The Competencies Of Business English For Communications Graduates According To The Requirements By Companies In The Bangkok Metropolitan Region, Thailand

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Abstract
The purpose of this research is to study the competencies of Business English for Communication Bachelor's Degree graduates according to the requirements of companies in the Bangkok Metropolitan Region, Thailand. The research is quantitative research. The sample group in this study consisted of business managers, the HR managers, department heads, and supervisors making up a total of 148 respondents. The sampling methodology used was the Stratified Sampling with the types of business as the criteria. The statistical analysis tools used were Descriptive Statistics (Mean, S.D), and one-way ANOVA. The research demonstrated 4 results regarding the companies and their competencies requirements from Business English for Communications graduates as follows: First, the competencies of the graduates in the role of the receiver in the aspects of Business English listening and reading according to the requirements by companies in the Bangkok Metropolitan Region was high. Second, the competencies of the graduates in the role of the sender in the aspects of Business English speaking and writing according to the requirements by companies in the above mentioned region was high. Third, no significant difference was found when comparing the competencies of the graduates in the role of the receiver in the aspects of Business English listening and reading according to the requirements the 4 types of businesses namely manufacture for exports, import and export companies, hotels and travel agencies, and other businesses. Forth, no significant difference was found when comparing the competencies of the graduates in the role of the sender in the aspects of Business English speaking and writing according to the requirements the 4 types of businesses mentioned above.

Keywords: Competencies of graduates, English for Business Communication, Thai companies

Introduction

A key mission of Thai higher education institutions is to produce quality graduates who are prepared to manage the global rapid changes (Puncreobutr et al., 2018), competent in their fields and exhibit the appropriate level of English competencies for work at both the ASEAN and International level (Puncreobutr, 2014)

There are many Bachelor's degree programs producing graduates to have the competencies to communicate in English such as the English for communication program and English for business program. The Bachelor of Arts in English for Business Communication is being offered by many universities in Thailand. (Mahavijit, 2018)

These English for Business Communications programs in Thailand follow the concept by Hymes (1981) which focuses on the communicative competence that enables the learners to accurately and appropriately utilize languages for communications in the society without neglecting the importance of grammar and contexts (Wilkins, 1976). Moreover, the reality is that the knowledge of the English vocabulary, grammar and the structure are not the only skills that help the student to use English effectively, but there must be methods of instructions for the learners to achieve a truly effective competencies in English. (Nunan, 1991; Hedge, 2000).

An important matter for institutions' production of graduates is the assessments on their preparation of graduates who can truly use the English language well. Several institutions have implemented a multitude of assessments such as conducting surveys on the employers' satisfaction of the interns and of the graduates, the graduates' assessments of the institution's learning management, and program assessments by stake holders. (Yim-on, 2014; Thitivesa et al.,2017; Mahavijit, 2018)

Nevertheless, another way to find out if the graduates are really competent in English is to conduct further investigation on the English competencies requirements for the companies hiring Business English for Communications graduates for the immediate hires of high-performance candidates.

Thus, this researcher sees it appropriate to conduct a study on the competencies of Business English for Communications graduates in the roles of the receiver and the sender for the roles of senders according to the requirements by companies in the Bangkok Metropolitan Region, Thailand. This study will help institutions to develop programs to match companies' requirements, to benefit companies by hiring suitable personnel while their requirements continue to evolve, and to satisfy the national policy to produce the high qualified graduate for the ASEAN and international labor demands.

Research Objective

1. To study the level of competencies of Business English for Communications graduates in the role of the receiver according to the requirements by companies in the Bangkok Metropolitan Region, Thailand

2. To study the level of competencies of Business English for Communications graduates in the role of the sender according to the requirements by companies in the Bangkok Metropolitan Region, Thailand

3. To compare the level of competencies of Business English for Communications graduates in the role of the receiver and the sender according to the requirements by companies in the Bangkok Metropolitan Region, Thailand

Research Method
This research is quantitative

The population was companies in the Bangkok Metropolitan Region using English to operate their businesses and are the employers of Business English for Communications interns and graduates. The sample group was selected from the business managers, HR managers, heads of department, and supervisors, a total of 148 respondents. The sampling methodology used was stratified sampling using business types as the criteria.
    The variables
    1. The Independent variable is the type of businesses in the Bangkok Metropolitan Region which are the manufacturers of export goods, import and export business, hotel and travel agencies, and others businesses
    2. The Dependent variable is the Business English for Communications graduates' competencies adapted from the concepts of English capabilities for communications by Bachman and Palmer(1996) Wongsothon(2001) and Thitivesa et al.(2017).
    2.1 The English competencies in the role of the receiver consists of 2 aspects 1) The business English listening competencies: understanding and grasping the essence of business negotiations, understanding and specifying the details of business negotiation, interpreting the reasoning of business negotiation partners, identifying the objective or indirect intentions of negotiation partners, and identifying the objectives or indirect intentions of negotiation partners.2) The Business English reading capabilities: understanding business vocabulary and expressions, transposing information from documents into own words, identifying the theme and main ideas of documents, analyzing and evaluating the relationship with in contents, proposing ideas from the reading for decision making.
    2.2 The English competencies in the role of the sender consists of 2 aspects 1) the Business English speaking competencies: use of appropriate business words and expressions, use of correct sentence structures in negotiations, use proper English dialogues to interact and maintain relationship with clients, expressing the focus of ideas and deliver clear business presentations, summarizing business negotiation issues or tie the outcomes to the negotiation goals.2) the competencies of Business English writing: use of simple words, idioms or grammar, and sentence patterns, use of complex words, idioms or grammar, and sentence patterns, choosing words, formats, or writing styles to fit the business communications objectives, preparing documents that can be followed step by step, preparing documents containing clear and complete business information.

The instrument used in this study was questionnaire created by this researcher. The questionnaire has the discrimination value of .301 -.901 and its Reliability is .89. The analysis tools used were descriptive statistics (Mean, S.D) and one-way ANOVA

The duration to study was on March 2020 – April 2020

Findings

The findings of this study were divided into 5 stages.

1. Information about the participants

The respondents of the survey on the competencies of the Business English for Communication graduates according to the requirements by companies in the Bangkok Metropolitan Region was grouped into 2 categories, the position held at the companies and types of business.

    1.1 The respondents grouped by positions held at the companies is shown in Table 1.

    1.2

Table 1: Respondents grouped by positions held at the company

Position	Number	Percentage
Business managers and HR managers	70	47.29
Heads of department and Supervisors	78	52.71
Total	148	100

From table 1, the management staff accounted for 47.29% while the heads of departments and supervisors were 52.1% showing close proportions among each group respondents.

    1.1 The respondents grouped by the types of business is shown in Table 2.

    1.2

Table 2: Respondents grouped by the types of business (N=148)

Type of Business	Number	Percentage
Manufacturers of export goods	36	24.3
Import and Export companies	36	24.3
Hotels and Travel agencies	36	24.3
Oher businesses	72	27.4
Total	148	100

Table 2 shows that the respondents from manufacturers, import and export businesses together with hotel and travel businesses each accounted for 24.3% while the

respondents from other businesses accounted for 27.4% indicating very close proportion among each group respondents.

2. The level of competencies of Business English for Communications graduates in the role of the receiver

The level of competencies of the Business English for Communication graduates in the role of the receiver according to the requirements by companies in the Bangkok Metropolitan Region, Thailand is shown in table 3

Table 3 The level of competencies of Business English for Communications graduates in the role of the receiver (N=384)

Competencies	Aspects of competencies	MEAN	S.D.	Requirement level
Business English listening competencies	understanding and grasping the essence of business negotiations	4.060	1.0577	high
	understanding and specifying the details of business negotiation	4.081	1.0531	high
	interpreting the reasoning of business negotiation partners	4.033	1.0062	high
	Identifying the objective or direct intentions of negotiation partners	4.128	1.0516	high
	Identifying the objectives or indirect intentions of negotiation partners	4.060	1.0116	high
	Total Business English reading competencies	4.073	.9190	high
Business English reading competencies	understanding business vocabulary and expressions	4.027	1.0623	high
	transposing information from documents into own words	4.101	1.1172	high
	identifying the theme and main ideas of documents	4.060	1.1501	high
	analyzing and evaluate the relationship with in contents	4.094	1.1024	high
	proposing ideas from the reading for decision making	4.121	1.0162	high
	Total Business English reading competencies	4.081	.9844	high
Total Business English competencies in the role of the receiver		4.077	.9256	high

Table 3 shows that the requirements for competencies of Business English for Communications graduate in the role of the receiver by companies in the Bangkok

Metropolitan Region were high (4.077). Considering by category, the total requirement for Business English listening competencies and the total Business English reading competencies were also high with MEAN = 4.073 and 4.081 respectively.

Aspects wise, for the requirements for the Business English listening competencies, it was found that the competencies for identifying the objective or direct intentions of negotiation partners was the highest (4.128) followed by understanding and specifying the details of business negotiation (4.081), understanding and grasping the essence of business negotiations (4.060), identifying the objectives or indirect intentions of negotiation partners (4.060), and interpreting the reasoning of business negotiation partners in that order.

Regarding the requirements for each aspect under English Business reading competencies, it was found that proposing ideas from the reading for decision making was the highest (4.121), followed by transposing information from documents into own words (4.101), analyzing and evaluating the relationship with in contents (4.094), identifying the theme and main ideas of documents (4.060), and understanding business vocabulary and expressions (4.027) in that order.

3. The level of competencies of Business English for Communications graduates in the role of the sender

The competencies of Business English for Communications graduates in the role of the sender according to the requirements by companies in the Bangkok Metropolitan Region, Thailand is shown in Table 4

Table 4 The competencies of Business English for Communications graduates in the role of sender (N=384)

Competencies	Aspects of competencies	mean	S.D.	Requirement level
Business English speaking competencies	use of appropriate business words and expressions	3.966	.9994	High
	use of correct sentence structures in negotiations	4.040	1.0554	High
	use proper English dialogues to interact and maintain relationship with clients	4.074	1.0438	High
	expressing the focus of ideas and deliver clear business presentations	4.000	1.0432	High
	summarizing business negotiation issues or tie the outcomes to the negotiation goals	3.993	1.0201	High
	Total Business English speaking competencies	4.014	.9023	High
Business English writing competencies	use of simple words, idioms or grammar, and sentence patterns	3.966	1.0394	High
	use of complex words, idioms or grammar, and sentence patterns	4.006	1.0658	High
	choosing words, formats, or writing styles to fit the business communications objectives	4.101	1.1880	High
	preparing documents that can be followed step by step	4.013	1.0941	High
	preparing documents containing clear and complete business information	3.885	1.1097	High
	Total Business English writing competencies	3.994	.9856	High
Total Business English competencies in the role of the sender		4.004	.9284	High

Table 4 shows that the requirements for Business English for Communications graduates in the role of the sender by companies in the Bangkok Metropolitan Region were high (4.004)

Considering by category, the total requirement for Business English speaking competencies and the total Business English writing competencies were also high with MEAN = 4.014 and 3.994 respectively.

Aspects wise, for the level of requirements for the Business English speaking competencies, it was found that the competencies for the use proper English dialogues to interact and maintain relationship with clients was the highest (4.074) followed by the use of correct sentence structures in negotiations (4.040), expressing the focus of ideas and deliver clear business presentations (4.000), summarizing business negotiation

issues or tie the outcomes to the negotiation goals (3.993), and the use of appropriate business words and expressions (3.996) in that order.

Regarding the requirements for each aspect under English Business writing competencies, it was found that choosing words, formats, or writing styles to fit the business communications objectives was the highest (4.101) followed by preparing documents that can be followed step by step (4.013), the use of complex words, idioms or grammar, and sentence patterns (4.006), the use of simple words, idioms or grammar, and sentence patterns (3.996), and preparing documents containing clear and complete business information (3.885) in that order.

4. The comparison of competencies of Business English for Communications graduates in the role of the receiver

The comparison of the level of competencies of Business English for Communications graduates in the role of the receiver according to the requirements by companies in the Bangkok Metropolitan Region, Thailand grouped by types of companies is displayed in table 5.

Table 5. The comparison of the level of competencies of Business English for Communications graduates in the role of the receiver according to the requirements by companies in the Bangkok Metropolitan Region

Business English competencies	Source of Variance	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F	p
Listening competencies	Between Groups	.580	3	.193	.225	.879
	Within Groups	123.592	144	.858		
	Total	124.172	147			
Reading competencies	Between Groups	.580	3	.193	.196	.899
	Within Groups	141.887	144	.985		
	Total	142.467	147			
Total competencies in the role of the receiver	Between Groups	.451	3	.150	.172	.915
	Within Groups	125.491	144	.871		
	Total	125.942	147			

* p< .05 ** p< .01

From table 5, the comparison of the competencies of Business English for Communications graduates in the role of the receiver categorized by the types of companies has found that the difference of requirements among all of the 4 company types namely manufactures of export goods, import and export companies, hotel and travel agencies, and other businesses for the competencies of Business English listening and reading in the role of the receiver was not significant.

5. The comparison of competencies of Business English for Communications graduates in the role of the sender

The comparison of the level of competencies of Business English for Communications graduates in the role of the sender according to the requirements by companies in the Bangkok Metropolitan Region, Thailand grouped by types of companies is displayed in table 6

Table 6 the comparison of the level of competencies of Business English for Communications graduates in the role of the sender according to the requirements by companies in the Bangkok Metropolitan Region

Business English competencies	Source of Variance	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F	p
Speaking competencies	Between Groups	2.244	3	.748	.917	.434
	Within Groups	117.443	144	.816		
	Total	119.687	147			
Writing competencies	Between Groups	3.413	3	1.138	1.175	.321
	Within Groups	139.383	144	.968		
	Total	142.796	147			
Overall of competencies in the role of sender	Between Groups	2.670	3	.890	1.033	.380
	Within Groups	124.037	144	.861		
	Total	126.707	147			

* p< .05 ** p< .01

From table 6, the comparison of the competencies of Business English for Communications graduates in the role of the sender categorized by the types of companies has found that the difference of requirements among all of the 4 company types namely manufactures of export goods, import and export companies, hotel and travel agencies, and other businesses for the competencies of Business English speaking and writing in the role of the receiver was not significant

Summary of findings
The result of the study
1. Basic information about respondents

The respondents were categorized by the position held at companies. It was found that 47.29% of respondents was the management which were the managers in general and HR managers and the remaining 52.7 % of respondents were the operations leads namely supervisors and heads of the department. But, if we consider the type of business, 24.3%

of respondents were from manufacturers of export goods, 24.3% were from import and export companies, 24.3 % belonged to hotels and travel agencies, and 27.4% were from other businesses. There was a close proportioning among respondents from each type of companies in which the Business English for Communications graduates were employed.

2. The level of the competencies of Business English for Communications graduates in the role of the receiver

The investigation on the level of the requirements for the competencies of Business English for Communications graduates in the role of the receiver from companies in the Bangkok Metropolitan Region found that the level of requirements in total and by categories were high

The top 3 ranking of the requirements for Business English listening competencies in the role of the receiver were: identifying the objectives or indirect intentions of negotiation partners, followed by understanding and specifying the details of business negotiation, and understanding and grasping the essence of business negotiations.

The top 3 ranking of the requirements for Business English reading competencies in the role of the receiver were: proposing ideas from the reading for decision making, followed by transposing information from documents into own words, and analyzing and evaluating the relationship with in contents.

3. The level of the competencies of Business English for Communications graduates in the role of the sender

The investigation on the level of the requirements for the competencies of Business English for Communications graduates in the role of the sender from companies in the Bangkok Metropolitan Region found that the level of requirements in total and by categories were high.

The top 3 ranking of the requirements for Business English speaking competencies in the role of the sender were: use proper English dialogues to interact and maintain relationship with clients followed by the use of correct sentence structures in negotiations, and expressing the focus of ideas and deliver clear business presentations (4.000).

The top 3 ranking of the requirements for Business English writing competencies in the role of the sender were: choosing words, formats, or writing styles to fit the business communications objective followed by preparing documents that can be followed step by step (4.013), and the use of complex words, idioms or grammar, and sentence patterns (4.006).

4. The comparison of competencies of Business English for Communications graduates in the role of the receiver

The comparison of the level of competencies of Business English for Communications graduates in the role of the receiver according to the requirements by

companies in the Bangkok Metropolitan Region by types of business found no difference among the requirements from all 4 types namely manufacturers of export goods, import and export companies, hotels and travel agencies.

5. The comparison of competencies of Business English for Communications graduates in the role of the sender by types of business

The comparison of the level of competencies of Business English for Communications graduates in the role of the sender according to the requirements by companies in the Bangkok Metropolitan Region by types of business found no difference among the requirements from all 4 types namely manufacturers of export goods, import and export companies, hotels and travel agencies.

Recommendations

Recommend for using the findings from this research.

From the findings that the level of competencies of Business English for Communications in the role of the receiver was high furthermore, the top 3 Business English listening competencies requirements placed importance on the ability to grasp the key points and identify the intentions from negotiation partners, and for Business English reading competencies, the top 3 requirements focused on the ability to analyze, transposing, and present information from documents to the management for decision making. Thus, higher education institutions and academic program managers should adapt these findings to improve the learning management processes to meet the requirements for potential employers of graduates.

From the findings that the level of competencies of Business English for Communications in the role of the sender was high, in addition the top 3 Business English speaking competencies requirements placed importance on the ability to iterate opinions and present business data while maintaining relationship with clients, and for Business English writing competencies, the top 3 requirements focused on the ability to compose various business documents such as letters, summaries, manuals, reports, product sheets, brochures, etc. These compositions must be prepared in appropriate wordings and formats, grammatically correct, easy to follow, and the contents presented must conform to the company communications objectives. Thus, higher education institutions and academic program managers should adapt these findings to improve the various practical learning experiences appropriate for the Thai business conditions.

From the finding that manufacturers of export goods, import and export companies, Hotels and travel agencies, and other businesses requirements for the competencies of Business English for Communications graduates in the roles of the receiver and the sender were not statistically different, therefore, curriculum mangers may be able to revise the Business English for Communications curriculum with no dependencies on the types of business.

Recommendation for further research

From the finding that manufacturers of export goods, import and export companies, Hotels and travel agencies, and other businesses requirements for the competencies of Business English for Communications graduates by categories were not statistically different, hence in order to validate this findings, further studies should be done on other types of company for a more complete set of data.

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