

A STUDY OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROBLEMS AND LANGUAGE SKILL  
NEEDS OF OPERATION STAFF IN THE AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY  
IN THAILAND



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

May 2011

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IN THAILAND



AN ABSTRACT

BY

ARANYA MUDLAE

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การศึกษาปัญหาและความต้องการการใช้ทักษะภาษาอังกฤษของ  
พนักงานฝ่ายปฏิบัติการในอุตสาหกรรมยานยนต์ในประเทศไทย



เสนอต่อบัณฑิตวิทยาลัย มหาวิทยาลัยศรีนครินทรวิโรฒ เพื่อเป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษา

ตามหลักสูตรปริญญาศิลปศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต

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The objectives of this study were to identify English language problems and language skill needs encountered by Thai staff working in the automotive industry. The research instrument used in this study was a questionnaire. The sampled group in this research was 30 staff members who worked in the operation line. The data were collected and analyzed to answer two research questions. The results showed that problems of reading and listening skills were at the highest level for the staff members who worked in the operation line. However, they could not understand the accents, the words, and the sentences spoken by their foreign colleagues.

When considering the results of the needs that the staff members wanted to improve, it was found that listening and reading skills were indicated by the participants as the highest needs. Their listening comprehension of the various accents of native English speakers from different countries needed improvement, as did their comprehension of native English speakers who spoke too rapidly. The results also revealed that the staff needed to improve their listening and their reading skills in their workplace.

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การศึกษานี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาปัญหาและความต้องการการใช้ทักษะภาษาอังกฤษของพนักงานฝ่ายปฏิบัติการในอุตสาหกรรมยานยนต์ในประเทศไทย กลุ่มตัวอย่างในงานวิจัยนี้คือพนักงานฝ่ายปฏิบัติการในบริษัทยานยนต์ จำนวน 30 คน ในจังหวัดปทุมธานีและอยุธยา มีการเก็บข้อมูลโดยใช้แบบสอบถามเป็นเครื่องมือ แล้วนำข้อมูลมาวิเคราะห์เพื่อตอบคำถามในการวิจัย ผลการศึกษาพบว่าพนักงานฝ่ายปฏิบัติการในอุตสาหกรรมยานยนต์ ประสบปัญหาทางด้านการอ่านและการฟังภาษาอังกฤษ ปัญหามาจากการฟังสำเนียงภาษาอังกฤษที่หลากหลาย และไม่เข้าใจคำหรือประโยคที่เพื่อนร่วมงานชาวต่างชาติพูด

ผลของการศึกษาพบว่า พนักงานฝ่ายปฏิบัติการในบริษัทยานยนต์ในประเทศไทย มีความต้องการพัฒนาทักษะการอ่านและการฟังภาษาอังกฤษมากที่สุด การฟังสำเนียงที่หลากหลายแตกต่างกันของชาวต่างชาติ และการฟังไม่เข้าใจเนื่องจากชาวต่างชาติพูดเร็วเกินไป ทำให้พนักงาน ต้องการที่จะปรับปรุงทักษะการฟังและการอ่านภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อใช้ในสถานที่ทำงาน

The Master's Project Advisor, Chair of Business English for International Communication, and Oral Defense Committee have approved this master's project, *A Study of English Language Problems and Language Skill Needs of Operation Staff in the Automotive Industry in Thailand* by Ms. Aranya Mudlae as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts degree in Business English for International Communication of Srinakharinwirot University.

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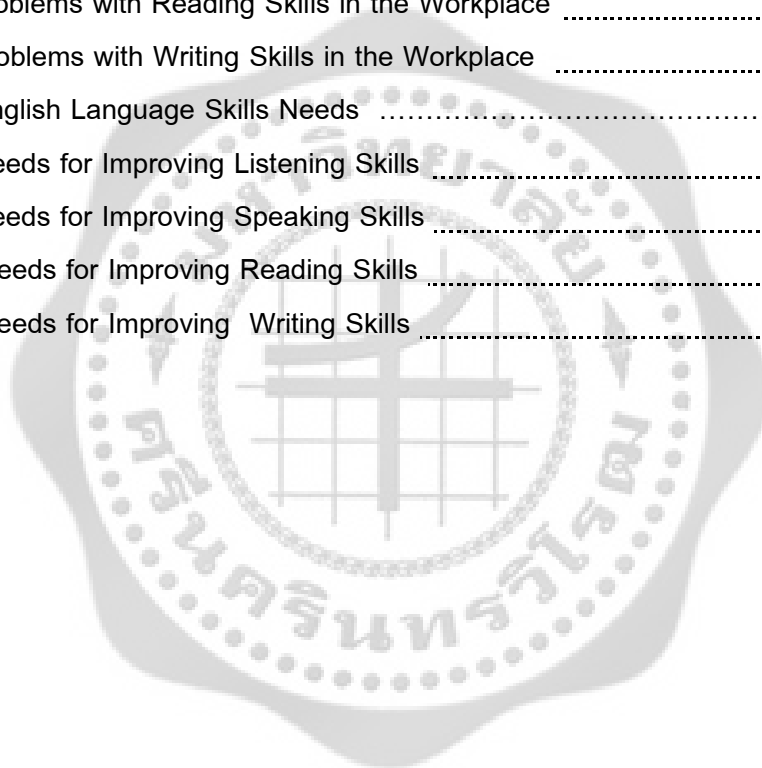
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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### Background of the Study

Over the past decade, rapid development in technology and intense competition in international trade have made business in Thailand a struggle for survival, and the automotive industry is no exception. According to sales statistics for the Thai automotive industry, total vehicle sales in the first six months of 2009 fell by 28% (Thailand Business News, 2009 p.1). The automotive sector is one of the six targeted industries that the Thai government has chosen to enter and compete in the international arena. The ultimate goal for this sector is to position Thailand as a regional manufacturing center for American and other foreign car companies in Asia, in other words, to transform Thailand into the Detroit of Asia. Thailand is intended to be a new center of the automotive industry, the leading country in Asia as both a production and export base. (Thachaloensak, 2004). This goal is designed to help support Thailand's long-term economic and social development.

Therefore, it is necessary for Thailand to develop manpower and technology as these factors lie at the heart of a developing country's economy. In Thailand, English is used as the means of communication in specific types of workplaces, especially the foreign departments. However, staff members who are not directly involved with foreign departments frequently encounter English language problems in the workplace. For example, in the automotive industry, members of the operation staff, which includes

technicians, engineers, researchers, and designers, lack the English communication skills required to support the growth of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) among Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) countries. As a result, workers urgently need to develop their English skills in order to properly respond to the threats and opportunities of the free open market under the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Economic Community (AEC) and other bi-lateral Free Trade Agreements (FTA) with other Asian and European countries (Business Monitor International, 2010).

The demands of new work practices require a more flexible labor force. This means that Thai workers must be able to adapt themselves to a wider variety of tasks in a wider variety of jobs. Additionally, workers are required to communicate with each other directly in order to perform their jobs effectively. In a multi-national working environment, workers must share ideas with foreign technicians or clients. English is regarded as the most common means of communication among people of varied nationalities, as well as an international business language. The success or failure of a business often relies on how effectively the staff can communicate in English. In the fields of engineering, business, and many other industries including the automotive industry, English communication is useful in almost all aspects of business: from marketing to manufacturing, from quality assurance to post-sales maintenance (Grin, 2001; Nickerson, 1998). This means that those who work in the automotive industry are required to have both knowledge of their field and English proficiency in order to cope with new technologies and remain competitive on an international level.

However, according to Hiranyapruek, (2001), English language education in Thailand has not adequately prepared Thai workers for the changing world. Thailand will continue to lag behind in the competitive world of business, education, science and technology unless English education – both the teaching and learning of the language – is drastically improved. While Thai workers are regarded as highly proficient as technicians, they are unable to make much progress in terms of science and technology as a result of their below average English competency.

For the previously mentioned reasons, the English skills required and the problems English poses in the automotive industry can provide information on how to improve English language teaching in Thailand in more general terms. Therefore, it is essential for the government and educational institutions to support the development of English language education and the related courses for learners, as well as raise the standard of teaching and the enhance the methods used to teach English. This is also vital in relation to supporting workers with limited English abilities. In order to meet the needs of the staff in the automotive industry, educational institutions will need to conduct needs analyses and design more effective training courses.

In fact, employees in the automotive industry commonly use English in order to communicate, exchange ideas, read and follow instructions, attend meetings, drive collective agendas, and improve their productivity at work. Moreover, English can also become a key competitive differentiator for individual staff, corporations and entire economic systems (Cameron, 2002; Crystal, 1985; Graddol, 2006). Hence, studying needs is one of the key factors required specific English that is relevant to operation staff in the

automotive industry. This process will help determine the type of difficulties staff may encounter and which courses are required to develop their skills. The researcher realizes that English is a necessary requirement for success in the automotive business. It has not only become a passport to better work opportunities for the operation staff, but also the best key indicator to show an individual's potential for participation in international business. In order to support this idea, a preliminary exploration and assessment of English language requirements needs to be made, despite the fact that such an endeavor would be both time-consuming and expensive. Most significantly, the results have helped identify the actual needs of workers and other possible factors that may affect training outcomes.

### **Research Questions**

The research questions are as follows:

1. What problems of the English language skills do the Thai operation staff have when communicating with foreign staff in their workplace?
2. Which English language skills do the Thai operation staff in the automotive industry need to use in their job performance?

### **Significance of the Study**

The results of this study can identify English language problems and needs in all skills of English encountered by operation staff in the automotive industry and the specific language skills they require to do their jobs properly. The information obtained will provide significant useful guidelines to help educational institutions develop English language

courses that suit the needs of Thai engineers in the automotive industry and other similar industries. Additionally, by facilitating the improvement of the English language skills of Thai engineers and particularly those in the automotive industry, this study aims to improve their potential for professional advancement.

### **Scope of the Study**

This researcher set out to determine the problems encountered by operation staff in the automotive industry due to their lack of English language skills and their needs for a higher standard of English language proficiency. The study was done using a group of thirty employees from three automotive companies in Pathumthani and Ayutthaya provinces. These three companies are American and Japanese multinational companies based in Thailand that manufacture automotive parts for export.

### **Definition of Terms**

The following terms are specifically defined for this study:

**Problems** refer to English language problems that staff in the Thai automotive industry may encounter in the workplace.

**Needs** refer to English language skills required for the production line staff in the Thai automotive industry.

**Automotive company** refers to a company that designs, develops, manufactures, markets, and sells motor vehicles, parts and systems such as brake systems, cooling systems, electrical systems, engine components, engine peripheral components, front and rear lights, fuel systems, mirrors & safety glass, and steering systems.

**Operation staff** refers to person who is responsible for turning raw materials into finished automotive parts through a series of production processes on the operation line in an automotive company.



## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

This study investigated the needs of operation staff in the automotive industry and their problems with English language skill acquisition. This chapter is divided into six sections: (1) background of automotive industry in Thailand, (2) Thai automotive industry and its structure, (3) English in the workplace, (4) English language problems in the automotive industry in Thailand, (5) English language needs in the automotive industry, and (6) related studies on English language problems and needs.

#### **Background of Automotive Industry in Thailand**

In the 1960s, the Thai automotive industry was among the first industry to receive an investment promotion from the Board of Investment (BOI) and was promoted in line with the country's import substitution policy. From 1970 to the mid-1980s, the domestic market and production volume gradually grew. This growth resulted from the change in government policy from import substitution to a more rationalized policy, aiming to increase the use of localized parts and components. Automobile production and sales grew significantly in the 1990s for two major reasons. First, the appreciation of the Japanese yen in 1985 encouraged Japanese automobile part manufacturers to expand their production to Thailand (Thai Auto Parts Manufacturing Associations, 2007). Second, the Thai government

committed to liberalize the auto industry that is the deregulation of the automobile industry in the early 1990s and the abolishment of the Local Content Requirement regulation in 2000. This significantly transformed the Thai automobile industry from a highly protected industry to a more liberalized one and into a hub for international vehicle manufacturers.

In conclusion, the automotive industry was acknowledged as the industry of industries in the 21st century and is considered one of the most globalised industries today (Dicken, 2007). Thailand is one of the most important automotive manufacturing bases in Asia.

Thai automotive parts industry is a growth industry that underpins a strategy to create an environment conducive to continued growth in this industry. In order to increase the level of competition within the Thai automotive industry, the agencies involved will be discussed in the Action Plan to provide operational support for the development of the Thai automotive industry and achieve the ultimate vision of the automotive industry.

### **Thai Automotive Industry and Its Structure**

The automotive industry plays an important role in developing the Thai economy in terms of employment, production, marketing and technology development. In general, the automotive industry usually designs, develops, manufactures, markets, and sells motor vehicles, automobile parts and systems, such as brake, cooling and electrical systems, engine components, engine peripheral components, front and rear lights, mirrors and safety glass, fuel and steering systems. The automotive industry is also responsible for shipping finished goods to both domestic and international markets. An automotive company normally consists of five departments and staff members from each department have specific duties, which are as follows:

### **1. Sales and Marketing Staff**

Sales and Marketing staff are primarily responsible for delivering finished products to the market. Staff in this department have specific duties related to their roles in the company, such as preparation of expense reports, customer service over the phone and in person, tracking sales progress, coordinating the submission of proposals, as well as normal administrative duties.

### **2. Accounting Staff**

Accounting staff are responsible for handling the financial records of business transactions and the financial status of a company at a particular moment in time. Accounting staff have to use English to communicate with foreign operation staff, to perform budget and audit procedures, to transfer pricing and to monitor intercompany activity.

### **3. Human Resources Staff**

Human Resources are responsible for handling recruitment, payroll, benefits and pension, health and safety issues and staff training. Human Resource personnel need to employ their English language abilities if they wish to function more effectively when performing routine tasks such as writing reports and strategic papers and making presentations. Human Resources employees also need advanced listening skills for formal meetings and teleconferences at their workplace.

### **4. Operation Staff**

The operation staff are responsible for turning inputs into finished outputs through a series of production processes and to make sure that raw materials are provided and made

into finished goods. In an automotive company, the operation function may be split into five sub-functions as follows:

1. The production and planning staff set standards and targets for each section of the production process. They also attend meetings with foreign clients in order to establish product specifications and descriptions.
2. The purchasing staff provides the materials, components and equipment required to keep the production process running smoothly. A vital aspect of this role is ensuring that stock arrives on time quality and control standards are maintained.
3. The stores department is responsible for stocking all necessary tools, spares, raw materials and equipment required to service the manufacturing process.
4. The design and technical support staff is responsible for researching new products or making modifications to existing ones and estimating costs for increasing quantity by using different production methods. They are also responsible for the design and testing of new product processes and types, as well as the development process from prototype to final product. The technical support staff may also be responsible for suggesting how working practices can be improved. All staff in this department must have English language skills in order to communicate ideas and share information. They must also be able to be clearly understood by other staff members, both Thai and native English speakers.
5. The works department is primarily responsible for manufacturing products. This will include the maintenance of the production line and all necessary repairs. The works department may also be responsible for inspection and quality control. They must be able to use English in order to summarize complex data and present technical information to

colleagues and management to communicate effectively at all levels of the organization. They must be able to approach technical problems methodically and develop, document, and execute effective problem solving strategies.

### **5. Quality Control Staff**

Quality Control Department is responsible for ensuring and maintaining high quality product and delivery standards. The staff in this department are responsible for complying with quality standards and processes, as well as maintaining positive communication with external and internal clients. Quality control workers use English in order to communicate with foreign operation personnel to ensure that the final product meets quality standards.

In an automotive industry, staff in all departments, especially the operation line, must be familiar with English in order to communicate with colleagues and clients in meetings, read instructions and handbooks, and write letters to order and purchase materials and equipment from suppliers. Therefore, proficiency in English communication allows business professionals, teams and organizations to implement focused language strategies that will improve organizational effectiveness, customer satisfaction, and employee productivity.

### **English in the Workplace**

English is regularly used in the workplace when a company or an industry reaches a multinational level. A valuable employee requires competency in the English language in addition to the skills required to perform their duties. English is now a requirement for any professional working in the global business environment. A lack of English communication

skills creates barriers and distortion leading to miscommunication and a breakdown in meaning that can have negative repercussions for any company.

The English language was established as an international business language by the head offices of Ford and General Motor automotive companies in Detroit that had expanded throughout the world (Pratt, 1995). As a result, horizontal relations between branches were also conducted in English. American companies attempted to improve the English abilities of staff in order to cope with changes in the workplace. Once employees have the basic skills to cope with change, they can respond to new conditions more rapidly and develop the confidence to take on leadership roles.

During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the economies of several European countries became progressively industrialized and internationalized; in other words, they became part of the growing worldwide trend in exporting technical knowledge, raw materials, capital, goods and services (Peter, 1985). The economy of the Scandinavian countries quickly adapted a new line of their products in order to keep the market share of their brand image in the world market. These countries find that the common language of communication is frequently adopted between multinational corporations from small to medium size enterprises. Most companies tended to adopt English as an official company language, including Swedish companies such as Ericsson and S.A.S. (air transport). As a result, English is required for all forms of written and oral communication involving persons of different linguistic origins, at least at the firms' head offices (Hollqvist, 1984). Even the Volvo group (private cars and industrial vehicles) used English as an official language as far back as 1975. Other languages, particularly German, Spanish and French, are also used in these companies, but mainly for outside

contacts (Hollqvist, 1984).

In Thailand, the aim to improve the English language proficiency of automotive industry has been designated as one of the crucial national targets for economic development by the government. In engineering, English communication penetrates into almost all aspects of the profession: from marketing to manufacturing, from quality assurance to post-sales maintenance (Grin, 2001; Nickerson, 1998).

### **English Language Problems in the Automotive Industry in Thailand**

Millions of people throughout the world are currently learning English. In the past decade, the automotive industry has been reorganized on a global scale and products and services often travel more than once around the world before reaching their final destination. In this multicultural environment, effective communication in English is essential as collaboration is vital for achieving innovation and maintaining growth.

Thai automotive engineers are committed to further education in English and aspire to be promoted based on their English abilities. They are often faced with the challenges brought about by a lack of effective English communication skills. Thai engineers require English competence in the four skills – listening, speaking, reading and writing – in their day-to-day operations. However, the biggest challenge for this group is their limited English conversation skills. Without sufficient English communicative competence, Thai engineers are unable to utilize their professional knowledge and work experience and as a result, they might lose self-confidence in performing in their day-to-day work responsibilities. Thai automotive engineers strive to improve their English language skills through either

workplace training or self-study. Therefore, English and Technical English, the skills and language learning strategies have been identified by these workers as essential components of an effective syllabus.

English has expanded from a culture-specific or national language to a tool for communicating across multiple countries and cultures and the test scores indicate how well people can communicate in English in today's globally diverse workplace. Measuring proficiency in English speaking and writing capabilities allows business professionals, teams and organizations to implement focused language strategies that will improve organizational effectiveness, increase customer satisfaction and employee productivity.

### **English Language Skill Needs in Automotive Industry**

English is one of the non-technical skills that staff need to improve, especially the four skills, as applied to different business situations. There are a wide range of business settings in which communication skills in English are an asset. These settings include basic spoken or conversational English for talking to people or using the phone in business, writing reports, making notes or presentations, explaining and describing processes and operations, negotiating or dealing with problems and a host of other possible scenarios. There are four basic skills that workers need in order to communicate effectively – listening, speaking, reading, and writing – which can be analyzed as follows:

## 1. Listening and Speaking

Listening and speaking are the key skills that staff must acquire in order to deal with customers. Staff are required to speak and listen to the opinions of customers, take part in discussions held in meetings, leave and take telephone messages, as well as basic communication with colleagues. Therefore, fluency in spoken English and literacy are considered to be key factors in success in the workplace. The correlation between English language proficiency to success in the workplace is one of the main reasons for federal funding for adult education programs (Chiswick & Miller, 2002; Moore & Stavrianos, 1994). For these reasons, staff must be able to achieve the following objectives:

- a. to engage critically and constructively in the exchange of ideas, particularly during discussions or meetings,
- b. to ask and answer the questions coherently and concisely, and to follow spoken instructions,
- c. to identify and comprehend the main and subordinate ideas in lectures and discussions, and to report accurately what others have said,
- d. to conceive and develop ideas about a topic for the purpose of speaking to a group, to choose and organize related ideas in order to present the information clearly in standard English and to evaluate similar presentations by others, and
- e. to vary one's use of spoken language to fit to different situations.

## 2. Reading

Reading skills are necessary in order to communicate effectively in English. In addition, businesspeople need to read business articles with different objectives, such as the agenda or the minutes of a meeting, business correspondence and proposals, journal articles from various sources, as well as reading books in order to gain knowledge. Workers must also develop reading skills in order to achieve the following objectives:

- a. to identify and comprehend the main and subordinate idea in a written work and summarize the ideas in one's own words,
- b. to recognize different purposes and methods of writing, to identify vocabulary, a writer's point of view and tone, and to interpret a writer's position or attitude,
- c. to separate one's personal opinions and assumptions from those of a writer of a text,
- d. to vary one's reading speed and methods (scanning, skimming, reviewing and asking and answering questions) according to the type of material and one's purpose for reading,
- e. to use the various features of textbooks and other reference materials such as the table of contents, preface, introduction, titles and subtitles, as well as the index, appendix and bibliography, and
- f. to define unfamiliar vocabulary by decoding, using contextual clues or a dictionary.

## 3. Writing.

Writing skills are necessary in order to communicate effectively in English and priority in business communications. The purpose of writing is to communicate a complete idea or information to the readers. English writing is a skill that requires an efficient use of words,

an ability to follow the essential rules of writing and to use formats such as letters, memos, agendas, minutes, resumes and so on. A model for business writing is clarity, correctness, conciseness, concreteness, and courtesy. Staff in the automotive industry must be able to achieve the following objectives:

- a. to conceive ideas about a topic for the purpose of writing,
- b. to organize, select, and relate ideas and to outline and develop them in coherent paragraphs,
- c. to write standard English sentences correctly,
- d. to vary one's writing style, including vocabulary and sentence structure for different audiences and purposes,
- e. to improve one's writing by error correction and rewriting, and
- f. to gather information from primary and secondary sources; report writing, quoting and paraphrasing, the ability to summarize accurately and to cite sources properly.

Business English is a special-function mode of English with its own characteristics, in contrast to ordinary English. It has different targets, evaluation methods, teaching outlines and methods etc. In this paper, English is discussed and compared to enable learners to better understand and grasp English for Specific Purposes.

### **Related Studies**

Studies on English language problems and needs of employees in various business areas and studies in related areas have been conducted. These studies are summarized below.

Mosallem (1984) investigated the English language needs of police officers in Egypt. The results revealed that most respondents stated that listening and speaking skills were the most relevant skills to their work performance while writing skills were the least significant. Moreover, the majority of the officers believed that learning English and the ability to use English language properly had a direct effect on their lives.

Koh (1988) studied the language needs of engineers and employees in the engineering industry. The survey was based on interviews across a spectrum of industrial organizations based on nationality and their role in the company. The results indicated that engineers had to write reports, routine, and technical works.

Poon (1991) analyzed the language needs of accountants and company administrators in Hong Kong. The results showed that English was considered to be the principal language for written communication at work and accountants tended to be more involved in most communication tasks. However, there is a direct relationship between the amount of time spent on the tasks or language used at work and the respondents' perception of their abilities.

Holiday (1995) surveyed the English language needs of an oil company in the Middle East. The results of the study indicated that the local staff had insufficient English skills when asking for clarification, expatriate supervisors did not know if their subordinates understood instructions and local staff were generally unable to communicate with expatriate supervisors. Holiday suggested that there was a need to provide English training for local staff members in order to establish and maintain effective communication within the

international oil and commercial business communities, essential to the continued growth of the company.

Jiranapakul (1996) studied the language needs of Thai engineers. This study investigated actual English usage in engineering companies that may be considered to be useful for course designers, English teachers, and those involved in the company. The findings revealed that from the engineers' perspective, reading was more important to their work than any other skill and that additional English training would be required to develop their listening and speaking skills. These skills were required for operation engineers, whereas writing and speaking skills were more important at the managerial level.

Ketkaew (1997) conducted a survey of the English needs of cabin attendants. The study explored the needs for English, the important functions of the language, and problems with using the language. The findings revealed that English was highly important to flight attendants, air pursers and flight managers at Thai Airways International. The most necessary skills were listening and speaking. There were problems using the four skills at a moderate level. Air stewards and air stewardesses needed to improve their listening and speaking skills the most, while air pursers and flight managers needed to improve all four skills at moderate to high levels.

Keyoonwong (1998) conducted a survey of the needs and wants of English in the tourist industry. The results showed that the tourism personnel in Chiang Mai considered listening and speaking skills to be the most important and necessary. Both employers and employees were not satisfied with their English language proficiency. They needed to practice their skills including listening, speaking, reading, writing and translation.

Chia, Johnson, Chia, and Olive (1999) conducted a research study on the English language needs of medical students in Taiwan. The findings revealed that English was perceived as important for both academic and professional reasons. The students wanted an elementary level English language course. In addition, they identified listening as the most important skill they needed to improve. Both students and faculty members desired more than one year of English language study.

Boonyawattana (1999) studied needs of English in the tourist industry. The results found that listening and speaking skills were more important than reading and writing skills. Speaking skills were considered to be the most desirable, followed by listening, reading and writing. People who worked in the tourist industry encountered the biggest problems with listening skills, followed by speaking, writing and reading.

Chan (2001) conducted research to discover how the students rated their English competence, to identify their perceptions of their language needs and wants, and to determine the extent to which their opinions matched those of their English teachers. The results revealed that both students and teachers perceived all four skills as important, while rating their academic competence as low. The students pointed out that they frequently lacked confidence in using English and failed to communicate effectively.

Sopon (2001) studied English Language skills needs of Thai engineers in the electronic manufacturing sector. The purpose of this study was to identify the English skills that were required and the communicative tasks carried out by Thai engineers working in the electronic manufacturing industry. The study showed that reading was ranked as the most frequently used skill in communicative tasks and the respondents had to use listening skills most of the

time, for example, listening to a foreign supervisor's instructions. Speaking skills were required for presentations, reading skills in order to read e-mails and writing skills for writing e-mails.

West, D. (2002) surveyed the needs, wants, and attributes lacking among doctors, nurses, and pharmacists in France. The findings showed that nurses were most interested in attending an English course in order to communicate more effectively with other professionals and patients. However, the doctors were more interested to understanding articles and participating in conferences than communicating with other professionals and patients. Pharmacists were less interested in following a medical English course on the Internet. The doctors were most interested in this option.

Phadungsilp and Thanudkasikij (2004) investigated the English language needs of call center employees. The results showed that English is perceived as an important skill for call center employees. The participants agreed the most important skills are speaking, followed by listening, reading, and writing.

Jialim (2006) surveyed the problems, needs, and wants of using English for specific purposes perceived by nursing students at Saint Louis College. The results showed that the English language problems of the first year students included listening to explanations and demonstrations by foreign instructors, while second year students had problems with writing summaries of textbooks, journals and newspaper articles in their presentation. The results indicated that the first year students needed speaking skills to deal with simple and general sentences, while the second year students needed reading skills to comprehend

the technical vocabulary. The primary English language needs of both of these groups are to improve their speaking skills.

Tangniam (2006) explored the English language needs of Thai Airways ground staff. The majority of them considered that an English training course helped them improve their English skills to communicate more fluently with passengers. As for English skills needs, listening and speaking were rated as extremely necessary. Based on these findings, English training courses were recommended mainly to emphasize their listening and speaking skills.

Khamkaew (2009) investigated problems and needs in English listening and speaking skills of the Metropolitan Police Officers (MPO) at counter service at Chana Songkram Police Station. The instruments used in this study were the questionnaire and the interview questions. The participants were 30 metropolitan police officers. The results of this study showed that listening and speaking were the main problems. They had problems of English accents and understanding when listening to basic expressions. The MPOs needed to improve English listening and speaking skills in greeting and offering help.

As far as a review of literature is concerned, there has been no previous research about English language needs in the automotive industry. Therefore, this research attempts to study which English skills are needed most by workers in the automotive industry. It also aims to examine the problems which are routinely encountered by employees. The results of this study would provide guidelines for English course designers to create courses that meet the needs of the automotive industry.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHODOLOGY**

This chapter describes the methodology of the research. It contains four parts; participants, research instrument, data collection and data analysis. The details are as follows:

#### **Participants**

The participants of this study consisted of 30 staff members from three automotive industry in Pathumthani and Ayutthaya based on the following criteria:

1. They are all foreign companies that have trade relations with foreign businesses in Asia, Europe, and America. They also have the highest company performance in auto-parts exports among other automotive companies in Pathumthani and Ayutthaya.
2. English is mainly used as a means of communication between foreign and Thai staff on an inter-office, inter-division, and international basis.

#### **Research Instrument**

The instrument used in this study was a questionnaire. There were two versions of the questionnaire used in this study. The Thai version was used in order to minimize problems of ambiguity and misinterpretation and the English version was supplementary for this project, as shown in the Appendices A and B.

The purpose of the questionnaire was to investigate English language problems in the workplace and the aspects of English that staff members wish to improve. It consists of three parts:

Part I: Personal data: This part was used to seek general information including personal details, educational background, and the work experience of each participants,

Part II: Problems with English language skills in the workplace. This part analyzed English language problems in the workplace, and

Part III: Needs for English language skills improvement. This part showed the level of English language needs in the workplace.

#### **Questionnaire Construction.**

The construction of the questionnaire was based on these three factors. First, a variety of related research study materials including texts, magazines, and journals concerned with the automotive industry. Second, the problems and needs of English language learners were reviewed. Finally, three managers from three automotive industries were interviewed to elicit the English language problems that they felt needed to be improved. The information obtained from the interview was used to support the construction of the questionnaire. The information from these interviews and a review of the related research and texts provided a guideline for the first draft of the questionnaire. Lastly, the final draft of the questionnaire was revised before it was distributed to three automotive companies.

#### **Pilot Study.**

A pilot study using a questionnaire as a research tool was designed to obtain information relevant to the design and the validity of the questionnaire before it was finalized to use with the subjects of the study. It was administered to ten employees of

Bridgestone Co., Ltd. in Pathumthani. They were not members of the target group of the study, but they also worked in the operation line. These employees were asked to answer the questions and comment on the content and terms used in the questionnaire. They were also asked to express any other opinions concerning the use of English in their workplace.

The results of the pilot study indicated that some of the questions were ambiguous, as the participants could not understand and answer the questions. After the pilot study was completed, the questionnaire was revised and distributed to 10 staff members at Bridgestone Co., Ltd. The questionnaire was used in the main study. The participants of this pilot study were requested to fill out the questionnaires, to comment on the content and wording, and to give suggestions on items that should be added or excluded.

#### **Validity of the Questionnaire.**

To ascertain the validity of the questionnaire, it was developed and revised based on relevant literature and research reviews. The first draft of the questionnaire was revised according to suggestions from the researcher's master's project's advisor, the executive managers of automotive companies, a lecturer at Silpakorn University, and English native speakers at Valaya Alongkorn Rajabhat University. The suggestions and comments from the experts helped the researcher to develop the final draft of the questionnaire for this study. For these reasons, the instrument for data collection in the study is valid and appropriate to use.

### Data Collection

1. The researcher distributed the questionnaires on March 18, 2011. The participants were asked to complete the questionnaires and return them to the researcher for analysis within a week.
2. The data were sorted into two groups before analysis: (a) personal information of the participants and (b) the results of the survey and the English skills required by employees.

### Data Analysis

The data analysis was calculated into the statistical values as follows:

1. The data concerning the general background and the problems with using English in the workplace was presented in terms of percentages.
2. The problems with English language acquisition and the needs of English language students were presented by using a five-point Likert scale in order to specify the level of problems and the needs of learners, based on the following the criteria of Rensis Likert (1932):

Scale	Level of problem	Mean Range
5	very high	4.50-5.00
4	high	3.50-4.49
3	moderate	2.50-3.49
2	low	1.50-2.49
1	very low	1.00-1.49

(a) Mean ( $M$ ) was used to summarize the average level of agreement of each item in the questionnaire and (b) Standard deviation was used to measure the distribution of English problems, and needs of the staff of automotive companies.



## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

This chapter presented the results from data analysis of the problems and language skill needs of operation staff in automotive industry in Thailand. The data were analyzed and presented in terms of frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. These results were reported in response to the two research questions:

1. What problems of the English language skills do the Thai operation staff have when communicating with foreign staff in their workplace?
2. Which English language skills do the Thai operation staff in the automotive industry need to use in their job performance?

The results were based on the data obtained by using the questionnaire which was analyzed by using Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) and presented in terms of percentage (%) and mean (*M*).

The findings are divided into three parts as follows:

Part 1: General information of Participants

Part 2: English Language Problems in the Workplace

Part 3: English Language Skill Needs

### General Information of Participants

This part presents the personal information of 30 staff concerning their demographic data, sex, age, education, and working experience. The data are summarized and presented in terms of frequency and percentage as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1**

#### *General Information of Participants*

General information	N = 30	%
<b>Sex:</b>		
Male	30	100
Female	0	0.00
<b>Age:</b>		
Under 25	3	10.00
25-30	5	16.66
31-35	14	46.66
Above 35	8	26.66
<b>Education:</b>		
Higher Vocational Education	23	76.66
Bachelor's Degree	7	23.33
Master's Degree	0	0.00

(continued)

**Table 1*****General Information of Participants (continued)*****Work experience:**

1-3 years	4	13.33
4-6 years	10	33.33
7-10 years	11	36.66
More than 10 years	5	16.66

Table 1 reveals that 100% of the participants were male. The most common age range of participants was from 31-35. The majority of participants (76.66%) graduated with Higher Vocational Education, and most of them (36.66%) had been working for 7-10 years.

**Research Question 1:** What problems of the English language skills do the Thai operation staff have when communicating with foreign staff in their workplace?

This part focuses on the level of agreement regarding the English language skills development of workers in the automotive industry. The participants were asked to rate the problems regarding the English language that they encountered in their workplace.

**Table 2*****English Language Problems in the Workplace***

Skills	Level of problems		
	<i>M</i>	SD	Meaning
1. Listening	4.70	.47	Very high
2. Speaking	3.30	.47	Moderate
3. Reading	4.80	.41	Very high
4. Writing	3.53	.51	High

Table 2 shows the main problems of English language skills in the workplace. The participants agreed that reading ( $M = 4.80$ ) and listening ( $M = 4.70$ ) were the highest rated problems, while writing was rated high ( $M = 3.53$ ), and speaking was rated moderately ( $M = 3.30$ ).

**Table 3*****Problems with Listening Skills in the Workplace***

Problems	Level of problems		
	<i>M</i>	SD	Meaning
1. Problems with listening to accents of people from different countries.	4.93	.25	Strongly agree

(continued)

**Table 3*****Problems with Listening Skills in the Workplace (continued)***

2. Problems with understanding words or sentences when Native Speakers speak English too quickly	4.67	.65	Strongly agree
3. Problems with listening to English technical terms	3.03	.84	Moderate
4. Problems with participating in discussions, training programs, or seminars	3.83	.37	Moderate

Table 3 shows that listening problems are the most common. Among the four item, problems with various accents ( $M = 4.93$ ) and understanding words or sentences are at the highest level ( $M = 4.67$ ). The moderate level of problems with were participation in discussions, training sessions or seminars ( $M = 3.83$ ), and problems understanding technical terms ( $M = 3.03$ ).

**Table 4*****Problems with Speaking Skills in the Workplace***

Problems	Level of problems		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Meaning
1. Problems with pronunciation	3.87	.67	Agree
2. Problems with speaking in complete sentences.	4.37	.84	Agree
3. Problems with using the correct vocabulary	4.50	.96	Strongly agree
4. Problems with participating in discussions, training programs, or seminars	4.47	.81	Agree
5. Problems with expressing my opinions in English	4.50	.76	Strongly agree

Table 4 shows that the participants had a similar degree of difficulty concerning the use of correct vocabulary and expressing opinions in English ( $M = 4.50$ ). The mean scores indicate that staff had problems with speaking when participating in the discussion. ( $M = 4.47$ ) at the highest level, followed by speaking in complete sentences ( $M = 4.37$ ), and problems with pronunciation ( $M = 3.87$ ), respectively.

**Table 5*****Problems with Reading Skills in the Workplace***

Problems	Level of problems		
	<i>M</i>	SD	Meaning
1. Problems with English vocabulary.	3.60	.71	Agree
2. Problems with English grammatical structures.	3.60	.71	Agree
3. Problems with finding the main idea	4.37	.84	Agree
4. Problems with reading techniques	3.80	.40	Agree

Table 5 shows that the participants had a high overall rating in terms of reading skills. The participants agreed that four reading problems had a similar level of difficulty. The mean scores show that reading for the main idea is at the highest level ( $M = 4.37$ ), followed by problem with reading techniques (skimming and scanning  $M = 3.80$ ), vocabulary ( $M = 3.60$ ), and grammatical structures ( $M = 3.60$ ), respectively.

**Table 6*****Problems with Writing Skills in the Workplace***

Problems	Level of problems		
	<i>M</i>	SD	Meaning
1. Problems with grammatical rules	5.00	.00	Strongly agree
2. Problems with vocabulary	3.17	.37	Moderate
3. Problems with sentence structures	4.53	.62	Strongly agree
4. Problems with writing a paragraph	2.77	.62	Moderate
5. Problems with taking note	3.73	.44	Agree

Table 6 shows that the participants rated problems concerning grammatical rules in writing at the highest level ( $M = 5.00$ ), followed by problems in writing sentences ( $M = 4.53$ ). The results also show that participants had a high degree of problems with note-taking ( $M = 3.73$ ), while problems with writing vocabulary ( $M = 3.17$ ) and writing paragraphs ( $M = 2.77$ ) were rated at a moderate level.

**Research Question 2:** Which English language skills do the Thai operation staff in the automotive industry need to use in their job performance?

This section presents the level of needs related to the English language skills development of staff in the automotive industry. The participants were asked to rate their needs in terms of their English language skills and they all agreed that they needed improvement. Table 7 shows the results of the needs of English.

**Table 7*****English Language Skill Needs***

Needs	Level of Needs		
	<i>M</i>	SD	Meaning
1. Listening	4.93	.25	Most highly needed
2. Speaking	3.00	.74	Moderately needed
3. Reading	4.83	.78	Most highly needed
4. Writing	3.10	.72	Moderately needed

Table 7 shows that the participants expressed the highest level of needs in listening ( $M = 4.93$ ), and reading skills ( $M = 4.83$ ), with moderate needs in speaking ( $M = 3.10$  and writing ( $M = 3.00$ ).

**Table 8*****Needs for Improving Listening Skills***

Needs	Level of Needs		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Meaning
1. Being able to understand accents from different countries, such as America, Germany, Japan, China, or India.	5.00	.00	Most highly needed
2. Being able to understand foreigners when they speak very quickly.	4.83	.38	Most highly needed
3. Being able to listen and understand unknown words or technical terms.	3.13	.57	Moderate needed
4. Being able to listen to discussions, or conversations in meetings, training programs, or seminars.	3.77	.57	Highly needed

As illustrated in Table 8, the participants had the highest level of needs regarding the comprehension of various foreign accents ( $M = 5.00$ ), and listening for specific words or sentences when foreigners speak very quickly ( $M = 4.83$ ). The mostly highly needed listening skill is the ability to listen to discussions or conversations in meetings ( $M = 3.77$ ), and at the moderate level, the comprehension of vocabulary or unknown technical terms ( $M = 3.13$ ).

**Table 9*****Needs for Improving Speaking Skills***

Needs	Level of Needs		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Meaning
1. Being able to pronounce English words correctly, including having the correct intonation and linking sounds	4.70	.47	Most highly needed
2. Being able to speak in complete sentences	3.93	.64	Highly needed
3. Being able to use correct words when speaking	3.67	.48	Highly needed
4. Being able to participate or communicate in discussions, meetings, training programs, or seminars.	3.77	.43	Highly needed
5. Being able to express opinions	3.57	.97	Highly needed

As illustrated in Table 9, the participants rated improving pronunciation, intonation, and linking sounds as the most highly necessary skill ( $M= 4.70$ ). The participants also felt that speaking in complete sentences ( $M =3.93$ ), participating in discussions in a meeting ( $M =3.77$ ), using correct words when speaking ( $M = 3.67$ ), and expressing opinions ( $M =3.57$ ), were highly necessary skills.

Table 10

***Needs for Improving Reading Skills***

Needs	Level of Needs		
	<i>M</i>	SD	Meaning
1. Increasing knowledge of vocabulary to help reading	3.67	.48	Highly needed
2. Increasing the understanding of grammatical rules to help with reading	4.40	.72	Highly needed
3. Using reading techniques, such as skimming and scanning to help with reading	3.90	.31	Highly needed
4. Finding the main idea in a text being	3.57	.97	Highly needed

According to Table 10, it can be seen that the participants rated these skills at a high level of necessity. Regarding the four items related to the needs for reading skills, understanding grammatical rules when reading is at the highest level ( $M = 4.40$ ), followed by reading techniques ( $M = 3.90$ ), reading to increase vocabulary ( $M = 3.67$ ), and reading to get the main idea ( $M = 3.5$ ), respectively.

**Table 11*****Needs for Improving Writing Skills***

Needs	Level of Needs		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Meaning
1. Increasing knowledge of vocabulary	5.00	.00	Most highly needed
2. Increasing understanding of grammatical rules	3.10	.71	Moderately needed
3. Understanding sentence structures	4.20	.41	Highly needed
4. Writing a well-organized paragraph	3.40	.81	Moderately needed
5. Taking note in English	3.40	.81	Moderately needed

Table 11 shows the participants had the highest needs in increasing their knowledge of vocabulary to help with writing ( $M = 5.00$ ), and a high degree of necessity for understanding sentence structures and writing a complete sentences ( $M = 4.20$ ). The participants rated paragraph writing, note taking and understanding grammatical rules at a moderate level ( $M = 3.40$ ) and ( $M = 3.10$ ) respectively.

In summary, the results of the research show that all of participants were male. The most common age range of participants was from 31-35. The majority of participants graduated with a Higher Vocational Education, and most of them had been working for 7-10 years. It was found that staff in automotive industry had problems with their English language listening and reading skills, and most of the participants needed to improve their reading and listening skills in the workplace.

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This chapter presents a discussion of the main findings of the two research questions which are: (a) What problems of the English language skills do the Thai operation staff have when communicating with foreign staff in their workplace?, (b) Which English language skills do the Thai operation staff in the automotive industry need to use in their job performance? This section also consists of results and discussion of each research question, limitations of the study, and recommendations for further studies.

**Research Question 1:** What problems of the English language skills do the Thai operation staff have when communicating with foreign staff in their workplace?

#### **Results of Research Question 1**

The results of this study show that the biggest problem that workers in the automotive industry had was with their listening and reading skills. The biggest problem was related to the various accents of staff members and management of different nationalities, which was exacerbated when they spoke too quickly and made it difficult for the Thai staff to understand words or sentences. In addition, reading and listening skills were also regarded as problematic. The second major problem was reading techniques and locating the main ideas in a text which were rated at a moderate level by the participants.

### **Discussion of Research Question 1**

These results are significant, considering that the majority of operation line staff must cope with both extensive and intensive listening and reading tasks in the course of their duties. The operation line staff is also required to listen to both local colleagues and foreign staff members speaking English when they attend meetings, training sessions and seminars. This is compounded by the fact that local and foreign staff members will have radically different accents and their pronunciation, intonation and stress when speaking English will also differ from their foreign colleagues. If the foreign staff members come from a single country, the Thai staff may eventually become familiar with the particular accent of the speakers, but this has negative implications in that it can lead to miscommunication, as well as the fact that the Thai staff will be unfamiliar with all other foreign accents and may pick up some of the idiosyncratic accent of the foreign English speakers. If the foreign English speakers do not speak English as a first language, the Thai staff may also pick up their errors in terms of pronunciation, intonation and stress patterns. If the foreign English speakers speak English as a first language it can also be problematic that is regional accents, American vs. British English and so on. Thai English speakers may overcome the obstacles of pronunciation, intonation and correct stress usage by focusing specifically on their speaking skills in terms of accent, coherence and accuracy of pronunciation and intonation in order to communicate more clearly with both foreign and Thai staff.

At the same time, the operation staff members need to read in order to update and expand their general knowledge as well as specific English skills. This can be achieved by taking information from various sources, including handbooks, texts, magazines and

material from the internet. This can be enhanced if the learner is able to successfully employ various reading techniques, such as skimming and scanning.

Speaking and writing were rated as the second most significant problem. Apart from listening and reading, workers in the automotive industry are required to write various types of documents in order to communicate and interact with their colleagues and supervisors, whereas listening is needed when they have to communicate with foreign supervisors and colleagues or attend in-house seminars or training sessions. These results are supported by other related studies such as Sapon (2001), who studied the English language needs of Thai engineers in the electronic manufacturing sector. The results of his study showed that reading was ranked as the most frequently used skill in communicative tasks, and participants had to use listening skills when listening to instructions from a foreign supervisor. Speaking skills were necessary for making presentations, reading skills for reading e-mails, and writing skills for writing e-mails.

When comparing the results with other studies, they are along the same lines as the results of Hart-Rawung and Li (2008) who studied the role of the English language in the arena of international business communication; and in particular, how this role is reflected in the English language communication abilities of Thai automotive engineers. The results of the study showed that the capacity to communicate orally in English was found to be the greatest challenge for Thai engineers in balancing their daily work commitments and their desire for professional advancement.

In conclusion, the results of the first research question can be summarized as listening and reading skills were the biggest problem for Thai operation line workers in the

automotive industry and that the source of the problems involved input from the organization, as well as linguistic problems.

**Research Question 2:** Which English language skills do the Thai operation staff in the automotive industry need to use in their job performance?

### **Results of Research Question 2**

As shown in the results for Question 1, automotive industry workers found listening and reading skills in their workplace to be the most problematic. As can be seen from the results, the respondents agreed that the most necessary English language skills were listening and reading. However, they viewed speaking and writing as being only moderately necessary.

### **Discussion of Research Question 2**

The study indicated that most important language skill required in the Thai automotive industry was reading, as most textbooks and documents were in English. The participants felt that they needed to develop their reading skills in order to understand vocabulary, grammatical structures, reading techniques including skimming and scanning, and reading to obtain ideas. At the same time, they rated listening as the highly necessary because they had to interact with foreign supervisors and colleagues and participate in discussions during meetings.

According to the results of this study, speaking was considered the second important need. Staff in the automotive industry use listening skills more than speaking skills, based

mainly on necessity. They use speech to express their ideas in a meeting and they also need to use the correct words and form complete sentences when giving their opinions.

Writing skills were considered to be the second important need in the results of this study. The need for improvement of writing skills was also at a moderate level because workers rarely use writing skills in the course of their regular duties. They only needed writing skills when they had to take notes, write complete sentences in English and record new vocabulary, and indicated that there was very low probability that they would ever have to write documents or communicate in English via e-mail.

The results of this study were also supported by the results of Jiranapakul (1996), who studied the language needs of Thai engineers. This study investigated actual English usage in engineering companies which may be considered useful to course designers, English teachers, and those involved in the educational sector of the company, such as the Human Resources department. The results of this study revealed that in the engineers' opinion, reading was far more important to their work than listening, writing or speaking skills. The results also indicated that additional English training was required by these engineers. Listening and speaking skills were necessary for the operation line engineers, whereas writing and speaking skills were more necessary for engineers at the managerial level.

In conclusion, listening and reading skills are considered to be the most important overall needs of staff in the automotive industry. Speaking and writing skills were only rated at a level of moderate necessity. The requirements for English skills depend on job-related activities and problems.

## **Conclusion**

The study aimed to investigate the English language problems and the language skills required by staff in the Thai operation line from three automotive companies located in Pathumthani and Ayutthaya. The instrument of this study was a questionnaire. The number of the participants in this study consisted of 30 employees from three automotive companies. The data collection was held on March 18, 2011.

The results indicate that the majority of operation line staff have problems with all four skills, listening, speaking, reading and writing. However, problems and needs rated at the highest level were listening and reading skills. Based on the results of this study English is also perceived as a key factor in employees' task performance and career advancements.

## **Limitations of the Study**

The study was conducted with three automotive companies in Pathumthani and Ayutthaya. The participants in this study were 30 automotive industry employees. This study had the following limitations:

1. The number of participants in this study was limited to only 30 operation line staff in the automotive industry in Pathumthani and Ayutthaya. Thus, the results of the study may not be able to generalized and apply to other automotive companies.

2. The study employed a closed-ended questionnaire focusing on the two aspects of problems and needs related to English. Therefore, it may not provide an in-depth analysis because the participants were not able to express some aspects of their needs related to the automotive industry.

### **Recommendations for Further Studies**

Based on the results of this study, it would be useful for the educational institutions or course designers to respond to the learners' needs. There are many steps to designing courses and the results can provide a useful guideline for both course designers and English teachers, as follows:

1. Further studies should be conducted with automotive companies from every region in Thailand to expand the scope of the results in order to get more accurate information,
2. Further studies should include automotive companies from other language groups such as Japanese, Korean, German, and French, and
3. Further studies should include interview to obtain in – depth information from participants. The interview will allow the participants to provide more information that may be useful to course designers in designing courses to meet the learners' needs.



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**APPENDICES**



## แบบสัมภาษณ์

### คำชี้แจง โปรดตอบคำถามต่อไปนี้

1. บริษัทของท่านมีพนักงานชาวต่างชาติหรือไม่  
ถ้ามี พนักงานต่างชาติมาจากประเทศใดบ้าง
2. ท่านเคยประสบปัญหาในการสื่อสารกับเพื่อนร่วมงานชาวต่างชาติในองค์กรของท่านหรือไม่
3. ท่านใช้ภาษาใดในการสื่อสารกับเพื่อนร่วมงานชาวต่างชาติ
4. ถ้าท่านใช้ภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อการสื่อสาร ท่านสื่อสารกับใครและบ่อยเพียงใด
5. ท่านประสบปัญหาอะไรบ้างในการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อการสื่อสาร
6. ทักษะภาษาอังกฤษใดที่ท่านต้องการพัฒนาในหน่วยงานของท่าน เพื่อใช้ในการสื่อสารในการสื่อสารกับเพื่อนร่วมงานชาวต่างชาติ

## แบบสอบถาม

การศึกษาปัญหาและความต้องการการใช้ทักษะภาษาอังกฤษของพนักงานฝ่ายปฏิบัติการ  
ในอุตสาหกรรมยานยนต์ในประเทศไทย

แบบสอบถามนี้สร้างขึ้นเพื่อสำรวจความคิดเห็นเกี่ยวกับปัญหาและความต้องการการใช้ทักษะภาษาอังกฤษของพนักงานฝ่ายปฏิบัติการในอุตสาหกรรมยานยนต์ในประเทศไทย คำตอบของท่านจะนำมาใช้เพื่อประโยชน์ในการวิจัย และถือเป็นความลับ ข้อมูลจะถูกทำลายหลังเสร็จสิ้นการศึกษาครั้งนี้ ผู้วิจัยใคร่ขอความกรุณาตอบคำถามทุกข้อ และหวังเป็นอย่างยิ่งว่าจะได้รับความร่วมมือจากท่าน จึงขอขอบคุณมา ณ โอกาสนี้

แบบสอบถามแบ่งเป็น 3 ตอน คือ

ตอนที่ 1 ข้อมูลทั่วไปเกี่ยวกับผู้ตอบแบบสอบถาม

ตอนที่ 2 ปัญหาการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษ

ตอนที่ 3 ความต้องการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษ

**ตอนที่ 1** ข้อมูลทั่วไปเกี่ยวกับผู้ตอบแบบสอบถาม

**คำชี้แจง :** โปรดกาเครื่องหมาย ✓ ในช่องที่ตรงกับข้อมูลของท่าน

1. เพศ
 

<input type="checkbox"/> ชาย	<input type="checkbox"/> หญิง
------------------------------	-------------------------------
2. อายุ
 

<input type="checkbox"/> ต่ำกว่า 25 ปี
<input type="checkbox"/> 26-30 ปี
<input type="checkbox"/> 31-35 ปี
<input type="checkbox"/> 35 ปี ขึ้นไป
3. วุฒิการศึกษาสูงสุดของท่านคือ
 

<input type="checkbox"/> ปวส
<input type="checkbox"/> ปริญญาตรี
<input type="checkbox"/> ปริญญาโท
<input type="checkbox"/> สูงกว่าปริญญาโท

4. ท่านทำงานในตำแหน่งปัจจุบันมาเป็นระยะเวลา

- 1- 3 ปี  
 4-6 ปี  
 7-10 ปี  
 มากกว่า 10 ปีขึ้นไป

ตอนที่ 2 : ปัญหาการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษของท่านในการทำงาน

คำชี้แจง: โปรดทำเครื่องหมาย ✓ ลงในช่องว่างที่ตรงกับความคิดเห็นของท่านเกี่ยวกับปัญหาการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษ.

ก. ทักษะการฟัง

- |                                    |                               |                                     |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> มากที่สุด | <input type="checkbox"/> มาก  |                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ปานกลาง   | <input type="checkbox"/> น้อย | <input type="checkbox"/> น้อยที่สุด |

ข. ทักษะการพูด

- |                                    |                               |                                     |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> มากที่สุด | <input type="checkbox"/> มาก  |                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ปานกลาง   | <input type="checkbox"/> น้อย | <input type="checkbox"/> น้อยที่สุด |

ค. ทักษะการอ่าน

- |                                    |                               |                                     |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> มากที่สุด | <input type="checkbox"/> มาก  |                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ปานกลาง   | <input type="checkbox"/> น้อย | <input type="checkbox"/> น้อยที่สุด |

ง. ทักษะการเขียน

- |                                    |                               |                                     |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> มากที่สุด | <input type="checkbox"/> มาก  |                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ปานกลาง   | <input type="checkbox"/> น้อย | <input type="checkbox"/> น้อยที่สุด |

คำชี้แจง โปรดทำเครื่องหมาย  ลงในช่องว่างที่ตรงกับความคิดเห็นของท่าน  
(5 = เห็นด้วยเป็นอย่างยิ่ง 4 = เห็นด้วย 3 = ปานกลาง 2 = เห็นด้วยน้อย 1 = ไม่เห็นด้วย)

การฟัง

ปัญหา	ระดับความคิดเห็น				
	5	4	3	2	1
1. ข้าพเจ้ามีปัญหาในการฟังเสียงสำเนียงของชาวต่างชาติที่แตกต่างกัน เช่นอเมริกา เยอรมัน ญี่ปุ่น จีนหรืออินเดีย					
2. ข้าพเจ้าไม่เข้าใจคำหรือประโยคเมื่อชาวต่างชาติพูดภาษาอังกฤษเร็วเกินไป					
3. เมื่อข้าพเจ้าฟังคำศัพท์ทางเทคนิคภาษาอังกฤษข้าพเจ้ามีปัญหาในการทำความเข้าใจศัพท์เหล่านั้น					
4. ข้าพเจ้าไม่สามารถมีส่วนร่วมในการอภิปราย การฝึกอบรมหรือสัมมนาโดยใช้ภาษาอังกฤษเพราะข้าพเจ้ามีปัญหาในการฟังภาษาอังกฤษ					

## การพูด

ปัญหา	ระดับความคิดเห็น				
	5	4	3	2	1
1. ข้าพเจ้ามีปัญหาในการออกเสียงคำภาษาอังกฤษและยังมีปัญหากับการออกเสียงสูงต่ำในประโยคและการเชื่อมโยงเสียง					
2. ข้าพเจ้ามีปัญหาในการพูดเป็นประโยคที่สมบูรณ์					
3. ข้าพเจ้ามีปัญหาในการใช้คำที่ถูกต้องเมื่อข้าพเจ้าต้องพูดภาษาอังกฤษ					
4. ข้าพเจ้าไม่สามารถมีส่วนร่วมในการอภิปราย การฝึกอบรมหรือสัมมนาโดยใช้ภาษาอังกฤษเพราะข้าพเจ้าไม่สามารถพูดภาษาอังกฤษได้					
5. ข้าพเจ้ามีปัญหาในการแสดงความคิดเห็นเป็นภาษาอังกฤษ					

## การอ่าน

ปัญหา	ระดับความคิดเห็น				
	5	4	3	2	1
1. ข้าพเจ้าไม่สามารถอ่านได้เพราะข้าพเจ้ามีปัญหาเกี่ยวกับคำศัพท์ภาษาอังกฤษ					
2. ข้าพเจ้าไม่สามารถอ่านเพราะข้าพเจ้ามีปัญหาเกี่ยวกับโครงสร้างประโยค และไวยากรณ์ภาษาอังกฤษ					
3. ข้าพเจ้าไม่สามารถอ่านเพราะข้าพเจ้าไม่ทราบวิธีการอ่านเร็ว (skim or scan)					
4. ข้าพเจ้าไม่สามารถอ่านเพื่อหาใจความหลักของข้อความที่กำลังอ่าน					

## การเขียน

ปัญหา	ระดับความคิดเห็น				
	5	4	3	2	1
1. ข้าพเจ้าไม่สามารถเขียนเป็นภาษาอังกฤษเพราะข้าพเจ้ามีปัญหาเกี่ยวกับกฎเกณฑ์ทางไวยากรณ์					
2. ข้าพเจ้าไม่สามารถเขียนเป็นภาษาอังกฤษเพราะข้าพเจ้ามีปัญหาเกี่ยวกับคำศัพท์					
3. ข้าพเจ้าไม่สามารถเขียนเป็นภาษาอังกฤษเพราะข้าพเจ้ามีปัญหาเกี่ยวกับโครงสร้างประโยค					
4. ข้าพเจ้าไม่ทราบวิธีการเขียนย่อหน้า					
5. ข้าพเจ้าไม่ทราบวิธีการจัดบันทึกการอ่านเป็นภาษาอังกฤษ					

**ตอนที่ 3 :** ความต้องการในการพัฒนาทักษะภาษาอังกฤษ

โปรดทำเครื่องหมาย ✓ ลงในช่องว่างที่ตรงกับความต้องการของท่าน

(5 = มีความต้องการมากที่สุด 4 = มีความต้องการมาก 3 = มีความต้องการปานกลาง  
2 = มีความต้องการน้อย 1 = ไม่ต้องการ)

## ก. ทักษะการฟัง

- มีความต้องการมากที่สุด     มีความต้องการมาก  
 มีความต้องการปานกลาง     มีความต้องการน้อย     ไม่ต้องการ

## ข. ทักษะการอ่าน

- มีความต้องการมากที่สุด     มีความต้องการมาก  
 มีความต้องการปานกลาง     มีความต้องการน้อย     ไม่ต้องการ

## ค. ทักษะการพูด

- มีความต้องการมากที่สุด     มีความต้องการมาก  
 มีความต้องการปานกลาง     มีความต้องการน้อย     ไม่ต้องการ

## ง. ทักษะการเขียน

- มีความต้องการมากที่สุด     มีความต้องการมาก  
 มีความต้องการปานกลาง     มีความต้องการน้อย     ไม่ต้องการ

โปรตรระดับความต้องการในการพัฒนาทักษะการฟังภาษาอังกฤษ

ทักษะการฟัง	ระดับความต้องการ				
	5	4	3	2	1
1. สามารถฟังเสียงของชาวต่างชาติที่มาจากประเทศที่แตกต่างกัน เช่นอเมริกา, เยอรมัน, ญี่ปุ่น, จีนหรืออินเดีย ได้เข้าใจ					
2. สามารถฟังชาวต่างชาติเมื่อพวกเขาพูดอย่างรวดเร็ว					
3. สามารถฟังหรือคำหรือเข้าใจที่ไม่รู้จัก หรือคำศัพท์ทางเทคนิค					
4. สามารถฟัง พูด อภิปรายหรือสนทนาในการประชุม การฝึกอบรมหรืองานสัมมนา					

โปรตรระดับความต้องการในการพัฒนาทักษะการพูดภาษาอังกฤษ

ทักษะการพูด	ระดับความต้องการ				
	5	4	3	2	1
1. สามารถออกเสียงคำภาษาอังกฤษอย่างถูกต้องรวมทั้งการออกเสียงสูงต่ำในประโยค และเชื่อมโยงเสียงให้ถูกต้อง					
2. สามารถพูดประโยคที่สมบูรณ์					
3. สามารถใช้คำที่ถูกต้องในการพูด					
4. สามารถมีส่วนร่วมหรือติดต่อสื่อสารในการอภิปรายการประชุม โครงการฝึกอบรมหรือสัมมนา					
5. สามารถแสดงความคิดเห็น					

โปรตรระดับความต้องการในการพัฒนาทักษะการอ่านภาษาอังกฤษ

ทักษะการอ่าน	ระดับความต้องการ				
	5	4	3	2	1
1. เพิ่มความรู้คำศัพท์เพื่อช่วยในการอ่าน					
2. เพิ่มความเข้าใจในกฎไวยากรณ์ที่จะช่วยในการอ่าน					
3. ใช้เทคนิคการอ่านเร็ว (skim or scan) เพื่อช่วยในการอ่าน					
4. อ่านเพื่อหาใจความสำคัญของเนื้อเรื่องที่อ่าน					

โปรตะระบุดระดับความต้องการในการพัฒนาทักษะการเขียนภาษาอังกฤษ

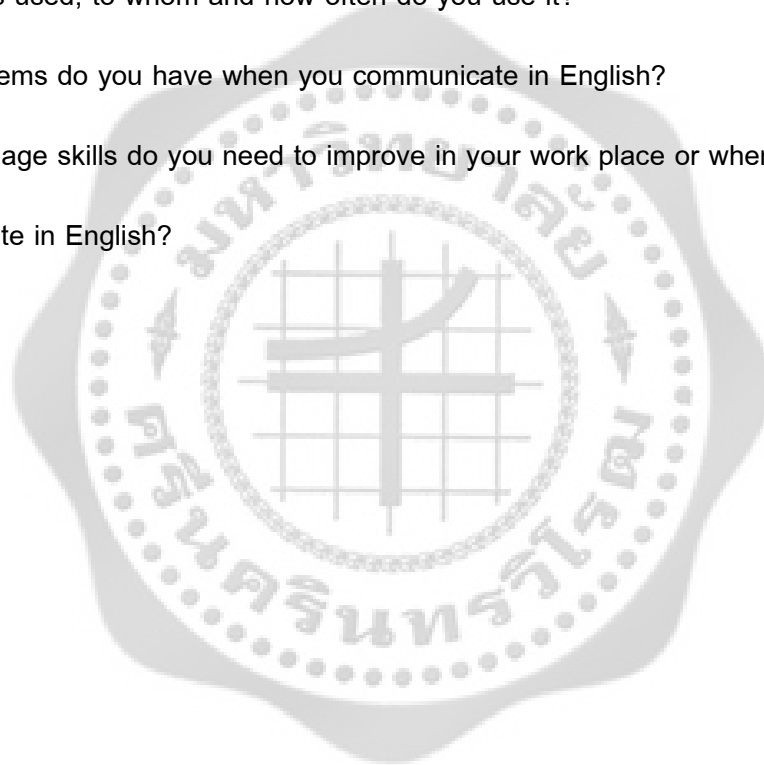
ทักษะการเขียน	ระดับความต้องการ				
	5	4	3	2	1
1. เพิ่มพูนความรู้คำศัพท์เพื่อช่วยในการเขียน					
2. เพิ่มพูนความเข้าใจในกฎเกณฑ์ไวยากรณ์ที่ช่วยในการเขียน					
3. เพิ่มความเข้าใจในโครงสร้างประโยคที่จะช่วยในการเขียนประโยคที่สมบูรณ์					
4. สามารถเขียนย่อหน้าที่ดี					
5. สามารถจดบันทึกภาษาอังกฤษ					



ขอขอบคุณทุกท่านที่ให้ความร่วมมือในการตอบแบบสอบถามครั้งนี้

**Interview Questions for Managers in the Operation line  
to obtain Data for Developing the Questionnaire**

1. Do you have foreign colleagues? If yes, what country are they from?
2. Have you had problems in communicating with foreign colleagues in your company?
3. What language do you use to communicate with your foreign colleagues?
4. If English is used, to whom and how often do you use it?
5. What problems do you have when you communicate in English?
6. What language skills do you need to improve in your work place or when you communicate in English?



## Questionnaire

### A Study of English Language Problems and Language Skills Needs of Thai Operation Staff in the Automotive Industry in Thailand

The purpose of this questionnaire is to survey the English language problems and language skills needs of Thai operation staff in the automotive industry in Thailand. The information you provided will be used only for the purpose of this study. It will be destroyed after the completion of this study. Please answer this questionnaire according to your English language problems and language skills needs. Your cooperation in completing this questionnaire is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Aranya Mudlae

#### Part I: Personal Information

Please mark (✓) in the box that best describes you.

1. Gender

- Male  Female

2. Age

- under 25 years old  
 26-30 years old  
 31-35 years old  
 Over 35 years old

3. Education

- Higher Vocational Certificate  
 Bachelor's Degree  
 Master's Degree  
 Higher than Master's Degree



- B. Please mark ( ✓ ) for each statement that to reflect the level of your agreement with each of the following statements.

(5 = Strongly agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Moderate, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly disagree)

Listening

Problems	Level of Agreement				
	5	4	3	2	1
1. I have problems understanding the accents of people from different countries, such as America Germany, Japan, China, or India.					
2. I do not understand words or sentences when Native Speakers speak English too quickly.					
3. When I listen to English technical terms, I have problems understanding them.					
4. I cannot participate in discussions, training programs, or seminars conducted in English because I have problems understanding the English language.					

Speaking

Problems	Level of Agreement				
	5	4	3	2	1
1. I have problems pronouncing English words and also have problems with intonation and linking sounds.					
2. I have problems speaking in complete sentences.					
3. I have problems using the correct vocabulary when I have to speak English.					
4. I cannot participate in discussions, training programs, or seminars conducted in English because I cannot speak English.					
5. I have problems expressing my opinions in English					

Reading

Problems	Level of Agreement				
	5	4	3	2	1
1. I cannot read because I have problems with English vocabulary.					
2. I cannot read because I have problems with English grammatical structures.					
3. I cannot read because I do not know how to skim or scan.					
4. I cannot find the main idea of the text.					

Writing

Problems	Level of Agreement				
	5	4	3	2	1
1. I cannot write in English because I have problems with grammatical rules.					
2. I cannot write in English because I have problems with vocabulary.					
3. I cannot write in English because I have problems with sentence structures.					
4. I do not know how to write a paragraph.					
5. I do not know how to take notes in English.					

**Part III: English Language Skills Needs**

A. Please check the level of your English language skills that you need to improve.

a. Listening:

- Most highly needed       Highly needed  
 Moderately needed       Slightly needed       Not needed

b. Speaking

- Most highly needed       Highly needed  
 Moderately needed       Slightly needed       Not needed

c. Reading

- Most highly needed       Highly needed  
 Moderately needed       Slightly needed       Not needed

d. Writing

- Most highly needed       Highly needed  
 Moderately needed       Slightly needed       Not needed

B. In listening, please indicate the level of need that you want to improve.

Listening	Level of Need				
	5	4	3	2	1
1. Being able to understand accents from different countries, such as America, Germany, Japan, China, or India.					
2. Being able to understand foreigners when they speak very quickly.					
3. Being able to listen and understand unknown words or technical terms.					
4. Being able to listen to discussions, or conversations in meetings, training programs, or seminars.					

C. In speaking, please indicate the level of need that you want to improve.

Speaking	Level of Need				
	5	4	3	2	1
1. Being able to pronounce English words correctly, including having the correct intonation and linking sounds.					
2. Being able to speak in complete sentences.					
3. Being able to use correct words when speaking					
4. Being able to participate or communicate in discussions, meetings, training programs, or seminars.					
5. Being able to express opinions					

D. In reading, please indicate the level of need that you want to improve.

Reading	Level of Need				
	5	4	3	2	1
1. Increasing knowledge of vocabulary to help with reading					
2. Increasing the understanding of grammatical rules to help with reading					
3. Using reading techniques, such as skimming and scanning to help with reading					
4. Finding the main idea in a text					

E. In writing, please indicate the level of need that you want to improve.

Writing	Level of Need				
	5	4	3	2	1
1. Increasing knowledge of vocabulary to help with writing					
2. Increasing understanding of grammatical rules to help with writing					
3. Understanding sentence structures and how to write a complete sentence					
4. How to write a well-organized paragraph					
5. How to take note in English					

Thank you for your cooperation

**Vitae**



## VITAE

**Name:** Aranya Mudlae

**Date of Birth:** 7 May

**Place of Birth:** Nonthaburi

**Address:** 13 Moo 4 , Bangkruai Sainoi Road, Bangbauthong, Nonthaburi

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### Educational Background

1990 Bachelor of Education (English)

2002 Master of Business Administration (International Business)

2011 Master of Arts (Business English for International  
Communication)

