

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents a summary of the study of communication strategies adopted by Thai professionals on the case of negative message, a summary of the findings, discussions of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations for further research.

5.1 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

5.1.1 Objectives of the Study

This study aims to determine the factors affecting the communication strategies in the production of negative messages and to investigate if the factors positively or negatively affect the communication strategies in the production of business messages.

5.1.2 Subjects, Materials, and Procedures

The subjects of this study were the graduates and the graduate students of the Master of Arts (English for Careers) Program at the Language Institute, Thammasat University. The research instrument was developed by this researcher to collect information related to personal background, educational background, English exposure, application of business writing knowledge, attempts to seek authority, and writing task.

The instrument was distributed electronically via emails and manually during class sessions. Twenty sets of completed questionnaires were returned to the researcher. The writing task was graded and edited by an English native speaker. The researcher, then, decoded the grammatical and the lexical errors into communication strategies. The results were tested using One-way ANOVA to determine the factors affecting the communication strategies.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

The results of the study can be summarized as follows:

5.2.1 Preposition and determiner were identified to be major areas of problems for Thai professionals as they ranked the highest at 19% and 17%,

respectively. Word choice, adverb, number, parts of speech, and verb were other problematic areas for Thai professionals.

5.2.2 When the grammatical and lexical errors were analyzed for communication strategies, Thai professionals were found to adopt overelaboration the most, followed by generalization, overgeneralization and transfer from native language.

5.2.3 One – way ANOVA test revealed that three English skills, naming speaking, listening and writing, affected the communication strategies with significance value at .04, .01 and .03 respectively. The number of English writings affected the transfer from the native language while age and time spent on writing affected the generalization. Reading and writing in English affected the overgeneralization whereas reading affected overelaboration.

5.3 DISCUSSION

This section concerns the discussions of some significant findings from this study including the communication strategies as corresponded to previous studies and those that did not corresponded to previous researches.

5.3.1 A significant difference found in this study that did not correspond to the previous studies is the adoption of overelaboration strategy among Thai professionals. The four researches on communication strategies in writing conducted by Chatsarut Malayanonton (ฉัตรศรุต มัลยมณฑล, 2541), Nuntaporn Hutyamanivudhi (2001), Napaporn Ngamwilaipong (2003), and Maneenun Rhurakvit (มานีนันท์ หรรักษ์วิทย์ , 2547) listed transfer from the native language strategy as the major communication strategy adopted by the sample groups. Overelaboration strategy was listed as less adopted strategy in these studies.

One observation is that the sample groups of previous studies were all students, either high school or university. Their English proficiency might be lower than the sample group in this study. This might cause the sample to resort to common literal translation in order to communicate

The average years of English education of the sample group in this study is 19.7 years. Their TU-GET (English proficiency score) is averaged at 623.5 points. These two factors explain the higher English proficiency of the Thai

professionals, the sample group of this study. The higher proficiency offers better language facilities to communicate. However, the higher proficiency might lead to excessive use of English syntax or expressions resulting in the overelaboration strategies where the writer tends to produce careful language but ends up with stilted, inordinately formal and not native-like language.

5.3.2 Other studies on communication strategies emphasized the oral aspect of communication. The studies conducted by Kwanhathai Chirdchoo (ขวัญหทัย เชิดชู, 2545), Jidanan Lertsuwan (2007), Daranee Suwanwaree (ดารณี สุวรรณวารี, 2550), Lortip Weerarak (2003), Wanna Charoenchang (1991), Siriporn Nimtiparat (1993), Amornrat Luangsaengthong (อมรรัตน์ เหลืองแสงทอง, 2545), Amarawadee Onnual (2007), Anchalee Wannarak (อัญชลี วรรณรักษ์, 2544), Inthira Namuangraks (อินทิรา นามืองรักษ์, 2542), Niphaporn Laothienchai (นิภาพร เล่าเทียนไชย, 2547), and Supanya Chomjinda (สุปัญญา ชมจินดา, 2538) shared common findings. Three common adopted communication strategies were transfer from the native language strategy, generalization strategy and appeal to authority.

Again, most of the sample groups of these studies were students, high school or university. Some were street vendors whose English proficiency was presumed to be low. They had to resort to a convenient and simultaneous way of communicating by resorting to transfer of the native language, generalization or appeal to authority in order to achieve their communication goals or to avoid it.

The findings from these studies corresponded to those whose studies aimed at writing skills. The common communication strategies adopted were the transfer from the native language strategy, the generalization strategy and the appeal to authority strategies.

The findings of this study remained different as the most commonly adopted strategy was overelaboration strategy. It is still believed that the higher English proficiency played an important role in the adoption of the overelaboration strategies.

5.3.3 The review of previous studies related to communication strategies did not reveal any studies conducted on the factors affecting communication strategies. All studies aimed to survey different communication strategies adopted by different groups of interlocutors.

This study not only surveyed the communication strategies adopted by the Thai professionals but also attempted to identify factors affecting the adoption of the communication strategies. The findings revealed that internal factors, naming gender, age, occupation, aptitude, and years of education, did not affect the communication strategies. As commonly perceived, the external factors, the use of English in everyday life, affected the communication strategies. The more a person uses English, the better he/she gets in English.

5.3.4 The analyses of writing tasks to determine grammatical and lexical errors also revealed one major discrepancy. Chatsarut Malayanonton (ฉัตรศรุต มัลยมณฑล, 2541) and Maneenun Rhurakvit (มานีนันท์ หรรักษ์วิทย์, 2547) analyzed communication strategies adopted by students through the analysis of grammatical and lexical errors in the students' writing. Both identified tenses to be the major error in the writings.

However, this is not the case for this study. There was only one mistake made regarding tense. This can be negligible when considering the total of 142 grammatical and lexical mistakes identified from the twenty pieces of writings.

The observation is still a fact that this group of sample, Thai professionals, possess higher English proficiency and is possibly more aware of the appropriate application of tenses during their writing.

5.4 CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions can be drawn from the discussion above.

5.4.1 The Thai professionals adopted significantly different communication strategies, i.e. overelaboration, when compared to previous studies with different sample groups – high school and university students who adopted the transfer from the native language strategy as their major communication strategies in their writings.

5.4.2 When compared to other studies on the other language skill, namely speaking, the Thai professionals still adopted different communication strategies. Like writing skill, Thai students or Thai native speakers adopted the transfer strategy as their major strategy during their speaking. The Thai professionals adopted the overelaboration strategy, possibly due to their higher English proficiency.

5.4.3 The use of English in daily life for either work or pleasure affected the adoption of communication strategies.

5.4.4 Inappropriate use of tenses as identified in other studies was not the case in this study, possibly because of the higher English proficiency of Thai professionals.

5.5 OBSTACLE

The collection of the questionnaire became the major obstacle in this study. The researcher originally planned to collect 40 pieces of writing in order to obtain a more objective result for the study. However, the first attempt in the electronic distribution of the questionnaire led to a collection of four responses. The second attempt was made in distributing the questionnaire electronically but only four more responses were received. The third follow-up was sent out electronically and four responses were returned. The fourth attempt was then made manually during class sessions. A total of eight responses were returned. Many respondents expressed their reservation in their cooperation, stating that the writing task was very demanding.

The smaller number of the responses might affect the objectivity of the answer. Chatsarut Malayanonton (ฉัตรศรุต มलयมณฑล, 2541) analyzed the communication strategies from 44 pieces of writings where as Maneenun Rhurakvit (มานีนันท์ หรรักษ์วิทย์, 2547) analyzed the communication strategies from 30 pieces of writings. This researcher believed that the findings derived from 20 pieces of writings might represent the communication strategies among the Thai professionals to a certain extent.

5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made for future research.

5.6.1 Studies deploying a larger group of sample may provide a more accurate result on the adoption of communication strategies among Thai professionals.

5.6.2 Studies aimed at specific groups of Thai professionals who require English proficiency in their careers should also be conducted to determine their communication strategies and their need to improve their English proficiency.