

ABSTRACT

English Language Use and Language Problems of Thai Postgraduate Students in Foreign Countries

by

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This study explores English language use and problems in academic settings of Thai postgraduate students in foreign countries. The subjects of this study include 39 DPST students beginning their studies in universities or colleges in England and in the United States of America in the academic years 1995 and 1996.

The questionnaires were sent by airmail and e-mail to the students. Twenty-two completed questionnaires were received, and were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS).

The results show that during their study abroad, reading and listening skills are used more often and considered important to students than speaking and writing skills. Students often use English skills in the following situations: listening skill--friends, lecturers/teaching assistants, professors tape/video, and group discussion; speaking skill--friends, and oral presentation; reading skill-- textbooks and journal; writing skill--assignments/projects. The language problems they face include: listening skill--speaking fast and speaking with different accents for both native and non-native English speakers; speaking skill--wrong pronunciation and lack of confidence; reading skill--slow reading; writing skill--lack of knowledge of formats

or patterns of types of writing. For each skill, vocabulary shortage and poor grammar use are mentioned as major problems.