A Study of Problems in English Communication of Information Technology Students

Bundit Anuyahong [1] *(anuyahong.bundit@gmail.com)*

Abstract

The purposes of this research were 1) to study problems in English communication of Information Technology students and 2) to compile opinions and suggestions concerning problems in English communication of Information Technology students.

Research samples were 291 Information Technology students at Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology in 2016 academic year, derived through simple random sampling technique. The instruments used for gathering the data were the rating-scale and open-ended questionnaire. The statistics used for analyzing the data were frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, and content analysis.

Research findings were as follows:

1. Information Technology students had a moderate level of problems in English communication, when considered in each aspect. It was found that *listening, speaking* were at low level. For reading and writing, it was at moderate level.

2. TNI students had various suggestions such as; reading skill should be taught in extra class; teachers should teach writing in various styles; Learning through Facebook should be utilized.

Keywords: *Problems in English Communication*

Introduction

English language is central for communication in a variety of contexts such as political, economic, social, educational, cultural, and for tourism (Canale, 1983). Currently, English in Thailand has been accepted as an international language. Thai students learn English through childhood in school until university. The English language is significant for roles in the daily life. Also, knowing English gives a chance to obtain a good job, and is vital to understand other cultures. English is the primary language and it has become almost a necessity for people, if they want to work in global workplaces (Rubin, 2005).

The problems from the lack of language skills may cause misunderstandings in communication between Thai people and foreigners because they use different languages. Furthermore, it may even lead to the failure in their communication. The ability to communication well can enhance success in their work (Swan, 2008).

In this study the researcher surveyed with Information Technology students at Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology. The results of this research will be used for improving instruction and developing teaching materials in English classes to be highly efficient.

Research purposes

1) To study problems in English communication of Information Technology students and

2) To compile opinions and suggestions concerning problems in English communication of Information Technology students.

[1] *Assistant Professor Dr., College of General Education and Languages, Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology , Thailand*

Methodology

Population and Samples

This research was to study problems in English communication of Information Technology students in four aspects: listening, speaking, reading, and writing which consisted of population and samples as follows:

Population of this research was 1,200 TNI students Information Technology in 2016 academic year. Samples of the research were 291 TNI students derived through simple random sampling technique. The instruments used for gathering the data were the rating-scale and open-ended questionnaire. The statistics used for analyzing the data were frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation and content analysis.

Instrumentation

The instrument used in this study is a questionnaire. The questionnaire was constructed by the researcher based on problems in English communication of Information Technology students.

The first part (Part 1) of this questionnaire asks for the demographic information on their genders and academic year. The participants were asked to report their information by ticking in only one box.

The second part (Part 2) concerns problems in English communication of Information Technology students. This part comprises 24 items of problems in English communication of Information Technology students in 4 major areas: 3 items of listening, 6 items of speaking, 8 items of reading, and 7 items of writing. The participants were asked to check by ticking in only one box under the five levels of importance on each item in Part 2 to indicate their problems in English communication in each area listed in the questionnaire. Reliability is defined as the proportion of the alpha is a lower bound of the true reliability of the research instrument or the questionnaire. The descriptive statistics is also used to determine the individual summary statistics for each of the 24 items in the questionnaire.

The third part (Part 3) asks for more opinions and suggestions of Information Technology students about problems in English communication which based on open-ended questions.

Data collection

Problems in English communication of Information Technology students were accessed through the questionnaire in 2016 academic year.

The administration of the research questionnaire was conducted in English classes. Part 1 concerns the demographic variables about their genders and academic years. The 24 items of Part 2 cover problems in English communication of Information Technology students. Therefore, the participants were requested to consider each item carefully and indicate how important each item was for their study. A total of 291 Information Technology students completed the questionnaire.

The analyses of the research data were conducted by means of descriptive statistics. Responses were employed to report their demographic variables and to indicate the rank order of the items in each area of problems in English communication listed in the questionnaire. The frequency distributions were analyzed to determine the proportions of the levels of importance on the 24 items in 4 major areas.

Data Analysis from Questionnaire

Data analysis from questionnaire both single item and whole questionnaire which presented a form of rating scale. These rating scales were calculated to find out mean and standard deviation and then translated based on criteria developed by Best (1977) as follows:

1.00 <= $\bar{x}$< 1.50 refers to Information Technology students have problems in English communication at the lowest level.

1.51 <= $\bar{x}$ < 2.50 refers to Information Technology students have problems in English communication at low level.

2.51 <= $\bar{x}$< 3.50 refers to Information Technology students have problems in English communication at moderate level.

3.51 <= $\bar{x}$< 4.50 refers to Information Technology students have problems in English communication at high level.

4.51 <= $\bar{x}$< 5.00 refers to Information Technology students have problems in English communication at the highest level.

The statistics used for analyzing the data

The collected data was analyzed using a computer program. The statistics used for analyzing the data were frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, and content analysis.

Results

Results of Data Analysis

Phase 1: The results of demographic variable of Information Technology students in the 2016 academic year is presented in the first section deals with genders and academic years as following table.

Table 1: Table of the results of demographic data of respondents

Demographic data of respondents	**n=291**	**Percentage**
1. Gender		
1.1 Male	175	60.13
1.2 Female	116	39.87
Total	**291**	**100**
2. Academic Year		
2.1 First Year	93	31.95
2.2 Second Year	78	26.80
2.3 Third Year	66	22.68
2.4 Forth Year	54	18.57
Total	**291**	**100**

Table showed that percentages of respondents in genders ranged from 60.13% for male and 39.87% for female; in academic years ranged from 31.95% for 1st year, 26.80% for 2nd year, 22.68% for 3rd year, and 18.57% for 4th year.

Phase 2: Problems in English communication of Information Technology students

Table 2: Table of mean and standard deviation of problems in English communication of Information Technology students in total and in each aspect

Components	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Level
Listening Skills	1.68	0.85	Low
Speaking Skills	1.89	0.67	Low
Reading Skills	3.49	0.96	Moderate
Writing Skills	3.21	0.86	Moderate
Total	**2.56**	**0.83**	**Moderate**

The table above indicated that Information Technology students had a moderate level of problems in English communication in overall ($\bar{x}$=2.56), when considered in each aspect, it was found that the students had low levels of problems in English communication in listening ($\bar{x}$=1.68) and speaking ($\bar{x}$=1.89). Furthermore, it was at moderate level in reading ($\bar{x}$=3.49) and writing ($\bar{x}$=3.21) respectively.

Table 3: Table of mean and standard deviation of problems in English communication of Information Technology students in the area of listening skills in overall and in each item

Listening skills	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Level
1) Inability to understand English presentations or discussions.	1.88	0.79	Low
2) Inability to understand long conversations.	1.65	0.91	Low
3) Inability to understand any information from speakers.	1.51	0.85	Low
Total	**1.68**	**0.85**	**Low**

The table above indicated that Information Technology students had a low level of problems in English communication in listening skills in overall ($\bar{x}$=1.68), when considered in each item, it was found that all items were at low level.

Table 4: Table of mean and standard deviation of problems in English communication of Information Technology students in the area of speaking skills in overall and in each item

Speaking skills	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Level
1) Inability to make an oral presentation.	1.89	0.66	Low
2) Inability to construct oral sentences in a limited time.	1.76	0.78	Low
3) Anxiety related to miscommunication.	1.97	0.62	Low
4) Limited English vocabulary.	1.79	0.63	Low
5) Inability to communicate properly.	1.88	0.74	Low
6) Inability to pronounce English clearly and correctly.	2.05	0.59	Low
Total	**1.89**	**0.67**	**Low**

The table above indicated that Information Technology students had a low level of problems in English communication in speaking skills in overall ($\bar{x}$=1.89), when considered in each item, it was found that all items were at low level.

Table 5: Table of mean and standard deviation of problems in English communication of Information Technology students in the area of reading skills in overall and in each item

Reading skills	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Level
1) Inability to find the main ideas.	3.38	1.16	moderate
2) Inability to use scanning technique.	3.44	0.87	moderate
3) Inability to use detailed reading technique.	3.58	0.82	high
4) Inability to use skimming technique.	3.51	1.17	high
5) Inability to guess meaning from the context.	3.47	0.89	moderate
6) Inability to identify the tone of passages or articles.	3.33	0.87	moderate
7) Inability to understand technical terms in passages or articles.	3.66	0.85	high
8) Inability to understand whole passages or articles.	3.55	1.05	high
Total	**3.49**	**0.96**	**moderate**

The table above indicated that Information Technology students had a moderate level of problems in English communication in reading skills in overall ($\bar{x}$=3.49), when considered in each item, it was found that the highest item were item7 *Inability to understand technical terms in passages or articles* ($\bar{x}$=3.66), and item3 *Inability to use detailed reading technique* ($\bar{x}$=3.58). The lowest item were item6 *Inability to identify the tone of passages or articles* ($\bar{x}$=3.33), and item1 *Inability to find the main ideas* ($\bar{x}$=3.38) respectively.

Table 6: Table of mean and standard deviation of problems in English communication of Information Technology students in the area of writing skills in overall and in each item

Writing skills	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Level
1) Inability to use punctuation correctly.	3.15	0.88	moderate
2) Inability to spell words correctly.	3.24	0.86	moderate
3) Inability to write more complicated structures.	3.01	0.96	moderate
4) Inability to use vocabulary in different contexts.	3.27	0.74	moderate
5) Inability to write a paragraph or more.	3.29	0.81	moderate
6) Inability to express opinions effectively when writing.	3.18	0.92	moderate
7) Inability to convey messages to readers.	3.33	0.85	moderate
Total	**3.21**	**0.86**	**moderate**

The table above indicated that Information Technology students had a moderate level of problems in English communication in writing skills in overall ($\bar{x}$=3.21), when considered in each item, it was found that all items were at moderate level.

Phase 4: The results of suggestions of Information Technology students about problems in English communication as following:

1) Reading skill should be taught in extra class.
2) Teachers should teach writing in various styles.
3) Learning through Facebook or social network should be utilized.

Conclusions

According to the study and data analysis, the results of this study were concluded as follows:

1. Information Technology students had a moderate level of problems in English communication, when considered in each aspect. It was found that *listening, speaking* were at low level. For reading and writing, it was at moderate level.

2. TNI students had various suggestions such as; reading skill should be taught in extra class; teachers should teach writing in various styles; Learning through Facebook should be utilized.

Discussion

According to the study and data analysis the results of this study could be discussed as follows.

The results of problems in English communication of Information Technology students in overall were at moderate level ($\bar{x}$=2.56). It might be because Information Technology students used communication strategies continuously in their learning. Moreover, they were taught these strategies in the classroom. This is related with the idea of Rubin (1990) who advocated that communication strategies should be taught continuously. The communication strategies use to promote more effective language learning. In addition, if students do not select strategies in the service of tasks, skills, and goals, they might not easily find the most appropriate strategies and be successful language learners (Gu 2003; Oxford et al. 2004). Therefore, more effectiveness could be obtained if both process and product were integrated in the teaching methods. As a result, strategic competence and language-skills development can be supported by a particular learning system in which students can cultivate their ability to choose appropriate strategies and be more successful (Rubin et al. 2007).

Acknowledgements

This research is supported by College of General Education and Languages, Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology, Bangkok, Thailand

References

Best, John W. (1977). *Research in Education*. 3rd ed. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey : Prentice Hall, Inc.

Canale, M. (1983). From Communicative Competence to Communicative Language Pedagogy. In *English for Cross-Cultural Communication*, edited by Jack C. Richards and Richard Schmidt. New York: Longman.

Gu, Yonggi P. (2003). Vocabulary Learning in a Second Language: Person, Task, Context and Strategies. *TESOL Quarterly* 37.1: 73–104.

Oxford, Rebecca, Yunkyoung Cho, Santoi Leung, and Hae-Jin Kim. (2004). Effect of the Presence and Difficulty of Task on Strategy Use: An Exploratory Study. *International Review of Applied Linguistics and Language Teaching* 42.1: 1–42.

Rubin, J. (1990). How learner strategies can inform language teaching. In *Language Use, Language Teaching and the Curriculum*, edited by V. Bickley. Hong Kong: Institute of Language in Education.

Rubin, J. (2005). The Expert Language Learner: A Review of Good Language Learner Studies and Learner Strategies. In *Expertise in Second Language Learning and Teaching*, edited by Keith Johnson. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Rubin, Joan, Anna Uhl Chamot, Vee Harris, and Neil Anderson. (2007). Intervening in the Use of Strategies. In *Language Learning Strategies*, edited by Andrew D. Cohen and Ernesto Macaro, pp. 141–160. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Swan, M. (2008). Talking Sense about Learning Strategies. *RELC Journal* 39: 262.

Bio Data

Assistant Professor Dr. Bundit Anuyahong is English lecturer at College of General Education and Languages, Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology. He got Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction-Teaching English at Silpakorn University. He also obtained double degrees for his master. One is Master of Education in TEFL from Silpakorn University and Master of Education in Educational Administration from Naresuan University.