



Study of Communication Strategy Use Among Thai EFL Students: A Case Study of GE Students at RMUTI SKC

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Abstract

This research aims to investigate communication strategies used in oral communication among Thai EFL students of different English proficiency levels, when speaking English in real context with three main objectives. These include 1) to find out the frequency of communication strategy use of Thai EFL students at the low, medium, and high levels of English proficiency; 2) to compare communication strategies use in oral communication among Thai EFL students of different English proficiency: low, medium, and high level, and 3) To compare communication strategies use in oral communication between business administration students and engineering students. The number of participants were 130 students studying in English as GE courses at Rajamangala University of Technology Isan Sakon Nakhon Campus, academic year 2024 including 65 engineering students and 65 business administration students obtained through purposive sampling method. The data were collected through 2 research instruments: English proficiency test, and questionnaires. The data for this study were analyzed by the assistance of SPSS program considering on descriptive statistics: mean (\bar{x}), standard deviation (S.D.), ANOVA, and T-test for Independent Sample. The results in this study indicated that the Business Administration students and Engineering students of low and medium level of English proficiency usually used CSs and high level of English proficiency occasionally used CSs. The results also showed that the students with different levels of English proficiency did not use CSs differently. Moreover, Business Administration students and Engineering students did not use CSs differently.

Keywords: EFL Students, English Proficiency, Oral Communication, Communication Strategies

1- Introduction

If the globe begins to move and globalization happens, English plays a major role in many global markets (Chopra, 2015). Asia has about 800 million people who speak English out of all English speakers in the country, there are about 1.5 billion people (Herscovitch, 2016). In addition, the working language of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) was declared to be English. Therefore, the fact that English language proficiency is a significant consideration for Thai citizens cannot be ignored, as Thailand is one of the member countries of ASEAN to interact successfully within ASEAN countries. In other words, Thai citizens, especially students, need to be trained to be able to use English efficiently before entering the job force or completing higher studies. It is simple to have good communication when both the speaker and the listener use their native tongue to convey meaning. However, using a second or foreign language to communicate will cause issues. The gaps between the speaker and the listener arise from their limited linguistic or grammatical expertise. According to Richard and Renandya (2002), "A large percentage of the world's language learners are studying English to develop proficiency in speaking". Since speaking a second language requires a sophisticated process

of meaning construction, it has been seen as the most difficult of the four talents (Celce Murcia and Olshta, 2000 as cited in Gruyter, 2006).

However, when compared internationally, the general level of English skills of Thai citizens, especially communication skills, is still very poor, although Thai students have learned English for several years since pre-primary school (Clark, 2014). In addition, the Education First English Proficiency Index (2023) stated that Thai citizens are still ranked at a very low level of English proficiency, 101st out of 113th countries in Asia, while English is a popular working language.

Table 1 The Ranking of English Proficiency of People in Asia Countries, Year 2023

02 Singapore 631	60 Bangladesh 504	88 Afghanistan 456
20 Philippines 578	60 India 504	90 Myanmar 450
25 Malaysia 568	64 Pakistan 497	90 Kyrgyzstan 450

29Hong Kong 558	67 Sri Lanka 491	98Cambodia 421
49South Korea 525	79 Indonesia 473	101 Thailand 416
57 Nepal 507	82 China 464	104 Kazakhstan 415
58 Vietnam 505	87 Japan 457	112 Tajikistan 388

Communication techniques (CSs) tend to be a significant element in encouraging individuals who study English as a second or foreign language to reach their objective of communication in English. According to Bialystok (1990), students are expected to develop CSs to address target language deficits and ultimately develop communicative competence in order to solve communicative problems. In addition, Canale (1983) claimed that CSs are useful instruments to compensate for inadequate competence for both native speakers and foreign language learners. Therefore, the notion of learning in the CSs used by Thai EFL students for oral communication came to mind. Some research on CSs have concentrated on the relationship between CSs and other influences, such as contact with native speakers or the frequency of communication techniques being used. However, few studies have examined students with different levels of English proficiency and their use of oral communication techniques, particularly undergraduate students in the Thai educational context.

Enhancing speaking abilities for learners of foreign languages can be difficult, as they often have limited chances to practice the target language beyond the classroom setting. Speaking activities offer students chances to rehearse, allowing them to practice, enhance their real-life speaking skills, and build greater confidence in a safe environment (Harmer, 2010). Before completing their university studies, students must prepare for their future careers. At university, they learn how to create resumes, draft cover letters, and perform job interviews as candidates, which is part of the recruitment process for companies. Recruitment can be seen as a competitive business activity. It involves the process of identifying individuals to fill positions within a company, which encompasses defining job requirements, screening applicants, creating a shortlist, and conducting interviews. Interviewing is the most prevalent. (Dafoulas et al., 2002).

Communication strategies are crucial and helpful techniques that help Thai undergraduates stay and survive in English conversations. Communication problems that Thai students frequently encounter when conversing in English include a lack of relevant and necessary vocabulary and listening difficulties. However, the majority of earlier research focused on how students used communication techniques in everyday speaking scenarios. The speaker and listener must discover some efficient ways to express their ideas in English, which is related to the significance of speaking the language. It points to adapting with different communicative circumstances. In the other side, it is additionally utilized to compensate the learners' insufficiencies so that they can survive in their communication within the target language. Those effective ways which offer assistance to individuals to

communicate within the nearness of such insufficiencies can be called as communication strategies.

Issues with communicating Thai undergraduates frequently struggle with listening comprehension and a lack of appropriate vocabulary when speaking English, thus communication strategies are crucial and practical tools that help them to remain and thrive in English-speaking interactions. Language learners must use communication strategies when speaking a foreign language since they are useful tools that help them carry on conversations more easily. However, whenever Thai undergraduates have to speak English, they are faced with some difficulties in all English skills. Listening was the highest-ranked issue among Thai EFL students because they felt unfamiliar with different English accents, and they did not have enough vocabulary to communicate in English which caused them to feel confused.

This present study, the investigator sought to ascertain the communication strategies of Thai English Foreign Language students of different English proficiency at the low, medium, and high levels when speaking English in a real context, and to compare the use of CSs between Business Administration students and Engineering students.

2- Research Questions

1. What is the frequency of communication strategies that Thai EFL students at the low, medium, and high levels of English proficiency utilizing when communicating in oral communication?
2. Are there any significant differences in the use of communication strategies among students who are at the low, medium, and high level of English proficiency?
3. Are there any significant differences in the use of communication strategies between business administration and engineering students?

3- Significance of the Study

The study investigated the communication strategies of Thai EFL students at the low, medium and high levels of English proficiency in general education students (GE) with the opportunity to use English for communication in the class with teacher and classmates with different English backgrounds. The results will be greatly beneficial to the university regarding the improvement of the students skills of English for communication.

4- Research Objectives

1. To find out the frequency of communication strategies that Thai EFL students at the low, medium, and high levels of English proficiency utilize when communicating in oral communication.
2. To investigate and compare CSs (communication strategies) used in oral communication among Thai EFL students of different English proficiency: low, medium, and high level.
3. To investigate and compare the significant differences of CS use between business administration students and engineering students.

5- Literature Reviews

English Foreign Language (EFL)

Background of EFL

The study of English in Swedish schools became possible in 1807, but its standing was poor. French, German, Latin and Greek were the prevailing languages in schools. English was essentially similar to languages such as German and French in the 1920s, and German became less popular at the end of WW II, while English gained prominence. English was adopted as the first foreign language to be taught in Swedish schools since the fall of 1946. When the Swedish primary school, Grundskolan, was established in 1962, English became compulsory and French and German were options (Flodin 2008). Standardized exams in English were also launched in 1962 and were replaced by national tests in 1994. The focus of English studies was initially on the written language, which is still the case today in many nations. However, it was emphasized in LGY 69 that the spoken language should get the same respect as the written language, and since then, when it comes to speaking English, Sweden is considered one of the strongest countries in the world. Those of us who were in school during the 1970s and 1980s recall the language laboratories where the teacher will personally supervise you to learn English pronunciation. The national tests in English after LPO 94 involve a speech part. Today, the speech part is deemed to be one-fifth of the overall exam score. The language feedback you get has long been recognized as a very significant part of learning the new language while learning a foreign language. Some research, such as Hart and Risley (1995), looked at children learning their native language and found that the consistency of the language input obtained by children from their parents had a lifelong effect on their children's language skills. This research was followed by Huttenlocher, Vasilyeva, Cymerman and Levine (2002) who found that by using a more complicated voice, teachers in classrooms could strengthen the language skills of the students. It was also proposed that children could acquire oral skills before learning how to read and write the language, and that they would perform quality performance automatically if a pupil only had adequate quality input from the language. However, language production in itself has recently been considered a significant component of second-language learning. Language performance is also used in oral or written replies to questions from the teacher to determine what the children have experienced. But language output has recently been regarded in its own right as a learning mechanism, where learners measure their output ability and benefit from the input they receive. Van Patten (2003) talks about two processes in strategies for language output, access and processing. Firstly, the student has to look for the language that he wants in his mind and the student has to make an attempt to bring the words together in a grammatically correct expression. Although the procedure is not yet standardized, this involves a significant commitment from the student. Research by Swain (2005) found that their speech and writing skills were still not as good as those students who had the language as their native language, even though second language students got a lot of good feedback. It has since been proposed that it is important for learning to use the language to try to generate the second language of speech and writing. Swain also indicated that the students know from the input that they get what additional data they need while attempting to generate the second language. It was also proposed that

children could acquire oral skills before learning how to read and write the language, and that they would perform quality performance automatically if a pupil only had adequate quality input from the language. English is considered a foreign language in Thailand (Suetae, 2010). During the reign of King Mongkut, English was first adopted and taught to the royal family and Thai government officials (year 1804-1868). The primary goal was to support the country by using English to negotiate with foreign traders, particularly from European countries (Aksornkul, 1980). In 1996, as a compulsory subject for all primary school children from Grade 1, the government supported learning the English language in primary schools (Foley, 2005). Foley (2005) also suggested that the key priority was to improve students' language skills in order to serve a variety of purposes: correspondence, knowledge learning, use of English in tertiary level research, job development, and so on. In the school curriculum, the Ministry of Education of Thailand declared English to be a key subject and thus compulsory for all Thai students. For the teaching and learning of English, they have 12 years of free general education, compulsory from Grade 1 (Prathom 1) to Grade 9 (Mattayom 3) and optional from Grade 10 (Mattayom 4) to Grade 12 (Mattayom 6) (Wongsothorn, 2000, as cited in Foley, 2005).

Furthermore, the majority of Thai universities currently provide a wide range of English courses to their students (Clark, 2014), and Thai curricula use English as the language of their teaching. In Thailand, students who learn English are referred to as Thai EFL students, and in this study, Thai EFL students refer to the first-year students in the Business Administration major and Engineering major at Raiamangala University of Technology Isan Sakon Nakhon Campus.

Communication Strategies (CSs)

Definition of Communication Strategies

"A systematic technique used by a speaker to express his or her meaning when faced with some difficulty" Corder 1981.

"A learner tries to fix his linguistic problems by using his own knowledge messages without necessarily considering situational appropriateness" Tarone 1981.

"A CS occurs when an individual faces problem in reaching a particular communicative goal and he tries to use a potentially conscious plan to solve those linguistic problems" Faerch and Kasper 1983.

Classification of Communication Strategies

The first researcher who proposed a grouping of CSs used by second language learners was Tarone. He grouped the CSs into five large areas: Avoidance, Paraphrasing, Borrowing, Appealing for Assistance, and Mime (non-verbal) (Tarone, 1977, as cited in Cheng, 2007). The details are below

1. Avoidance strategies

- a. Topic avoidance: A second language listener tries to ignore ideas that are mentioned by a speaker that he is not acquainted with.
- b. Message abandonment: A speaker continues to discuss the subject, but may not complete a term and

stop mid-sentence because he doesn't have enough to complete it.

2. Paraphrasing strategies

- a. Approximation: A second language speaker can also use a word close to the correct answer, even if the speaker acknowledges that it does not have precisely the same definition.
- b. Word coinage: a speaker can generate non-existent words or build a new language that is quickly created. Approved by the person, but which is not really a true term.
- c. Circumlocution: Instead of using the required target language structure or meaning of words, the second language speaker defines or illustrates attributes, actions or thoughts on an entity or activity, such as its color, scale, and form.

3. Borrowing strategies

- a. Language switch: a speaker, during of speaking English, uses his mother tongue.
- b. Literal translation: It is a translation that closely fits the originating language or first language type here. It's localization, word by word.

4. Appealing for assistance

- a. Comprehension check: a speaker asks to verify whether or not the interlocutor knows what he has said.
- b. Clarification requests: It suggests that a listener requests for an interpretation about what he does not know.
- c. Confirmation check: A listener repeats the term or phrase the interlocutor has spoken to clarify whether or not what he has heard is right.

5. Mime or non-verbal strategies

- a. Body language: It happens when students use acts to elaborate on their sentence or letter if they do not know the words to be said.
- b. Facial expression: Smiling or frowning, for example, may reflect the mood of a person or how he thinks or responds to some details.
- c. Eye contact: It happens when two people stare at each other's eyes simultaneously. As a non-verbal coping technique, an example of eye contact is where a person rolls his eyes to indicate that he is bored or has little involvement in the discussion.

6- Related research

The use of CSs used by South America and Asian speakers of English as a second language (non-native speakers) was explored by Tarone and Yule (1989) in particular. The outcome shows that most of the participants used circumlocution, approximation, evasion, abandoning of the post, mime and translation of literature. Especial, circumlocution and approximation occurred with high frequency. In the Grade 9 (M.3) English Curriculum of the Attarkiah Islamiah Academy, Binhayearong (2009)

researched the contact methods used by students with high and low English proficiency. Participants were 20 students whose average grades in four English subjects were used as a measure to classify them into high and low proficiency classes over two years from grade 7-9 (M.1 - M.2). The results revealed that there were major differences in the use of communication strategies by high- and low-skilled students and the use of communication strategies in role-play by students and the tasks of concept formulation. Chuanchaisit and Prapphal (2009) examined the impact of English language abilities and contact techniques on the ability of Thai university students to communicate orally. Thai Chamber of Commerce University's 100 third year English majored students were divided into high and low skill classes and required to complete the Oral Communication test and Speaking Test Inventory. It was found that the levels of language abilities and forms of CSs used had a substantial influence on the oral communication ability of the students. Numerous research have examined how Asian EFL undergraduates used communication strategies. For example, Mei and Nathalang (2009) studied first-year Chinese undergraduates to determine how their academic subjects, gender, and English proficiency level affected their usage of communication strategies. The results showed that comprehension checks and requests for explanation were the most often used strategies by the students, while language switching, word coinage, and message abandonment were the least common.

Preedawat (2010) discussed the techniques are used in actual scenarios by foreign undergraduate students in Bangkok while speaking English. The 400 undergraduate students were invited to complete the questionnaires and attend the semi-structured interviews at four universities in Bangkok. The findings revealed that Circumlocution (at most), Self-repair, Approximation, Smurfing and Asking for support, respectively, were commonly used by most students.

According to Bialystok (1997), language competency is the most important predictor of the usage of a certain communication strategy. There is no statistically significant correlation between language competency and the usage of communication strategies, according to the contradictory findings published by Kaivanpanah, Yamouty, and Karami (2012). Malasit & Sarobol (2014) provide evidence for this claim, stating that communication strategy choices were unaffected by English speaking ability.

In a study with Thai undergraduates majoring in English, Somsai and Intaraprasert (2011) discovered that the students employed a variety of strategies to deal with their communication issues due to their limited linguistic knowledge and encounters with unfamiliar words. These strategies included utilizing nonverbal cues to communicate with the other person, translating some unfamiliar words or phrases into Thai, calling someone else for help, and requesting help from the other person.

The use of communication strategies by Thai science and non-science students was investigated by Saengpakdeejit (2016). In contrast to strategies for avoiding communication problems, such as utilizing simple words, simple expressions, and non-verbal expressions, she discovered that the students used strategies for establishing communication more frequently. Phonhan (2019) examined the usage of communication strategies in oral English communication by Thai engineering students. The results showed that while accuracy-oriented strategies were used the least, engineering

students most frequently used nonverbal strategies. The communication issues of the third-year students were investigated by Sunitisarn et al. (2017). According to their findings, the students' restricted vocabulary and phrases, inability to comprehend complex grammatical structures, and perceived unfamiliarity with the accents of English speakers all contributed to their inability to speak the language accurately and effectively.

7- Methodology

Research Design

This study was designed to investigate or communication strategies and problems by Thai EFI students at low, medium, and high levels of English proficiency in general education students (GE) at Rajamangala University of Technology Isan Sakon Nakhon Campus. Based on the purpose of research, nature of the research questions, techniques and methods used in data collection and analysis. One main categorization of research approaches and designs is quantitative and qualitative research. Quantitative research is concerned with studying a phenomenon to explain, predict, control, and generalize. It is about the quantifying relationships between variables. Data analysis involves statistical procedures. Quantitative research is associated with descriptive research and qualitative research, on the other hand, is concerned with gaining insight into phenomena of interest by collecting qualitative data gathering by participation. In carrying out a case study, several approaches ideally should be used, including quantitative and qualitative research. This research could be qualitative as well as quantitative in nature which is formed through the study of reports and materials published by various agencies and also is in the pattern structured questionnaires from Thai EFL students of GE majors and concluding.

8- Participants

130 students were participants in this study. The samples were the students from Engineering and Business Administration Departments. Therefore, the participants were all 65 engineering students and 65 business administration students. They were selected via purposive sampling. The participants have similar age, ranging from 18 to 22 years old at the time of conducting the study. The GE major students were the main participants in this study because they are considered EFL students which is suitable for the study.

The survey was conducted at Rajamangala University between June and July 2024 and the distribution of questionnaires were carried out only during the daytime from 11 A.M. to 5 P.M. by the researchers. The participants were divided into three groups which were low, medium, and high levels based on the NIETS score, and the NIETS criteria are as follows:

- 0-25 points is in the low level.
- 26-75 points is in the medium level.
- 76-100 points is in a high level

9- Research Instruments

1. Frequency Proficiency Test

The participants were divided in three groups which are low, medium, and high level based on the NIETS (National Institute of Educational Testing Service) score

The survey was conducted at Rajamangala University between June and July 2024 and the distribution of questionnaires were carried out only during the daytime from 11 A.M. to 5 P.M. by the researchers.

2. Questionnaire

The questionnaire that was used in this study was written both in English and Thai to avoid the problem of questions being misunderstood, and it was divided into two parts. In the first part finds out the participants' demographic data which contains 3 items intended to obtain information on the respondents, background including gender, age, the level of education in which learners started learning English in the field of studies business administration major, and engineering major, and the second part is consisting of the 13 self-evaluation sentences about CSs used in oral communication adopted from the taxonomy of CSs composed by Tarone (1977) which is cited in Cheng (2007). The 13 sentences were as follows:

1. Topic avoidance (I stop talking about unknown words or unfamiliar topics that are raised by the speaker.)
2. Message abandonment: I leave a conversation incomplete when facing a communication problem.
3. Approximation: When I can not think of an English word, I use another word phrase, or sentence that meaning the same to express the idea.
4. Word coinage: I try to create a new word for the same terms I do not know.
5. Circumlocution: Try to explain the characteristics of the object or action instead of using an English word I do not know.
6. Language switch: When I cannot think of an appropriate word, phrase, or sentence, I use the Thai word.
7. Literal translation: I translate directly from my mother tongue when I have difficulties expressing certain meanings in English'.
8. Comprehension check: When I said something in English, and I am not sure whether the listener understands, I ask him to check.
9. Clarification requests: If I am not sure about what the speaker says, I ask the speaker for help.
10. Confirmation check: If I am not sure whether what I heard is correct, I repeat the word or sentence that said by the speaker in order to confirm the correction.
11. Body language: I use hand gestures to communicate when I want to praise someone, but I do not know how to say it in English, I make a thumb up instead.
12. Facial expression: I use facial expressions to communicate instead of English words or sentences when I do not know English.
13. Eye contact: I use eyes contact to communicate when I do not know English.

The second part was a five-point Linkert Scale questionnaire. Every item had five response alternatives: "Always, Usually, Occasionally, Seldom, and Never".

"Always" is during a communication in English you use Communication Strategies more than 10 times a week.

"Usually" is during communication in English you use Communication Strategies 7-10 times a week.

"Occasionally" is during a communication in English you use Communication Strategies 4-6 times a week.

"Seldom" is during a communication in English you use Communication Strategies 1-3 times a week.

"Never" is during communication in English you never use Communication Strategies.

10- Data Collection

The data collection process was conducted the business administration and engineering department of Rajamangala University of Technology Isan Sakon Nakhon Campus in the month of June and July 2024.

1. In the first step of data collection, each participant was required to respond to the NIETST (National Institute of Educational Testing Service) test to determine their English proficiency level (low, med, high) within the defined time of 60 minutes.

2. After finishing the NIETST (National Institute of Educational Testing Service) test, the questionnaire was administered to the students at the end of class, and they were asked to complete the questionnaires.

11- Data Analysis

In response to the research questions, the data were analyzed quantitatively. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS/PC) program was used to analyze this quantitative data from part I to part II. The frequency of use for each type of CS by the participants in each group was tallied and tabulated.

1. Descriptive Statistics. To answer the research question 1.
2. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) is used to test for the research question 2.
3. An Independent-Sample T Test is used to test for the research question 3.

12- Results

The results are discussed according to the three research questions.

Demographic distribution of students' respondents

We collected the respondents' information in term of age, gender, and level of education.

Table 2 Age of the Respondents

Age	Frequency of Number of Respondents	Percentage
18-19	35	26.9
20-21	62	47.7
22-23	33	25.4
Total	130	100

From Table 2, there were 130 business administration students and engineering students from the Faculty of Industry and Technology in Rajamangala University of Technology Isan, Sakon Nakhon Campus administered with the questionnaires. The information revealed that most of the students were aged 20-21 years old (47.7%), followed by 18-19 years old (26.9%) and 22-23 years old (25.4%).

Table 3 Gender of the Respondents

Gender	Frequency of Number of Respondents	Percentage
Male	69	53.1
Female	61	46.9
Total	130	100

From Table 3, there were 130 students participated in the study. The information revealed that there are more male students than female students with a percentage of 53.1 and 46.9, respectively.

Table 4 Level of Education of the Respondents

Level of education	Frequency of Number of Respondents	Percentage
Bachelor	103	79.2
Diploma	27	20.8
Total	130	100

From Table 4, there were 130 students participated in the study. The information revealed that there are more Bachelor degree students (79.2%) than Diploma students (20.8%).

Research Question 1

What is the frequency use of communication strategies that Thai EFL students at the low, medium, and high levels of English proficiency utilizing when communicating in oral communication?

Table 5 Descriptive Analysis for CSs Preferences of the Students in Low, Medium, and High Levels of English Proficiency

Oral Communication Strategies	Low Level			Medium Level			High Level		
	\bar{x}	S.D.	Degree of CS use	\bar{x}	S.D.	Degree of CS use	\bar{x}	S.D.	Degree of CS use
	1. Topic avoidance	3.98	.888	Usually	3.26	.536	Usually	3.40	.990
2. Message abandonment	3.97	.725	Usually	3.23	.945	Usually	3.12	1.101	Usually
3. Approximation	3.98	.848	Usually	3.26	.973	Usually	1.47	.640	Seldom
4. Word coinage	3.76	1.081	Usually	3.12	1.070	Usually	3.46	1.102	Usually
5. Circumlocution	3.97	.898	Usually	3.42	.944	Usually	3.28	.990	Usually
6. Language switch	3.83	.881	Usually	3.44	1.035	Usually	1.53	.799	Seldom
7. Literal translation	4.05	.887	Always	3.28	.940	Usually	1.73	.704	Seldom

8. Comprehension check	4.07	.896	Always	3.51	.848	Usually	3.39	.996	Usually
9. Clarification request	3.91	.852	Usually	3.46	1.001	Usually	2.00	.926	Seldom
10. Confirmation check	3.91	.854	Usually	3.53	1.001	Usually	3.51	1.001	Usually
11. Body language	4.02	1.017	Always	3.40	.997	Usually	1.67	.617	Seldom
12. Facial expression	4.19	.926	Always	3.46	.908	Usually	3.49	.988	Usually
13. Eye contact	3.91	1.097	Usually	3.39	1.048	Usually	3.53	1.040	Usually
Overall	3.97	.841	Usually	3.37	.939	Usually	2.73	.914	Occasionally

From Table 5 results show that the majority of the low and medium level students usually use CSs. The low-level students use Facial expressions (\bar{x} =4.19), at the most. The medium level students use the Confirmation check (\bar{x} =3.53), at the most. While most of the students at high level occasionally use CSs, and they use Confirmation check (\bar{x} =3.51), at the most. The results also show the strategies that are least used by each level of student: Word coinage (\bar{x} =3.76) by low level, Word coinage (\bar{x} =3.12) by medium level, and Approximation (\bar{x} =1.47) by high level.

Research Question 2

Are there any significant differences in the use of communication strategies among students who are at the low, medium, and high level of English proficiency?

Table 6 Comparison Among Three Groups of English Proficiency Level Students Using CSs

Oral communication strategies	Low		Medium		High		P-value (sig.)	Pattern of Variation
	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D		
1 Topic avoidance	3.98	.888	3.26	.536	2.40	.990	.938	-
2 Message abandonment	3.97	.725	3.23	.945	3.12	1.101	.995	-
3 Approximation	3.98	.848	3.26	.973	1.47	.640	.000*	High<low High<Medium
4 Word coinage	3.76	1.081	3.12	1.070	3.46	1.102	.312	-
5 Circumlocution	3.97	.898	3.42	.944	3.28	.990	.600	-
6 Language switch	3.83	.881	3.44	1.035	1.53	.799	.000*	High<low High<Medium
7 Literal translation	4.05	.887	3.28	.940	1.73	.704	.000*	High<low High<Medium
8 Comprehension check	4.07	.896	3.51	.848	3.39	.996	.241	-

9 Clarification request	3.91	.852	3.46	1.001	2.00	.926	.000*	High<low High<Medium
10 Confirmation check	4.16	.854	3.53	1.002	3.51	1.001	.249	-
11 Body language	4.02	1.017	3.40	.997	1.67	.617	.000*	High<low High<Medium
12 Facial expression	4.19	.926	3.46	.908	3.49	.988	.260	-
13 Eye contact	3.91	1.097	3.39	1.048	3.53	1.040	.276	-
Overall	3.98	.911	3.37	.939	2.73	.914	0.298	-

From table 6, when One Way ANOVA is used to test for research question 2, the overall result shows that no statistically significant difference is found among the three groups of English proficiency level using CSs. However, the results also show that statistically significant differences are found among the group of students with three CS use which are Approximation ($p < 0.05$), Language switch ($p < 0.05$), Literal translation ($p < 0.05$), Clarification request ($p < 0.05$), and Body language ($p < 0.05$).

Research Question 3

Are there any significant differences in the use of communication strategies between business administration students and engineering students?

Table 7 Comparison Among Two Groups of Students: B.A. Students and Eng. Students.

From table 7, when the t-test is used to test research question 3, the overall mean scores are not significantly different between the two majors (Business Administration and Engineering) using CSs ($p>0.05$). Therefore, the students who study in different programs do not use CSs differently. However, the results also show that there are significant differences between the two majors using Message abandonment ($p<0.05$), Circumlocution ($p<0.05$), and Clarification request ($p<0.05$). In comparison, engineering students use CSs in Message abandonment, Circumlocution, and Clarification requests more than business administration students.

13- Discussion

There are some interesting points in the findings that need further discussion. Firstly, it was noticed that students with the low level of English proficiency used CSs in oral communication more frequently ($x = 3.97$) compared to students at the high level ($x = 2.73$). It could be said that the high level students used fewer strategies than low level students because their proficiency in English was higher, so they could communicate without much assistance from CSs. On the other hand, low level students utilized CSs more often because they were less proficient in English or had little knowledge of English grammar or vocabulary. As a result, when it comes to oral communication, low-level students frequently use CSs to aid in their oral English communication. The study of Binhayearong (2009) supports the findings of this study. It indicated that the less able group used CSs more frequently than the more able one.

Secondly, even though a statistically significant difference was not found in the overall mean score of CSs used among the students of different levels of proficiency, but statistically significant difference was found among the groups of students using five CSs which are Approximation ($p<0.05$), Language switch ($p<0.05$), Literal translation ($p<0.05$), Clarification request ($p<0.05$), and Body language ($p<0.05$). This finding is inconsistent with the study of Binhayearong (2009) reporting that the different levels of students using CSs in oral communication are significantly different. That might be because they do not use English to communicate as much as they should.

Thirdly, in the comparison of CSs used between the students in Business Administration and Engineering, it was found that the overall mean scores were not significantly different. The finding was consistent with the study of Preedatawat (2009) which was said that the students who are with different faculties did not have differences in the use of the CSs. However, in the present study, the statistically significant differences were found in the mean scores of Message abandonment ($p<0.05$), Circumlocution ($p<0.05$), and Clarification request ($p<0.05$). Therefore, the students who come from different majors did not seem to use CSs differently, except for the Message abandonment, Circumlocution, and Clarification requests that they used differently.

Finally, the last point to discuss here is about the CSs that are most and least used by the students in each level. The low students used Facial expression at the most frequency, the majority of students in medium and high levels used Confirmation check at the most frequency. The results also show the strategies that are least used by each level of student:

Communication Strategies	Business Administration Students		Engineering Students		t	P-value (sig.)	Pattern of Variation
	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D			
1 Topic avoidance	3.17	1.232	3.60	1.028	1.346	.248	-
2 Message abandonment	2.17	1.282	3.57	.829	10.498	.002*	B.A < Eng
3 Approximation	3.23	1.272	3.52	1.047	3.126	.079	-
4 Word coinage	3.05	1.351	3.42	1.088	3.262	.073	-
5 Circumlocution	2.34	1.253	3.62	.947	4.653	.033*	B.A < Eng
6 Language switch	3.31	1.198	3.57	.984	1.600	.208	-
7 Literal translation	3.23	1.142	3.66	1.108	.038	.846	-
8 Comprehension check	3.37	1.219	3.71	.996	2.232	.138	-
9 Clarification request	2.40	1.247	3.58	.967	5.081	.026*	B.A < Eng
10 Confirmation check	3.51	1.288	3.63	1.126	1.249	.266	-
11 Body language	3.29	1.284	3.66	1.094	1.236	.268	-
12 Facial expression	3.43	1.287	3.71	1.086	2.723	.101	-
13 Eye contact	3.26	1.314	3.55	1.186	.947	.332	-
Overall	3.06	1.260	3.60	1.037	2.922	0.201	-

Word coinage by low and medium level and Approximation by high level. The overall result of CSs used in this study contradicts the result of Chuanchaisit and Prapphal (2009) showed that the high-level students preferred risk-taking strategies, such as Circumlocution strategy and Clarification request strategy, whereas the low level tended to use Body language strategy, and Topic avoidance strategy. This outcome conflicts with the current study's findings. In this present study, the low level students rarely used Word coinage strategy while the medium level students rarely used Word coinage and Message abandonment strategy, and the high level students rarely used the Approximation, Language switch, Literal translation, Clarification request, and Body language. The findings of Chuanchaisit and Prapphal (2009), also showed that the low-level seldom used Literal translation and Comprehension check strategy while the high-level seldom used topic avoidance and Literal translation strategy. The reason why it contradicts might be because of the different contexts of participants. The participants in Chuanchaisit and Prapphal (2009) study were English major students while in this study the participants were Business Administration and Engineering majors students. The students who participate in each study have their uniqueness; therefore, the result could be different.

14- Conclusion and Suggestions

Communication strategies are the methods that students use to express their intentions when they encounter communication barriers. This is due to the limited communication abilities of students. By using different forms of communication strategies, students can practice and develop their strategies and language skills according to their language acquisition level.

The present study aimed to investigate CSs among Thai EFL students at the Rajamangala University of Technology Isan Sakon Nakhon Campus. One hundred-thirty students of Business Administration majors and Engineering majors of GE subjects were participants. In order to investigate CSs, a questionnaire was adopted from Tarone (1977), which is cited in Cheng (2007) was employed to collect the data. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data in terms of the frequency of use of communication strategies by Thai EFL students. The finding revealed that the Business Administration and Engineering students of low and medium levels of English proficiency usually used CSs; high level of English proficiency occasionally used CSs. Analysis of Variance was used any significant differences in the use of communication strategies among students with different levels of English proficiency. The results showed no statistically significant difference in CSs used among the students of different levels of English proficiency. It means that the students with different levels of English proficiency did not use CSs differently. An Independent-Sample T-Test is used to test significant differences in the use of communication strategies between two majors students. Moreover, a statistically significant difference was not found in the use of CSs between business administration and engineering students. This indicates, as a whole, that the students of Business Administration and Engineering did not use CSs differently. Communication strategies directly impact on communication and are essential to learning a second language. Generally, communication strategies help to maintain the line of communication and get more feedback from students. The usage of communication strategies is influenced by a variety of elements, including the personality, attitude toward a specific approach, and level of language proficiency of the learner, as well as communication contexts. The application of communication strategies are influenced by these variables in combination. As reported by Cohen (1998), Chamot et al. (1999), Macaro (2001), and Cohen and Macaro (2007), students should be familiar with computer science and the types of strategies that can be used. One way to help lower-achieving students improve their oral communication may be to familiarize them with the risk-taking strategies of higher-achieving students. Cohen et al. (1998) and Dörnyei (1995) claim that communication skills can be developed by developing specific CS and sensitizing low-performing students to strategies for solving potential communication problems. These suggestions are supported by Nakatani (2005), who found that trained participants significantly improved their oral proficiency test scores and success rates, partly due to increased CS awareness.

Communication strategies also improve students' fluency because students can communicate without restrictions. This can be seen from the fact that students with higher language proficiency use better communication strategies than students with lower language proficiency. These strategies enable students with higher language proficiency to excel in communication.

For further research, researchers may take a larger number of participants or various students from various universities into account. Moreover, it would be interesting if further researchers conducted a comparative study on the use of CSs in oral communication in the second language between Thai students and those coming from other countries who are not English speakers.

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APPENDIX QUESTIONNAIRE

Oral Communication Strategies Used Among EFL Students

Part One: Demographic information

Please put a ✓ in front of the item you choose and write required information.

1. Age: 18-19 20-21 22-23
 2. Gender: _____ Male _____ Female
 3. Department: _____ Business Administration _____ Engineering
 4. level of education: _____ Bachelor's Degree _____ Associate Degree
 5. When did you start learning English in the educational curriculum?
 Primary school Guidance high school
 high school University

Part Two: Communication strategies use in speaking tasks

Please put a ✓ in front of the item you choose

During a communication in English.....

No	Questions	5 Always	4 Usually	3 Occasionally	2 Seldom	1 Never
1	I stop talking about unknown words or unfamiliar topics that are raised by the speaker.					
2	I leave a conversation incomplete when facing a communication problem.					
3	When I can not think of an English word, I use another word phrase, or sentence that meaning the same to express idea.					
4	I try to create a new word for same terms I do not know.					
5	Try to explain characteristics of the object or action instead of using an English word I do not know.					
6	When I cannot think of an appropriate word, phrase or sentence, I use the Thai word.					
7	I translate directly from my mother tongue when I have difficulties expressing certain meaning in English'.					
8	When I said something in English and I am not sure whether the listener understands, I ask him to check.					
9	If I am not sure about what the speaker says, I ask the speaker for help.					
10	If I am not sure whether what I heard is correct, I repeat the word or sentence that said by the speaker in order to confirm the correction.					
11	I use the hand gestures to communicate when I want to praise someone, but I do not know how to say it in English, I make a thumb up instead'.					
12	I use facial expressions to communicate instead of English words or sentences when I do not know English.					
13	I use eyes contact to communicate when I do not know English.					