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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Papers/Authors</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>English for communication role-playing and students’ attitudes in speaking</strong>&lt;br&gt;skill development</td>
<td>4 – 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thongsuk Leelard and Pattaraporn Thampradit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="https://doi.org/10.29139/aijss.20150301">https://doi.org/10.29139/aijss.20150301</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>English oral communication needs of Thai undergraduate marketing students</strong></td>
<td>15 – 30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
English for communication role-playing and students’ attitudes in speaking skill development

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**Abstract:** The objectives of this study were (1) to study the effect of using role-playing teaching method on developing Speaking Skill in English for communication, and (2) to examine the students’ attitude on role-playing teaching method on developing Speaking Skill in English for communication. The samples were thirty-four first year diploma level students at Khon Kaen College of Agriculture and Technology. The students were taught by role-playing teaching method through three lesson plans. The instruments were pre-test and post-test, three lesson plans, speaking assessment, and attitude questionnaire. The data analyses of the study were mean, standard deviation and the independent t-test, using a statistical analysis package. The result indicated that there were statistically significant differences in students’ English speaking skill (t-test = 14.88, P = 0.00* P< 0.05). The study also found that there was moderately positive attitude with role-playing teaching method. However, they were strongly agreed to use the activities (X = 4.56 and S.D = 0.50). Therefore, it can be concluded that role-
playing teaching method is an effective teaching method for developing students’ Speaking Skill in English for communication.

**Keywords:** Role-playing teaching method, pre-test and post-test, developing Speaking Skill in English for communication, attitude questionnaire
Introduction

English is an international language, speaking or communication in many countries both as a native, a second or a foreign language. It is taught in the schools in almost every country on this earth. It is a living and vibrant language spoken by over 300 million people as their native language. Millions more speak it as an additional language.

The Association of South East Asian Nations: ASEAN also has an agreement in the ASEAN Summit in November 2007 that the working and official language of ASEAN should be English. So, people in ten countries including Thailand must use English to convey their communication.

Even if Thailand in the responsibility of Thailand Ministry of Education has policies to promote and encourage students to study English in schools since 1890, the result is still ineffective. The students lack confidence to speak English and lack opportunity to use English in their daily lives. Many Thai students could not use English skills effectively, especially listening and speaking. Moreover, Punthumasen found that most of students do not want to learn English because they find the subject matter is boring and also teaching methodology in the classroom is not interesting.

Vocational Education students are forced to improve English skills to be ready to ASEAN Community and their prospective careers; it is a serious problem because of a lack of interest and poor basic principles of English in Thai vocational students. Additionally, it has been found that Thai Agricultural students’ achievements are very poor in all four skills. They do not realize how important the English language is and have not carried on good attitude in English. For less motivation and negative attitude toward studying English are the barriers of developing their English ability. The role-playing teaching method is the one of instructional
teaching method type to develop student ability. Students can apply knowledge in class to their real social life. According to Johnson, Sutton and Harris role-playing is one of the most important techniques for learning communication skills, students are motivated and engaged to their learning outcomes. As the result, the researcher interested in role-playing teaching method to develop students’ capability in communication and also change students’ attitude in studying English.

**Study Objectives**

1. To study the effect of role-playing teaching method on developing speaking skill in English for communication.
2. To examine the students’ attitude on role-playing teaching method on developing speaking skill in English for communication.

**Research Questions**

1. Can role-playing teaching method improve speaking skill in English for communication?
2. How does role-playing teaching method effect to students’ attitude?

**Methods**

**Population and Samples**

The samples were all first-year diploma students at Khon Kaen College of Agriculture and Technology who enrolled in Developing Speaking Skill in English for Communication II in the second semester of the academic year 2013. All samples were from two programs: Animal Science and Plant Science Department.

**Instrument**
The instruments of this study were [1] three topics of role-playing teaching method lesson plans, [2] thirty-six questions of the pre and post-test with four multiple choices alternative, and they were paralleled, [3] speaking assessment, and [4] attitude questionnaires with five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5. The data analyses of the study were mean, standard deviation and the independent t-test, using a statistical analysis package.

**Data Analysis and Statistical Procedures**

**Analysis of research tools** - In finding validity and reliability of the research tools, pilot pre and post-test and questionnaire were tried out with forty diploma students in Animal and Plant Science Department in the second semester of the academic year of 2012 who did not being to the samples.

**Analysis of research questions** - Descriptive statistics was used to analyze all data to answer the research questions. Statistical procedures, arithmetic mean, t-test and standard deviation of pre and post-test and speaking assessment were used to answer research question one. The data were analyzed through a computer program. The mean and standard deviation of attitude questionnaire were analyzed to answer research question two.

**Results and Discussion**

Table 1 shows the summary of demographic data of the students: gender, age, field of study and period of time for reviewing or using English outside the class per week. There were 34 first year diploma students in Animal Science and Plant Science enrolled in *Developing Skills in English for Communication II* during the second semester of academic year 2013 at Khon Kaen College of Agriculture and Technology. There were 24 male students (70.59%) and 10 female students (29.41%). There were 12 students were 17-18 years old (35.29%), 20 students were 19-20 years old (58.82%) and 2 students were 20 years old (5.88%).

8
Table 1 Demographic Data of the Students

Analysis of research question one: This study showed that the majority of the samples were Animal Science students (N = 16, 47.06%) and Plant Science students (N = 18, 52.82%). The 50% of samples spent less than 1 hour a week for reviewing and rest of them spend more than one hour a week outside the class to practice English (N = 17, 50.00%).

Research Question: Can role-playing teaching method improves speaking skill in English for Communication?

To answer research question one and to investigate the effect of role-playing teaching method in improving speaking skill in English for Communication, the score of pre and post-test and speaking assessment were calculated the mean and standard deviation for the population to prove that role-playing teaching method improves speaking skill in English for Communication as shown in Tables 2-3 below.

From table 2, it showed that there were the statistically significant differences in mean, and

1. of pre and post-test (t-test = 14.88, P = 0.00* P<0.05). The mean, the standard deviation of pre-test were lower than the mean and the standard deviation of post-test. This shows that the speaking skill could improve after learning through role-playing teaching method.

Moreover, when considering the students’ speaking assessment the result was also paralleled to the result of the mean of post test. That is, in each unit students could improve their speaking skill English for communication in all units (unit 1, mean = 17.97, unit 2, mean = 8.09, unit 3, mean = 20.06).
Table 2 Mean and Standard Deviation of Pre-test and Post-test

** Significance at level 0.05

According to table 3, the mean score of speaking assessment was 18.71. However the mean scores of unit one to unit three were 17.97, 18.09 and 20.06 respectively which were increased. Hence, it could see that role-playing teaching method could improve speaking skill in English for Communication.

Table 3 Mean and Standard Deviation of Speaking Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speaking assessment</th>
<th>Minimum score</th>
<th>Maximum score</th>
<th>Mean (X)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unit 1 (24 point)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>17.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 2 (24 point)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>18.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 3 (24 point)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>20.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>18.71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Analysis of Research Questions two: How does role-playing teaching method effect to students’ attitudes?

To answer this research question and investigate whether the role-playing method influenced the students’ attitude for developing speaking skill, the mean, the standard deviation of each item were calculated as shown in table 4.

Table 4, presents how the role-playing teaching method affect students’ attitude. Most students agreed with role-playing activities and they perceived moderately positive attitude (X = 4.56 and S.D = 0.50). Hence, it indicated that role-playing teaching method could effect and be useful for developing speaking skill.
Table 4 Mean and Standard Deviation of each item of students’ attitude questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean (X)</th>
<th>Standard Deviation (S.D)</th>
<th>Attitude Level</th>
<th>Statement interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Moderately Positive attitude</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion

According to the results of the study it could be identified that role-playing teaching method could improve students’ speaking skill as well as students’ attitude. Role-play activities could also be successfully used with the students. That is the students seemed to be able to use language skills in real world situations. Moreover, the students seemed to be able to use exact vocabulary, accuracy in pronunciation: stress and intonation.

Conclusion

The results revealed that role-playing teaching method could affect on developing speaking skill in English for communication and be useful for developing speaking skill. As it showed that there was the significant difference in mean score of pre-and post-test. The mean, the standard deviation of pre- test was lower than mean and the standard deviation of post-test. Moreover, the speaking assessment shows that role-playing teaching method could improve speaking skill in English for Communication too.
Acknowledgements

This research was supported by the Faculty of Industrial Education, King Mongkut’s Institute of Technology Ladkrabang (KMITL) and the Office of Vocational Commission. The researcher wishes to acknowledge the instruction and hard work of the advisor, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Pattaraporn Thampradit, Department of Applied Arts, King Mongkut’s Institute of Technology Ladkrabang (KMITL). My research would not be possible without her support and guidance.
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English oral communication needs of Thai undergraduate marketing students

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Abstract: This paper aimed to investigate the English oral communication needs of the undergraduate marketing students at Burapha University (BUU), Chantaburi Campus and stakeholders in a marketing context. The needs analysis questionnaires and structured interviews were conducted with 30 marketing students and 100 marketers. The findings from these two research instruments revealed similar results that talking about products and services was first highly rated as the beneficial oral communication topics in a marketing context with the mean score at 4.64 (100% of the subjects in the structured interview). Interpersonal skills were rated as the highest useful skills for doing project activities with the mean score at 4.59 (97.5% of the subjects in the structured interview). Meanwhile, simulation was rated as the highest useful teaching and learning activity for enhancing oral communication abilities with the mean score at 4.65 (97.5% of the subjects in the structured interview).

Keywords: Need Analysis, Oral Communication for Marketing
**Introduction**

Numerous language practitioners and stakeholders in Thailand have paid more attention to develop curricula emphasizing business English courses in the universities to serve the demand of foreign-related economic talent and information age in recent years. However, the level of business English skills, especially oral communication skills of Thai graduates is unsatisfactory and rather low comparing with other Asian countries, such as Malaysia, Philippines, and Singapore (Wiriyachitra, 2001; Foley, 2005). This oral communicative deficiency is obviously related to a number of Thai graduates who have difficulties in employment, especially in the areas of business, information technology, tourism, and in higher academic contexts. Additionally, Combs and Bourne (1989) mentioned the importance of oral communication consistently with Wiriyachitra (2001) and Foley (2005) that students need to be able to perform effective and productive oral communication skills to compete in the dynamic marketplace as speaking skill is regarded as one of two prerequisite skills for business success.

Business English course is an interdisciplinary teaching and learning including the integration of business knowledge and English language knowledge and skills. Learners formulate and combine knowledge and skills in both two areas to perform diverse business activities. Similarly, business English teachers need to master knowledge and skills in both two areas to design and regulate the course effectively. One reliable process recommended for teachers and language practitioners in order to formulate a systematic and effective course is to conduct a needs analysis.

Needs analysis is a systematic process of investigating and carrying out the information for designing, developing, and evaluating course goals and objectives, teaching and learning activities, and materials prior to the course started (Songhori, 2007).
This research study aimed to conduct the formative needs analysis to investigate oral communication needs of learners and stakeholders in the field of a marketing context. Literature review, research methodology, and findings of the study were described in the following sections.

**Literature Review**

**Needs Analysis**

In an educational setting, conducting needs analysis is considered as the vital step not only for learners but also for teachers, course designers, and educators. Needs analysis can be defined as systematic instruments or the well-designed process that helps a teacher to investigate the information of learners as well as to help learners to identify or realize their personal information in an educational setting (Witkin and Altschuld, 1995; Bachman and Palmer, 1996; Reviere, 1996; Nunan, 1999). The findings of needs analysis should be analyzed and listed as goals and objectives of the developed course.

Conducting a needs analysis is regarded as one of the vital responsibilities of the teacher for designing a productive language course. In addition, needs analysis is not only significant in an educational domain but it is also important for business organizations.

Nunan (1999) proposes that to conduct needs analysis in an educational domain, the first priority should be placed on students’ needs as they are the center of learning. However, only students is not enough for designing or developing effective and appropriate courses, another perspective of needs should be concerned as well. Besides, students, teachers and course developers should also consider the needs of other people in the related domains, such as the ministry of education official, policy makers, teachers, academics, parents, communities, and employers. This is because it is the responsibility of the educational institution to produce
graduates or employees who would be able to serve the needs of the community and employers in a real workplace (Nunan, 1999).

**Business English**

Business English refers to the study of a combination between business knowledge and English language knowledge and skills used in different fields of business (Choo, 2005), such as tourism, finance, logistics, and medical profession to achieve the common goal. Business English focuses on studying business English communication skills related to a real-business setting. Therefore, the content in the course should be systematically designed and developed to meet the actual needs in diverse business activities. Activities in the course should be various, interactive, practical, and authentic to the workplace in order to enable learners to perform flexible business knowledge and English skills.

Business teaching should focus on not only verbal and non-verbal communication skills but also proper etiquette and social skills to maintain a positive relationship with other interlocutors which lead to the business achievement. As a result, classroom activities which empower learners to perform both communication skills and social skills should be used in business English classrooms.

**Oral Communication**

At the basic level, oral communication refers to the spoken interaction between two or more communicators. It is a unique and learned rhetorical skill that requires abilities to understand and decide what to say and how to say it (Rahman, 2010). Additionally, it refers to the ability of the speaker to use language to communicate in face-to-face interaction to express ideas or intended messages in both basic communicative and academic purposes. Rahman (2010), moreover, suggests that successful oral communication requires other elements beyond the formal ability to speak well in a wide range of expressions. Apart from the spoken language
used, proficient speakers should bear in mind and learn coincident skills in communication, such as gestures, facial expressions, eye contact, etiquette, active and reflexive listening, style, as well a understanding and adapting to the audience.

In a marketing context, oral communication is used as a means to convey information regarding products, prices, services, and organization with the attempts to transfer information, persuade clients, and to build rapport and trust.

As previously mentioned, oral communication abilities in this study could be defined as the abilities of the speakers to use appropriate English linguistic knowledge and skills to transfer ideas, information, or the intended messages interactively with other interlocutors in the marketing context.

**Methodology**

**Research Design**

This present study was conducted in three main phases: developing needs analysis instruments, conducting needs analysis, and reporting the findings. Research instruments included both quantitative and qualitative instruments. Quantitative and qualitative data were triangulated in order to enhance the reliability of the findings.

**Population and Sample**

The populations of this study were forth-year marketing students from Science and Arts Faculty, Burapha University (BUU), Chanthaburi Campus and the employees in a marketing context in a nearby context considering Rayong, Chonburi, and Chanthaburi. Samples of the questionnaire included 30 fourth-year marketing students at BUU, Chanthaburi Campus.
Another group of samples was 100 people who work in a marketing context of consumer goods and tourism industry in Rayong, Chonburi, and Chanthaburi provinces. From these 100 marketers, 40 marketers with minimum five years of experience were selected by using a convenience sampling method to participate in the structured interview.

Research Instruments

Two needs analysis instruments used in this study were:

Questionnaire

The questionnaire was developed to elicit the data regarding the oral communication needs of marketing students at BUU, Chanthaburi Campus as well as people who work in the field of marketing in the East of Thailand regarding content, learning styles and strategies, and other suggestions.

Items and constructs of the questionnaire were developed based on previous studies (Bachman and Palmer, 1996; Nunan, 1999; Richards, 2001; Siritararatn, 2007) and from commercial textbooks regarding business English for marketing. The questionnaire was divided into five parts: background information; oral communication topics that are useful in the field of marketing; useful skills for doing project activities; learning activities for enhancing oral communication abilities; and suggestions. The responses from part one to part three were presented in a five-point Likert scale with the following descriptors: 5= Highly useful, 4= Moderately-very useful, 3= Moderately useful, 2= Slightly-moderately useful, and 1= Slightly useful, while open-ended items were used in part five. Three experts were invited to validate the questionnaire with the aims to validate contents and constructs of the questionnaire and to confirm the contents with the stated objectives.
Structured interview

The interviews were designed to collect more in-depth information and opinions from marketers towards topics for oral communication abilities, social skills, teaching and learning activities for enhancing English oral communication abilities and skills for processing the project work. The interviews were administered in Thai and the interviewees were allowed to answer in Thai with the aim to make this interview comfortable and since the objectives of this instrument did not focus on measuring their English proficiency. Afterward, three experts in the fields of business and language learning and teaching were invited to validate the this instrument in order to enhance the reliability of the interview.

Data collection

In October 2011, questionnaires and structured interviews were administered by the teacher researcher. 130 questionnaires were distributed to 30 forth-year marketing students at BUU, Chanthaburi Campus and 100 people in the field of marketing at Chonburi, Rayong, and Chanthaburi provinces, 117 questionnaires were returned. 40 marketers who acquire minimum five years of experience in these three provinces were interviewed by using a convenient sampling method.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data from the questionnaires were analyzed and interpreted by the SPSS computer program by mean of descriptive statistics, such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. Qualitative data from part five of questionnaires and structured interviews were analyzed and calculated using content analysis.
Results

Questionnaire

The results from the questionnaires were reported in five parts. In part 1, the questions focused on demographic characteristics of the respondents regarding gender, groups of respondents, educational background, number of years study English, and number of years working in a marketing context. The findings were presented in the following table (see table 1).

Findings from the questionnaires revealed that 25.64% of the subjects were undergraduate students, while the remaining 74.36% were people who work in the field of marketing of consumer and tourism business. 61.54% of the subjects were female. Regarding educational background, most subjects held bachelor’s degrees (63.25%), high school certificate (25.64%), master’s degree (8.55%), and cannot be identified (2.56%), respectively. In terms of number of years studying English, 50.43% of the subjects revealed that they have learned English for 5-10 years, while the remaining 48.71% reported that they have learned English more than 10 years. 14.94% of people who work in the field of marketing (n=87) had less than 5 years of experience. Another 67.81% have had 5-10 years of experience in the marketing context. The remaining 17.24% have had more than 10 years of experience.

In part 2, the items in the questionnaire included 15 topics of oral communication in the marketing context, such as describing a company profile, talking about products/services, talking about prices, and brands and strategies, etc. The findings of the second part of the questionnaire were reported as follows (see table 2):

The findings revealed that when asked about oral communication topics in a marketing context, the first highly rated by the subjects was talking about products and services with the
mean score at 4.64 or at a “highly useful” level. The second came was talking about prices with the mean score at 4.53 or at a “highly useful” level. The third to fifth highest rankings were rated at a “moderately-very useful” level included brand and strategies, oral presentation, and telephone conversations with the mean score at 4.20, 4.09, and 4.05, respectively.

In part 3 of the questionnaire, the subjects were asked to rate seven useful skills for doing project activities, for example, using the Internet, using computer programs, and delivering oral presentation. The data of this part were presented in the table below (see Table 3).

Regarding useful skills for formulating project activities, the findings pointed out that the subjects rated interpersonal skills the highest at a “highly useful” level, with the mean score at 4.59. The second highest was self-management skills, with the mean score at 4.51 or at a “highly useful” level. Delivering oral presentations and organization skills were rated the third and fourth, with the preference level of “moderately-very useful” at 4.40 and 4.28, respectively. The fifth came was using computer online, with the mean score at 4.07 or at a “moderate-very useful” level.

Part 4 of the questionnaire shed light on teaching and learning activities for enhancing students’ oral communication abilities, such as oral presentation, role-play, simulation, and oral presentation. The findings gathered from the subjects were presented as follows (see Table 4):

The findings revealed that the subjects rated simulation as the highest useful teaching and learning activity for enhancing oral communication abilities with the mean score at 4.65, or at a “highly useful’ level. Small-group discussion was rated the second with the mean score at 4.57, or at a “highly useful” level. In addition, role-play and information gap were ranked the
third and fourth with the mean score at 4.53 and 4.19, or at “highly useful” and “moderately-very useful” levels, respectively. The fifth highest ranking was an oral presentation with the mean score at 4.08, or a “moderately-very useful” level.

Part 5 of the questionnaire included four open-ended questions regarding the subjects’ additional suggestions on course content, activities besides teacher’s lectures, materials besides a textbook, and other suggestions. Suggestions obtained from the questionnaire were content should emphasize authentic business marketing situations (63.24%), be simplified to match the level of learners (32.48%), intensify both business and daily-life communication (27.35%), be concise (21.37%), and focus on a pronunciation (16.24%). Regarding teaching and learning activities, most subjects rated simulation (90.60%), role-play (86.32%), group work and pair work activities (77.78%), oral presentation (75.21%), and field trip (52.98%), respectively. In terms of materials, concrete and authentic materials (93.16%), computer and the Internet (72.65%), PowerPoint (58.12%), and visualizer (52.14%) were suggested respectively by the subjects.

**Structured interview**

Five open-ended questions included the frequency of using English oral communication in daily routine, five frequently used oral communication topics, social skills in which enhance the effectiveness of oral communication in the marketing context, the number of projects worked in a year, and additional teaching and learning activities for enhancing English oral communication abilities in a marketing context and skills for processing project activities for marketing undergraduate students. The findings from the structured interview indicated that regarding the frequent use of English oral communication in the marketing context, Forty percent of the subjects revealed that they sometimes use English in the marketing communication, while the remaining 32.5%, 20%, and 7.5% claimed that they frequently,
seldom, and rarely use English when communicating in their job, respectively. When asked about five topics of oral communication frequently used in the marketing context, the subjects’ rankings were products (100%), prices (95%), telephone conversations (92.5%), oral presentation (80%), and the promotion and selling (67.5%). Regarding social skills for enhancing the effectiveness of oral communication abilities in a marketing context, interpersonal skills were selected the most (97.5%). Two social skills, self-management/anger management skills and cooperative working skills were both selected at 90%. Meanwhile, problem solving skills were answered at 77.5%. When asked about the frequency of formulating group projects in a year, the subjects’ answers were two projects (42.5%), one project (22.5%), less than one and more than two projects were answered equally at 17.5%. Regarding teaching and learning activities for enhancing English oral communication abilities in the marketing context, the findings were simulation (97.5%), role-play (92.5%), oral presentation (77.5%), guest speaker visiting (47.5%), and field trip (35%), respectively. In terms of skills for processing project activities for the undergraduate marketing students, most subjects mentioned team-work skills (100%), critical thinking (95%), problem solving (82.5%), summarizing main ideas (72.5%), and making a plan (42.5%).

**Conclusion**

Findings obtained from the questionnaires shared some similarities to the findings collected from the structured interview. To illustrate, findings from two instruments pointed out that the content to be included in the course should focus on business English oral communication related to the accountability of the marketers, e.g., talking about products/services, talking about prices, brand and strategies, oral presentation, telephone conversations, promotion and selling. However, topics of oral communication which had the mean score less than 3.00 will not be included in the course due to the limitation of a teaching time (1 semester). For teaching and learning activities, data from two instruments revealed similar findings that
interactive and cooperative activities, such as simulation, role-play, small-group discussion, information gap, and oral presentation were needed; therefore, these activities will be included in the course. Additionally, whole-class discussions will be included in classroom activities to negotiate meanings and understanding and to summarize the knowledge and skills of the course. Regarding skills for processing project activities, the findings from two needs analysis instruments led to the conclusion that interpersonal skills (e.g., giving assistsances to peers, following the assigned group activities, team-work skills), self-management/anger management skills (e.g., dealing with being left out of a group appropriately, express anger or frustration without harming yourselves and others), and organization skill (e.g., making plans, searching for relevant information, analyzing information, problem-solving skills, critical thinking skills) were recommended to be included in the developed course.

Recommendations

As English is used dominantly in business communication worldwide and oral communication is valued as one of the influential skills which affect business achievement, investigating the needs of oral communication in various business contexts is recommended. This study highlighted the needs of English oral communication abilities of marketing students as well as marketers with the aim to develop an effective English oral communication course for marketing students. Findings in this present study could be used as the informative example for developing English oral communication abilities of students from various filed of studies or students from different contexts. Furthermore, the findings could be inferred that there was the interrelation between social skills and oral communication abilities in the marketing context. Another additional recommendation was processing project activities was relevant to one of the communicative activities exist in the real marketing context; therefore, the Project-based learning pedagogy could be used as the
teaching approach to design and develop English courses to enhance students’ oral communication abilities.
References


Logistics from academic discipline to industry best practices

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Abstract: Logistic as business has been in existence for centuries, however academic departments of logistics at universities only have been around for a few decades. Most people including incoming students have a misconception of logistics. They think logistics is equivalent with transportation and/or import export. But by 1988 definition of the Logistics Council “Process of planning, implementing and controlling the efficient, cost-effective flow of raw materials, in-process inventory, finished goods and related information from the point of origin to the point of consumption for the purpose of conforming to customer requirements” which means logistics manages the entire supply chain by means of planning, packaging, warehousing and all modes of transportation. This quantitative study analyses how the perception of logistic majors chances over time from first year freshman to graduation. The study also looked at various instructional methods to provide the students with a real-world experience. The objective of the study was to find out what is the best way to provide the students with a real-life learning experience. The study used the university e-learning system to collect the information via on-line surveys of logistics students ranging from freshmen to seniors. The collected scaled data was statistically analyzed and the findings clearly show that the students obtained a clearer picture of the field of logistics during their studies which used multi-media to engage learners and prepare them to think critically. The big “aha” moment came during hands-on co-op and internships experiences. While the knowledge of the field of logistics increased over time, the affection for the logistics major may have decreased
over the same time period. Many students like to study logistics but do not like to work directly in the field of logistics.

**Keywords:** Logistics Education, Supply Chain Management (SCM), Import Export, International Business Education, Cooperative Education
Introduction

The logistics business is nothing new. One can say logistics is as old as mankind and certainly got revolutionized with the invention of the wheel. Or better the logistics revolution was in transportation. But transportation is only one part of logistics, which focuses on getting materials and people from point A to point B. In doing so other functions such as warehousing are included. Transporting goods internationally also has to deal with import and export and some people see logistics equivalent with doing business on an international level. Others focus on the mode of transportation such as land (trucks & trains), water (inland and ocean transports) as well as air (airplanes & helicopters). Traditionally logistics was learned hands-on, by working for transportation or shipping company or a freight-forwarder or import/export company which dealt with the supply chain. Less than thirty years ago logistics became an academic discipline either located in the marketing department (which itself is a young discipline) or in the engineering department under operations management dealing with transportation planning and scheduling of equipment and personal. Today’s students have little or no hands-on real life first hand logistics experience. Few students have worked in a logistics related position such as loader or driver for companies like FedEx. (Zegwaard & Coll, 2011).

Literature Review

The literature review looked at best practices from newly developing majors such as marketing a few decades ago and hands-on learning experiences in other areas (Fleming & Eames, 2005). We also looked at the literature related to CO-OP and internship experiences, which often dealt with engineering education their course of study (Wilson, 1988). We also looked at industry advisory councils to provide input on the learning experience of college students (Hodges & Burchell, 2003). The industry advisors would provide both internship
and co-op opportunities as well as support in form of donations and also contribute to the
design of the program in terms of content and learning outcomes desired by industry partners
(Coll & Chapman, 2000).

**Methodology**

This quantitative research study explored the changing perception of logistic students over
their course of study and the impact of authentic teaching material. The students were
surveyed using the Moodle based university e-learning system. This served as data collection
tool which allowed answers to be traced back to the individual students. A survey was created
within the e-learning system and administrated as part of in-class assignments. The design of
this research study employed a set of test and ranking questions developed by the principal
investigator (PI).

**Participants**

The participants of this study consisted of a male (25%) and female (75%) logistic students
ranging from 18 to 23 years of age. The students included both Thai (80%) and Chinese
(20%) nationals. The language of instruction was English. The survey included students in
their various stages of their education from freshmen to students ready to graduate. The
students studied a sequence of logistics courses and also conducted an internship and or co-op
with a local or international logistics related companies, such as FedEx, freight forwarders,
shipping and transportation companies.

**Analysis**

The paper was analyzed using SPSS and various statistical methods to find significances
among the answers received from the students through the on-line survey instrument. The age
of the students was very much correlated with the year of study. Also percentage wise we had more female than male students. There was only a small percentage 5% of students who dropped out of the logistics program or changed the major, others transferred to and from other universities.

**Findings**

The findings of the paper can be divided into the following major areas which will describe the results in more detail: E-learning, Videos, Case Studies, Fieldtrips, and Co-Op/Internship.

**E-Learning**

All the logistics courses offered by the PI are on the university e-learning site, which uses Moodle as a platform. The students embrace e-learning, all the course materials, power point presentations, videos, in-class assignments, home works, exams, quizzes, attendance, grades, discussion groups, group assignments are on e-learning. It is a one stop shopping place for the students for teaching and learning. All assignments are submitted electronically and feedback is send via e-mail offering students 24/7 access to their grades and feedback for individual assignments. Students feel very positive taking on-line quizzes and exams. The e-learning course administration platform also provides an on-line reservoir of student portfolios and multi-media material for the lectures including on-line games and animations.

**Figure 1** E-Learning Moodle Based - 99% of students love E-learning
**Videos**

Logistics students found that videos were an effective way to provide them with a close to real life learning experience in the class room, bringing the outside to the inside. The video footage was obtained mostly from YouTube free of charge and linked to the e-learning website. We use both commercials from logistics providers such as UPS and FedEx, as well as logistics related movies like Cast Away which features FedEx as back-drop for Tom Hanks. We also use documentaries about certain logistics topic like logistics equipment and marine cargo insurance. One of the problems with YouTube is that all kind of other videos and commercials pop up which may not be politically correct. On the other side the students not only watch video material and comment on them they also upload retrieved material and create their own short videos on You- Tube, this is a very popular group project in all of the author’s logistics courses. The students really apply themselves when producing logistics related video and act in them. The assignment typically is to create a 60 second spot on You- Tube related to the particular logistics course inter modal transportation, cargo insurance, legal issues in logistics, freight and distribution, cold supply chain. (Motley, 2000).

**Figure 2** You Tube – Broadcast Yourself - 75% of students like video 85% of students like to produce videos
Case Studies

Case studies are a popular methodology in law and business schools in the USA and Europe; we use the case study method successfully in logistics. The challenge is to find affordable case studies in logistics which is still a relative new academic field. There are case studies available from renowned sources like Harvard Business School, the problem is the cost of these cases and often the lack of good support material for the instructor in particular power point presentations relevant to the case. Some logistics providers provide case studies with videos these case studies were created for marketing purposes and show logistics applications for business partners (Crabtree, Hoang, James, & Heinicke, 2009). The company case studies often lack objectivity and do not provide an inclusive picture of the company. The instructor started to write his own case studies for companies who operate in Thailand and ASEA, along with power point presentation and video clips.

Figure 3 Case Studies - Fieldtrips

Every semester we build into the semester a field trip for logistics students. Typically this is a bus full of students. The students play an active role in working out the logistics for the field trip, schedule, transportation, routing etc. Thereby the field trip in itself becomes a logistics problem of moving people. After the field trip we analyze the trip for lessons learned. The students found that there were issues including forecasting demand, and problems interfacing
with transportation provider and payment in advance. So this was not only an opportunity to see logistics operations but to experience logistics management first hand. On the less positive side some students see field trips as a fun time off and don’t necessary value the learning experience provided to them. Lectures appear as mandatory, while field trips may be something certain students want to skip. This goes also hand in hand with the fact that some students pick logistics as major but don’t want to work in the logistics industry. To make fieldtrips a true learning experience one has to couple them with specific assignments maybe even pre- and post-study in combination of the trip. A graded photo documentary in form of a power point presentation or video has proven to be effective. There are also safety issues when taken students on a field trip and insurance and release forms have to be signed especially when visiting sites with heavy machinery like in ports (Mongelluzzo, 1996) If resources are tight sometimes even an on-campus field trip can be fruitful, like visiting the university hospital as part of the hospital logistics class, where students can study material and patient flow in and to and from the hospital.

**Figure 4** Logistics Related Field Trips - 50% of Thai students like fieldtrips - 75% of Chinese **students like fieldtrips**

**CO-OP and Internship**

All logistics students are required to be involved in either the internship or co-op program. The co-op experience is for ca. 3 month working for Thai or international logistics companies
like FedEx and Maersk. The students work 40 hours a week and normally don’t get paid. The positions vary from planning, to stuffing and entering data in the various logistics software packages. The students gain a good understanding of logistics and acquire useful work ethics. The survey showed that the students in general have a aha experience, they finally understand what logistics is all about. Most of the students who work for a famous logistics company then also want to stick with logistics and hope for a job offer from the same company. As part of the co-op experience students write a report about their internship and also select a topic related to their company and particular logistics problem they want to solve for the company. Companies usually appreciate the input of the students as they see the work with a set of fresh eyes from an outsider standpoint and new ideas are generated (Harps, 2000) An example is the shipping of used cars in containers from Thailand to China. The student recommended that the container number should be written on the mirrors of the car with chalk and the car number to be written on top of the container; a simple thing like this makes it easy for the drivers to identify which car goes where, and saving valuable time that’s logistics. Another simple change in operating procedures was to disconnect the car battery before the car is pushed into the container thereby eliminating climbing over the car to disconnect the batteries. The students thereby gain valuable problem solving skills. (Coll & Zegwaard, 2011). And realize the importance of containerization. (Levinson, 2006).

**Conclusion**

Logistics has gone a long way from the loading docks to the halls of academia. From storing and moving goods to integrating the global supply chain. Today the velocity of doing business has increased and it is equally if not more important to transfer the documents as well as the product (Ira & Talalayevsky, 1997). Logistics grew out of two major academic disciplines that of marketing and namely supply chain management and the operations
management research focusing on the engineering side of logistics using sophisticated mathematical models to establish networks and time tables and selecting the optimal routes and load schedules. The logistics students learn all that in the classroom and gradually experience that logistics is more than just transportation. Transportation is often the next to last step in the supply chain. Transportation can make up for errors and unscheduled events in forecasting demand and production. Students understand through “authentic material” the role logistics plays in the real world, videos are a great source for students to get a realistic picture. YouTube offers a great resource of learning materials, but one has to be careful which ones to choose, and distinguish between objective material and promotional material. Also video games and simulations can be useful to help students more complex topics like reverse logistics (Jayaraman, Vaidyanathan, & Yadong, 2007). Students need to get a clear understanding of the purpose of field trips, and field trips need to be coupled with a graded exercise to make it a meaningful learning experience for students. Internship and co-op programs are probably the highest degree of authentic learning to provide the students a real life learning experience. Not only related to logistics but also to ethics (Gesteland, 1996) and dealing with government agencies (Fiorino, 2008). The intern and co-op programs are mostly in the last year of study, it may be better to embed students early in their studies with industry so that they have awareness of what the work place looks like and expects from them. It is critical to bridge from academic learning to applied knowledge to transfer the theory into practice. At the same time logistics is such a new academic field and so quickly changing that there is a need to generate theory out of industry practices. So not only the students but also the faculty has to engage into workplace learning. (Bartkus, 2007).
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Multiple selves: Identity negotiation in the Korean EFL context

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Abstract: Much of the research on identity and language learning has focused on ESL (English as a second language) contexts where English is an official language and integral for assimilation into mainstream society. However, this attention has not been extended to language learning in EFL (English as a foreign language) contexts. Given limited exposure to the L2 (second language) and opportunity for its use within the community, scholars have been quick to situate and confine EFL learning experiences to artificial classroom environments and underestimate the potential for authentic intercultural exchange. Accordingly, few acknowledge the potential for EFL learner identity construction and negotiation outside of Western English speaking nations. The purpose of this qualitative study is to fill the gap in the existing research on L2 identity in EFL contexts by exploring how English shapes identity amongst Korean EFL learners, and how their actual use of English, or perceived (future) use of English works to construct and negotiate their self-identities within Korean society. Through purposive homogenous sampling techniques, open-ended questionnaires and in-depth interview was conducted with 4 Korean university students. Participants were selected on the basis of two
criteria: (1) majoring in English Interpretation and Translation; and (2) having lived in an English-speaking context for over 12 months. Analysis of the interview and questionnaire data reveals the prevalence and extent of opportunities to reconstruct and renegotiate L1 (first language)/L2 self-identities within Korea. Themes emerging from the data highlight increased self-confidence and empowerment as a result of the L2/C2 (second culture) proficiency, the ability to transition between L1/L2 identities and the conscious (and subconscious) process of repositioning by shifting between L1/L2 selves. Overall, the research demonstrates the legitimacy and complexity of language learner identity research in EFL contexts.

Keywords: identity, English, foreign language learning, Korea
Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study is to fill the gap in the existing research on L2 identity in EFL contexts by exploring the relationship between language and self identity construction of individuals learning English as a foreign language in Korea, namely among L2 learners/users with travelling, living, and studying experience in the L2 community. More specifically, this study examines how English shapes identity amongst Korean EFL learners, and how their actual use of English, or perceived (future) use of English works to construct and negotiate their self-identities within Korean society. Through multiple in-depth interviews with 4 Korean university students that have lived and studied in L2 contexts, the study seeks to expose the multiple forms of self-identity shifts, construction and negotiation experienced by advanced language learners. Ultimately, this study addresses the legitimacy of foreign language learning and identity research in EFL contexts.

Literature Review

The Korean EFL Context

The position of English in the Korean context represents a unique circumstance uncharacteristic of neighboring EFL contexts. Korea is a monolingual nation whereby English is used as a foreign language (Collins, 2005). Despite the narrow use of English, Korea devotes an unprecedented amount of resources to English language learning with a commitment to English education often described as “zealous” and “feverish” (Park & Abelmann, 2004). This zeal is reflected in the local figures which reveal the mass appeal with an English education industry estimated at over 10 billion dollars a year (Kang, 2008) targeting learners of all ages.
Similar to the zeal for local English language instruction, the national expenditure on overseas foreign language learning is staggering. MEST (Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology) 2009 statistics on students studying abroad in higher education degree courses or English course increased from about 217,000 in 2008 to 243,000 in 2009 with expenditures at a record breaking figure of over 5 trillion KRW (Korean Won) (Jung, 2010).

On top of the extensive exposure to English language learning within the Korean public school system, the popularity of study abroad should also be taken into account when considering the influence of English as a L2/C2 (Second language/second culture) on learner identity.

Identity

Identity is best understood when viewed as a plurality and non-unitary, construct. It is the individual’s concept of the self, as well as the individual’s interpretation of the social definition of self, within his/her inner group and larger society. In simpler terms, it answers the question “Who am I?” (Gao et al., 2005). Norton (1997a) adds that identity is more than how individuals perceive themselves, but also “how people understand their relationship to the outside world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how people understand their possibilities for the future” (p. 410).

From a constructivist perspective, identity is self-defined, pluralistic and dynamic, and constantly negotiated between the individual agent and the social environment. Individuals may possess multiple identities whereby through agency, each linguistic act is a situated act of identity and might involve multiple dimensions (La Page and Tabouret-Keller, 1985).
Multiple subjects, multiple possibilities and multiple selves exist which individuals identify with at any given time. Moreover, language works to construct those same identities dependent on situations in L2 classrooms or in naturalistic settings.

*Identity Research in EFL contexts*

To date, empirical research into identity shifts and identity construction in EFL context is sparse. Pioneering EFL learner identity, Gao and her team (2005) report numerous constructs of self-identity changes among Chinese university students after learning English namely changes in self-confidence with surprisingly high indications of productive and additive bilingualism. More importantly, heightened L2 language and L2 cultural awareness did not correlate with diminished L1/C1. Similar results were reported among tertiary English language learners in Thailand (Boonchum, 2009) and Korea (Vasilopoulos, 2010). In reverse, Bian’s (2009) longitudinal study (2 years) of L2 self-identity changes among Chinese non-English majors produced conflicting results: respondents noted decreased self-confidence from their entry into the college to their 2nd year as college students and subtractive loss of their cultural self as a Chinese.

In Korea, social class also plays a critical role in constructing imagined identity. “Cosmopolitan striving” and English education management among Korean mother’s demonstrated a similar tendency whereby trajectories of “international status” facilitated through English proficiency varied between families based primarily on status and the ability to afford the extreme expense of international education and domestic private tutoring (Park & Abelmann, 2004). For the small percentage of individuals who have the resources to study in extra-curricular private schools and, or spend years living abroad, these group members envision global status that extends beyond Korean society; they “imagine, experience, and develop transnational identity and mobility as a result of their English language proficiency
and cross-cultural experience” (Paik, 2005). With growing numbers of Koreans experiencing life abroad and then subsequently returning to their native country, a new social class of transnational individual has been formed with bilingual and bicultural identity beyond traditional monolingual monocultural Korea. These individuals experience the reconstruction of bilingual identities by recognizing the advantages of bilingualism, accepting both cultures, and developing an ownership in English (Choe 2009).

Methodology

Research Question

This research explores the role of foreign language learning on self-identity negotiation among advance L2 users. Focusing on one foreign language learning context, English language education in Korea, the central research question asks: What impact does English have on Korean EFL learners’ self-identity in the L1 context?

Method and Participants

A basic descriptive and interpretive research design was selected to address the research question. Elements of ethnographic design are also present in the cultural focus of the study as the purpose of describing and interpreting the culture of the group and addressing the external conditions shaping identity negotiation.

The participants of this study are 4 undergraduate Korean students in English Translation and Interpretation at Hankuk University of Foreign studies. All respondents are in either their junior or senior year (aged 25-28) forming a homogenous sample based on similar age, educational experiences, and linguistic and academic goals. To better understand the subtle
process of identity negotiation, a homogenous sample of advanced proficiency who have studied or lived in the L2 community were selected.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data was drawn from multiple tools, namely open-ended questionnaires and in-depth interviews. First, open ended questionnaires were distributed to the four participants in advance. Participants were provided with time for critical reflection and consideration as the issue of identity negotiation and identity shifts is often subtle and subconscious.

Approximately two weeks after the delivery of the questionnaires, the first set of interviews were scheduled. During the interview, participants were allowed to refer to their questionnaires to guide the semi-structured interview. Interviews varied in length from one hour to two hours.

Data was analyzed through inductive information processing which first identifies frames of analysis upon which domains are then created and verified through repeated data cross referencing. Once the domains are verified, the data was analyzed within and across the established domains from which central themes emerge (Hatch, 2002).

Findings

Two interesting themes emerged from the data analysis: (1) participants perceived shifts in their current social positions as a result of their English use and proficiency; and (2) participants experienced changes in personality and communication patterns which they modified as they transitioned between and renegotiated their multiple self-identities. The themes suggest an interwoven and entwined process. Mastery of English increased self confidence and empowerment. Shifts in self-confidence and empowerment directly affected
respondents’ perception of their current individual social position. In response, participants described the process of switching their L2 “on and off” to reposition themselves based on context.

**Present Social Re-positioning**

For Ben, English plays a central role in himself and social identity construction. Ben’s father, an academic, lawyer, and judge, accepted a position with an American university and relocated the family to the US for several years. Ben attended American public school and returned to Korean to attend middle school. Bilingualism and biculturalism plays an important role in Ben’s family as he struggles to live up to his parents’ expectations of success. Thus, when asked if he could imagine his life without English proficiency, Ben responds,

I can imagine my life without the ability to speak English and it would awful.

I would be a coward afraid of my responsibility in this world. Sure, learning English is only one aspect of success. Through it, I can understand so much more and this makes me better.

With that comes the self respect from others. Ben’s personal trajectory, and that encouraged by his family, is to be bicultural and bilingual. Given the years spent in the U.S. as a child, and both his father’s and mother’s advanced English proficiency, it is only natural for Ben to follow in his family’s footsteps as an international citizen. Thus his English skills place him in the social role whereby he can be the person he is expected to be.
From a more humble family background, Ken notes that his studies in English Translation and Interpretation, and his English language proficiency gained from his academic pursuits and travel abroad experience is the pride of his family. Neither his mother nor father speaks a foreign language, and nor have they travelled outside of Korea. As he comes from a small rural town, his language proficiency is considered an accomplishment. He has gained significant respect from his parents who pride themselves in raising a son that can move up the social ladder within Korean and abroad.

Increased self-confidence related to changes in social position. However, shifts in social position may be attributed to factors beyond heighten self-confidence (pragmatic, ideological, and social). Namely characteristics inherent to L2/C2 culture also boosted the self confidence as they adopted English speaker identities distinct from their L1 Korean identities. This leads to the third theme of an “on and off switch” by which the respondents reposition themselves and the L1/L2 identities.

*Modified Communication and Self-Representation*

Esther learned English in Guam where she attended middle school and high school. She returned to Korea to attend university and notes that her academic English is superior to that of her Korean given that most of her education was in an L2 context. In Korea, she teaches English on a part-time basis for approximately 4 hours a day. She mentioned that her students vary in age but are predominately adult learners, and many of whom are significantly older than her.

The issue of age becomes relevant in her speech patterns in both Korean and English as the Korean language traditional uses honorific forms and formality to address elders.
Esther feels that her Korean is more polite and well-mannered than her English. When speaking English, she is more liberal and outspoken. Students tell her that they had a different impression of her when she switched from Korean to English in their second day of class.

Consequently, when speaking English to an older person, she feels that she can be more casual and hence feels more mature and grown-up, but when speaking in Korean to the same person, she feels that she needs to be extra polite again. Likewise, to assert authority, Esther prefers to use English as can speak more directly without feeling as though she has stepped outside of her Korean tradition.

All the respondents described an “on and off” switch between their English language selves and Korean speaking selves. This switch related to attitudes, communication styles, personality, and for how they perceive themselves and how they believe others perceived them. Whether intentional or unintentional, conscious, or subconscious, speaking English in Korea shifted their discourse and position within the context.

Language choice and identity switch was also expressed by Ken who commented on how English and the time he spent studying and working in Australia has made him into a more social and outgoing person. Ken took one year off from his undergraduate studies to work, travel, and study in Australia. Upon returning, Ken notes that he now finds himself to be more social, outgoing, and talkative when speaking English to English speakers. However, Korean speech, “somehow” returns him to his “old shy Korean self”. “I guess there is a switch in my head so when it turns on, I become an English speaker with a certain attitude”.

Ken comments on the lack of opportunities to use English in Korea and has sought an online English tutor from the Philippines for extra-curricular practice. On a daily basis, he has a 30
minute conversation with the tutor and again reverts to his English self “and is more outgoing and candid” admitting that he jokes and says things that he wouldn’t typically say in Korean.

Esther also talked about the transformation in her personality from a “timid” Korean girl but can speak openly about topics taboo in Korea to American friends.

In 2009-2010, Cindy spent 11 months in the United States studying English at a language education centre. Upon returning to Korea, she recalls modifications in communication styles when speaking in her L1.

When I got back from the States, I found myself really getting to the point and saying things directly ‘yes or no’ which some people in my circle felt uncomfortable with. Now I’ve realized that I shouldn’t speak like that to Korean friends, and only speak so directly when I am with foreign friends.

To maintain her L2 proficiency, Cindy recognizes the necessity of continued L2 use; thus, she participates in an international student association where English is the predominant means of communication. Perhaps the critical point emerging from the experiences described above is not the duality of personality from “timid” to “out-going”, rather, it is the desire to engage in opportunities which reveal and perhaps maintain an L2 identity that is notable distinct from their L1 selves.

**Discussion**

This study findings similar to Lee (2003) an increased sense of empowerment and self-confidence, career related but also socially related to their present lives. Moreover, in the case of select respondents, the L2 self reflects the person they believe they should based on their social status and expectations imposed by those around them.
**Real and Imagined Communities**

Wenger defines imagines communities as “groups of people not immediately tangible and accessible with whom we connect through the power of the imagination” (1998, p. 176). In comparison to the many communities that we interact with in our daily lives whose existence can be felt concretely and directly, such as our workplaces, our educational institutions, and our religious groups, imagined communities transcend time and space to create a new image of the world and ourselves. Despite the intangible nature of imagined communities, they still function as another important source of community, affiliation, and identity formation with an expanded range of possible selves. Following the constructivist paradigm, fixed versus unfixed, static versus non-static, concrete versus abstract, real and imagined cannot be separated into isolated realms.

Alongside the technological advances of the last two decades, mass migration has had an overwhelming impact on what is possible to imagine (Appadurai, 1996). Respondents’ travel and life experience abroad extends their concept of community beyond national borders and their immediate context. All respondents expressed an interest in continuing to travel and visit foreign countries or the desire to somehow maintain their connection to a/the L2 community through employment or further academic pursuits. In other words, respondents had incorporated the L2 community into their personal trajectories. Maintaining tangible connections is facilitated through the convenience of global communication systems which leads to the fuzzy line between “imagined communities and imagined identities” and “real communities and real identities”.

The use of the internet to maintain L2 communications and to solidify or maintain L2 identities is seen in the online relationships between Esther and her Korean students and Ken.
and his online tutor (from the Philippines). Thus, L2 use in the EFL can be used to reinforce L2 identities in EFL contexts in the absence of native L2 speakers.

While earlier research framed identity negotiation in EFL contexts as “imagined identities” and “imagined communities”, the findings above move from future trajectories and aspirations to reality. Choe (2009) demonstrates the reality of multiple identity negotiation experienced by Korean returnee elementary students with “transnational identities”. Similar processes are at work in more subtle ways among the local EFL learners. Gao, Xiu, and Kuang (2010) research on the adoption of English names among English majors in a Chinese comprehensive university observes how learners’ direct experience congeal their ideal selves or “imagined” identities with reality when participating in activities where their English names are used. The researchers conclude that the English names tie up the “imagined” with the “real” and the new name owners were not merely L2 learners, but also creators of multicultural discourses and multicultural identities (Gao, Xiu, & Kuang 2010). On this basis, the polarization between “real” and “imagined” as distinctly separate domains has evolved into the two interconnect and reinforcing realms.

**Conclusion**

This study sought to explore the impact of English language use and English language learning on learner identity construction in the Korean L1 (first language) context. From the data results, most notable is the suggestion of participants switching on and off, whether consciously or subconsciously, and depending on the context, from the L1 associated with L1 identity, and the L2 associated with their L2 persona. Switching on and off empowers participants to represent themselves in multiple mediums shifting from who they typically are as Korean speakers to a role they “self-selected” to be. Social repositioning manifests in real
and imagined forms, that is in direct present communication as in the case of Esther to intangible trajectories and expectations and accomplishments expressed by Ben and Ken.

The findings presented above convincingly challenges skepticism of the relevance and legitimacy of identity research in EFL contexts such as Korea. The conditions under which learners speak the target language is of great interest to language educators. Typically confined to the EFL language learning classroom, the limited exposure and opportunity would inadvertently impact L2 functionality and L2 motivation. Without opportunities to practice the target language, progress in language learning is comprised; however, the agency exercised by the respondents suggests possible avenues for L2 language practice in meaningful ways.

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Abstract: The objectives of English on the job for Thai engineers: application forms and work are to find out how well Thai engineers can fill in English application forms and to study the ability of Thai engineers to use English for conversations on the job, or “work talk.” The instruments used for collecting data were a questionnaire, a test on English competence, and a hypothetical job application form. Proportional stratified random sampling was employed to formulate the sample of 50 Thai engineers who work in the production line of some industrial factories that are located in Ayutthaya, Pathumthani, Samutprakan, and Bangkok. The data were analyzed by using frequency statistics and percentage. The test on the job application form was concerned with filling in four parts of a job application form: ethnographical background, education information, working experiences, and language abilities. The researcher analyzed the filled-in job application forms by explaining the problems that were found. Then, the test on English competence was used to study English communication ability in the workplace; it consisted of questions on different situations involving the practical use of English which was divided into five parts: meeting, negotiation, on duty, presentation, and training. The results were analyzed by using the statistics and percentage, and then the scores were compared with the TOEIC scores for English competence. The findings reveal that most of the respondents had problems on filling in an application form, especially the part on ethnographical background. Moreover, the English competence of 24% of the engineers was at a poor level.

Keywords: English competence, Application form, ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), Engineer
Introduction

Engineering is one of the seven fields for which the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) will allow the free flow of skilled labor, which will help enlarge the labor market and build more working opportunities for Thai citizens. On the other hand, there will be more labor competition in ASEAN. So a person’s English ability will play an important role in job searching because it will be used as a medium of communication, the “working language,” in ASEAN countries. According to the Dean of the Faculty of Engineering of Burapha University, Thai engineers should improve their English skill because there will be an increasing flow of skilled labor in the near future.

English plays an important role in work, both in governmental and private sectors, because it is widely used by people of different nations, cultures, and language in order to communicate with one another. English is used as the medium of technology, business, international travel, and trade and as a working language between all ASEAN nations. Nowadays, engineers from other countries have advantages over Thai engineers in their ability to English. If Thai engineers have better English competence in conversation, it will be beneficial for them according to a former President of the Engineering Institute of Thailand, who explained that a major problem of Thai engineers is their English communication skills, and that it is a long-term problem. In 2015, English will increase its importance in Thailand because it will be the working language of ASEAN countries, so professors, students, and workers will have to have communication skills in English.

Before the Thai engineers can work in other ASEAN countries, the first thing that they will face is a job application. Filling in an application form is the first step into a career and is a very important one. Dispanya (2008) considered the job application form one of the important documents for applying for a position in each company. The application form is
divided into categories, as the primary step in examining the applicant’s qualification. Although the application form has just a few pages for the applicant to fill in his/her personal data, which seems to be easy, it strongly influences the decision of a company in selecting the applicants for an interview. If the applicant writes only simple information, the job application will repeatedly fail (Ngeam-sanga & Chusub, 1988).

For the reasons above, the researcher became interested to find out how well Thai engineers can fill in English application forms, because it is the first step into a career and very important to an applicant. Moreover, the researcher would like to find out the ability of Thai engineers to use English language for conversations in the work place. Prakan Kanjanawadee, from the Engineering Institute of Thailand, once mentioned that not only should Thai engineers have literacy, but they should have communication abilities in English, also.

**Study Significance**

This study of English on the job for Thai engineers (application forms and work talk), is conducted with an expectation that the results will be beneficial for Thai engineers and people who will join the ASEAN Free Flow in 2015, as well as the international companies they work for, because the results of the study should explain whether Thai engineers are ready for the country’s challenge as a member of the AEC. Besides, the researcher is hopeful that it will help lead to guidelines for a curriculum developer or an educator wanting to improve the curriculum or to develop courses that will support Thai engineers in their efforts to become more successful in their career path. For instance, Boonsom Lerdjirunwong, Dean of the Faculty of Engineering of Chulalongkorn University, presented his point of view in “Vision in the curriculum development and integration learning of Thai engineers for AEC in 2015,” stating that there will be much competition for labor when the AEC is formed in 2015.
Thai engineers will be able to survive only if they enhance their qualities. Besides, the university should improve the English curriculum quality also.

**Scope and limitations of the study**

This study aims to examine Thai engineers’ English on the job because engineering is one of the seven fields that the AEC has decided to allow the free flow of skilled labor. Therefore, the samples for this study were limited to fifty Thai engineers who are working in the production line of industrial factories located in Ayutthaya, Pathumthani, Samutprakan, and Bangkok. In accordance with the purpose of the study, these engineers were asked to complete a questionnaire focusing on their background regarding education, position, and the frequency of English use on the job. Next, they did a two-part language test that explored how effectively they could complete an application form and how well they could use English language for their work talk.

**Methods**

This study used a closed-ended questionnaire and a test of English on the job, in two parts, described below.

Firstly, the questionnaire survey was conducted to collect the respondents’ personal background and work experience in order to find out the factors that might influence their English competence. It consists of ten items: gender, age, educational level, major field of study, name of organization, work position, number of years in the organization, the languages used for work, the frequency of their written English use, and the frequency of their spoken English used for communication.
Secondly, the English test on completing an application form and workplace conversation was distributed to every respondent. The first part of the test was the job application form. It was carefully put together after the researcher had gathered sample job application forms for the position of engineers from countries in Asia and the Pacific, and after the first trial with five engineers. The trial found that most people had important problems in Parts 1-4 of the tests, which were on ethnographic background, education information, working experience, and language abilities. Next, the problem findings were considered in the revised application form that was given to the fifty Thai engineers. The second part of the test investigated the engineers’ English communication ability in the workplace. To construct the test, the researcher interviewed ten Thai engineers about what situations in the workplace in which they usually speak English. It was found that they use English most in five situations: meeting, negotiation, on duty, presentation, and training. Therefore, the researcher adopted these five situations in the test and made thirty questions, or six questions on each situation. The researcher calculated the score of this study by extrapolating with the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) score which is an English language test designed specifically to measure the everyday English skills of people working in an international environment. The researcher designed the score for English competence into six levels: very poor, poor, fair, good, very good, and excellent. The possible scores range from 1 to 30 points.

The quantitative data from the two tests were analyzed with a computer program to identify how well the application forms were filled in and the English communication ability of Thai engineers in their workplace. The procedures were as follows:

1. The analysis of personal data findings were calculated by using frequency statistics and percentage.
2. The researcher analyzed the job application form answers and English competence level by explaining the problems which were found.

Findings

Findings from Questionnaires

Table 1 shows that the 35 of the subjects (70%) are male, and the rest are female. The age of the largest group (42%) is 31-35 years old; the second group, 26-30 years old, is 32%; the third group, 21-25 years old, is 16%; and the last group, 36-40 years old, is 10%. With reference to their educational background, the majority of subjects graduated with a bachelor’s degree (78%), and 18% of them hold a master’s degree (18%). According to the work experience, the majority of the subjects have been working in the industry or organization for only 1-5 years (60%), while 26% have been working for 6-10 years, and 14% have been working for 11-15 years.
**Table 1** Classification of subjects according to gender, age, educational background, and work experience

The data in Table 2 show that the largest group of subjects (38%) used English for writing 1 day a week, while 32% never used English for writing. In addition, 16% wrote in English 2-3 days/week, and 14% used it every day. Besides, the table shows that the largest group of subjects (40%) used English for speaking 1 day/week, while 34% never used spoken English. Moreover, 24% used English 2-3 days/week, and 2% used English for speaking every day.

**Table 2** Classification of subjects according to frequency of English use
**Findings from Filling in Job Application Form**

Regarding ethnographical background, the major problem is that 68% of the respondents did not fill in the salary requirement with a suitable range. The main problem in the education part is that about 22% of the subjects did use chronological order starting with latest year. And the main problem with filling in working experiences is that about 30% of the respondents did not fill the reasons for resignation. Next, the main problem in the language ability part is that about 20% of the respondents did not use either adverbs or adjectives to identify their language ability.

**Table 3** Parts of application form not filled in or filled in incorrectly

From the Table 4, concerning the parts of the form that were completed, it can be seen that the highest number of subject (48%) filled in working experience well, while none of the respondents could complete the ethnographic background; 32% could complete the education information, and 28% filled in the language ability.
Table 4 Percentage of parts completed on the job application form

Findings Related to English Competence

Regarding the English test score in each part, the highest score is for presentation (M = 3.96), and the lowest score is for the negotiation part (M = 3.42)

Table 5 Results of English test

As can be seen from Table 6, the largest group of respondents (27%) could get a score in the range of 10-14 points, which is the “poor” level. The percentages rose from “fair” to “very good,” and dropped to 13% at the “excellent” level.
Table 6 Overall English competence

Conclusion and implications

Regarding the research questions, the answers to each question are as follows:

Research Question 1: How effectively can Thai engineers fill in application forms?

The researcher divided the application forms into four parts: ethnographic background, education information, working experience, and language ability. In the ethnographic background, the findings show that 68% of respondents had a problem filling in salary requirement in a range, for example, some wrote a single figure, “21,670 baht/month” or “100,000 baht/month,” so it may not look appealing to the employer to consider whether he can offer appropriate salary for job seekers or not. Chumworatayee (2011) stated that it is the best to give a salary range or to respond with “negotiable.”

Besides, respondents had a problem about telephone numbers (66%). Most of them put in the telephone number without an area code. They provided only the telephone number with Bangkok code, but no country code, for instance, “02-*******” or “089-*******.”

Chumworatayee (2011) also mentioned that applicants should provide the telephone number with an area code and include an extension number if one is available for a business number. Therefore, it can be assumed that they did not read completely the situation of the test on job
application form. For example, Dispanya (2008) stated that the applicants should try to understand the details in an application form.

In addition, the respondents had a problem about e-mail (36%). Several put an e-mail address that did not seem to relate to them, for example, “ABCDE@***.com,” “psybuster@***.com,” or “Ezo@***.com.” Dispanya (2008) mentioned that the applicant’s e-mail should be relevant to them, such as their name or surname.

In the next part, on education information, it was found that 22% of the respondents did not fill in the information in chronological order starting with the latest year, which is similar to their working experiences starting with the latest position (14%). The applicants should start with the most recent qualification or period in education and recent job (Chumworatayee, 2011). If the applicants start with old period of schooling or working, that makes their information less interesting and less attractive to recruiters.

Another main problem in working experience is that about 30% of the respondents did not fill in the reasons of resignation, while some respondent replied with “boring” or “far away from home.” Chumworatayee (2011) suggested that it is important to avoid using the words “Fired,” “Terminated,” “Quit,” “Illness,” or “Personal Reasons.” They should always look for a positive statement to use in answering this question, so “boring” makes a bad impression.

In the part on language ability, most of the respondents completed the part, but they did not fill in the blanks with adverbs or adjectives to describe their language ability. Some filled in with both adverbs and adjectives in the same section; 20% of respondents had this problem. Furthermore, some put check marks in the language abilities instead of adverbs or adjectives. This does not tell how good their language skills are, and it may confuse an employer. Next, some respondents did not fill in the date of application in Christian era (A.D.) but used
Buddhist era dates, which are 543 years different. Apparently, they did not completely read the instructions on that part of the test. Besides, some did not sign their name. If the applicants forget to sign, they risk having the application rejected.

Research Questions 2: How well are Thai engineers able to use English language for the work talk?

With reference to the results of the five-part English competence test on meeting, negotiation, on duty, presentation and training situations, the results of the study show that most of the respondents got around 3-5 points in each category, which is the “poor” level. The training situation was the part that got the highest score, 6 points for 22% of the subjects, while 8% got 0 points.

According to the data, the overall English language ability of Thai engineers in production line is “poor.” Regarding the result of Table 6, 40% of respondents used English for speaking 1 day a week, while 34% never used English for speaking.

Most of the respondents, who are in the “poor” level, never used English for speaking and writing. Moreover, they only had about 1-5 years of working experience, while the respondents who got an excellent level (13%) were 31-35 years old and used English for speaking and writing about 2-3 days/week or every day. It seems that the average Thai engineer is not able to speak English well. This problem will make them less competitive in the ASEAN labor market, which agrees with Chantarangsu’s point of view that the major problem of Thai engineers is the English communication skill, and that it is a long-term problem.
The highest score of each situation appears in the presentation part. The respondents could respond to the presentation questions quite well because of their experience, familiarity with English native speakers, vocabulary, and educational background. Moreover, the study by Jiranapakul (1996) investigating workplace English use by Thai engineers supports the finding that speaking skill of Thai engineers was used regularly in presenting reports, answering question, explaining topics, and so on.

In addition, Riemer (2002) noted that a recent Irish study found that 78% of a sample of practicing engineering graduates stated that they were required to give oral presentations as part of their work, and quite often this was on a regular basis. This should be considered in particular as teamwork is recognized as a core skill in industry, and communication with team members needs to be effective. Finally, the conclusion of this study’s findings disagrees with the study of Charadsith (2007), which shows that Thai engineers use English in the workplace at an intermediate level.

**Discussion**

After conducting this research, the researcher has recommendations to three groups of stakeholders, as follows:

**Recommendations for Universities**

The findings of this research reveal that most of the respondents got around 3-5 points in each category, which is the “poor” level. Therefore, universities should provide more courses in English for special purposes (ESP) for the engineering curriculum, to suit the engineers’ future occupations. Furthermore, the institute should add a job application course, which may help engineering students to succeed in the job hunt after graduation.
**Recommendations for Business Organizations**

For the sake of those Thai engineers who are working for business organizations, the organizations should provide an ESP training course for their staff in order to enable them to gain more skill in communicating across cultures, because Thailand is joining the AEC. The researcher believes that the business will grow better with better-prepared staff members when the year 2015 arrives.

**Recommendations for Future Studies**

The researcher would suggest that future studies include in-depth interviews in order to study the factors which influence English ability and use and which may cause problems. Besides, the number of samples should be larger in order to obtain more reliable results. Furthermore, the researcher might study whether technical terms create problems for engineering students. Another area would be to investigate other types of engineers in order to find out their needs and problems in using English.

Finally, it would be interesting if a study would explore the characteristics of the job application forms in ASEAN countries, in order to show their similarities and differences and the main points of each form that companies in ASEAN countries will provide for job seekers. Its findings would benefit Thai applicants interested in working in other countries in the future.
References


Thai vocational college cross cultural skills

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Abstract: The purposes of this research were to study and compare Cross cultural skills of students at Nawamintrachutit Industrial and community college under the Office of Vocational Education Commission, which had 4 aspects: intercultural awareness, communication, leadership and interaction, and living with people from different cultures. The same contained 152 Vocational Certificate Student and 83 Vocational Diploma Student. The instrument for the data collection was 5 rating scales questionnaire with the reliability at 0.88. The statistics used in analyzing the data are mean, standard deviation and Two way analysis of variance. The research finding was as follow: Students at Nawamintrachutit Industrial and community college under the Office of Vocational Education Commission had Cross cultural skills at a most level. As a whole and each aspects of Cross cultural skills of the students at Nawamintrachutit Industrial and community college under the Office of Vocational Education Commission, was not significantly different in terms of gender and level of education.

Keywords: cross cultural, skills
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