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## **How to Develop English in the Aspects of Higher Education, Business, and Communication**

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### ***Abstract:***

*The purposes of this research were to study the use of English language in higher education, to study the application of English language in business, and to study the use of English language for communication.*

*This study is the documentary research with content analysis; the researcher applied the qualitative research method in conducting this study. This research contributes to the knowledge firstly on English in higher education. Due to the reason that English is broadly considered as the lingua franca of higher education and as the most essential necessity to internationalize the higher education. In the context of higher education, skills of reading and writing are keys elements of studying. Another issue is English for business. In business section, English language takes part in the success in operation, administration, and communication.*

*Business English functions as a lingua franca in multilingual settings, which is a challenging interaction in terms of linguistics, and culture of speakers whose first language is not English. The last finding of this research is associated with English for communication. First, English language is studied as mediating tool in the world of globalization; second, there are various reasons supporting the significance of learning English language. Third, English language is accepted to be the working language of ASEAN; consequently, populations in 10 member countries have to prepare themselves about English language skills.*

***Keywords:*** English skills, higher education, business, communication

### **1. Introduction**

Nowadays, English language is generally considered as the official mediating tool for communication. When people from different nationalities want to communicate, they generally use English language. That is the reason why it is necessary to learn English language in order to get in touch on an international level. Considering this established globalization trend, it is interesting to investigate the use of English language as a medium instrument in various aspects. English language skills competency is essential given its widespread status across the world as lingua franca. Indeed, the multilingual skills are a salient element in the make-up of the new world. According to Hamzah-Sendut, Madsen, and Thong (1989); Terpstra (1991), the language competency of communicators influences their interaction patterns and that individuals at different language competency levels communicate very differently.

English language is the global dominance in higher education. English language has been a key to academic collaboration, through research activity, events and communications, both inside and between institutions themselves. In the investigation of Jochems, Snippe, Smid and Verweji (1996) on associations between studying in foreign language and student's academic and study behavior, it was found that language proficiency played a major part in explaining differences in study achievement. English as medium of instruction remains predominant even in contexts where it enjoys the status of a foreign language.

English language ability plays very necessary roles in business administration in helping increasing the opportunities for understanding and learning other cultures. Consequently, the ability of understanding and fluent using English language can create customer's satisfaction which leads to the competitiveness of the business. While English for international business has an important function as a lingua franca in multilingual settings, it can also present challenges both linguistically and culturally, particularly as interactions are between speakers whose first language is not English.

The English language is widely used throughout the world both as a medium for written and oral communications. Good communication creates good relationships (Mead, 1990). English language is considered as the world's prominent linking language, many people around the world learn English language in order to fulfill this linking role. In communication situations, those with low-proficiency levels of English share fewer opinions than do those with high-proficiency levels of English language or native speakers.

In the view of the importance of English language ability, the researcher, as a Thai English-as-a-second-language speaker, studied the use of English language in the aspect of higher education, business, and communication. The intention of the researcher is to revise the useful knowledge about the application of English language in the mentioned aspects and to orderly present them to other Thai people who are keen on practicing and developing their English language skills so that they can use English language more fluently.

### *1.1. Purposes of Research*

- 1) To study the use of English language in higher education.
- 2) To study the application of English language in business.
- 3) To study the use of English language for communication

## **2. Research Methodology**

This study is the documentary research with content analysis; the researcher applied the qualitative research method in conducting this study by retrieving data from reviewing concepts and theories from the books, articles, and related research, covering the area of English in higher education, English for business, and English for communication. The period of this study is from August – November 2015.

## **3. Results**

### *3.1. English Language in Higher Education*

The world dominance in higher education is English language. English as the lingua franca of higher education is the most significant current necessity to internationalize the higher education. The issue is that English language is not only studied as a foreign language, but also as a medium of transmitting advanced knowledge, especially in the higher education.

According to Sabariah and Rafik-Galea (2005), the beginning of English for academic purposes (EAP) came from the awareness of English for specific purposes (ESP) practitioners that students in different language proficiency level possess different learning needs and this cannot be fulfilled by teaching with the same type of English language. The modern-day field of EAP addresses the teaching of English in the academy at all age and proficiency levels, and it draws on a range of interdisciplinary influences for its research methods, theories and practices. Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) outlined 4 types of EAP situations at the tertiary level: 1) An English Speaking country such as United Kingdom or USA; 2) An English as Second Language (ESL) situation, such as in former British colonies in Africa or in South East Asia; 3) A situation where certain subjects are taught in English and the remaining in the national language; and 4) A situation in which all subjects are taught in the national language and English plays an ancillary role. In addition, the reason for an importance of English language is in the compulsory education of many countries across the world. Moreover, English is a language which is rich in literature: humanistic, scientific and technical. English language also constitutes a major portion of almost all competitive examinations.

Due to the reason that English language is studied all over the world, The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), developed in the early 1990s, is the result of a need for a common international framework about language learning which would facilitate co-operation among educational institutions in various countries, particularly within Europe (CEFR, 2001). The purposes of CEFR, at the level of policy, are that it will be possible to facilitate communication and interaction among Europeans of different mother tongues in order to promote European mobility, mutual understanding and co-operation, and overcome prejudice and discrimination (CEFR, 2001). Besides, the goals of CEFR is to provide a common basis for the explicit description of objectives, content and method, and to promote international co-operation in the field of modern languages. In addition, it also defines levels of proficiency which allow learners' progress to be measured at the edge stage of learning and on a lifelong basis, describing in 6 levels of language ability from A1 for beginners up to C2 for those who have mastered a language.

In the context of higher education, skills of reading and writing are keys elements of studying. Reading is the process of constructing meaning through the dynamic interaction among the reader's existing knowledge, the information suggested by the written language and the context of the reading situation. Accordingly, Enright and Schedl (2000) said that academic reading comprehension focuses on 4 main purposes; first is reading to find information; the method to find the answers or to complete a task or a work of readers. Second is reading for basic comprehension; to get the generally overall message of that text. Third is reading to learn; including the ability to recognize the organization and purpose of a text, to distinguish major from minor ideas and essential from non-essential information, to conceptualize and organize text information into a mental framework, and to understand rhetorical functions. Forth is reading to integrate information across multiple texts; aiming to test information across larger areas of the text. According to Aebersold and Field (1997), the ways that most high proficient readers use when reading to help them comprehend texts well are; recognize word quickly, use text features, use titles to infer what information might follow, use world knowledge, analyze unfamiliar words, identify the grammatical functions of words, read for meaning or concentrate on constructing meaning, guess about the meaning of the text, evaluate guess and try new guesses if necessary, monitor comprehension, keep the purpose of reading the text in mind, adjust strategies to the purpose for reading, identify or infer main idea, understanding the relationships between the parts of a text, distinguish main idea, tolerate ambiguity in a text, paraphrase, use context to build meaning and aid comprehension, and finally continue reading even when unsuccessful.

Writing is largely considered as a multifunctional tool in higher education teaching and learning situations, as it is mainly used to express acquired knowledge in a specific subject area. In essence, according to National Writing Project and Nagin (2006), the

recognition and integration of writing in all academic programs rests on the belief that “effective writing skills are important in all stages of life from early education to future employment”. Besides, writing is “of critical importance for success in a wide variety of situations and professions”. Therefore, academic writing must be outstanding from other formal styles of writing. Writing in academic style has its own particular principles. According to Whitaker (2009), academic writing must have clear purpose; the most common purposes in academic writing are to persuade, to analyze / to synthesize, and to inform. Next is that author has to engage readers with their ideas and catch their interest with writing style. Although authors will present other people’s ideas and research, the goal of paper is to show what authors think about these things. The paper will have and support authors’ own original idea about the topic. The academic writing will likely include contradictory or alternative points of view, but author has to strengthen the point of view. For academic essays and papers, there is an introduction, body, and conclusion. Each paragraph has to logically lead to the next one. In addition, thoughts and thought processes should be clearly and completely explained. Authors will use their research to support their own ideas; that means source material will be introduced, analyzed, explained, and then cited. All academic writing should follow the guidelines of the American Psychological Association, regarding in-text citations, the reference list, and format. Lastly, it is also very important that there must not be any grammatical, spelling, punctuation, or vocabulary mistakes in academic writing.

### 3.2. *English for Business*

English for business communication is essentially a multi-disciplinary and multi-dimensional activity. One also needs to take into account the complexities involved in the contexts in which business genres are used and exploited to achieve the specific goals of business communities. The complexity of the uses of English is as mother tongue, second language, and international language. English language is important for both internal and external communication, a role in having a chance to get a good job, and as a mean to understand other cultures. English language is very important to the business, especially for communication with customers, other companies, competitors, or even employers, employees, colleagues and suppliers. Moreover, English language provides more chance to get a good job; this is relevant to the concept of Ebling (2005) that many businesses are looking for people who are fluent in English language. English language skills provide a competitive edge in career choices in the contemporary job market. English language is also compared as a means to understand other cultures (Voght and Schaub, 1992).

Furthermore, English language plays various important roles in business sector; first, in the aspect of business administration, English language plays a significant role in communicating; this is relevant to the concept of Cline (1998) and Stone (2008) that the success of business administration will depend on the quality of information about its customers, its competitors and the market in general. Second, in the aspect of communication, the roles of English language in internal communication and external communication will support each other; according to Grunig (1992), if the internal communication works well, the external communication can work effectively too. Third, in the aspect of customer satisfaction, English language makes customers feel comfortable about buying products or services. Based on the study by Runnakit (2007), using positive and friendly language to show understanding and care for the customers, and listening carefully to customers is very important, because it makes the company staffs know how to make them satisfy. The last is the aspect of language and culture, understanding language and using it perfectly requires understanding its cultural component. Cultural misunderstandings in business activities can be destructive to an organization.

In addition, English language has increasingly become the lingua franca of today’s world business language with business practitioners coming from a difference of cultural backgrounds and speaking different languages. The phenomenon of English as lingua franca in international business contexts has been studied as the world of business in globalization time. English for international business (EIB) has an essential function as a lingua franca in multilingual settings, it can also present challenges both linguistically and culturally particularly as more and more interactions are between speakers whose first language is not English. A shared language is essential for communication purposes and that business professionals have to be able to communicate in English language professionally and effectively. This is relevant to the study of Louhiala-Salminen et al. (2005), business English as a lingua franca refers to English used as a neutral and shared communication code; it is shared in the sense that it is used for conducting business within the global business community whose members are Business English as a lingua franca users and communicators in their own right. Moreover, business English as a lingua franca is a variety English that is used by non-native speakers of English language in which the characteristics of the speaker’s mother tongue communication patterns are present. The most prominent feature is business-related vocabulary and technical jargon.

### 3.3. *English for Communication*

The communication is a complex two-way process which involves some iteration before mutual understanding is succeeded, according to the concept of DeVito (1986) that the essence of communication is the understanding. The process of communication begins at senders send a message with a certain intention in mind. Receivers of the message try to understand and interpret the message sent. Then receivers give feedback to original senders, who in turn interpret the feedback. This is relevant to the description of Adler and Towne (1978) that communication is a process between at least two people that begins when one person wants to communicate with another. The sender first must transpose or translate the images into symbols that receivers can understand. The next level in the communication process is to transmit or communicate the message to a receiver. When a message is received by another person, a decoding process occurs. After messages are decoded exactly as the sender has intended, the images of the sender and the images of the receiver match, and effective communication occurs.

In addition, communication competence is most often understood as achieving a successful balance between effectiveness and appropriateness. According to Spitzberg and Cupach (1989), effectiveness is the extent to which communicators achieve their goals in an interaction; and appropriateness refers to fulfilling social expectations for a particular situation.

This research also offers interesting insights to English language for communication. In the aspect of English language as mediating tool, language and communication play a vital role in globalization especially in unifying the world's culture and economy through the use of information technology and media. English is explicitly the language of international communication, but it is also evident that the dominance of English language today causes not only linguistic and communicative inequality but also the feeling of anxiety and insecurity on the part of those who cannot speak the language.

Next, in the aspect of reasons to learn English language, Thai people should learn English language for many supportive reasons; the international trade is increasingly broadened, English language takes the role of common language to provide more convenience for making contract and agreement. This can prevent the problems caused from mis-understanding.

Moreover, sharpening English language skills is necessary for Thai people. Especially the government officers, who work in the areas of politics, military, and diplomacy, it is necessary for them to develop their English language skills in order to also develop the work quality, and to maintain the work standard. In order to understand and to pace abreast the advance of science and modern technology inundating from the occidental world, the knowledge about English language

in the good or practical level is required. Learning English language is inevitably considered as the trait of being well educated. That Thai people reject to learn English language or any other foreign languages is considered as self-enclosing, and this enables Thailand to be remained behindhand. Besides, people who know more than one language have more occasions to develop their brain in the part that is relevant to language than others who know only one language. Consequently, people who can speak more than one language will have more confidence to present themselves and to express their feeling, attitude, and opinion. Another is the aspect of English language in ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), according to Association of Southeast Asian Nations (2008), the ASEAN Charter Article 34 talks about the working language of ASEAN shall be English. Consequently, in addition to their native language, the populations in 10 member countries of ASEAN will use more English language. In addition, ASEAN authorizes English as a "working language"; the word "working language" is concerned about those who work about ASEAN, who work in ASEAN, who work with ASEAN colleagues, who have social connection in ASEAN, who search for the opportunity in ASEAN, who have ASEAN friends, and who travel to member countries in ASEAN. Hence, people in this related concern must learn and practice English language skills for the life advantages as the populations of ASEAN Community. After the establishment of the ASEAN Community in 2015, professional mobility across ASEAN countries will be encouraged. As a result, there will be an increased competitiveness of working in professional careers among ASEAN citizens. As Rooth and Saarela (2007) stated, for better employment opportunities, member people are required to have additional skills such as English and other regional languages used in ASEAN apart from their professional skills. It is, thereby, essential for the Thai workforce to improve their English language as it is the success factor for Thailand in the ASEAN Community.

#### 4. Conclusion and Discussion

With regard to the English language in higher education, English language is used as a medium of instruction, recruitment, teaching and learning methods, academic publishing, research activity, compulsory education, and an acceptable vehicular language. The 4 situations of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) are assisting directions for managing and providing the education to suit each situation. Besides, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) is as criteria to distinguish the learners with their different language ability into 6 levels by the official examinations.

Moreover, the academic reading and writing skills are extraordinarily essential in the higher education for finding information from written sources and for expressing acquired knowledge in specific subject area.

With regard to the English for business, the roles of English in business sectors are that the success of business administration will depend on the quality of information about its customers, its competitors and the market in general. Communication can be a way to build a good relationship between employees which leads to the success of the organization. The customers develop an understanding about the company. This reflects how important language roles in external communication. Communication skills will be used as a first step to reach customers and make them satisfied with the organization's offerings. Cultural mis-understandings in business activities can be destructive to an organization. Especially for English as business lingua franca which English is compared as a shared language used by both native and non-native speakers for international communication.

With regard to the English for communication, the communication is the two-way process which its significance is an understanding. This process requires sender, message, medium, feedback, receiver, and context to complete the loop. In the aspects of English language for communication, it is a mediating tool for communicating in this globalization world. As can be seen in ASEAN Economic Community, English language is also accepted to be working language. Consequently, it is necessary for populations in 10 member countries to prepare themselves well by sharpening their English language skills.

#### 5. Recommendations

1. The research findings should be used in improving and developing English language skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing.
2. The research findings should be publicized to people who are interested in developing their English language skills.
3. There should be the study about the importance of English language in other aspects to further the English language competency.
4. There should be the quantitative research: a case study of students about English language skills in higher education, in order to provide the completion to qualitative research.

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