					
1. I cannot think of appropriate vocabulary.					
2. My vocabulary skill is limited, leading to using only simple words or repetition of the words used.					
3. My sentences are unnecessarily long since I cannot find the exact word to use.					
Insufficient grammar knowledge component					
1. I cannot compose a sentence.					
2. I am confused with punctuation marks.					
3. I face a problem when I have to write a sentence that is in passive form.					

Questions	Frequency in finding the problems				
	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
4. I cannot use singular and plural forms of the words correctly.					
5. I cannot use indefinite articles (A, An) and definite article (The) correctly.					
6. I am confused with applying tenses in a sentence.					
Lack of content knowledge					
1. I have little knowledge of what I must write about.					
2. I have little knowledge of International trade rules and practices.					
3. I have not had any knowledge of topics I must write about.					
4. The things I must write about are too difficult.					
Transference of the native language component					
1. I think in Thai and then translate the message to English.					
2. Due to the influence of Thai construction, my English writing sounds unnatural.					
Others (Please specify).....					

Solutions to English writing problems of the work related documents.

When I find writing problems, I will

Methods of solution	Frequency in applying the solutions				
	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
1. ask for advice from the boss or the co-workers					
2. ask for advice from professionals in the related field					
3. refer to the manuals of International trade rules and practices					
4. consult a dictionary					
5. use electronic dictionary					
6. use formulaic sentences collected as a guideline					
7. skip the complicated part					
8. use online translator					
9. search for more information from the Internet					
10. Others (Please specify)					



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