



The 4<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Applied Liberal Arts: ICAA2021

"Hard & Soft Skills for Human Capital in the New Normal"  
Friday 13<sup>th</sup> August 2021

**FACULTY OF LIBERAL ARTS**  
King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang





### **Message from the Dean**

The 4<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Applied Liberal Arts (ICAA 2021) under the theme “Hard & Soft Skills for Human Capital in the New Normal” is organized as a forum for scholars, academic staff members, and students to exchange knowledge, skills, and experiences gained from conducting research in the field of languages, humanities, and social sciences.

I would like to thank our capable and engaging presenters for their contributions to the papers and presentations as well as the conference committee members for their support. I hope that this conference will provide our participants with a worthy experience through a variety of knowledge and perspectives.



Associate Professor Dr. Paitoon Pimdee  
Vice President for Procurement  
and  
Acting Dean of Faculty of Liberal Arts

## Table of Content

	<b>Page</b>
<b>Message from the Dean, the Faculty of Liberal Arts, KMITL</b>	<b>i</b>
Online Social Media and Phonics Instruction in Enhancing English Pronunciation of EFL Primary Students	1
<b><i>Natthanan Thagrairaj, Pattaraporn Thampradit</i></b>	
A Study of Graduate Engineering Students' Perspectives toward the Importance of Intercultural Communicative Competence in Engineering Careers	9
<b><i>Chutima Chuenta, Atinuch Pin-ngern</i></b>	
Thai EFL Learners' Pragmatic Awareness in Hotel Contexts	16
<b><i>Pattra Panatta, Atinuch Pin-ngern</i></b>	
EP and MEP Teachers' Perceived Barriers to Participating in Continuing Professional Development Activities	23
<b><i>Lattiya Parmwong, Pramarn Subphadoongchone</i></b>	
Perceptions of Undergraduate Students from the Faculty of Agricultural Technology towards English Graduation Requirements	34
<b><i>Nuttarin Panchoei, Pramarn Subphadoongchone</i></b>	
Thai Vocational Students' English Learning Trajectories and Their Imagined Communities	44
<b><i>Krongrat Chaiwichitta, Pramarn Subphadoongchone</i></b>	
A Narrative Inquiry into the Identity formation of Thai Workers in the Philippines's Business Process Outsourcing industry	52
<b><i>Arnon M. Siriphap, Pramarn Subphadoongchone</i></b>	
Thai Students' Transitional Learning Experiences in an International Program in a Thai University	59
<b><i>Jaroon Saenmuang, Pramarn Subphadoongchone</i></b>	
English Speaking Problems Encountered by Thai Frontline Nurses in a Public Hospital	72
<b><i>Dararat Chuwongin, Pramarn Subphadoongchone</i></b>	
Factors that Impact the Behavioral Intention to Actual Use of Generation Z on Mobile Shopping Applications in Thailand	84
<b><i>Monivireak Ly, Veerisa Chotiyaputta</i></b>	
A Review of Overseas K-pop Fans: Through the Lens of Transnational Connections and Social Identity Theory	92
<b><i>Nasatorn Witayarat</i></b>	
A Review of the Development of Online Chinese Education in Thailand	99
<b><i>Xue Meng, Qiuli Zheng</i></b>	
<b>ICAA2021 Board of Committee</b>	<b>106</b>
<b>ICAA2021 Organizing Committee</b>	<b>108</b>

## **Online Social Media and Phonics Instruction in Enhancing English Pronunciation of EFL Primary Students**

Natthanan Thagrairaj

Postgraduate Student, Faculty of Liberal Arts, King Mongkut's Institute of Technology  
Ladkrabang

E-mail: natthananmk6002@gmail.com

Associate Professor Pattaraporn Thampradit, Ph.D.

Senior Lecturer, King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang

E-mail: patt997@gmail.com

### **Abstract**

The objectives of the study were 1) to investigate the quality of online social media that is suitable for EFL primary students, 2) to compare the English pronunciation ability of EFL primary students before and after using online social media and phonics instruction, and 3) to explore students' perspectives toward using online social media and phonics instruction. The sample included thirty EFL primary students studying in Primary 1 at Watmongkolkotawas School, Samutprakan province, selected by the cluster random sampling method. The research instruments were pronunciation pre-test and posttest that focused on initial sounds of /l/, /r/, /s/, /z/, /f/, /v/, /k/, /g/, /t/ and /d/, formative assessment, lesson plan and questionnaire. The pretest and posttest data were statistically analyzed by means, standard deviations, and t-test dependent. The data from the questionnaire was collected and analyzed by means and standard deviations. The results showed that 1) the quality of online social media is suitable for EFL primary students in enhancing English pronunciation, 2) the analysis of the pretest and posttest scores revealed that English pronunciation ability was significantly enhanced at the level of 0.05, after using online social media and phonics instructions, and 3) students' perspectives toward using online social media and phonics instruction was at a satisfying level.

**Keywords:** Online social media, Phonics instructions, English pronunciation ability

## 1. Background of the Study

The Thai government develops policies to improve Thai people skills with critical thinking and create innovative value for productions and services (Puncreobutr, 2017). Education is one of the most critical issues to be developed in Thailand 4.0. The policy is to incorporate the digital era and education for communities and the students to learn and solve community problems by using digital technology in their classroom for worldwide knowledge rather than books (Buasuwan, 2018).

Undeniably, the English language influences second or foreign language countries around the world. The Ministry of Education (2008) supported primary schools in Thailand by providing an English learning foundation to enhance student's English proficiency and positive attitudes towards learning English and pronunciation as they are helpful skills in acquiring the oral skills for the students in a second language and a foreign language (Nomnian & Arphattananon, 2018).

This research was conducted with the interest of online social media and phonics instruction in enhancing the English pronunciation of EFL primary students. Since the researchers found many pronunciation problems occurred with primary students at Watmongkolkotawas school in Samutprakan province, Thailand, the problems are as follows:

Firstly, primary students, especially first-grade students, cannot pronounce English words correctly because they do not have much time to practice pronouncing. Since the time spent in class is just an hour a day, the teacher needed to focus on textbook content.

Secondly, students did not have many opportunities to learn through authentic media instead of their books to gain more knowledge. The content of textbooks is too broad and covers several English skills, making the teachers unable to teach English pronunciation effectively.

Thirdly, several primary school teachers were not major in English and were not well trained in teaching pronunciation. Therefore, they are not good at teaching pronunciation correctly. Inadequate training and skills lead to a lack of confidence to teach methodically.

Nowadays, social media provide more opportunities for language learners with meaningful and authentic language use in the classroom (Richards, 2015). Also, social media tools help teachers to encourage and motivate students in their class to engage in the lesson actively. Social media have played an essential part in fostering language learning.

Teachers also use Phonics instructions to teach the students how to learn pronunciation. The use of phonics instruction supports how to teach students to

pronounce. The target sounds of pronunciation teaching are /l/, /r/, /s/, /z/, /f/, /v/, /k/, /g/, /t/ and /d/. Prather et al. (2018) stated that students by the ages of 5 to 6-year-old should be improved in pronouncing sounds /l/ and /r/. Moreover, Pimwan (2012) revealed that pronouncing the words are different, making most of the Thai students mispronounce such consonant sounds as /s/, /z/, /t/, /k/, and /g/. Therefore, those sounds are suitable for first-grade students to learn how to pronounce the sounds productively.

In conclusion, the researcher has realized that the problems of English pronunciation should be enhanced in class, and there are currently no media to improve English pronunciation in school. The researcher thus aimed to improve English pronunciation by using online social media and phonics instruction for EFL primary students.

## **2. Research Objectives**

The study was conducted to achieve the objectives as follows:

1. To investigate the quality of online social media that is suitable for EFL primary students;
2. To compare the English pronunciation ability of EFL primary students before and after using online social media and phonics instruction; and
3. To explore students' perspectives toward using online social media and phonics instruction.

## **3. Method**

### **3.1 Research Design**

One group pretest-posttest design was used in the study. The experimental design was O X O.

O = Pretest using English pronunciation ability.

X = Experimental treatment using online social media.

O = Posttest using English pronunciation ability.

### **3.2 Population and Sample**

The population was 120 students, and the sample of this study was 30 first grade EFL students who studied English class in 2020 at Watmongkolkothawas School, a public primary school in Samutprakan Province. They had mixed abilities, ranging from low, medium, and high levels in every class. The participants were selected by cluster random sampling method.

### 3.3 Research Instruments

#### 3.3.1 Pronunciation pretest and posttest

The sound words that the students were tested in the pretest and posttest consisted of 20 sound words; Lion, Lama, Rabbit, Rat, Six, Seven, Zoo, Zero, Fan, Food, Vat, Vase, Key, Kite, Garden, Guitar, Toy, Table, Door, and Desk. There were 10 initial sounds teaching and testing in the instructions which are /l/, /r/, /s/, /z/, /f/, /v/, /k/, /g/, /t/ and /d/. The words used in this part were compiled from two main sources, namely, *English Smile 1* and Samutprakan Primary Educational Service Office 2's vocabulary book. If the students have got 60 percent of the total score, they pass the test.

#### 3.3.2 Formative Assessment

To measure what the students have learned in each lesson. The lessons were five units and each unit was taught in four hours. The students were taught in the lessons of (1) Animals, (2) Things and Numbers, (3) My Room, (4) My House and, (5) Restaurant and Food. The students did the test after learning in each lesson. In each test, the students were tested for ten words. The students who got 60 percentage scores passed the test.

#### 3.3.3 Lesson Plan

The researcher studied the core curriculum focusing on Grade 1 to conceptualize the content. The outcomes were identified in the National Curriculum B.E. 2008. Then, the researcher selected songs, pictures, activities, and assignments that were suitable for ten target sounds. After that, the researcher created online media as the teaching materials. There were Loom Program and PowToon Video Program for teaching English pronunciation. In addition, the researcher wrote the lesson plans based on teaching English pronunciation by using online social media and phonics instructions which were applied the procedure of the lesson in *stages of speaking*. Each lesson consists of three stages: pre-speaking, while-speaking, and post-speaking.

#### 3.3.4 Questionnaire

The questionnaire was aimed to explore students' perspectives toward using online social media and phonics instruction. The questionnaire was divided into two parts. The first part drew the profile of the participants in terms of gender and age. The second part allowed the participants to rate their satisfaction with using online social media and phonics instruction. The choices of the answers were used Three-Point Likert Scale faces, including happy, neutral, and sad to let the participants choose the emoticon in each question for the answer. The researcher selected faces because the participants were grade 1 students. It was easy for them to understand the meanings of images as emotions better than texts. The questionnaire was translated into the Thai language to ensure students' clear understanding.

The research instruments were validated by three English language teaching experts: two English teachers and a phonological expert. They examined the content validity of the pronunciation test. The overall score of all items was 0.91.

### **3.4 Data collection**

#### **3.4.1 Quantitative data collection**

The data were collected by the researcher's designed instruments as described below.

1. The tests were used as the pretest by the students pronouncing aloud. It consisted of 20 items aimed to measure the students' performances before the experiment.
2. There were five lesson plans. Each plan took four hours for the experiment. The whole experimental study lasted for six weeks, and each lesson lasted for four hours.
3. After teaching each unit, the researcher asked the students to do a formative assessment by pronouncing 10 - word lists as the sound words provided.
4. The students pronounced aloud posttest, using the same test as the pretest.
5. The pretest and posttest were both audio-recorded for accurate grading.
6. The evaluation of each test was calculated and measured to identify pronunciation ability.

#### **3.4.2 Qualitative data collection**

A two-part questionnaire was administered at the end of the course to obtain students' perspectives on combining online social media and phonics teaching to improve English pronunciation skills.

### **3.5 Data analysis**

- The Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) was used to ensure content validity. In this process, all the tests and the questionnaire were checked by three experts including, two English teachers and a phonological expert.

- The quantitative data collected was analyzed dominantly using percentage, means, standard deviation, and t-test for dependent.

- The mean score of the students on the posttest of enhancing English pronunciation by using online social media and phonics instructions was higher than the mean score on the pretest.

## **4. Results**

### **Result of Research Question 1: Is the quality of online social media suitable for EFL primary students?**

The results obtained from the online social media's quality were evaluated by three experts before the experiment and formative assessment from each lesson that the students had learned. The overall score of all items was 0.80. It was implied that the quality of the online social media was acceptable. Moreover, in the formative assessment, the students who got 60 percent of the total score passed the test. After receiving online

social media and phonics instruction, the students made an overall score of 71.16. It resulted that the students passed the test.

**Result of Research Question 2: Does the students' English pronunciation ability enhance after using online social media and phonics instruction?**

The pretest and the posttest means were compared using the t-test dependent. The students' posttest mean score was significantly different from their pretest mean score at a level of 0.05. The result strongly supported that the students' English pronunciation ability has improved after using online social media and phonics instruction.

Table 1 showed the descriptive statistics of the pretest and posttest scores. The results revealed that there was a significant difference between the mean score of pretest and posttest.

**Table 1:** A comparison of pretest and posttest

	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Pretest	30	9.27	2.03	9.72	29	0.00*
Posttest	30	14.23	2.65	9.72	29	0.00*

\*Significant at .05 level  
( $p < .05$ )

**Result of Research Question 3: What is the students' perspective toward using online social media and phonics instruction?**

The questionnaires were given to the students after using online social media and phonics instructions to obtain their perspectives. The students rated from 3 for satisfied, 2 for indifferent, and 1 for dissatisfied. The responses of the questionnaire rated by the students were analyzed by using mean and standard deviation (SD). According to the Three-Point Likert Scale analysis, the interval of 1.00-1.66 meant dissatisfied, 1.67-2.63 meant indifferent, and 2.64-3.00 meant satisfied. Regarding the results of the questionnaire to determine students' perspectives based on the Three-Point Likert Scale, most students were satisfied with the learning, showing the total mean of 2.64 ( $n=30$ ).

**5. Discussion and Conclusion**

Based on the results from this study, the mean score of the pretest was 9.27, while the posttest was 14.23 ( $t=9.72$ ). In pronunciation learning, the result was consistent with the study of Chi Ma (2017) that used phonics instruction in class to help the students pronounce the words accurately and effectively through phonics practices. The study supported the development of English pronunciation ability from phonics instructions, including online social media. The results showed that they were effective and beneficial techniques for EFL primary students to develop English pronunciation ability.

From the pronunciation instruction, the students' English pronunciation ability improved from their weakness in the pretest. They tried to pronounce the target sounds actively from the online social media provided. Furthermore, they developed their

pronunciation by monitoring themselves and modifying their pronunciation in the posttest better than in the pretest.

The result of the questionnaire in each aspect showed that most of the students were satisfied with enhancing their English pronunciation ability by using online social media and phonics instructions. From the questionnaire, the students rated "students participate activities effectively" and "students required further activities using online social media" at the highest level with a mean of 2.87. The results supported the effectiveness of using online social media.

However, the lowest ranking of the students' perspectives was "Students pronounce the /v/ sound better". The result revealed that most of the students could not pronounce the /v/ sound accurately. Since the articulation positions of English sounds and Thai sounds were different, the students were also unfamiliar with the /v/ sound, which led to inaccurate pronunciation.

This study enhances English pronunciation for first-grade students with phonics instruction in the lesson. It is beneficial for both English teachers interested in integrating phonics instruction in their classroom and the EFL students who are learning English pronunciation in general. Also, it is helpful for policymakers, educators, and ministers to apply in the learning of Thai education.

## 6. Acknowledgements

This research would not have been completed without the support and encouragement of many people. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my thesis advisor, Associate Professor Dr. Pattaraporn Thampradit, who provided me with invaluable advice. She is always patient with me and willing to spend her time reading and editing my thesis drafts.

I would like to extend my sincere thankfulness to all of the experts – Miss Parawee Kluensanun, Miss Pichanee Pakavirojkul, and Miss Thippawan Sripunya for their suggestions on the instruments in my research.

My special thanks go to all of my teachers and friends in the Applied Linguistics (English for Professional Purposes) program at King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang.

## 7. References

- Buasawan, P. (2018), "Rethinking Thai higher education for Thailand 4.0", *Asian Education and Development Studies*, 7(2), 157-173.  
<https://doi.org/10.1108/AEDS-07-2017-0072>
- Etikan, I. & Bala, K. (2017). Sampling and sampling methods. *Biom Biostat Int J*, 5(6), 215-217. Doi.org/10.15406/bbij.2017.05.00149
- Nomnian, S., & Arphattananon, T. (2018). A qualitative study on factors influencing achievement of English language teaching and learning in Thai government secondary schools. *Asian EFL Journal*, 20(2), 207-233.
- Paunonen, S. V., Jackson, D. N., & Keinonen, M. (1990). The structured nonverbal assessment of personality. *Journal of Personality*, 58, 481–502.

- Pimwan, K. (2012). *The effect of teaching pronunciation through songs of Pratomsuksa 4 students at Watratchaphatigaram School*. Retrieved from [http://thesis.swu.ac.th/swuthesis/Tea\\_Eng\\_For\\_Lan%28M.A.%29/Kanlayanee\\_P.pdf/](http://thesis.swu.ac.th/swuthesis/Tea_Eng_For_Lan%28M.A.%29/Kanlayanee_P.pdf/)
- Prather, E. M., Hedrick, D. L., & Kern, C. A. (1975). Articulation development in children aged two to four years. *Journal of Speech & Hearing Disorders*, 40(2), 179–191. <https://doi.org/10.1044/jshd.4002.179>
- Puncreobutr, V. (2017). The policy drive of Thailand 4.0. *St. Theresa Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 3(1), 91-102.
- Richards, J. C. (2015). The Changing Face of Language Learning: *Learning Beyond the Classroom*. *RELC Journal*, 46(1), 5–22. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0033688214561621>
- The Basic Education Core Curriculum B.E. 2551 (A.D. 2008). (n.d.). Retrieved from: <http://act.ac.th/document/1741.pdf/>

## **A Study of Graduate Engineering Students' Perspectives toward the Importance of Intercultural Communicative Competence in Engineering Careers**

Chutima Chuenta

Graduate student, Faculty of Liberal Arts, King Mongkut's Institute of Technology

Ladkrabang

E-mail: 61616003@kmitl.ac.th

Atinuch Pin-ngern

Lecturer, Faculty of Liberal Arts, King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang

E-mail: atinuch.pi@kmitl.ac.th

### **Abstract**

The globalization in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century has promoted the communication and collaboration among countries; therefore, employees in various industries including engineering are required to possess not only hard skills or the knowledge in specific fields, but also soft skills which include social and communication skills. Intercultural communicative competence is one of the important aspects of soft skills that allow people to effectively communicate in the international context. This study aimed to investigate and explore the perspectives of graduate engineering students toward the importance of intercultural communicative competence in engineering careers in order to reflect their attitudes when communicating and working with people from different cultural backgrounds. A semi-structure interview was performed to gain the in-depth information from five graduate engineering students regarding their attitudes and opinions toward the particular topics related to intercultural communication in the engineering professions. The findings revealed that most of the participants were open-minded and had positive attitudes toward people from different countries and with different cultural backgrounds. They also suggested that the concepts of intercultural communication and knowledge of other cultures should be provided more in the language classes in order to enhance the students' communicative ability and intercultural communicative competence as well as to prepare them for the international working contexts. The findings from this study can be used as a guideline for curriculum development as it also reflects the students' readiness for working with people with diverse nationalities and cultural background and their ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in the intercultural environment.

**Keywords:** Intercultural Communicative Competence, Intercultural Communication, Engineering Professions, Soft Skills

### **1. Background of the Study**

In the recent years, the trend of globalization influences borderless communication and collaboration in terms of knowledge and technology exchange, people and culture transferring, and labor transforming among countries. The international working environment has emerged in several countries and gives people more opportunities to communicate with the others who speak different languages and have diverse cultural backgrounds. As a result, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills which are critical thinking, problem solving,

communication and collaboration are considered as the important skills for every profession (Partnership 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills, 2009). Moreover, many companies also expect their employees to possess other skills such as flexibility, adaptability, and social and cross-cultural skills which enable them to work successfully in multi-cultural environments with culturally diverse teams.

According to Rajprasit, Pratoomrat, and Wang (2015), in order to be successful in communicating and interacting with people, not only the knowledge of language but also the ability to use language appropriately in particular contexts are needed. This idea can be related to the concept of intercultural communicative competence proposed by many scholars in the past few decades. The intercultural communicative competence refers to the ability to understand cultural difference and to engage appropriately with people who have different cultural backgrounds and identities (Leung et al., 2014). To be equipped with intercultural communicative competence, the language users need to have positive attitude toward cultural differences, knowledge and understanding of their own cultures and the others, skills to perform appropriate interaction with people from different cultures, and awareness of the importance of learning new cultures (Barrett et al., 2013; Byram, 1997; Deardoff, 2006; Fantini & Tirmizi, 2006). This concept emphasizes that language users need more than linguistic competence to effectively communicate with people from different parts of the world. Hence, the intercultural communicative competence is essential for the employees in various industries, including engineering which plays an important role in developing Thailand and helps the country to achieve the economic goals from 2020 to 2024 as indicated in the policy of Demand New S-Curve by the National Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation Policy Council in 2019.

The ideas of intercultural communicative competence and its dimensions were proposed by many researchers. Nevertheless, this study was conducted under the concept presented by Fantini & Tirmizi (2006) as the dimensions of their concept covered important aspects of the intercultural communicative competence. According to their study, the competence consists of four dimensions including intercultural knowledge (the knowledge of one's own culture and other hosting culture), intercultural attitude (the ability to understand cultural difference), intercultural skills (the ability to perform effective and appropriate interactions with those who are from different cultures), and intercultural awareness (the ability to realize the similarities and differences between cultures). However, the current study focused only on intercultural attitude since it significantly affects other dimensions and how people interact with the others. Besides the understanding in cultural differences, the intercultural attitude in this study also refers to the willingness to learn new cultures and being open minded and tolerant to unfamiliar and ambiguity situations.

Recently, there have been some studies investigating the communication skills, including intercultural communicative competence of the staffs in different industries e.g. tourism and hospitality (Inkeaw, 2016; Jhaiyanuntana & Nomnian, 2020) and medical and healthcare (Hudelson et al., 2011; Sathiensathidkun, 2015). However, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, the number of studies in intercultural communicative competence of personnel in technical and engineering industries in Thai context is limited. Consequently, more studies on intercultural communicative competence in Thai industrial contexts are much needed as shading the light on intercultural communicative competence of Thai engineering students is one way to reflect their readiness for global working environment and to provide some guideline of curriculum development in higher educational institutions and

how to prepare their engineering students to be qualified for their future careers in the international contexts where the communicative skills are required.

## 2. Objective

As the engineering profession has received more attention and becomes one of the important future careers, the main objective of this study is to investigate and explore the perspectives of graduate engineering students toward the importance of intercultural communicative competence in engineering careers in order to reflect their attitudes when communicating and working with people from different cultural backgrounds and their opinions of how to enhance the intercultural communicative competence of engineering students.

## 3. Method

The current study was conducted using a qualitative method of semi-structured interview which allows participants to widely share their opinions and in-depth information about their experiences. Using a purposive sampling method, five Thai graduate engineering students who are taking a language class in a public university in Bangkok and are also working as an engineer in different fields were selected. They were requested to participate in a semi-structured interview to reflect their attitude and opinions toward the importance of intercultural communicative competence in engineering careers.

The interview questions were developed under the concept of intercultural communicative proposed by Fantini & Tirmizi (2006). At the first stage of the interview, the participants' general information and their working experiences with foreigners were gathered, followed by five main questions related to the attitude toward intercultural communication in engineering career. The method of content analysis was performed to conclude the data gained from the interview, and the data was also validated by the participants themselves through the member checking process to enhance its reliability.

## 4. Results

The findings obtained from the interview reveals that the participants are in the age of 27-42 years old. Most of them have worked as an engineer for more than four years and have direct experiences in working with foreigners. Some of them used to work in overseas countries for a few years and encountered with a lot of cultural barriers while working with international teams as summarized in the following table.

**Table 4.1:** The participants' background information and working experiences

Participants	Age	Gender	Field of Engineering	Years of working experience	Experiences in working with foreigners
A	35	Male	Production Engineer	9 years	The participant works in an international organization and usually works with foreigners.
B	29	Male	Civil Engineer	7 years	The participant used to work in an international organization and had worked in China for a few years.

C	27	Female	Environmental Engineer	4 years	The participant usually works with the colleagues from overseas headquarter and foreign customers.
D	29	Male	Logistic Engineer	7 years	The participant works in an international organization and usually works with foreigners.
E	42	Male	Electrical Engineer	16 years	The participant works with foreigners sometimes and has experiences in working in an international organization.

According to the main objective of the study, the participants' perspectives toward the importance of intercultural communicative competence were gathered through the interview question as follows:

**Question 1: Do you enjoy working or communicating with foreigners? Why or why not?**

The results indicate that most of the participants have positive feelings and attitudes when communicating and working with other people from different countries. Although they encountered with language difficulty and cultural difference sometimes, they could still accept the difference and understand that everyone has their own identities and believes. The findings also reveal that from the participants' experiences most of their foreign colleagues are very opened-minded. They usually share their own cultures to people and are willing to understand and learn Thai culture as well. Consequently, the participants think that it is a good chance for them to improve their language abilities and learn more about new cultures.

**Question 2: In your opinion, how can cultural differences affect the communication?**

According to the interview, most of the participants believe that cultural differences have a lot of impacts to communication. It can affect the results of communicating and collaboration between two people or more. Moreover, it also affects the working atmosphere.

One of the participants stated that the knowledge of cultures could be considered as a key to perform effective and successful interaction with foreigners. She also gave an example from her experiences:

“When dealing with foreign colleagues, it is very important to know and understand their cultures, especially, how they work. For example, people from some countries are very straightforward. They prefer only clear and short answers. If you provide unnecessary and unclear information when talking to them, they might lose their trust in you and your company.”

However, one of the participants thinks that cultural differences do not affect the communication, especially, in a workplace. He said:

“Most people at my workplace usually focus only on the accuracy of information when talking to each other. We always follow our working

objectives and try to get our work done, so we don't usually overthink or be sensitive about cultural differences.”

**Question 3: Have you ever had any problems relating to cultural differences when communicating with foreigners and how did you solve the problems?**

All of the participants reported that they have experienced some difficulties relating to cultural differences when communicating with people from other countries. Sometimes they do not understand how foreigners think or react to some particular situations. For example, one of the participants used to work with younger colleague from another countries. He expected that his colleague would understand Thai culture and give him some respect as an elder; however, his colleague thought that age was not important in a workplace. Some of the participants also encountered with miscommunication because they did not know the interlocutors' cultures. This also caused a serious misinterpretation while communicating. Hence, most of the participants suggested that they needed to learn more about new cultures to understand how people behave and to avoid unintentionally offensive communication.

**Question 4: Do you think it is important for engineers to have intercultural communicative competence? Why or why not?**

Most of the participants agree that intercultural communicative competence is important not only for engineers, but also other professions. They think that working environment in Thailand has changed now. A lot of employees in various industries, including engineering have to deal with people from other countries. Hence, they think it is also important for engineers to learn more about new cultures and be opened-minded, particularly, in intercultural working contexts. They believe that this competence can also help them to be successful in their workplace and achieve their working objectives more easily.

**Question 5: Do you think the intercultural communicative competence of engineering students should be enhance more in language classes? Why or why not?**

According to the participants' experiences, they agree that the knowledge of culture should be added into the language classes to help the students understand more about other cultures. Most of them think that the main contents in language classes in Thailand usually focus on grammars and structures. Thus, Language teachers should provide more lessons about cultural difference to promote positive attitude toward people from diverse countries and to enhance students' awareness in cultural difference. One of the participants also gave an example from his experiences:

“When I was studying in a language class, my teacher provided only few lessons relating to cultures. At that time, I didn't think it was important to now how foreigners behave or think in some particular situations. However, when I started working with them, I realized that it was very important. And I think knowing other cultures can also help me to get along well with my colleagues, and that makes my work a lot easier.”

**5. Discussion and Conclusion**

As the globalization causes a lot of changes in working environment in Thailand, the employees in many companies have to communicate and cooperate more with people from different countries. Several employers also expect that new graduates should be able to deal

with intercultural working contexts and work well in international environment. Consequently, the students in various fields, including engineering should be encouraged to gain more soft skills. The intercultural communicative competence is also one of the most important skills that help people to communicate effectively and appropriately with foreigners. Thus, providing more contents about cultural difference is another way to prepare the students to be ready for global working context.

This study aimed to investigate and explore the perspective toward the importance of intercultural communicative competence of graduate engineering students who also have some work experiences as a real engineer and have a chance to work with foreigners. The findings indicate that only the knowledge of a language is not enough to perform an effective communication. This is in line with Rajprasit, Pratoomrat, and Wang's study (2015) showing that in some particular situations, the knowledge of other cultures is also needed in order to make the conversation smoother and more effective.

According to the results gained from the interview, most of the participants have positive attitude toward the importance of intercultural communicative competence. They believe that this competence enhances their working performance with foreigners and offer them more opportunities in the workplace. With their positive attitudes, they seem to be more open-minded and willing to learn more about new cultures. This shows that attitude is an important dimension that can significantly affect other dimensions as indicated in Fantini and Tirmizi's concept of intercultural communicative competence (2006).

Furthermore, although some of the participants might think that this competence is unnecessary in a workplace, they still suggest that the knowledge of cultures should be added and focused more in language classes so that the students can apply these knowledges in their everyday lives as well. According to their experiences, the knowledge of cultures is hardly provided in language classes and sometimes the lessons provided are not directly related to their fields. These results are similar to the previous studies in hospitality and medical industries which report that the knowledge of intercultural communication should be provided more, especially, in higher educational institutions. Hence, the results in this study can be considered as the empirical evidence for the needs of curriculum and lesson development in language classes not only for engineers, but also for other professions.

Due to the aim of gaining in-dept data from the interview, the methodological limitation of this study is that the small group of participants were selected. Therefore, the results cannot be widely generalized in every profession and every branch of engineers. For future studies, a larger group of participants from different fields of engineering should be selected in order to obtain more ideas. The comparative studies between each group can be conducted to manifest the needs of intercultural communicative competence in different conditions. In addition, other dimensions should be investigated more as only one dimension was focused in this study.

In conclusion, to perform the effective and proper communication with people from different countries, the knowledge of cultures and intercultural communicative competence are needed. It is also important to enhance the positive attitude toward cultural differences and encourage the students in many fields, including engineering to be more open-minded to people from other parts of the world. Thus, the results from this study can be a guideline to develop the curriculum and provide more cultural lessons that are suitable for recent situations. Moreover, as the ideas gained in this study is from real engineers who have some experiences in working with foreigners, they can also give the educational institutions some

ideas of how to prepare their students to be ready for the global market and international working environment.

## 6. References

- Barrett, M., Byram, M., Lazar, I., Mompoin-Gaillard, P., & Philippou, S. (2013). *Developing Intercultural Competence through Education*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing.
- Byram, M. (1997). *Teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Deardorff, D. K. (2006). Identification and assessment of intercultural competence as a student outcome of internationalization. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 10(3), 241-266.
- Fantini, A. E., & Tirmizi, A. (2006). Exploring and assessing intercultural competence. *World Learning Publication, 1*. Retrieved from [https://digitalcollections.sit.edu/worldlearning\\_publications/1/](https://digitalcollections.sit.edu/worldlearning_publications/1/)
- Hudelson, P., Perron, N. J., & Perneger, T. (2011). Self-assessment of intercultural communication skills: a survey of physicians and medical students in Geneva, Switzerland. *BMC Medical Education, 11*. Retrieved from <http://www.biomedcentral.com/1472-6920/11/63>
- Inkaew, M. (2016). An analysis of intercultural communicative competence: Hotel front office personnel in Bangkok. *PASAA, 51*(1), 185-214.
- Jhaiyanuntana, A., & Nomnian, S. (2020). Intercultural Communication Challenges and Strategies for the Thai Undergraduate Hotel Interns. *PASAA, 59*, 204-235.
- Leung, K., Ang, S., & Tan, M. L. (2014). Intercultural competence. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior, 1*, 489-519. Retrieved from <https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/abs/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-031413-091229>
- The National Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation Policy Council. (2019). *The policy of demand new s-curve 2020-2024*. Retrieved from <https://www.nxpo.or.th/th/report/2350/>
- Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills. (2009). *P21 framework definitions*. Retrieved from Education Resources Information Center: <https://eric.ed.gov/?q=P21+skills+definitions&id=ED519462>
- Rajprasit, K., Pratoomrat, P., & Wang, T. (2015). Perceptions and problems of English Language and communication abilities: A final check in Thai engineering undergraduates. *English Language Teaching, 8*(3), 111-120.
- Sathiensathidkun, A. (2015). *Intercultural communication apprehension and communication apprehension among Thai physicians at hospitals in Bangkok*. (Master's thesis, Thammasat University, Bangkok). Retrieved from [http://ethesisarchive.library.tu.ac.th/thesis/2015/TU\\_2015\\_5721040086\\_4467\\_2467.pdf](http://ethesisarchive.library.tu.ac.th/thesis/2015/TU_2015_5721040086_4467_2467.pdf)

## Thai EFL Learners' Pragmatic Awareness in Hotel Contexts

Pattra Panatta

Graduate student, Faculty of Liberal Arts, King Mongkut's Institute of Technology  
Ladkrabang

E-mail: 61616005@kmitl.ac.th

Atinuch Pin-ngern

Lecturer, Faculty of Liberal Arts, King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang

E-mail: atinuch.pi@kmitl.ac.th

### Abstract

The ability to communicate appropriately and effectively is one of the important soft skills required for success in building satisfaction and long-lasting impressions on the customers in the tourism and hospitality industry. To avoid miscommunication resulted from rudeness and inappropriate utterances, pragmatic awareness or the knowledge of performing and interpreting the appropriate language in different social situations is very crucial as miscommunication might negatively affect the business. This study aimed to measure the level of pragmatic awareness and the preference for pragmatic awareness-raising instruction. The data was gathered via semi-structured interview with five Thai EFL tourism and hospitality undergraduate students from a public university in Thailand. The findings revealed that the students had moderate awareness of appropriate and inappropriate language use in hotel contexts. They also demonstrated the high awareness of power and relationships between the customers and the hotel staff, while they were less aware of the severity of the offence. In addition, the students agreed that appropriate and polite utterances were important for communication in hotel contexts. In order to improve communication efficacy in the workplace, the students preferred pragmatic awareness-raising instruction in class. The findings will help language instructors in ESP and educational institutions to develop job-related curricula and teaching materials to improve students' readiness for appropriate and effective communication in the workplace.

**Keywords:** Pragmatic awareness, Linguistic politeness, Tourism and hospitality, Communication, Soft skills

### 1. Background of the Study

The worldwide tourism industry has been suffering from the Covid-19 pandemic. In 2020, the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) proposed the global protocol 'Safe Travels' to aid in the recovery of the global hospitality and tourism industry. Thailand agreed upon the policy of welcoming international tourists by adhering to safety and sanitary standards (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2020). According to the protocol, service providers should be trained to reskill and upskill for work, particularly in communication skills. In the new normal, service providers must be able to communicate effectively and

politely in order to offer information and deal with sensitive issues such as vaccine passport, quarantine restrictions, and social distancing regulations (Kappina et al., 2021).

For the hospitality and tourism contexts, the ability to communicate appropriately and effectively is one of the important soft skills for success in building customers' satisfaction and long-lasting impressions. To avoid miscommunication resulted from rudeness and inappropriate utterances, pragmatic awareness or the knowledge of performing and interpreting language appropriately in different social situations is very crucial. The concept of pragmatic awareness has been investigated on the impact of individual differences such as language proficiency, learning environment, and length of stay in a target language country (e.g., Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei, 1998; Schauer, 2006). Many studies have mainly focused only on daily conversations and communication in academic contexts. However, the number of pragmatic awareness studies in the Thai context is limited, especially in professional contexts including the tourism and hospitality (Sirikhan and Prapphal, 2011; Jareonsak, 2018). For this reason, it is important to investigate more about the Thai EFL learners' pragmatic awareness in order to provide language instructors, English for specific purposes (ESP) practitioners, and educational institutions the idea of developing job-related curricula and teaching materials to raise pragmatic awareness and enhance students' receptive and productive skills.

## **2. Research Objectives**

The present study aims to assess Thai EFL tourism and hospitality undergraduate students' pragmatic awareness in the hotel context and to investigate the pragmatic awareness-raising instruction needs among Thai EFL tourism and hospitality undergraduate students.

## **3. Method**

### **3.1 Research design**

The present study was designed as a qualitative study with the aim to gain the insight information of the students' pragmatic awareness level and the in-depth perceptions toward pragmatic awareness-raising instruction.

### **3.2 Participants**

The participants were five tourism and hospitality students from a public university in Bangkok. The researcher employed a snowball sampling technique, one of a non-probability sampling method, to recruit the participants for the interviews. All the participants are Thai native speakers who use the Thai language on a daily basis.

### **3.3 Research instruments**

This qualitative study was divided into two phases, using two different research instruments. In the first phase, a pragmatic judgment task consisting of five scenarios in hotel contexts was used, followed by a semi-structured interview in the second phase, which included five questions investigating pragmatic instruction needs and the awareness of situational variables namely, power (P), social distance (D), and severity of offence (R)

(Brown and Levinson, 1987). The distribution of situational variables was presented in the following table.

**Table 1:** Distribution of situational variables

Scenarios	Hearer	Power (P)	Social distance (D)	Severity of offence (R)
1. Informing smoking prohibition	Guest	+	+	+
2. Requesting VIP guest greeting	Supervisor	+	-	-
3. Handing spelling mistake complaint	Colleague	=	-	-
4. Informing shuttle van schedule	Guest	+	+	-
5. Handing internet connection complaint	Guest	+	+	-

**Power** +P: the hearer has higher power than the speaker

=P: the hearer and the speaker have the equal power

**Social distance** +D: the hearer and the speaker are not familiar with each other

-D: the hearer and the speaker are familiar with each other

**Severity of offence** +R: The offence is severe

-R: The offence is minor

An example of a scenario can be found in the appendix. The scenarios, interview questions, and Thai translation were evaluated for content validity by three experts including two experts in English Linguistics and one expert in Tourism and Hospitality. The Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) was employed to evaluate the scenarios and interview questions based on the score range from -1 to +1. The items that had average scores lower than 0.5 were revised and the items with 0.5 or higher were reserved.

### 3.4 Data Collection

The researcher contacted and scheduled an appointment with five undergraduate students who agreed to participate in the study. The participants were informed about the research study's objectives, scope of the study, and anonymity of personal information. The interview was then conducted individually with each participant via an online social media platform and telephone in which their responses were tape-recorded. Each interview lasted approximately 15 to 20 minutes.

### 3.5 Data analysis

The data obtained from the interview were analyzed using content analysis. The researcher first transcribed the interview data and then categorized the responses into major themes including awareness of situational variables, benefits of effective communication, and suggestions for implementation of pragmatic instruction. For reliability, intra-coder and

inter-coder approaches were employed. The researcher first transcribed the data and then reanalyzed it again. The two rounds of transcription were compared to find if there were any differences. For inter-coder reliability, another graduate student analyzed the data and compared the transcription with that of the researchers. The differences were discussed for agreement.

## 4. Results

### 4.1 Results from pragmatic judgment task

The findings revealed that the participants' awareness of (in) appropriate language was moderate. All participants could make correct judgments for scenarios of informing unfamiliar guests (+P, +D, +R) (+P, +D, -R). Furthermore, most participants could identify the appropriateness of requesting a familiar supervisor (+P, -D, -R) and dealing with the guest's complaint (+P, +D, -R) scenarios correctly. However, only one participant could correctly judge the appropriate of response in scenario, where the hearer power is equal, the social distance is a familiar relationship, and the offence is minor (=P, -D, -R). Half of the respondents stated that, even if the speaker is familiar to the listener, the language should be polite.

### 4.2 Results from semi-structured interview

***Question 1: How did you know that the responses were appropriate or inappropriate for the given situations?***

The majority of participants reported the impact of the listener's role on the judgment of (in) appropriate language. Most participants could provide reasons relating to awareness of situational variables such as power, distance, and severity of offence. One participant said, "*When service agents speak with their customers, they should use polite language.*" Furthermore, all of the participants stated that the feelings of the listeners were significant in justifying the appropriateness of responses.

***Question 2: Did you aware of the hearer's power, the relationship between speaker and hearer, and the severity of the offense in justifying the appropriateness of responses?***

Based on the reasons provided, the participants demonstrated a high awareness of power and relationships between the customers and the hotel staff. However, they were less aware of the severity of the offence. One of the participants stated, "*The utterances in working context can reflect the user's professionalization and organization image. Therefore, the consideration of the hearer is crucial.*" Another participant also said that before making judgments, she had been thinking about power and relationship between the speaker and the hearer. However, only one participant mentioned the importance of the severity of the offence. The participant stated, "*When I apologize others, I consider the severity of the offence to the hearer and how the utterance will affect the listener's feelings.*"

***Question 3: In your opinion, what are the factors influencing appropriate utterances when you communicate with others?***

The speaker's role and the hearer's power were reported as the essential factors influencing appropriate utterances and decisions about the appropriate degree of politeness. The majority of the participants also expressed their thoughts on the significance of tone of

voice, eye contact, and communicative contexts in interpersonal communication. Half of the participants also asserted the important role of cultural awareness for avoiding rudeness and miscommunication.

***Question 4: Have you ever learned how to speak and respond politely to customers in the hospitality context?***

All participants reported that they had never directly learned about pragmatic awareness in the workplace. The teachers, on the other hand, provided some lessons on hospitality communication. All participants indicated a preference for a job preparation course emphasizing English communication in order to improve their communication skills.

One participant showed an opinion about the importance of appropriate language for service encounters. She said, *“The employees in hospitality business have to constantly interact with the others, so appropriate language can affect customers’ loyalty and revisit.”*

***Question 5: Do you think whether pragmatic-raising activities should be implemented in your English course?***

All participants strongly agreed that pragmatic-raising activities should be implemented in class. Since the students have to attend cooperation training in the last semester of the fourth year, they believed that the preparation of English communication in the workplace would be beneficial. One participant said, *“Raising awareness of language use will increase the improvement of efficacy in communication with customers in English. Moreover, the pragmatic awareness-raising activities will help students to be proficient in communication with others from different cultures.”*

All participants stated that pragmatic raising-instruction will improve students’ readiness to communicate effectively and appropriately in real-world situations. Furthermore, strong communication skills will provide the students more advantages for job employment. If the institution offers pragmatic awareness-raising course, students will benefit from learning. There were some positive comments about the implementation of pragmatic instruction in class, as follows:

*“English language has various degrees of politeness. If students have a deep understanding of the differences in usage, they will be able to use language correctly and appropriately.”*

*“Appropriate language is very essential because the use of language will reflect the positive or negative image and service quality of a brand. Furthermore, inappropriate language may cause ‘dissatisfaction’ among customers. There will be less communication under the new normal policy. Pragmatic instruction will help students communicate effectively and appropriately in various contexts.”*

## **5. Discussion and Conclusion**

The present study examined Thai EFL tourism and hospitality undergraduate students’ pragmatic awareness and perceptions of pragmatic awareness-raising instruction. Tourism and hospitality students completely agreed that appropriate and polite utterances were important for communication in hotel contexts. The reason was that “The customer is

God”, as they are always right (Arrington, 1990). The service providers had to be aware of the satisfaction of customers; therefore, the welcoming manner and polite utterances are needed. Focusing on participants’ pragmatic awareness, the participants’ awareness of power and relationships showed the influence of hierarchy in Thai culture. The hierarchy has a strong influence on Thai people’s use of polite language. The awareness of power, social status, age, and socioeconomic status have become essential factors influencing appropriate language use in the hospitality context (Leelaharattanarak, 2015). The study found that participants were mostly aware of power and relationship. In a similar view of Nipaspong (2011), Thai EFL learners showed the high awareness of power referring to age and social status of interlocutors. For the preference of pragmatic instruction, Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei (1998) suggested that pragmatic awareness-raising instructions should be integrated in EFL classroom. According to the findings, the participants reported an inadequate language support for professional purposes. The participants agreed that pragmatic awareness should be applied in the English course to enhance communication skills and reinforce efficacy to communicate in English.

The current study attempted to qualitatively analyze participants’ perceptions and pragmatic awareness in hotel contexts. As a result, the findings from a small group of participants cannot be generalized. Future studies may apply the framework to examine pragmatic awareness with a large scale of participants and in different contexts, such as business, logistics, or engineering. Moreover, the study disregarded some factors, such as English proficiency, learning environment, language exposure, etc. Further studies may be conducted taking these factors into consideration. Lastly, the results showed a high preference for pragmatic awareness-raising instructions. Future investigations may be conducted as classroom research investigating the effects of pragmatic awareness-raising instruction for professional purposes.

To summarize, the findings reflect some voices from tourism and hospitality students to language instructors in preparing effective job-related courses according to the industry and learners’ needs. A high-quality workforce is important for the organization to succeed. The development of job-related courses is critical for inclusion in the classrooms in order to improve students’ language ability, raise awareness, and reinforce their efficacy in communicating effectively in the workplace.

## 6. References

- Arrington, L. (1990). The customer is god. Managing service quality, *An International Journal*, 1(1), 23-26.
- Bardovi-Harlig, K., & Dörnyei, Z. (1998). Do language learners recognize pragmatic violations? Pragmatic versus grammatical awareness in instructed L2 learning. *TESOL Quarterly*, 32(2), 233-259. doi: 10.2307/3587583
- Brown, P., & Levinson, S. C. (1987). *Politeness: Some universals in language usage*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Jaroensak, T. (2018). *ELF on a tropical island: The use of pragmatic strategies in touristic ELF in Thailand* (Doctoral thesis, University of Portsmouth). Retrieved from [https://researchportal.port.ac.uk/portal/en/theses/elf-on-a-tropical-island\(46b1e841-339f-41e1-ae92-7423fe3799a0\).html](https://researchportal.port.ac.uk/portal/en/theses/elf-on-a-tropical-island(46b1e841-339f-41e1-ae92-7423fe3799a0).html)

- Kappina, K., Charoennaiwongphao, W., & Konchiab, S. (2021). Needs for improving non-verbal communication skills of Thai homestay staff in the new normal tourism context, Chiang Mai. *FEU Academic Review*, 15(1), 80–99.
- Leelaharattanak, N. (2015). *Face manifestations in Thai hospitality settings: An investigation of interpersonally-sensitive activities* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Surrey). Retrieved from <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/30341824.pdf>
- Nipaspong, P. (2011). Pragmatic awareness levels and patterns reported by Thai learners of English and the native speakers of American English. *Veridian E-Journal Silpakorn University*, 4(1), 687-710.
- Schauer, G. (2006). Pragmatic awareness in ESL and EFL contexts: Contrast and development. *A Journal of Research in Language Studies*, 56(2), 269-318. doi: 10.1111/j.0023-8333.2006.00348.x
- Sirikhan, S., & Prapphal, K. (2011). Assessing pragmatic ability of Thai hotel management and tourism students in the context of hotel front office department. *Asian EFL Journal Professional Teaching Articles*, 53, 72-94.
- World Travel & Tourism Council. (2020). *Leading global protocols for the new normal*. Retrieved from <https://wttc.org/Portals/0/Documents/Reports/2020/Global%20Protocols%20for%20the%20New%20Normal%20%20Overview.pdf?ver=2021-02-25-183107-437>.

## 7. Appendix

**Scenario 1:** Somsri works as a receptionist. According to the hotel regulations, all the rooms are non-smoking rooms. The guests can smoke only outside or in a provided area. However, a housekeeper reports to Somsri that a guest is smoking in the room now. Somsri must inform the guest, whom she is not familiar with, that smoking is not allowed.

**Somsri:** *Sorry for interrupting sir, I would like to inform you that smoking in a room is not allowed. You can smoke in a provided area on the ground floor.*

---

## EP and MEP Teachers' Perceived Barriers to Participating in Continuing Professional Development Activities

Lattiya Parmwong

Postgraduate student, Faculty of Liberal Arts, King Mongkut's Institute of Technology  
Ladkrabang

E-mail: limelattiya@gmail.com

Pramarn Subphadoongchone, Ph.D.

Lecturer, King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang

E-mail: pramarn.su@kmitl.ac.th

### Abstract

The continuing professional development (CPD) of teachers is a constant concern among educational institutions. With the emerging trends of English and Mini-English programs (EP/MEP) in schools in Thailand, supporting CPD has been regarded as an effective means of helping the teachers maintain their interest and enthusiasm in their profession. However, some schools may encounter certain challenges in engaging their teachers in CPD activities. This study aimed at investigating the perceived barriers of EP/MEP teachers to participating in CPD activities. The research participants were 138 Thai teachers from 13 secondary schools in Samut Prakan province, Thailand. The teachers were requested to identify the types of barriers to their participation in CPD activities, as provided in the questionnaire. Of the 138 teachers, 11 of them were further interviewed to provide in-depth information about their CPD experiences. The results of this study revealed that the highest percentage of the teachers (39.86%) reported that they did not attend CPD activities since the offered activities did not meet their teaching needs and seemed to be irrelevant to their teaching context. Several teachers reiterated in the interview that even though they were well aware of the importance of CPD activities, their non-participation in such activities were attributed to their tight teaching schedules and other job responsibilities. This study suggests that in order for schools to encourage EP/MEP teachers to participate in CPD activities, administrators and policy makers should take into consideration possible factors that may affect teachers' decision making in participating in professional development schemes.

**Keywords:** Content teacher, Teacher training, Thai teacher, Professional development, English/Mini-English Program

### 1. Background of the Study

The continuing professional development (CPD) is defined as a learning activity of in-service teachers to develop their teaching performance and skills in order to fulfill the students' learning needs as well as serving school policies. According to Day (1999), the professional development comprises all learning experiences, and conscious and

planned activities. These experiences and activities would create both direct and indirect benefits to students, teachers, and schools via the quality of pedagogy in the class. The continuing professional development of teachers is a lifelong learning activity. Teachers are expected to continually improve themselves, which is not only for students' learning achievement but also for the teachers' career growth. Richards and Farrell (2005) suggest that the CPD encourages teachers to have a better understanding of teaching and themselves as a teacher through various activities. Moreover, Diaz-Maggioli (2003) defines CPD as an on-going learning process where teachers learn ways in which they adjust their teaching to the students' learning needs and expectations. In addition, Avalos (2011) advocates that the CPD is the complex process of teacher learning to transform their knowledge into practices for the benefits of their students. It is important to note that the CPD of teachers is highly significant for teachers in terms of improving their teaching skills and enhancing their knowledge for the sake of the quality of education and their career path. Over the past two decades where the Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) in schools is an emerging trend, teachers have encountered a number of teaching challenges. In order to help the teacher to effectively cope with those challenges, educational establishments have encouraged their teachers to attend CPD activities.

The Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is an educational approach in which an additional language is used as a medium of teaching both content and language. Coyle, Hood, and Marsh (2010) define CLIL as "a dual-focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content and language." Dale and Tanner (2012) explain that CLIL is implemented for teaching the content subjects through the additional language. CLIL is often referred to as Content-and-English Integrated Learning (CEIL) as English is widely used in the CLIL approach (Dalton-Puffer, 2011). Additionally, Dalton - Puffer and Smit (2007) advocate that CLIL classrooms could provide students with an ample opportunity to learn and use English, particularly in the countries where English is used as a Foreign Language (EFL). It can be concluded that CLIL is an approach that stimulates students to learn the language and content simultaneously.

In Thailand, there is an increase in the number of schools offering the English Program (EP) and Mini-English Program (MEP). The operation of these two types of programs follows the CLIL approach. In these programs, English is used as a medium of instruction. While some content subjects, such as Science, Mathematics, and Physical Education, are taught through English, other content subjects are taught in Thai. In addition, the extent to which English is used in teaching varies, depending on the students' educational levels (Prasongporn, 2009). For example, in the EP at a secondary level, all subjects can be taught in English, except Thai and Social Sciences. Some schools may offer the MEP where the courses would be implemented 50% in English, if they are not ready to offer the EP. Ideally, in the Thai educational context, foreign teachers who are native speakers of English or non-native speakers of English with high English language proficiency are preferred to serve as teachers in the EP and MEP. However, in reality several schools have encountered certain problems in recruiting those teachers. For example, schools are unable to recruit foreign teachers with specific degrees and expertise. Another problem is that foreign teachers may not fully understand the Basic Education Core Curriculum B.E. 2551 (A.D. 2008), which may adversely affect the quality of teaching in schools (Kewara, 2016; Punthumasen, 2007). For Thai teachers, they meet the degree requirements as stipulated by the Ministry of Education and thus are qualified to teach content subjects to students. Unfortunately, they seem to have problems in teaching content subjects in English. They should be trained to become teachers who

could teach content subjects through English. According to Parmwong and Subphadoongchon (2019), most of the Thai teachers in the EP/MEP in Samut Prakan province had a low level of confidence in teaching content subjects in English due to their low English language proficiency. It is important to note that the CPD should be provided by schools so as to support their Thai teachers who are responsible for teaching the EP/MEP. However, some schools may confront some barriers to engaging the teachers in CPD activities.

Previous studies reveal teachers' barriers to attending CPD activities in different contexts. Teachers seem to perceive heavy workload and the lack of time as their major barriers. According to Krille (2020), heavy workload is a main reason why teachers did not participate in CPD activities. Their high workload can be attributed to teaching tasks in the classroom and further tasks beyond in-class work responsibilities. Besides the high workload, the issue of time is also the remarkable inhibition of teachers (AlMutlaq et al., 2017; Dilshad et al., 2019). The findings of AlMutlaq et al. (2017) also expose that teachers need more time for their professional growth, but their time is devoted to various work assignments and responsibilities, and family-related activities. Noom-ura (2013) and Badri et al. (2016) also report that CPD activities affected the teachers' work schedule. According to findings of Dilshad et al. (2019), the funding and un-availability of study leaves are also the barriers to teachers' engagement in CPD activities. It should be noted that the barriers reported by the teachers may be different, all of which seem to depend on the teaching contexts. The barriers to participation in CPD would thus be the issue that should be explored in-depth in order to help teachers overcome those barriers and facilitate schools in organizing appropriate CPD activities in their context.

This issues surrounding teachers' barriers to attending CPD activities are of utmost importance with reference to teacher professional growth, yet it seems that the issues are less explored in the EP/MEP context. This study therefore investigated the perceived barriers to participating in CPD activities, as experienced by EP/MEP teachers in Samut Prakan province. The findings would provide insightful implications for those concerned in organizing CPD activities for secondary school teachers who are native speakers of Thai but are assigned to teach content subjects in English in the EP/MEP.

## **2. Objective**

This paper is part of a larger research project that investigated the challenges encountered by Thai secondary school teachers in teaching in the EP/MEP in Samut Prakan province. In this current paper, the focus is on the barriers to participating in CPD activities as reported by the teachers. The research question of this paper is as follows:

What are the EP/MEP teachers' perceptions about barriers to participating in CPD activities offered by their schools?

## **3. Methods**

### **3.1 Research design and setting**

The study used a mixed-methods sequential explanatory design which consists of both quantitative and qualitative research methods. Ivankova, Creswell and Stick (2006) explain that this kind of mixed-methods research involves the integration of quantitative (numeric) and qualitative (text) data that are collected sequentially within one study. That is, quantitative data will be first collected in order to gain a whole picture of the issue

under investigation. Then the data obtained will be analyzed, and the results will be used to guide the collection of qualitative data in the next stage. The qualitative results will be used to augment the quantitative results, which will help the researcher to insightfully understand the issue being investigated.

This study was conducted in 13 schools that offered the EP/MEP at the secondary level in Samut Prakan province, Thailand. Of the 13 schools, ten were public schools and three were private schools. These 13 schools offered three programs: the regular (or Thai) program, the EP, and the MEP. As stated above, this paper focused only on Thai teachers who taught content subjects in the EP/MEP.

### **3.2 Research Participants**

The population of this study consisted of 198 Thai teachers from EP/MEP, who taught content subjects at the secondary level in 13 schools in Samut Prakan province, Thailand. All of the teachers were native speakers of Thai. The researchers used Yamane's sample size formula (1973), with a confidence level of 95% ( $e = \pm 5\%$ ), to calculate the sample size for this study. As the population of this study was 198 teachers, the calculated sample size was at least 132 teachers. The researchers further used a proportional stratified random sampling method in recruiting prospective research participants of this study. This was to ensure that they were good representatives of the population. In this study, the actual participants were 138 teachers who returned the completed questionnaire, which will be discussed in the subsequent sections.

### **3.3 Research instrument and data collection**

This study used two types of research instruments: a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview. The questionnaire was adapted from previous studies (Alfaki, 2014; Dale & Tanner, 2012; Ito (2018); Kewara & Prabjandee, 2018; Lorenzo, Casal, & Moore, 2009; Pérez Cañado, 2014; Strotmann, et al., 2014; Tachaiyaphum, & Sukying, 2017; Ulla, M. B., & Winitkun, D., 2018.) and a preliminary study (Parmwong & Subphadoongchone, 2019). The research instruments were sent to six experts for content validation. Three of the experts were Thai teachers who taught content subjects in the EP/MEP at a secondary level. The three others were universities lecturers with a doctoral degree in English language teaching or related fields, and had experiences in conducting research on teacher professional development.

To collect the data, the researchers sent an official letter, as issued by the Faculty of Liberal Arts, and a short version of the research proposal to the school principal to ask for permission to conduct this research. Then, the researchers contacted prospective research participants (teachers), and the questionnaires in Thai were administered to them. Teachers were also invited to take part in this study on a voluntary basis and state whether they agreed to be interviewed at a later stage. Of the 198 teachers, 138 teachers returned the completed questionnaires, which accounted for 69.70% of the total. In addition, eleven teachers agreed to be further interviewed.

The interview was conducted in Thai on a one-on-one basis so that the participant would feel comfortable to share her/his teaching experience with the researcher. All interviews were audio-recorded with the teachers' permission.

### **3.4. Data analysis**

There were two types of collected data for this study: quantitative data and qualitative data. The quantitative data from the returned questionnaires were analyzed by

using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). Descriptive statistics including frequency and percentage, were employed in analyzing the data and then presenting the results. Content analysis were used to analyze qualitative data which were obtained from semi-structured interviews.

This study took into consideration the issues of protecting the anonymity and confidentiality of the research sites and the teachers. That is, the names of schools that served as research sites and teachers' names were not disclosed. The teachers were also informed that the raw data obtained from them were not disclosed to others, except another researcher who helped analyze the data to ensure the high reliability of data analysis.

#### 4. Results

The results from the questionnaire are reported in Table 4.1 below. It is important to note that to elicit the data, the researchers asked to teachers to identify the types of barriers to their participation in CPD activities ( from a list of 12 barriers) as offered by their schools.

**Table 1:** Teachers' perceived barriers to participating in continuing professional development activities

<b>Teachers' perceived barriers to participating in continuing professional development activities</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>
1. Some CPD activities did not meet teachers' teaching needs and seemed to be irrelevant to teachers' teaching context.	55	39.86%
2. Some CPD activities conflicted with a teachers' work/teaching schedule.	46	33.33%
3. Some CPD activities dealt with general issues on teaching or education, not specifically geared towards the subject teachers teach.	42	30.43%
4. Some CPD activities were too expensive for teachers to attend.	40	28.99%
5. Some CPD activities lacked continuity and sustainability.	33	23.91%
6. Some CPD activities focused on theoretical knowledge, without providing sufficient practical aspects.	31	22.46%
7. Teachers find it difficult to attend some CPD activities due to their family responsibilities.	31	22.46%
8. Teachers' school did not have a clear plan about staff' s CPD (for example, teachers' school did not inform the teachers in advance of how many CPD activities they could attend each year, or a teachers' school allocated a limited budget for teachers to attend CPD activities each year.)	25	18.12%
9. Teachers used to attend some CPD activities which were conducted in a stressful, threatening atmosphere, so teachers do not want to attend CPD activities if not required by their school.	17	12.32%
10. Some CPD activities were held with class size that was too large, thus providing teachers with little opportunity to	13	9.42%

<b>Teachers' perceived barriers to participating in continuing professional development activities</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>
interact and share teachers' teaching experiences with others.		
11. The selection criteria for selecting teachers to attend CPD activities were biased or not clearly specified (for example, a particular group of teachers had more opportunities to attend CPD activities than others).	11	7.97%
12. The administrative team/school principal chose or held CPD activities for teachers without listening to their actual needs for such activities.	8	5.80%

From the table above, the top three barriers to participating in CPD were 1) some CPD activities did not meet the teachers' teaching needs and seemed to be irrelevant to their teaching context ( 39.86% ), 2) some CPD activities conflicted with their work/teaching schedule (33.33%), and 3) some CPD activities dealt with general issues on teaching or education, not specifically geared towards the subject teachers teach (30.43%). The barrier that the smallest number of teachers mentioned was that the administrative team/school principal chose or held CPD activities for teachers without listening to their actual needs for such activities (5.80%).

Apart from the questionnaire results, the semi-structured interviews provided more room for teachers to explain what their barriers to attending CPD were. Some teachers reported their experiences as follows:

I did not participate in any training for EP/MEP teaching, but my school provided training on general English language training for all teachers. The training did not match my real teaching in EP/MEP. I thought that it was unbeneficial. (Teacher 4, Mathematics)

I was very busy and had a tight schedule because I had to teach for both normal and EP/MEP classes. I was quite unavailable to attend any training. Moreover, I needed to look after my family when I came back home. I had no more time to attend any training. (Teacher 5, Computational Science)

I had to work with foreign teachers such as preparing the contents of teaching materials and recording students' marks on a report assignment. Furthermore, I had to teach in normal (Thai-medium) classes. That's why I had no more time for attending any training. (Teacher 6, Science)

Some teachers commented on how to start preparing CPD activities. These comments would be beneficial for the school's management team and those concerned in holding CPD activities for the teachers.

A needs analysis should be implemented as the first priority for preparing a training session. Moreover, the teachers' current problems needed to be surveyed and used as a training guideline for filling actual teaching gaps. (Teacher 2, Health Education)

The teachers' perceived problems and needs should be discussed to find out what the actual teachers' needs are. The training organizers should provide a placement test for assessing teachers' language competency first. The teachers' actual problems and language competencies should be used as a focus of the training. Small group meetings should be organized because it would help teachers to get more interaction between people (Teacher 5, Computational Science)

The selected teachers (for the CPD training) should complete a pre-test for assessing their strengths and weaknesses. In the teacher training, training organizers should provide the content knowledge and activities to improve teachers' skills and fill their gaps in ability. (Teacher 6, Science)

The training organizers should discuss with EP/MEP teachers and assess their teaching problems and learn about their individual comments. Actually, the head of EP/MEP asked teachers about their problems, but those problems still remained the same and were not solved. (Teacher 8, Mathematics)

Besides the barriers, some teachers also shared their opinions on activities to improve English skills in their own way.

I learned how to teach content in English for different levels through Youtube. Sometimes, I used a translation application to help me better understand English words and adapted the knowledge into my teaching situation. (Teacher 1, Science)

I used to work with foreign teachers at my old private school. I still contacted and consulted them directly about how to use English as a medium of instruction. They suggested to me that I teach my students regardless of my students' proficiency levels. (Teacher 2, Health Education)

I was a lucky man. My girlfriend was an English teacher in my school. I used to consult her in using English for teaching. Moreover, I improved myself by learning English through an online channel in terms of communication skills and teaching techniques. (Teacher 6, Science)

It is interesting to find that one teacher added her opinion on activities to improve English skills. She revealed that she did not improve her English skills:

I did not improve my English skills by myself because I thought that my English skills were adequate. I worked as a co-teacher in EP/MEP. I did not use English that much. I was okay with my English skills. (Teacher 8, Mathematics)

From the questionnaire results reported in this study, it can be seen that the teachers experienced different barriers to their CPD activity participation. The teachers also elaborated on their participation and non-participation experiences in training as part of their CPD, as revealed by the interview data. The teachers also shared their experiences in improving their English proficiency. Although CPD for teachers involves more than the issues of English language proficiency development, such as ability to design a course, competence in intercultural communication, and assessment literacy, it is quite interesting to find that these EP/MEP teachers seemed to focus their CPD activities on their English proficiency development.

## 5. Discussion and Conclusion

The findings of this study have revealed that the EP/MEP teachers encountered different types of barriers to participation in CPD activities. The findings exposed the top three barriers, as reported by the teachers: 1) some CPD activities did not meet their teaching needs and seemed to be irrelevant to their teaching context, 2) some CPD activities conflicted with their work/teaching schedule, and 3) some CPD activities dealt with general issues on teaching or education, not specifically geared towards the subject teachers teach. The barriers revealed by the teachers in this study are quite similar to those of other contexts where teachers wanted to participate in CPD activities, yet they could not make it. According to Noom-ura (2013) and Badri et al. (2016), teachers' participation in CPD activities was made impossible as they tended to conflict with the teachers' work schedule. Moreover, time and workload were the teachers' significant barriers to engaging in CPD (AlMutlaq et al., 2017).

The findings also revealed that some teachers were responsible for teaching students in the EP/MEP as well as the regular (Thai-medium) classes. This seems to be the reason why they did not have time to attend any trainings, especially CPD activities. This is in line with the study by Krille (2020) showing that the high workload is the absolutely crucial barriers of teachers to participating in CPD.

Some teachers recommended that CPD should be started with a needs analysis as the first priority. The needs analysis would help those involved in running CPD programs find out insightful information, for example, the teachers' problems, needs, and gaps, which can be used as appropriated guidelines for designing appropriate CPD activities for teachers. It is important to note that appropriate CPD activities, which meets the

teachers' needs and expectations would affect to teachers' decision to attend CPD activities. However, it is without a shadow of a doubt that those organized CPD activities may not be attended by the teachers if they are run without taking into consideration the teachers' teaching schedules and their workloads.

Interestingly, some teachers shared the ways in which they improved their English language proficiency in their own way. They learned how to teach students through English via watching Youtube. They also used a translation application to help them better overcome English problems encountered in their teaching. This is very interesting in that although they had barriers to attending CPD activities, they put efforts in trying to improve their English skills by themselves. Those involved in running CPD activities may invite these teachers to share their own CPD experiences with other teachers. Their idea sharing session would definitely motivate other busy teachers to strategically find their own ways to improve themselves at their convenience and their own pace. Teacher networks show the great potential in order to develop their teaching skills and a culture of teacher inquiry (Harris & Anthony, 2001). The teacher collaboration can provide feedback and new ideas and also create motivations for exchanging teachers' experiences through cooperation, interaction and negotiation (De Vries, Grift, & Jansen, 2013). This is one of the practical ways to grow professionally as a teacher.

As the EP/MEP in Thai schools are an emerging trend of education, it can be assumed that there are a number of teachers in these programs who should be encouraged to attend CPD activities. Since the current study focuses on Thai teachers in the EP/MEP, further studies should also explore the non-Thai teachers' barriers to participation in CPD activities. This is because in the EP/MEP contexts in Thailand, there are a large number of teachers who are non-Thai, and perhaps they may outnumber their Thai counterparts in the EP/MEP. Another line of inquiry should be placed on investigating the perceptions of the school's management team, with particular reference to their policy on CPD activities. With empirical research findings from teachers' perspectives and those from the school's management team, those involved in supporting CPD activities for EP/MEP teachers, be they Thai or non-Thai, would be able to plan, design, deliver, and then evaluate the proposed CPD activities in an effective and efficient fashion.

## 6. Acknowledgements

We would like to express our gratitude to Asst. Prof. Dr. Paweena Chatsungnoen, Dr. Usa Intharaksa, Dr. Nattharmma Thong-Iam, Mr. Patthadol Kanjanathung, Acting Sub.Lt. Wimolwan Phanyu, and Mr. Nutthamat Wannakhao for validating and providing us with insightful feedback on the research instruments of this study. We would also like to thank King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang for providing us with financial support for attending this conference.

## 7. References

- Alfaki, I. M. (2014). Professional development in English language teaching: A teachers' view. *British Journal of Education*, 2(7), 32-49.
- AlMutlaq, A., Dimitriadi, Y., & McCrindle, R. (2017). Factors affecting academics' involvement in TEL continuing professional development (CPD). *Journal of Education and Practice*, 8(10), 142-148.

- Avalos, B. (2011). Teacher professional development in teaching and teacher education over ten years. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 27(1), 10-20.
- Badri, M., Alnuaimi, A., Mohaidat, J., Yang, G., & Al Rashedi, A. (2016). Perception of teachers' professional development needs, impacts, and barriers: The Abu Dhabi case. *Sage Open*, 6(3), 1-15.
- Coyle, D., Hood, P., & Marsh, D. (2010). *CLIL: Content and language integrated learning*. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.
- Dale, L. & Tanner, R. (2012). *CLIL activities: A resource for subject and language teachers*. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.
- Dalton-Puffer, C. (2011). Content-and-language integrated learning: From practice to principles? *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 31, 182-204.
- Dalton-Puffer, C., & Smit, U. (2007). Introduction. In C. Dalton-Puffer & U. Smit (Eds.), *Empirical perspectives on CLIL classroom discourse* (pp.7-23). Frankfurt, Germany: Peter Lang.
- Day, C. (1999). *Developing teachers: The challenges of lifelong learning*. Bristol, United Kingdom: Taylor & Francis.
- De Vries, S., Van De Grift, W. J., & Jansen, E. P. (2013). Teachers' beliefs and continuing professional development. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 51(2), 213-231.
- Diaz-Maggioli, G. H. (2003). *Professional development for language teachers*. Retrieved from [https://www.academia.edu/1754875/Professional\\_Development\\_for\\_Language\\_Teachers](https://www.academia.edu/1754875/Professional_Development_for_Language_Teachers)
- Dilshad, M., Hussain, B., & Batool, H. (2019). Continuous professional development of teachers: A case of public universities in Pakistan. *Bulletin of Education and Research*, 41(3), 119-130.
- Harris, D. L., & Anthony, H. M. (2001). Collegiality and its role in teacher development: Perspectives from veteran and novice teachers. *Teacher Development*, 5(3), 371-390.
- Ito, Y. (2018). CLIL in practice in Japanese elementary classrooms: An analysis of the effectiveness of a CLIL lesson in Japanese traditional crafts. *English Language Teaching*, 11(9), 59-67.
- Ivankova, N. V., Creswell, J. W., & Stick, S. L. (2006). Using mixed-methods sequential explanatory design: From theory to practice. *Field Methods*, 18(1), 3-20.

- Kewara, P., & Prabjandee, D. (2018). CLIL teacher professional development for content teachers in Thailand. *Iranian Journal of Language Teaching Research*, 6(1), 93 – 108.
- Krille, C. (2020). Barriers to participation in professional development. In C. Krille (Eds), *Teachers' Participation in Professional Development* (pp. 27-39). Cham, Switzerland: Springer Nature Switzerland AG.
- Kewara, P. (2016). Learning English through content and language integrated learning type approach: Concept and perspective for Thai teachers. *Journal of Education*, 27(1), 28-40.
- Noom-ura, S. (2013). English-teaching problems in Thailand and Thai teachers' professional development needs. *English Language Teaching*, 6(11). 139-147.
- Parmwong, L., & Subphadoongchone, P. (Eds.). (2019). Proceedings from ICAA2019: *Interrogating Professional Development in CLILL Voices from Thai School Teachers*. Bangkok, Thailand: The Faculty of Liberal Arts.
- Pérez Cañado, M. L. (2014). Teacher training needs for bilingual education: In-service teacher perceptions. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 19(3), 266-295.
- Prasongporn, P.(Ed.). (2009). Proceeding from the first Access English EBE Symposium. *CLIL in Thailand: Challenges and possibilities*. Jakarta, Indonesia.
- Punthumasen, P. (Ed.). (2007). Proceedings from the 11th UNESCO-APEID international conference: *International program for teacher education: An approach to tackling problems of English education in Thailand*. Bangkok, Thailand.
- Richards, J. C., & Farrell, T. S. C. (2005). *Professional development for language teachers: Strategies for teacher learning*. New York: NY, Cambridge University Press.
- Strotmann, B., Bamond, V., Lopez Lago, J. M., Bailen, M., Bonilla, S., & Montesinos, F. (2014). Improving bilingual higher education: Training university professors in content and language integrated learning. *Higher Learning Research Communications*, 4(1), 91-97.
- Tachaiyaphum, N., & Sukying, A. (2017). EFL pre-service teachers' perceptions of CLIL. *Asian Education Studies*, 2(4), 44–56.
- Ulla, M. B., & Winitkun, D. (2018). In-service teacher training program in Thailand: Teachers' beliefs, needs, and challenges. *Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities*, 26(3), 1579-1594.
- Yamane, T. (1973). *Statistics: An Introductory Analysis*. New York, NY: Harper and Row.

---

## Perceptions of Undergraduate Students from the Faculty of Agricultural Technology towards English Graduation Requirements

Nuttarinan Panchoei

Postgraduate student, Faculty of Liberal Arts, King Mongkut's Institute of Technology  
Ladkrabang

E-mail: panch.rinan@gmail.com

Pramarn Subphadoongchone, Ph.D.

Lecturer, King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang

E-mail: pramarn.su@kmitl.ac.th

### Abstract

Several universities in Thailand have implemented the English benchmark policy for graduation requirements and developed their own English exit exam. Students' perceptions towards the policy are nevertheless under-researched. This study aimed to explore undergraduate students' perceptions towards the university's English proficiency graduation requirements. Following an interpretive, qualitative research paradigm, the study recruited five fourth-year students from the Faculty of Agricultural Technology at one public university in Bangkok, Thailand. A semi-structured interview with each student via Microsoft Teams was employed as a research instrument, and all the interviews were audio-recorded with the participants' permission. The collected data were analyzed using content analysis. The results revealed that the majority of the participants expressed positive perceptions towards the policy even though they encountered some challenges in taking the English exit exam administered by the university. Some of them thought that the policy encouraged them to improve their English proficiency as preparation for their future careers. However, the policy posed anxiety on them. All of the participants were concerned about their time management due to their engagement in a final year internship or project, and the effect of the policy on their graduation. The results also showed that the participants had encountered challenges in completing the written and interview tasks of the exit exam. This study suggests that policy makers, test developers, and faculty members should listen to the students' voices and thus work collaboratively to prepare the students to cope with the demand in meeting the English graduation requirements.

**Keywords:** Undergraduate students, Test takers' perceptions, English language policy, English proficiency tests, English exit exam

### 1. Background of the Study

A great number of universities in different countries have put effort into setting the English language proficiency thresholds and implementing the English benchmark policy for graduation requirements to their undergraduate students. Their primary aim is to increase an awareness of improving the students' English language proficiency (ELP) in order for them to cope with high competition in the world's labor market, achieve the ELP requirements of

their prospective careers, and equip themselves with adequate ELP for further studies (Pham & Bui, 2019; Shih, 2009, 2010, 2012, as cited in Hsieh, 2017).

In order to show a proof of evidence of their English proficiency, students can choose to take different English language proficiency tests as approved by their universities. While some universities have developed their own English proficiency tests for this particular purpose, others may adopt the tests available on the market as developed and administered by different trustworthy educational and testing organizations.

A study by Li et al. (2012) indicates that most Chinese students choose to take the College English Test (CET), the most influential English language proficiency test in China developed and administered by the Chinese Ministry of Education. Students in universities in Vietnam can choose one of the recommended English language proficiency tests developed by domestic or international testing institutes, including the Vietnamese Standardized Test of English Proficiency, IELTS, TOEIC, TOEFL, Cambridge Preliminary Test (PET), and First Certificate of English (FCE) (Le, 2017; Nguyen, 2013, as cited in Pham & Bui, 2019).

Even though previous studies reveal that students had positive perceptions regarding the English graduation benchmark policy, they also reported that the policy seemed to exert negative impacts on affective conditions. For example, students from China and Vietnam experienced an increase in anxiety and pressure when preparing and taking the test as graduation requirements (Li et al., 2012; Pham & Bui, 2019).

In the Thai educational context, many universities have started to set their own English graduation benchmark policies, allowing students to take both international English language proficiency tests, such as TOEFL, IELTS, and TOEIC; and university-developed English language proficiency tests. Most universities in Thailand have their own language institutes or English departments, which are responsible for developing and administering a university-based test of English language proficiency. For instance, two leading universities, Chulalongkorn University and Thammasat University, have their own tests known as “Chulalongkorn University Test of English Proficiency (CU-TEP)” and “Thammasat University General English Test (TU-GET)” respectively. Although both universities have encouraged their undergraduate students to take the test before graduation, the universities have not yet had a clear policy regarding the English proficiency graduation requirements.

As stated above, many universities in Thailand, be they private or public, have not had issued a clear policy on the use of the English proficiency graduation requirements for their undergraduate students. As a result, it seems that perceptions of Thai undergraduate students towards the policy have not yet been insightfully explored even though there have been a certain number of studies on issues surrounding the English proficiency graduation requirements for undergraduate students in other countries (Chu & Yeh, 2017; Hsieh, 2017; Hường & Mai, 2018; Li et al., 2012; Pan & Roever, 2016; Pham & Bui, 2019). There is however one interesting study by Sriwilajaroen and Piamsai (2018), which investigated the perceptions of postgraduate students towards the implementation of the English language policy in one public university.

Over the past few decades, the issue on the washback of a particular language test has been widely studied due to its important implications for language education. Altowaim (2015) indicated that examination always comes about test impacts on the lives of influence stakeholders, emphasizing examinees and a high authority of that testing. As a result, scholars in the field of applied linguistics have attempted to put their efforts into investigating how

such test effects operate and thus proposed different definitions, notions, hypotheses, and frameworks of washback. The board definition of washback or backwash was defined by Hughes (1989), which is known as “the effect of testing on teaching and learning” (p.1). Shih (2007) asserts that washback can cause both positive and negative effects on students’ learning and psychological conditions.

The significance of washback effects, dealing with an exploration of how testing influences learning and teaching processes, has generated plenty of studies in a field of language testing and assessment. This is because it is essential for stakeholders involved in this issue, such as teachers, university members, test developers, administrators, and policy makers, to listen to test takers’ and influence individuals’ voices, especially students and teachers who are directly affected by the implementation of a particular language policy. Findings from studies on the washback effects would shed light on ways in which flaws in the implementation of the test can be handled. The findings can also serve as supplementary ideas in developing authentic and measurable standardized tests (Chu & Yeh, 2017).

This study aims to investigate undergraduate students’ perceptions of the English language proficiency graduation requirements as stipulated in one public university in Thailand. The students were those from the Faculty of Agricultural Technology. The reasons why this study placed emphasis on only one selected university and one faculty are as follows. First, the university under investigation has just set its own English graduation policy for undergraduate students and developed its own English language proficiency test as an exit exam. It is thus worth conducting the study at this particular university, where a new policy and an exit exam are still in their infancy and in the process of trial and error.

Second, as this study was conducted at one faculty, it would allow the researchers to insightfully delve into useful context-laden information to better understand the issues under investigation. Finally, the impetus of this study was based upon the first researcher’s own experience in discussing the issues with undergraduate students from the Faculty of Agricultural Technology and some English teachers. It was found that many students from this faculty had a variety of challenges in learning English, and many of them had expressed their concern about the policy due to their limited English proficiency.

## 2. Objectives

This paper is part of a larger research project that delves into the perceptions of Thai undergraduate students and lecturers from the Faculty of Agricultural Technology towards the policy on English language proficiency graduation requirements. In this paper, the focus is placed on the qualitative study of the lived experiences of five fourth-year students only. It is important to note that the university’s English exit examination is offered in two formats: Format 1 (a paper-based test with multiple-choice items) and Format 2 (writing tasks and an online oral interview based on a selected news article). At the time of this study, Test Format 2 was administrated by the university in order to mitigate possible health risks during the Covid-19 pandemic. This paper thus focuses on the students’ perceptions of the English graduation policy and Test Format 2 only. The objectives of the current paper are as follows:

1. To investigate the students’ views of the policy on English language proficiency graduation requirements
2. To explore the challenges encountered by the students in taking the university’s English exit examination (Test Format 2)

The findings of this study can provide useful implications for those involved in implementing the policy, developing and delivering the exit exam, and supporting students in preparing themselves to cope with the demands in meeting the English language proficiency graduation requirements.

### 3. Method

#### 3.1 Research design and setting

This study adopted a qualitative, interpretive research design. The qualitative inquiry through the use of semi-structured interviews was employed to elicit rich data. This study was conducted at the Faculty of Agricultural Technology in one public university in Bangkok, Thailand. The mission of this faculty is to develop Thai agriculture for its advancement and sustainability. This faculty is one of the largest faculties of the university. It is also one of the most prestigious agricultural technology-oriented faculties of the country, highly regarded as an educational sector with high quality education in agricultural science and technology. The faculty offers three major disciplines in both undergraduate and postgraduate levels: plant production technology, animal production technology and fisheries, and agricultural development and resource management. The medium of instruction in this faculty is Thai.

#### 3.2 Research participants

The research participants of this study were five fourth-year undergraduate students from the Faculty of Agricultural Technology, who graduated in the academic year 2020. They took part in this study on a voluntary basis. All of the students were native speakers of Thai, and they took four required English as a foreign language courses (two foundation English courses and two English for Academic Purposes courses). All the five students took Format 2 of the English exit exam developed by the university and met the minimum score stipulated by the university for graduation. Two of them also took Format 1 of the exit exam. Although the students could also opt for taking other international tests, including TOEIC, TOEFL and IELTS, all of them chose to take the university's English exit exam. The following table presents background information about the participants.

**Table 1:** Background information about the participants

Student	Gender	Age	Field of study	Exam Format Taken
S1	Male	23	Plant Production Technology	1 & 2
S2	Female	25	Plant Production Technology	2
S3	Male	22	Plant Production Technology	2
S4	Female	22	Animal Production Technology and Fisheries	2
S5	Female	23	Agricultural Development and Resource Management	1 & 2

### **3.3 Research instruments**

This study employed an online semi-structured interview via Microsoft Teams as a research instrument, with the purpose of gaining essentially qualitative explanations for the issues under investigation. This study adopted a semi-structured interview because it is an effective tool for investigating people's experiences from their own words and points of view. In addition, it involves the use of predetermined interview questions, but it also allows the researcher to simultaneously probe far beyond the initial answers to the prepared questions. These characteristics of the semi-structured interview thus allow the research participants and the researcher to pursue relevant issues of interest, of which the researcher may not have previously considered (Cohen et al, 2013; Marshall & Rossman, 2014).

In this study, the use of a semi-structured interview was conducive, providing the researchers with in-depth and useful information on the participants' understanding, perspectives, and attitudes toward the English language proficiency requirements. A list of interview questions was prepared by the researchers, and it was validated by three experts with a doctoral degree in Applied Linguistics or TESOL and experiences in conducting qualitative research. The interview questions were constructed with three main foci:

1. The students' perspectives towards the English language proficiency requirements,
2. The students' challenges in taking Test Format 2, and
3. The students' perspectives towards types of the English language support they preferred in helping them deal with the English language proficiency requirements

### **3.4 Data collection and data analysis**

The interviews through Microsoft Teams were conducted on a one-on-one basis, which would make the students feel comfortable to share their perspectives with the researcher, particularly for sensitive issues. In order to avoid any language barrier, the interview was conducted in Thai, which is the first language of the participants and the researcher. This would help the researcher to gain the data with high content validity for the study. All the interviews were audio-recorded with the participants' permission. A content analysis was employed to analyze the qualitative data in this study.

This study took ethical issues into serious consideration. A brief research proposal and an official letter were sent to the Dean of the Faculty of Agricultural Technology to ask for permission to conduct this research. In addition, the participants were invited to participate in this study on a voluntary basis and with their informed consent. Finally, the name of the university serving as a research setting and the name of the student were not disclosed in order to protect their anonymity.

## **4. Results**

The collected data were analyzed and presented under three themes as follows.

### **4.1 Students' perspectives towards the policy on English language proficiency graduation requirements**

Most participants had a positive perception towards the policy on the use of English proficiency as graduation requirements for undergraduate studies. They thought that the main purpose of this English language policy would be assessing their English language proficiency before they entered the highly competitive labor market. For example, two participants (S2 and S5) thought that taking the exit exam, as required by the university, could motivate them to brush up their English for their future careers. One of the participants (S5)

stated that “the policy affected my motivation in learning English. Due to a limited timeframe in preparation for the exam, I studied a lot of grammar lessons because I was worried that I would not graduate. So, I searched for online video clips about English on the Internet and learned through them.”

Even though the majority of the participants thought that this English language policy was useful for all undergraduate students, the findings from three participants (S1, S3, and S4) revealed that this policy could not positively encourage them to become more active in learning and practicing English. This policy simply forced them to learn English just for examination in order to meet the test requirements stipulated by the university. One of the participants (S4) mentioned that “this policy did not affect my motivation in learning English at all. I studied English because I wanted to meet the test requirements. I didn’t actually want to study English.”

Besides, most participants thought that this English language policy should not have been set as a criterion for graduation. This is because this policy posed anxiety on them in terms of their time management and the effect on their graduation. One of the participants (S4) revealed that “this policy brought about a lot of anxiety to me because I had a ton of assignments to submit to my teachers while being worried about this issue at the same time...I had to prepare for the oral interview session, but finally I failed the exam.”

Hence, some participants suggested that all undergraduate students be required to sit the English exit exam, but the university should not have set a pass or fail score, nor should the university have used their scores as a graduation requirement. The participant (S2) recommended that “in my opinion, the university should encourage every undergraduate student to take the exit exam in order to self-assess their strengths and weaknesses of the English language ability. This is because some students might use this English self-assessment to improve their English abilities in the future. However, this policy should not have set a pass or fail benchmark or conditions for graduation.”

#### **4.2 Students’ challenges in taking Test Format 2**

Although the findings disclosed that most participants mentioned that the level of difficulty in taking Test Format 2 was moderate, the participants reported having varying degrees of challenges in taking the exam. It is important to note that for Test Format 2, the participants were required to write a summary of a news article of their interest and an opinion paragraph about the selected news. They were subsequently interviewed online by an English teacher, and the content of the interview was based on the news article selected and summarized by the participant. For the news summary session, two participants (S4 and S5) had a few challenges in summarizing the news article and writing an opinion paragraph about it. Moreover, the results reported that three participants (S3, S4, and S5) encountered difficulties in finding a news article suitable for the given topic. For instance, one of the participants (S3) expressed that “the problem I found was finding the news. I had to check whether the news I selected was related to the given topic or not. The news I selected sometimes was not related to the topic, so I had to search for the new one...I could read and write English a little bit...I translated some parts of the news and found that it was irrelevant to the topic assigned, so I had to find another one instead.”

For the oral interview, all the participants reported facing several challenges regarding taking an online interview in English. The results showed that most participants had some problems in responding to questions asked by the interviewer. For instance, one of the participants (S4) said that she could not find suitable words to use in answering the

question. She also mentioned that “I was not good at English. Anyway, the interviewer spoke really fast to me with dense information. I couldn’t catch her words sometimes, so I didn’t understand the questions...the interviewer asked me a question with long sentences.” In addition, one of the participants (S3) expressed that he felt nervous in a face-to-face interview via an online mode. Another participant (S1) reported encountering technical problems such as unclear voices and Internet connection.

#### **4.3 Students’ needs for support with reference to preparation for Test Format 2**

The participants provided suggestions for the faculty members and the university with reference to preparation for the English language proficiency requirements. First, they expressed that the university should provide the exam preparation training to help the students prepare for the exam, particular those who wanted to re-sit the exam because they were unsatisfied with their previous exam results. Second, they reported that the test administrators should clearly inform them of information about the exit exam in terms of test formats, test contents, skills tested, and the test criterion to all students before taking the exam. Third, the participants mentioned that the university should give a practice exam/mock exam with further recommendations based on each students’ exam result. Fourth, they expected support in terms of exam preparation materials for their self-study.

In case that some students failed the exit exam for many times, all the participants stated that teachers, the faculty, and the university should offer some kind of help and support regarding taking the exit exam to all these students. Most students thought that free exam preparation training and English language courses offered by the university were of utmost importance for them. According to the interviews, one of the participants (S1) suggested that “if some students couldn’t pass the exam for three times, I think that the university should have some sorts of policy to assist this group of students...like additional instructional materials or something, or any policy to enhance those students’ English language abilities.”

### **5. Discussion and Conclusion**

Through the analysis of the semi-structured interviews, the present study has provided a clearer understanding of the washback effects regarding taking the University’s English exit examination and the implementation of the policy on English language proficiency graduation requirements. Furthermore, it highlights the challenges the students encountered in taking Test Format 2, an English exit exam administered during the Covid-19 pandemic, and needs for support with reference to preparation to meet the requirements.

Based upon the evidence from the findings, this study pointed out that the implementation of the English benchmark policy as a graduation requirement and the English exit exam administered by the university could exert both positive and negative washback effects on the learning and psychology of the undergraduate students from the Faculty of Agricultural Technology. This study appeared to confirm the study by shih (2007) in that the examination is one of the factors causing test impacts on students’ learning and psychology in various aspects in terms of content of learning, total time on learning, learning strategies, learning motivation, and test anxiety.

It is important to note that positive washback effects can be found from the implementation of this policy. The results of the current study showed that positive washback

effects emerged when the students attempted to prepare themselves for the university's English exit exam with many kinds of strategies in order to complete the test requirements. This can also be observed from the fact that some believed that preparing for the exam could provide them with positive impacts on their language proficiency levels and future employment prospects. This is in line with the study by Alderson and Wall (1993), which indicated that positive washback would offer beneficial test effects in promoting students' learning, motivating more appropriate learning practices, and encouraging participants' positive attitudes in relation to the influence tests, resulting in students' lifelong learning to study English.

Significantly, this current study disclosed that this English language policy implemented by the university and the use of the language test also posed some negative washback effects on the students. The results drawn from the interviews also pointed that the students felt worried before taking the exit exam because they had some difficulties about their time management. They had to juggle between test preparation and other academic activities, such as attending internship and completing a final year project. This negative washback on learning delivered test-induced fear, unexpected pressure, anxiety, and frustration. The implementation of the one-size-fit-all policy may provide continuous faults in terms of the unfairness, the test-driven orientation in learning, and the increase of stakeholders' dissatisfaction (Pham & Bui, 2019). All these severe issues lead to the higher test anxiety in students (Chen & Squires, 2010, as cited in Pham & Bui, 2019).

The results of this study also demonstrated that the students encountered certain challenges regarding taking written and interview tasks of Test Format 2. This is because they were unfamiliar with the test format and had a test-taking pressure from the interviewer. Moreover, the students faced difficulties in taking the exit exam, especially in the interview session, due to their low level of English language proficiency. As a result, the students seemed to have a high level of test anxiety towards the test implementation, similar to the students reported in the study by Hường and Mai (2018).

The students suggested a variety of needs for support with reference to preparation for the English language proficiency requirements expected from the university. It is not surprising to find that the students agreed that the university should offer appropriate support in the form of English preparation courses for the test to all students. They expected to receive necessary information about the policy and acceptable standardized tests, including the test objectives, the test content, the type of test, the English language skills to be tested, and the test allocation. In addition, the university and faculty members should provide any effort in helping those students who take the exit exam for several times but still cannot meet the test requirements. This is in line with the study by Chu and Yeh (2017), which recommends that each university should provide students who cannot pass the English language test with alternatives, such as taking extra English courses to reach a graduation requirement instead and retaking the language test in order to build chances in passing the test.

As reflected in this study, teachers, test developers, administrators, and policy makers necessarily listen to the students' voices about the policy on English language proficiency graduation requirements. What they have heard can help them in making an important decision pertaining to this policy in order to achieve goals of the policy. This is line with the study by Kirkland (1971) revealing that students are the most important group of stakeholders who can provide major decisions in setting the policy. Additionally, policy makers should

work collaboratively with those from other universities to insightfully understand the actual objective of the policy, the nature of each testing and assessment in terms of strengths and weaknesses, and the test development when evaluating students' test results and learning products (Prapphal, 2008).

For further studies, it is recommended that researchers investigate the perceptions of the university's administrative team and policy makers with reference to the English language proficiency graduation requirements for undergraduate students. Findings from these prospective studies could be compared with those derived from studies focusing on the students' perspectives. This will provide us with a more insightful understanding of the policy from multifaceted perspectives, resulting in us having adequate empirical findings useful for revising the policy, if necessary and where appropriate.

## 6. Acknowledgements

We are indebted to Assistant Professor Dr. Paweena Chatsungnoen (Maejo University), Dr. Usa Intraraksa (Prince of Songkla University), and Dr. Juthamas Thongsongsee (Chulalongkorn University) for their help in validating the research instrument of this study. We would also like to thank King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang for providing us with financial support for attending this conference.

## 7. References

- Alderson, J. C., & Wall, D. (1993). Does washback exist? *Applied Linguistics*, 14(2), 115-129.
- Chu, H. Y., & Yeh, H. Y. (2017). English benchmark policy for graduation in Taiwan's higher education: Investigation and reflection. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 8(6), 1063-1072. <http://dx.doi.org/10.17507/jltr.0806.06>
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2013). *Research methods in education* (7<sup>th</sup> ed.). London: United Kingdom: Routledge.
- Hsieh, C. N. (2017). *The case of Taiwan: Perceptions of college students about the use of the TOEIC® tests as a condition of graduation* (Research Report No. RR-17-45). Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ets2.12179>
- Hughes, A. (1989). *Testing for language teachers*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Hường, B. T., & Mai D. T. (2018). Washback of the proficiency assessment as exit requirement on non-English major students at a law school. *University of Languages and International Studies Repository*. Retrieved from [http://hdl.handle.net/ULIS\\_123456789/1741](http://hdl.handle.net/ULIS_123456789/1741)
- Kirkland, M. C. (1971). The effect of tests on students and schools. *Review of Educational Research*, 41(4), 303-350.
- Li, H., Zhong, Q., & Suen, H. K. (2012). Students' perceptions of the impact of the college English test. *Language Testing in Asia*, 2(3), 77-94.
- Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. B. (2014). *Designing qualitative research* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage publications.
- Pan, Y., & Roever, C. (2016). Consequences of test use: A case study of employers' voice on the social impact of English certification exit requirements in Taiwan. *Language Testing in Asia*. doi:10.1186/s40468016-0029-5

- Pham, T. N., & Bui, L. T. P. (2019). An exploration of students' voices on the English graduation benchmark policy across Northern, Central and Southern Vietnam. *Language Testing in Asia*. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40468-019-0091-x>
- Prapphal, K. (2008). Issues and trends in language testing and assessment in Thailand. *Language Testing*, 25(1), 127-143.
- Shih, C. (2007). A new washback model of students' learning. *Canadian Modern Language Review*, 64, 135-162.
- Sriwilaijaroen, P., & Piamsai, C. (2018). Washback of a university English proficiency test from graduate students' and lecturers' perceptions. *Thailand TESOL International Conference Proceedings*, 149-168.

## Thai Vocational Students' English Learning Trajectories and Their Imagined Communities

Krongrat Chaiwichitta

Postgraduate Student, Faculty of Liberal Arts, King Mongkut's Institute of Technology  
Ladkrabang

E-mail: pkrongrat@gmail.com

Pramarn Subphadoongchone, Ph.D.

Lecturer, Faculty of Liberal Arts, King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang

E-mail: pramarn.su@kmitl.ac.th

### Abstract

Thai vocational students have been labelled as having poor English proficiency and low English learning motivation. The issue has long been controversial among stakeholders. While some questioned the English language pedagogical practices in vocational institutions, others distrusted the country's educational system and policy. Drawing on Norton's (2000, 2001) conceptualization of an imagined community and reconceptualization of motivation as investments, this qualitative study aims to insightfully explore selected vocational diploma students' learning experiences with critical reference to their investments and identities as influenced by their imagined communities. The participants were three vocational diploma students studying in an electrical specialized program in one public technical college in Eastern Thailand. Following the interpretive, qualitative research design, this study collected data from the three students through the use of semi-structured interviews. The obtained data were analyzed qualitatively using a content analysis technique. The results revealed that all participants visualized their concrete imagined communities and had rather clear pictures of their own identities in those communities. They invested in English language classes as they were aware that the English language would significantly play a vital role in their future careers. The interplay between the vocational students' imagined communities and their investment in the English language classes suggests that to encourage students to put efforts in learning in their English language classes, teachers and those concerned should design an English curriculum that pedagogically adheres to students' prospective future careers and that serves as an enhancer of students' career promotion.

**Keywords:** Vocational students, Imagined community, Investment, Learning identity

### 1. Background of the Study

Vocational education management particularly focuses on supplying prospective employers with quality manpower equipped with work readiness skills, including fluent English communication skills. The English language curricula at this level are thus developed and implemented in order to promote students' English language proficiency covering both general communication skills and job-oriented communication skills.

Nonetheless, despite much effort, according to the recent Vocational National Educational Test (V-net) results, the English for daily and job-oriented communication skills of Thai vocational diploma students in 2018 and 2019 were considered remarkably low. The poor results have triggered controversial issues among stakeholders, including the quality of the tests and teachers, the appropriateness of the curricula, and the adopted pedagogical practices in vocational institutions.

Pedagogically, there are many factors believed to affect students' success or failure in learning additional languages. One of the most discussed factors is language learning motivation. To some language practitioners and researchers, motivation has a crucial role to play in learning an additional language. Gardner (1985) identified motivation as a combination of a desire to learn and an effort to achieve language proficiency. A seminal work by Gardner and Lambert (1972), which studied Canadian high school students learning French in Montreal, found that motivation could be divided into two main types: integrative and instrumental. Integrative motivation refers to language learning for personal advancement and cultural enrichment. In contrast, instrumental motivation includes a desire to learn a language for functional or external reasons, such as passing exams, career advancement, or financial rewards. The study results confirmed that both types of motivation accompanied the success or failure in second or foreign language learning. The study also advocated that success in that learning could be more attributed to integrative motivation as it maintains better long-term motivation than its counterpart.

Nevertheless, simply investigating students' language learning motivation has been criticized for its imperviousness to social contexts of learners (Dörnyei, 2001; Norton, 2000). Most studies on motivation conceptualized it as a fixed characteristic residing in each language learner and concluded that learners who were unsuccessful in learning target languages did not possess a satisfactory level of desire to learn the language. These studies excluded the existent impact of the social world to second or foreign language learners' engagement in classrooms or other milieus. To elaborate, Norton (2000) observed that the traditional social psychological notion of motivation in language learning could not accurately explain her research participants' motivation in learning English in relation to their actual classroom commitment. According to Norton (2000), to better explain the ambivalent desire to learn and practice languages, it was necessary to reconceptualize the construct of motivation as a form of 'investment' in an 'imagined community'.

Adhering to a social psychological perspective, the construct of motivation is conceptualized as a fixed personality trait belonging to each language learner. In contrast, the notion of investment, capturing the relationship between language learners and the changing social world, regards learners as social beings with complex identities and variable desires. Drawing on Bourdieu's (1977) economic metaphors, Norton (2001) also advocated that learners 'invest' in the target language because they expect a good return that will boost up their cultural capital through acquiring a wide range of resources, for example, language, education, friendship, real estate, and money. It should be noted here that the concept of investment that Norton (2001) proposed is not the same perception as instrumental motivation. The distinctive contrast between the two concepts is that instrumental motivation is constructed as a fixed and ahistorical characteristic that belongs to learners who desire to gain material resources valuable to the target language speakers, while the notion of investment perceives language learners as having "a complex social history and multiple desires" (Norton, 2000, p. 10). Norton (2001) also adopted the concept of imagined

communities – an envisioned community that transcended across time and space (Norton, 2001) – to complement the concept of investment. According to Norton (2001), an imagined community appears when a language learner aspires to belong to an ideal community of target language users. Norton (2001) also suggested that a learner invests in learning a target language in order to gain membership to an imagined community and thus earn expected cultural capital.

The notion of imagined community and investment has been laid as a foundational theoretical framework for a number of research studies within language learning fields even though only a handful of research studies were conducted with vocational students. In order to understand the learning experiences and trajectories of Thai vocational students with reference to their English learning, this study sets out to explore vocational diploma students' investments and identities from the different angle through the lens of the notion of imagined communities. It is strategized to illuminate a richer understanding of language learning processes and shed light on effective practices in English language pedagogy for vocational education. Additionally, the study can be of great help to educators to design and develop language learning curricula with enhanced perceptions of learning as a socially constructed activity.

## **2. Objectives of the Study**

This paper is part of a larger research project that delves into the investments and identities of vocational diploma students in one college in relation to their imagined communities (Norton, 2001) in order to discover potential pedagogies for the English language teaching for vocational education. This paper focuses on critical discussions of lived experiences and learning trajectories of three students.

## **3. Research Method**

### **3.1 Research design and setting**

To gain insights into investments and identities of a group of vocational students in relation to their imagined communities, this study adopted a qualitative research design, which was defined by Guba and Lincoln (1994) as interpretive and humanistic methodology preserving multiple realities. The qualitative method inclusively captured the complexity of participants' investment in both tangible and imagined communities, including their identity formation.

This study was conducted at a public technical college in Rayong, the eastern part of Thailand. The college is situated in the center of the eastern economic corridor (EEC) area where petrochemical industries and modern logistic facilities are strongly accelerated by the Thai government. Consequently, vocational and technical colleges in the area are expected to supply skilled manpower equipped with a sound English proficiency to the business establishments.

### **3.2 Research participants**

Three vocational diploma students were recruited to serve as research participants. They were from Electricals specialized program. The major reason why these students were selected was that they had notable internship plans which helped unhide new angles of the impact of imagined communities on their learning trajectory.

Regarding the internship plans, unlike students from the other programs in the college, the students from this specialized program were required to attend specialized

internship plans which were approved by both the college and the business establishments where the students did their internship. At the beginning of their first semester in the college, they started their observing phase of internship during May to June. This one-month phase allowed them to observe real working environment and to learn to adjust themselves to new surroundings. The second phase started in October and ended in March of the next year. At this phase, the students learned and practiced, their specific jobs, via apprenticeship, usually as technicians, for example, operating machines, working on machine maintenance, and handling documentation. From May to September, the second year of their study, they did the last internship phase. At the end of this phase, all students were evaluated by the teachers and their supervisors from the companies where the internship took place.

### **3.3 Research instrument**

In this research project, a semi-structured interview was opted since it was a more flexible adaptation of the structured interview. It enabled an in-depth exploration whereas allowing the interviewer to keep the interview within the framework outlined by the aim of the research (Berg, 2007). The interview sessions were held in Thai as it is the first language of both the participants and the researcher. This helped enable both parties to accurately understand the questions and clearly discuss their points, resulting in this study receiving valid data.

### **3.4 Data collection and analysis**

As this study employed a qualitative design, the data obtained were analyzed qualitatively using a content analysis technique. The semi-structured interviews were audio recorded, transcribed, and then analyzed. The interview transcripts were analyzed recursively to accurately capture the emerging themes. To ensure a high inter-coder reliability, they were first analyzed by the researcher and later reanalyzed by the other coder. Additionally, to maintain ethical principles in order to protect the participants' dignity, this study took into consideration their rights and welfare. The data collection only started when official permission from the research site was released. Participant consent forms were reviewed and signed by all participants. Furthermore, member checking was performed.

## **4. Results**

### **4.1 Cole: The strong investor and his distinct imagined self**

Cole, 19, was from a mid-range family. His parents worked in a company and were always supportive for Cole in both his studying trajectory and future career. Cole declared himself as a strong investor in the English classes. He strongly considered himself as a vocational student who was more proficient in English than most of his counterparts in the class. He mentioned that:

“I want to be an engineer. It’s quite a big dream for just a vocational student. I don’t want my friend to laugh at my dream, so I always pay attention to every class. .... In class, I always answer questions, discuss with friends and teachers when asked to, and finish exercises earlier than my classmates. In so doing, I can convince my friends and teachers that I can be an engineer.”

However, when asked for his favorite subjects, Cole did not mention English at first. He recounted that his English teachers at primary and secondary levels were quite unfriendly and that made him anxious during the English classes. The situation was better when he started vocational education at the age of 16. The English classes were more relaxing, and the teachers put less pressure on his studies than those years during the secondary school.

Cole mentioned that he started studying English more actively when he began his first phase of internship at one international petrochemical company. He confessed that he felt disappointed about his English language ability. At the college, he was one of the top students, but at the company, he could understand just a few ideas that the staff discussed. He reflected that:

“The staff often mixed Thai with English. They used difficult vocabulary. I couldn’t take note of those words at the time because I felt too ashamed. I could only memorize some words and then search for their meanings in Thai when I got back to my dormitory.”

After finishing his internship and went back to study in class in the last semester, Cole put more effort into practicing English. At the time, he was confirmed for a permanent position at the company, and he could start his job once graduating from the college. The internship made him “realize that English was really important for work even it was the work that included only Thai staff.”

#### **4.2 Eric: The divergent dream job**

Eric, 19, has studied electricals since the vocational certificate level. Nonetheless, his dream job was never related to his field of study, but clearly linked to his family occupation, fruit farmers. He wanted to be a fruit farmer and exporter. When asked about his English learning, he stated that he was always reminded that English was very important, so he tried to pay attention to the English classes. However, he mentioned that he did not like studying English because he was not good at it. It was always hard for him to catch up with what the teacher said or explained, and it was worse when the teachers were foreigners. Despite his dislike of English, Eric usually paid attention to the English classes, especially when the lessons were dealing with business. As he noted:

“I like it when we studied English for Social and Business Communication when we were doing our Diploma in year one. Most of the lessons were about doing business. It made me feel like I had been being trained to be a businessman.”

In relation to his internship, Eric was sent to work as a technician in one petrochemical company. He regularly met his bosses who were foreigners and had ample chances to talk with them “using very easy greetings” and his “broken English”. Although he did not like English, he expressed that he appreciated it when he could communicate with foreigners, and that made him feel “more positive to English” and “eager to learn more.”

#### **4.3 Bale: The unsteady dream**

Bale had been changing his study path several times. He was 22 and could have graduated from a university. Actually, Bale finished his vocational certificate in electricals, and then pursued the engineering degree in one public university in Bangkok. After two

years, he was terminated from the program for some reasons. Hence, he decided to study in this college as he thought “studying a diploma degree might much be easier than studying engineering”. Disappointment from the university seemed to intensely distort him from his dream job as an engineer. He felt like he was “too dumb to study engineering and be an engineer”. At that time, Bale did not have any specific dream job. He just thought about the very near future after his graduation. He hoped that the company where he took his internship would accept him as a permanent employee. He would just do his job, collect money and later think more about what he really wanted to do.

In the English classes, Bale always studied passively. He did what the teachers told the class to do. He did not want to participate in any active activities, for example, group discussions, demonstrations, or role plays. He could not see why he had to do those activities, and why the activities were not “something like playing online games in English where I can talk to real foreigners who speak real English.”

When asked about his experiences during the internship, Bale disclosed that it was like “a real working life without studying anymore.” Interestingly, Bale experienced the use of the English language among the company staff, especially writing skills, yet he believed that English language proficiency is not a keystone of work promotion.

## 5. Discussion and Conclusion

The results of the study revealed the tie between the English language learners and their imagined communities, identities and learning investment. They are particularly interesting as they connected learning investment to an ability to envision a possible future self. Both Cole’s and Eric’s identity constructions seemed to be guided by their potent visions of becoming parts of the future career communities. Cole focused on learning technical English and building an appropriate identity as a future engineer. His identity awareness caused a big perseverance in investing in English proficiency. This part of the findings is consistent with Kanno and Norton's (2003) reflection that imagined communities truly have the potential to impact learners’ actions and identity construction, which seems to be stronger than the ones with which they have daily interaction. Similarly, Eric’s imagined identity as a farming businessman drove him to invest great effort in his acquisition of business English skills. He chose to take control of his English language learning by spending more time and energy on business English than on other English lessons as he envisaged the importance of English on export documentation he would need to handle in his future job. This adds weight to Norton and Toohey’s (2011) observation that learners “invest in the target language at particular times and in particular settings because they believe they will acquire a wider range of symbolic and material resources, which will, in turn, increase the value of their cultural capital” (Norton & Toohey, 2011, p. 420). In contrast, Bale, with his ambivalent imagined identity, did not specifically focus on any kind of English lessons. He just passively studied and hoped for graduation, which was his only clear target. Bale did not explicit his investment in the English classes since he did not possess an ability to foresee himself in any English language communities of practice. Additionally, he was unable to realize what “symbolic and material resources” (Norton & Toohey, 2011, p. 420) he would acquire in the future.

Implications based on the findings of this study can be concluded as follows: First, students’ imagined communities and identities influence their English learning investment. In the situation when English language teachers are aware of the students’ imagined identities

through needs analysis or other kinds of inquiry, the teachers, then, need to take them into consideration before making any pedagogical decisions, for instance, designing lesson plans, learning activities, and learning materials, so as to assure that the language learning is meaningful, context-specific, and aligned with students' envisioned imagined community of practice. Otherwise, as cautiously pointed out by Yashima and Zenuk-Nishide (2008), when classroom pedagogy is unable to be linked with learners' imagined communities where learners wish to gain membership, it can "alienate" (p. 569) them.

Second, students' imagined communities and identities influence their English learning trajectories. In this light, it is advised that besides providing students with necessary linguistic knowledge, English language teachers should also design relevant learning activities that could guide students to align their personal desires, including educational development, professional growth, and job opportunities with language learning. In so doing, English language teachers may facilitate students to "think of themselves as living in multiple communities, including the classroom community, the target language community, and the imagined community" (Norton & Toohey, 2011, p. 178) which are their vivid imagination that may foster them in learning the English language with an unwavering direction through the long journey of English language learning.

Finally, as implied by Cole and Eric, students invest in the English classes despite their dislike of English. The only reason behind their investment is that they want to gain "symbolic and material resources" (Norton & Toohey, 2011, p. 420). Nevertheless, English language learning can be more enjoyable even for ones who dislike it. In this regard, teachers play an important role in enhancing their English language classes. English teachers could initiate a convivial, active learning environment and create English activities to arouse students' interest. They may allow students to engage in more varied language activities within informal contexts like watching movies, listening to songs, and reading from websites. Furthermore, English teachers may offer rewards attracting teenage or adult learners, such as online game cards, movie tickets or celebrity fan party tickets.

Even though the investigation of the three participants' experiences has shed light on our understanding of the relationships among learners' imagined communities, identities, and investment, it allows only limited generalizations to other learners or in other contexts since it was a small-scale research project with a small number of participants. While the detailed description of experiences on a certain phenomenon in this study provides valuable insights from the participants' perspectives, larger-scale studies with both qualitative and quantitative data sets are encouraged to discover findings that are more generalizable to a larger population. More studies on these complex issues would then certainly enrich our understanding of how individuals with their personal histories put effort in, or withdraw from, learning a particular language. Results from studies conducted in different social and educational contexts, coupled with participants with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, would help enhance the rigor and theorization of the notions of investment, identity, and imagined communities of practice.

## 6. Acknowledgements

We are indebted to Dr. Juthamas Thongsongsee from Chulalongkorn University, Assistant Professor Dr. Paweena Chatsungnoen from Maejo University, and Dr. Richavee Chatviriyawong from Rayong Technical College for their insightful feedback on the research

instrument of this study. We would also like to thank King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang for providing us with financial support for attending this conference.

## 7. References

- Berg, B. (2007). An introduction to content analysis. In: B.L. Berg (Ed.), *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences*, Allyn and Bacon, Boston, 238-267.
- Bourdieu, P. (1977). The economics of linguistic exchanges. *Social Science Information*, 16(6), 645–668. <https://doi.org/10.1177/053901847701600601>
- Dörnyei, Z. (2001). *Teaching and researching motivation*. Essex: Pearson Education.
- Gardner, R. C. (1985). *Social psychology and second language learning: The role of attitudes and motivation*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Gardner, R. C., & Lambert, W. E. (1972). *Attitudes and motivation in second language learning*. Rowley, Massachusetts: Newbury house.
- Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 105–117). London: Sage.
- Kanno, Y., & Norton, B. (2003). Imagined communities and educational possibilities: Introduction. *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education*, 2, 241-249.
- Norton, B. (2000). *Identity and language learning: Gender, ethnicity and educational change*. London: Pearson/Longman.
- Norton, B. (2001). Non-participation, imagined communities, and the language classroom. In M. Breen (Ed.), *Learner contributions to language learning: New directions in research* (pp. 159-171). Harlow, England: Pearson Education.
- Norton, B., & Toohey, K. (2011). Identity, language learning, and social change. *Language Teaching*, 44, 412-446.
- Peirce, B. N. (1995). Social identity, investment, and language learning. *TESOL Quarterly*, 29(1), 9-31.
- Yashima, T., & Zenuk-Nishide, L. (2008). The impact of learning contexts on proficiency, attitudes, and L2 communication: Creating an imagined international community. *System*, 36, 566-585. doi: 10.1016/j.system.2008.03.006

---

## **A Narrative Inquiry into the Identity formation of Thai Workers in the Philippines's Business Process Outsourcing industry**

Arnon M. Siriphap

Postgraduate student, Faculty of Liberal Arts, King Mongkut's Institute of Technology

Ladkrabang

E-mail: 62616003@kmitl.ac.th

Pramarn Subphadoongchone, Ph.D.

King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang

E-mail: pramarn.su@kmitl.ac.th

### **Abstract**

The Philippines' thriving Business Process Outsourcing industry (BPO) has been attracting a rising number of Thai workers in recent years. One of its business functions that offers the opportunity for Thai workers to provide products or service support to Thai-speaking clients is the Multilingual Call Center Services. Their new settings in a predominantly English-speaking country form an inevitable social and professional encounter that they must negotiate to form their identities and invest in the targeted linguistic and cultural constructs to secure a significant place within the communities that embrace them. With that, the notion of identity and investment by Norton (1995), underlines the theoretical framework of this study in understanding the experiences of Thai workers. In this qualitative research, the lived experiences of two Thai workers in the Philippines' Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) were accentuated by using narrative inquiry through in-depth interviews. The informants were purposively selected through recommendations from members of Thai communities in the Philippines. The findings suggest that, before moving to the Philippines, they had experienced trepidation as they lacked sufficient communicative skills. However, as they embarked on their social and professional journey, they did not seem to experience marginalization or deprivation because of their pre-notion language inadequacy. On the contrary, they regarded their professional and social experiences in the Philippines as valuable, meaningful, and contributive to forming their identities as speakers of English, ready to venture into globalized societies.

**Keywords:** Identity, Investment, Narrative inquiry, The Philippines' BPO industry

### **1. Background**

As Thais, we generally recognize English as an international language, and it is essential to succeed in matters concerning globalization. With that, the quest for employment abroad has always found its way into discussions involving the betterment of lives. In recent years, countries with a robust economy, such as Singapore and Malaysia, have continued to attract Thai migrant workers with the hope of better economic outcomes to enhance the well-being of their families (Sakolnakorn, 2015). On the other hand, the Philippines' thriving business process outsourcing industry (BPO) has attracted a rising number of Thai professionals seeking career opportunities in the multilingual call center services, which require customer service agents who can speak a variety of languages according to their customers' language inquiries. With the competitive government tax incentives, the Philippines' BPO industry has surpassed India

to become the leading destination for call center services for global companies with international clientele to invest in their call center services in the Philippines (Shead, 2017).

As the Thai workers embarked on their journey to live and work in the Philippines for the first time, they understood and accepted the reality that linguistic and cultural integration was crucial to the success of their employment and well-being. The newfound reality had an immense impact on their sense of self and their relationships with the communities that embraced them and positioned them as second language learners. Norton (2000) reiterates this relationship by defining one's identity as "how a person understands his or her relationship with the world, how that relationship is structured across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future" (p.5). Furthermore, as they navigated through the site of struggles in their social encounters, they pursued meaningful connections between their aspirations and commitment to learning a second language with their altering identities (Norton & Toohey, 2011). The notion of investment in a second language learning context implies that the learners' exertion of efforts and enthusiasm to achieve learning goals are not only confined to their individual attributes but are also driven by factors brought by their engagement in the social context.

## **2. Objective**

The objective of this study is to understand the identity formation of Thai workers in the Philippines' business process outsourcing industry through lived experiences throughout their journeys. In deriving meanings from lived experiences through their narratives, this study sought to examine the following questions:

- How do Thai workers perceive their sense of self before coming to the Philippines, and during the transitional period to the new environment?
- How do they recognize the formative experiences of their sense of self in their new social and professional communities?
- How do they perceive their future as the outcome of their experiences living and working in the Philippines?

## **3. Theoretical framework**

### **A Poststructuralist perspective on identity**

To illustrate the poststructuralist's view on identity, it is important to draw on the earlier notions which it is built on. The traditional Western view on identity describes how every individual maintains a fixed, unique identity and a coherent core, such as being introverted or extrovert, motivated or unmotivated, whilst poststructuralism accepts individuals to be fluid and dynamic and subject to changes over time and space (Norton, 2000). Referring to the abovementioned view, the notion of identity extends beyond addressing the question of "who am I?" in a wider sense, but also defines one's sense of self in relation to the social world. Given the characteristic of being dynamic and complex, multiple, and constantly changing through time, space, and other determinants, identity is a process of acquiring learning and experiences from the past and future merging with the present (Wenger, 1998).

In the field of language education, the investigation of identity has widely emerged with notable publications that address different issues such as race, gender, and a wide range of contexts. Block (2007) has classified the studies of identity into 3 main categories: L2 identity among immigrants, L2 identity in a second language context, and L2 identity in a foreign language context.

### **Construct of investment.**

In a study conducted to examine immigrant women in Canada, Norton (2013) and Norton Peirce (1995) argued that the earlier notion of motivation to learn a target language is inconsistent with recognizing the learners' identity in their prevailing context. Hence, one's motivation to learn does not always prevail over learning obstacles caused by the self-consciousness of his or her surroundings. The notion of investment recognizes the contextual influence on learners to produce variable learning outcomes. Today, Norton's notion of identity and investment, which recognizes learners as social entities whose identities are complex, is regarded as the main component in the field of language study. As pointed out by Kramsch (2013):

“Norton's notion of investment, a strong dynamic term with economic connotations... accentuates the role of human agency and identity in engaging with the task at hand, in accumulating economic and symbolic capital, in having stakes in the endeavor, and in persevering in that endeavor. In the North American context, investment in SLA has become synonymous with 'language learning commitment' and is based on a learner's intentional choice and desire.” (p. 195).

## **4. Method**

### **Narrative inquiry**

In the sphere of qualitative study, the narrative inquiry approach has emerged as an instrument to view individuals' experiences and accentuate critical events and construct storied lives that they represent (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007). Adopting narrative inquiry is to understand a specific view of experience as the underlying phenomenon of the study through cooperation between the researcher and the informants throughout a series of places and social interactions (Clandinin, 2006). Thus, narrative inquiry is instrumental in investigating identity formation through storied experiences in situated contexts whereby it hopes to establish a framework for analysis. Furthermore, as a poststructuralism study method, narrative inquiry is the result of a series of shifts in the approach to the methodology that saw the evolving relationship between the researcher and the individuals subjected to the study, the growing movement from numerical data towards the use of narrative as data, the change from acquiring general and universal insight towards local and specific focus, and the broadening acceptance of alternative approaches to acquiring information (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007).

### **The Study**

The primary means of data collection for this study is an in-depth interview to solicit narratives conducted by the researcher as the main research instrument. Three (3) in-depth interviews are set as an introductory interview, recounting experience and reflection, and a follow-up for verification and conclusion. Each lasted about 30 – 40 min. Before participating in the study, an introductory interview is conducted via an online meeting platform to verify the informants' qualifications for the study.

Before conducting the interview, informed consent, and agreement to audio-record, transcribe verbatim, and maintain the anonymity of the informants and employers' companies will be secured. This process follows the relational responsibility in narrative inquiry to negotiate boundaries, anonymity, and ethics (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

As the narrative progresses during the in-depth interview, significant and critical events that have occurred in the informant's experience are identified and categorized as themes that resonate with their evolving sense of self and connection to community, how they negotiate their identities, and the effort they have invested in achieving well-being

in a foreign land and unaccustomed environment. The interviews were conducted in Thai through an online conferencing platform, after which the entire interview was recorded for transcription and analysis.

### **Key informants**

Through affiliation, the key informants are purposively selected based on a set of criteria: a) the Philippines is their first overseas employment; b) working in the Philippines is their first employment with a foreign company; and c) the minimum length of stay in the Philippines for employment purposes in the BPO industry is 6 months.

### **Data analysis**

After transcribing the recorded narratives, thematic analysis was employed to interpret critical events that consistently transpired and influenced the informants' behaviors, actions, and thoughts (Hatch, 2002; Creswell, 2003).

## **5. Findings**

### **Informant A: Ploy**

Through a common social connection, Ploy was recruited to be the informant for this study. Before Ploy migrated to the Philippines to work in the BDO industry, she was working in the sales and distribution of restaurant and kitchen supplies in Bangkok. Although she had obtained a master's degree in science, she had never worked in a field that required her educational background. As far as the English language is concerned, although she has never had the chance to study in an English program or get the international exposure like other affluent Thais, she has always aspired to gain an international connection either socially or professionally. The life experience of her late father had inspired her to always seek an opportunity to travel and experience living abroad, as she had frequently expressed in her narrative, "I remembered my father spoke very good English and had always told me of his rich experience living abroad". However, she described this period as static as she did not pursue this aspiration.

As much as Ploy wanted to pursue her dream of traveling and experiencing living abroad, she recognizes the challenges of finances and inferior language ability. At one point, she was considering investing in a work and study program in Australia, but that did not materialize because of the challenges mentioned.

Through a relative, she discovered a job opportunity in the Philippine BDO industry. Initially, her mother was skeptical and was concerned about Ploy's safety. Later, she agreed to explore the opportunity by accompanying Ploy to the Philippines for job-hunting. Also, Ploy has studied the Philippines and discovered that it is one of the most chosen English learning destinations for Koreans and Chinese. One of the encouraging reasons that helped her decision is the recurring testimonials of foreign students in the Philippines that it is one of the best and most affordable steppingstones to learning English and experiencing the world. Besides, the job opportunities in the Philippines' BDO industry offer higher remuneration as compared to Thailand with the same qualifications. With the thought of learning English, experiencing living abroad, and a better job opportunity. Ploy, with her mother, traveled to the Philippines for job interview appointments that she had secured before.

These events in Ploy's life reflect the changeability of identity across the series of events that transpired, and despite the motivation she had received, she did not invest in the language practices as she perceived herself to be powerless and unable to overcome the struggles she was facing.

### **Informant B: Gift**

Through an invitation post on the social networking site for Thais living in the Philippines, Gift responded to the post and volunteered for the study. After the initial qualifying interview, Gift met the criteria to become an informant for this study. Gift grew up in a middle-income family in Bang Sare, Chonburi, and attended a regular Thai curriculum from elementary to tertiary level. She grew up in an environment that had no exposure to English speaking or language exchange opportunities. However, her father, although less educated, had the foresight to instill in her mind the importance of English communication at a very young age. As a result, Gift became motivated to enhance her language skills and eventually took up an English major during her tertiary years. After completing her tertiary education, still motivated by the idea of gaining exposure to speaking English and encountering foreigners, Gift was persistent in seeking employment opportunities that might serve her purpose. Gift came to know about the job opportunity in the Philippines BPO through a friend who was already working there. After contemplation and arrangements with her family, Gift flew to the Philippines after being accepted through a series of online interviews. In late 2018, Gift became pregnant and asked for maternity leave to come back to Thailand to be close to her family during prenatal care and after giving birth. Later, after the extended leave and the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, Gift lost the opportunity to travel back as restrictions have increased. However, Gift maintains regular communication with her employer and awaits the day she will return to the Philippines again.

## **6. Discussion and Conclusion**

Through the themes established from the informants' narratives, their journeys that set off from the moment of contemplating moving to the Philippines to their current positions are revealed. The highlight of their narratives signifies the dynamics of their identities throughout the journey whereby their identities evolved with the influence of various stimuli and how they constructed investments to cope with the apparent understanding of their positions in the world. (Norton & Toohey, 2011).

Although motivated by her late father's encouragement to explore the world and learn English, that motivation was not enough to drive Ploy to start following her aspiration. It was not until she had finally recognized that every individual's path to becoming "a citizen of the world" is unique, that she finally had the courage to start exploring every possibility of becoming one.

"I used to believe that we needed to be proficient in English first before we could even think of being part of an English-speaking world. We were mentally made to believe that international studies or bilingual education was the only answer to becoming good at English." Similarly, Gift also had the same notion before meeting her husband, who is a Filipino migrant worker at her workplace. "... communicating with my husband has made me realize that we have wasted so much time worrying about being correct when talking in English. Grammar is necessary to know, but it does not guarantee comprehensibility in communicating".

For both, there was an ongoing struggle to negotiate their identities through stereotyping. Their perception of language inadequacy and deprivation of opportunity to acquire the necessary competence had prevented them from pursuing a better career opportunity. However, when they opted to recognize the ever-changing nature of their perception about their potential and abilities to strive for betterment, they conceptualized the aspired identities which they had set to invest in.

From both narratives, a significant commonality revealed that after the first few weeks of moving to the Philippines, they had experienced a more welcoming and accommodating environment, despite their anticipation of struggle at work. As call center agents whose Thai language ability is hard to acquire in the Philippines, they felt valued at work. At this point, they started to enjoy interacting with their Filipino hosts and colleagues of other nationalities, which had reinforced their desire to develop their cultural understanding and language skills. Their day-to-day encounters were filled with excitement and discoveries. Ploy mentions in her narrative, “Despite the long working hours and late-night shift, I enjoy coming to work. Every day I would prepare stories and jokes to share with my colleagues during breaks and in between calls, and by doing that, I also practice my language skills.”

Similarly, Gift also appreciated socializing with her colleagues as she narrates. “My friends (colleagues) ask me almost every day about my choice of dress and make-up. They are very interested in knowing about Thai actors, food, and tourist destinations, among other things, and I found myself wanting to explain better every time.”

Both regard their experience in the Philippines as valuable and beneficial to their future. Aside from the learning experiences, socialization, and discoveries they had, they also appreciate the Filipinos’ resilience and courage to seek better opportunities abroad. In her narrative, Ploy asserts that she hopes one day she can also follow the Filipino trend of seeking better lives abroad.

“Before, I heard that the Philippines was a poor country and over-populated. But I never realized that people were so ready and equipped to venture outside the country at any opportunity that may arise. Almost every Filipino that I know has friends or family members residing abroad. Many that I know also plan to live abroad too. They talk enthusiastically about living in America, Canada, or other developed countries. I am starting to think like them and hope that one day I can go too.”

Although Gift has returned to Thailand on maternity leave and is not able to return because of the pandemic, she has been constantly communicating with her employer and waiting to return. Meanwhile, at home, Gift confidently speaks English to her children and inspires them with the idea of exploring the world.

Based on the narratives, this study’s implications can be asserted that the informants’ identities seem to be influenced by their perceived position at a particular point in time. Their evolving sense of power or deprivation to attain the desired goals-English competence, determines the constructs of investment that they must undertake. Thus, their investment in acquiring the necessary skills to seek international employment is an investment in negotiating their identities (Norton 2013; Norton Peirce 1995). As they find learning through socialization to be enjoyable and fruitful, they unexpectedly realize the benefits of practicing to master this skill.

Although the investigation into the informants’ narratives has offered a valuable perspective on understanding their voices that represent their experience in the study’s context, it may not generalize to other contexts due to its minimal scale of research and number of informants. This study hopes to encourage future studies on a larger scale and wider context to enrich our understanding of identity formation and the construct of investment.

## 7. References

- Bruner, J. (1996). *The culture of education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press [Spanish edition in 1997, with Bruner's Foreword].
- Clandinin, D. J. (2006). Narrative Inquiry: A Methodology for Studying Lived Experience. *Research Studies in Music Education*, 27 (1), 44–54. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1321103x060270010301>
- Clandinin, D.J., & Connelly, F.M. (2000). *Narrative Inquiry: experience and stories in qualitative research*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Clandinin J, Rosiek J. Mapping the Landscape of Narrative Inquiry. In: Clandinin J, editor. *Handbook of Narrative Inquiry: Mapping a Methodology California*: Sage Publications Ltd., 2007.
- Hatch, J.A. 2002. *Doing qualitative research in educational settings*. SUNY Press.
- Kramsch, C. J. (2013). Afterword In B. Norton (Ed.), *Identity and language learning: Extending the conversation* (2nd ed., pp. 192–201). Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Norton, B. (1995). Social identity, investment, and language learning. *TESOL Quarterly*, 29, 9-32. doi:10.2307/3587803
- Norton, B. (2000). *Identity and Language Learning: Gender, Ethnicity, and Educational Change*. Harlow: Longman/Pearson
- Norton, (2009). Language, and Identity. In *Sociolinguistics and Language Education* (Nancy H. Hornberger and Sandra Lee McKay ed., pp. 349–369). Multilingual Matters.
- Norton, B. (2013). *Identity and language learning: Extending the conversation* (2nd ed.). Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Norton, B., & Toohey, K. (2011). Identity, Language Learning, and Social Change. *Lang. Teach.* 44, 412-446. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444811000309>
- Pinnegar, S., & Daynes, J. G. (2007). Locating Narrative Inquiry Historically: Thematic in the Turn to Narrative. In D. J. Clandinin (Ed.), *Handbook of narrative inquiry: Mapping a methodology* (p. 3–34). <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781452226552.n1>
- Sakolnakorn, T.P.N., 2015, Problems, obstacles, challenges, and government policy guidelines for Thai migrant workers in Singapore and Malaysia. (2019). *Kasetsart Journal of Social Sciences*. Published at <https://doi.org/10.34044/j.kjss.2019.40.1.07>
- Shead, N. (2017). <https://www.aseanbriefing.com/news/business-process-outsourcing-Philippines/>
- Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

## **Thai Students' Transitional Learning Experiences in an International Program in a Thai University**

Jaroon Saenmuang

Postgraduate student, Faculty of Liberal Arts, King Mongkut's Institute of Technology  
Ladkrabang

E-mail: 62616001@kmitl.ac.th

Pramarn Subphadoongchone, Ph.D.

Lecturer, Faculty of Liberal Arts, King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang

### **Abstract**

Due to the emerging trends of internationalization of higher education, many universities in Thailand have offered programs in English in order to improve their competitiveness and subsequently to become more internationally visible. Framed within the concept of English Medium Instruction (EMI), this exploratory study aims at exploring Thai students' transitional learning experiences in an international program, where all classes were delivered in English. Adopting an interpretive, qualitative research paradigm, this study recruited six Thai undergraduate students who were completing their first year of studies in the Bachelor's degree in Business Administration (international program) in one public university in Thailand. A semi-structured interview was utilized as a research instrument to elicit data on the students' challenges in learning in the EMI environment. The data obtained were analyzed qualitatively using a content analysis with the intra-coder and inter-coder agreement procedures to ensure a high reliability in the analysis. The results revealed that the students confronted varying degrees of challenges, which were largely attributed to their past exposure to English before embarking on their tertiary education. They subsequently sought certain adjustment strategies in order to cope with the linguistic demands in learning in the EMI environment. The students also voiced their needs for English language support from the program. The findings of this study thus provide the program's leader and staff members with a critical understanding of the students' transitional learning experiences in their new community of practice as well as their needs for support from the program.

**Keywords:** Learning transition, Learning needs, English-medium instruction, International program

### **1. Background of the Study**

There have been many universities in non-English speaking countries all over the world using English as a medium of instruction (EMI). Particularly in the last two decades, there has been widespread use of EMI with its increased growth globally (Curle et al., 2021). English Medium Instruction (EMI) can be defined as teaching non-language subjects by using English normally in a country where its majority of people do not speak English as their first language (Macaro et al., 2017).

Internationalization and globalization are the two main factors leading to the growth of EMI in non-English speaking countries' higher education (Le, 2016). It was also argued by Curle et al. (2021) that the implementation of EMI in contexts where English is utilized in teaching and learning activities has been influenced by a desire to internationalize the university as well as globalization. English has become synonymous with the internationalization of higher education (Galloway et al., 2017, as cited in Rose & Galloway, 2019). Therefore, an exponentially growing global trend towards teaching content through English continues to exist while the emergence of EMI is regarded as a vital educational phenomenon (Rose, 2019).

Over the past decade has seen the momentum of EMI in higher education in East and Southeast Asia. Kirkpatrick (2014) argued that there is a constant growth in the number of East and Southeast Asian universities providing EMI courses to students since they endeavor to internationalize and magnetize foreign students and more incomes. The increases in undergraduate and postgraduate courses taught in English can be seen in many leading universities in ASEAN nations in recent years (Rose, 2019). In addition, Rose (2019) mentioned that “the establishment of EMI programs often goes hand-in-hand with what is sometimes referred to as part of the ‘internationalization at home’ trend.” Kirkpatrick (2011) asserted that EMI and internationalization are intertwined (as cited in Rose, 2019). There are several reasons why EMI is extensively used in designing and offering courses in non-Anglophone universities. The major reasons are that universities want to compete in the market of global higher education, to develop teaching and learning quality, and to increase students' enrollment which can bring about higher revenues.

As noted, there is the growing use of EMI in higher education, and the increasing reference to EMI can be found in national education policies of countries around the globe (Curle et al., 2021). For many governments in Asian countries, EMI has also been given importance in their educational policy actions. Apart from the concern for internationalization, their educational policies have been proposed to enhance their education quality in the world of globalization, to refine foreign language skills of students, to get students ready for postgraduate education, and to promote students' ability to work in the international environment with bilingual and multilingual skills (Dearden 2014, as cited in Zumor, 2019).

According to a study by Xu and Chuaychoowong (2017), it was discovered that in Thailand, EMI was adopted by 884 international programs in 2017, including 296 bachelor's degree programs, 350 master's degree programs and 215 doctoral degree programs. It is likely that the current number of EMI programs has been increasing constantly in recent years. The assumption behind that could be because Thailand has aspired to be an international hub for education in the region and attempted to increase the number of international students in the country (Rhein, 2018). Besides, it is well-known that Thailand has been one of the country members of many international organizations, including the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), and the World Trade Organization (WTO). Being one of the members of those international organizations has resulted in the need of competency in English language of the labor force in every part of the regions at

present and in the future (Walkinshaw et al., 2017). Consequently, it is not surprising that there is continued growth in the number of Thai universities offering EMI programs.

Previous studies have addressed the use of EMI in higher education and its impacts on the learners in foreign countries around the globe, such as Hong Kong (Evans & Morrison, 2011), Turkey (Yıldız et al., 2017), China (Hu, 2019; Hu & Lei 2013; Yang et al., 2019), and the United Arab Emirates (Solloway, 2016). Researchers reported several challenges for students whose first language is not English to study in the EMI environment. For example, they appear to encounter numerous difficulties in using four English skills in learning as they may lack sufficient knowledge of English vocabulary (Solloway, 2016), confidence in speaking English (Vu & Burns, 2014), and a good level of listening competence (Macaro et al., 2017).

A number of Thai students learning in the EMI environment seem to face several negative impacts from using English as the medium of instruction. According to some research findings concerning using English in the classroom with Thai students, it has been reported that Thai students faced negative impacts of utilizing English in teaching and learning content subjects (Hengsadeeikul et al., 2014; Tanielian, 2014; Thawarom & Chaimongkol, 2013).

Furthermore, the results of some studies on EMI informed that learners in EMI programs need to seek for certain strategies to deal with problems which they confront when learning in the course. For example, they have to prepare themselves before class by studying notes and subject content from previous class, ask their classmates, and ask their lecturers in their first language after the lecture (Le, 2016; Yang et al., 2019). These adaptation strategies used by students experiencing challenges of learning in the EMI environments can be explained by the concept of “community of practice (CoP)” (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Additionally, the theory of scaffolding within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) by Vygotsky’s (1978) can be explicated using the ways in which teachers, as more experienced users of English, help their students, who are less experienced users of English, to overcome language barriers embedded in the CoP. Likewise, students with higher English proficiency can help others with lower English proficiency when they study together in the EMI program, which can be referred to as their CoP.

There have been much research raising the issues of adopting EMI in higher education in many non-English speaking countries, including Thailand. These studies addressed the students’ challenges in learning in EMI programs. However, what seems to be lacking is a study focusing on the transitional learning experiences of first year undergraduate students in an international program, especially those studying in a newly established program in a university where the majority of programs are not delivered in English. In particular, there is scarce research in the field of EMI research focusing on Thai students’ perceived challenges, particularly on their adaptation strategies to the EMI environment, and their views for the language support from the program. Therefore, this study aims to explore Thai students’ challenges in studying in an international program in a Thai university, their adjustment to the English Medium Instruction (EMI) environment, and their views for English language support from the program.

## 2. Objectives

This research was an exploratory, qualitative study aiming at exploring transitional learning experiences of six Thai students in the Bachelor's degree in Business Administration (international program) at the Business School. The objectives of this study are as follows:

1. to study the EMI context of this international program,
2. to examine Thai students' experience in the EMI program which includes their perceived challenges in using English in academic studies and their adjustment to the EMI environment, and
3. to explore the available English language support from the program and the students' views of the support.

## 3. Method

### 3.1 Research design

This study adopted an interpretive, qualitative research design. The rationale for selecting this kind of research design is that it enables the researcher to obtain rich and in-depth data from the research participants in order to delve into relevant issues under investigation. In conducting qualitative research, the researcher can study and explore particular issues in their natural setting in an attempt to understand or interpret a phenomenon in several aspects that the participants informed the researcher (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, as cited in Merriam, 2009). Moreover, when a semi-structured interview is used as a research instrument, the participants will be given an opportunity to express their own views and share their lived experiences in detail (Taylor, Bogdan & DeVault, 2016).

### 3.2 Research site and participants

This study was conducted in a public university where Thai is predominantly used as a medium of instruction and everyday communication. The EMI program under investigation, which will be henceforth referred to as an international program, has been offered by the Business School since 2017. This international program can be thus considered as a newly established international program at this university.

The participants of this study included six Thai undergraduate students in the Bachelor's degree in Business Administration (international program) at the Business School. They graduated from various high school programs, such as English program (EP), Mini-English program (MEP), gifted science-math program, and regular programs (Thai-medium program). They ranged in age from 18 - 21 years old. All of them had done some English proficiency tests, namely the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), Chulalongkorn University Test of English Proficiency (CU-TEP), Cambridge English Exam, and the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT-English). Three of them took a summer language course in an English speaking country.

**Table 1:** Background information of the participants

Student	Gender	Age	High school program	Score of English proficiency tests
ST1	Male	19	Bilingual	IELTS: 3.5
ST2	Female	18	Regular	Cambridge English Exam: B2
ST3	Male	19	Regular	IELTS: 5.5
ST4	Male	19	EP	IELTS: 5.5
ST5	Female	21	Gifted science-math	CU-TEP: 90
ST6	Female	18	MEP	SAT (English): 410

### 3.3 Research instrument

The instrument utilized in this study was a semi-structured interview. An interview provides the researcher with an opportunity to discover the opinions of participants (Spolsky, 2000, as cited in Solloway, 2016). During an interview, the research participants' voices can be expressed, and information gained from them can be supplemented by observing their non-verbal reactions. Also, interviewing participants from different genders and educational backgrounds can bring about the richness of the interview data since various perspectives on a particular phenomenon can be found among diverse individuals (Creswell & Clark, 2018). Therefore, in this study it was believed that the interview was considered to be an appropriate instrument to elicit data on perceived challenges and adaptation strategies to learning in the EMI environment between these participants, as well as their opinions on English language support from the program.

### 3.4 Data collection

After receiving names and contact information of six students provided by the program's administrators, the researcher began to contact them in order to inform them of the background of this research project. This is to make sure that they were willing to participate in the study. Prior to starting the data collection process, the researcher informed the participants that the data would be collected through semi-structured interviews and that the interviews would be recorded and conducted online via Microsoft Teams. The participants were also informed that their anonymity would be preserved, their information would be treated as confidential, and the recorded videos would be deleted after the research was completed. The participants also signed a consent form upon their acceptance to participate in this study.

Before interviewing, the researcher designed an online questionnaire on Google Forms and sent its link to each student to fill out. Besides, the researcher collected additional information about the English proficiency requirements for applying to study in the program and the required English courses on the program's curriculum from the Office of the Registrar and the program's websites. This helped facilitate the interview process since the

researcher could have useful information about the participants before conducting the interviews.

As mentioned earlier, the researcher used Microsoft Teams as a platform for the online interviews. This mode of interviews was practical due to situational constraints of the COVID-19 pandemic. The interview was conducted in Thai in order to avoid language barriers as Thai was the participants' and the researcher's first language. The participants were interviewed individually for approximately 35-45 minutes.

### **3.5 Data analysis**

All recorded interviews were transcribed and checked for accuracy. The researcher wrote memos about initial thoughts on relevant themes and patterns of findings and then developed initial codes next to the appropriate segments of the text. In addition to doing an intra-coder reliability check, the researcher used the inter-coder agreement procedure to conduct a reliability check for qualitative data analysis. In so doing, the researcher invited another researcher to recode 25 percent of the interview transcripts. If there were any discrepancies in the analysis, the researchers would discuss those discrepancies with each other in order to reach a consensus.

## **4. Results**

### **4.1 EMI context of the program**

According to the information obtained from an administrative staff member of the program, there were 85 Thai first-year undergraduate students and one male Taiwanese student in this international program. They applied to study in the program in different rounds, such as direct admission, portfolio presentation, and quota admission. To be accepted to study in this international program, applicants who graduated from a Thai high school, were required to meet the minimum requirements of English proficiency as stipulated by the program. The students needed to submit a score of one of the following English language proficiency tests, such as the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOFEL - iBT), IELTS, CU-TEP and Thammasat University General English Test (TU-GET) to the program's committee. However, if they graduated from any high school programs where English was used as a medium of instruction, such as EP, MEP and bilingual programs, they might not be required to present the score of any English proficiency test. On certain circumstances, applicants who did not meet the minimum English requirements were allowed to attend an admission interview. Some of these students were accepted to the program as they communicated well in English and could convince the interview panel that they could survive in the program.

One of the participants (ST1) reported that he received the IELTS score of 3.5 and was accepted by the program although the program originally announced that the score of 5.0 was required. He mentioned that he was asked if he would be able to study in the program where all courses were delivered in English. He was recommended by the interview panel that he study more English as preparation for his study in the program, such as taking an English course before the semester started. Subsequently, he decided to take a course with a private English tutor to improve his English. Another participant (ST2) asserted that she did

not submit the score of any English proficiency test in her application to study in the program. Only an interview with the committee in English was required for her.

When all the participants were asked about their views on the importance of the score of English proficiency tests required by the program, they expressed different opinions on this issue. According to ST1, “the score was not important, but what mattered was adapting themselves to learning in the program.” Unlike ST1, ST2 held the belief that the English proficiency score was useful as the applicant could use it to consider if he/she had adequate English proficiency to survive in the program. As she stated:

“The required English score in this program was not as high as that required by other universities. When some applicants were unaware of their low English proficiency as could be reflected from the English score, they might struggle to study in the program because of their problems in using English. This might make them resign from the program as it happened to one of my friends.”

In addition, ST3 and ST4 shared similar experience that before they did an English proficiency test, they took an English course to prepare themselves for the test and “the knowledge gained when studying for the test in a tutorial school could be used in studying in the program.”

According to the data provided by the administrative staff member and the interviews with the research participants, the program did not offer any English language support to its students. To put it another way, the program did not have any pre-sessional English support course for the students, nor did it provide any in-sessional English support course for them. However, the program required that the students take four English courses (12 credits) as part of the curriculum.

#### **4.2 Students’ experience in the EMI program**

Prior to deciding to apply to study in this program, almost all of the participants compared the program with those similar programs from other universities. One of the reasons why they chose to study in this program was that all of them expected that their English skills would be developed in several ways. Some participants wished to improve their listening skills and learn more technical terms while one of the participants hoped to apply English knowledge and skills to their study at a postgraduate level. For instance, ST4 said that “I hoped to be very fluent in English and that I can speak like a native speaker.”

Based upon the participants’ experience studying in the program for almost two semesters, the participants were satisfied and unsatisfied with several aspects. To begin with, some of them were satisfied with the courses offered as designed in the program’s curriculum. Others commented that “we’re lucky to have good friends that we always help one another, and nice lecturers with empathy for students in the program.” However, ST4 addressed that the program did not offer a workshop to students to learn in real situations. Some students also complained about the inadequacy of English courses in the curriculum, the online learning mode during the Covid-19 pandemic, and physical facilities.

Most of the participants reported that they had encountered many challenges in the first year of their studies. In terms of their adaptation to higher education, all of them revealed that they found the transition from high school to university rather challenging and demanding. For example, they had to be more responsible as they were overwhelmed by assignments although they were more independent in their studies. As ST1 noted:

“I almost gave up at the beginning of the first semester due to too many assignments. I firstly found listening to lectures in English quite challenging due to different unfamiliar accents of the lecturers. A month later, I could adjust myself to the environment and found that some friends still had more troubles than me to study in the program.”

ST2 added that she adjusted herself a lot to new friends, especially when doing group works. Furthermore, most of the participants pointed out that apart from those concerning the language, they encountered some challenges in online learning during the pandemic of Covid-19. For instance, there was often a problem of the Internet signal both of the lecturers and the students. Learning online also made them inactive in studying.

Of the four English language skills, the participants were confronted with varying degrees of difficulties in using English in their study. Four of them reported that they had constraints on writing. One participant found the listening skill challenging while the other mentioned that she was trying to improve her speaking skill. However, the skill that most of the participants felt most comfortable with was listening. Not only did the participants have challenges in using English in their study, but their friends, as the participants reported, also experienced the same situations. ST2 expressed her view about the issue that “some might not have good background knowledge of some subject content, so it was more difficult for them to understand the content, particularly when studying in English.” She also stated that due to the difference in the levels of English proficiency among students in a group, there seemed to be more obstacles to them working together.

Therefore, the participants and their friends had to find some strategies to deal with those challenges. For example, they usually looked up for the meaning of certain unfamiliar words and the context they were used. ST3 said that to improve his writing skill, he would find some English articles to read apart from reviewing English grammar books learned earlier. However, ST5 used an application to check the accuracy of grammar in a writing assignment. The participants pointed out that the students in the program always helped one another when any of their friends needed assistance with their studies. They normally shared their learning experience on a chatting application, and discussed or explained particular course content with their friends. As ST6 mentioned, if she was not clear about something, she would text to her friends to ask for more explanation. ST4 put it:

“I used to tutor one of my close friends both in general subject content and in English language for a month. This also motivated me to try to develop my English knowledge so that I could help my friend. Afterwards, I realized that my English was much better.”

Some participants noted problems in using English in an online class during the pandemic of Covid-19, which seemed to be attributed to technical problems. For instance,

they found it difficult to interact with their friends or answer their lecturers' questions as their microphone were usually turned off to avoid random noise distractions. ST1 asserted that when he was not clear about a question asked by a lecturer, he "would listen to the answers of my friends to know what the lecturer actually asked." ST3 opined that his speaking skill seemed to be worse, so he had to consequently keep practicing speaking English to himself. Additionally, ST6 said that she would study a textbook before class, and this means helped her understand what a lecturer was talking about when there was an Internet signal problem.

Since all of the first-year undergraduate students in this international program were Thai, except for one Taiwanese student, and most of them graduated from Thai high schools, the participants stated that they used just some English words and sentences when doing a group activity in class as they found it easier to communicate with each other in Thai. ST2 mentioned that "I couldn't keep speaking English in class all the time because I didn't want to be judged by my friends." Moreover, it seemed that on certain circumstances, students in the program were allowed to ask a lecturer a question in Thai although all courses they studied in their first year used English as a medium of instruction. The participants elaborated that lecturers would firstly encourage students to ask a question in English. If students could not really ask in English, they would then be let to ask a question in Thai. Nevertheless, the participants could not speak Thai to their lecturers of the two compulsory English language courses since both courses in the first year were taught by non-Thai lecturers.

There were both advantages and disadvantages when students were allowed to ask questions in Thai in an EMI class. To start with, students could understand questions and the subject content better when discussing in Thai. ST1 agreed that lecturers permitted students to ask question in Thai as "some questions are not clear when being asked in English." ST2 asserted that "this made some students better understand a lecture because of listening to a friend asking a question in Thai." On the contrary, some participants opined that lecturers should keep speaking only in English since there was a foreign student in class, and it was an international program. ST3 commented that there should be the limit on allowing students to ask questions in Thai. ST5 reiterated, "this might make some students not to try to speak English as they knew they could ask or speak Thai with a lecturer in class. This would also result in students' worse command of English."

The participants reported that class assignments required them to use their English skills to write paragraphs, summaries and analysis in business, and give an oral presentation to the class. In addition to using English in studying, they had an opportunity to use English outside the classroom in different situations. To illustrate, ST2 always spoke English with a Thai friend living in Spain. ST4 talked to his audience on an application in English as he was a VJ. He also communicated online with foreign game players in English. ST6 said that she often spoke English with her foreign teachers in her high school. Besides, most of them normally practiced their English by watching some talk shows on TV and video clips on YouTube in English.

### **4.3 Students' views on English language support from the program**

Although the program did not offer any specific English language support to its students, most of the participants noted that their lecturers of English were always willing to help students with the language problems as well as explaining some assignments in detail

to them. The participants further elaborated that their subject content lecturers helped them better understand the lecture in several ways. For instance, in order to explain the subject content more clearly, the lecturers would use simple English in their lecture or give some familiar examples to help the students to better understand the content taught. The lecturers also helped improve students' English by correcting a mistake the students made when they asked a question in English. The lecturers also helped the students form a proper question in English. Some participants added that most of the lecturers would ask students at the end of a class whether students had any questions or not.

Without the English language support for students in the program, their academic activities, namely listening to lectures, participating in class activities, giving an oral presentation in class, and doing assignments might be affected by their level of English proficiency. As ST2 reiterated, "the language challenges could affect my study in the program if I didn't know how to overcome those challenges." ST3 stated that his English should be improved along with his years of study progress, adding that "if my writing is still not good, there might be some complaints from a lecturer regarding using English word choices in my writing, particularly when doing a project in a junior year." Unlike ST3, ST5 put it, "the challenges might not affect studying in the program, but it was considered as weaknesses."

Thus, according to the interviews with the participants, there were many suggestions from them on the program's additional English support provision. ST2 voiced her views on this:

"The program should stick to the requirements of English proficiency when they considered accepting a student to study in the program because only interviewing with a few sentences in English can't ensure that a student will have potential to study in the program."

ST4 emphasized that the program should provide a free English proficiency test, such as IELTS as in-session support for students so that they would know what skills they should develop. In addition, ST5 commented that the program should classify the students into sections based on their English proficiency, which can be assessed when all students in the program were required to take the same English test provided by the program. She further mentioned:

"The program should offer English language support to students with weaknesses in using English in their study so that all students could study together in a more effective way. Without support from the program, there exists a huge gap between students who are good at English and those who are not."

In ST6's opinion, the program should offer additional English courses, in addition to those required by the curriculum, to students who needed to improve certain skills, such as writing and speaking in English. Also, ST3 recommended that the program organize a summer course abroad so that students could practice their English in real situations, gain new experience, and explore the wider world at the same time.

## 5. Discussion and Conclusion

The results have discovered that students studying in this international program had different educational backgrounds and took various English proficiency tests prior to applying to study in the program. They encountered some challenges in their first year of studies while they did not receive any formal English language support from the program. Most of them considered academic writing as the most problematic skill whereas they felt most comfortable with listening. They informed that their friends also faced difficult situations concerning using English for their study. The findings of this study are in line with those of previous studies (e.g. Evans & Morrison, 2011; Hu & Lei 2013; Macaro et al., 2017; Solloway, 2016) pointing out that students in foreign countries, whose first language was not English, could be affected by the use of EMI in their higher education.

The results of this study have also revealed that the students confronting language challenges in studying in the EMI environment sought certain adaptation strategies to deal with the demands which they experienced when studying in the program. Previous studies (e.g. Le, 2016; Yang et al., 2019) also discovered similar findings when investigating how students with English language problems adjusted themselves to learn in the EMI program. Moreover, the results of this study with reference to students' adjustment strategies can help explicate the concept of communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and the instructional technique of scaffolding within the Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1978). That is, the students (newcomers) and the lecturers (old timers) in the program can be considered members of a community of practice of the international program under investigation. As can be seen from the findings presented above, the lecturers did their best to help the participants to be full-fledged members of the community by providing the participants with support through scaffolding, such as allowing the students to use Thai in class on certain occasions and correcting the participants' mistakes when the participants asked questions in English. In other words, the lecturers' efforts in helping the participants with linguistic challenges can be regarded as ways in which community members with more experience in using English help those with less experience in using English to improve their English to gain fuller membership and acceptance in the community, a process called "legitimate peripheral participation" (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

Even though the students did not receive any formal English language support from the program, they held the belief that this kind of language support were necessary for them. Therefore, the results of this study can serve as a steppingstone to provide the program's leaders and members with some insights and understanding of the transitional learning experiences of the students in the EMI environment as their new community of practice. The findings of this study are particular useful for those involved in running a newly established international program as they resonate with students' voices and critical needs, which can be used as guidelines in planning, developing, delivering and evaluating pre-sessional and in-sessional English language support for the students.

## 6. Acknowledgements

We would like to thank King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang for providing us with financial support for attending this conference.

## 7. References

- Creswell, J. W., & Clark, V. L. P. (2018). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research* (3rd ed.). SAGE. <https://www.pdfdrive.com/designing-and-conducting-mixed-methods-research-e196908993.html>
- Duff, P. A. (2010). Language socialization into academic discourse communities. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 30, 169–192. <https://doi:10.1017/S0267190510000048>
- Evans, S., & Morrison, B. (2011). The student experience of English-medium higher education in Hong Kong. *Language and Education*, 25(2), 147–162. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09500782.2011.553287>
- Fujieda, Y. (2018). Academic discourse socialization in a research seminar course: A case study of a Japanese EFL undergraduate learner. *Asia-Pacific Edu Res*, 28(2), 93–100. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40299-018-0416-z>
- Hengsadeekul, C., Koul, R., & Kaewkuekool, S. (2014). Motivational orientation and preference for English-medium programs in Thailand. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 66, 35–44. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2014.02.001>
- Hu, G. (2019). English-medium instruction in higher education: Lessons from China. *The Journal of Asia TEFL*, 16(1), 1–11. <https://dx.doi.org/10.18823/asiatefl.2019.16.1.1.1>
- Hu, G., & Lei J. (2013). English-medium instruction in Chinese higher education: A case study. *High Educ*, 67, 551–567. <https://doi.10.1007/s10734-013-9661-5>
- Khaliliaqdam, S. (2014). ZPD, Scaffolding and basic speech development in EFL context. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 98, 891–897. <https://doi:10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.03.497>
- Kirkpatrick, A. (2014). The language(s) of HE: EMI and/or ELF and/or multilingualism? *The Asian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 1(1), 4–15.
- Le T. T. N. (2016). *Exploring students' experiences of English medium instruction in Vietnamese universities*. [Doctoral thesis, The University of Newcastle]. <https://nova.newcastle.edu.au/vital/access/manager/Repository/uon:27503>
- Macaro, E., Curle, S., Pun, J., An, J., & Dearden J. (2018). A systematic review of English medium instruction in higher education. *Language Teaching*, 51(1), 36–76. [https:// dx.doi:10.1017/S0261444817000350](https://dx.doi:10.1017/S0261444817000350)

- Rhein, D. (2018). Sociocultural adjustment and coping strategies of Korean and Japanese students in a Thai international college. *International Journal of Asia-Pacific Studies*, 1(1), 57–78. <https://doi.org/10.21315/ijaps2018.14.1.3>
- Solloway, A. J. (2016). *English-medium instruction in higher education in the United Arab Emirates: The perspectives of students*. [Doctoral thesis, The University of Exeter]. <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/79558839.pdf>
- Tanielian, A. R. (2014). Foreign language anxiety in a new English program in Thailand. *The International Education Journal: Comparative Perspectives*, 13(1), 60–81. <https://openjournals.library.sydney.edu.au/index.php/IEJ/article/view/6865>
- Vu N. T. T., & Burns A. (2014). English as a medium of instruction: Challenges for Vietnamese tertiary lecturers. *The Journal of Asia TEFL*, 11(3), 1–31.
- Walkinshaw, I., Fenton-Smith, P., & Humphreys, B. (2017). EMI issues and challenges in Asia-Pacific higher education: An introduction. *Multilingual Education*, 21, 1–18. [https://doi:10.1007/978-3-319-51976-0\\_1](https://doi:10.1007/978-3-319-51976-0_1)
- Xu, L., & Chuaychoowong, M. (2017). *A case study of teachers' beliefs and practices with English-medium instruction (EMI) at Mae Fah Luang university*. Paper presented at the International Conference: DRAL 3/19th ESEA 2017. [http://sola.kmutt.ac.th/dral2017/proceedings/5-6Additional/264-279\\_A%20case%20study%20of%20teachers\\_%20beliefs%20and%20practices%20with%20English-medium%20Instruction\\_Lingrui%20Xu%20and%20Maneerat%20Chuaychoowong.pdf](http://sola.kmutt.ac.th/dral2017/proceedings/5-6Additional/264-279_A%20case%20study%20of%20teachers_%20beliefs%20and%20practices%20with%20English-medium%20Instruction_Lingrui%20Xu%20and%20Maneerat%20Chuaychoowong.pdf)
- Yang, M., O'Sullivan, P. S., Irby, D. M., Chen, Z., Lin, C., & Lin, C. (2019). Challenges and adaptations in implementing an English-medium medical program: A case study in China. *BMC Medical Education*, 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12909-018-1452-3>
- Yıldız, M., Soruc, A., & Griffiths, C. (2017). Challenges and needs of students in the EMI (English as a medium of instruction) classroom. *Konin Language Studies*, 5(4), 387–402. <https://doi:10.30438/ksj.2017.5.4.1>
- Zumor, A. Q. A. (2019). Challenges of using EMI in teaching and learning of university Scientific Disciplines: Student Voice. *International Journal of Language Education*, 3(1), 74–90. <https://doi:10.26858/ijole.v1i1.7510>

## **English Speaking Problems Encountered by Thai Frontline Nurses in a Public Hospital**

Dararat Chuwongin

Postgraduate student, Faculty of Liberal Arts, King Mongkut's Institute of Technology  
Ladkrabang

E-mail: dararatchuwongin@gmail.com

Pramarn Subphadoongchone, Ph.D.

Lecturer, King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang

E-mail: pramarn.su@kmitl.ac.th

### **Abstract**

Over the past decade, there has been a continual increase in the number of foreign patients in hospitals in Thailand. As the first point of patient contact, frontline nurses with effective English speaking skills can contribute a great deal to quality care and safety, and general service satisfaction. This study aims at examining English speaking problems as perceived by frontline nurses working in outpatient units in one public hospital in Bangkok, Thailand. The participants consisted of 159 frontline nurses, who were native speakers of Thai. These nurses completed the questionnaire designed to elicit their English speaking problems while communicating orally with foreign patients. In order to gain in-depth data to insightfully understand the nurses' speaking problems, this study also invited 11 nurses to further participate in an in-depth, semi-structured interview session. The questionnaire data were analyzed using descriptive statistics while the interview data were analyzed using content analysis. The questionnaire results revealed that most of the nurses perceived all of the ten problems, as stated in the questionnaire, at the moderate level. The highest number of the nurses, accounting for 94.97% of the total, mentioned that they had limited vocabulary to express what they wanted to say ( $\bar{x} = 3.33$ ,  $SD = 0.79$ ). The interview results revealed that the nurses were well aware of their English speaking problems. This study suggests that the hospital's management team should provide the nurses with tailored training to help the nurses improve their oral communication skills and confidence as their continuing professional development.

**Keywords:** Speaking problems, English for Specific Purposes, Frontline nurses

### **1. Background of the Study**

English oral communication skills are viewed as an integral tool to help facilitate effective communication and establish a good rapport between nurses and patients who are from different linguistic backgrounds. Effective communication between these two parties has a significant impact on the provision of treatment and related healthcare services since nurses with effective communication skills can help reduce medication errors and communication misunderstanding (Sibiya, 2018). In hospitals where interpreter services are not available, nurses and foreign patients may have language barriers to their communication, and this situation could result in negative patient outcomes, such as decreasing patient

satisfaction, lessening quality care, and wreaking havoc on patient safety (Al Shamsi et al., 2020). It is also important to note that English oral communication skills can contribute to good nurse-patient relationship as nurses can use English as a medium of communication with their foreign patients so as to help engage the patients in adhering to continual care, which will consequently lead to positive outcomes (Riley, 2008 as cited in Kawame, 2020.)

In hospitals, nurses are expected to be the first representative of healthcare staff to provide care for all patients equitably, including foreign patients who share different languages and cultural backgrounds with them. Noviana et al. (2019) advocate that in this era, English oral communication and nursing profession are inextricably intertwined during the process of providing medical care. Unfortunately, Wu et al. (2019) reported that the majority of nurses in Taiwan do not have adequate English oral communication skills to deal with clinical situations, and they are aware of improving their English proficiency. They further elaborated that with limited English oral communication skills, nurses may have communication misunderstanding and need to spend more time, feel more anxious, and act in a non-professional fashion when providing medical care and other services for foreign patients. Additionally, English communication challenges in healthcare services are viewed as one of hindrances that may obstruct the country from popular medical tourism destinations (Heung, 2011 as cited in Ching, 2020).

Over the past two decades, it is noticeable that people from around the world travel to Asia for accessing medical services, and this brings about the increasing needs in the use of English as a medium of communication in the medical service industry (Connell, 2006 as cited in Ching, 2020). In Thailand, hospitals welcome foreign patients at a continually increasing rate due to international labor mobility, and the country is regarded as one of the most preferred medical tourism destinations. With this regard, it is without a shadow of a doubt nurses are expected to possess effective English communication skills. Youwattana (2010) revealed that most nurses' competency in English usage from four private hospitals in Bangkok was at the moderate level. Noticeably, most nurses under investigation encountered English speaking problems while taking care of foreign patients. Bormann et al. (2021) reported that since nurses in Thailand may not communicate in English with foreign patients every day, they have fewer opportunities to practice in English, resulting in their viewing English oral communication ability as one of the major concerns for their workplace communication. With this situation, hospital's management team should be aware of nurses' English language needs and provides them with expected support in order for the nurses to enhance their English skills and thus achieve positive patient outcomes.

Effective communication is considered as part of nursing competency for establishing interpersonal relationships between nurses and patients. Communication competence also helps nurses to understand and be aware of patients' medical conditions (Kim & Sim, 2020). With this regard, helping nurses to have effective communication skills can be considered as supporting nurses' continuing professional development (CPD). Manley et al. (2018) suggested that CPD in healthcare services requires that healthcare professionals retain knowledge and skills consistently pertaining to healthcare needs. Similarly, Mlambo et al. (2021) further confirmed that CPD is an integral part of nurses' sustainable learning and a pivotal aspect for maintaining nurses' knowledge and updated skills necessary for their job responsibilities. Therefore, one of the best ways to promote CPD among nurses working in

Thai public hospitals without interpreter services is to provide them with appropriate English training support, which will help them to communicate with foreign patients in an effective manner.

It is important to note that different hospitals in Thailand may have different criteria in recruiting nurses due to their particular policy and work contexts. Even in the same hospital, nurses in different units may need to communicate with foreign patients at a varying degree. Frontline nurses, who work in outpatient units and serve as a first contact point, are expected to have more exposure to foreign patients and possess effective English speaking skills in order to provide clear, concise and correct information for patients rapidly under time pressures and constraints. It is therefore interesting to investigate frontline nurses' English speaking problems in context so as to yield implications for their CPD.

## **2. Objective**

This paper is part of a larger research project that investigates English oral communication challenges, English language needs, and views on continuing professional development of frontline nurses in one public hospital in Thailand. In this paper, the focus is on general English speaking problems reported by frontline nurses based upon their lived experiences. The research question of this paper is as follows:

What English speaking problems are encountered by frontline nurses who are working in one public hospital in Thailand?

## **3. Method**

### **3.1 Research design and setting**

Following a mixed-methods sequential explanatory design (Ivankova, Creswell, & Stick, 2009), this study employed a combination of quantitative and qualitative research approaches in two phases to ascertain insightful results of nurses' perceived problems towards English speaking during administering care to foreign patients. This study was implemented at one public hospital in Bangkok, Thailand. This 144-bed hospital aims at offering excellent medical services and medical technology advances to both Thai and foreign patients. It also serves as a training center and research-based hospital. Most medical staff used Thai as a medium of communication. All nurses in this hospital are native speakers of Thai.

### **3.2 Research Participants**

The participants of this study were 159 frontline nurses working at the outpatient units from the two medical centers of the hospital where this study took place. Six of head nurses and five of frontline nurses participated in the interviews on a voluntary basis.

### **3.3 Research Instruments**

This study used a survey questionnaire and a semi-structured interview in collecting data. The instruments were developed as follows:

**Step 1:** The questionnaire items and interview items related to problems with English speaking skills for nurses working in outpatient units and their needs for training support were formulated based on previous studies (Bosher & Stocker 2015; Chetsadanuwat, 2018; Freihat & Al-Machzoomi, 2012; Gass, 2012; Kay1, 2008; Lu, 2018; Mitra & Mujtaba,

2014; Miyake & Tremarco, 2005; Saragih, 2014; Sursattayawong, 2006; Tercan, 2018; Theeartsana, 2017; Tongvivat, 2008; Waidarp, 2011) and the findings from the preliminary study (Chuwongin & Subphadoongchone, 2019).

**Step 2:** The content and design of the questionnaire and the interview developed in Step 1 were adjusted according to comments from three registered nurses who were not the participants in the main study and had experience in teaching nursing students, and two lecturers who worked for the university and had teaching experience.

**Step 3:** The revised questionnaire and interview from Step 2 were validated using Item-Objective Congruence Index (IOC) form for content validity by five experts, consisting of three lecturers from nursing fields and two lecturers from the Applied Linguistics field.

### 3.4 Data collection and analysis

In Phase 1, the survey questionnaire in Thai was administered to 165 frontline nurses at the hospital under investigation. Of the 165 nurses, 20 served as head nurses of the sub-units in the outpatient departments. The data of this study were based on 159 completed questionnaires, representing 96.4% of the responding rate, as returned by the nurses. The responses gained from the questions were analyzed by using descriptive statistics.

In Phase 2, a semi-structured interview with the participants was conducted in order to gain in-depth, qualitative data to better understand the perceived problems encountered by the nurses. Eleven frontline nurses were invited for the individual interview on a voluntary basis. The interview was performed in Thai, and it was audio-recorded. Moreover, to gain more practical viewpoints, when conducting the interview, the researcher asked each nurse to respond to the same pre-determined questions and the rest of the questions were added while the interview was in progress to further scrutinize specific issues (Cohen, 2008). All recorded interviews were then transcribed and analyzed to identify themes and key issues. The interview transcripts were analyzed by using content analysis. It is important to emphasize that ethical issues in the data collection process were taken into consideration. Precautions were taken to protect confidentiality of data gained from nurses. To maintain their anonymity, this study adopted designated codes for all participants, such as HN1 for Head Nurse 1, HN2 for Head Nurse 2, FN1 for Frontline Nurse 1, and FN2 for Frontline Nurse 2.

## 4. Results

The quantitative results of this study were based on the nurses' responses to the questionnaires. The nurses were asked to identify if they had a particular English speaking problem or not. If their answer was yes, they were required to rate the level of the problem. The following is an example of the questionnaire item.

### Problems with English speaking

When I communicate with foreign patients, I encounter the following speaking problems. (Note: If your answer is "Yes", please also identify the level of the problem based on your work experience by placing a tick (√) in the appropriate box.

1. I have limited vocabulary to express what I want to say.

Yes

No

Level of the problem:

Highest (5)	High (4)	Moderate (3)	Low (2)	Lowest (1)

Note that the number of nurses who returned the questionnaires was 159. The results are reported in Table 4.1, and the interpretation of the identified problem is as follows:

- 04.21 – 05.00 = Highest level of the problem
- 03.41 – 04.20 = High level of the problem
- 02.61 – 03.40 = Moderate level of the problem
- 01.81 – 02.60 = Low level of the problem
- 01.00 – 01.80 = Lowest level of the problem

**Table 4.1:** Nurses’ Perceived Problems about English Speaking

Problems with English Speaking	Perceived Problems		Level of the Perceived Problem		
	Frequency <sup>1</sup>	Interpretation (%)	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Meaning <sup>2</sup>
Having limited vocabulary to express what I want to say	151	94.97	3.33	0.79	Moderate
Having a limited grammatical knowledge to construct correct phrases and sentences during conversation	149	93.71	3.39	0.85	Moderate
Having difficulty speaking under time pressures (e.g., having to spontaneously respond to foreign patients’ questions or requests in an urgent situation)	146	91.82	3.28	0.97	Moderate
Having difficulty speaking to more than one individual at the same time (e.g., having a conversation with a patient and his/her family member(s) at the same time).	144	90.57	3.33	0.97	Moderate

Feeling worried because I am afraid that patients will not understand my English (Whenever I know that I have to talk to the patients)	142	89.31	3.11	0.93	Moderate
Having difficulty finding lay terms to express equivalent medical/nursing terms when speaking with the patients	141	88.68	3.28	0.80	Moderate
Finding that some patients do not what I say because of my pronunciation and intonation	141	88.68	3.08	0.93	Moderate
Feeling worried because I am afraid that I will make a speaking mistake (Whenever I know that I have to talk to patients)	141	88.68	3.22	0.92	Moderate
Being worried that I will use culturally inappropriate body language (While I am talking to the patient)	115	72.33	2.82	1.11	Moderate
Feeling uncomfortable to speak English (while my Thai colleagues are around)	113	71.07	2.90	1.02	Moderate
Other speaking problems	124	77.99	3.39	0.97	Moderate

\*1. The number of participants who reported that they had the stated problem

2. The interpretation of the level of seriousness of the stated problem

Table 4.1 shows that most nurses rated nearly all problems they had at the moderate level. The top three problems identified by the nurses were that they had limited vocabulary to express what they wanted to say (94.97% to the total), and this problem was perceived at a moderate level ( $\bar{x} = 3.33$ , S.D. = 0.79); 2) they had a limited grammatical knowledge to construct correct phrases and sentences during conversation (93.71%), and this problem was rated at a moderate level of seriousness ( $\bar{x} = 3.39$ , S.D. = 0.85); and 3) they had difficulty speaking under time pressures (e.g., having to spontaneously respond to foreign patients' questions or requests in an urgent situation), where the seriousness of this problem was rated at a moderate level ( $\bar{x} = 3.28$ , S.D. = 0.97). It is interesting to find that the smallest number of the nurses stated they felt uncomfortable to speak English while their Thai colleagues were around (71.07%), with the level of seriousness of this problem at a moderate level ( $\bar{x} = 2.90$ , S.D. = 1.02). In addition to the problems mentioned in the questionnaire for the nurses to identify, additional problems were also addressed by the nurses such as problems about understanding of the meaning of simple utterances, and a lack of confidence with pronunciation.

Apart from quantitative data, qualitative data from the semi-structured interviews were also collected. Head nurses were well aware of the frontline nurses' ability to

communicate orally in English, yet they observed that some still had problems in communicating in English with foreign patients.

Nowadays, the number of foreign patients using the English language has been gradually increasing. As a result, nurses were more likely to have encounters with the needs for English oral communication skills, and some nurses were unable to clearly advise and explain ideas with patients. (HN1)

Another common language barrier to speaking English among nurses, as reiterated by the nurses, was a limited vocabulary range to express what they want to say with foreign patients in order to identify needs or obtain information while administering care. This also resulted in their level of confidence in communicating with foreign patients. Some nurses shared their experiences as follows:

Common problems in English oral communication were thinking of the meanings of words, and sometimes some nurses had to guess at the meanings of those words. (HN4)

I think that some nurses tend to have low confidence due to a shortage in their vocabulary, and they are unable to come up with the words when they are speaking. (FN1)

A contributing factor in communicating with native speakers was the fear in their English oral communication ability due to a limited vocabulary. (FN5)

The nurses also voiced their concerns about the interplay between their grammatical knowledge and their speaking ability, which was attributed to their lack of confidence in speaking English as follows:

Some nurses had a low confidence in using English oral communication skills since they were not confident about utilizing the correct grammatical structures. (HN4)

The main factor I view as a barrier during interactions with native speakers is a fear of using incorrect grammatical structures. (FN5)

As a result of the perceived problems with pronunciation and intonation encountered by the nurses, some nurses confirmed that some patients do not understand what was said due to their pronunciation and intonation as follows:

Most common barriers of miscommunication encountered by outpatient nurses was a variety of accents. (HN5)

Nurses lack confidence in English oral communication because they feel shy and nervous to speak English with native speakers due to their accent and poor pronunciation. (FN4)

Due to patient overcrowding and time limitations at the outpatient unit and the emergency room, frontline nurses commonly encountered difficulties in speaking under time pressure constraints while administering care to foreign patients. Some nurses expressed their previous experience as follows:

Nurses working at outpatient units are expected to have good English oral communication skills in terms of speed, clarification and correction in order to administer care to foreign patients and satisfy their actual needs in an effective manner. (HN6)

Due to patient overcrowding at outpatient units and time limitations, as frontline staff, some nurses feel nervous to interact with foreign patients at the first time because they do not speak English every day and also have no experience to take care of them. As a result, certain nurses lack confidence in English oral communication with foreign patients, resulting in errors in communications, and they are unable to fully understand their patients. (FN2)

Due to a nurse's workload, outpatient nurses require good English oral communication skills in determining patients' needs quickly and precisely under real world time limitations. (FN4)

As can be seen from both quantitative and qualitative results of this study, frontline nurses expressed their concerns about problems in speaking English with foreign patients. Their limited range of vocabulary and their inadequate grammatical and structural knowledge, coupled with their pronunciation problems, are also attributed to their confidence in nurse-foreign patient encounters.

## **5. Discussion and Conclusion**

English speaking skills play a pivotal role in nurse-patient interactions and inevitably influence nursing practices in terms of quality care and safety since an exchange of correct information between nurses and patients is of utmost importance. Even though nurses working at other units in hospital settings need to possess English speaking skills to interact with foreign patients, noticeably English speaking skills are considered the most needed skills for frontline nurses in hospitals. The results from this study showed that nurses were aware of their problems with English speaking skills while providing care to foreign patients. The findings of this study are in line with those of previous studies (e.g., Chetsadanuwat, 2018; Theartsana, 2017) that revealed that Thai nurses working at both public and private hospitals without translator services tended to encounter problems about English oral communication skills during administering care to foreign patients. Thus, the findings of this study call for the hospital's management team to listen to the frontline nurses' voices about their English-speaking problems as well as their confidence in communicating in English with their foreign patients. Scrutinizing the problems and the levels of seriousness reported by the frontline nurses in this study, those involved in establishing CPD programs for nurses,

with particular reference to nurses' communication, can plan, design, and deliver appropriate English speaking training to help the nurses overcome their English speaking problems and thus boost their speaking confidence.

With respect to the research setting, since the hospital under investigation is a research-based hospital, the hospital seems to focus on providing English language training on English for research activities, such as reading and presenting a research paper. Based on the first researcher's experience as a nurse at the hospital, it seems that most nurses engaging in this research-based activity have improved only their reading skills instead of speaking skills. As a result, nurses here lack opportunities to engage in English oral communication training. Therefore, they seem to have encountered difficult or challenging situations at work while communicating in English with foreign patients under time pressures.

The evidence from this study suggests that the results of nurses' perceived problems toward English speaking can help raise the awareness of the hospital's management team, policymakers, and ESP practitioners of the importance of conducting needs analysis (Basturkmen, 2013; Brown, 2016) prior to formulating tailored training support as well as sustaining their knowledge and skills viewed on continuing professional development (CPD). In practicality, they need to work collaboratively to find ways to help the nurses overcome their English speaking challenges.

Generally, as different hospitals have different policies for their CPD programs, further research should critically focus in detail on the management team and policymakers' perspectives of CPD programs with reference to English for nursing professionals. Results from these studies would provide those responsibilities for running CPD programs with useful information to negotiate the different expectations, if any and as appropriate, between those of the frontline nurses and those of individuals in top positions.

## 6. Acknowledgements

We would like to thank King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang for providing us with financial support for attending this conference. We are also indebted to Dr. Juthamas Thongsongsee, Dr. Usa Intharaksa, Assistant Professor Anchaleeporn Amatayakul, Dr. Benjamas Preechakoon, and Mrs. Penpuk Gongmuang for providing us with insightful feedback on the validation of the research instrument of this research project.

## 7. References

- Al Shamsi, H., Almutairi, A. G., Al Mashrafi, S., & Al Kalbani, T. (2020). Implications of language barriers for healthcare: a systematic review. *Oman medical journal*, 35(2), e122.
- Basturkmen, H. (2013). Needs analysis and syllabus design for language for specific purposes. *The encyclopedia of applied linguistics*, 1-8.

- Bormann, S., Wichaikul, S., Turner, K., Soonthorn, S., Khamwong, W., Ritruethai, S., & Tippyaphalapholgu, B. (2021). Relationship between personal factors, attitude, knowledge and English skills of health professional working in Health Service regions of the Thai Ministry of Public Health. *Nursing journal of the Ministry of Public Health*, 31(1),199-210.
- Bosher, S., & Stocker, J. (2015). Nurses' narratives on workplace English in Taiwan: Improving patient care and enhancing professionalism. *English for Specific Purposes*, 38, 109-120.
- Brown, J. D. (2016). *Introducing needs analysis and English for specific purposes*. New York, NY: Routledge
- Chetsadanuwat, K. (2018). Needs of English skills of Thai nurses working in international hospitals accredited by JCI in Bangkok area. *LEARN Journal: Language Education and Acquisition Research Network*, 11(1), 26-46.
- Ching, S. S. Y., Fong, D., Zhang, L. W., Guan, G. Y., & Cheung, K. (2020). Perceptions of the English use of college transfer nursing students in a non-English speaking city: A qualitative study. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 17(2), 462. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17020462>
- Chuwongin, D., & Subphadoongchone, P. (Eds.). (2019). *Proceeding from ICAA2019: Problematizing Frontline Nurses' Oral Communication Skills in English in a Public Hospital in Thailand*. Bangkok, Thailand: The Faculty of Liberal Arts of KMITL.
- Cohen, E. C. E. (2008). Medical tourism in Thailand. *AU-GSB e-journal*, 1(1), 24-37
- Connell, J. (2006). Medical tourism: Sea, sun, sand and... surgery. *Tourism management*, 27(6), 1093-1100.
- Freihat, S., & Al-Machzoomi, K. (2012). The picture of workplace oral communication skills for ESP Jordanian business graduate employees. *International Journal of Business, Humanities and Technology*, 2(1), 159-173.
- Gass, J. (2012). Needs analysis and situational analysis: Designing an ESP curriculum for Thai nurses. *English for Specific Purposes World*, 36(12), 1-21.
- Kayi, H. (2008). Developing an ESL curriculum based on needs and situation analyses: A case study. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 4(1), 29-49.
- Kim, A. Y., & Sim, I. O. (2020). Communication skills, problem-solving ability, understanding of patients' conditions, and nurse's perception of professionalism among clinical nurses: A structural equation model analysis. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 17(13), 4896. [doi:10.3390/ijerph17134896](https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17134896)

- Kwame, A., & Petrucka, P. M. (2020). Communication in nurse-patient interaction in healthcare settings in sub-Saharan Africa: A scoping review. *International Journal of Africa Nursing Sciences*, 12, 100198.
- Heung, V. C., Kucukusta, D., & Song, H. (2011). Medical tourism development in Hong Kong: An assessment of the barriers. *Tourism Management*, 32(5), 995-1005.
- Ivankova, N. V., Creswell, J. W., & Stick, S. L. (2006). Using mixed-methods sequential explanatory design: From theory to practice. *Field methods*, 18(1), 3-20.
- Lu, Y. L. (2018). What do nurses say about their English language needs for patient care and their ESP coursework: The case of Taiwanese nurses. *English for Specific Purposes*, 50, 116-129.
- Manley, K., Martin, A., Jackson, C., & Wright, T. (2018). A realist synthesis of effective continuing professional development (CPD): A case study of healthcare practitioners' CPD. *Nurse education today*, 69, 134-141.
- Miyake, M., & Tremarco, J. (2005). Needs analysis for nursing students utilizing questionnaires and interviews. *Kawasaki journal of medical welfare*, 11(1), 23-34.
- Mitra, M., & Mutjaba, M. (2014). The role of needs analysis in teaching ESP for nursing. Paper presented at The 61 TEFLIN International Conference, Surabaya, Indonesia
- Mlambo, M., Silén, C., & McGrath, C. (2021). Lifelong learning and nurses' continuing professional development, a meta synthesis of the literature. *BMC nursing*, 20(1), 1-13.
- Noviana, I., Nahariani, P., & Rosmaharani, S. (2019). The Problems Faced in Learning English for Nursing of Students in STIKes Pemkab Jombang. *KnE Life Sciences*, 4(13), 535-541.
- Riley, J. B. (2015). *Communication in Nursing-E-Book*. Elsevier Health Sciences.
- Saragih, E. (2014). Designing ESP materials for nursing students based on needs analysis. *International journal of Linguistics*, 6(4), 59-70.
- Sibiya, M. N. (2018). Effective communication in nursing. *Nursing*, 119, 19-36.
- Sursattayawong, O. (2006). A survey of English-speaking problems of nurses at Rajavithi Hospital. (Unpublished master dissertation). Srinakharinwirot University. Bangkok: Thailand.
- Tercan, G., (2018). An In-depth Analysis of Nurses' Perceptions about English language needs of Nursing students for the Design of New Nursing Curricula. *ELT Research Journal*, 7(3), 105-124.

- Theartsana, P., (2017). English language needs analysis of Thai nurses at a public hospital in Bangkok (Unpublished master dissertation). Thammasat University. Bangkok: Thailand.
- Tongvivat, Y. (2008). Needs Assessment for English Skills of ICCU Nurse in a Private Hospital in Bangkok (Unpublished master dissertation). Thammasat University. Bangkok: Thailand.
- Waidarp, W. (2011). Demand of English Skills for Thai Nurses Working in an International Healthcare Organization: A Study in a Private Hospital in the Silom Area (Unpublished master dissertation). Thammasat University. Bangkok: Thailand.
- Wu, K. H., Tzeng, W.C., Yang, P.L., Chen, Y.A., Wang, Y.W., Kung, P.Y., & Hung, C.I. (2021). The clinical English communication situations and the requirement of nursing staff on improving their clinical English communication abilities. *Journal of Medical Sciences*, 41(2), 58-67.
- Youwattana, P. (2010). *Relationships between personal factors, workplace environments, transformational leadership of head nurses, and transcultural nursing competencies of professional nurses private Hospitals Bangkok Metropolis* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Chulalongkorn University. Bangkok: Thailand.

## **Factors that Impact the Behavioral Intention to Actual Use of Generation Z on Mobile Shopping Applications in Thailand**

Monivireak Ly

Postgraduate Student, Faculty of Business Administration, Panyapiwat Institute of Management.

E-mail: monivireakly.ace@gmail.com

Asst. Prof. Veerisa Chotiyaputta, Ph.D.

Lecturer, Faculty of Business Administration, Panyapiwat Institute of Management.

E-mail: veerisacho@pim.ac.th

### **Abstract**

The main purpose of this research study is to analyze the impact of Thai Generation Z on mobile shopping application in Thailand. In this rapidly developing technology world, it is imperative to explore and figure out the impact of a user using a mobile shopping application that led their behavioral intention to actual use. In the 21st century, the world economy has been affected by the global pandemic COVID-19. The first launch of the smartphone created by Apple in 2007 has created a considerable stimulation toward the mobile commerce market (Chou et al., 2018) This research study conducted the study by adopting a solid framework UTAUT-2 with an add-on construct of perceived risk as it is crucial to explore the impact as some technology lacks privacy protection. The study collected 302 samples from Thai Generation Z based in Thailand. According to the structural model that has tested through Partial Least Square (PLS), the study's description is reliable and has strong validity, as it will be explained in detail in each chapter. The result shows that the proposed hypotheses positively impact Thai Generation Z behavioral intention to use a mobile shopping application. Some hypotheses did not support the proposed hypothesis as it will also be explained comprehensively in the conclusion, discussion, theoretical implication, and further research.

**Keywords:** Mobile shopping application, Behavioral intention, Thai Generation Z

### **1. Background of the study**

In this digital revolution, the world fosters innovation and rapidly developing on technology that provide opportunities for technology industry to develop and launch products and services. The tremendous opportunity allows enterprise to advance their business to reach a larger market capitalization. Specifically, this paper aims to explore the factors impacting the behavioral intention to use the mobile shopping application. This paper hopes to achieve a better understanding of the Generation Z. Comparing Gen Z with other generations, Gen Z

has unique characteristics such as self-awareness, persistence, innovativeness, and self-reliance, and they were born during the age of disruption (Merriman, 2015). In Thailand, the number of online shoppers aged 16-24 accounted for 3.9 million is almost equal to the 25-34 years old of 4.4 million. In 2021, the average online shopper will spend an average of \$382 per year, 57% more than in 2017. The growth is surging, and online shoppers expect to grow more in the future (Thailand, 2020). According to JPMorgan, the market value of e-commerce in Thailand is equal to \$26.2 billion (J.P. Morgan, 2019). Understanding them can produce a tool for the individual to develop and create a unique promotion for their segments. The Generation Z (born 1996 – 2012) has a distinctive character as they enter adult hood during the global pandemic (Aimee et al., 2020). Thailand is one of the countries among ASEAN countries to have the highest internet users, which accounted for approximately 57 million in the country (ASEAN Briefing, 2018). The conceptual framework of the study constructs upon theoretical UTAUT2. The model shows validity of the model toward mobile application adoption, such as performance expectancy, effort expectancy, facilitating condition, and hedonic motivation, which are the optimistic prediction Peng et al. (2018). UTAUT 2 is constructed by (Venkatesh et al., 2012). The model is highly noteworthy and extraordinary in determining the behavior intention of an individual toward technology adoption (Venkatesh et al., 2012).

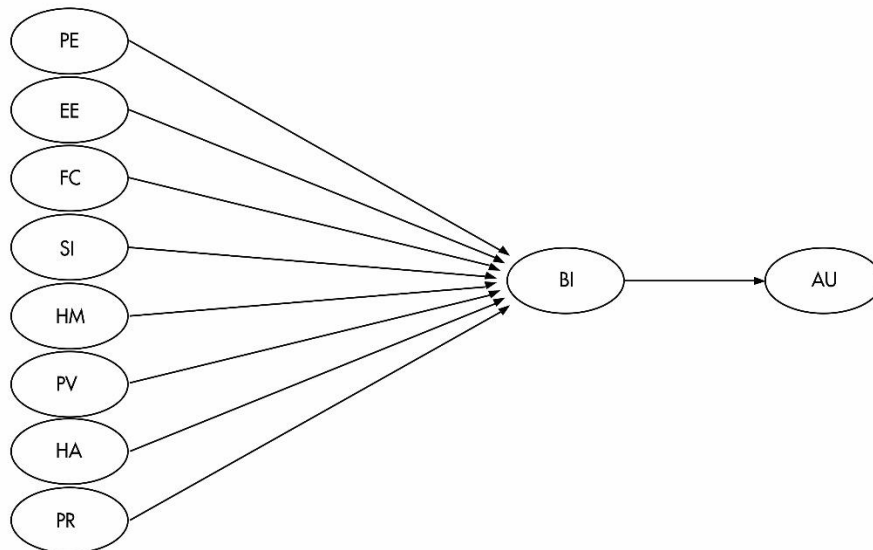
## 2. Objectives

1. To analyze the impact of hedonic motivation on behavioral intention.
2. To analyze the impact of perceived risk on behavioral intention.
3. To analyze the impact of Thai Generation Z behavioral intention on actual use toward mobile shopping application

## 3. Hypothesis

Performance expectancy and effort expectancy positively impact Thai Generation Z behavioural intention to use mobile shopping application in Thailand. Chou et al. (2018) determined that effort expectancy positively impact the behavioural intention to adopt m-commerce by mobiles devices. Social influence positively impacts Thai Generation Z behavioural intention to use mobile shopping application in Thailand. The study of m-commerce adoption with 372 respondents prior on UTAUT-2 model suggested that social influence positively impacts the behavioural intention to adopt m-commerce (Verkijika, 2018).Facilitating condition and hedonic motivation positively impact the Thai Generation Z behavioural intention to use mobile shopping application in Thailand. Hew et al. (2015) also suggested that facilitating condition and hedonic motivation to indicate how the consumer is likely to intend to use the mobile application. Price Value positively impact Thai Generation Z behavioural intention to use mobile shopping application in Thailand. However, previous studies (Peng et al., 2018; Hew et al., 2015; Chopdar et al., 2018) show a similarity in the price value as it considers an insignificant predictor. Habit positively impact Thai Generation Z behavioural intention to use mobile shopping application in Thailand. A study done by (Hew et al., 2015) with 288 questionnaires in Malaysia suggested that habit is the most significant driver to impact a person's intention to use a mobile application. Perceived risks

positively impact Thai Generation Z behavioural intention to use mobile shopping application in Thailand Slade et al. (2014) also have a similarity that perceived risk impact the consumer adoption of mobile payment. Behavioural Intention positively impact Thai Generation Z to use mobile shopping application in Thailand. It has been broadly adopted by various studies and found that it is a crucial indicator to determine the individual willingness to use a technology system (Venkatesh et al., 2012).



**Figure 3.1:** Conceptual Model

#### 4. Method

The data collection was online questionnaire. The questionnaire was conducted and administered via Google Form. Conducting the questionnaire on Google Form allows the researcher to avoid time constraint, as the Google Form has various templates for setting up the questions. The survey was redistributed by professors from different universities in Thailand. The questionnaire was developed using a 5-point Likert-Scale. The research has eight factors, and all are measured with the 5 points of Likert scale from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”. Based on sample formula (Green, 1991), it suggested a minimum sample of 121 to achieve substantial rate of validity and reliability. The study collected the data with a sample of 302. The questionnaire was distributed with two translations with Thai and English. The questionnaire criteria for the participants are specifically for Thai who is in the year gap. Therefore, participants who are older than the year gap were selected for analysis.

#### 5. Results

The minimum number of respondent’s are 14 age years old and a maximum of 23 years old. Also, respondents with the age of 22 account for 24% of the whole survey. The table below will explain the frequency of the respondent’s profile by exploring specifically on Generation Z. Out of 302 samples, the age range comprises of 14 years old = 0.66%; 15 = 2.31%, 16 = 0.99%, 17 = 4.3%, 18 = 4.63%, 19 = 10.92%, 20 = 14.90%, 21 = 19.20%, 22 = 24.50%, and 23 = 17.54%. Also, most of the respondents were female (64.9%), which is almost two times male.

**Table 5.1:** Respondents' profile

<b>Demographic</b>	<b>Number (Frequency)</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>Age</b>		
14	2	0.66%
15	7	2.31%
16	3	0.99%
17	13	4.3%
18	14	4.63%
19	33	10.92%
20	45	14.90%
21	58	19.20%
22	74	24.50%
23	53	17.54%
<b>Gender</b>		
<b>Male</b>	101	33.44%
<b>Female</b>	196	64.9%
<b>Others</b>	5	1.65%

Each construct also shows a more excellent value than the threshold ranging from 0.75 to 0.87. Besides that, Chin (1998) suggested that the Factor Loading of each construct should be above 0.7, and the tested results indicate that each construct has a value greater than 0.7, ranging from 0.87 to 0.93. As the composite reliability, Cronbach's Alpha, and the average variance (AVE) are more extraordinary as recommended, this result considers to achieve strong convergent validity.

**Table 5.2:** Factors loading, composite reliability (CR), the average variance extracted (AVE) of the measurements.

<b>Constructs</b>	<b>Items</b>	<b>Factor Loading</b>	<b>CR</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	<b>AVE</b>
Behavioral Intention	BI1	0.88	0.90	0.91	0.79
	BI2	0.92			
	BI3	0.91			
	BI4	0.83			
Performance Expectancy	PE1	0.89	0.91	0.86	0.78
	PE2	0.90			
	PE3	0.86			
Effort Expectancy	EE1	0.94	0.93	0.85	0.87
	EEE	0.92			
Facilitating Condition	FC1	0.93	0.93	0.85	0.87
	FC2	0.93			
Social Influence	SI1	0.90	0.92	0.88	0.80

	SI2	0.89			
	SI3	0.89			
Hedonic Motivation	HM1	0.88	0.91	0.86	0.78
	HM2	0.90			
	HM3	0.87			
Price Value	PV1	0.89	0.93	0.89	0.82
	PV2	0.92			
	PV3	0.89			
Habit	HA1	0.88	0.92	0.88	0.75
	HA2	0.88			
	HA3	0.87			
	HA4	0.82			
Perceived Risk	PR1	0.91	0.93	0.89	0.82
	PR2	0.89			
	PR3	0.91			
Actual Use	AU1	0.84	0.93	0.83	0.75
	AU2	0.85			
	AU3	0.90			

Based on the table below, each constructs PE = 0.88, EE = 0.93, FC = 0.93, SI = 0.89, HM = 0.88, PV = 0.91, HA = 0.87, PR = 0.91, BI = 0.89, and AU = 0.87 have the value greater than others. Therefore, this result is considered to have a strong discriminant validity based on Fornell-Larkcer theory.

**Table 5.3:** Validity: Fornell-Larcker (n=302) With Correlation Matrix and Square Root of AVE

Construct	PE	EE	FC	SI	HM	PV	HA	PR	BI	AU
PE	<b>0.88</b>									
EE	0.81	<b>0.93</b>								
FC	0.72	0.17	<b>0.93</b>							
SI	0.62	0.59	0.77	<b>0.89</b>						
HM	0.62	0.61	0.73	0.78	<b>0.88</b>					
PV	0.65	0.62	0.70	0.77	0.73	<b>0.91</b>				
HA	0.56	0.56	0.70	0.75	0.75	0.76	<b>0.87</b>			
PR	0.41	0.37	0.50	0.51	0.49	0.40	0.45	<b>0.91</b>		
BI	0.64	0.63	0.69	0.73	0.77	0.76	0.79	0.53	<b>0.89</b>	
AU	0.59	0.61	0.67	0.70	0.73	0.71	0.75	0.49	0.79	<b>0.87</b>

The critical predictors that make the most significant impacts on behavioral intention are habit and perceived risk, followed by price value and hedonic motivation. A minor key predictor of behavioral intention is effort expectancy.

**Table 5.4:** Summary of Structural Model and Hypotheses Result

Hypothesis	Standard Error	Beta	t-value	p-value (2-sided)	Result
PE > BI	0.05	0.042	0.7295	0.46	Not Supported
EE > BI	0.06	0.1243*	2.0184	0.04	Supported
FC > BI	0.08	-0.0449	-0.5241	0.60	Not Supported
SI > BI	0.09	0.0097	0.10	0.91	Not Supported
HM > BI	0.06	0.2372**	3.65	0.0003	Supported
PV > BI	0.08	0.2204**	2.73	0.0063	Supported
HA > BI	0.08	0.3084***	3.81	0.0001	Supported
PR > BI	0.03	0.1358***	3.6197	0.0003	Supported
BI > AU	0.03	0.7876***	23.23	0.0000	Supported

**Note:** R<sup>2</sup> for BI = 75.2%, R<sup>2</sup> for AU = 62%, p<0.1\*; p<0.05\*\*, p<0.001\*\*\*. Author's calculation based on ADANCO 2.2.1.

## 6. Discussion and conclusion

The research study has analyzed all the factors based on UTAUT2 and sub-construct of perceived risk. The result shows that all the proposed hypotheses show support toward the study except performance expectancy, social influence, and facilitating condition that is not supported. The supported hypotheses on behavioral intention and actual use of mobile shopping application are effort expectancy, hedonic motivation, price value, habit, perceived risks (see Table 5.4). For performance expectancy, the proposed hypotheses show no supports with the current study, which also support the finding of Verkijka (2018) that have found that performance expectancy not positively impact the adoption of mobile commerce applications and. There is one possible reason for price value that positively impacts user's behavioral intention and actual use of the mobile shopping application. The mobile application provides users with various products that are more convenient than going shopping at the store and more promotion.

Within the model, the study has been able to explore various measurements by measuring the variables and how they correlate with one another. From the finding, the research study demonstrates that 6 out of 9 hypotheses supported the study. The hypotheses that are not supported are the Performance Expectancy (PE), Facilitating Condition (FC), and Social Influence (SI). Based on the past studies, the study found out that habit and hedonic motivation were the critical predictors that led to mobile adoption (Hew et al. 2015; Chopdar et al. 2018; Peng et al. 2018). Also, based on Slade et al. (2014), the study specifically mobile adoption payment based on perceived risks. As a result, this indicates that users are also concerned about their privacy by using a mobile shopping application.

This result provides another extensive practical implication for mobile shopping application developer and enterprise to actively keep developing attractive and colossal enjoyment of their application along with customer's privacy protection. As the mobile

shopping (m-commerce) emerges from electronic commerce (e-commerce), it shows a great different usage of behavioral intention that has continuously switching from shopping through a computer to a mobile phone. The study found out that the constructs of behavioral intention ( $R^2 = 0.752\%$ ) and actual use ( $R^2 = 0.620$ ). The description of the behavioral intention is reliable, whereas the intention that led to actual is at a substantial rate that can be considered reliable to a certain extent. As mobile phone is convenient and portable than computer, it indicates that people also use their mobile phone to shop more often. As the mobile shopping (m-commerce) emerges from electronic commerce (e-commerce), it shows a great different usage of behavioral intention that has continuously switching from shopping through a computer to a mobile phone. As mobile phone is convenient and portable than computer, it indicates that people also use their mobile phone to shop more often.

The limitation of this research study is that it conducts for a specific generation within an age range. The study's impact only contributes to explore factors relating to Thai Generation Z. Asides from that; there are various mobile users from other age range that could include in the research study. The characteristic and result of the study will be different if another age range includes in the study. Another critical limitation of this study is that the survey was distributed online, that it should be a mix of face to face with the respondents dive deeper regarding the factors included in the study. Also, the study does not specify a particular mobile shopping application based in Thailand. By adopting a specific application, the study would explore and extract various statistical measurements that could make the study more solid.

This research study could apply to other fields relating to users using the mobile application regarding future research. For example, this study focuses on shopping fields that could apply to other fields such as hospitality, food, and education. Also, the future researcher can aim to explore and figure out the hypothesis such as H1, H3, and H4 are not supported based on the finding results.

## 7. References

- Aimee, K., Paul, M., Thomas, R. S., & Naomi, Y. (2020, June 29). *What makes Asia-Pacific's Generation Z different?* Retrieved from McKinsey & Company Web site: <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/marketing-and-sales/our-insights/what-makes-asia-pacifics-generation-z-different>
- ASEAN Briefing. (2018, July 6). *Thailand's E-Commerce Landscape: Trends and Opportunities*. Retrieved from ASEAN Briefing Web site: <https://www.aseanbriefing.com/news/thailands-e-commerce-landscape-trends-opportunities/>
- Chin, W., & Marcoulides, G. (1998). The Partial Least Squares Approach to Structural Equation Modeling. *Modern Methods for Business Research.*, 8 (2).
- Chou, Y.-H., Li, T.-Y., & Ho, C.-T. (2018). Factors influencing the adoption of mobile commerce in Taiwan. *Journal of Mobile Communication*, 16(2), 117-134. doi:10.1504/IJMC.2018.089754
- Chopdar, P., Nikolaos Korfiatis, Sivakumar, V., & Miltiades D. Lytras. (2018). Mobile shopping apps adoption and perceived risks: A cross-country perspective utilizing the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology. *Computers in Human Behavior*. doi: 10.1016/j.chb.2018.04.017

- Fornell, C., & Larcker, D. F. (1981). Evaluating Structural Equation Models with Unobservable Variables and Measurement Error. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 18 (1), 39-50. doi: [www.jstor.org/stable/3151312](http://www.jstor.org/stable/3151312). Accessed 1 Feb. 2021.
- Hew, J.-J., Lee, V.-H., Ooi, K.-B., & Wei, J. (2015). What catalyses mobile apps usage intention: An empirical analysis. *Industrial Management & Data Systems*, 115 (7).
- Peng, W., Yuan, S., & Ma, W. (2018). Moderating effects of app type on the intention of continued use of mobile apps among college students. *Int. J. Mobile Communication*, 715-734. doi:10.1504/IJMC.2018.095131
- Venkatesh, V., L., J. Y., & Xu, T. a. (2012, March). Consumer Acceptance and Use of Information Technology. *MIS Q*, 36(1), 157-178. Retrieved from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41410412>.
- Verkijika, S. (2018). Factors influencing the adoption of mobile commerce applications in Cameroon. *Telematics and Informatics*. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tele.2018.04.012>

## **A Review of Overseas K-pop Fans: Through the Lens of Transnational Connections and Social Identity Theory**

Nasatorn Witayarat, Ph.D.

Lecturer, Faculty of Liberal Arts, Thammasat University

E-mail: nasatorn@tu.ac.th

### **Abstract**

South Korean pop music (K-pop) has spread rapidly globally, attracting a fan base across multiple diverse geographical regions. However, the engagement of overseas K-pop fans is an under-researched area. Thus, this review of the empirical literature concerning K-pop fans focuses on their reception of K-pop, and analyses how fans from different countries have become captivated by transnational K-pop cultural flows within digital media networks, and how they maintain a geographical intimacy with K-pop. Despite being considered by non-K-pop fans in their countries as bizarre, overseas K-pop fans form bonds among themselves and with their idols. Combining transnationalism and social identity theory as a conceptual framework, this review offers in-depth insights into transnational pop cultural flows within social media environments, and the Western media's racial stereotyping of K-pop idols. The review also examines how overseas K-pop fans address discrimination and the racial stereotyping of K-pop by Western mainstream media, highlighting their opinions of being regarded as having marginal cultural taste and also citing stereotypical responses from non-Korean K-pop fans. Through their consumption of K-pop, overseas K-pop fans can access alternative cultural content from the Western mainstream media. More importantly, K-pop presents an opportunity for them to re-examine their own local contexts, promote their personal growth, and develop an intercultural understanding of another culture.

**Keywords:** Korean Wave, K-pop fans, K-pop idols, Transnational flows, Stereotyping

### **1. Introduction**

The Korean wave refers to the cultural phenomenon of Korean popular culture, which includes Korean music (K-pop), Korean drama (K-drama), fashion, food, and beauty (Bok-rae, 2015). The Korean wave, or Hallyu, has recently grown in popularity. K-pop global revenue reached over \$4.7 billion in 2016 (Kim, 2017), and Time Magazine named K-pop South Korea's greatest export (Mahr, 2012). The global popularity of K-pop began to achieve international recognition in neighbouring Asian countries, e.g. China, Japan and Taiwan, in the late 1990s (Koeltzsch, 2019) and subsequently spread beyond East Asia across the globe. This review discusses the case of overseas K-pop fans attracted by K-pop groups, who are defined as a group of Korean males or females forming a musical group who are pop music idols (Otmazgin & Lyan, 2014). In this review, the term 'idol' is someone who is greatly admired (Cambridge Dictionary, 2021). The success of K-pop's international expansion may be attributed to social media platforms such as YouTube and Facebook. This emphasises the significant role social media has played in K-pop's transnational circulation facilitated via technological advancements (Yoon, 2019).

## 2. Objective and Contribution

In seeking to fill a gap in the literature on overseas K-pop fans far from K-pop's country of origin (Morimoto, 2017), this review offers a new insight into how overseas K-pop's fans worldwide negotiate racial stereotyping of Asian culture through K-pop and maintain their engagement and affiliation with K-pop despite their cultural and geographical distance. The main contribution of this review is that the author builds up a conceptual framework that combines transnationalism and social identity theory to explain this phenomenon.

## 3. The Consumption of K-pop Worldwide

The literature reveals that public audiences initially became familiar with K-pop by being exposed to K-drama on TV channels in their countries. For example, in Romania, Korean culture was first introduced when the first K-drama, *Daejanggeum* (The Jewel of the Palace), was broadcasted on a Romanian public television channel (Marinescu & Balica, 2013). Similarly, in the last decade in Latin America, namely in Peru and Argentina, there has been an explosive growth in the broadcasting of Korean dramas and films (Min, Jin, & Han, 2019). From 2010, K-pop spread rapidly globally through multiple forms of media. BOA, a K-pop idol, was first aired both on TV music channels and on the Internet in Romania (Marinescu & Balica, 2013), and "Gangnam Style", a popular K-pop song and dance craze, was covered in Spanish broadsheet newspapers (Yoon, Min & Jin, 2020). Additionally, K-pop has been introduced in Israel and Palestine, broadcast in English, Hebrew and Arabic, on television, Internet forums, and websites (Otmazgin & Lyan, 2014). K-pop's popularity in Thailand may be attributed to its promotion by the two major Thai music companies, GMM Grammy Public Company Limited and RS Public Company Limited, through their distribution of the albums of the South Korean singers, Rain and Se7en, to the public (Siriyuvasak & Hyunjoon, 2007). This demonstrates that K-pop not only appeals to Eastern audiences, but also to those living in non-Asia countries. Arguably, K-pop offers an alternative form of music to its overseas fans that provides escapism not only from American mainstream music but also from any music popular in any particular country. Despite its widespread popularity, some scholars argue that Korea employs K-pop as a vehicle of its economic enhancement (Min, Jin, & Han, 2019) to promote the export of its national cultural product and the image of Korea (Lee, 2012).

## 4. Overseas K-pop Fans

Overseas K-pop fans tend to be aged between ten years old and late thirties; the majority are likely to be university students and those who have just started their career (Yoon, Min, & Jin, 2020) and have followed their favourite K-pop groups from between five to nearly ten years (Koeltzsch, 2019; Min, Jin, & Han, 2019). With regard to initial exposure to K-pop, overseas K-pop fans have already been exposed to Korean TV dramas, Japanese anime and Japanese and Chinese pop music before becoming K-pop fans (Otmazgin & Lyan, 2014; Yoon, 2019). This implies that such exposure to Korean dramas and other Asian pop cultures may have an impact on the fans' subsequent engagement with K-pop, and thus could make them find the similar cultural content of K-pop appealing. There are a number of attempts within the literature to indicate the reasons why overseas K-pop fans have been attracted to K-pop. One of its successes could be the combination of Western and Eastern

cultures to accommodate Asian tastes (Marinescu & Balica, 2013), as K-pop incorporates rap and hip hop from Western music culture, which subsequently make its tones, melody and rhythms unique, catchy and exotic, thus differing from other types of pop music (Otmazgin & Lyan, 2014). Consequently, overseas K-pop fans can enjoy the music even if they do not understand the Korean language (Min, Jin, & Han, 2019). Further, overseas K-pop fans tend to be attracted to K-pop because of its distinguishing dance performances, the quality of the singers and the music videos and the first-rate performances of K-pop idols (Yoon, 2019). The dedication of K-pop idols to devoting long periods of time to perfecting their singing and dancing could inspire the fans to work equally hard to achieve their own goals. K-pop is also attractive to its Chilean and Spanish fans as K-pop boy bands apply make-up, which reflects soft masculinity including attributes such as tenderness, charisma, and politeness, which may be considered as the antithesis of masculinity in Chilean and Spanish male singers (Yoon, Min, & Jin, 2020). This suggests that K-pop enables its overseas fans to challenge narratives embedded in their society and implies that a Western audience desires different modern societal aspects mirrored in Korean popular culture. In addition, while consuming K-pop, many Spanish and Romanian K-pop fans have expressed an interest in learning the Korean language and its culture (Marinescu & Balica, 2013). It may be argued that becoming a K-pop fan can increase intercultural understanding, which encompasses knowledge about other cultures including similarities and differences between cultures (Hill, 2006). Moreover, the literature discusses the role of the fan community where fans can post comments, share up-to-date information on their favourite K-pop idols, famous songs and meet other K-pop fans worldwide via social media (Koeltzsch, 2019; Otmazgin & Lyan, 2014). These online activities seem to be in line with the concept of transnationalism, which focuses on “multiple ties and interactions linking people or institutions across the borders of nation-states” (Vertovec, 2009, p. 447). In this context, overseas K-pop fans employ social media to help them create transnational communities among other overseas K-pop fans and strengthen their bond with K-pop music and their idols despite their geographical distance from other fans and from Korea.

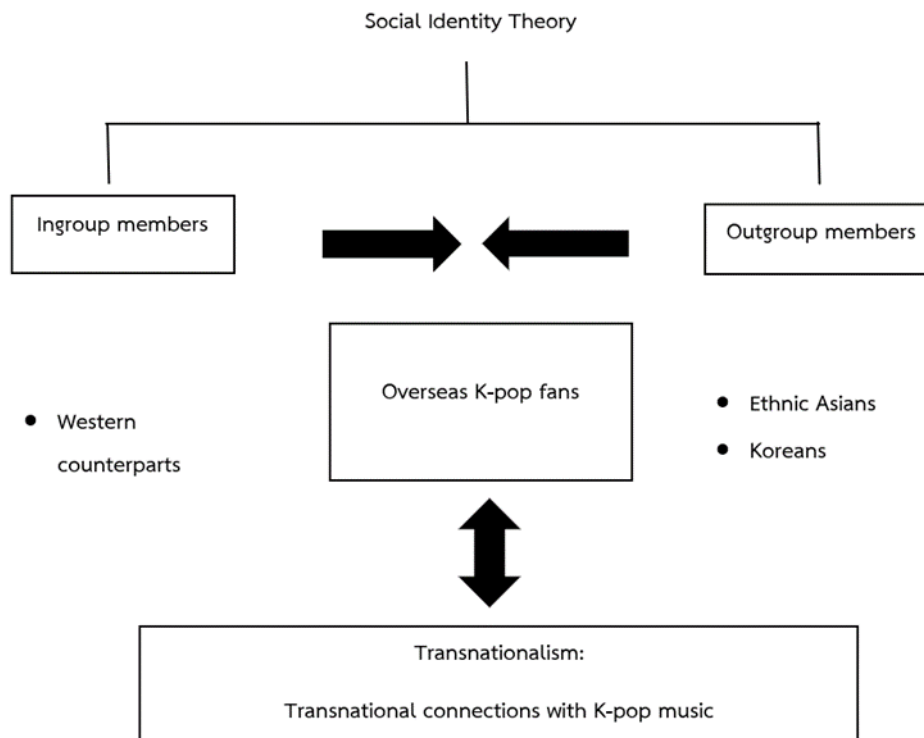
## 5. Stereotypes and Discrimination

The global rise in the popularity of K-pop also reflects the American media’s stereotypical representation of K-pop idols as sexy and vulnerable Asian women (Yoon, Min, & Jin, 2020). For example, a Korean female singer, BoA, is portrayed by an American director in a music video using different lyrics in a way that orients her in the American market, as “hyper-sexualized”, “submissive” and “docile” (p.220), while another South Korean girl group, the Wonder Girls, is characterized as “docile, cute, sexy, vulnerable, and playful attitudes” (Jung, 2010, p. 220). Furthermore, overseas K-pop fans have raised the issues of stereotype and racial discrimination they have encountered when expressing their appreciation of K-pop (Min, Jin, & Han, 2019). For example, Spanish people and Chileans associate K-pop with the term ‘Chinos’ and ‘Chinitos’, which includes all Asian nationalities without considering the complexity and diversity of Asian cultures and its people (Min, Jin, & Han, 2019; Yoon, Min, & Jin, 2020). Thus, when Spanish K-pop fans express their appreciation of K-pop, their friends and family would refer to them as liking ‘Chinos’ (Yoon, Min, & Jin, 2020). In Spanish, Chilean, Israeli, and Palestinian society, K-pop is often perceived as being overly exotic, coming from the very different culture of the Asian

continent, and therefore K-pop fans may likewise be regarded negatively (Min, Jin, & Han, 2019; Otmazgin & Lyan, 2014). The literature also states that overseas K-pop fans may experience being stereotyped as immature and having their musical taste derided as their families and peers are unlikely to understand their preference for K-pop and regard it as incomprehensible foreign music (Yoon, 2019). This is exemplified by the case of white K-pop fans in Canada who tend to face marginalization from their non-fan peers and families, who regard them as Asian-fetishizing and obsessed with Asian culture (Yoon, 2019). This is because Canadian K-pop fans might think non-K-pop fans consider them Koreaboo, i.e. excessively obsessed with K-pop, thereby reflecting a negative image of extreme fans, who frequently post and share K-pop on blogs and YouTube. In addition, Canadian K-pop fans reported that they have received hostile racist comments from strangers on social media, and from other people who know them, stating that they are overly Asian for example (Yoon, 2019). Moreover, findings of a quantitative study conducted by Mazaná (2014) demonstrated that the perception of Czechs tends to be negative towards K-pop idol groups, as they consider the appearance of K-pop idol groups as bizarre and homosexual, since the members of Korean boy bands apply make-up. Consequently, Czech K-pop fans who are open about following this genre tend to be marginalized by others (Mazaná, 2014). In Israel, due to most Israelis' lack of familiarity with K-pop, the music is perceived as "weird," "ridiculous," "gay-like and "child-like" (as reported by Israeli K-pop fans) (Otmazgin & Lyan, 2014, p.47). Furthermore, K-pop idols are thought to be Chinese, so when Israeli K-pop fans express their admiration of their K-pop idols on Facebook, they are mocked by their friends for being fans of the Chinese (Otmazgin & Lyan, 2014). Interestingly, overseas K-pop fans are viewed by non-fans as also liking Korean culture, with the result overseas K-pop fans see themselves and K-pop fans in other countries as ingroup members. Concurrently, their non-K-pop counterparts might be considered by K-pop fans as outgroup members with different feelings and experiences. As a result, non-reciprocal feelings might lead to stereotyping and discrimination between ingroup and outgroup members. Ingroup members or "us" are defined as people with whom you have a connection as you share similar backgrounds such as the same ethnic or religious group (Jackson, 2014). This notion contrasts with outgroup members or "them", where one is perceived as an outsider due to a lack of an emotional or psychological connection as a result of ethnical differences (Jackson, 2014). Thus, this notion leads to the classification of ingroup and outgroup members and negative consequences, e.g. prejudice, discrimination, and racism (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). This classification is linked to social identity theory, which posits that individuals are prone to categorize people in their setting into ingroup and outgroup members, e.g. "us" and "them", based on their perception of similar nationality, religion, region, and so forth. In this context, although overseas K-pop fans generally share the same ethnicity as other people in their society, they tend to be regarded as outgroup members due to their appreciation of foreign culture and thus be perceived as the outgroup. Concurrently, overseas K-pop fans distinguish themselves from non-fans through active membership of fan clubs or the Facebook pages of the fan clubs. Their participation may provide them with a sense of fitting into the group and being accepted. Such actions may be said to demonstrate the distinction between K-pop fans and non-fans (Min, Jin & Han, 2019; Yoon, Min & Jin, 2020). To address the issue of stereotyping and discrimination, overseas K-pop fans use social media to identify the disrespectful or hostile comments they experience on social media by putting a hashtag before a word on Twitter as a rallying point for other K-pop fans to share similar

experiences and provide one another with emotional support (see Sonder, 2020). Another example was when Chilean K-pop fans complained about a Chilean television show and made racists joke about the Korean boy band BTS (O'Kane, 2021). The fans made a huge impact by sharing their thoughts with other fans worldwide on social media and putting several hashtags on Twitter demanding the show issue an apology (O'Kane, 2021). As a result, the video was removed from the YouTube channel and the show apologized on its Instagram page (O'Kane, 2021).

The author incorporates both social identity theory and transnationalism. The diagram below demonstrates that there is a sense of belonging affiliated with group membership, i.e. ingroup and outgroup members, which may consequently lead to conflict between these two group members. Those who tend to be regarded as the outgroup members or “them” are those from Asian ethnic backgrounds, i.e. Koreans in this context, who tend to be considered as a representation of Asian ethnicity as a whole. In contrast, those who do not consume K-pop tend to be perceived as ingroup members or belonging to “us”, situated at the opposite end of the continuum. Consequently, this group categorisation might cause conflict and may lead to stereotypes and discrimination. This conflict seems to be a barrier that overseas K-pop fans have to overcome. In so doing, in the middle of the continuum, becoming dedicated to K-pop allows its overseas fans to recognize themselves as belonging to their own group through membership of fan clubs or attending fan meetings, which differentiates them from other non-fans in their countries. Concurrently, overseas fans’ attachment to K-pop, its idols and other fans reflects transnational connections, irrespective of their geographical distance and in the absence of shared culture and language.



**Figure 1:** Proposed conceptual framework for overseas K-pop fans

## 6. Conclusion

This review has extended the understanding of overseas K-pop fans and the K-pop phenomenon by utilizing a conceptual framework, transnationalism combined with social identity theory, to demonstrate the transnational connections of overseas K-pop fans with K-pop and its idols through social media platforms and the challenges of stereotyping and discrimination the overseas fans encounter. As previously noted, becoming an overseas fan of K-pop can enhance the fans' strong sense of bonding with K-pop, with their idols and other fans despite their distant geographical context. At the same time, their appreciation of K-pop can also give rise to the issues of stereotyping and discrimination against Asian ethnicities, when their peers and families may use derogative terms to label K-pop fans and demonstrate negative attitudes towards them.

Engagement with K-pop offers overseas fans an alternative choice of music as a new possible cultural resource, and enables them to reflect on their own society, i.e. stereotyping, discrimination, and soft masculinity in K-pop male singers, which differs from singers in their countries (Yoon, Min, & Jin, 2020). Additionally, K-pop idols' strong work ethic can prove aspirational to their fans. This review has shown that many overseas K-pop fans have found it possible to incorporate K-pop into their everyday lives regardless of their differences in ethnicity and geographical distance, with the help of online social networks to facilitate their modes of participation. However, it may be premature to generalize the overseas K-pop fans discussed in this review as an example of the K-pop phenomenon and its overseas fans in general as the experiences of other overseas K-pop fans may differ. Thus, it is crucial to develop more detailed approaches to explore the complexities of K-pop and its overseas fans.

## 7. References

- Bok-rae, K. (2015). Past, Present and Future of Hallyu (Korean Wave). *American International Journal of Contemporary Research*, 5(5), 154-160.
- Cambridge Dictionary. (2021). Idol. In *Cambridge.org*. Retrieved July 14, 2021, from <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/idol>
- Hill, I. (2006). Student types, school types and their combined influence on the development of intercultural understanding. *Journal of Research in International Education*, 5(1), 5-33.
- Jackson, J. (2014). *Introducing Language and Intercultural Communication*. Oxon: Routledge.
- Jung, E. Y. (2010). Playing the race and sexuality cards in the transnational pop game: Korean music videos for the US market. *Journal of Popular Music Studies*, 22(2), 219-236.
- Kim, S. (2017). *The \$4.7 Billion K-Pop Industry Chases Its 'Michael Jackson Moment'*. Retrieved from <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-08-22/the-4-7-billion-k-pop-industry-chases-its-michael-jackson-moment>

- Koeltzsch, G. (2019). *Korean Popular Culture in Argentina*. Retrieved from [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/335608640\\_Korean\\_Popular\\_Culture\\_in\\_Argentina](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/335608640_Korean_Popular_Culture_in_Argentina)
- Lee, J-Y. (2012). Managing the transnational, governing the national: cultural policy and the politics of the culture archetype project in South Korea. In N. Otmazgin & E. Ben-Ari (Eds.), *Popular culture and the state in East and Southeast Asia* (pp. 123-145). Oxon: Routledge.
- Mahr, K. (2012). *South Korea's greatest export: How K-Pop's rocking the world*. Retrieved from <https://world.time.com/2012/03/07/south-koreas-greatest-export-how-k-pops-rocking-the-world/>
- Marinescu, V., & Balica, E. (2013). Korean Cultural Products in Eastern Europe: A Case Study of the K-Pop Impact in Romania. *Region: Regional Studies of Russia, Eastern Europe, and Central Asia*, 2(1), 113-135.
- Mazana', V. (2014). Cultural perception and social impact of the Korean Wave in the Czech Republic. In: V. Marinescu (Ed.), *The Global Impact of South Korean Popular Culture: Hallyu Unbound* (pp. 47-63). Lanham: Lexington.
- Min, W., Jin, D.Y., & Han, B. (2019). Transcultural fandom of the Korean Wave in Latin America: through the lens of cultural intimacy and affinity space. *Media, Culture & Society*, 41(5), 604-619.
- Morimoto, L. (2017). Transnational media fan studies. In M.A. Click & S. Scott (Eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Media Fandom* (pp. 280-288). London: Routledge.
- O'Kane, C. (2021). *When a TV show made racist jokes about BTS, their fans around the world rallied online to defend them*. Retrieved from <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/bts-racist-joke-mi-barrio/>
- Otmazgin, N., & Lyan, I. (2014). Hallyu across the Desert: K-pop Fandom in Israel and Palestine. *Cross-Currents: East Asian History and Culture Review*, 3(1), 32-55.
- Siriyuvasak, U., & Hyunjoon, S. (2007). Asianizing K-pop: production, consumption and identification patterns among Thai youth. *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 8(1), 109-136.
- Sonder, S. (2020). *The Traumatic Black Female Experience in K-Pop Fandoms*. Retrieved from <https://www.southsonder.com/post/the-traumatic-black-female-experience-in-k-pop-fandoms>
- Tajfel, H., & Turner, J.C. (1986). 'An integrative theory of intergroup conflict' In S. Worchel & W.G. Austin (Eds.), *Psychology of Intergroup Relations* (pp. 2-24). Chicago: Nelson-Hall Publishers.
- Vertovec, S. (2009). *Transnationalism*. Oxon: Routledge.
- Yoon, K. (2019). Transnational fandom in the making: K-pop fans in Vancouver. *The International Communication Gazette*, 81(2), 176-192.
- Yoon, K., Min, W., & Jin, D. Y. (2020). Consuming the Contra-Flow of K-pop in Spain. *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 41(2), 132-147.

## A Review of the Development of Online Chinese Education in Thailand

Xue Meng

Lecturer, Faculty of Liberal Arts, King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Latkrabang

E-mail: meng.xu@kmitl.ac.th

Qiuli Zheng

Lecturer, Faculty of Liberal Arts, King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Latkrabang

E-mail: Qiuli\_Zheng@163.com

### Abstract

Thailand has the most prominent Chinese education market in Southeast Asia. With the development of time, the improvement of scientific and information technology, and the influence of various factors such as the epidemic, online Chinese language education in Thailand is developing more and more deeply. Hence, this paper analyzes the status quo, advantages, and disadvantages of online Chinese language education in Thailand and discusses how to improve online Chinese language education management in Thailand under the current era background.

**Keywords:** Online Chinese language education, Chinese language education in Thailand, Analysis of advantages and disadvantages, solutions

### 1. Introduction

Thailand has the most prominent Chinese education market in Southeast Asia due to its relatively close geographical location to China, the prevalence of Buddhist culture, frequent tourism and economic exchanges, and other different reasons. The long-term friendly and peaceful diplomatic relations between China and Thailand, the close economic and trade exchanges, the "Belt and Road Initiative" diplomatic policy of China, and the rapid development of the eastern economic corridor of Thailand all make the Thai people have a high enthusiasm for learning Chinese. According to the latest statistics from the United Nations, Thailand has a total population of about 69.84 million, of which more than one million are learning Chinese. In this context, this paper analyzes the development status, advantages, and disadvantages of online Chinese language teaching in Thailand in the post-epidemic era. It puts forward how to strengthen and promote online Chinese language teaching related to the feasibility of suggestions.

### 2. The Development Status of Online Chinese Teaching in Thailand

Thailand has a large number of offline Chinese teaching institutions. These teaching institutions generally have a specific operating time. In the development process, they have established a multi-lingual teaching and training system, including Chinese, and have accumulated a wealth of offline Chinese teaching experience. The development of the online

Chinese language teaching system is not perfect; no matter in course production, interaction, and teaching experience, there are some disadvantages. However, with the continuous development of the Chinese education boom in Thailand, when the offline training institutions are limited by the increasing number of students and unable to provide the corresponding number of teachers, online Chinese teaching has begun to show its unique advantages. Especially when many schools in Thailand choose to close due to the COVID-19 outbreak in 2020, online education that can guarantee home learning has gained more and more people's favor. Among them, Beijing Tangfeng International Education Group has launched in-depth cooperation with the Thai government. From May 1 to July 31, we will provide current online Chinese language teaching courses and platform support for 100,000 teachers and students from more than 900 colleges and universities in Thailand. In the future, we will carry out more extensive and in-depth cooperation with Thailand in teacher training, Sino-Thai cooperation in running schools, integration of industry and education, and other aspects. So, to speak that the epidemic period is undoubtedly a development opportunity for online Chinese language education. Thailand's online Chinese education system has also achieved rapid development during the epidemic and has been widely recognized and developed with the convenience of the Internet platform.

### **3. Analysis of Advantages and Disadvantages of Online Chinese Teaching Development in Thailand**

#### **3.1 Advantages of online Chinese teaching**

At present, the most significant advantages of online Chinese teaching compared with offline training are mainly concentrated in two aspects: one is the unique advantages in epidemic prevention, and the other is the saving of teachers:

##### **3.1.1 Advantages of epidemic prevention**

Although the Thai government actively cooperated with China to get help in introducing epidemic control and prevention materials, Thailand experienced a peak of transmission between mid-December 2020 and early February 2021 due to a variety of reasons. Of these, 959 were newly infected on January 26, the highest since April 2020 in Thailand. With the efforts of the Thai government and the help of China, Thailand has successfully controlled the large-scale spread of the epidemic. However, both the government and the public will pay more attention to epidemic prevention and personal safety since the outbreak has just passed. In this regard, compared with offline education institutions that need to go there in person and learn with many strangers worldwide, online Chinese language education can undoubtedly better meet the needs of epidemic prevention and self-protection. Even though this advantage will gradually weaken and eventually disappear with the introduction of the Chinese vaccine and the passage of time as the threat of the epidemic recedes, it is undoubtedly an excellent opportunity for online Chinese language teaching in Thailand to overtake.

Online Chinese education also contributes to the overall epidemic control of the society and the alleviation of the government's work pressure, which has the advantage of

epidemic prevention. Moreover, in the current period, the Thai government will also give a lot of support to online Chinese language education. Therefore, the epidemic prevention advantage of online Chinese language education can also bring policy support.

### **3.1.2 Advantage of teachers**

In terms of saving teachers' resources, online Chinese language education has the same great advantage over offline training, and this advantage will exist for a long time. The number of Chinese learners in Thailand is not roughly stable but has grown by leaps and bounds in recent decades. In 2003, the number of people learning Chinese in Thailand was only tens of thousands, but by the end of 2017, the number had exceeded one million. The majority of Chinese learners have also changed from students to practitioners in walks of life, including students and employees. In a manner of speaking that the current Thai society has formed a wave of learning Chinese, under the influence of this wave, more and more Thais want to be able to learn Chinese. However, compared with the significant increase in the number of learners, the faculty of training institutions has been growing slowly. As a result, the number of teachers in many training institutions has not been able to keep up with the growing number of students. Most of these institutions choose to keep increasing the size of their classes, which inevitably leads to a decline in teaching quality and dissatisfaction among students.

In this case, the emergence of online Chinese teaching has dramatically alleviated the shortage of teachers. Even the most capable teacher can only work a few hours a day and teach only a few dozen students in a class. However, with the launch of various online courses on online Chinese language teaching platforms, thousands or even tens of thousands of students have gained the opportunity to learn Chinese. What's more, online courses' flexible and free time is also a great help to students. Moreover, compared with offline education, which can only be taught by teachers living in Thailand, online education can rely on excellent teachers from all over the world to conduct teaching activities and make courses to ensure the high quality of online lessons. Moreover, with the development of modern live-streaming technology, communication, and learning, which are extremely important in language education, can also be satisfied through online live-streaming, thus enabling online Chinese education to gain great development advantages in terms of teachers.

### **3.1.3 Advantages of policy support**

There are many offline training institutions with a high level of development in Thailand, which are undoubtedly compelling competitors for online Chinese language institutions. Although the business of these training institutions has been hit to some extent due to the development of the epidemic in the past, overall, these institutions still have a large and stable customer group as well as the home advantage of operating in Thailand. However, the development of "One Belt and One Road" before and after the epidemic and the introduction a relevant online education system by the Thai government has enabled online Chinese education institutions to obtain relatively comprehensive policy support. The promotion of "One Belt and One Road" enables relevant Chinese enterprises to get domestic policy support in foreign trade. Meanwhile, to maintain domestic education development during the

epidemic period, Thailand vigorously introduced relevant online education platforms in China, which also helps to obtain policy support from Thailand.

### **3.1.4 Knowledge of China**

For Thais who choose to learn Chinese, the purpose of their study is mainly to focus on China-related business. Although a small number of students study to connect with tourists or business people from Singapore and other Chinese-speaking countries and regions, the vast majority of students study to better communicate with Chinese tourists to Thailand or Chinese e-commerce and enterprises. Therefore, compared with offline Chinese teaching in Thailand, online Chinese teaching platform undoubtedly has higher advantages. Online Chinese education can enable Thai students to know more about different regions of China and effectively help them master various information such as Chinese culture, current popular content on the Internet, the domestic situation in China, preferences, and shopping tendencies of Chinese tourists. Therefore, compared with offline Chinese language education, online Chinese language education is more attractive.

### **3.2 Disadvantages of online Chinese teaching**

Although online Chinese teaching has many advantages, as an industry that has only recently started to develop rapidly, online Chinese teaching is not perfect. Therefore, compared with offline Chinese language education institutions with accumulated decades of development experience, online Chinese language education also has disadvantages.

#### **3.2.1 Lack of interactivity**

In the process of language learning, interactivity is crucial. In addition to language teaching, offline training institutions provide students with various activities related to Chinese language and Chinese culture, such as Go, Chinese chess, calligraphy, ink painting, etc., so that students can increase their interest in Chinese language learning and enhance their understanding of relevant content in the process of interaction. However, although online teaching can introduce this kind of content, teachers and students cannot have face-to-face interaction, let alone solve the problems existing in the interaction. In addition, although online Chinese learning may have some advantages in learning writing and characters when students need to practice pronunciation and communication, they need to make more significant efforts due to the lack of correction from teachers. In contrast, even if there are live-streaming courses to ensure the communication and interaction between teachers and students, network live-streaming still has some shortcomings.

#### **3.2.2 Poor learning atmosphere**

Learning in an offline institution is a process of learning with many classmates who have the exact needs. Reading aloud and oral communication, mutual help, and encouragement among classmates will create a better learning atmosphere and make learners' attention more focused. Even some students who are easily distracted can focus on learning

for a long time. Moreover, studying together can also help learners get timely answers when encountering problems in the learning process. In contrast, online Chinese language education cannot form a good learning atmosphere. With electronic equipment as the medium of Chinese online education platform, the online live courses and record courses can be suspended at any time, making learners more easily distracted. They have to rely on their willpower to overcome these problems, not through a good study atmosphere for help.

### **3.2.3 The system is not perfect**

For the development of online Chinese teaching, the system's imperfection will undoubtedly lead to its inability to meet the unique needs of some students. At present, the textbooks of online Chinese language education are still dominated by regular teaching courses. At the same time, there are no specialized practice courses for specific courses such as vocabulary, sentences, or cultural knowledge, or specially designed surprise training courses for the upcoming exams. Therefore, it cannot meet the needs of some students with more unique requirements. In addition, the current offline training institutions in Thailand often do not have a unified textbook standard, and the online educational institutions are unable to connect with different offline training institutions in a short period. However, they can refer to their textbooks to provide specialized seamless courses for students studying in these offline institutions, making it possible for students who studied in offline institutions to continue their studies in their former institutions. These institutions will also use their existing faculty and student resources to promote their online education platforms, leading to fierce competition for other specialized online education platforms.

### **3.2.4 Higher initial operating costs**

Although many people in Thailand have learned or are learning Chinese, Chinese is still a foreign language in Thailand but occupies a relatively important position. Therefore, the relevant online courses produced by Chinese teachers need to be translated and post-produced in Thai before using them. In addition, due to the differences between the education systems of China and Thailand, the relevant online course videos produced also need to be reviewed by both the Chinese side and the Thai side. The translation and post-production of courses and additional review procedures require enterprises to pay more human resources costs and higher administrative costs. Although the higher administrative costs will be gradually reduced after the relevant platforms gradually get on the right track and maintain a significantly lower price than offline education, the operating costs are considerably higher in the early stage of development.

## **4. Analysis of Countermeasures to Promote the Development of Online Education Platform**

### **4.1 Strengthen cooperation with local governments**

Online education platforms can rely on current policy support and advantages in epidemic prevention to strengthen cooperation with local governments. In fact, with the development of education in Thailand, the demand for online education will continue to increase. Not Chinese language education, Thailand also needs other types of online education courses. Therefore, Chinese online education platforms or related enterprises can

also strengthen cooperation with the Thai government, develop and expand the business scope of online education according to Thailand's needs, and enhance market competitiveness and guarantee their vitality and development level.

#### **4.2 Strengthen the level of curriculum design according to local conditions**

Compared with China, the examination system in Thailand will undoubtedly have specific differences. Moreover, Thais are learning Chinese for their purposes: to study abroad, international trade between Thailand and China, or improve communication with tourists to Thailand. Therefore, enterprises and platforms related to online Chinese language education should take measures according to local conditions and conduct oriented course design according to the unique development needs of Thai students to promote the corresponding development and progress of course design level so as to attract more Thai students to choose online Chinese courses and make a long-term choice. In this process, the relevant personnel should also actively do an excellent job in the preliminary investigation of local students and understand Thai students' learning habits and main learning objectives to improve the service quality as much as possible and enhance the attraction of Chinese to Thai students. In addition, considering the relatively poor network coverage level in some areas of Thailand, the size and precision of the video should be adjusted in the course production to ensure the fluency of video playback in the learning process and improve students' learning quality.

#### **4.3 Cooperate with local institutions to achieve joint development**

Online Chinese education and offline training institutions are not entirely competitive. The relationship between the two can be a competitor, but it can also become a cooperative ally. Online education institutions can choose to cooperate with local institutions, collect a part of the platform management fees, and help these offline institutions launch their online courses. Such a cooperation model can enable both parties to take advantage of each other's advantages and reduce costs and burdens. Online Chinese education enterprises can reduce the vast burden of recruiting students and designing textbooks. At the same time, they can also obtain a stable income. On the other hand, offline institutions avoid the vast expense of developing online platforms from scratch. If the two sides strengthen the cooperation and exchanges between each other, it will undoubtedly bring significant advantages and help.

### **5. Conclusion**

For a long time, the folk Chinese education institutions in Thailand have been acting as a bridge and link between Chinese and Thai colleges and universities, providing opportunities and conditions for Chinese students majoring in Chinese education to go to Thailand for internships and work. On the other hand, based on the needs of Thai colleges and universities and related enterprises, the folk Chinese education institutions will also promote China's domestic teachers and teaching materials in Thailand. Moreover, during the epidemic period, China's online Chinese language education institutions will undoubtedly help to strengthen the penetration of the Thai market and take advantage of their advantages in capital and language to explore a new path for the development of Chinese language education by adopting the development model of Sino-Thai cooperation in running schools.

## 6. References

- Wei, W. (2020). Investigation on the Professional Development Attitudes of Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language during the COVID-19. *Proceedings of the China Market Society 2020 National Congress*, 2.
- Wu, C., & Diao, X. (2021). *Reflection and exploration on the online teaching of Chinese as a foreign language under the epidemic situation. Cultural Industry*, 2.
- Xiao, Q. (2020). Research on the Development Trend of Chinese Language Education under "One Belt and One Road" Construction background. *Science, Education, and Literature Collection*, 10.
- Zhang, P. (2020). Online Development of Chinese Language Education in Britain during the Epidemic Period. *World Education Information*, 33 (7).

## ICAA2021 Board of Committee

### Advisory Board

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Paitoon Pimdee	Vice President for Procurement and Acting Dean of Faculty of Liberal Arts
Dr. Montha Polrak	Acting Vice Dean of Faculty of Liberal Arts
Dr. Charinee Chansri	Acting Vice Dean of Faculty of Liberal Arts
Ajarn Napalai Meela	Acting Vice Dean of Faculty of Liberal Arts

### Editor

Dr. Pramarn Subphadoongchone	King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang, Thailand
------------------------------	---

### Editorial Board

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nuwee Chomphuchart	Thai Chamber of Commerce University, Thailand
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Yonca Ozkan	Cukurova University, Turkey
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Supakorn Phoocharoensil	Thammasat University, Thailand
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Viput Ongsakul	National Institute of Development Administration, Thailand
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Pattaraporn Thampradit	King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang, Thailand
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Piyatida Changpueng	King Mongkut's University of Technology North Bangkok, Thailand
Assoc. Prof. Porntip Waisang	King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang, Thailand
Asst. Prof. Dr. Sutthirak Sapsirin	Chulalongkorn University, Thailand
Asst. Prof. Dr. Patcharee Muangnakin	King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang, Thailand
Asst. Prof. Dr. Patama Satawedini	Bangkok University, Thailand
Asst. Prof. Dr. Jantima Simpson	Naresuan University, Thailand
Asst. Prof. Dr. Chatuwit Keawsuwan	Kasetsart University, Thailand
Asst. Prof. Dr. Kandaporn Jaroenkitboworn	Chulalongkorn University, Thailand

Asst. Prof. Dr. Alexander J. Klemm	King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang, Thailand
Asst. Prof. Dr. Wang Ying Chuan	The Macau University of Science and Technology, China
Asst. Prof. Choedphong Uttama	King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang, Thailand
Dr. Atinuch Pin-Ngern	King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang, Thailand
Dr. Kanpajee Rattanaeng	King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang, Thailand
Dr. Thapanee Khemanuwong	King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang, Thailand
Dr. Pramarn subphadoongchone	King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang, Thailand
Dr. Piriyaorn Uampittaya	King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang, Thailand
Dr. Rujira Bumrungkarn	King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang, Thailand
Dr. Khwanchanok Suebsook	Huachiew Chalermprakiet University, Thailand
Dr. Juthamas Thongsongsee	Chulalongkorn University, Thailand
Dr. Denchai Prabjandee	Burapha University, Thailand
Dr. Chutamas Sundrarajun	Assumption University, Thailand
Dr. Sakolkarn Insai	Dhurakij Pundit University, Thailand
Dr. Wikrom Chuntarajit	Phuket Rajabhat University, Thailand
Dr. Nuchsa C. Thongsan	Maharakham University, Thailand
Dr. Nopphawan Chimroylarp	Kasetsart University, Thailand
Dr. Natthamma Thong-Iam	Burapha University, Thailand
Dr. Patteera Thienpermpool	Silpakorn University, Thailand
Dr. Sasithida Saraiwang	Nakhon Pathom Rajabhat University, Thailand
Dr. Pongtawee Tassawa	Lampang Rajabhat University, Thailand
Dr. Pornchanok Sukpan	Dhurakij Pundit University, Thailand
Dr. Arthitaya Narathakoon	Thammasat University, Thailand

### ICAA2021 Organizing Committee



คำสั่ง คณะศิลปศาสตร์  
สถาบันเทคโนโลยีพระจอมเกล้าเจ้าคุณทหารลาดกระบัง  
ที่ **e2b/2564**  
เรื่อง แต่งตั้งคณะกรรมการดำเนินงานโครงการประชุมวิชาการระดับชาติทางศิลปศาสตร์ประยุกต์  
ครั้งที่ 10 (NCAA 2021)  
คณะกรรมการดำเนินงานโครงการประชุมวิชาการระดับนานาชาติทางศิลปศาสตร์ประยุกต์  
ครั้งที่ 4 (ICAA 2021)

เพื่อให้การดำเนินงานโครงการประชุมวิชาการระดับชาติทางศิลปศาสตร์ทางศิลปศาสตร์ประยุกต์ ครั้งที่ 10 (NCAA 2021) และโครงการประชุมวิชาการระดับนานาชาติทางศิลปศาสตร์ประยุกต์ ครั้งที่ 4 (ICAA 2021) ภายใต้หัวข้อ "ฮาร์ดสกิลและซอฟต์สกิลเพื่อการสร้างทุนทางมนุษย์แบบนิวนอร์มอล (Hard & Soft Skills for Human Capital in the New Normal)" ในวันที่ 16 กรกฎาคม 2564 ณ โรงแรมแคนเนลิส สุวรรณภูมิ แอร์พอร์ต เป็นไปด้วยความเรียบร้อย มีประสิทธิภาพและเกิดประโยชน์สูงสุด จึงขอก่อตั้งคำสั่ง คณะศิลปศาสตร์ สถาบันเทคโนโลยีพระจอมเกล้าเจ้าคุณทหารลาดกระบัง ที่ e10/2564 เรื่อง แต่งตั้งคณะกรรมการดำเนินงานโครงการประชุมวิชาการระดับชาติทางศิลปศาสตร์ประยุกต์ ครั้งที่ 10 (NCAA 2021) และคณะกรรมการดำเนินงานโครงการประชุมวิชาการระดับนานาชาติทางศิลปศาสตร์ประยุกต์ ครั้งที่ 4 (ICAA 2021) และขอแต่งตั้งคณะกรรมการดำเนินงานชุดใหม่ ดังรายนามต่อไปนี้

#### 1. คณะกรรมการอำนวยการ

1. รองศาสตราจารย์ ดร.ไพฑูริย์	พิมพ์ดี	ที่ปรึกษา
2. อาจารย์ ดร.จวีณ์	จันทร์ศรี	ประธานโครงการ
3. ผู้ช่วยศาสตราจารย์ ดร.พัชรภรณ์	สุนทรวิบูลย์	กรรมการ
4. อาจารย์ ว่าที่ร้อยตรี ดร.ปฎิภาณ	บัณฑิตน์	กรรมการ
5. อาจารย์ ดร.ชูปณีย์	เชมานุวงศ์	กรรมการ
6. อาจารย์ ดร.มณฑา	พลรักษ์	กรรมการ
7. อาจารย์ ดร.เอกรัตน์	สุวรรณภูม	กรรมการ
8. อาจารย์ณภัลย์	มีลา	กรรมการ
9. นางสาวดารณี	สถาน๊ะ	กรรมการ
10.นางปราณี	นิลขาว	กรรมการ
11. นางสาววันทนา	วันจิตต์	กรรมการและเลขานุการ
12. นางสาวรัตนา	แสงจันทร์	กรรมการและเลขานุการ

**หน้าที่และความรับผิดชอบ**

สนับสนุนและให้คำปรึกษาการจัดโครงการประชุมวิชาการระดับระดับชาติทางศิลปศาสตร์ ครั้งที่ 10 (NCAA 2021) และโครงการประชุมวิชาการระดับนานาชาติทางศิลปศาสตร์ ครั้งที่ 4 (ICAA 2021) ให้เป็นไปด้วยความเรียบร้อย มีประสิทธิภาพ

**2. คณะกรรมการฝ่ายพิจารณาบทความ**

1. อาจารย์ ดร.จาริณี	จันทร์ศรี	ประธานกรรมการ
2. อาจารย์ ดร.ชุติมา	ไวสุระสิงห์	รองประธานกรรมการ
3. อาจารย์ ดร.ประมาณ	ทวีพจน์คุณงาม	รองประธานกรรมการ
4. อาจารย์ ดร.รุปนีย์	เขมานูวงศ์	กรรมการ
5. อาจารย์ ดร.มณฑา	พลรัักษ์	กรรมการ
6. นางสาวดารณี	สถามเต็ช	กรรมการ
7. นางปรวณี	นิลชาว	กรรมการ
8. นางสาววิรัช	ท่มเจริญ	กรรมการ
9. นางสาวฉวีพร	รินจิตต์	กรรมการและเลขานุการ
10. นางสาวรัตนา	แสงจันทร์	กรรมการและเลขานุการ

**หน้าที่และความรับผิดชอบ**

- 1) พิจารณาคัดเลือกบทความเพื่อตอบรับให้เข้าร่วมนำเสนอผลงาน
- 2) คัดเลือกผู้ทรงคุณวุฒิในการอ่านบทความ
- 3) กำหนดโปรแกรมการประชุม วางแผนการจำหน่ายหนังสือพิมพ์
- 4) ทบทวนผู้ทรงคุณวุฒิอ่านบทความ
- 5) ทำหนังสือเชิญวิทยากรบรรยายพิเศษ (Keynote speaker) และผู้ทรงคุณวุฒิอ่านบทความ
- 6) ทำหนังสือแจ้งตอบรับการนำเสนอบทความไปยังผู้นำเสนอบทความ
- 7) ติดตาม ทวงถามบทความจากผู้นำเสนอบทความ กรณีไม่ส่งบทความฉบับแก้ไขตามระยะเวลาที่กำหนด
- 8) งานอื่นๆ ที่ได้รับมอบหมาย

**3. คณะกรรมการฝ่ายจัดทำรูปเล่ม Proceedings สำหรับโครงการประชุมวิชาการระดับชาติทางศิลปศาสตร์ประยุกต์ ครั้งที่ 10 (NCAA 2021)**

1. อาจารย์ ดร.ชุติมา	ไวสุระสิงห์	ประธานกรรมการ
2. อาจารย์ ดร.รุปนีย์	เขมานูวงศ์	กรรมการ
3. อาจารย์ ดร.ภัททิศา	โสตาบัน	กรรมการ
4. นางสาวดารณี	สถามเต็ช	กรรมการ
5. นายกัญญวัฒน์	สถาพร	กรรมการ
6. นางสาววิรัช	ท่มเจริญ	กรรมการ
7. นางสาวรัตนา	แสงจันทร์	กรรมการและเลขานุการ

**หน้าที่และความรับผิดชอบ**

- 1) นำบทความมาจัดหมวดหมู่ และพิมพ์ให้เป็นรูปแบบเดียวกัน กลั่นกรอง วางลำดับ จัดทำเป็น Proceedings
- 2) งานอื่น ๆ ที่ได้รับมอบหมาย

**4. คณะกรรมการฝ่ายจัดทำรูปเล่ม Proceedings สำหรับโครงการประชุมวิชาการระดับนานาชาติทางศิลปศาสตร์ประยุกต์ ครั้งที่ 4 (ICAA 2021)**

1. อาจารย์ ดร.ประภาณ	ทวีทย์ผดุงขันธ์	ประธานกรรมการ
2. อาจารย์ ดร.พิริยาพร	อ่วมพิทยา	กรรมการ
3. นางสาวดารณี	สลามเต๊ะ	กรรมการ
4. นายภิญโญวัฒน์	สถาพร	กรรมการ
5. นางสาวศุทธภา	จันทร์ปลั่ง	กรรมการ
6. นางสาวฉวีพร	วินจิตต์	กรรมการและเลขานุการ

**หน้าที่และความรับผิดชอบ**

- 1) นำบทความมาจัดหมวดหมู่ และพิมพ์ให้เป็นรูปแบบเดียวกัน กลั่นกรอง วางลำดับ จัดทำเป็น Proceedings
- 2) งานอื่น ๆ ที่ได้รับมอบหมาย

**5. คณะกรรมการดำเนินรายการประชุม (Moderator) ในห้องสัมมนาย่อย**

1. อาจารย์ณภัลลีย์	มีลา	ประธานกรรมการ
2. รองศาสตราจารย์ ดร.ภัทรพร	ธรรมประติษฐ์	กรรมการ
3. รองศาสตราจารย์ ดร.ยศศักดิ์	โกศโยกานนท์	กรรมการ
4. รองศาสตราจารย์ปรียาภา	จิตต์บุญ	กรรมการ
5. รองศาสตราจารย์พรทิพย์	ไวแสง	กรรมการ
6. ผู้ช่วยศาสตราจารย์ ดร.พิชญกรณ์	สุนทรวิบูลย์	กรรมการ
7. ผู้ช่วยศาสตราจารย์ ดร.พัชรี	เมืองภาคิน	กรรมการ
8. ผู้ช่วยศาสตราจารย์ ดร.อารีย์	รุ่งระแสง	กรรมการ
9. ผู้ช่วยศาสตราจารย์จันจิรา	จันทร์เจริญสุข	กรรมการ
10. ผู้ช่วยศาสตราจารย์นิตา	ลากศรีสวัสดิ์	กรรมการ
11. ผู้ช่วยศาสตราจารย์พนิดา	จันทร์ภรณ์	กรรมการ
12. ผู้ช่วยศาสตราจารย์สรียา	ทับทัน	กรรมการ
13. อาจารย์ ว่าที่ร้อยตรี ดร.ปฎิภาณ	บัณฑิตน์	กรรมการ
14. อาจารย์ ดร.กานต์พิช	รัตนแสง	กรรมการ
15. อาจารย์ ดร.จาริณี	จันทร์ศรี	กรรมการ
16. อาจารย์ ดร.ชาดา	เตรียมวิทยา	กรรมการ
17. อาจารย์ ดร.ศุติมา	ไวสุระสิงห์	กรรมการ
18. อาจารย์ ดร.ฐปนีย์	เมฆานุวงศ์	กรรมการ

4

19. อาจารย์ ดร.ปณชวีร์	วิเศษสุนทรสกุล	กรรมการ
20. อาจารย์ ดร.ประมาณ	ทรัพย์ผดุงชนม์	กรรมการ
21. อาจารย์ ดร.พิริยาพร	อ่วมพิทยา	กรรมการ
22. อาจารย์ ดร.ภัทณิดา	โสคาบัน	กรรมการ
23. อาจารย์ ดร.มณฑา	พลรักษ์	กรรมการ
24. อาจารย์ ดร.มรกต	นุชศุภา	กรรมการ
25. อาจารย์ ดร.โยแก้ว	ศีลรักษ์	กรรมการ
26. อาจารย์ ดร.รุจิรา	บำรุงกาญจน์	กรรมการ
27. อาจารย์ ดร.อศินุช	ปิ่นเงิน	กรรมการ
28. อาจารย์ ดร.เอกรัตน์	สุวรรณกุล	กรรมการ
29. อาจารย์เจนจิรา	จิตรไพฑูย์	กรรมการ
30. อาจารย์จนิกันต์	ทับทิง	กรรมการ
31. อาจารย์เชิดพงศ์	อุตตะมะ	กรรมการ
32. อาจารย์เชิดศักดิ์	มานะกิจไพศาล	กรรมการ
33. อาจารย์ดวงพร	จิรจิตไพฑูย์	กรรมการ
34. อาจารย์ดวงใจ	วสุเพ็ญ	กรรมการ
35. อาจารย์นันทิยา	สุวรรณ	กรรมการ
36. อาจารย์ปฐมาภรณ์	วศิริ	กรรมการ
37. อาจารย์มิ่งอศินุช	สงรัมย์	กรรมการ
38. อาจารย์ภาณุวัฒน์	จุทอง	กรรมการ
39. อาจารย์วรปรีชญ์	มะโนวัง	กรรมการ
40. อาจารย์สุภาพร	วิชัยดิษฐ์	กรรมการ
41. อาจารย์สุรัชชัย	ฐานสโร	กรรมการ
42. อาจารย์อศินาศ	รุ่งสว่าง	กรรมการ
43. Asst. Prof. Dr. Alexander Johannes Klemm		กรรมการ
44. Dr. Andy Noces Cubalit		กรรมการ
45. Dr. Susanne Sara Thomas		กรรมการ
46. Ajarn Chenebeth Borja		กรรมการ
47. Ajarn Joo Huang Lee		กรรมการ
48. Ajarn Kenta Morii		กรรมการ
49. Ajarn Manashi G. Dutta		กรรมการ
50. Ajarn Mark O' Carroll		กรรมการ
51. Ajarn Meng Xue		กรรมการ
52. Ajarn Qiuli Zheng		กรรมการ
53. Ajarn Shiro Mizokawa		กรรมการ
54. Ajarn Tetsu Yokota		กรรมการ
55. Ajarn Xavier Boegly		กรรมการ
56. Ajarn Yuki Miyamoto		กรรมการ
57. นางสาวณรินทรา	ธีรจิตต์	กรรมการและเลขานุการ

5

58. นางสาวรัตนา แสงจันทร์ กรรมการและเลขานุการ  
หน้าที่และความรับผิดชอบ  
 ดำเนินรายการประชุม (Moderator) ในห้องสัมมนาย่อย

**6. คณะกรรมการฝ่ายต้อนรับและพิธีการ**

1. อาจารย์ ดร.กานต์พี	รัตนแสง	ประธานกรรมการ
2. อาจารย์ ดร.ภิญญา	โสดาบัน	กรรมการ
3. อาจารย์เจนจิรา	จิตรไพฑูริย์	กรรมการ
4. อาจารย์อติชาต	รุ่งสว่าง	กรรมการ
5. นางปราณี	นิลขาว	กรรมการ
6. นางสาวณรินทร์	รินจิตต์	กรรมการและเลขานุการ
7. นางสาวรัตนา	แสงจันทร์	กรรมการและเลขานุการ

หน้าที่และความรับผิดชอบ

- 1) ประสานงานด้านการเตรียมการต้อนรับ
- 2) ประสานข้อมูลการเดินทางของวิทยากร
- 3) กำหนดรูปแบบภาพรวมในพิธีการด้านต่าง ๆ ทั้งก่อนการประชุม ระหว่างการประชุม และหลังเสร็จสิ้นการประชุม

**7. คณะกรรมการฝ่ายลงทะเบียนและประเมินผล**

1. อาจารย์นภาลัย	มีลา	ประธานกรรมการ
2. ผู้ช่วยศาสตราจารย์อรุษา	ร้อยแก้ว	กรรมการ
3. อาจารย์นันทิยา	สุวรรณ	กรรมการ
4. อาจารย์ปฐมภรณ์	วรศิริ	กรรมการ
5. นางสาวปลาย้อย	เป็นธรรม	กรรมการ
6. นางสาวศุทธภา	จันทร์ปลั่ง	กรรมการ
7. นางสาวสุจินดา	สุกใส	กรรมการ
8. นางสาวศารณี	สถานเฑียร	กรรมการและเลขานุการ

หน้าที่และความรับผิดชอบ

- 1) จัดเตรียมวัสดุ อุปกรณ์ประกอบการประชุม เอกสารการลงทะเบียน รายชื่อผู้เข้าร่วมประชุม แยกบริเวณ วิทยากร และคณะกรรมการดำเนินงาน
- 2) ออกแบบประเมิน สรุปผลการประเมินโครงการ
- 3) จัดทำรูปเล่มรายงานสรุปผลการดำเนินโครงการ

**8. คณะกรรมการฝ่ายสถานที่**

1. อาจารย์ ดร.เอกวัฒน์	สุวรรณกุล	ประธานกรรมการ
2. อาจารย์ ว่าที่ร้อยตรี ดร.ปฎิภาณ	บัณฑิตน์	กรรมการ
3. อาจารย์ภาณุวัฒน์	จุทอง	กรรมการ
4. นางสาวชนันท์ธิพัฒน์	แจ่มศรี	กรรมการ

6

5. นางสาววิรัช	พุ่มเจริญ	กรรมการ
6. นายอาณัติ	นิลขาว	กรรมการ
7. นายภิญญวัฒน์	สถาพร	กรรมการและเลขานุการ

**หน้าที่และความรับผิดชอบ**

วางแผน ควบคุม ประสานงานเตรียมความพร้อมด้านสถานที่จัดการบรรยาย สถานที่จัดเลี้ยง

**9. คณะกรรมการฝ่ายการเงิน**

1. อาจารย์ ดร.มณฑา	พลรักษ์	ประธานกรรมการ
2. นางปราณี	นิลขาว	กรรมการ
3. นายภิญญวัฒน์	สถาพร	กรรมการ
4. นางสาวฉวีพร	วันจิตต์	กรรมการและเลขานุการ

**หน้าที่และความรับผิดชอบ**

- 1) เตรียมเอกสารเพื่อเบิกจ่ายตามหลักฐานการเบิกจ่าย
- 2) จัดเตรียมเอกสารหลักฐานต่าง ๆ ที่เกี่ยวข้องด้านการเงินให้เป็นไปตามหลักเกณฑ์และระเบียบสถาบันฯ

**10. คณะกรรมการฝ่ายสารสนเทศและประชาสัมพันธ์**

1. อาจารย์ วาที่ร้อยตรี ดร.ปฎิภาณ	บัณฑิตน์	ประธานกรรมการ
2. ผู้ช่วยศาสตราจารย์ ดร.พัชรภรณ์	สุนทรวิบูลย์	กรรมการ
3. อาจารย์ ดร.เอกวัฒน์	สุวรรณกุล	กรรมการ
4. อาจารย์เจนจิรา	จิตรไพฑูลย์	กรรมการ
5. อาจารย์อติชาติ	รุ่งสว่าง	กรรมการ
6. นางสาวนันทิพัทธ์	แจ่มศรี	กรรมการ
7. นายอาณัติ	นิลขาว	กรรมการ
8. นายภิญญวัฒน์	สถาพร	กรรมการและเลขานุการ

**หน้าที่และความรับผิดชอบ**

- 1) เตรียมความพร้อมอุปกรณ์สารสนเทศ
- 2) จัดทำบัตรประจำตัวสำหรับผู้นำเสนอผลงาน ผู้ดำเนินรายการในห้องสัมมนาย่อย และคณะกรรมการฝ่ายต่าง ๆ
- 3) จัดทำใบประกาศนียบัตรผู้นำเสนอผลงาน
- 4) จัดทำเอกสารเพื่อเผยแพร่การจัดประชุมให้บุคคลทั่วไปทราบก่อนการจัดประชุม
- 5) ถ่ายภาพนิ่งในวันประชุม
- 6) เผยแพร่ภาพข่าวลงในช่องทางต่าง ๆ เช่น เฟสบุ๊ก และเว็บไซต์ของคณะ

7

11. คณะกรรมการฝ่ายอาหาร

1. นางปราณี	นิลชาว	ประธานกรรมการ
2. นางสาววิรัช	พุ่มแจ้ญ	กรรมการ
3. นางสาวสุจินดา	สุกใส	กรรมการ
4. นางสาวรัตนา	แสงจันทร์	กรรมการและเลขานุการ

หน้าที่และความรับผิดชอบ

มีหน้าที่ ดูแลอาหารว่าง และอาหารกลางวันแก่ผู้เข้าร่วมประชุม วิทยากร และคณะกรรมการ

สั่ง ณ วันที่ 12 มีนาคม พ.ศ. 2564



(รองศาสตราจารย์ ดร.ไพฑูริย์ พิมพ์)  
 วิชาการแทนคณบดีคณะศิลปศาสตร์



**FACULTY OF LIBERAL ARTS**  
King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang

