

ORAL ENGLISH PROBLEMS BETWEEN FOREIGN EXECUTIVES AND THEIR THAI
SUBORDINATES WORKING IN THE BANKING SECTOR IN BANGKOK



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

October 2012

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Champavan.

The purpose of this study was to explore oral English communication problems between foreign executives and Thai subordinates working in the banking sector. The study focused on the causes of oral English communication problems, in other words, language problems among them in the workplace. The study conveyed both speaking and listening in English communication problems. The questionnaires were provided to 15 foreign executives and 15 Thai subordinates and administered according to the purposes of the study.

The results of this study demonstrated that two main oral communication problems between foreign executives and Thai subordinates were divided into two parts. First, foreign executives' listening problems occurred because of Thai subordinates' English pronunciation or accent, and foreign executives did not ask for repetition when they could not understand their subordinates. On the other hand, foreign executives did not have speaking problems because English was his or her mother language. Second, Thai subordinates' listening problems occurred because they cannot understand their colleagues when they used English technical terms, idioms, jargon, and slang. Moreover, Thai subordinates had word limitation problems when they communicated in English with their colleagues. Thai subordinates stated that they also faced with unfamiliar English pronunciation or accent, could not catch key words when their colleagues speak too fast, and could not understand the main point when their colleagues speak too fast. In addition, they also said that they always translate the sentence into Thai before replying to foreigners, and that they had poor English grammar. Thais still had speaking problem because of their vocabulary limitation, lack of English

technical words, idioms, and slang to use in the conversation. They also had English pronunciation and accent problems.



ปัญหาการพูดสื่อสารภาษาอังกฤษระหว่างผู้บริหารชาวต่างชาติกับพนักงานธนาคารชาวไทยใน
กรุงเทพมหานคร



เสนอต่อบัณฑิตวิทยาลัย มหาวิทยาลัยศรีนครินทรวิโรฒ เพื่อเป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษา
ตามหลักสูตรปริญญาศิลปศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต สาขาวิชาภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อการสื่อสารนานาชาติ
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ชาวไทย ในธุรกิจธนาคาร เขตกรุงเทพมหานคร สารนิพนธ์ (ภาษาอังกฤษสื่อสารธุรกิจ

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นิพนธ์: ผศ.ดร.สาวยรุณ จำปาวัลย์

วัตถุประสงค์ของงานวิจัยเล่มนี้คือศึกษาปัญหาการพูดสื่อสารภาษาอังกฤษระหว่างผู้บริหารชาวต่างชาติและพนักงานธนาคารชาวไทยในกรุงเทพมหานคร งานวิจัยศึกษาสาเหตุที่ทำให้เกิดปัญหาการพูดสื่อสารภาษาอังกฤษ อีกนัยหนึ่งคือปัญหาที่เกิดจากภาษาที่เกิดขึ้นในที่ทำงาน อีกทั้งยังศึกษาครอบคลุมถึงปัญหาด้านการฟังและพูดภาษาอังกฤษ ซึ่งงานวิจัยนี้ใช้แบบสอบถามเพื่อเก็บข้อมูลผู้บริหารชาวต่างชาติ 15 คน และพนักงานธนาคารชาวไทย 15 คนเป็นเครื่องมือในการวิจัย

ผลการศึกษาแสดงให้เห็นว่าปัญหาหลักจากการสื่อสารระหว่างผู้บริหารชาวต่างชาติและพนักงานชาวไทย มีดังนี้ 1 ปัญหาการฟังของผู้บริหารชาวต่างชาติที่เกิดขึ้นในการสนทนากับพนักงานชาวไทยเกิดขึ้นจากสำเนียงและการออกเสียงภาษาอังกฤษของพนักงานชาวไทย และ การที่ผู้บริหารชาวต่างชาติไม่ขอให้พนักงานชาวไทยพูดซ้ำอีกครั้งเมื่อพวกเขาไม่เข้าใจในสิ่งที่ชาวไทยพูด ในทางกลับกันปัญหาด้านการพูดภาษาอังกฤษของผู้บริหารชาวต่างชาติ นั้น ไม่มีเป็นเพราะเป็นภาษาที่ใช้โดยกำเนิด 2 ปัญหาด้านการฟังภาษาอังกฤษของพนักงานชาวไทยเกิดขึ้นเนื่องจากไม่เข้าใจคำศัพท์เฉพาะ ส่วนวนภาษาแบบเจ้าของภาษาภาษาเฉพาะวงการ และ คำแสดงที่ผู้บริหารชาวต่างชาติใช้ ยิ่งไปกว่านั้นพนักงานชาวไทยยังมีข้อจำกัดด้านคำพูดเมื่อสื่อสารภาษาอังกฤษกับผู้บริหารชาวต่างชาติ พนักงานชาวไทยยังไม่คุ้นเคยกับการออกเสียงหรือสำเนียงภาษาอังกฤษของกลุ่มสนทนา พนักงานชาวไทยไม่สามารถจับคำสำคัญได้ ไม่เข้าใจใจความสำคัญถ้าหากกลุ่มสนทนาพูดเร็วเกินไป พนักงานชาวไทยมักจะแปลประโยคที่ได้ยินมาเป็นภาษาไทยก่อนจะตอบผู้บริหารชาวต่างชาติในการสนทนา พนักงานชาวไทยมีข้อจำกัดด้านคำศัพท์ และการใช้ภาษาตามหลักไวยากรณ์ต่ำ พนักงานชาวไทยยังประสบปัญหาด้านการพูดสื่อสารภาษาอังกฤษเพราะมีคำศัพท์ที่จะใช้จำกัด

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และสำเนียงอีกด้วย



The Master's Project Advisor, Chair of Business English for International Communication Program and Oral Defense Committee have approved this Master's Project, "Oral English Communication Problems Between Foreign Executives and Their Subordinates Working in the Banking Sector in Bangkok," by Sorodda Upamai as partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Arts Degree in Business English for International Communication at Srinakharinwirot University.

Master's Project Advisor

.....
(Assistant Professor Dr. Sriwaroon Chumpavan)

Chair of Business English for International Communication

.....
(Assistant Professor Dr. Prapaipan Aimchoo)

Oral Defense Committee

..... Chair
(Assistant Professor Dr. Sriwaroon Chumpavan)

..... Committee
(Assistant Professor Nattha Kaewcha)

..... Committee
(Ms.Aranya Srijongjai)

This Master's Project has been approved as partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Arts Degree in Business English for International Communication at Srinakharinwirot University.

..... Dean of Faculty of Humanities
(Dr. Wanee Aujsatid)

October., 2013

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CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Introduction

The Thai economy is developing rapidly and many international companies have invested in Thai financial institutions. As a result, Thais in banking sector now have to deal with foreign investors, executives, and co-workers. English has been widely accepted as the medium of communication in international business. English is also useful in other fields, such as commerce and aviation, education, technology, science, tourism, and diplomacy (Jandt, 1995).

Many businesspeople build their success on their English proficiency, as employers value English ability both as a practical skill and as a Key Performance Indicator (Ashworth, Beard & Hortop, 1994). Although English is not an official language, its use in Thailand continues to increase. Thailand has developed a large amount of international trade with foreign countries in which English is spoken either as a first language or as a foreign language. Therefore, English proficiency is a mandatory requirement for any professional in the business sector working for a domestic or a multinational company (Nagi, 2012). Learning English in non-native language countries is increasingly important because English is accepted as one of the most important world language. In service industries, English skills play a significant role for people who work in the service business as banking sector.

In order to survive in a competitive market, a good command of English is necessary along with professional knowledge, expertise, and experience. A deficiency in English may result in adverse effects on the business opportunities of an organization and the professional development of subordinates.

Because Thai subordinates have to deal with foreign customers or foreign colleagues, the degree of English communication skills especially in speaking and listening are noticeable required. Sufficient English proficiency will help them to be able to work and communicate with their foreign executives and customers successfully and effectively.

The importance of the English language

English has been recognized as a global language to communicate in many fields including education, medication, technology, and business. Nowadays, English is less of a foreign language than a global business language; it has an official and special status in more than 75 countries and a total population of 312 to 380 million speakers (CIA World Factbook, 2011). English is the first language used in the United States of America, Canada, the United Kingdom, the Republic of Ireland, South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand. More than 70 other countries use English as an official language, including Ghana, India, Singapore, and Nigeria, while other countries still use English as a foreign language.

Currently, the use of English in Thailand is on the rise. Because of economic development in Thailand, Thais have more contact with foreign companies and foreigners doing business in Thailand. As a result, English has an increasingly important role in the business context (Ekkasittipol, 2010). Due to an influx of new knowledge and the expansion and accessibility of the Internet, there has been a major evolution in fields such as business, education, and technology that require high proficiency in English. Because of the economic downturn in Thailand over the last few years, many Thai companies embraced regional and international co-operative strategies, while international companies used association, merger, and takeover strategies to extend their business into other regions. For this reason, English is the language used to communicate, negotiate,

and execute transactions in situations where there would otherwise be a language barrier, for example, between a native English speaker and non-native English speaker.

Therefore, large numbers of companies are now operating in a global market where English is not the first language (Crystal, 2003).

English has been accepted as a key instrument of communication in the Thai business context. The research on English needs and wants in the workplace also suggests that the English curriculum in Thai universities cannot meet the demand for the English skills required in the workplace. Additionally, English has become a requirement in many fields, professions, and occupations (Manivannan, 2006). In the workplace, subordinates responsible for international relations are required to have English communication abilities that utilize all of the four skills, reading, writing, speaking and listening. As many international companies have invested in Thailand, many Thai subordinates are required to work in an English-speaking environment and communicate in English. However, when people from different cultural backgrounds communicate, a number of problems can occur.

In Thai's banking sector routine work, Thai subordinates communicate with foreign executives by using English as a medium. As Richards (1985) claims that, English is the international language and important for people who work in many field such as business, tourism, and civil services. Consequently, English listening and speaking skill are important for Thai subordinates because they are always use these skills in the department. Commonly, Thais use Thai language to communication in their lifestyle when Thais have to communicate with foreigners, the problems might occur. The sample problems are as follows: (a) foreign executives use technical terms that cause Thai subordinates do not understand the point of foreign executives, (b) Thai subordinates spend too much to think before they answer foreign executives, (c) foreign executives do

not understand Thais' English accent and pronunciation, sometime he/she misunderstand, (d) Thai subordinates have to present in the meeting, but they cannot make a good presentation because they do not have enough confidence to speak English, and (e) Thai subordinates do not understand the key words when my colleagues speak too quickly. Communication problems cause longer work process within the bank and waste the recourses of the bank such as tape recorder, paper, telephone fee, and especially working time. This study will find the most problems and suggest special training to solve the English communication problems. According to the above problems, the researcher is interested in conducting this study to find oral English communication problems of foreign executives and Thai subordinates working in the Thai banking sector in Bangkok.

Purpose of the Study

This study was an attempt to provide a particular understanding of the nature of oral communication problems in the workplace, particularly when English was used as a common language between foreign executives and local subordinates, as well as the different forms of communication that exist in the workplace. This was especially true for a company that has foreign collaborators or expatriate subordinates, as they need to be able to identify and resolve communication problems in the workplace.

Research Questions

1. What oral English communication problems did foreign executives experience when communicating with Thai subordinates?
2. What oral English communication problems did Thai subordinates experience when communicating with foreign executives?

Significance of the Study

The rise of foreign investment in Thailand has made English communication skills an important tool for Thais in terms of career advancement. The Thai Board of Investment (BOI) encouraged both the private and public sector to develop an industry standard of English communication that will not only meet the requirements of foreign investors, but also encouraged future investment (The Thai Board of Investment, 2011). Consequently, the staff of companies in both the private and public sector should develop their English proficiency in order to communicate more effectively with foreign partners.

This study aimed to investigate the oral communication problems between foreign executives and Thai subordinates in the banking sector. Therefore, this study should be useful to the banking sector in terms of identifying and overcoming oral communication problems between the Thai staff and foreign partners. Moreover, the findings of this study would also suggest methods to improve the English proficiency of Thai staff, such as appropriate training or short courses.

Methodology

Participants.

This study emphasized the English competency and communication problems that occurred between Thai subordinates and foreign executives in the banking sector. The selected commercial bank was a joint venture and merger between Thai and western financial institutions. Commercial banks have long dominated the Thai financial system. In 2011, Thai commercial banks deposited over 7.8 trillion baht. Now, several years after the financial crisis, Thailand's commercial banks can once again make higher profits and have regained the trust of both investors and the public. Furthermore, several changes have occurred in the Thai banking sector. One of these new changes was the "strategic partner" method.

The participants of this study were 30 subordinates work in the banking sector in Bangkok. The participants included 15 Western expatriates from the Netherlands and Canada, Britain, the United States of America, and Australia, who had lived and worked in Thailand more than one year, and 15 Thai subordinates working and coordinating with foreign executives.

Instrument.

The instrument used to collect the data in this study was a questionnaire developed by the researcher. The questions focused on English communication problems between Thai staff and foreign executives. The project advisor examined the questionnaire to determine if it was appropriate for use. Moreover, the researcher asked an organizational behavior expert, who was not a participant in this study, to check that the language in the questionnaire was appropriate for the participants.

The questionnaire consists of two parts, Part I asks about personal information of the participants includes gender, nationality, educational background, and work experiences. Part II focuses on English communication problems between Thai subordinates and foreign executives. The questionnaire was developed to examine the English communication problems between Thai staff and foreign executives. The questionnaire addresses the communication problems that are applicable to oral communication.

Data collection procedures.

The data was collected during the second semester of the 2011 academic year. The participants were asked to complete the questionnaire before the end of April. The data were collected at the end of April in order to give the participants enough time to complete the questionnaire. Before completing the questionnaire, the participants were asked to state that they were willing to participate in the study. For those who were not

willing to participate in the study, the researcher found willing replacements. The participants were asked to return the completed questionnaire the day after they received it from the researcher.

Data analysis.

The data were analyzed in relation to the research questions regarding English communication problems. The personal information data obtained from Part I of the questionnaire such as gender, nationality, and education background were analyzed for descriptive information. Part II was concerned with English communication problems applicable to oral communication. The data from based on the level of agreement of the participant with a series of statements were analyzed quantitatively for percentage and mean score. The tables were also used to illustrate the answers of the participants. Finally, the researcher discussed the results in relation to the research questions and made conclusions and recommendations for further study.

Confidentiality of the Participants

The participants were informed that the data would remain confidential. None of the real names of the participants appeared in the study, and they were destroyed on completion of the study.

Organization of the Study

The study consists of five chapters. Chapter I contains the background and the English communication problems. Chapter II presents a review of the related literature that is relevant to the study. Chapter III discusses the methodology used in this study. Chapter IV is concerned with the results of this study. Chapter V presents the conclusion, a discussion and recommendations for further study.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter is a review of the literature related to the effective communication research. The study is divided into seven parts:

1. The Thai Banking Sector
2. Communication Process
3. English Communication Skills
4. The Importance of Oral Communication Skills
5. Effective Communication
6. Non-Native English Speakers Problems
7. Previous Studies or Related Studies

The Thai Banking Sector

The major industries that play the most important roles in the Thai economy are agriculture, industrial, manufacturing, energy, and services. Thailand has developed very fast in recent years especially in the tourism sector. According to the report of Tourism Authority of Thailand (2010), 19 million tourists arrived in 2011. In terms of financial institutions, several banks in Thailand such as Siam Commercial Bank, Thai Farmer Bank, Bangkok Bank, Thai Military Bank (TMB), and Ayudthaya Bank are in top five Thai commercial banks, (Bank of Thailand, 2011). Now, several years after the crisis, Thailand's commercial banks are making higher profits and have regained the trust of both investors and the public. Furthermore, there have been several changes made in the Thai banking sector. The main change is the increase in competition among commercial banks, due to the introduction of new commercial banks, including foreign firms who

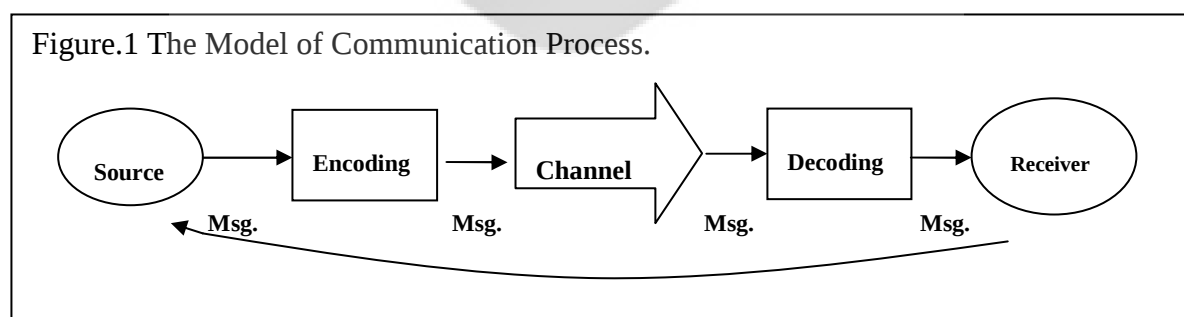
want to invest in the Thai commercial banking sector. This trend is beneficial to the banking sector, and in order to encourage and support direct investments from foreign companies, the Bank of Thailand (BOT) conducts feasibility studies on direct investment in Thailand. These investments include potential joint ventures between foreign and Thai companies. Moreover, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)'s plan to establish an economic community by 2015 will result in increased foreign competition in the banking industry (Business Monitor International, 2011).

The Thai Government has created conditions that are advantageous for foreign companies to invest in Thailand. These companies typically bring their technology, materials, and employees with them to Thailand. There are also creeping takeover rules that apply to banks and financial institutions. At present, ACL Bank, Bangkok Bank, Krungthai Bank, Siam City Bank, and Thanachart Bank are believed to have less than 25% foreign ownership; Therefore, there is scope to increase the level of foreign ownership. The Bank of Ayutthaya, BankThai, Kasikorn Bank, Kiatnakin Bank, TMB Bank, Tisco Bank, Siam Commercial Bank, UOB (Thai) Bank, and Standard Chartered Bank already have substantial foreign ownership of up to 49%, and thus may not be an attractive option for potential foreign investment, unless the existing foreign shareholders are seeking an exit.

Many of the international organizations who have invested in Thai commercial banks use mergers and acquisitions to manage their businesses in Thailand. A merger can be defined as a strategy to combine two companies into a single entity. An acquisition refers to the acquisition of the assets of one company by another. In an acquisition, both companies may continue to exist, whereas in a merger, only one company continues to exist.

Communication Process

Communication is an important part of every day working life. Many people communicate with each other all the time. The definition of communication is the transmission of a message from one person to another or many other people, whether in a verbal or a non-verbal transmission. The simple process of communication includes the context, sender, message, and receiver (Barrett, 2006). Moreover, Hamilton and Parker (1997) defined communication as the process of people sharing ideas, feelings, and opinions with others. According to this definition, communication for results refers to either communicating with an individual, a small group or with a larger number of people. These definitions can be simplified by using Schramm's model (1954). His model was considered one of the most famous of all communication theories since it evolved, which proved to be very comprehensive. In Schramm's model, the foregoing communication has always required three main elements as its source, the message, and the destination. Ideally, the source encodes a message and transmits it to its destination via some channel, where the message is received, and decoded (Schramm, 1954 as show in the diagram below.



Communication process includes eight components as sender, messages, encoding, channel, decoding, receiver, feedback, and context. The details of these components are as follows:

1. **Sender.** Senders are the people who transfer the message to the receiver.
Moreover, a sender makes use of symbols (words or graphic or visual aids) to convey the message and generate the required response. For instance, a training manager conducts a training class for new batch of employees. Senders may be individuals, groups, or organizations (Gamble & Gamble, 1996).
2. **Messages.** Messages are key ideas that the sender wants to communicate to others. It is a sign that elicits responses of recipients. Messages include symbols that people use to represent the ideas, feelings, gestures, body movements, tone, and touch (Pearson & Nelson, 1997). In conclusion, once the main objective of the message is clear, the process of communication can now begin when the response to the message is finally conveyed.
3. **Encoding.** Encoding is the process of transferring the information to communicate into a form. People send and receive messages through all their senses. Hearing, sight, and touch, which are the primary channels for interpersonal communication used in everyday life (Gamble & Gamble, 1996).
4. **Channel.** Channel refers to a medium through which a message is transmitted to its intended audience (Bovee & Thill, 1992). Messages are conveyed through channels, with verbal channels including face-to-face meetings, telephone and videoconferencing; and written channels including letters, emails, memos, and reports. Moreover, when using these different channels to get a point across, it may provide different strengths and weaknesses.
5. **Decoding.** Decoding takes place once the receiver gets the message from the sender, thus sending stimulus to the brain for processing to apply meaning to it. This processing stage is what constitutes decoding. The receiver can then begin to interpret the symbols sent by the sender, translating the message to their own set of

experiences in order to make the symbols meaningful. Successful communication takes place when the receiver correctly interprets the sender's message (Bovee & Thill, 1992).

6. **Receiver.** The receiver is the individual or individuals to whom the message is being directed to. The extent to which this person comprehends the message will depend on a number of factors, which include the following: how much the individual or individuals know about the topic, their receptivity to the message, and the relationship and trust that exists between sender and receiver. All interpretations by the receiver are influenced by their experiences, attitudes, knowledge, skills, perceptions, and culture. It is similar to the sender's relationship with encoding (Bovee & Thill, 1992).
7. **Feedback.** Feedback is the main component of the communication process as it permits the sender to analyze the efficacy of the message. It helps the sender in attesting the correct interpretation of message by the decoder. Feedback may be verbal (through words) or non-verbal (in form of smiles, sighs, etc.). Feedback may also be in forms of memos, reports, and any other (Hybels & Weaver II, 2007).
8. **Context.** Context is the situation in which your message is delivered, which may also include the surrounding environments or broader culture aspects as corporate culture, international cultures, and so on (Bovee & Thill, 1992).

A more comprehensive definition of communication is the process of the sender transmitting information or their ideas, attitudes, and opinions. The primary purpose of communication in the organization is enabling and energizing subordinates to carry out the organization strategies or policies. It is very necessary for an organization's personnel to have the potential to send, receive, and to identify messages very quickly and accurately. In the organization, communication can flow in three directions as upward

communication, downward communication, and horizontal/literal communication (Hartley & Bruckmann, 2002).

1. Upward Communication. Upward communication is the flow of information from subordinates to superiors, or from employees to management. Without upward communication, management works in a vacuum, not knowing if messages have been received properly, or if other problems exist in the organization. By definition, communication is a two-way affair. Yet for effective two-way organizational communication to occur, it must begin from the bottom.
2. Downward Communication. Communication that flows from a higher level in an organization to a lower level is a downward communication. In other words, communication from superiors to subordinates in a chain of command is a downward communication. The managers to transmit work-related information to the employees at lower levels use this communication flow. Employees require this information for performing their jobs and for meeting the expectations of their managers.
3. Horizontal/Literal communication. Horizontal communication normally involves coordinating information, and allows people with the same or similar rank in an organization to cooperate or collaborate. Communication among employees at the same level is crucial for the accomplishment of work.

In addition, effective organization flows in various, directions, downward, upward, and horizontal, which are officially recognized by the enterprises. In organizations with an authoritarian atmosphere, these different kinds of communication exist. Information that can be transmitted in this form includes: implementation of goals, strategies, and objectives. Downward flow of information through the different levels of the organization is too time consuming (Appleby, 2003). Furthermore, effective

communication is a critical element for an organization's survival, whether being interpersonal or at an external level.

English Communication Skills

In Thailand, the importance of communication is often not recognized by those who seem to make no special effort to learn how to communicate or actually communicate. However, communication is increasingly important in the contemporary world because of the amount of information and new technology, large organizations, as well as an ever-increasing variety of products and consumer preferences, and wide and varied markets. Many people need to communicate the objective data in order to accomplish any given task (Rodgers, 1986). In addition, we need to convey and elicit personalized and subjective feelings or emotions for many reasons, such as motivating people and deriving satisfaction from work. This can make communication a complicated and resource-intensive communication activity. In order to communicate effectively and efficiently, effective communication systems need to be designed and implemented. Moreover, English communication skills are essential in working effectively as a member of a group or team.

Consequently, effective communication skills have become an increasingly important factor in the current business context in Thailand. These English skills include listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The essential characteristics of each skill are essential for effective communication. Moreover, these four skills build the basis of the interdependence of language and communication (Rodgers, 1986). Therefore, communication skills are essential in the communication process and can have a great impact in the work place, in social situations and in the personal lives of individuals (Rodgers, 1986).

Communication is a two-way process that involves sending and receiving a message. The sending part of the process may use written or oral communication. In terms of written communication, if the writer is the sender, the reader is the receiver. In oral communication, if the speaker is the sender, the listener is the receiver. The effectiveness of oral communication depends on both the proper functioning of the sending process and the appropriate functioning of the receiving process (Stewart, Zimmer & Clark, 1985).

Presently, English is used as a key language of the world. It is a national language of the largest speech community in the world and Mandarin being second. Globalization and the exportation of innovation and entertainment helped English to become the language of business. In the rapidly globalizing post-WWII world, many English Speaking countries dictated a great deal of world politics and world business. English is the most common language form of communication for a variety of information, including academic and scientific news. Many organizations in the present business world use English as an official language of communication. Moreover, English is used in international affairs and is also accepted as a medium for international communication, business transactions, and cooperation (Lowe, 1996).

English in Thailand has been accepted as a foreign language, not the country's official language. People learn English starting from kindergarten to the university level and may continue to study more by taking private courses. Most people pay high attention to English learning, not only in the general education system but also outside the classroom. Globalization has helped businesses of many economies grow, and this has also been proven true in Thailand (Kiatcharas, 2011).

Additionally, communication is crucial in any business, and many experts consider communication to be one of the most critical aspects of a business's success. Business

communication skills fall into a few basic forms that include oral, written, and listening skills. The importance of oral and written communication has its own significance. The international organizations use English as a medium to communicate with Thai commercial banks when they want a merger in order to avoid any miscommunications in terms of language and culture (Suksriroj, 2009),. Many Thai English speakers experience difficulties with pronunciation in terms of speech as well as other problems with listening, reading, and writing. These problems occur due to a number of factors, mainly in terms of differences in language and culture. English communication skills are essential to a successful career in an international company in Thailand.

The Type of Communication in the Organization

Communication in the organization helps many people to learn about others and themselves. It is also concerned with what is transmitted, how it is to be transmitted, and what hinders or aids this process (Arnold & Underman-Boggs, 2007). Interpersonal communication is so significant that it has been suggested that many problems associated with patients' non-compliance could be avoided by improving the communication skills of health professionals (Ley, 1988). Business communication entails massive amounts of information. Organizations nowadays are very large; having exceptional feedback is a fundamental part in business communication. There are various levels of hierarchy in an organization with greater number of levels, which becomes difficult to manage. This is where communication plays a very important role in the process of directing and controlling the people within an organization. Instantaneous feedback can be obtained and misunderstandings can be minimal or avoided through effective communication between superiors and subordinates in an organization, between organization and society at large (for example between management and trade unions). It is essential for success and growth of an organization and miscommunication should not occur in any

organization if communication is goal oriented. Rules, regulations, and policies of a company have to be transmitted to people within and outside an organization.

Proper business communication is regulated by certain rules and norms. In the past, business communication was only limited to paperwork, telephone calls etc. But now with advent of technology, we have cell phones, video conferencing, emails, and satellite communication to support business communication. Effective business communication helps in building goodwill of an organization (Guo, 2009). Two types of Business Communication are:

1. Written communication, which includes all the skills necessary for effective expression of thoughts, feelings, and ideas in written form. Written communication in business includes reports, agendas, manuals etc.
2. Oral communication, which refers to spoken verbal communication, and can be formal or informal. Oral communication includes speeches, presentations, discussions, and all aspects of interpersonal communication. Generally, business communication is a formal method of communication, which can be seen in meetings, interviews, group discussions, and speeches. An example of informal business communication would be internal memos, emails, or informal conversations between colleagues. In face-to-face communication, body language and tonality also play a significant role and may have a greater impact to the listener than just information content. This type of communication also garners immediate feedback.

Informal communication can be both spoken and written. Some language is appropriate for speech, whereas other language is appropriate for writing, but no language exists solely as a written language (Hassett, 2003). In other words, oral communication is a vital component of any spoken language. In terms of the four skills, listening and

speaking are often identified as the skills that foreign language learners at all levels are often weakest at and experience the most difficulty with (Hassett, 2003). Moreover, Tjinto (1999) studied English communication in the airline industry. He argued that there are many different types of communication, and that these forms could be both spoken and written, and formal or informal. Tjinto (1999) also suggested that employees should practice active listening with their customers by communicating with English native speakers as often as possible to become familiar with the different accents of native speakers of English. Katkaew (1997) used a questionnaire to ask flight attendants what they regarded as the most important English skill and which skill they needed to improve the most. The results indicated that listening and speaking were both the most important skills and skills they needed to master.

The importance of oral communication.

Oral communication refers to having the capability skills of speaking and listening needed to participate effectively verbally in discussions, exchange thoughts and information, making clear and convincing presentations, and interacting with a variety of audiences (Brown, 1994). Its pattern and definition are depending on the context where it occurred that can be ranged from very informal to very formal. Oral communication covers both speaking and listening forms. It is difficult to decide which one came first. Furthermore, oral communication implies communication through the use of the mouth. It includes individuals conversing with each other, be it direct conversation or telephonic conversation. Speeches, presentations, discussions are all forms of oral communication. Oral communication is generally recommended when the communication matter is of temporary kind or where a direct interaction is required. Face to face, communication such as meetings, lectures, conferences, and interviews, show significance to build rapport and trust.

Furthermore, the awareness that were worth the importance of oral English has been supported by many studies from several regions, especially from within Asia such as a study of Chinese business professionals on the English language needs for WTO (World Trade Organization) entry. The findings of this study demonstrated that listening and speaking skills are considered the most important skills among four skills in English. The demand of English proficiency influenced the awareness of English learning especially for many countries including Thailand. Presently, in the organization, communication is that of a formal nature and requires a person to present their thoughts in a precise and concise manner. The quality of speaking in a precise manner proves to be helpful in a face-to-face conversation. Effective oral communication skills can be beneficial to people in various occupations and positions, but is not easily taught as most personal skills. Many communication studies provide strategies and steps for achieving effective oral communication. It is important to keep in mind that practice is essential to acquiring these skills (McArthur, 1998).

In summary, oral communication in business provides a variety of benefits. First, oral communication accompanied by nonverbal signifiers, which provides context, which can enhance understanding in the communication process. Posture, facial expressions, and habitual movements may provide clues as to an individual's feelings about the ideas being discussed. Even in telephone conversations, pitch, rate, volume and the tone of the respective speakers can help in understanding sentiments. Moreover, oral communication also provides a springboard for relational development. Unlike emails, memos and chat functions, which tends to take a task-oriented approach to communication, the immediacy involved in oral communication allows for instant feedback and a relational approach. This is important, as strong relationships in business often lead to more profitable and productive cooperation.

Effective Communication

The concept of the communication strategy came into existence because of the inadequacy of former theories to offer a clear conception of what it means to ‘know’ a language. Linguistic theories are primarily concerned with “an ideal speaker-listener in a completely homogeneous speech community, who knows his/her language perfectly (Chomsky, 1965, p.3).” People can share information, ideas, feelings, the spoken, and the written words, as well as body language and manners that add meaning to a message. People use symbols to send and receive meaning, as people they use verbal and nonverbal signals throughout their life (Hybels & Weaver II, 2007). Moreover, one definition of effective communication is “a dynamic process in which people attempt to share their internal states with other people through the use of symbols or a symbol (Samovar, Porter & McDaniel, 2007, p.112).”

People can understand communication more effectively when they can understand the components of the communication process and its various elements: sender, receiver, message, channel, noise, feedback, and setting (Hybels & Weaver II, 2007). Senders and receivers pass on messages via a channel, such as e-mail, a telephone, a bulletin board, a media advertisement, a memo, or an annual report, and receive feedback, the response of the receiver to the sender. Noise or other types of interference that occurring between sender and receiver (Tubb & Moss, 2003) can disturb the message.

In conclusion, effective communication is defined as the balance of an intended message from sender received with the same perceived meaning (Ross, 2006). Effective or successful communication requires an awareness of vocabulary, grammatical structure, the phonetics of language, as well as various social and cultural aspects (Importa, 2011). In order to achieve effective communication, it is important to understand how the people you are interacting with may interpret your message. People obtain information through

their senses, and it is therefore necessary for communication to include both verbal and non-verbal components. Effective communication is the key to achievement in business. In international business context, the aspects of cultural and the linguistic background may cause problems for non-native English speakers.

Definition of Thais and Non-Native English Speakers

English communication problems might occur among non-native speakers of English because of their differences in backgrounds. Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, and the Philippines are countries that use English fluently, but non-native speakers from Japan, Korea, and China are more difficult to understand because their pronunciation is less fluent due to their mother tongue and accent (Jung, 2010).

The term of “non-native English speakers” refers to people who do not speak English as their mother tongues, who learned English as a second or third language, or who are brought up in families in which English is not their first language spoken at home. Therefore, Thais can be identified as non-native speakers, as Thai is the official language of Thailand (Wiriyachitra, 2002). English is widely used in Thailand as the first foreign language and as a way to medium with foreigners, both native and non-native English speakers (Khamkhien, 2010; Laopongharn & Sercombe, 2009).

Non-Native English Speakers English Communication Problems

Wiriyachitra (2002) found that most Thais believe English is too difficult for them to achieve fluency. Some of the reasons why Thais cannot achieve fluency include mother tongue interference, syntax, idiomatic usage, pronunciation, as well as a lack of opportunity to use English in their daily lives, and shyness about speaking English. Ekwannang (2004) found that factors such as accent and pronunciation resulted in Thais misinterpreting messages from native or non-native English speakers. Moreover, Noreewong (2006) also found that incorrect pronunciation was a factor that led to Thais

misinterpreting messages from native or non-native English speakers. Moreover, Jung (2010) indicates in her study that pronunciation can also be problematic for non-native English speakers in other countries. Therefore, non-native English speakers need to learn the varieties of speeds, sounds, and styles of English to avoid miscommunication. The communication problems mentioned above occur when people lack language skills and have various intercultural issues, which make communication difficult or embarrassing for Thais and native or non-native English speaking foreigners.

Moreover, Ross (2006) also indicates that in the communication process between sender and receiver, there are additional communication problems.

1. Semantic problems. A poor choice of words or unclear language can cause semantic problems. A lack of vocabulary and poor English grammar are also apparent when speakers lack the ability to express an idea clearly. As a result, they will have limited communication skills (Pruksanubal, 2006). Moreover, the same word may mean completely different things to different people and if people use difficult or unusual words, miscommunication may also occur (Gibson, John, & James, 2000).
2. Mixed messages. A Mixed message is a communication problem that occurs when the receiver verbally communicates one meaning, but their body language or non-verbal communication conveys another. This also results in miscommunication. Additionally, non-verbal cues such as gesture and pauses can also be misinterpreted by listeners from different cultures (Gilakjani & Ahmadi, 2011).
3. Absence of feedback. A lack of reinforcement from an original message is one of the main factors leading to the absence of feedback. Although one-way communication is commonly used in the workplace, it is also limited as one-way communication is only concerned with messages from the sender to the receiver. This may be convenient for the sender, but subsequently inconvenient for the receiver. The circle

of effective communication needs to be closed by checking the response and the feedback between speakers (Ross, 2006).

Previous Studies

Noreewong (2006) found intercultural communication problems between Thai employees and Western expatriates, identified how cultural differences affected communication at aclEnglish (Thailand). The participants were 12 Thais and 15 western expatriates, and the information was collected via an interview and a questionnaire. The results of the study revealed that the most significant communication problem was the misinterpretation of contexts and contents. In addition, communication failure was due to the variety of accents among the Western expatriates, the use of complex idioms and slang, as well as intercultural communication problems. Moreover, the results showed that 70% of the employees at aclEnglish (Thailand) agreed that intercultural communication problems affected job performance in many ways, including a lack of progress on assigned work, the length of time required to finish a task, employee resentment and an increased turnover rate. The solutions offered by this study were that individuals showed more consideration when communicating with others, developed more empathy and patience, which in turn increased the rate of effective intercultural exchanges between both groups.

Pruksanubal (2006) explored the communication problems experienced by Thai vendors and foreigners at Khao San Road. This study was concerned with how Thai vendors communicated with foreigners, what communication problems Thai vendors experienced and how they found ways to resolve these problems. The participants that participated in this study were 25 Thai vendors who sold goods or services on Khao San Road. The findings of this study revealed that Thai vendors spoke English with foreign customers. Most of the vendors had never had any formal schooling in English, such as

an English course, but they did manage to independently practice English by using dictionaries and doing English exercises on their own. The frequent exposure of the vendors to foreigners and their retail experience at Khao San Road also helped them to improve their English. Although the Thai vendors could not speak English well, they used non-verbal methods to communicate with foreign customers. The communication problems identified by this study were a lack of knowledge of English, a lack of vocabulary, difficulty understanding the varieties of accents and the factor of background noise.

Somsai and Intaraprasert (2011) study conducted to investigate how university students majoring in English for International Communication solve their face-to-face oral communication problems. The participants were 48 students of three Rajamangala Universities of Technology in Thailand.

The results reveal two main categories of strategies for coping with face-to-face oral communication problems. The two groups of strategies employed for conveying a message to the interlocutor as the message sender, continuous interaction, and discontinuous interaction subcategories; and one group of strategies for understanding the message as the message receiver were reported.

Ekwanang (2004) explored verbal cross-cultural communication problems among Western employees in Thailand. Her study focused on verbal cross-cultural communication and language problems in the workplace. The participants consisted of 20 western expatriates. They were interviewed face-to-face and were asked to complete a questionnaire for analysis in accordance with the objective of the study.

The results revealed that misinterpretation of context and content of statements due to the Thai staff's lack of vocabulary, low level of language competency, poor pronunciation, and difficulty with accents. When Thai staffs communicated with foreign expatriates,

misunderstanding occurred because Thai staffs were unfamiliar with different English accents and English idioms and slang. Moreover, this study showed that Thai culture and characteristics are other communication barriers of communication problems.

The importance of having good speaking skills has influenced many studies, including Surattayawong's research. Surattayawong (2006) explored the English speaking skills and the major problems with speaking English using the experiences of nurses working at Rajavithi Hospital. The nurses often spoke English to foreign patients, as well as doctors and nurses. The English speaking problems experienced by nurses included grammatical errors, difficulty with self-expression, an inability to find the right words, inappropriate intonation and stress, mispronunciation and lack of confidence when speaking to foreigners.

Pawapatcharadom (2007) investigated the English language problems and learning strategies of 30 Thai students at Mahidol University. It revealed that the most serious problem experienced by Thai students in English language learning was writing, while the intercultural communication barrier was seen as the least serious problem. Another significant problem met was the inability of the students to write an essay within a limited period. The problem that was mentioned least by the students was the feeling of being ashamed of their pronunciation when communicating with an English native speaker. This also shows that oral communication problems are among the most significant communication problems.

The study of speaking skills in Thailand, Thanakorn (2007) studied English speaking problems of staff members at SME Bank. The findings showed that the most frequent English speaking problems of the staff members was the lack of chance to practice their English. The second problem is that the staff members had problems in producing grammatically correct sentences in English. The third problem was that staff members

had to pause and think about the meanings of words they heard. The fourth problem was that staffs did not know the meanings of some of technical terms they came across. The last problem they had difficulty in was using correct verb tenses. The findings of this study suggested that the SME Bank should recognize the English speaking problems of their staffs and conduct training courses to improve their staffs' English speaking skills.

In other English, non-native speaking regions, Bekleyen (2009) revealed that the students rated their listening ability at the "poor" level. In the process of listening, the students are affected by many factors such as tone of voice, the rate of speech, the voice quality of the speaker and a lack of visual materials. It was also found that language courses offered in High Schools focused on reading and grammar skills and were designed with the University Entrance Exam in mind.

The study of listening skills in Thailand, Mudlae (2011) studied the English language problem and language needs of Thai staff working in the automotive industry. The study showed that 30 staff members who worked on the operation line had problems of listening and reading at its highest level. The cause of the problems was that the staffs could not understand the accents, the words, and the sentences spoken by their foreign colleagues. Their listening comprehension of the various accents of native English speakers from many countries required improvement. The study of Nuangrit (2007) found that the students' attitudes toward the importance of listening, listening problems and strategies of 100 undergraduate students at Prince of Songkla University in Faculty of Service Industries. The findings showed that most students considered natural speech of native speakers as the biggest listening problem and the most useful listening strategy is trying not to listen to every word. Moreover, most students considered that the most important skill, considering on the time spent by people was speaking and listening respectively.

Summary

In the 21st century, globalization has connected the world in terms of communication. As a result, knowledge and innovations can easily be shared and communication between individuals via social media and other forms of technology has dramatically increased. As Thailand is a member of the global community, we should be aware of the importance of the English language. The adoption of English as a second language is one of two strategic keys in the Thai regional and national development.

The first strategic key is the importance of Thais developing a level of English that meets the international standard. In many developing countries, the tendency to learn English has sharply increased as English is a global language used for communication in a variety of fields and for a number of reasons; communicative purposes such as exploring understanding and cooperation, professional reasons such as career advancement or in economical terms, increasing the level of competitiveness at both a domestic and an international level.

The second strategic key is the importance of English in terms of achieving the goal of establishing an ASEAN community by 2015. According to the action plan of ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community blueprint (ASCC), the ASEAN members are encouraged to use English as an official language for communication among all people in the ASEAN community in order to improve the knowledge of language skills and increase competition in a knowledge-based economy.

The researcher strongly believes that the English language is very important as a strategic key to develop English communication in the Thai business context. This is especially true for oral English communication, as oral communication is one of the most powerful forms of human interaction. Communication in the workplace is essential for success and as a result, employees need to be able to communicate effectively. The

differences between both language and culture inevitably result in some miscommunication at international companies in Thailand. Presently, the role and the importance of marketing in the financial and banking sector are growing, and many more foreign companies will be investing in the Thai banking sector, so the importance of effective communication is increasing. The commercial banks that have the employees with the most effective English communication skills will be the most likely to invite further foreign investment into the Thai commercial banking sector.



CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter includes the methodology of the study, which consists of the participants, research instrument, data collection procedure, and data analysis.

Method

Participants.

This study focused on the English communication problems experienced by Thai employees and communication problems that occur between Thai employees and foreign executives in the banking sector. The selected commercial bank was a joint venture and merger between Thai and western financial institutions. The financial system in Thailand has long been dominated by commercial banks. In 2011, over 7.8 trillion baht of total deposits were made in Thai commercial banks. Now, several years after the financial crisis, Thai commercial banks have regained the trust of both investors and the public and are making bigger profits. Furthermore, there have been significant changes made in the Thai banking sector. One of these changes is known as the “strategic partner” method.

In this study, 30 subordinates from the Risk Management Department in the Thai banking sector in Bangkok were selected as participants. The participants included 15 Western expatriates from the Netherlands, Australia, Britain, and the United States of America, who had lived and worked in Thailand for more than one year, and 15 Thai subordinates who worked and coordinated with foreign executives. They were invited for answering the questionnaires at the beginning of April because there were fewer cases at this time than any other time of the month. The reason of selecting Risk Management Department because the subordinates in this department always use English as medium to communicate not only within the department but they also use English to communicate

with their clients. Moreover, the researcher was a secretary of the Head of this department so the researcher faced with the real problems. Therefore, the findings of this research were an advantage for the researcher's organization.

Instrument.

The questionnaire was developed by the researcher. The questions focused on oral English communication problems experienced by Thai staff and foreign executives. The project advisor was asked to examine the questionnaire to determine if it was appropriate for use in this study. Moreover, the researcher asked an expert in organizational behavior, who was not involved in this study, to check that the language in the questionnaire was appropriate for the participants.

The questionnaire consisted of two parts, which are as follows:

Part I: Personal information. The personal information of the participants includes gender, nationality, educational background, and work experience.

Part II: The English communication problems experienced by Thai subordinates and foreign executives. This part was developed to examine English communication problems between these two groups and consisted of two sections regarding listening and speaking problems. The questionnaire specifically addresses listening communication problems and speaking communication problems.

In Part II, a five-level item format is used for a rating scale as follows: 1= strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = moderately agree, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree.

Moreover, the participants were asked to provide additional listening or speaking problems they experienced at the end of each section.

Table 1

Questionnaire Description Part II

Communication Problems	Item Number
Listening	1-11
Speaking	12-22

Data collection procedures.

The data was collected during the second semester of the 2011 academic year. The participants were asked to complete the questionnaire by the end of April 2012. The data was collected in April in order to give the participants enough time to complete the questionnaire. Before completing the questionnaire, the participants were asked to confirm that they were willing to participate in the study. For those who were not willing to participate, the researcher found replacements. The participants were asked to return the completed questionnaire the day after they received the questionnaire from the researcher.

Data analysis.

The data were analyzed in relation to the research questions regarding English communication problems. The problems found in previous studies identified as pronunciation, semantic problems, listening, mixed messages, speaking. The personal information data obtained from Part I of the questionnaire such as gender, nationality, and education background were analyzed for descriptive information. Part II was concerned with the English communication problems applicable to oral communication which divided into two problems as listening problems and speaking problems. The data based on the level of agreement of the participants were analyzed quantitatively for percentage and mean score. The tables were used to illustrate the answers of the participants.

Finally, the researcher discussed the results as they related to research questions and made conclusions and recommendations for further studies.

Summary

30 subordinates from the Risk Management Department in TMB were selected as participants. The participants included fifteen Western expatriates from the Netherlands, Australia, Britain, and the United States of America, who have lived and worked in Thailand for more than one year, and fifteen Thai subordinates who work and coordinate with foreign executives. The instrument used to collect the data in this study was a questionnaire developed by the researcher. The questions focused on the English communication problems between Western expatriates and Thai subordinates. The data were collected during the second semester of the 2011 academic year.

The participants were asked to complete the questionnaire about their problems when they communicate in English. The data were based on the participant's level of agreement with the items on the questionnaire and was analyzed quantitatively for percentage and mean score, and tables were also used to demonstrate the responses of the participants. Finally, the researcher discussed the results related to research questions and made conclusions and recommendations for further studies.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This chapter demonstrated the results from data analysis of the oral communication problems of foreign executives and Thai staffs in banking sector in Thailand. The data were analyzed and presented in terms of frequency, mean, percentage, and standard deviation. The results were reported in response to these two research questions:

1. What oral English communication problems did foreign executives experience when communicating with Thai subordinates?
2. What oral English communication problems did Thai subordinates experience when communicating with foreign executives?

Personal Information of the Participants

Personal information about gender, position, native language, educational background, and working experience was collected to provide information about the participants. The results are presented in Tables 1-4 below.

Table 1 shows the participants' gender. Out of 30 participants in the study, 16 participants (53.30%) were male, while 14 participants (46.70%) were female.

Table 1

Gender (N = 30)

Gender	<i>n</i>	%
Male	16	53.30
Female	14	46.70

Table 2 shows the participants' position. Out of 30 participants in the study, 15 participants (50.00%) were foreign executives, and 15 participants (50.00%) were Thai subordinates.

Table 2

Position (N = 30)

Position	<i>n</i>	%
Foreign Executives	15	50.00
Thai Subordinates	15	50.00

Table 3 presents the participants' native language. Out of 30 participants in the study, 15 participants (50.00%) were Thai native speakers, 12 participants (40.00%) were English native speakers, and 3 participants or 10.00% of them were other native speakers.

Table 3

Native Language (N = 30)

Language	<i>n</i>	%
Thai	15	50.00
English	12	40.00
Other	3	10.00

Table 4 reveals the participants' educational background. The majority of the participants (22 participants or 73.30%) held Master's degree, while 8 participants (26.70%) hold Bachelor's degree.

Table 4

Educational Background (N = 30)

Educational Level	<i>n</i>	%
Bachelor's degree	8	26.70
Master's degree	22	73.30

Table 5 shows the participants' working experience. The participants who had working experience more than 10 years were at the highest number, totaling 55 participants or 76.70%, followed by those who had 4-6 years working experience (4 participants or 13.30%) and 1-3 years working experience (2 participants or 6.70%). However, one participant did not state his/her working experience.

Table 5

Working Experience (N = 30)

Period of Working	<i>n</i>	%
More than 10 years	23	76.70
4-6 years	4	13.30
1-3 years	2	6.70
Not specify	1	3.30

In summary, most of the participants in this research were male who were Thai native speakers. They earned a Master's degree with more than 10-year working experience.

Research Question 1

What oral English communication problems did foreign executives experience when communicating with Thai subordinates?

Results.

The result of Research Question 1 acquired from data from Part II of the questionnaire. Tables 6 and 7 include quantitative data that present the mean and standard deviation score that the participants rated their level of agreement.

Table 6 demonstrates listening English communication problems between foreign executives and their Thai subordinates. The information grounds on the level of agreement rated by participants of this study. The data showed that listening English communication problems in the banking sector were: (a) foreign executives had listening problems because they were not familiar with their colleagues' English pronunciation or accent, and (b) foreign executives did not think it was appropriate to ask their colleagues for repetition. The data showed that the foreign executives did not have other problems asking in the questionnaire.

Table 6

English Listening Communication Problems of Foreign Executives (n = 15)

Listening Problems	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
I do not understand what my colleagues say because I am not familiar with their English pronunciation or accent.	2.93	0.79
I do not think it is appropriate to ask my colleagues for repetition when I cannot understand them, so I do not ask them to repeat themselves.	2.73	1.38

In the part of speaking English communication problems between foreign executives and their Thai subordinates. The information grounds on the level of

agreement rated by participants of this study. It was found that the foreign executives did not have speaking problems.

Research Question 2

What oral English communication problems did Thai subordinates experience when communicating with foreign executives?

Results.

Table 7 demonstrates listening English communication problems between Thai subordinates and their foreign executives. The information grounds on the level of agreement rated by participants of this study. It was found that the most listening English communication problems in the banking sector between Thai subordinates and foreign executives were: (a) Thai subordinates cannot understand their colleagues when they used English technical terms, idioms, jargon, or slang ($M = 3.53$); and (b) Thai subordinates had word limitation problems when they communicated in English with their colleagues ($M = 3.13$). Moreover, Thai subordinates stated that they also faced with unfamiliar English pronunciation or accent ($M = 3.00$); they could not catch key words when my colleagues spoke too quickly ($M = 3.00$); they could not understand the main point when my colleagues spoke too quickly ($M = 2.93$); they always translated the sentence into Thai before reply to foreigner ($M = 2.67$), and they had a poor English grammar ($M = 2.60$).

Table 7

English Listening Communication Problems of Thai Subordinates (n = 15)

Listening Problems	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
I cannot understand my colleagues when they use English technical terms, idioms, jargon, or slang.	3.53	0.74
I have word limitation problems when I communicate in English with my colleagues.	3.13	0.83
I do not understand what my colleagues say because I am not familiar with their English pronunciation or accent.	3.00	0.53
I cannot understand the key words when my colleagues speak too quickly.	3.00	1.00
I cannot understand the main point when my colleagues speak too quickly.	2.93	1.16
After listening to my colleagues speak English, I have to translate it into my native language before replying to them.	2.67	0.90
I have listening problems because of my poor English grammar.	2.60	0.82

Table 8 demonstrates English speaking communication problems between Thai subordinates and their foreign executives. The information grounds on the level of agreement rated by participants of this study. It was showed that speaking English communication problems in the banking sector were: (a) Thai subordinates had speaking problems because of their limited English vocabulary, and they did not know how to use English technical words, idioms and slang appropriately when they speak with their colleagues in English, ($M = 3.27$) and (b) foreign executives did not understand Thai subordinates because of their English pronunciation and accent ($M = 3.27$). Moreover, the Thai subordinates' speaking problems were as follow; Thais were too shy to speak English ($M = 3.00$); Thais had problems about English pronunciation and accent

($M = 3.00$); Thais also had problems expressing their opinion in English ($M = 2.93$); Thai subordinates had problems about speaking English in complete sentences ($M = 2.87$); Thais had poor English grammar ($M = 2.80$); Thais could not pronounce English word ($M = 2.80$); Thais could not find the most appropriate English words ($M = 2.67$); Thais thought that their English was not good enough to speak with foreigners ($M = 2.60$) and Thais always translated English to Thai before speaking ($M = 2.60$).

Table 8

English Speaking Communication Problems of Thai Subordinates

Speaking Problems	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
I have speaking problems because of my limited English vocabulary.	3.27	0.99
I do not know how to use English technical words appropriately when I speak with colleagues.	3.27	0.88
I have speaking problems because I am too shy to speak English.	3.00	0.92
My colleagues do not understand me because of my English pronunciation and accent.	3.00	0.53
I have problems expressing my opinion in English.	2.93	0.70
I cannot speak English in complete sentences.	2.87	1.06
I have speaking problems because of my poor English grammar.	2.80	0.87
I have problems pronouncing English words.	2.80	0.67
I have troubles finding the most appropriate English words to use because I translate from my native language to English.	2.67	0.90
I do not think that my English is good enough to participate in discussions with my colleagues.	2.60	0.82
I like to translate everything into my native language before saying it in English.	2.60	0.63

Summary

This chapter demonstrated the data of both foreign executives and Thai subordinates about their speaking and listening. The data were collected from questionnaire of 30 participants. The majority of participants were female (53.3%), graduated with a Master's Degree (73.3%) and had working experiences more than ten years (76.7%).

Listening and speaking problems of foreign executives were: (a) foreign executives did not think it was appropriate to ask their colleagues for repetition when they could not understand their colleagues and (b) foreign executives thought that their Thai subordinates did not understand their English pronunciation and accent, respectively.

Listening and speaking problems of Thai subordinates were: (a) they could not understand foreign executives' English technical terms, idioms, jargons, or slang; and (b) Thai subordinates liked to translate everything into Thai language and did not know how to use English technical words, idioms and slang appropriately when they spoke with their foreign executives.

The information of the questionnaire displayed main problems of foreign executives and Thai subordinates when they communicated together. The results of this study shows that Thai subordinates have more English communication problems than foreign executives, especially speaking skill is the main problems of Thai subordinates. As a result, the findings are crucial and valuable to guide the short courses or training designers in Human Resource Department in designing an English Communication training to solve Thai subordinates' speaking and listening problems.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION, DISCUSSTION, AND RECCOMMENDATIONS

This chapter consists of four parts: the conclusion of the study, discussion of the findings, recommendations for the further studies, and suggestions ofr the design of the course or training.

Conclusion

This study was conducted to explore the oral English communication problems between foreign executives and Thai subordinates working in the banking sector in Bangkok, and the consequences of these difficulties. The data were obtained from 30 participants, who included 15 foreign executives and 15 Thai subordinates who communicate in English in the work place. The data were analyzed according to the following research questions:

1. What oral English communication problems did foreign executives experience when communicating with Thai subordinates?
2. What oral English communication problems did Thai subordinates experience when communicating with foreign executives?

A major transformation over the past three decades has been that governments have become more encouraging towards foreign investment and have loosened their foreign investment rules accordingly, though at different times, speeds, and depths in different countries and regions. Over the past 15 years, countries have regarded foreign investment increasingly as contributing to their development strategies for the technology and capital it provides. They have even have started to compete for foreign investment. Investment policies have become more liberal at the national and regional levels, but there is no comprehensive framework at the multilateral level.

Some home countries are also increasingly facilitating foreign investment into developing countries using guaranteed funds, matchmaking, and other measures.

Foreign investment has been an important element of Thailand's economic development process. These transactions have given a growing importance to industrial competitiveness in an increasingly competitive global marketplace. As a result, many countries have come to invest in Thai business sectors as the researcher mentioned above, but communication breakdowns may occur between foreign businessmen and Thai subordinates or business partners. In addition, communication problems can affect the job efficiency of Thai subordinates and it may have an effect on banks' returns eventually.

Discussion

Research Question 1.

What oral English communication problems did foreign executives experience when communicating with Thai subordinates?

Results.

The researcher separated the English communication problems experienced by foreign executives into two categories: listening problems and speaking problems.

Listening problems that foreign executives faced when they communicated with their Thai subordinates were: (a) foreign executives did not understand what their colleagues say because they were not familiar with their colleagues' English pronunciation or accent, and (b) foreign executives did not think it was appropriate to ask their colleagues for repetition when they could not understand them, so they did not ask their colleagues to repeat themselves.

There was only one speaking problem that foreign executives faced when they communicated with their Thai subordinates, according to the participants that

answered. It was that foreign executives' colleagues did not understand them because of their English pronunciation and accent.

Discussion.

According to the results of Research Question 1, this study found that listening problems were similar with Ekwannang (2004) and Noreewong (2006). English was used as a medium when Thai subordinates communicated with foreign executives and the problems may have occurred because English is used as a foreign language in Thailand. Listening also creates communication problems among different groups of non-native English speakers. Moreover, the findings of Ekwannang (2004) demonstrated that misinterpretations between Thais and foreigners occurred because Thais were unfamiliar with particular accents in terms of pronunciation and intonation. In this study, English was used as a medium for communication between foreign executives and Thai subordinates. First, the Thais' pronunciation and accent problems occurred because of the differences between the tonal systems of English and Thai, causing the Thais to misunderstand and/or to have insufficient confidence to produce English sounds. Second, foreign executives think that they are interrupting if they keep asking their partner to repeat what they have just said, so the executives cannot catch the main idea of their subordinates. Moreover, the study of Wiriya (2006) supported the results of this study in that the problems of using English at work are in pronunciation, listening, and speaking. Furthermore, the majority of second language learners experience difficulties when listening to the target language and have problems with vocabulary, the comprehension of fast speech, unfamiliar vocabulary features, and a lack of background knowledge (Lee, Huang & Hung, 2010).

In terms of speaking problems, foreign executives' colleagues did not understand them because of their English pronunciation and accent. The results were consistent with the study of Kiatcharas (2011), where the findings showed that language differences could create communication problems for groups of people who did not share the same first language and communicated in a second language. In this study, the participants were from different backgrounds but worked in the same place. Foreign executives used English as a medium to communicate with Thai subordinates who were unfamiliar with English pronunciation, accent; and its interpretations and misunderstandings were always happening.

Research Question 2.

What oral English communication problems did Thai subordinates experience when communicating with foreign executives?

Results.

The researcher separated the English communication problems experienced by Thai subordinates into two categories: listening problems and speaking problems.

Listening communication problems that the Thai subordinates faced when they communicated with foreign executives were: (a) the Thai subordinates could not understand their colleagues when they used English technical terms, idioms, jargon, or slang, and (b) the Thai subordinates had word limitation problems when they communicated in English with their colleagues.

Speaking communication problems that the Thai subordinates faced when they communicated with foreign executives were: (a) the Thai subordinates had problems because of their limited English vocabulary, and they did not know how to use English technical words, idioms and slang appropriately when they spoke with their

colleagues in English and (b) foreign executives did not understand them because of the subordinates' English pronunciation and accent.

Discussion.

According to the results of Research Question 2, this study found that the English listening problem of Thai subordinates had occurred because of their limited vocabulary. They could not understand technical terms, idioms, jargon, or slang when they communicated with foreign executives. One of the main English communication problems occurred because of the idioms, jargon, and technical terms. According to Suksriroj (2009), non-native English speakers should know the meanings of idioms, jargon and technical terms to avoid mistaken communication due to confusion and frustration, and this is similar to the results of the listening English communication problems found in this study.

In terms of the speaking problems, the results of this study were consistent with what was found in Osada's study (2004), where she pointed out that non-native English speakers may be faced with listening problems due to their limited vocabulary. The speaker may use words the listener does not understand clearly. As a result, the listener has to stop and think about the word, and this process disrupts the conversation. Moreover, another observation from foreign executives determined that Thai people often overcomplicate their English because they try to translate Thai into English before they speak. This habit of the Thais causes the listeners to be confused and to misunderstand the point.

Suggestions for the Course or Training

Based on the findings, an English training course for the Thai subordinates working in the banking sector should be organized in accordance with the actual needs of Thai subordinates who must use English to communicate with foreign

executives. The main problems are pronunciation, accent, technical terms, idioms, and slang. The training or course should be taught by native speakers to make Thai subordinates familiar with the accent and pronunciation.

Recommendations for Further Research

Referring to the results and conclusions of this study, these are the recommendations made for further research:

1. This study emphasized the oral (listening and speaking) communication problems, so future research can be focussed on other English communication problems, such as reading and writing, and add the appropriate implications or solutions to the problems.
2. The participants of this study were small in number and from a specific site, so they should not be assumed to be typical of the Thai subordinates working in the financial industry in Bangkok. Consequently, the findings could not be considered as an overview of the whole population.
3. Further research would be better if the researcher both interviews the participants and uses questionnaires to collect the data.
4. This study emphasized the oral (listening and speaking) communication problems but not specify the use of American and British English. Further research would be better if researchers focus the problems of differences of British English and American English.



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APPENDIX
QUESTIONNAIRE



The English Listening and Speaking Problems Survey

My name is Soradda Upamai, and I am conducting a research study entitled “Oral English Problems between Foreign Executives and Their Thai Subordinates Working at the Banking Sector in Bangkok.” This study is part of a Master’s Degree Program in Business English for International Communication at Srinakharinwirot University.

The purpose of this survey is to investigate the “Oral English Problems between Foreign Executives and Their Thai Subordinates Working at the Banking Sector in Bangkok.” The following questions are intended to help gather that information. The information you provide will be used only for purposes of this study and will be kept strictly confidential. Your cooperation in completing this survey is greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Sorodda Upamai

Part I: Personal Information

Directions: Please mark ✓ in the check box ☐ in front of the answer that describes you.

1. Gender: ☐ Male
☐ Female
2. Position: ☐ Foreign Executive
☐ Thai Subordinate
3. Your native language: _____
4. Educational background:
☐ Bachelor’s degree in _____
☐ Master’s degree in _____
5. Working experience:
☐ 1-3 years
☐ 4-6 years
☐ 7-10 years
☐ More than 10 years

Part II: Problems

Directions: Please mark ✓ in a blank for each statement that comes closest to reflecting the level of your agreement with each of the following statements.

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

Listening Problems

Problems	Level of Agreement				
	5	4	3	2	1
1. I do not understand what my colleagues say because I am not familiar with their English pronunciation or accent.					
2. I do not understand words or sentences when my colleagues speak in English.					
3. I have word limitation problems when I communicate in English with my colleagues.					
4. I cannot understand the key words when my colleagues speak too quickly.					
5. I cannot understand the main point when my colleagues speak too quickly.					
6. I cannot participate in discussions with my colleagues because I have problems listening to English.					
7. I cannot understand my colleagues when they use English technical terms, idioms, jargon, or slang.					
8. I have listening problems because of my poor English grammar.					
9. I do not understand what my colleagues say because of their poor English grammar.					

Problems	Level of Agreement				
	5	4	3	2	1
10. I do not think it is appropriate to ask my colleagues for repetition when I cannot understand them, so I do not ask them to repeat themselves.					
11. After I listen to my colleagues speak English, I always translate it into my native language before replying to them.					

Speaking Problems

Problems	Level of Agreement				
	5	4	3	2	1
1. I have problems pronouncing English words.					
2. My colleagues do not understand me because of my English pronunciation and accent.					
3. I cannot speak English in complete sentences					
4. I do not think that my English is good enough to participate in discussions with my colleagues.					

Problems	Level of Agreement				
	5	4	3	2	1
5. I have problems expressing my opinion in English.					
6. I have speaking problems because of my limited English vocabulary.					
7. I have speaking problems because of my poor English grammar.					
8. I have speaking problems because I am too shy to speak English.					
9. I like to translate everything into my native language before saying it in English.					
10. I have troubles finding the most appropriate English words to use because I translate from my native language to English.					
11. I think that there are too many English technical words, idioms and slang.					



VITAE

Name: Miss. Sorodda Upamai
Date of Birth: 13 October 1983
Place of Birth: Ubonratchatani
Address: 93/7 Prachachuen rd., Jatujak, Jatujak, Bangkok

Educational Background:

2007 M.A. (Business English for International Communication),
Srinakharinwirot University, Bangkok
2001 B.A. (English),
The University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce,
Bangkok
1998 High School, Benchamamaharaj School,
Ubonratchatani

