

A Correlation Study of the Contribution and Usage of the Factors That Contribute To a Competent Speaker of English in a Business Context

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Abstract

This study investigates the correlation of the contribution and usage of the factors that contribute to a competent speaker of English in a business context. There are four research questions which lead to the findings that achieve the objectives. The 278 participants were selected from a multinational semi-conductor manufacturing company located in Thailand. The majority of the participants were Thai nationals who dealt with international clients and suppliers on a daily basis. Because the participants practice global communication, this study adapted Global Communicative Competence framework by Louhiala-Salminen & Kankaanranta (2011). Using mixed-methodology research design, the answers to the research questions were realized. The findings indicated that employees and employers perceived the six factors in GCC, which are 1) Business-Specific Knowledge, 2) English Competence, 3) Communication Strategies, 4) Strategic Skills, 5) Cultural Knowledge & Skills, and 6) Accommodation Skills, to contribute a competent speaker of English in business context with the Mean (M) = 4.08 for employees and M = 4.17 for employers. The findings also showed that most of the factors were often used by the employees and employers with M = 3.76 and M = 3.89 respectively. In addition, the findings indicated that, there was a significant correlation between the contribution and usage of each factor, except for English Competence. These findings show that, in this particular study, employees and employers need to possess all the factors or competencies to become globally competent speakers of English in business context.

Key Words: BELF Competence, Competent English Speaker, English as a Business Lingua Franca, English in Business Context, Global Communicative Competence

INTRODUCTION

Globalization transforms the landscape of business and has made English as a multinational linguistic power sharing tool to compete in this competitive world and becomes a lingua franca of business.

To be a proficient speaker of English language is not a straightforward task to do as there are various factors that contribute to a realization of being a successful speaker of English. The question is, what is categorized as globally competent speakers of English in business context? To answer that question, this study aims to investigate employees and employers' perceptions on what it meant to be globally competent speakers which contribute to the success of various domains of business in Thailand where English is used as a common language or a lingua franca.

Moreover, as this study focuses on global business communication using English language, *Global Communicative Competence* (GCC) theoretical framework by Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen (2011) was seen fit to this study. GCC consists of three layers: multicultural competence, competence in English as a Business Lingua Franca, and the communicator's business 'knowhow'. These three layers are regarded to have a big impact in communication specifically in the business world.

Therefore, Thailand must expand their focus from linguistic competence in English, which is the emphasis of most educational institutions, to communicative competence in English. By doing so, the country will be able to build a bridge that can connect English for educational purposes to English for business purposes and domains. Most importantly, it will help create business professionals that are holistically and globally communicative competent – a goal that most companies in Thailand have for their workers.

Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are:

1. to identify the level of *employees' perceived contribution* and *usage* of factors that contribute to a competent speaker of English in the business context;
 - 1.1 to identify if there is a correlation between *employees' perceived contribution* and *usage* of factors which contribute to a competent speaker of English in the business context;
2. to identify the level of *employers' perceived contribution* and *usage* of factors that contribute to a competent speaker of English in the business context; and
 - 2.1 to identify if there is a correlation between *employers' perceived contribution* and *usage* of factors which contribute to a competent speaker of English in the business context.

Theoretical Framework

As mentioned earlier, this study employs Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen's (2011) GCC framework as it deals with communicative competence in English specifically in business context. Figure 1 shows the illustration of GCC.

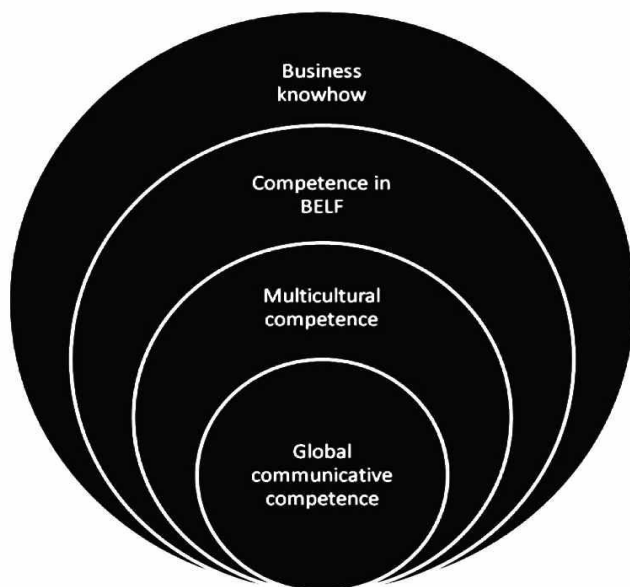


Figure 1. Global Communicative Competence (adapted from Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen, 2011)

According to Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen (2011), GCC is wrapped with three layers, the multicultural competence, competence in BELF, and business knowhow. Multicultural competence deals with person's knowledge and skills in managing communication in different contexts of the situation. Meaning, a person should require accommodation skills not only in terms of language but also culture. BELF competence focuses on the interpersonal aspect of language in which a person should require competence in English 'core'. This involves a person's familiarity of 'business-specific genres, communication strategies such as clarity, brevity, directness and politeness, in other words, 'creating rapport and maintaining relationship' with others (Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen, 2013, p. 28). The last most important layer of GCC is the business knowhow as it filters and influences its other layers. According to Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen (2013, p. 29), this layer is business-specific knowledge and combines two integral elements: the particular "domain of use" and the wider, overall goals, norms and strategies of business shared by the business community.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework used in this study is adapted and adopted from Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen's (2011) GCC framework to answer the research questions based on theories represented in this study.

By breaking down the competencies gathered from GCC, the conceptual framework below was created to help attain the objectives of this study.

Figure 2 shows the illustrated conceptual framework of this study.

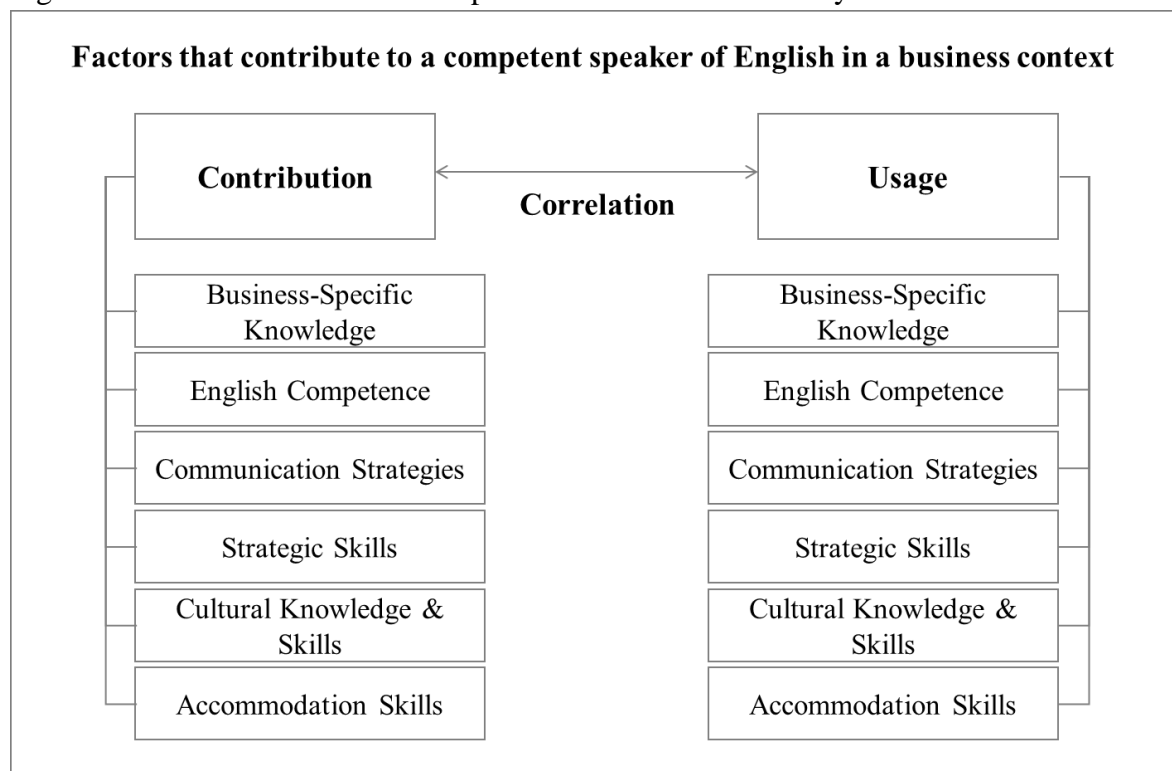


Figure 2. Conceptual Framework

Definition of Terms

1. **Accommodation Skills (AS)** is one of the six factors that contribute to a competent speaker of English in a business context. It refers to the workers' ability to understand others' opinions, and make them feel good.
2. **Business-Specific Knowledge (BSK)** is one of the six factors that contribute to a competent speaker of English in a business context. It refers to the workers' knowledge on what, who, when, and how to communicate. It is also the workers' knowledge on using technical English words with people who do understand them; explaining the technical English words to people who do not understand them; and avoiding technical English words with people who may not understand them.
3. **Communication Strategies (CS)** is one of the six factors that contribute to a competent speaker of English in a business context. It refers to the workers' ability to communicate with directness, clarity, conciseness, politeness, understanding, and also maintain relationships while communicating.
4. **Competent speaker** refers to an Employee or Employer who is contextually, linguistically, and culturally competent in communicating in English for business domain.
5. **Contribution** is one of the two variables used in this study. It refers to the level of Employees and Employers' perceived contribution of the six factors on their successful communication at work.

6. **Correlation** refers to the relationship of the two variables used in this study – contribution and usage of the six factors.
7. **Cultural Knowledge & Skills (CKS)** is one of the six factors that contribute to a competent speaker of English in a business context. It refers to the workers' knowledge and ability to consider their interlocutor's national culture, organizational culture, and role in the organization.
8. **Employees** refer to the office-level employees who are the subordinates of the Employers. They learn English language specifically for communicative purposes at work. They report to the Employers.
9. **Employers** refer to the office-level employees whose positions are supervisors, managers, and directors. They learn English language specifically for communicative purposes at work. The Employees report to them.
10. **English as a Business Lingua Franca (BELF)** refers to the shared language or code used in international business arena to get the work done.
11. **English Competence (EC)** is one of the six factors that contribute to a competent speaker of English in a business context. It refers to the workers' ability to use English for different communicative purposes at work which include email writing, report writing, meeting, presentation, telephone calls, and conference calls.
12. **Factors/Constructs** refer to the six competencies that contribute to competent BELF speakers. These include Business-Specific Knowledge (BSK), English Competence (EC), Communication Strategies (CS), Strategic Skills (SS), Cultural Knowledge & Skills (CKS), and Accommodation Skills (AS).
13. **Global Communicative Competence (GCC)** refers to the theoretical framework created by Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen in 2011. The framework suggests that for a person to become a globally competent communicator, s/he must possess competencies in business, BELF, and cultures. It was adapted and adopted for the construction of conceptual framework in this study.
14. **Strategic Skills (SS)** is one of the six factors that contribute to a competent speaker of English in a business context. It refers to the workers' ability to ask for clarifications and questions, repeat utterances, and paraphrase.
15. **The Company** refers to the multinational semi-conductor manufacturing company in Thailand where the research has been conducted.
16. **Usage** is one of the two variables used in this study. It refers to Employees and Employers' actual usage of the six factors on their communication at work.
17. **Workers** refer to all Employees and Employers who use English for their work on a daily basis at The Company.

Significance of the Study

This study is of great significance in the field of business and English Language Teaching (ELT) based on these different points.

The findings will be able to provide important insights from both the employees and employers' perspectives that can help English language teachers, especially those who teach in business organizations to adjust their teaching and learning materials to be aligned to the companies' policy and goals in terms of workers' needs using the GCC framework. Through GCC, teachers' will be able to understand which skills the workers need. This includes the cultural aspect, linguistics, as well as, their business knowhow.

It will also help learners understand the concept of GCC which will enable them to become aware that context is the most important foundation on perception specifically if BELF is taught in companies, for example, how to act accordingly, in certain task or situation.

Developers of teaching materials for business context will gain better knowledge on how to produce materials intended for workers who are trying to develop their English language competence at work.

Moreover, companies will understand that GCC, and not just the linguistic side of English, can help them gain a competitive advantage in international trade.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The influence and importance of English in the world have increased in a great speed and influences how business markets are being shaped over the last 20 years. Globalization pushes people especially in the business world to communicate with someone with different cultural and linguistic backgrounds in a common language which is English (Hendriks, Meurs, & De Groot, 2015; Seidlhofer, Breiteneder, & Pitzl, 2006). In the context of Thailand, this means that they have to use English as a lingua franca or their common language. Thailand is a country where English is a foreign language and for years the speakers of English have grown rapidly. Due to the country's economic growth, Thailand's multinational companies have grown rapidly which means great competitions to Thai local companies.

To be conversant, a person should possess certain knowledge of the English language. However, language alone is not enough especially if a person is dealing with speakers who come from different parts of the world with different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Knowing how to speak a language does not mean a person is a competent speaker. Problem could arise as comprehensibility is depending on interlocutors' know-how to communicate. The implication is that, to be a competent speaker of English, a speaker should have cultural knowledge, linguistic knowledge, and discourse knowledge.

English language, although just one, can vary in forms, grammar, accents, and pronunciations depending on the user. Most of the time, it is localized and therefore could reflect one's identity. English as a lingua franca or ELF is the language most commonly used by people whose mother tongues are not English when they discourse with each other in any

contexts, and English as a business lingua franca or BELF is the language most commonly used in business contexts.

One might predict that when people from diverse linguacultural backgrounds use English as Lingua Franca to communicate, there would be difficulties in communication. However, most empirical studies have shown that ELF communication is less problematic than expected (Kaur, 2009; Mauranen, 2006; Pitzl 2005) as speakers cooperate and use various strategies that ensure communicative success (Cogo, 2009; 2010). This shows that successful communication in English is no longer just about being able to use “correct” or “accurate” English, but more on having the capability to adjust oneself in order to understand other interlocutors despite the differences in “their” English.

English as a Business Lingua Franca (BELF)

BELF competence can be considered an essential component of business knowledge required in today’s global business environment (Kankaanranta & Planken, 2010). BELF is “a ‘neutral’ and shared communication code for the function of conducting business” (Louhiala-Salminen et al., 2005, Bargiela-Chiappini et al., 2013). It is shared in the sense that it is used for conducting business within the global community whose members are BELF users and communicators in their own right – not non-native speakers or learners (Grygiel, 2015).

The concept of BELF, which originally stood for “Business English as Lingua Franca” was later used as the abbreviation to refer to “English as Business Lingua Franca” in the research made by Kankaanranta and Louhiala-Salminen (2013). With that change, they wanted to emphasize the “B” or “Business” as the domain of use rather than the type of English. BELF entails the professional domain of internationally operating companies and the people representing various “cultural identities” (Jameson, 2007) who constitute that domain, which can be characterized by its goal-oriented (inter)actions. This distinguishes it from ELF, General English, and Business English.

Similar to ELF, BELF speakers do not focus on grammatical correctness. BELF speakers give more importance on the genre knowledge of their own specific field of expertise, involving a shared understanding of what, why, how and when to communicate in business contexts (Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen, 2013).

Furthermore, BELF is also culture-neutral just like ELF because its speakers do not share a particular cultural background (Meierkord, 2002). However, Kankaanranta (2009) argues that BELF communication is always intercultural: BELF speakers share the ‘B’, i.e. the context and culture of business, the ‘E’, i.e. English and its discourse practices, but are separated by their personal cultural background, their discourse practices, and hidden, implicit rules of communication.

Culture and Intercultural Communication

According to Hall (1976), culture has elements which can be categorized into two: surface/conscious (food, language, festivals) and deep/unconscious (beliefs, values, perceptions). These elements influence our actions, behaviors, and the way we interact with each other.

Culture is often considered the core concept in intercultural communication (Gudykunst, 2002). Language is embedded in culture; thus, culture influences communication and vice versa. When people from different cultural backgrounds communicate with one another, such as in a multi-national company where BELF is used, it can be said that intercultural communication exists in their discourse.

Intercultural Communicative Competence

According to Hymes (1972), in addition to the linguistic competence, the language user has another intuitive system in which the rules of grammar would be useless. This means the language user can adjust his or her language use based on the factors such as the topic, situation and human relations. Based on this, he also proposed the concept of “communicative competence” which includes both linguistic competence and implicit and explicit knowledge, both the rules of grammar and contextual or sociolinguistic knowledge of the rules of language use in contexts (Mede, 2015). As Mede (2015) simply put it, Hymes’ communicative competence involves the following: what is formally possible, what is feasible, what is the social meaning or value of a given utterance, and what actually occurs.

Linguistic Competence, often interchangeable with grammatical competence, is the ability to combine grammatical forms (such as phonological forms, morphological forms, syntactic patterns, lexical items) to form grammatical sentences (Canale & Swain, 1980).

According to van Ek (1986), it is the ability to produce and interpret meaningful utterances which are formed in accordance with the rules of the language concerned and bear their conventional meaning... that meaning which native speakers would normally attach to an utterance when used in isolation.

Sociolinguistic Competence is the knowledge of the rules of language use. van Ek (1986) defined it as the awareness of ways in which the choice of language forms; that it is determined by such conditions as setting, relationship between communication partners, communicative invention, and so on; and it covers the relationship between linguistic signals and their contextual – or situational – meaning.

Discourse Competence is the ability to use appropriate strategies in the construction and interpretation of texts (van Ek, 1986).

Intercultural Competence and *Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC)* differ from each other. According to Byram (1997), the first refers to people's ability to interact in their own language with the people from another country and culture, while ICC takes into account language teaching and focuses on the ability to interact with people from another country and culture in a foreign language. In Byram's (1997) view, a person who has developed ICC is able to build relationships while speaking in the foreign language; communicates effectively, taking into consideration his own and the other person's viewpoint and needs; mediates interactions between people of different backgrounds, and strives to continue developing communicative skills.

In 2009, Byram also said that intercultural competence means knowledge of others; knowledge of self; skills to interpret and relate; skills to discover and/or to interact; valuing others' values, beliefs, and behaviors; and relativizing one's self. Intercultural Communicative Competence is composed of two closely related areas including communicative competence, and intercultural competence (Byram 2009, p. 323, cited in Waliński, 2012).

As mentioned above, the communicative competence consists of linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence, and discourse competence. Intercultural competence consists of three components (knowledge, skills and attitudes) and is supplemented by five values: (1) intercultural attitudes, (2) knowledge, (3) skills of interpreting and relating, (4) skills of discovery and interaction, and (5) critical cultural awareness (Byram et al. 2002, pp. 11-13, cited in Waliński, 2012). These five major intercultural competences are strongly interrelated (Waliński, 2012).

Therefore, it strongly suggests that culture influences the way a person discourses. This makes culture important for companies to consider especially when communicating with people from other countries.

Global Communicative Competence

Louhiala-Salminen & Kankaanranta (2011) conducted a research discussing communicative competence. They suggested that globalization and new technology in workplace has resulted in the needs of understanding communicative competence in global encounters. Complexity of interaction increased due to new technologies in communication, emergence of new types of business structures, and arrival of societal megatrends. Hence, global professional communication requires a new type of communicative competence.

A few studies had been conducted in that period in response to the current trends. Melton (2009) conducted a research focused on rapport in global encounters and concluded by highlighting the role of intercultural relationship. Ulijn, Lincke & Karakaya (2001) also investigated the impact of non-face-to-face media on intercultural negotiations. They indicated the possibility of involvement building via email with efforts from the communicators.

However, Louhiala-Salminen & Kankaanranta (2011) noticed that one element was overlooked – the language used in global business of which role and nature were not addressed, questioned or problemized. According to them, this language could no longer be perceived as a ‘foreign’ language as it is used as a shared resource between nonnative speakers (NNSs); therefore, the language largely used for professional communication in global business is the English of NNSs, English Lingua Franca (ELF), whose role in (global) communicative competence has hardly been researched. With this realization, they conducted a research with European samples and created a framework called the *Global Communicative Competence (GCC)* as shown below.

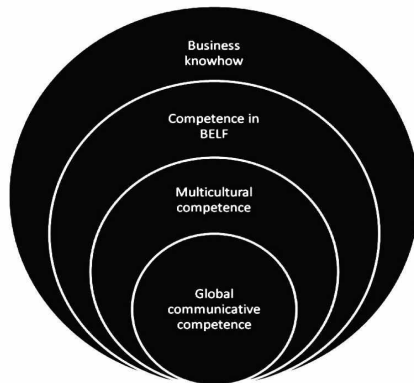


Figure 3. *Global Communicative Competence by Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen (2011)*

The model represents their view of the elements required for GCC – or the successful communication in the global business context.

According to Louhiala-Salminen & Kankaanranta (2011), the inner most layer of the model is GCC of a business professional but for it to exist, the outer layers from inside out of 1) multicultural competence, 2) BELF competence, and 3) business know-how are necessary. Louhiala-Salminen & Kankaanranta’s explanation of each layer is below.

Multicultural Competence can only be achieved by a business professional who possesses adequate sociolinguistic and discourse competence. Simply put, they must be sensitive to “different ways of doing things” and includes such issues as listening skills, accommodation skills, and understanding different accents and varieties of language. As Canagarajah (2007) argues, variation is at the heart of the lingua franca system, and variation is primary for communicators at a particular situation to understand each other and proceed with the communication using their own “situated” variants. Hence, the awareness of one’s nation, corporate, and professional cultures is basis to acquire this sensitivity. Meierkord (2002) also explained, the “linguistic masala” is created by the heterogeneity of ELF users and is shown as highly dynamic “communicative hybridity”, which means that the speakers incorporate their own cultural norms and linguistic backgrounds as well as the situation-specific requirements into a mixture that works for them, in particular situation. This will allow them to have flexibility and tolerance needed for GCC to succeed.

BELF Competence seems to be dissimilar to the natural language used by native speakers. The use of English as a lingua franca allows users to implement “core” English language in specific situation. BELF, at the same time, is highly specialized, filled with shared terms and concepts to adapt to the forms and norms of the language required in each business situation. This does not necessarily mean that BELF is more complex, on the contrary they can be simple basic English filled with language errors.

BELF competence also includes the element of strategic competence—being aware of the need to explicate and ascertain messages. Successful BELF communicators ask questions, repeat utterances and use more than one channel to achieve shared understanding.

The third and outermost layer of the model is *Business Know-How* or the field-specific professional competence. For example, a man who works in Engineering Department must have the competence required to perform well in his specific business profession. His tasks may involve frequent communication with customers of different nationalities. In order to perform well, he must incorporate his English competence with his technical skills or know-how in business. Therefore, business know-how is the fundamental concept for GCC. Knowing what, who, when, and how to use technical words in English are vital for the success of global communication (Andersen & Rasmussen, 2004; Barner-Rasmussen & Aarnio, 2011). This knowledge is important for both written and oral forms of communication, such as email, letters, phone calls, meetings, presentations, and other means of communication and conventions where businesses are conducted (Harzing & Pudelko, 2013) as a person’s performance evaluation can be influenced by his/her ability to deal with or handle his/her task using English (Ahmad, 2016).

Without this layer, GCC cannot be achieved by the speaker who wishes to thrive in business communication.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research was conducted at a multinational semi-conductor manufacturing company located in many countries such as China, America, and Thailand. It is an independent provider of assembly and test services for semiconductor chips with various end-uses including in-communication devices (such as smartphones and Wi-Fi), automatic devices, security devices, and devices for industrial and medical applications. It has been operating in Thailand for more than 40 years and has around 6,000 local employees.

Since it is a multinational company which deals with the global market, it gives importance to the development of English language communication proficiency of its workers. The workers use English for their daily work activities such as having conference calls, telephone calls, meetings, and presentations; writing emails and reports; and communicating with their colleagues, customers, suppliers, and vendors from all over the world. Therefore,

The Company hires in-house English language teachers to help their workers become more proficient at English communication.

Population

The size of population (N) was based on the employee roster obtained from the Human Resource Department of The Company. Although The Company employs around 6,000 workers in Thailand alone, only the workers who need to use English for their work were counted as part of the population.

The population matching the criteria of the research consists of around 500 employees and 300 employers. They use English to communicate with their suppliers, vendors, customers, colleagues and bosses with different nationalities on a daily basis. Most of them work in the office and belong to 17 different departments: Automation, Business Development, Customer Engineering, Customer Service, Engineering, Facilities, Finance, General Management, Human Resource, Industrial Engineering, Information Technology, Operations, Production Control, Quality Assurance, Research Development, Supply Chain, and Test.

Sampling Techniques

Nonprobability Convenience Sampling was applied in this study. Using the method to determine the sample size (n) from a given population designed by Krejcie & Morgan (1970), 260 participants were sufficient enough to represent the population size of 800.

Research Design

This study utilized the Explanatory Design. To follow the sequence of this design, a quantitative research was done first in order to find out the answers for the research questions. These questions were followed by a qualitative research to get in-depth information.

Figure 4 presents the visual diagram of the Explanatory Design procedures in this study.

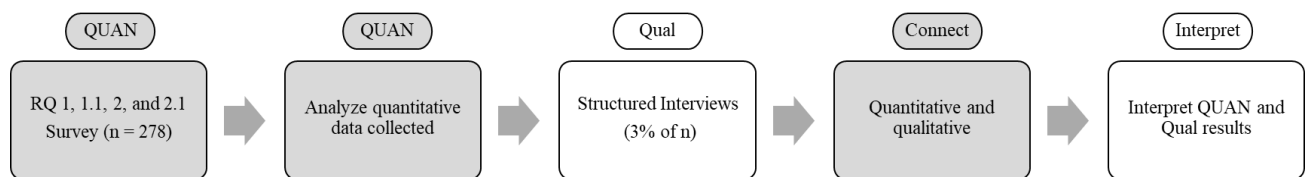


Figure 4. Explanatory Design Procedures

Instruments for Data Collection

The instrument used for quantitative research was the online survey. The structured interviews were conducted for the qualitative part to further investigate the findings presented in quantitative section. The quantitative research was conducted first to gather the level of samples' perceived contribution and usage of factors and their correlations presented in

conceptual framework. Qualitative research in the form of interview was conducted after initial data analysis of the questionnaire.

Data Collection

The methods for data collection were based on what would answer the research questions using the maximum sources available to the researcher.

To gather the quantitative and qualitative data, the following steps were taken.

- Step 1. A questionnaire from a study made by Louhiala-Salminen & Kankaanranta (2011) was adopted and adapted in this research's online questionnaire as it is highly relevant to this research.
- Step 2. Three experts were asked to check the validity of the questionnaire through IOC – two experts were from the field of English Language Teaching (ELT) and one expert from Master of Business Administration (MBA).
- Step 3. After the questionnaire had been verified to be valid, a few minor improvements had been made based on the feedback given by the three experts.
- Step 4. The questionnaire was translated to Thai language by a highly qualified English-Thai-English translator who graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration from an international university, and has experiences in teaching English language at an international university, and doing market research.
- Step 5. When the questionnaire was translated, three more Thai nationals who are educated and fluent in Thai and English languages were asked to check the correctness of the translation. Two of them hold Master's degree taught in English curriculum and were also previous lecturers of English language in English centers; while the other has studied in international schools.
- Step 6. After getting feedback from the Thai evaluators, the questionnaire was edited and finalized.
- Step 7. The Company was contacted and asked for a consent to be a part of this study through a presentation and a Letter of Consent.
- Step 8. When the request had been approved, a pilot test was launched by asking 32 members of the population to answer the questionnaire online so as to check its reliability.
- Step 9. The data from the pilot test were analyzed, and the reliability result from Cronbach's alpha for 12 categories of questions was more than 0.70 which means the questionnaire is valid and reliable.
- Step 10. After the questionnaire had been proven valid and reliable, small pamphlets with information on how to access the online questionnaire were distributed to around 650 members of the population in order to collect as many data as possible. They were asked to complete the questionnaire within two weeks.
- Step 11. Since 260 participants were needed in order to represent the population size of 800 according to Krejcie & Morgan (1970), the data collection was ended after receiving answers from 290 members of the population. However, only 278

were qualified as the sample after failing the screening question in the questionnaire. Therefore, the final sample size is 278.

- Step 12. The quantitative data collected from the 278 respondents were analyzed using the computer statistics program.
- Step 13. From the quantitative results, 10 questions were formed for the collection of qualitative data using structured interview.
- Step 14. From 278 participants, 20 of them (10 employees and 10 employers) were contacted and asked to be interviewed one-on-one and face-to-face. However, only 9 participants (4 employees and 5 employers) could accommodate the interview.
- Step 15. All of the interviewees were asked the 10 questions that were prepared by the researcher. Some of them were also asked other questions that were not included in the pre-prepared questions as follow-up questions to gather more information and clarifications from each interviewee. All of the interviews were conducted in English and also recorded.
- Step 16. The interviews were transcribed, analyzed using thematic analysis, and were used to support the quantitative results.

By following the 16 steps above, the level of employees and employers' perceived contribution and usage of factors that to contribute to a competent speaker of English were realized in a valid and reliable way.

Data Analysis

The quantitative data collected were analyzed using a computer statistics program. Statistical analysis was used in this study using Mean, Standard Deviation, Frequency, and Correlation.

Both the mean and standard deviation in this study were used to determine the level of the two variables: respondents' perceived contribution and usage of factors that contribute to a competent speaker of English in the business context. They were calculated by following the two steps. The first step was to get the average score each respondent gave to the contribution and usage of each factor using frequency. The second step was to use all of the average scores to determine the mean and standard deviation for each variable and factor.

Frequency was used to analyze the number of times the particular answers or choices in closed-ended questions were chosen by the respondents. In this study, the frequency is shown in terms of percentage.

Moreover, Correlation was used to determine the degree to which the scores on two variables co-relate. These variables are 1) employees and employers' perceived contribution of the factors to their successful communication at work, and 2) employees and employers' usage of factors at work.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In what follows, the findings of employees and employers' perceptions on the contribution and usage of factors are combined, together with the correlations. The table below shows the findings for research questions 1, 1.1, 2, and 2.2 in terms of mean, standard deviation, and Pearson correlation. Table 1 below shows the combined results for all of the research questions.

Table 1. Combined Results for Research Questions 1, 1.1, 2, and 2.1

Factors that contribute to a competent speaker of English in the business context	Contribution of Factors				Usage of Factors				Correlation between Contribution & Usage of Factors		
	Employees		Employers		Employees		Employers		Pearson Correlation		
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	Employees	Employers	
Business-Specific Knowledge	4.48	0.498	4.66	0.566	4.09	0.533	4.09	0.587	0.394	0.52	
English Competence	3.9	0.677	3.98	0.65	3.39	0.837	3.95	0.714	No correlation	No correlation	
Communication Strategies	4.25	0.481	4.32	0.493	3.89	0.587	4.05	0.531	0.465	0.608	
Strategic Skills	3.87	0.442	3.96	0.527	3.7	0.595	3.8	0.613	0.462	0.473	
Cultural Knowledge & Skills	3.95	0.544	4.02	0.628	3.57	0.73	3.56	0.862	0.494	0.555	
Accommodation Skills	4.05	0.505	4.1	0.537	3.93	0.704	3.92	0.618	0.666	0.7	
Average	4.08	0.524	4.17	0.567	3.76	0.664	3.89	0.654	0.496	0.571	
Remarks: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree				Remarks: 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Often, 5 = Always				Remarks: +1 = Perfect positive correlation, Near +1 = Strong positive correlation, 0 = No correlation, -1 = Perfect negative correlation, Near -1 = Strong negative correlation			

In this research, the perceptions of 278 workers of The Company on factors that contribute to a competent speaker of English in business context were thoroughly investigated. The factors, which were based on GCC framework, include Business-Specific Knowledge, English Competence, Communication Strategies, Strategic Skills, Cultural Knowledge & Skills, and Accommodation Skills. There are different elements in each factor which help create a globally competent BELF speaker. The findings on the workers' perceptions are concluded and separated based on each factor.

Business-Specific Knowledge. The elements under Business-Specific Knowledge include knowing what, who, when, and how to communicate given the situation. According to the findings, employees and employers perceived that having such knowledge contributes to a competent speaker of English at work. These findings are similar to the result of the research Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen (2011) in which they found out that the significance of communication has been acknowledged as important in business activities in general and is also fundamental in international encounter as business environment gets more and more complex due to globalization.

It was also found out that employees and employers use technical English words with people who understand them but avoid or explain them with people who do not understand them. As Louhiala-Salminen & Kankaanranta (2011) affirmed, the shared vocabulary of the specific field—and the shared genres and genre knowledge which such vocabulary implies (Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1995) were perceived as essential for doing work. This is perhaps the reason why the findings show that there is a positive correlation between employees and

employers' usage of Business-Specific Knowledge and their perceived contribution of BSK in their successful communication at work.

English Competence. This competence means having a wide vocabulary in English and knowing the English vocabulary of their business area very well; using grammar correctly; understanding what other people say and write in English very well; and speaking and writing in English very well in various tasks at work such as writing email, presenting, and making telephone calls. Most of the employees and employers believe that having this competence is required for their work as it helps them to successfully complete their tasks in which they need to use English language. Furthermore, the respondents indicated that they use English the most in email, report, and presentation. This shows that English is more widely used on writing rather than speaking.

In addition, the findings show that employers use English Competence at work more often than employees do which could be explained by the nature of their work as well as their position. Perhaps the higher the position is, the more frequent the worker has to communicate with customers from other countries using English language.

Despite its contribution to successful communication and completion of workers' tasks, it was found out that it does not directly lead to promotions or attainment of rewards and/or recognitions as there is no correlation found between the workers' perceived contribution and usage of English competence. This implies that The Company might consider other factors and professional aspects, and require the workers' skill sets before they give them rewards and promotions.

Communication Strategies. These strategies include directness, clarity, conciseness, politeness, understanding, and maintaining rapport. This study found out that in the employees and employers' perceptions, directness, clarity, conciseness, politeness, understanding, and maintaining rapport have significant positive contribution to their success at work. Also, most of them frequently use the strategies in their communication at work.

When tested, a strong positive correlation between their perceived contribution and usage of Communication Strategies came up. This shows that both groups of the respondents' use CS more often because it makes their communication at work successful.

Strategic Skills. This set of skills consists of the ability to ask for clarifications, ask questions, repeat utterances, and paraphrase. Both groups of respondents believe that they are important as they contribute to their work. However, the majority thinks that asking for clarification is the most important strategic skill to understand others.

There are also some respondents from both groups who claimed that they use different strategies based on the situation. There are occasions when employees and employers do not

apply them and they find the right time, place, person, and element that will be appropriate to use the skills.

These results support the statement that Louhiala-Salminen & Kankaanranta (2011) research where they mentioned that effectiveness of communication is related to appropriateness to suitability for situation and social rules. Furthermore, to be communicatively competent, a person must be able to communicate messages appropriately in a given context of interaction (Spitzberg & Cupach, 1984).

Moreover, a positive correlation was found between the respondents' perceived contribution and usage of Strategic Skills at work.

Cultural Knowledge & Skills. These skills include knowing and considering the national culture, organizational culture, and role in the organization of the person. These skills are often, but not always perceived important in communicating with someone at work. Hence, the findings show that only half of the employees and one-third of the employers 'Often' use them. More than one-third of both groups use them only 'Sometimes'.

Moreover, knowing the person's role in the organization was shown to be 'Often' used by most workers. This could be because they believe that being aware of the person's role could give them the idea on how to approach him/her, and they would be able to adjust themselves accordingly.

It also revealed that the workers' believe there is a positive correlation between their usage and contribution of CKS to being a competent speaker of English. They believe that the more they use the skills, the more their communication become successful.

Accommodation Skills. This last set of skills comprises the ability to understand other's opinion and ability to make the person feel good. Perhaps expected, the majority of the employees and employers agree that when they communicate at work, they try to understand someone's opinion and make him/her feel good. They also give importance to understanding someone's opinion more than making him/her feel good. This could be because understanding someone's opinion means getting their work done faster, therefore making him/her feel good is given less priority. This result is similar to Louhiala-Salminen & Kankaanranta (2011) research result where they found out that factual business needs were considered more important than the interactional needs of creating rapport and a positive atmosphere.

In addition, when the workers' usage of AS was tested against their contribution to work, it was found out that there is a strong positive correlation. Therefore, the more they use AS, the more successful they become at communication.

CONCLUSION

With the investigation and thorough analysis done in this research, it is apparent that the competencies in Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen's (2011) Global Communicative Competence framework proved to be applicable, beneficial, and important in this business environment setting, with The Company, and perhaps other multinational semi-conductor manufacturing companies in Thailand.

Pedagogical Implications of the Study

Based on the result of this research, GCC should be taken into consideration when teaching English language classes in companies. Corporate English language teachers should be aware of the related issues and factors that can help learners become a globally competent English speaker. This means giving the learners knowledge and awareness of the communication strategies, culture, accommodation skills, and so on, not only focusing on the linguistic elements such as vocabulary and grammar.

Institutions such as schools and universities could perhaps use the findings of this research in training English language teachers to give importance on teaching the factors indicated in this research so they may relay this knowledge to their own students who are about to enter a professional setting.

When companies hire English language teachers to teach their workers, they must realize that the depth of a competent English speaker goes beyond English competence, that other skills must also be integrated in trainings to produce well-rounded communicators.

Limitations of the Study

Although the sample size of this study was sufficient enough compared to its population, the results could have been more strengthened and more reliable and valid if bigger sample size participated in both quantitative and qualitative research parts.

The setting of the study was also limited in terms of context. The setting is limited to The Company which belongs in electronics industry. Therefore, the results of the study may be applicable and useful for companies with similar settings and within the same industry. Other companies in different industries may find the study less beneficial for them.

Recommendations for Further Study

It is recommended to further investigate the topic with larger number of samples. The larger the samples, the more the results can be generalized and become more applicable to larger scopes.

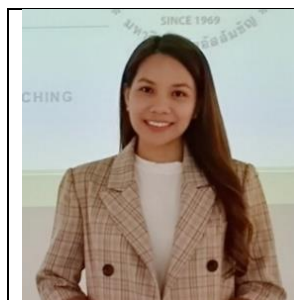
It is also recommended to test the framework in other contexts or companies in another industry to see whether it would yield the same or different results. It would give all the stakeholders such as the teachers, the learners, institutions, and business sectors better

knowledge and ideas on how to make Thai workforce more globally competent English speakers.

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