An Assessment of English Learning Ability of Graduate Students at TNI

Bundit Anuyahong
College of General Education and Languages
Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology
E-mail: bundit-anuyahong@hotmail.com

Abstract:

The purposes of this research were 1) to assess English learning ability of graduate students in 5 aspects; listening, reading, grammar, vocabulary, and writing 2) to compare English learning ability of graduate students according to genders and majors and 3) to study opinions in English learning of graduate students

The research samplings were 60 graduate students in summer semester of 2012 academic year derived through simple random sampling technique. The instruments for gathering the data were English ability test and questionnaire. The statistics for analyzing the data were frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, t-test, F-test and content analysis.

The research findings were as follows; 1) effects of English learning ability of graduate students in 5 aspects were at high level, 2) students with different genders had no statistically significant differences at 0.05 level, 3) there were statistically significant differences between majors at 0.01 level, 4) supplemental suggestions were also discussed.

Keywords: *English Learning Ability, EFL Assessment*

Introduction

The Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology has been operating under the philosophy of "disseminating knowledge and building the economic base." One of the TNI objectives is to generate human resources who have abilities in the advancement of technology and industrial management. Moreover, the TNI concept of program administration focuses on the graduate students' language skills, so that graduate students will be able to communicate in English. In order to achieve the TNI objectives, TNI has provided English for graduate student course which is provided for the students from all majors (TNI Student Handbook, 2013, 18).

According to Oxford (1989), there are many factors to influence students for using language learning strategies such as age, sex, attitude, motivation, aptitude, learning stage, task requirements, teacher expectation, learning styles, individual differences, motivation, cultural differences, beliefs about language learning, and language proficiency. However, McDonough (1983) asserts that the factor that might cause the students' low proficiency in English is low level of learning motivation. This could be related to the notion of Ellis (1994) who advocates that learners' motivation is accepted as an important factor to the success of foreign language learning. This is, further, stated by McDonough (1983:142) who indicates that "motivation of the students is one of the most important factors influencing their success or failure in learning the language". Gardner and Lambert (1972), moreover, highlight a significant of learner's attitudes as an EFL learner's motivation in language learning is affected by his/her attitudes towards learning the language. Thus, a better understanding of students' motivation and attitudes could be vital factors to assist ESL/EFL

curriculum and instruction designers to create language teaching programs that generate more successful ESL/EFL learners.

Another radical approach is stated by Richard (1994) who asserts that language learners should be supported by language learning tasks such as reading or writing. Hence, they can employ several strategies to achieve the assigned tasks. In additions, O'Malley & Chamot (1990:78) contend that language learners who applied language learning strategies are able to acquire, store or recall as well as promote autonomous learning. To support these theories, it is significant to discuss on the development of the testing practice as described by Sato (2007). Sato points out that focusing on good practice in each and every step in the testing cycle, item writing, test administration, marking and reporting test results, and post hoc test data analyses are concerned. This is related to Alderson (2000) who emphasizes on discussing good practice in the testing or assessment of a specific language ability or skill through more specific information about the prioritization of the targeted content and intended difficulty of the items, dictate the format of the items and response modes, and delineate administration and scoring procedures.

In conclusion, the researcher created English ability test for graduate students which was then checked by experts in order to improve English learning for graduate students in academic year 2013. The results derived from this research will provide guidelines for improvement and development of instruction and instructional materials for future courses.

Research purposes

1) to assess English learning ability of graduate students in 5 aspects; listening, reading, grammar, vocabulary, and writing

2) to compare English learning ability of graduate students according to genders and majors, and

3) to study opinions in English learning of graduate students

Literature Review

This literature review focuses on English language ability, English language performance, English language learning strategies, models for English language learning strategies and related research as follows:

1. English Language Ability

A significance of language ability is to emphasize on the meaningful of the students' classroom activities, assignment and task. The application of language ability can be seen in a form of the language grammatical rule, structure and vocabulary to achieve in producing the correct utterance, meaningful spoken language, and well-performance language structure (Graham: 1987).

Therefore, English competency derived by effective learning activities is perceived as one of the most essential communication channels to connect people who are not using English as their native language. However, Ellis (1994) asserts that learning English as a foreign language is not only learning the vocabulary, structure or the grammar, but the learners also have to learn cognitive intelligence. This is similar to Harmer (1996) who states that English teaching as a foreign language should be focused on the cognitive aspect as well as emphasized the implementation of all communicative skills. Thus, to bridge a gap between English ability and the learner's competency is to be concerned in a form of the learner's practice as indicated by Richards and Rodgers (1992).

Richard (1994), moreover, defines the target of language learning in terms of phonological units, grammatical units, grammatical operations and lexical items in order to produce the grammatically correct sentences in language. This is related to Chomsky's theory of transformational grammar proposed as the essential competence which students should master first (Chomsky, 2009).

2. English Language Performance

Roberts (1958) highlights that language is the method of speech sound by which human uses to communicate with one another. This is similar to Richards and Rodgers (1992) who advocate that language is not limited in knowing the language, but also it is needed the ability to use communicatively and meaningful. This statement is also supported by Harmer (1996) as a notion to bridge the competence and performance that the learners need to know in order to be communicatively competent in speech community.

Besides, Richards and Rodgers (1992) define in their book, *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*, that a language is viewed as a medium for communicating a right meaning and messages. In a result, the knowledge about the rules and form of a language and the ability to verbalize this knowledge is undergone by learners who are taught in the school.

3. English Language Learning Strategies

Learning strategies are aware as thoughts and actions that learners take in order to achieve a learning goal. The learners, therefore, are required to have metacognitive knowledge about their own thinking and learning approaches with a good understanding of what a task entails as well as the ability to devise the strategies to meet the task demands and learning strengths (Stern 1975).

O'Malley and Chamot (1990), further, demonstrate that basic research in second language acquisition is to identify learning strategies and the correlation of these strategies with other learner variables such as proficiency level, age, gender, and motivation. This is confirmed by Rubin (1981) and Stern (1975) that applied research on language learning strategies is to help students become more effective language learners by teaching them some of the learning strategies that descriptive studies have identified as characteristic of the "good language learner".

Cohen (1998); O'Malley and Chamot (1990); and Wenden (1991) give an example of learning strategies as a learner could use selective attention (unobservable) to focus on the main ideas while listening to a newscast and could then decide to take notes (observable) in order to remember the information. Sato (2007), moreover, indicates that the only way to find out whether students are using learning strategies while engaged in a language task is to ask them. However, Oxford (1990) suggests that verbal report data are used to identify language learning strategies because observation does not capture mental processes.

4. Models for English language learning strategy

Cohen (1998) demonstrates models for teaching learning strategies in both first and second language contexts as to develop students' understanding of the value of learning strategies and metacognitive methods. Oxford (1990) also notes that the importance of providing multiple practice opportunities with the strategies is as: students should evaluate how well a strategy has worked, choose strategies for a task, and actively transfer strategies to new tasks.

The CALLA model, stated by Chamot (2005), is the option of revisiting prior instructional phases among teachers and students. The students have to work through a cycle of CALLA model steps, and then begin a new cycle. The teacher's responsibility is to take on a variety of roles in

order to help students learn to use learning strategies appropriate to their own learning styles. Another popular model known as the Grenfell and Harris model is demonstrated by Grenfell and Harris (1999). The model provides initial familiarization with the new strategies, then the students make personal action plans to improve their own learning, while the CALLA model builds in a self-evaluation phase for students to reflect on their use of strategies before going on to transfer the strategies to new tasks.

In summary, current models of language learning strategy instruction are based on developing students' knowledge about their own metacognitive thinking and encouraging the students to improve their language learning and proficiency.

Research Design
The data was gathered and analyzed as follows:
1. Population and sampling
1.1 The population was graduate students at Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology, Bangkok, in 2013 academic year. There were 80 students from two classes.
1.2 The sample consisted of 60 students, and was derived from a simple random sampling technique.
2. Duration in experiment
The experiment ran for 12 weeks (2 hour per week)

3. Variables
Variables in this study were as follows:
3.1 The English learning ability of graduate students.
3.2 The opinions of graduate students with English language learning.

4. Research Instruments
4.1 A 2-hour English ability test (60 items: 60 scores).
4.2 A questionnaire constructed by the researcher assessing opinions about English language learning.

5. Construction and Development of Research Instruments
The researcher constructed the English ability test and the questionnaire in the following way:

Proficiency test
Students were given pre- and post-class proficiency tests. The tests had the same format and consisted of 60 items (60 scores). The duration of each test was 60 minutes.

First, the researcher studied the objectives of English language teaching, and focused on English reading, listening, writing, grammar, and vocabulary skills and strategies. Emphasis was placed on learning for main ideas, learning for topic sentences, learning for pronoun references, learning for facts and opinions, learning for author's purposes, learning for inference.

Moreover, the researcher used the textbook, journal articles and related research as an outline to create the test. The researcher also, created a table of test specifications including language learning skills and goals for each items, and then created one set of proficiency tests following this table of test specifications.

Table1: Table of Test specification

Skills	Mode	Type of Text	Cog. Level	Item type	Total No. of item	Weight %	Scoring	Times Mns
Reading	R	Passage	Comprehension	M/C	12	20	1-0	16
Listening	L	Dialogue	Comprehension	M/C	12	20	1-0	8
Writing	W	Error Identifications	Critical	M/C	12	20	1-0	12
Grammar	G	Structures	Critical	M/C	12	20	1-0	12
Vocabulary	V	Incomplete sentences	Comprehension	M/C	12	20	1-0	12
Total					**60**	**100**		**60**

Then, the researcher derived the difficulty and discrimination of the tests (P-R value) from standard criteria consisting of 60 items. Five experts examined, corrected and improved the accuracy, validity and reliability of the language and contents of the test. The test had a difficulty level between 0.20-0.80 and a rank of discrimination at 0.20 or over. The calculation of the test reliability was used K-R 20 by Kuder-Richardson (Cited Boonriang Khajonsil 2000: 165). Then, the English ability test was used to sampling of the research. The data obtained from a small group experiment was analyzed to find reliability by using α-Coefficient formula stated by Cronbach (1974: 161). Coefficient of reliability was 0.92.

The table following demonstrated the difficulty of test items (p) and the discrimination of test items (r) of English learning ability test.

Table 2: The difficulty of test items (p) and the discrimination of test items (r) of English learning ability test

Item	p	r	Item	p	r
1	0.47	0.40	31	0.47	0.67
2	0.60	0.67	32	0.47	0.67
3	0.73	0.37	33	0.47	0.67
4	0.33	0.71	34	0.60	0.67
5	0.67	0.40	35	0.73	0.67
6	0.53	0.23	36	0.33	0.27
7	0.73	0.40	37	0.73	0.67
8	0.73	0.67	38	0.53	0.80
9	0.47	0.67	39	0.80	0.40
10	0.67	0.53	40	0.47	0.80
11	0.80	0.27	41	0.20	0.40
12	0.60	0.67	42	0.73	0.40
13	0.60	0.53	43	0.27	0.27
14	0.80	0.53	44	0.53	0.53
15	0.27	0.27	45	0.40	0.80
16	0.73	0.27	46	0.53	0.71
17	0.53	0.53	47	0.73	0.37
18	0.80	0.80	48	0.67	0.71
19	0.47	0.67	49	0.27	0.40
20	0.67	0.67	50	0.67	0.67
21	0.80	0.53	51	0.80	0.37
22	0.58	0.67	52	0.40	0.53
23	0.33	0.80	53	0.60	0.27
24	0.73	0.40	54	0.73	0.27
25	0.53	0.67	55	0.33	0.53

26	0.80	0.27	56	0.67	0.80
27	0.41	0.67	57	0.53	0.67
28	0.73	0.80	58	0.73	0.67
29	0.33	0.40	59	0.67	0.53
30	0.73	0.56	60	0.27	0.55

The Questionnaire

The researcher created a questionnaire to investigate students' opinions about English language teaching. The questionnaire was constructed using opened-end questions.

The data from the experts was applied with the following formula:

$$IOC = \frac{\Sigma R}{N}$$

IOC replaces   Index of item-Objective Congruence
R   replaces Experts' opinions
N   replaces Number of experts
Questions rated less than 0.5 by the experts were considered and improved.

Statistic Used in Data Analysis

1. The comparison between the male and female was done using t-test, which was calculated by computer program.

2. The F-test was used to measure the students' English reading achievement on reading test according to students' majors.

3. The data from the questionnaire were analyzed by using content analysis method.

Results

  Results of the data analysis

  Phase 1: Results of demographic data of graduate students

Table3: Results of demographic data analysis of graduate students

samplings	Number of students	%
Majors		
1. EEM (*Master of Business Administration Program in Executive Enterprise Management*)	20	33.33
2. MET (*Master Program in Engineering Technology*)	20	33.33
3. MIM (*Master of Business Administration Program in Industrial Management*)	20	33.34
Total	**60**	**100**

The table above showed that the percentage of graduate students in majors ranged from 33.33% for EEM (*Master of Business Administration Program in Executive Enterprise Management)*, 33.33% for MET *(Master Program in Engineering Technology*), and 33.34% for MIM (*Master of Business Administration Program in Industrial Management*).

Phase 2: Results of English ability test scores analysis of graduate students

The assessment of English learning ability of graduate students at TNI, the researcher used English learning ability test which created according to test procedure. Therefore, percentage of scores was calculated from criteria as following; (adapted from Thaweerat, 2000; Wongsothorn, 1995)

       81-100 means very high
       61-80 means high
       41-60 means moderate
       21-40 means low
       1-20   means very low

Table4: results of English ability test of 60 graduate students

No.	Majors	Listening (12)	Reading (12)	Writing (12)	Grammar (12)	Vocabulary (12)	Scores (60)	percentage
1	EEM	7	8	9	10	10	44	73.33
2	EEM	6	7	8	10	10	41	68.33
3	EEM	5	5	7	9	9	35	58.33
4	EEM	6	5	7	10	11	39	65.00
5	EEM	7	9	10	11	11	48	80.00
6	EEM	4	5	7	8	8	32	53.33
7	EEM	9	9	10	10	11	49	81.66
8	EEM	6	6	9	9	10	40	66.66
9	EEM	9	10	10	11	10	50	83.33
10	EEM	6	6	8	8	7	35	58.33
11	EEM	6	7	7	8	9	37	61.66
12	EEM	5	5	8	8	10	36	60.00
13	EEM	7	9	10	10	10	46	76.66
14	EEM	7	7	7	8	8	37	61.66
15	EEM	8	9	10	11	11	49	81.66
16	EEM	4	8	8	8	10	38	63.33
17	EEM	7	9	10	11	10	47	78.33
18	EEM	3	8	7	8	7	33	55.00
19	EEM	9	8	8	7	10	42	70.00
20	EEM	7	5	6	8	10	36	60.00
21	MET	8	8	8	10	11	45	75.00
22	MET	4	5	6	6	6	27	45.00
23	MET	7	8	9	5	7	36	60.00
24	MET	10	11	11	11	10	53	88.33
25	MET	6	8	10	9	11	44	73.33
26	MET	5	6	7	7	8	33	55.00
27	MET	6	7	8	8	8	37	61.66
28	MET	9	9	10	11	12	51	85.00
29	MET	7	8	10	9	8	42	70.00
30	MET	9	7	8	9	7	40	66.66
31	MET	7	8	7	9	7	38	63.33

32	MET	7	5	7	9	8	36	60.00
33	MET	4	6	7	7	7	31	51.66
34	MET	5	5	6	6	7	29	48.33
35	MET	8	8	9	9	10	44	73.33
36	MET	5	6	9	9	9	38	63.33
37	MET	4	8	7	9	9	37	61.66
38	MET	5	9	8	8	9	39	65.00
39	MET	9	9	11	11	10	50	83.33
40	MET	7	9	9	10	10	45	75.00
41	MIM	9	9	11	11	11	51	85.00
42	MIM	6	5	7	7	9	34	56.66
43	MIM	6	9	10	10	11	46	76.66
44	MIM	7	7	5	6	9	34	56.66
45	MIM	5	8	9	8	8	38	63.33
46	MIM	6	6	9	8	9	38	63.33
47	MIM	9	9	10	9	11	48	80.00
48	MIM	4	5	6	6	9	30	50.00
49	MIM	5	5	9	9	9	37	61.66
50	MIM	7	7	9	9	10	42	70.00
51	MIM	5	8	8	9	11	41	68.33
52	MIM	4	5	8	8	10	35	58.33
53	MIM	6	7	10	10	10	43	71.66
54	MIM	7	9	9	9	10	44	73.33
55	MIM	5	6	7	9	9	36	60.00
56	MIM	7	9	11	11	11	49	81.66
57	MIM	6	5	7	7	7	32	53.33
58	MIM	5	5	8	8	9	35	58.33
59	MIM	4	6	9	9	10	38	63.33
60	MIM	6	8	9	10	10	43	71.66
Total scores							**2,403**	**66.75**

The table showed that the total scores of the 60 graduate students were 2,403 and 66.75 for the total percentage which effects of English learning ability of graduate students were at high level.

Table 5: results of mean scores and standard deviation of 60 graduate students according to majors

No.	Majors	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	S.D
1	EEM	40.70	5.80
2	MET	39.75	7.08
3	MIM	39.70	5.90
Total		**40.05**	**6.20**

The table showed that the total of mean scores was 40.05 (S.D=6.20) which in majors ranged from ($\bar{x}$=40.70) for EEM, ($\bar{x}$=39.75) for MET, and ($\bar{x}$=39.70) for MIM respectively.

Table 6: results of mean scores and standard deviation of 60 graduate students in each skill and in the total

No.	Skills	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	S.D
1	Listening	6.31	1.65
2	Reading	7.21	1.62
3	Writing	8.40	1.46
4	Grammar	8.80	1.48
5	Vocabulary	9.32	1.39
Total		**8.00**	**1.52**

The table showed that the total of mean scores was 8.00 (S.D=1.52) which in skills ranged from ($\bar{x}$=9.32) for vocabulary, ($\bar{x}$=8.80) for grammar, ($\bar{x}$=8.40) for writing, ($\bar{x}$=7.21) for reading, and ($\bar{x}$=6.31) for listening respectively.

Phase 3: The comparison of the English ability test for the 60 graduate students according to genders and majors. The statistics used in the data analysis consisted of mean ($\bar{x}$), standard deviation (S.D), t-test and F-test

Table7: The comparison of the English ability test for the 60 graduate students according to genders was as follows:

Genders	Number of students	Total score	($\bar{x}$)	S.D	t	Sig
Male	32	60	38.45	6.65		
					21.433*	0.14
Female	28	60	39.69	5.72		

* *Statistical significance at 0.05 level*

The table showed that graduate students with different genders had no statistically significant differences at 0.05 level.

Table8: The comparison of the before and after test according to majors

ANOVA

Major	Group	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Sheffe'
EEM	Between Groups	640.200	15	42.680	0.723	0.00*	MET-EEM, MIM-EEM
	Within Groups	.000	5	.000			
	Total	640.200	20				
MET	Between Groups	840.250	15	56.017	1.974	.268	
	Within Groups	113.500	5	28.375			
	Total	953.750	20				
MIM	Between Groups	545.700	15	36.380	1.249	.457	

Within Groups	116.500	5	29.125			
Total	662.200	20				

* Statistical significance at 0.01 level

The graduate students with different majors showed statistically significant differences on reading test at 0.01 level. When considered in each major, it was found that there were 2 pairs of different majors as following;

Pair1: Graduate students from MET major and EEM major

Pair 2: Graduate students from MIM major and EEM major

Phase 4: The results of the students' opinions from questionnaire were as follows:

Table 9: Results of content analysis about opinions in English learning

Questions	statements	frequency	percentage
1. What skills would you like to improve?		*60*	*100*
	1. Listening skill is very useful.	18	30.00
	2. Reading for summarizing is suitable for graduate students to conclude reading passage.	17	28.33
	3. Grammar is very important for writing.	15	25.00
	4. Vocabulary is very difficult.	10	16.67
2. What activity do you want to apply in teaching-learning process?		*60*	*100*
	1. Pre-listening, while- listening and post-listening are very important for teaching.	16	26.66
	2. Reading activities such as before reading, while reading and after reading are preferred in teaching-learning process.	14	23.33
	3. Outlining, drafting and editing are good process.	12	20.00
	4. Learning vocabulary from pictures and definitions are essential.	10	16.66
	5. Grammar with examples and various activities is very comprehensible.	8	13.33
3. What types of learning style would you like to utilize in learning language?		*60*	*100*
	1. Problem based learning is useful.	18	30.00
	2. Case studies are essential for graduate students.	16	26.67
	3. Discussion in group is good style.	14	23.33
	4. Role playing is good learning style for speaking.	12	20.00

4. What kind of teaching materials do you want to use in teaching and learning?		*60*	*100*
	1. Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) materials are preferred for teaching-learning English.	35	58.33
	2. Paper based instruction is suitable because students can take note their ideas.	25	41.67
5. What environment do you want in classroom?		*60*	*100*
	1. A generous teacher supports a positive learning environment.	18	30.00
	2. Flexible environment is suitable for teaching and learning in the classroom.	15	25.00
	3. Wireless internet should be provided in the classroom.	15	25.00
	4. A beautiful classroom increases my learning motivation.	12	20.00

The table indicated opinions and suggestions given by graduate students regarding the English language learning as follows:

Opinions from **question1:** *What skills would you like to improve?*
For this question, the following opinions were given by the graduate students:
    1. Listening skill is very useful (30.00% or 18 students).
    2. Reading for summarizing is suitable for graduate students to conclude reading passage (28.33% or 17 students).
    3. Grammar is very important for writing (25.00% or 15 students).
    4. Vocabulary is very difficult (16.67% or 10 students).

Opinions from **question2:** *What activity do you want to apply in teaching-learning process?*
For this question, the following opinions were given by the graduate students:
    1. Pre-listening, while- listening and post-listening are very important for teaching (26.66% or 16 students).
    2. Reading activities such as before reading, while reading and after reading are preferred in teaching-learning process (23.33% or 14 students).
    3. Outlining, drafting and editing are good process (20.00% or 12 students).
    4. Learning vocabulary from pictures and definitions are essential (16.66% or 10 students).
    5. Grammar with examples and various activities is very comprehensible (13.33% or 8 students).

Opinions from **question3:** *What types of learning style would you like to utilize in learning language?*
    1. Problem based learning is useful (30.00% or 18 students).

2. Case studies are essential for graduate students (26.67 or 16 students).
3. Discussion in group is good style (23.33% or 14 students).
4. Role playing is good learning style for speaking (20.00% or 12 students).

Opinions from **question4:** *What kind of teaching materials do you want to use in teaching and learning?*
1. Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) materials are preferred for teaching-learning English (58.33% or 35 students).
2. Paper based instruction is suitable because students can take note their ideas (41.67% or 25 students).

Opinions from **question5:** *What environment do you want in classroom?*
1. A generous teacher supports a positive learning environment (30.00% or 18 students).
2. 2. Flexible environment is suitable for teaching and learning in the classroom (25.00% or 15 students).
3. Wireless internet should be provided in the classroom (25.00 or 15 students).
4. A beautiful classroom increases my learning motivation (20.00% or 12 student).

Discussion
The results of the study indicate:
1. The total scores of the 60 graduate students were 2,403, and the total percentage was 66.75 which showed that English learning ability of graduate students was at high level. This may be because the graduate students were taught language learning strategies. Furthermore, these strategies are applied by language learners as a means to acquire and to use information that learners have acquired, stored or recalled, and can also promote autonomous learning (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990:78) which related to idea of the theorist, Richard (1994) who advocated that language learners will be successful in the tasks due to use of an appropriate language learning strategy.

In addition, the graduate students applied the language learning strategies in their learning to enhance their understanding. Moreover, the teaching-learning activity in each week was constructed according to an English learning theory developed by Stern (1975) who produced language learning strategies. He believed that the good language learner is characterized by a personal learning style or positive learning strategies, an active approach to the learning task, a tolerant and outgoing approach to the target language which is empathetic with its speakers, technical know-how about how to tackle a language, strategies of experimentation and planning with the object of developing the new language into an ordered system with progressive revision, constantly searching for meaning, willingness to practice, willingness to use the language in real communication, critically sensitive self-monitoring in language use and an ability to develop the target language more and more as a separate reference system while learning to think about it.

2. Results of students' opinions indicated students had positive ideas with the class. This seemed to be because they understood and applied learning strategies. Results also confirmed statements of the educational theorists, O'Malley & Chamot (1990), who reported that skilled learners tend to keep the meaning of the words in mind, guess the meaning of words, and learn with confidence. Moreover, language learning environment becomes a crucial element in the process of language learning. Therefore, Chen (1999) believed that language is a way of expression; learning a language cannot only imitate sound or be familiar with grammar structure; learning a language first must go back to the context of language and culture and then catch the point of language learning.

6. Conclusion
   According to the study and data analysis, the results of this study were as follows.
        1. The total scores of the 60 graduate students were 2,403 and 66.75 for the total percentage which effects of English learning ability of graduate students were at high level.

        2. The graduate students with different genders had no statistically significant differences at 0.05 level.

        3. The graduate students with different majors showed statistically significant differences on reading test at 0.01 level. When considered in each major, it was found that there were 2 pairs of different majors as following;
        Pair1: Graduate students from MET major and EEM major
        Pair 2: Graduate students from MIM major and EEM major

        4. Opinions from question1: *What skills would you like to improve?*
For this question, the following opinions were given by the graduate students:
        1. Listening skill is very useful (30.00% or 18 students).
        2. Reading for summarizing is suitable for graduate students to conclude reading passage (28.33% or 17 students).
        3. Grammar is very important for writing (25.00% or 15 students).
        4. Vocabulary is very difficult (16.67% or 10 students).

        Opinions from question2: *What activity do you want to apply in teaching-learning process?*
For this question, the following opinions were given by the graduate students:
        1. Pre-listening, while- listening and post-listening are very important for teaching (26.66% or 16 students).
        2. Reading activities such as before reading, while reading and after reading are preferred in teaching-learning process (23.33% or 14 students).
        3. Outlining, drafting and editing are good process (20.00% or 12 students).
        4. Learning vocabulary from pictures and definitions are essential (16.66% or 10 students).
        5. Grammar with examples and various activities is very comprehensible (13.33% or 8 students).

        Opinions from question3: *What types of learning style would you like to utilize in learning language?*
        1. Problem based learning is useful (30.00% or 18 students).
        2. Case studies are essential for graduate students (26.67 or 16 students).
        3. Discussion in group is good style (23.33% or 14 students).
        4. Role playing is good learning style for speaking (20.00% or 12 students).

        Opinions from question4: *What kind of teaching materials do you want to use in teaching and learning?*
        1. Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) materials are preferred for teaching-learning English (58.33% or 35 students).
        2. Paper based instruction is suitable because students can take note their ideas (41.67% or 25 students).

Opinions from question5: *What environment do you want in classroom?*

1. A generous teacher supports a positive learning environment (30.00% or 18 students).

2. 2. Flexible environment is suitable for teaching and learning in the classroom (25.00% or 15 students).

3. Wireless internet should be provided in the classroom (25.00 or 15 students).

4. A beautiful classroom increases my learning motivation (20.00% or 12 student).

7. Acknowledgements

References

Alderson, J. C. 2000. *Assessing Reading*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Boonriang Khajonsil. 2000. *Educational Research Methodology*. Fifth Edition. Bangkok: P.N. Publishing.

Chamot, A.U. (2005). The Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA): An update. In P.A.Richard-Amato & M.A. Snow (Eds.), *Academic success for English language learners: Strategies for K-12 mainstream teachers* (pp. 87-101). White Plains, NY: Longman.

Chen, Y. L. (1999). Motivation in Learning English as a Foreign Language. *The Proceedings of the 1999 English for Specific Purposes Conference*. 58-71.

Cheung, M.W. (1979). A comparison of secondary school pupils' comprehension of lessons taught in English and in auxiliary language. In N.L. Cheng (Ed.), *Issues in language of instruction in Hong Kong. Hong Kong*: Cosmos.

Chomsky, Noam. (2009). *Cartesian Linguistics*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Cohen, A.D. (1998). *Strategies in learning and using a second language*. London: Longman.

Cronbach, Lee Joseph. (1974). *The Dependability of Behavioral Measurement Theory of Generalizability for Scores and Profile*. New York: Wiley Press.

Ellis, R. (1994). *The study of second language acquisition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gardner, R., & Lambert, W. (1972). *Attitudes and motivations in second language learning*. Rowley, Massachusetts: Newbury House.

Graham, J.G. (1987). English language proficiency and the prediction of academic success. *TESOL Quarterly*, 21(3), 505-521.

Grenfell, M., & Harris, V. (1999). *Modern languages and learning strategies: In theory and practice*. London: Routledge.

Harmer, Jeremi. (1996). *The Practice of English Language Teaching*. New York: Longman.

McDonough, S. (1983). *Psychology in foreign language teaching*. George Allen & Unwin: London.

O'Malley, J. M., & Chamot, A. U. (1990). *Learning strategies in second language acquisition*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Oxford, R. (1989). Use of language learning strategies: A synthesis of studies with implications for strategy training. *System*, 17(2), 235-247.

Oxford, R.L. (1990). *Language learning strategies: What every teacher should know.*

New York: Newbury House.

Richard, J. C. (1994). *Reflective teaching in second language classroom*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Richards, Jack.C., & Rodgers Theodore. (1992). *Approaches and methods in Language Teaching*. United States of America: Cambridge University Press.

Roberts, Paul. (1958). *Understanding English*. New York: Harper and Brothers.

Rubin, J. (1975). What the "good language learner" can teach us. *TESOL Quarterly, 9*, 41-51.

Rubin, J. (1981). Study of cognitive processes in second language learning. *Applied Linguistics, 11*, 117-131.

Stern, H. (1975). What can we learn from the good language learner?, *Canadian Modern Language Review*, 34, 304-318

Sato, E. (2007). *A Guide to Linguistic Modification: Strategies for Increasing English Language Learner Access to Academic Content*. Paper developed for the U.S. Department of Education LEP Partnership

Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology (2013). *TNI student handbook*, Bangkok.

Thaweerat, P. (2000) Methodology of Behavioral and Social Sciences. 8th Edition, Bangkok: Chareonphol Publishing.

Wongsothorn, A. (1995) Guideline for Language Testing. Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Publishing.

Wenden, A.L. (1991). *Learner strategies for learner autonomy*. London: Prentice-Hall International.

Bio data

    Bundit Anuyahong is a lecturer and Assistant Director for Academic Affair at College of General Education and Languages, Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology and is also Ph.D candidate at Silpakorn University in Curriculum and Instruction-Teaching English. He obtained double degrees for his master. One is Master of Education in TEFL from Silpakorn University and Master of Education in Educational Administration from Naresuan University.

Appendix

Example of Reading Test

Passage 1: Items 1-5

    A social problem is a condition that at least some people in a community view as being undesirable. Everyone would agree about some social problems, such as murders and DWI traffic deaths. Other social problems may be viewed as such by certain groups of people. Teenagers who play loud music in a public park obviously do not view it as a problem, but some other people may consider it an undesirable social condition. Some nonsmokers view smoking as an undesirable social condition that should be banned or restricted in public buildings. Every newspaper is filled with stories about undesirable social conditions. Examples include crime, violence, drug abuse, and environmental problems. Such social problems can be found at the local, state, national and international levels. You will be focusing in the Public Policy Analyst on social problems in your own community.

Drug **suppression** and law enforcement Thailand carries the death penalty for drug trafficking. Many social structures in Thailand share some resemblance to their British counterparts. This is not just coincidence. Thailand has a long history of scholarly links to England, in the past many members of Thai royalty have received their schooling within British shores. One area of similarity is law, especially policy on drug suppression and **jurisprudence**. Yet the enforcement and penalties used by the two nations tell a different tale. The most obvious difference in drug laws is the death penalty. In Thailand, possession of category one drugs "for the purpose of disposal" carries the death penalty, although this has not been used since 2004. The Narcotics Act is vague about category one drugs, simply stating "dangerous drugs such as Heroin". **Rehabilitation** counseling is also mandatory in Thailand for all categories of drugs, so even a weed smoker would have to attend a course.

In the UK, the maximum penalty is life imprisonment. This is usually reserved for those who carry "class A" drugs with intent to supply. The Home Office is clearer about what drugs are classes a: Ecstasy, LSD, heroin, cocaine, crack, magic mushrooms, and amphetamines (if prepared for injection). Amphetamines have just been upgraded from class B to class A. I'd be grateful to anyone who can tell me what this drug is graded as in Thailand?

Directions: Choose the best answer.
1. The topic of this passage could be …………….
       a. Social Problem in Thailand
       b. Teenagers in Thailand
       c. Drug Abuse
       d. Dangerous Drugs
2. Which statement is TRUE?
       a. Some nonsmokers view smoking as an undesirable social condition that should be supported.
       b. Social problems can be found at the local, state, national and international levels.
       c. Possession of category one drugs "for the purpose of disposal" carries the happiness in life.
       d. The Narcotics Act is vague about category one drugs, simply stating "dangerous drugs such as Red Label".

3. The word "**suppression**" means………….... (in line 11)
       a. control   b. contrast
       c. combination   d. complex
4. The word "**jurisprudence**" means…………………... (in line 16)
       a. Causes and effects of drug law
       b. A study concerned with drugs
       c. Teenagers in jails
       d. philosophy concerned with the law
5. The word "**Rehabilitation**" could be best replaced by ………………. (in line 20)
       a. review   b. therapy
       c. regression   d. theory