

Appendix A

Content Validity Analysis

DRU

The panel of 4 EFL specialists was asked to consider each item of the questionnaire. The names are as follows:

Dr Srawut Na Pattalung, Dr Samorn Ketsom, Asst. Prof. Dr. Kedsuda Ratchadavisitkul, and
Dr Intira Jarujinda

Part 1: English Use within the Academic Community

Please identify whether or not each item is necessary for the measurement of the level of the English use of the students with other members of the Thai academic community.

Use of Listening Skills

#	Listening	Necessary	Unnecessary	CVR Ratio
1	I attend/give an academic presentation given in English.	4	0	1.00
2	I listen to a radio program presented in English.	4	0	1.00
3	I participate in a seminar or a conference conducted in English.	4	0	1.00
4	In general, I listen to English used by other members of my academic community.	4	0	1.00

Use of Speaking Skills

#	Speaking	Necessary	Unnecessary	CVR Ratio
1	I converse in English with other students.	4	0	1.00
2	I converse in English with the teachers/lecturers.	4	0	1.00
3	I give an oral presentation in English.	4	0	1.00
4	I speak in English with my classmates.	4	0	1.00
5	I present an academic paper in English.	4	0	1.00
6	In general, I speak in English with other members of the academic community.	4	0	1.00

Use of Reading Skills

#	Speaking	Necessary	Unnecessary	CVR Ratio
1	I read academic articles written in English.	4	0	1.00
2	I read English newspapers.	4	0	1.00
3	I read textbooks written in English.	4	0	1.00
4	I read the information written in English on the Internet.	4	0	1.00
5	In general, I read many types of texts written by	4	0	1.00

	other members of the academic community.			
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Use of Writing Skills

#	Speaking	Necessary	Unnecessary	CVR Ratio
1	I write a report in English.	4	0	1.00
2	I write an academic paper in English.	4	0	1.00
3	I write an assignment in English.	4	0	1.00
4	I write e-mails in English to communicate with my classmates and teachers.	4	0	1.00
5	I write short notes and memos in English.	3	1	.75
6	Overall, I write in English to communicate with other members of the academic community.	4	0	1.00

Part 2: Perceived Problems in English Use

As an EFL/ESL specialist, please identify whether or not each item is necessary for the measurement of the student participants' perceptions of their own English problems and difficulties. Please mark (X) in the space provided.

Problems in the Use of Listening Skills

#	Listening	Necessary	Unnecessary	CVR Ratio
1	I often have problems when I converse with other members of the academic community in English.	4	0	1.00
2	When I participate in an academic presentation given in English, I have difficulties following it.	4	0	1.00
3	I rarely have problems when I listen to other people talking in English.	4	0	1.00
4	I usually have difficulties following the lectures in English.	4	0	1.00
5	I often have difficulties following other students when they speak in English.	3	1	.75
6	In general I have difficulties in my listening skills when I communicate with other members of the academic community.	3	1	.75

Problems in the Use of Speaking Skills

#	Speaking	Necessary	Unnecessary	CVR Ratio
1	I can speak English fluently.	4	0	1.00
2	I need to improve my English speaking skills.	4	0	1.00
3	I try to avoid speaking in English with native speakers.	4	0	1.00
4	I feel uneasy when I speak English.	3	1	.75
5	I often have problems when I give a presentation in English.	3	1	.75
6	In general, I have problems and difficulties speaking in English with other members of my academic community.	3	1	.75

Problems in the Use of Reading Skills

#	Reading	Necessary	Unnecessary	CVR Ratio
1	I have problems and difficulties reading English texts and have a real need to improve my reading skills.	4	0	1.00
2	I have problems understanding various English text types such as textbooks, journal articles, and news articles.	4	0	1.00
3	I have the ability to read and understand texts in English.	4	0	1.00

4	I try to avoid reading English texts.	4	0	1.00
5	I like reading in English.	3	1	0.75
6	I enjoy reading English texts.	3	1	0.75
7	In general, I have problems understanding English texts often used in my academic community.	3	1	0.75

Problems in the Use of Writing Skills

#	Writing	Necessary	Unnecessary	CVR Ratio
1	I often have problems and difficulties writing in English.	4	0	1.00
2	I feel proud of my English writing skills.	4	0	1.00
3	I feel that my writing skills are inadequate when I have to write anything in English.	3	1	0.75
4	I can write an academic article in English if I am given editing help.	4	0	1.00
5	I feel uneasy when I have to write in English.	4	0	1.00
6	I try to avoid writing in English.	4	0	1.00
7	In general, I have problems writing in English for communication and use within my academic community.	4	0	1.00

Part 4: Perceived Coping Ability

As an EFL/ESL specialist, please identify whether or not each item is necessary for the measurement of the student participants' perceptions of their ability to cope with their own English problems and difficulties. Please mark (X) in the space provided.

#	Listening-Speaking	Necessary	Unnecessary	CVR Ratio
1	I have effective ways to solve my listening and speaking problems.	4	0	1.00
2	I always attempt to solve my listening-speaking problems.	4	0	1.00
3	I am able to deal with my English listening-speaking problems and difficulties.	4	0	1.00
4	I believe that I can improve my own listening-speaking problems.	4	0	1.00

#	Reading-Writing	Necessary	Unnecessary	CVR Ratio
1	I have effective ways to deal satisfactorily with my own reading-writing problems and difficulties.	4	0	1.00
2	I almost always make efforts to solve my English reading and writing problems.	4	0	1.00
3	I have an ability to deal satisfactorily with my reading and writing problems.	4	0	1.00
4	I believe that I can improve my reading and writing skills.	4	0	1.00

Part 5: Perceived English Supported Needed from the University

As an EFL/ESL specialist, please identify whether or not each item is necessary for the measurement of the student participants' perceptions of English support from the university. Please mark (X) in the space provided.

#	Item	Necessary	Unnecessary	CVR Ratio
1	I would like the university to step in and help me develop my knowledge and English language skills and ability.	4	0	1.00
2	I would like the university to provide me with English support so that I can present a paper in English.	4	0	1.00
3	My English language skills and ability are adequate; I do not need further help or support from the university.	4	0	1.00
4	I would like the university to help me improve my English so that I can write an abstract in English.	4	0	1.00
5	I would like the university to give me English support so that I can write a thesis in English.	4	0	1.00
6	I really need English support from the university.	4	0	1.00
7	The university should work harder to help me improve my English language skills and ability.	4	0	1.00
8	English language development is my own responsibility.	4	0	1.00
9	My English language ability is adequate to support my study and work in Thailand.	4	0	1.00
10	Overall, I have received adequate support to develop my language skills.	4	0	1.00

Appendix B

Questionnaire

DRU



English Department, Language Institute

Dhurakij Pundit University, 110/1-4 Prachachuen Road, Lak Si, Bangkok 10210,

www.dpu.ac.th

To Postgraduate Students, Dhurakij Pundit University
 Subject Request for Research Cooperation
 Attachment Questionnaire

My name is Janpha Thadphoothon, a researcher working on a research project titled *The Use of English with Other Members of the Thai Academic Community among Dhurakij Pundit University's Postgraduate Business Students*. The aims of the research are to (1) investigate the post-graduate students' perceived English ability, (2) investigate the postgraduate students' conception of the Thai academics and their perceived identities, (3) investigate the scope and extent of DPU postgraduate students' use of English with other members of the Thai academic community, (4) identify the main problems arising from their use of English within the Thai academic community, (5) identify the students' perceived coping ability, (6) investigate the relationship between the students' personal factors, their perceptions, and the factors related to language use, and (7) find out about the support they needed from the institution regarding the training of English.

This questionnaire has seven parts: (1) General Information, (2) Identity and Perception of the Thai Academic Community, (3) Perceived English Competency, (4) Use of English within the Community, (5) Perceived Language Problems, (6) Perceived Language Coping Ability, (7) Perceived Support from the University.

This study defines the term 'the academic community in business administration' as a group of individuals, including graduate students (MBA & DBA), lecturers, researchers, business people, academics in the field of business administration or related fields, be they in the governmental or private sector.

No risk or discomfort from participating in this research project is anticipated. The findings of this research will generally be presented as an article in a refereed paper and/or at conferences. Your responses will be kept in strict confidential.

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

(Dr Janpha Thadphoothon)

Researcher

Part 1: Respondents' Personal Details

My study program is (Please mark X)MBA.....DBA.

I am (Please mark X) ____ 20-25 years old ____ 26-30 years old ____ 31-35 years old ____ 39-40 years old ____ 40 years old or above

I have been studying at this university for ... (Please mark X) ____ less than 1 year ____ 1-2 years ____ 2-3 years ____ 3-5 years

Gender: ____ Male ____ Female

Please identify your occupation:

____ Owner of a business

____ A civil servant

____ An employee of a private company

____ An employee of a state enterprise

____ A teacher/lecturer (Private)

____ A teacher/lecturer (Government)

____ A graduate student (not working yet)

Others (Please specify) _____

How frequently do you use English in your workplace? (Choose one answer only)

_____ Never (0%)

_____ Rarely (1-20%)

_____ Sometimes (21-50%)

_____ Often (51-80%)

_____ Always (81-100%)

Have you ever attended or participated in a training program conducted overseas?

(Please mark X) _____ YES _____ NO. (If Yes), which
country(ies)_____ Length of Stay:_____

Have you ever been overseas to learn English? (Please mark X) _____ YES

_____ NO. (If Yes), which country (ies)_____ Length of
Stay:_____

Part 2: Identity and Perception of the Thai Academic Community

The questions in this part deal with your perceived identity, that is, how you see yourself as an academic or part of the Thai academic community. Please write your answer in the space provided.

This study defines the term ‘the academic community in business administration’ as a group of individuals, including graduate students (MBA & DBA), lecturers, researchers, business people, academics in the field of business administration or related fields, be they in the governmental or private sector.

To you, what are the key qualifications of a Thai academic in the field of business administration?

Do you consider yourself **an academic** in business administration? Why/Why not?

Do you consider yourself a part of the Thai academic community of business administration? Why/Why not?

Why is having English skills and ability necessary for Thai academics in the field of business administration?

Part 3: Perceived English Competency

Please evaluate your own English competency (ability and skills) by marking X in each of the category.

Listening

_____ : Very Weak

_____ : Weak

_____ : Fair

_____ : Good

_____ : Excellent

Speaking

_____ : Very Weak

_____ : Weak

_____ : Fair

_____ : Good

_____ : Excellent

Reading

_____ : Very Weak

_____ : Weak

_____ : Fair

_____ : Good

_____ : Excellent

Writing

_____ : Very Weak

_____ : Weak

_____ : Fair

_____ : Good

_____ : Excellent

Globally (In General)

_____ : Very Weak

_____ : Weak

_____ : Fair

_____ : Good

_____ : Very Good

Your English grade at DPU is (Please mark X) (Note: This question is optional.)

_____ A

_____ B

_____ C

_____ D

___ F

___ S

___ U

___ I have not taken the course

Which of the following skills is considered your weakest? (Choose only one).

___ Listening

___ Speaking

___ Reading

___ Writing

Which of the following skills is considered your best (strongest)? (Choose only one).

___ Listening

___ Speaking

___ Reading

___ Writing

How often do you use English in your graduate study (Choose only one)?

___ Never (0%)

___ Rarely (1-20%)

___ Sometimes (21-50%)

___ Often (51-80%)

___ Always (81-100%)

How often do you use English in your academic community (Choose only one)?

___ Never (0%)

___ Rarely (1-20%)

___ Sometimes (21-50%)

___ Often (51-80%)

___ Always (81-100%)

Part 4: English Use Within the Academic Community

For each of the given items, please select one of the five options that best represents your experience. The five options are: (1) Never (0%), Rarely (1-20%), (3) Sometimes (21-50%), (4) Often (51-80%), and (5) Always (81-100%).

Listening Skills						
#	Statement	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	I attend/give an academic presentation given in English.					
2	I listen to a radio program presented in English.					
3	I participate in a seminar or a conference conducted in English.					
4	In general, I listen to the use of English by other members of your academic community.					

Speaking Skills						
#	Statement	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	I converse in English with other students.					
2	I converse in English with the teachers/lecturers.					

3	I give an oral presentation in English.					
4	I speak in English with my classmates.					
5	I present an academic paper in English.					
6	In general, I speak in English with other members of the academic community.					

Reading Skills						
#	Statement	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	I read academic articles written in English.					
2	I read English language newspaper.					
3	I read textbooks written in English.					
4	I read the information written in English on the Internet.					
5	In general, I read many types of texts written by other members of the academic community.					

Writing Skills						
#	Statement	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	I write a report in English.					
2	I write an assignment in English.					
3	I write e-mails in English to communicate with my classmates and teachers.					
4	I write short notes and memos in English.					
5	Overall, I write in English to communicate with other members of the academic community.					

Part 5: Perceived Problems in English use

For each item/statement, please rate your level of agreement-disagreement by marking X in the cell provided.

Perceived Problems in Listening Skills						
#	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	I often have problems when I converse with other members of the academic community in English.					
2	When I participate in an academic presentation given in English, I have difficulties following it.					
3	I rarely have problems when I listen to other people talking in English.					
4	I usually have difficulties following the lectures in English.					
5	I often have difficulties following other students when they speak in English.					
6	In general I have difficulties in my listening skills when I communicate with other members of the academic community.					

Perceived Problems in Speaking Skills						
#	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	I can speak English fluently.					
2	I need to improve my English speaking skills.					
3	I try to avoid speaking in English with native speakers.					
4	I feel uneasy when I speak English.					
5	I often have problems when I give a presentation in English.					
6	In general, I have problems and difficulties speaking in English with other members of my academic community.					

Perceived Problems in Reading Skills						
#	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	I have problems and difficulties reading English texts and have a real need to improve my reading skills.					
2	I have problems understanding various English text types such as textbooks, journal articles, and news articles.					
3	I have the ability to read and understand texts in English.					
4	I try to avoid reading English texts.					
5	I like reading in English.					
6	I enjoy reading English texts.					
7	In general, I have problems understanding English texts often used in my academic community.					

Perceived Problems in Writing Skills						
#	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	I often have problems and difficulties writing in English.					
2	I feel proud of my English writing skills.					
3	I feel that my writing skills are inadequate when I have to write anything in English.					
4	I feel uneasy when I have to write in English.					
5	I try to avoid writing in English.					
6	In general, I have problems writing in English for communication and use within my academic community.					

Part 6: Perceived Language Coping Ability

The items/statements in this part aim to illicit your perceived English coping ability or your ability to deal with the difficulties and challenges when you use English to service your graduate study.

For each item/statement, please rate your level of agreement-disagreement by marking X in the cell provided.

Perceived Coping Ability						
#	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	I have effective ways to solve my listening and speaking problems.					
2	I am able to deal with my English listening-speaking problems and difficulties.					
3	I believe that I can improve my own listening–speaking problems.					
4	I have effective ways to deal satisfactorily with my own reading-writing problems and difficulties.					
5	I almost always make efforts to solve my English reading and writing problems.					
6	I have an ability to deal satisfactorily with my reading and writing problems.					
7	I believe that I can improve my reading and writing skills.					

Part 7: Perceived Support Received from the University

The items/statements in this part aim to illicit your perceived English support from the university. For each item/statement, please rate your level of agreement-disagreement by marking X in the cell provided.

Perceived English Support						
#	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	I would like the university to step in and help me develop my knowledge and English language skills and ability.					
2	My English language skills and ability are adequate; I do not need further help or support from the university.					
3	The university should work harder to help me improve my English language skills and ability.					
4	My English language ability is adequate to support my study and work in Thailand.					
5	Overall, I have received adequate support to develop my language skills.					

Appendix C

Summary of Roundtable Seminars



Note: Two roundtable seminars were conducted. The title of the seminars was English for the Graduate Study: What, Why, and How Much?

Sunday, August 2, 2009 [MBA] Sunday, August 9, 2009 [DBA]

The two roundtable seminars were conducted at DPU.

1. MBA Roundtable
2. DBA Roundtable

The audio-taped roundtable seminars were transcribed into Thai. The transcription has been translated into English, then it was summarized.

MBA Roundtable

Note: All names of the participants are pseudonyms except the researcher (Janpha).

Janpha:

- Let me first introduce myself. My name is Janpha Thadphoothon. At present, I'm an English teacher from the English Department of this university. I've taught a few English courses at the postgraduate level --- the DBA (Doctor of Business Administration). This roundtable seminar is part of a study titled *The Use of English Among Members of the Thai Academic Community of Dhurakij Pandit University's Graduate Business Students*. My research participants are MBA and DBA students of this university (DPU).
- The topic for the roundtable seminar today is *English for Graduate Study What, Why and How Much* --- To define what English for postgraduate study means, why it is important, and the term 'how much' means how much English graduate students should know. *How much here means How much English do you need?* It also means "How much time do we need to spend learning or practicing it in order to become competent users of the language?"
- This is the theme and topics for our roundtable seminar. What I would like to do is to exchange opinions on the mentioned topics and related issues.
- Firstly, what do you think about the term 'English for graduate study'? What's it all about?

PJN:

- English for graduate study, for me, is mainly about the use of reading skills --- to read the textbooks we use. Even though we are in the Thai program, the textbooks are all in English. The lecturers' sources of references are from the texts in English. Though other English skills are important such as speaking and writing, they are rarely used by us.

Janpha:

- So for you PJN, the most needed skill is reading. You don't have to use productive skills like speaking and writing. Am I right?

PJN:

- Speaking and writing skills are not directly required in my study. But for my work, I need to use them. I'm working for an international college of the university, so I have to use quite a great deal of English, including speaking and writing skills.

Janpha:

- That's why we have an expression in Thai 'to read text'. To อ่าน text for graduate students means to read textbooks written in English. Usually, lecturers assign their students to read texts before class for discussion.

WCR:

- In addition to reading skills, I think knowledge of grammar is also very important for us. When we read texts, we need to apply the knowledge of grammar to help us read better, like, we have to summarize main ideas. We also need to translate some ideas and put them in Thai.

Janpha:

- Do you mean when you read texts, you need to summarize them for main ideas, which requires a knowledge of grammar?

WCR:

- Exactly. Moreover, we also need to understand the meaning of the vocabulary and jargon, as well as other technical terms.

Janpha:

- You've mentioned the term vocabulary. And we have come to the point where we realize that reading skills are important for graduate study, so are grammar and

knowledge of vocabulary, including technical terms. What do you think about this, NPW?

NPW:

- I strongly agree with what PJN and WCR have just said. At the graduate degree level, the instructional language involves more use of English, and the difficulty level is higher than the level of the undergraduate degree. This reflects in the use of English textbooks.

Janpha:

- With regards to your reading skills, you have to read challenging texts written in English, most of you, I guess, read and help yourselves by using a dictionary. If you still do not understand, you often ask for help from classmates. Still, if your mates cannot answer or help you, you opt to the assistance of the teachers. As for speaking skills, you rarely use them. I want you to say something about the speaking-listening skills. I mean, are they necessary?

WCR:

- We used speaking-listening skills when we did the remedial course.

Janpha:

- You did? Can you please tell me about it?

WCR:

- It's a required course. We had to take an English course and the teacher was not a Thai English teacher, so we had to use English all the time.

Janpha:

- The teacher did not speak in Thai at all?

WCR:

- That's right.

Janpha:

- But that's limited to the classroom only, am I right?

WCR:

- Yes, only in the classroom.

Janpha:

- Apart from one remedial course, you don't have to use any speaking skills on other subjects, as the language of instruction is entirely in Thai.

WCR:

- That's right.

PJN:

- For example, we give an oral presentation in Thai. Yes, there maybe some occasions where we have to read English terms aloud. We use English terms or expressions in our presentations. But the presentation is in Thai.

Janpha:

- PJN has just mentioned one characteristic of English use. The practice of code-switching, that is, the mixing of Thai and English. In many cases, academics code-switch from Thai to English. One quality of the use of English at this level, for me, is to code-switch correctly and appropriately. You may not have to speak English, you, however, need to code-switch, in writing and speech. For the writing skills, you rarely use them, is that right?

NPW:

- We rarely have to write in English.

Janpha:

- Can you tell me about the use of writing skills in your remedial English course?

NPW:

- Of course, we had to write or do exercises given by the teacher in the English language. In other content courses, we use Thai. We write assignments and give presentations in Thai. All in Thai. It's a Thai program, anyway.

Janpha:

- How about you PWD? In work, how often do you write in English?

PWD:

- I rarely do. I write short notes such as leaving notes to foreign teachers.

Janpha:

- Let me put it this way. In work, all of you write? How often do you have to do it?

PJN:

- My case is special, as I am working with the expats, and English is used most of the time. The meetings are in English, and I take notes in English, including the meeting minutes and agendas.

Janpha:

- Do you have to take minutes?

PJN:

- Minutes of meeting are in English, which is quite challenging. This is part of my responsibilities.

Janpha:

- Thank you. Let's move on to the next topic. It's about the use of English at the graduate level. In your opinion, how much English, I mean how often do you use it in your study?

PJN:

- Do you mean how often do we use English? I think we use it quite often. Some students are okay with that; however, some MBA students have not opened their minds to English. This results in the use of Thai handouts by some teachers. However, most teachers use English in their handouts, which is okay for those who are open-minded. Those who have not opened their minds to this kind of learning, in my opinion, often feel bored and unmotivated. Yes, we do use a lot of English.

Janpha:

- You mean even though the handouts are in Thai, the technical terms are mostly in English?

PJN:

- Yes, some of them.

Janpha:

- Is there a case where the teacher uses English? I mean what's on PowerPoint slides, but the explanation is in Thai. Is this the case?

PJN:

- PowerPoint slides and texts are mostly in English.

Janpha:

- And teacher explains the slides in Thai, right?

PJN:

- That's right.

Janpha:

- Some students have problems following the teachers, I think.

PJN:

- They do. I know some of them, so I know they have problems.

Janpha:

- And how do they deal with the problems?

PJN:

- The problems would be solved by peer tutoring. We help each other, For example, WCR may be good at one topic, so he would be asked to tutor that topic. This is effective. Sometimes I don't have to read in English, I learn from his summary.

Janpha:

- That's more like solving problems through group activities. Did you study English with any native speaker?

PJN:

- Yes, we did. For our first English course, we studied with Mary Ann. But it was an introductory course.

Janpha:

- It was in an English class, right?

PJN:

- Yes.

Janpha:

- Okay. But for a content subject, you only have Thai lecturers, most of whom have graduated from an overseas university, right?

PJN:

- Yes, that's true.

Janpha:

- Before moving on to the next topic. Does anyone have anything thing to add?

WCR:

- In my case, my use of English is moderate. I think the English here is quite intensive. After two years studying here, this is my impression. I'd like English to be integrated into all the subjects students have to learn. When we give a presentation, we have to give some definitions of technical terms. We often do it in Thai. I'd like the program to add more English in to the curriculum. Say, when we do midterm exams or final exams. I think if there are tasks where we have to give definitions of technical terms or some English, it'd be good for us, as we will have both contents and English skills, even though we are not doing the English program.

Janpha:

- I think sometime it's easier for us to communicate using English. For example, the word 'Human Capita', I think it's easier to use English. Other words such as management or feedback we use English, as they are better for our communications. Do you want them to be included, explicitly, in the course? Do you think they should be part of your curriculum?

WCR:

- That's right.

Janpha:

- Does anyone want to add? If not, let's move to another topic. The next topic is about your problems and difficulties in using English. Would anyone like to start?

WCR:

- If the students do not need to use English in their work, they may lack inspiration or motivation to learn English. If anyone uses English in their work, they're motivated. The big problem, I think, is the lack of motivation, as we don't have to use it at work.

Janpha:

- I see. So, it's something to do with your background, or what's called 'English in the workplace'. I think it determines our use of English. If you have to use it in your work, you have to use it. That's simple. How about the use of English for your graduate study?

NPW:

- In my case, I don't have any serious problems. My background has helped me. I got a BA in English, so I have a few problems reading texts. For some of my classmates, some of them do not have strong English background, and they have problems in their reading skills. They complain that the thick and expensive textbooks required to purchase by the teachers are not worth spending the money on. Why? They rarely use them, they don't read them. After taking the course, the textbooks look very new.

Janpha:

- I see. I can imagine this.

NPW:

- Poor English background is a problem for students who have to read thick textbooks. Another thing is that the time to learn English. I, personally, think that one remedial course is insufficient.

Janpha:

- Let me recap this. You have said that some students still have difficulties reading textbooks, even though they have taken the remedial course? What's should the university do?

NPW:

- It's not easy to solve, and I think English takes time.

Janpha:

- As an English teacher, if you have poor background of English, a semester of remedial lessons, is hardly the answer.

NPW:

- I agree.

Janpha:

- A semester of remedial lessons is inadequate to serve the purposes. Another way to solve the problems like we have just discussed may lie in the fact that we integrate the English components into many non-English subjects like marketing or financial management. Many students have little chance of English use in their workplaces. So, maybe, making English, especially, the key vocabulary and jargon, part of the curriculum is another means to deal with the amount of English.

NPW:

- I'd like to suggest that DPU should set a minimum standard like other institutions, say CUTEF, to scan the students. This may help. Then we ask them to take a remedial course, like we have just discussed. In my opinion, the readiness of the students comes first.

Janpha:

- Another related issue is the issue of using English for gate-keeping mechanism. This is a conventional means being used by, I dare say, all institutions. There's an issue ---

that is – is it necessary to do so? From one perspective requiring the students to have high scores on standardized tests is something unnecessary. We may not be able to answer this, but we should discuss another issue, that is, the need of English use by graduate students in the Thai society. I refer to the perception or the expectation of the society. In reality, do they need to have that high level of competency?

WCR:

- For me, what I consider having a high level of English competency to be something very important. In my organization, which is a public one, there are indicators of my competencies. And if we know English, we have an edge over others when we are assessed by the supervisors. Another benefit is the greater chance to develop myself. Say, if there is a scholarship overseas. If my English is very good, and I can pass the English test. If I am qualified, but my English is poor and cannot pass the standard, I will lose my chance.

Janpha:

- English gives you an advantage in work. Those who have better English skills have more opportunities to move ahead. Is this what you suggest?

WCR:

- Yes.

Janpha:

- But do they have to use that much English in real work?

WCR:

- Maybe they don't have to be that competent. But having a high competency matters a lot in work. For example, when we have a lot of knowledge and are good at English, we can ask for changes of departments. We can ask for a transfer to the other departments that needs more use of English such as the Department of Export Promotion, so that we can grow in the career path.

Janpha:

- What's interesting to note is that, in reality, English use is not frequent. But it is needed to support your career path. Is that right?

WCR:

- Yes.

Janpha:

- This is interesting. Would anyone like to add anything else?

PWN:

- In my opinion, the use of English depends on an individual student or graduate and his or her society. Many of them can function well without using much English.

Janpha:

- You mean it depends on an individual student and his or her social environment?

PWN:

- Exactly, it's about how English matters for them.

Janpha:

- So, this may mean that the need of English should be varied?

PWN:

- Yes.

PWD

- For me, to be blunt, those who do not know much English, there's nothing to worry for them. In Thai society, they can function well without much use of English.

Janpha

- For you, PWD, MBA students don't need to know much English, even after they have graduated?

PWD

- Yes, you don't have to use it. It's like an option.

Janpha:

- If you do accounting, it does not affect your accounting performance. Is that what you seem to suggest?

PWD:

- Not really. In accounting, we use some English. But it is not used when we talk to each other. But we do write in English, when we have to keep a balance with our superiors. Yes, English is needed in this regard, but if we have to deal with English-speaking foreigners, we can simply say 'I don't know'. I think this is okay.

Janpha:

- The next issue is something I refer to as 'identity.', which maybe defined as your self-perception. In other words, how you see yourself as an academic in the Thai academic community. Identity, from this perspective, also depends on how other people think of you. For example, I'm an English teacher, and my identity is thus an English teacher. You have to know English well. You have to know using which word. There is no other choice.

NPW

- Does the term mean how we see ourselves? I'm still not clear about the term.

Janpha:

- It's about how you perceive yourself as an academic.

NPW:

- My answer to this is related to what I have just said.

Janpha:

- Please explain.

NPW:'

- The image or identity of graduate study is really important. English is one of those indicators. Let's think about all the MBA programs available in Thailand. The society will judge us. This person is from so and so university, and they will be judged and identify the differences. The program has its identity.

Janpha:

- Do you think the MBA program here and others differ in their English requirements?

NPW:

- No, it's not the difference of the English ability. I am sure our English and other MBA programs' English are not different from one another. But the competency is not the same. I am talking about MBA in general. The standard or quality of each program is not the same. The image of this university seems to be positive. In terms of English, ours is as strong as any other place.

Janpha:

- Does anyone wish to add anything else?

NPW:

- For me, the society may not expect an MBA graduate from a Thai program to have a high competency of English. They do, however, expect you to be competent in the subject matters of the content subjects and your ability to apply the knowledge and skills in real situations. English is an advantage preferred by everybody. As WTC has mentioned, English is useful for your individual progress. If you don't have a high

level of its competency, you are okay. An MBA graduate needs to be competent in the knowledge and skills of business. English is a plus.

Janpha

- You mean the business knowledge in your academic field?

PJN:

- That's right. But the emphasis is not on the mastery of English. But if you have a degree say MBA from an English-speaking country, you'd get two things, business knowledge and the English language.

Janpha:

- Thank you PJN for your opinion.

Janpha:

- WCR, how about you? Anything to say about this?

WCR:

- Is identity about my role and how I see it?

Janpha:

- Yes, it's about how you see yourself as a member of the society and how the society perceives you.

WCR:

- Today the world is smaller and we often have meetings, conferences, or seminars between Thais and non-Thais. I think, yes, we need English, and we need to know some English to communicate with others.

Janpha:

- If we don't know English well enough, I think it'll be quite difficult. Don't you think?

WCR:

- I agree. Otherwise, we'll only be sitting idly, not knowing what's going on.

Janpha:

- So, can I say that, as a graduate student, at least, you should know some English? If your English was poor, would you be judged by the society?

NPW

- Yes.

Janpha:

- We seem to pass our judgment; they, too, pass theirs. If they said 'Human Capital' and we didn't recognize it. I think this may be a problem.

NPW:

- Yes, it should be the case that we speak the same language. We are doing the same degree – MBA – or doing Marketing, so we should recognize each other's language. If we don't understand each other, maybe we are from different schools.

Janpha:

- I see. Does anyone want to say anything more about this? Otherwise, we should move on to the next topic. It's about our academic identity, our community. Do you consider yourself an academic in your field? And do you see yourself part of the academic community in business administration?

WCR:

- For me, yes, I'm and I see my self being part of the academic community.

Janpha:

- Part of the community?

WCR:

- Yes, part of it. And I've participated in it and I've learned from it, so that I can apply the knowledge to solve real problems. Moreover, I can help pass it on to others.

Janpha:

- You said you are part of the academic community, WCR. As part of the community in business admiration, how much English is required so as to function well in the community? At the moment, do you feel that your English is sufficient for the use within the community?

WCR

- My English is okay, but I still have a lot to learn. In my workplace, English has been used as a gate-keeping mechanism, as English is one of the criteria for selecting new employees and promoting existing ones. For me, better English means better chances of getting a promotion.

Janpha:

- WCR, you are telling me that your community expects its members to be competent in English. Now you see yourself as part of it. Am I right? So, in order to be a full member of the community, you have to try harder, right?

WCR:'

- Yes, but I don't agree with it. The thing is that we have made a big mistake. It was our past mistake. Nowadays, we have tests and exams, and we have been so obsessed with them. We have been tested -- again and again. I think it's a waste of money and time, and energy. It's hard to find those with very good English to fill the position.

Janpha:

- So, do you think it's a bit too preoccupied?

WCR:

- Not really, I just feel that it's a bit too much.

Janpha:

- In your community, to be accepted as an academic, do you need to have a high level of English ability?

WCR:

- I don't quite approve of this thinking. In fact, what I like is to accept those capable people whose English may be at the intermediate level, and then train them. Very few people are excellent in English, if they are given a chance. I think they can develop English to function well. It's about on-going development.

Janpha:

- NPW, how about you?

NPW:

- I agree with what WCR has just said. As for your question, yes, we're part of the community.

Janpha:

- Do you see yourself as an academic now?

NPW:

- No, (I'm not) at the present. But, surely, I'm part of the community. My ability and skills are not great, not good enough to be a guru or sage in marketing. But I'm developing myself all the time. Certainly, I'm part of it.

Janpha:

- As part of the community in marketing, are you developing yourself to be a full member of the community? When you have graduated, do you think you can function as a member of the community?

NPW

- I think I can. As I have said, learning is a process of self-development, and I'm learning all the time. I may not be no. 1 in the field, but there are other numbers like no. 2 and no. 3.

Janpha:

- It's what we call the Heavy weight, Light Fly Weight or Straw Weight; there are many levels of participation, from smaller to bigger. You'd slowly increase your participation.

NPW:

- I'd find it not easy to engage in the community if we feel that we lack the ability and knowledge.

Janpha:

- I see. Do you see the community? Can you see it?

NPW:

- Yes, I can see it. I can see that there are people who speak the same language as mine. We can share and exchange the opinions. I'm sure my community exists.

Janpha:

- And...you have a place in the community. Right?

NPW:

- Yes, I know my level and participation.

Janpha:

- I must admit that this conception of academic community is a new concept. It's one of the concepts within my study. It's like a construct in research, which means that it

may not be obvious. By the way, PWD, do you see the community, or see yourself in the community?

PWD:

- My understanding is this. As we understand, if we speak the same language, we are members of the community. If we don't know and cannot engage in the conversations we should know English. By the way, I'd like to suggest that the university, use English, it's really necessary.

Janpha:

- PJN, how about you?

PJN:

- If you ask how I see myself...

Janpha:

- Yes, as a member of the academic community..yes.

PJN:

- As a member of the community...I see it, yes.

Janpha:

- Clearly?

PJN:

- No, not at the moment, because I have not graduated yet.

Janpha:

- I see. Unless you graduate, the membership is not clear. But do you think at the moment, your English is okay for your participation?

PJN:

- I think I can manage it.

Janpha:

- You can manage and handle the challenges

WCR:

But I'm not the star or a significant member of the community, not yet

Janpha:

- How about you PWN? As you are walking into the community, what do you think about their idea; what'd they think of you?

PWN:

- They would see that we can use English, communicate in English because we have an MBA degree. We are expected that we should know English and be part of the community.

Janpha:

- Being part of the academic community and a member of the community are similar; it's a gradual process of becoming a full member of the community. Sometimes, you often feel uncertain of how you can take part in it. This is my idea.

PWN:

- I think we're not sure of our roles in the community. What are our roles in the community? This is what we want to know. And we can find them out from being part of the community.

Janpha:

- Thank you very much everybody for sharing the ideas and experiences and discussion.

DRU

DBA Transcription

Note: All names of the participants are pseudonyms except the researcher (Janpha).

Janpha:

- Let me first introduce myself. My name is Janpha Thadphoothon. At present, I'm an English teacher from the English Department of this university. I'm also teaching English at the graduate level --- the DBA (Doctor of Business Administration). I've taught for over three years. This roundtable seminar is part of a study titled *The Use of English Among Members of the Thai Academic Community of Dhurakij Pundit University's Postgraduate Business Students*. My research participants are MBA and DBA students of this university (DPU).
- The topic for the roundtable seminar today is *English for postgraduate study What, Why and How Much* --- To define what English for postgraduate study means, why it is important, and the term 'how much' means how much English graduate students should know. *How much here mean How much English do you need?* It also means "How much time do we need to spend learning or practicing it in order to become competent users of the language?"
- This is the theme and topics for our roundtable seminar. What I would like us to do this afternoon is to exchange ideas on the mentioned topics and related issues.
- Firstly, please introduce yourself.

TER:

- I'm TER.

PRP

- I'm PEP.

ATW

- ATW.

Janpha

- First of all, TER, what does English for graduate study mean to you?

TER

- In my opinion, English for graduate study may be viewed as general English, but it is more specific. As a DBA student, I read textbooks and articles from journals related to business studies. More business jargon and technical terms are used. Grammar is general, but vocabulary is more business-focused.

Janpha

- PRP, what to you is postgraduate English?

PRP

- For me, English at the postgraduate level means the use of English at the higher level in all four macro-skills, namely, listening, speaking, reading, and writing. At this level, the most important skills are the reading ones. For me, in my study, I have to read a lot, e.g., textbooks and articles from journals. Accuracy is very important.

Janpha

- Yes. ATW, you have something to add?

ATW

- For me, graduate English is similar to what the two of them have just said. What is needed is the kind of English that is more academic and applicable for our areas.

Janpha

- You mean it's about English for academic purposes?

ATW

- Yes. It's the kind of English for specialized purposes. As we read a lot, we might recognize academic terms and expressions. We can learn from them. We have to be selective in using this kind of English. We have to be able to analyze and judge the quality of the texts, which is reliable and which is not.

Janpha

- How about the use of English? Do you have to use it very often?

ATW

- From my own experience, we have to use it quite often, especially when we have to read articles and textbooks. The lecturers often use cases from English sources, so we have to read them in English. If you ask me how we use English, I can tell you that we read a lot; we rarely write. When we write reports, we write them in Thai.

Janpha

- How about when you have to search for information on the Internet?

ATW

- We have to google a lot, all the time...

Janpha

- Do you use keywords?

ATW

- Yes, keywords are important. But this does not mean that the Thai sources are unreliable, but the English ones are more 'inter' or modern, up-to-dated and are more recognized and accepted by scholars all over the world. In fact, as we know, the Thai sources rely on the sources from English texts. Sometimes, when we work on Thai case studies, we google in Thai to trace the sources, we sometimes find that the original sources are in English, so we have to follow them, and that means we have to apply our English skills..

Janpha

- How about you PRP? On the same issue.

PRP

- We rely a lot on the reading skills as we have to read a lot of English texts. We need to read when we work on reports or our theses. If you have poor reading skills, your reports might be of low quality. In terms of writing skills, we rarely have to write reports in English. We, as mentioned, often have to use keywords to search for the needed information. As for listening-speaking skills, we experience them in class. Our lecturers use a lot of English. If we can't follow them, we will not understand the lessons.

Janpha

- Most of the lecturers' power point slides are in English?

PRP

- Yes, English is used in every course.

Janpha

- Do they, I mean the teachers, use a lot of technical terms?

PRP

- Of course, they do, but we rarely converse in English. But we need to be competent in the key business terms. For technical terms, if we, for example, mispronounce them, communication will break down. In my opinion, all macro-skills are important.

Janpha

- Let me summarize what we have just discussed. The most used skill is reading, and critical reading skills are essential. You have said that you are in the Thai program, so speaking skills or conversations are rare. But you have admitted that you need to be able to read the technical terms correctly for effective communication. You have also

mentioned that all four skills are important, not just reading. TER, do you have anything to add to this?

TER

- Just to add that, as you know, it is a Thai program, As a Thai program, it is a fact that writing is not something we have to do very often. Even though we are doing the Thai program, we still need to use correct technical terms and business jargon. Many of the terms we use are English terms. We use them because they can communicate the ideas or concepts effectively, which can make our presentations successful. Writing is also important. When the lecturers introduce new terms to us, we need to learn to write them in English and grasp their meanings. Even though we understand the terms and can find Thai explanations, the explanations are often too long and often sounds complicated. Many words have never been calqued (loan-translated).

Janpha

- You seem to use a lot of English loan words. How about the English words that have been calqued?

TER

- Calques are not common. As I have said, many terms are not in Thai. We import them from the West.

ATW

- I'd like to add that sometimes using loan-translated words (calques) make communication unnatural.

Janpha

- I agree with you, ATW. I've conducted a study on the characteristics of the English being used among Thai academics and have found that there is a great deal of Western knowledge in the Thai writing. We may write our theses or academic works in Thai, but the contents are heavily influenced by the western ideas, evidenced by the use of English loan words and calques. I'd like to discuss with you the use of English,

problems and your ability to cope with English use, as well as the English support from the university. TER, what do you think?

TER

- In my case, my B.A. and MA are not in the same field. My doctoral degree is in another field. I have experienced that some terms are used differently in other fields. So, my idea is that we need to be aware of the different meanings assigned or used by other communities. We have been assigned to read journal articles related to our field of study, which has been helpful. What I like to see is more, more English support from the university and more emphasis on key concepts and technical terms. This would be helpful in our communication, as we need to use the same discourse. I'm talking about my case, of course. We need time to acquire various key terms in various subjects such as marketing, statistics, and finance. I guess we need to adjust our discourse or language. Time is needed for us to adjust and absorb the different meanings of technical terms, and I think if we have a chance to apply what we have learned, we'll learn them much better.

Janpha

- Thank you TER for your input. SUC, welcome to the forum.

SUC

- Hi, I'm SUC, DBA student, class 3. Today, I'm glad to join this roundtable seminar. I'm sorry for not being able to join this forum from the beginning, but as I have informed you that I will be late as I have had to fulfill some errands.

Janpha

- SUC, do you have any problems in your use of English?

SUC

- At first, I was quite concerned, as my English was not good. Both grammar and conversations were poor. But I worked hard to improve my English. When I was in an English class, I learned some English and I also practice using English at home. I also

benefited from watching English program on cable TV. My reading and writing have improved from reading journal articles required by all courses. Now, I think my English has improved to a certain level, but I still feel it's not okay for me yet.

Janpha

- I see. When you have problems reading academic journal articles, how do you deal with them?

SUC

- First of all, I try to cope with the problem by myself. Use a dictionary and translate.

Janpha

- Do you ask for help from your friends or teachers?

SUC

- No, not very often. I often get struck with technical terms. I often work on projects based on a case of my company, which is a company producing electronic stuff. Many technical words are not what people in marketing and finance are familiar with.

Janpha

- One reason we can understand what we read is our familiarity of the words. Is it because of the fact that we have learned it from our professional experience?

SUC

- That's true. For example, in my field, I'm in the marketing field. I am familiar with many of the terms I encounter in the journal. However, many of them are deeper than what I know, never seen them before. But I try my best to get the meaning in Thai. I try to decode it.

Janpha

- How about you ATW? Any problems dealing with your use of English?

ATW

- You have asked the right person. I've problems speaking English. I often feel shy, especially when there are other Thais nearby. I dare speaking in English. I don't know why I still have problems conversing in English. Despite the fact that I have taken English courses from many English language schools in Thailand, I still have problems with my spoken language, not to mention my writing skills. I think all of us here would agree with me in this regard. We may be too preoccupied with using correct grammar, so we feel inadequate to utter anything in English. I even spent time studying English overseas. At first I struggled, but after about two months, I could speak English with few problems. When I returned home to Thailand, my speaking skills gradually declined, and I soon got back to my normal situation. I feel shy and embarrassed to speak English in Thailand.

Janpha

- Research findings often suggest that the use of English is still in its infancy. We have few opportunities to use it, even in the English programs. Most of them need to read and use technical terms.

ATW

- When I went to Sweden, I could get myself from the airport to my destination with my English. I could ask for directions in Sweden without any serious problems. In Europe, My spoken English was okay. Back to Thailand, I still have to face the same problems and difficulties. My problems are, first of all, I feel that it is embarrassing to speak in English in front of other Thais. And two, I am afraid of making mistakes. I think the two are my personal problems. Anyone who could solve these two problems, I think, would be able to excel in English in Thailand. SUC, for example, has good English skills. He is concerned about his using of correct accent. I have noticed that that he was worried about the accent. For me, I think it is not a problem, not a big deal, and farangs would understand you. They understand us. I think only the Thais would pass judgment concerning our accent. This is of course my personal perspective. This university has the staff and the facilities, but they do not provide adequate English classes. At Kasetsart University, for example, there are several

English classes available every semester. For us, we had one course only. Then we have nothing more. We lack this continuity.

Janpha

- PRP, can you give us your opinion on this?

PRP

- For me, I can manage well in conversations and reading. I have a lot of difficulties in my writing skills. This is because, like you have said, I'm doing the Thai program, and do not have a chance to write in English.

Janpha

- Do you plan to write a paper or an academic article in English?

PRP

- I have thought about it. My writing is far from perfect. I am still at the basic conversational level. I sometimes write a letter to a friend overseas. The DBA program does not require that we have to write anything in English, except one English course. This, I feel, is something blocking the development of our English. Nowhere in the curriculum is it stated that we students are required to write reports or do assignments in English, except for one course, English for Postgraduate Study. This subject, however, is not our core subject, just a supplementary. The main problem is our opportunities to use it, as ATW has mentioned. Yes, we use English, but only in English classes. When we are outside of class, it's unlikely that we speak to each other in English. This is what I think is a big obstacle preventing us from developing our English.

Janpha

- One issue I think is worth pondering upon, and that is, why do we have to speak English to fellow Thais unless you are majoring in English. In fact, most English majors I know speak Thai most of the time.

PRP

- In an English class, we may use English inside, but as soon as we step out of the room, we resort to our mother language, Thai. That is the reason why it is hard for us to develop our English. Only one or two hours we use English in class is hardly adequate. It lacks consistency. As a matter of fact, we can use English even when we are not in an English class, but often others do not speak English with us. The real issues are in the consistency and the opportunities of English use. If the curriculum requires that we use writing skills or even listening and speaking skills, it will have to be that way. Everything, I think, depends on the consistency of English use. The same principle can be applied to our use of Thai. Daily practice helps develop our formal Thai. If we spent 2-3 years studying at an English-speaking country, our English would surely be developed. The worst skill for us is writing. We have problems writing in Thai too.

Janpha

- Let's move on to the next issue. We are aware that Thai society expects us to know, to have knowledge of something, including English. How much English should you as budding academics know?

TER

- My idea is that, even though we are in Thailand, we have to admit that the majority of theories and ideas are from the West, of course, this situation is not limited to Thailand. As many things are from the West, we need English to learn about the progress and development, so we can further develop them for our benefit. Therefore we need to study and learn about them. They would not write in Thai anyway. Graduate students need to read their academic journals to access updated knowledge. Therefore, for me, as far as the English language is concerned, Thai graduate students need to have strong writing skills. Speaking and writing skills may depend on our necessity. So we need to practice reading a lot. If we want to ask for advice, we may have to use our conversation skills. If we have to write an article in English to let other nationalities know about our work, we may publish or write the report in

English. But the reading skills are very important. Listening-speaking skills depend on individual needs.

Janpha

- Let me just add a few words to what TER has just said. Reading allows us to get what others have said, their thoughts, their theories or concepts, which are not really the Thai concepts. So if we have good English competency, that is to say, we can speak, read, and write well in English, it's like we can do the two-way communication. This is a way to do the exchange, not simply to receive. Instead of being a receiver, passively, we should be the giver too. SUC, do you have anything to say about this?

SUC

- I've experienced that graduate students really need to have good English skills. In business, we need to use English to communicate and negotiate with other business people around the world. English can help us open the door of business opportunities. Furthermore, English has become a global language. When I meet a Filipino, we use English. There are about 30 Filipinos in my neighborhood. They can use English far better than I can. Sometimes I feel embarrassed when I am in the fitness center; younger children are more fluent than me. But from a broader perspective, English is something we need to learn and make it one of our strengths. The key for me is to find and seek every opportunity to use English.

Janpha

- SUC, I agree with what you've just said that English is a global language. English is used to communicate with other nationalities. We use it to communicate with the Filipinos, Indians, and Malaysians, and others.

SUC

- Indeed, many clients, from India or Taiwan, sometimes, their English is not as perfect, or as poor as mine, but we do understand each other. I think we have to be flexible and try harder to communicate in English.

Janpha

- Their English, too, is not perfect.

SUC

- Yes, they are not perfect. Some of them, I feel, are worse than us.

Janpha

- How about the Japanese?

SUC

- The Japanese? In general, their English is not better than ours. In Asia, I think, Thais are among the top, especially our knowledge of grammar.

Janpha

- PRP, anything to add on the expectation of Thai society about your English?

PRP

- In Thai society, within the context of graduate study, I think, English is very important. If you can't read English well, you'd have problems working. At present, only about 20 percent can speak in English, but that's only for the moderate level. English is essential for study and work. When we have graduated, in work, we do need it to negotiate in business. If our English is poor we would be in disadvantages. So, for graduate students, English is a must.

Janpha

- Anything to add?

ATW

- We must have English ability and skills.

Janpha

- Please elaborate on this.

ATW

- The word ‘graduate study (บัณฑิตศึกษา)’ has a positive connotation. This reflects an advanced level of education. As for the recognition of the society, it must be admitted that, for the Thai society, *sakdina* (field power) matters, so titles, positions, and ranks are important. The term ‘graduate study’, forces us to uphold our ability. If our English scores are low, we’d feel pressured. For the public, English is needed for graduates of the master and doctoral degree levels. We need to improve ourselves. From another perspective, the level ‘graduate study’ is a curse, as it will force us not to take risks in speaking or writing in English, as we are afraid of making mistakes. That’s why we often read, so nobody can hear or understand us. When we translate we use jargon and technical terms in our fields.

Janpha

- Let me interrupt for a few seconds. Sometimes, in many programs, English has been used as a gate-keeping tool. They say that if your English is not up to their required level, you cannot enter the program or graduate. There are many negative aspects of this way of thinking. For one thing, it is not based on a scientific rationale. How much English will they be using in the Thai society anyway? There’s no evidence to suggest that they use a lot of English in Thai society. Yes, they have to read English texts a lot when they study. Of course, they may argue that they want their graduates to have higher calibers so they ask them to present papers in English.

SUC

- This is how I see it. Most Thais have excuses and conditions when it comes to English and this makes them too tense. They would avoid talking to *farangs*, but if we allow ourselves to feel relax, we’d be more successful. For example, young kids are very good at speaking English. I feel that my generation has been conditioned with rules and practices which are not good for language learning. This, I think, needs to be changed.

Janpha

- Does anyone have anything to say about this? Otherwise, I shall come to the last issue -- that is the issue of identity. Identity is related to the use of English, your ability. Many of you have mentioned this, For example, one of you (ATW) has said, "graduate-level students must have good English skills". I think there is something in what you have said, something deeper than that. It implies the identity of the students as graduate students, which is something different from being the undergraduate students. This means that graduate level students are being viewed as budding or full academics. As doctoral degree students, people cannot regard you otherwise, except the fact that you are academics or in the process of becoming one of them. It can safely be assumed that the education at this level is about helping you to become 'scholars' or 'academics'. My last topic for discussion is this. With regard to the issue of 'identity', I'd like to invite you to discuss your learning experience, as a doctoral degree student, how do you view yourself as an academic, how much English do you need to know...anyone would like to begin.

ATW

- May I ask you this first? Do you want me to discuss my role as an academic or my role as someone who is going to be one?

Janpha

- Well, at the moment, do you consider yourself an academic?

ATW

- For me, I'd say 'No', but I'm in the process of becoming one. When I am one of the academics, I am sure I'll be ready.

Janpha

- When do you think you'll be ready...

ATW

- When my English is better than this...

Janpha

- I see, English is one of the criteria. Do you say that good English is a quality for being an academic?

ATW

- Not just English, but English is one of the criteria. I mean you need to have knowledge of other things as well.

Janpha

- So English is only one of those qualities.

ATW

- Yes, and there are two approaches to learning

Janpha

- Yes. Can you clarify this, a bit more details?

ATW

- I guess my English has reached the required level. My English ability is adequate. In terms of theoretical knowledge, however, I think I have a lot to learn. The Thai style of teaching is different from the style of the West. For example, a case about a CEO. The professor would only give us one perspective. Each of us has to find other point to discuss about that CEO. For the discussion in the Thai context, a lecturer would tell us what to do, giving us less room to express our opinion.

PRP

- ATW is trying to suggest that Thai teachers' method of teaching is spoon-feeding; but, for Western teachers, they're more opened, allowing us to have our say and express our opinions.

ATW

- You're right. The way we are being taught reflects our ways of learning things. When we are learning with Western teachers, we act differently. And the process to get the goal is different too.

Janpha

- I'd like to share my experience as a doctoral student in an Australian university many years ago. They gave me an office, an independent office, a room downstairs. I had my own office and a computer with the Internet access. They treated me like one of the staff. Even though, I considered myself a student, they, on the other hand, seemed to consider me a staff member, a researcher, an academic. Identity, for me, means the way I see myself and how the society sees me. My point is this, if you perceive yourself as a member of the Thai academic community; and, you know feel that the community expects you to be competent in English, you would strive to fulfill the expectation. One of you has just told me that at present you are not an academic but part of the community. So, I'd say your level of participation determines your role and status in the community. I am a teacher at a university, so I consider myself an academic in my field. Now, can you tell me about yours?

TER

- For me, I do not understand what roles academics really have to play, for I am not in the teaching profession. I have been working for a private organization and have decided to do a DBA program. My intention is to open up another perspective, that is, the perspective of business administration. Another thing is the focus on business skills. When I have graduated, I, surely, will have more career opportunities. I may have a chance to do some academic works and enter the academic community. I do not necessarily think that my English will be better than others. I am content with the English skills that are usable and serve my purposes. For me, a graduate with good English, but who cannot communicate well is not what I consider good. I do not know how to talk to them. They may know a lot but they are poor communicators. From an outsider, an academic is a good communicator, not limited to a person who has a lot of knowledge or knows a lot of English. I think what's more important is that academics are good communicators.

Janpha

- Academics in my understanding do not have to be teachers at colleges or universities, there are different types of academics, e.g. independent academics. For me, academics are those who consider themselves a specialist or expert in a particular field. They maybe working in universities or other organizations. Many of them are graduate students. There are several levels of academics --- ranging from the heavyweight or big names to the straw weight. SUC, you are about to say something?

SUC

- For me, with regard to the role of English in the graduate level, I think not all of the graduates of the graduate level students are or should be academics. They may be working as executives and managers, some of them may be academics in various communities. Others may be specialists. Especially in Thailand, in our industrial sector, there are a lot of companies with foreign investment. Some have 30 per cent; some may have up to 70 per cent. English has been used in the grassroots level as well. Local administrators sometimes have to go overseas to study and exchange ideas with neighboring countries such as Vietnam. Many foreigners visit us and would like to learn from us too. English is thus a must. At the tertiary level, I think, we need to communicate well in English, and good at writing as well as speaking skills, too.

PRP

- Are we talking about the role of English among academics?

Janpha

- Yes, for example, as a doctoral level student, you are, probably, at the highest level, do you see yourself as an academic and if so, how relevant is English. May be the society expects you to be that good.

PRP

- Definitely, it is something the society expects us to be good at. It is also our expectation. We, too, need fulfill our expectation. At present, I am working on a

dissertation, something new to Thai society. Once it's done, I'm sure I can present it to the Thai public. It's a small beginning. If it's only in Thai, only some Thais will know about it. My intention is to make it available in English so as to let the non-Thais understand my work. And for me to be able to do that, I need to have strong English skills. With regards to Thai academics, if the only language they know and can use is Thai, they are limited in scope of their scholarship. Without English, they won't be able to produce global quality work. Thus, English is something we must be serious about. If I want to be an academic acknowledged by the society, I also need to present my work in English.

Janpha

- Assigned identity is in many ways a form of social mechanism. Identity is what and how we see ourselves. Thai society, in my opinion, expects something from us. They expect graduate students to have acceptable English skills and ability. English has become more important in many aspects of our lives. Even though many of you do not consider yourselves academics, but all of you consider yourselves part of the Thai academic community. Of course, you may increase your participation and get more involved in the activities of the community. TER, do you have anything more to say?

TER

- From my experiences in using English, I remember that when I was in a high school, I focused only on studying. When I was in a university, I took only one English course, that was, the first semester of my first year. They expected us to have some knowledge of English, sufficient to do the study. I am an engineer, and I often use engineering terms, our jargon and technical terms. I don't think any institute would be able to really teach us what words or vocabulary to use. The skills are embedded in our work. The same thing I think is true when we talk about academics. They too are professionals, so they are bound to deal with their areas of English. They may have to read and write what is related to their everyday activities. This is what I think.

Janpha:

- For example, research terms such as sampling, questionnaire, and so on.

TER

- Yes. I think if the language institute offered an English course, I guess there would be few students who would participate in it. This is because we are more focused. I think what is best for us is when we get together as a group, and we read more. If there is a way to help us read our articles or texts, and exchange our ideas in Thai or in English. This, I'm sure, will help us to better understand English in our community.

Janpha

- Thank you everybody for your participation.