

**ENVIRONMENTAL INFLUENCES ON COMPETENCE IN
ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE: A STUDY OF
THAI UNDERGRADUATES AT AN INTERNATIONAL
UNIVERSITY IN THAILAND**

Jirada Ueasiriwatthanachai

**A Thesis Submitted in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts (Language and Communication)
School of Language and Communication
National Institute of Development Administration
2013**

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ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis	Environmental Influences on Competence in English as a Foreign Language: A Study of Thai Undergraduates at an International University in Thailand
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This study is designed in an attempt to examine the ideal and the actual university learning environment in relation to English language learning and to investigate the actual environmental influence on the students' English language competence. This is to understand why a number of Thai university students of English-medium instruction programs are still unable to attain high levels of English proficiency despite engaging in an English-medium education system. An interpretive approach was used to conduct interviews with 10 teachers and 15 students of an international university, along with questionnaires which were administered to 175 students. The results disclose some major differences between the ideal and the actual university learning environment, perceived by the teachers and experienced by the students respectively. The major differences are related to the nature and amount of English exposure as well as the responsibilities of the English-medium instruction program's teachers. Precisely, having limited exposure to English outside the classroom, being exposed to little social English, getting little English-related feedback, and having few native English-speaking teachers were reported to be the major causes of these students' inability to use English effectively. Overall, with the improvement in all the four language skills, the students reported having difficulty in using English in some aspects, English writing and grammar in particular. Based on this study's findings, major valuable implications which could be used as the strategies for improvement in the quality of the teaching and learning environments are finally suggested.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 General Background

It has been recognized that in an increasingly globalized world, English has become vitally important as it serves as the leading international language. As Education First (2012) asserted, globalization has made English become “the de facto language of communication, not only in international business, but also in nearly every context where two people do not share a language” (p. 12). Also, it was further reported that the English language is currently a core criterion in determining individuals’ employment opportunities. Therefore, it could certainly be argued that in the world where global integration is the norm, the most basic but significant qualification required for future success is knowledge of English (Education First, 2012; C. Hengsadeekul, T. Hengsadeekul, Koul, & Kaewkuekool, 2010; Pawapatcharaudom, 2007). It is apparent that people who attain high levels of English proficiency will undoubtedly gain numerous benefits from it since being able to effectively understand English can lead to having great business opportunities as well as having access to advanced technology and entertainment around the world. It thus makes sense to say that the impact of English on the globalized world is undeniable. More importantly, so as to effectively and efficiently compete in today’s global economy, individuals, graduates in particular, need to be equipped with the qualification of English proficiency (Puengpipattrakul, 2007).

With regard to the upcoming ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) in the year 2015, investors and workers of the 10 member countries of ASEAN — namely, Thailand, Myanmar, Laos, Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, the Philippines, Cambodia, and Brunei—can invest and go to work anywhere in these

countries, without the previous tight restrictions. This is because AEC's goal is to form a single market base (Association of Southeast Asian Nations, 2012). In this respect, it is no surprise that English has been chosen as the common language for conducting business and communication among the AEC members. For this reason, those who are not well-prepared for this upcoming regional economic integration, especially in terms of English competence, may tend to lose their jobs more easily or find it difficult to work when the ASEAN labor free market takes effect in 2015 since English, without doubt, is regarded as a key component of career opportunity and advancement. It is therefore certain that every area of work in Thailand needs personnel with a good command of English. In other words, a lack of English proficiency could deny individuals access to professional opportunities.

Up to this point in time, the current globalization phenomenon and the upcoming AEC have pushed many countries, including Thailand, to adopt English as the language for teaching and learning. For example, the fact that English competence is required by all business workplaces challenges Thai universities to produce graduates with strong English skills (Puengpipattrakul, 2007). This fact leads to the reformation of academic curricula provided by the Thai higher education institutions. Here, all Thai universities are unhesitatingly reforming their existing curricula by placing English as a compulsory subject requiring it to be studied by students in all academic disciplines (Hengsadeeikul et al., 2010). Besides, a number of universities in Thailand, both public and private, have been attempting to imitate an English language environment by offering English-medium instruction in the hope of consolidating Thai students' English skills as well as training students for maximum language proficiency (Degang, 2010; Hengsadeeikul et al., 2010). As stated by Graddol (1997), the global status of English impels the adoption of English-medium teaching in higher education. In more detail, Graddol (1997) further pointed out:

One of the most significant educational trends world-wide is the teaching of a growing number of courses in universities through the medium of English. The need to teach some subjects in English, rather than the national language, is well understood: in the sciences, for example, up-to-date text books and research articles are obtainable

much more easily in one of the world languages and most readily of all in English. (p. 45)

However, it is noteworthy that a mere reform of the curricula does not guarantee an improvement in English proficiency among Thai students since being competent in English depends on a variety of factors. In addition to internal factors, it is widely believed that the process of learning a foreign language is also crucially affected by external factors. Obviously, one of the key factors that promotes language learning success, as asserted by Collentine and Freed (2004), Firth and Wagner (1997), and Tarone (2007), is the context of the learning. Learning environment or the context of the learning can be defined as a setting in which second or foreign language learning can take place. The learning environment is believed to influence the language learning process and eventually the outcomes with regard to language proficiency (Ellis, 2008, as cited in Housen, et al., 2011). The study of Lizzio, Wilson and Simons (2002) reveals that the current learning environment is considered a stronger predictor of learning outcomes at university than prior achievement at school; students' perceptions of the current learning environment both directly and indirectly influence their learning outcomes. Therefore, it can be summed up that it is very necessary to build the environment that will support learning.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

It is undeniable that English competence is essentially important in the era of globalization as it has become a prerequisite for professional accomplishment. As mentioned earlier, the regional economic integration, slated to take effect in 2015, requires personnel equipped with fluent English. Thus, in order to successfully work in such a competitive market, Thai graduates need to be equipped with a high level of English proficiency. However, there is some surprise to discover that there appears to be a great contradiction between the demands for English proficiency in today's globalized world, in business settings in particular, and the actual level of Thai people's English competence. While today's globalized world requires individuals with high English proficiency, the English skills of Thai students and graduates, on

the other hand, are critically poor, especially when compared with those of other countries in the region (Khaopa, 2012; Puengpipattrakul, 2007; Wiriyaichitra, 2002).

Thoroughly, as reported by Khaopa (2012) in *The Nation*, Visanu Vongsinsirikul, a director of ASEAN Community Preparation Centre (ACPC) at Dhurakij Pundit University, stated, “Thailand has advantages over other ASEAN countries in terms of geographical features, weather, races and cost of living, ... [but] foreign languages, English in particular, are our big problem” (para. 3). Moreover, Runckles (2012) also pointed out a similar view:

For soft infrastructure, better English speaking countries in ASEAN, such as Singapore, Malaysia and the Philippines will have an advantage over countries like Thailand ... Thailand has not given enough attention to improving English skills throughout its education system and now is in a somewhat weaker position to countries such as Vietnam who have given increased attention to this. (para. 12)

In fact, by focusing on a more specific context, it is surprising that Thai university students and graduates of international programs where English is used as a medium of instruction are also unable to perform well in the English language in spite of the fact that all subjects and coursework are conducted in English. Indeed, a study by Barnes (2008) which was undertaken with twenty employers in Bangkok can be used as evidence to support this claim. The in-depth interview conducted with these twenty Bangkok employers revealed that Thai graduates of international MBA programs in Thailand perform well in analytical and planning skills; however, they lack some of the soft skill areas, including written and spoken English language proficiency as well as interpersonal skills, especially when compared with those who have taken similar program of studies abroad.

Likewise, the Thai undergraduate students of international programs participating in Pawapatcharaudom’s (2007) study reported that English writing, listening, and reading skills are the most serious English language competence problems being faced respectively. Also, the findings of Adamson’s (2004) study revealed that some of his participants, Thai students from an English-medium college

in Thailand, have low level of English communicative competence and find it hard to communicate effectively with native English speakers. Additionally, as a former undergraduate student of an international English-medium university in Thailand, the researcher noticed that the overall English performances of a majority of international program students are somewhat below standard, not quite attaining high levels of English proficiency, in terms of both accuracy and fluency. More precisely, a significant number of Thai students enrolled in international programs have difficulty producing well-formed sentences and utterances when performing writing tasks and/or engaging in interactions.

Above all, this could be interpreted that in spite of the significance of English as a global language, the English-language education in Thailand has not yet prepared Thais for the changing world. It is clear that “Thailand will lag behind in the competitive world of business, education, science and technology if the teaching and learning of English is not improved” (Wiriyachitra, 2002, p. 1); a similar concern was noted by the Economist Intelligence Unit (2012):

Despite a history of higher education reforms, the scarcity of skilled, competent employees remains a huge challenge. University enrolments are on the rise, but higher education institutions are not yet succeeding at adequately improving the quality and relevance of their programs ... and Thai universities are perceived to be lacking in producing graduates that possess good language skills, technical and information technology skills. (p. 45)

Hence, the above studies indicate that the current command of English seems insufficient to meet the employers’ requirements and expectations and must be counted as a main barrier to Thai university students’ employment opportunities. More specifically, having unsatisfactory English proficiency can be considered a major obstacle for Thai students and graduates to meet the challenges and opportunities of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC).

1.3 Rationale of the Study

An insufficient level of English among Thai students and graduates of international programs, as well as employers' dissatisfaction with the English competence of Thai graduates has been well documented (Adamson, 2004; Barnes, 2008; The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2012; Pawapatcharaudom, 2007; Wiriyachitra, 2002). In addition, the researcher adds her own experience as a former undergraduate student of an international university. Accordingly, serious consideration needs to be given to understand why a majority of Thai students and graduates of international programs are still unable to have proficiency in English, despite learning in an educational system, where the medium of instruction is English.

From a wider perspective, the rationale of this study is guided by the premise that external factors, namely, learning environments, are crucial to students' foreign language competence as they play a major role in influencing the learning process. For this reason, it is believed that improving the quality of the educational environment unquestionably improves students' language learning outcomes. According to Prayoonwong and Nimnuan (2010), in order to investigate the quality of educational environment, students' perceptions need to be carefully taken into account. These scholars maintain that the students' perception is of great importance, for it provides interesting and valuable feedback regarding their learning experience which in turn reflects the efficiency of the curriculum, educational methods, and the quality of the entire learning environment.

Indeed, the issue of the importance of the learning environment for foreign language learning has received much attention in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT) and Second Language Acquisition (SLA). Most of the previous studies, however, have normally been conducted at school level. For example, the study of Khamkhien (2010) revealed that it is difficult for Thai students to master the English language since the instruction in the school classroom pays little to no concern to communicative methods. As a result, Thai learners fail to master English, especially in terms of speaking and listening. Furthermore, the studies of Punthumasan (2007) and Wiriyachitra (2002) depicted similar results. Their studies showed that although all schools in Thailand are aware of the importance of English

as a world language, the school environment, in reality, does not facilitate students to practice their English. This could be implied that low performance in English usage by Thai school students might be a result of lack of sufficient opportunity to use it in their daily lives.

It is noticeable that the issue of learning environments for foreign language learning has received much attention from a number of scholars (Collentine & Freed, 2004; Firth & Wagner, 1997; Housen et al., 2011; Tarone, 2007), but none of the previous research has been conducted at Thai tertiary education level, even those of international programs. Actually, it is believed that the learning environment in the international program context typically creates high opportunities for students' language input and output which can certainly help enhance their English skills. As Ibrahim (2001) claimed, this kind of a study program provides learners with more exposure to English and offers them more opportunities to use it on the ground that it involves English-related activities like gaining information (listening & reading) and conveying information (speaking & writing). However, owing to the findings of Adamson's (2004), Barnes's (2008), and Pawapatcharaudom's (2007) studies, as well as the researcher's own experience mentioned above, it could be said that there might be a discrepancy between ideal and actual educational environments, especially in the context of international programs at Thai tertiary level, since Thai students and graduates are still unable to perform well in the English language. For this reason, it would be both favorable and necessary that this current study investigates the actual Thai university-learning environment of English-medium instruction programs. In addition, it will be implemented in such a way as to examine the degree to which the current context of learning helps to promote students' English language competence.

1.4 Research Objectives

Overall, this study was designed in an attempt to examine the university's environmental influences on students' English competence. By investigating the teachers' perceptions of the ideal learning environment and the students' perceptions of the actual one, a comparison could be made to find out whether there are any

differences in their responses. The chief objectives designed for the current study are as follows:

- 1) To examine the teachers' perceptions of the ideal learning environment for the context of an international university in relation to foreign language learning.
- 2) To examine the students' perceptions of the actual university learning environment in relation to foreign language learning.
- 3) To discover whether there is any discrepancy between the ideal learning environment perceived by the teachers and the actual learning environment experienced by the students.
- 4) To investigate the extent to which the actual university learning environment affects students' foreign language competence.

1.5 Research Questions

In relation to the four main research objectives mentioned above, three specific research questions are identified as follows:

- 1) What are the teachers' perceptions of the ideal learning environment for the context of an international university in relation to foreign language learning?
- 2) What are the students' perceptions of the actual university learning environment in relation to foreign language learning?
- 3) What are the students' perceptions of the extent to which the actual university learning environment affects their foreign language competence?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The aim of this study is for its participants to highlight the characteristics of the learning environment of an international program at Thai tertiary level, for the purpose of better understanding and improving the actual learning context.

Hopefully, the results of this study would be beneficial to all education institutions, especially those offering international programs, as this study was designed in an attempt to provide useful and valuable implications for English

language teaching and learning. In summary, the outcomes expected from the present study can be described as follows:

1) This study would assist teachers and academic administrators of an English-medium instruction program in determining the key issues needing attention for the improvement of the English language teaching and learning process.

2) This study would be beneficial as it provides the university with feedback of the students' areas of concern and perceptions in relation to the actual educational context. In turn, such feedback can be used as input for strategies which can correct problem areas, leading to the improvement in the quality of the learning environment.

3) Providing key information and valuable implications for improvement in the quality of the teaching and learning environment could result in enhancing students' English skills which in turn can ultimately help prepare them for the upcoming AEC. Such improvement would have an obvious and positive impact in the highly competitive era of globalization where English plays a significant role in achieving both academic and professional success.

1.7 Scope and Delimitations of the Study

1.7.1 A Learning Environment for Foreign Language Learning

It is important to note that the term "learning environment" used in this study is somewhat constrained to learner-external, contextual factors that characterize the particular language learning situation, regardless of the physical surroundings. That is how the physical environments (e.g. the spatial design, workspace, facility, and other visual environment) support language learning has no consequence in this research investigation.

1.7.2 Environmental Influences on English Language Competence

According to Hinkel (2009), it is commonly accepted that language instruction is normally divided into four language skills, typically including speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Furthermore, Powers (2010) similarly stated that these four aspects of language skills are regarded as the four most basic and highly related language skills used to assess the overall communicative ability. Given that speaking,

listening, reading, and writing represent the most frequently assessed and focused aspects in the area of foreign language teaching and learning, an investigation of students' English language competence in this study therefore mainly focuses on these four skills of English.

According to SIL International (1999), the four basic skills are related to each other by two parameters: (i) the mode of communication: oral (spoken) or written and (ii) the direction of communication: receiving or producing the message. The relationships among the four language skills can be demonstrated by the following diagram (Figure 1.1) proposed by SIL International (1999).

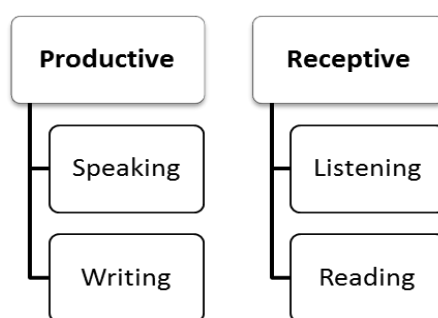


Figure 1.1 The Relationship among Four Language Skills

Source: SIL International, 1999

1.7.3 The Participants

The participants of this study can be divided into two groups:

1) The teachers of the Business English department with more than 10 years of experience in teaching at the university under investigation were selected as the target respondents.

2) The fourth year undergraduate Thai students majoring in Business English were selected as the student participants representing Thai students of the university under investigation.

1.8 Definition of Terms

The following are the key terms and their definitions which are used in the present study.

1.8.1 L1

L1 is an abbreviation for first language, or mother tongue. It is also used to refer to speakers who are speaking in their mother tongue (The Bilingual School of Monza, 2012).

1.8.2 English as a foreign language (EFL)

EFL refers to the teaching and learning of English in the community or environment where English is not commonly used in that particular society or the teaching and learning of English is in the environment of learner's native language (Baker & Hengeveld, 2012).

1.8.3 Language Competence

Language Competence deals with the knowledge of language and the ability to use that knowledge to interpret and produce meaningful texts appropriate to the situation in which they are used (Manitoba Education Citizenship and Youth, 2009).

1.8.4 Learning Environment

In this paper, the terms "learning environment" and "the context of the learning" convey the same meaning, referring to the settings in which English language learning takes place (Ellis, 2008, as cited in Housen et al., 2011).

1.8.5 International Program

An international program or an English medium instruction is considered a type of content-based instruction (CBI) where the academic subject is used as a vehicle for the second or foreign language teaching and learning (Grabe & Stoller, 1997; Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

1.9 Organization of the Study

In all, this paper consists of five separate chapters and is organized in the following order:

Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the study. It begins with a brief overview of the background, the statement of the problem, the rationale of the study, the objectives of the study, the research questions, the benefits, as well as the scope of this research investigation. The definitions of the key terms used in this study are also included in this chapter.

Chapter 2 provides a review and analysis of the literature relevant to the areas under inquiry, including the issues vis-à-vis international programs operated at tertiary education level. Further, a review of the general background of the selected university is also addressed. The concepts of effective learning environments for foreign language learning and the differences between ESL and EFL environments are then provided. This chapter also outlines some other important factors, namely individual differences, which play a key role in promoting successful foreign language learning. The chapter finally ends with a review of some previous research studies on English proficiency of non-native English students. And, last but not least, based on the reviewed literature, the conceptual framework constructed by the researcher is also introduced in this chapter.

Chapter 3 presents an overview of the methodology used to conduct the present study, including theoretical framework, research design, participants, data collection methods, validity and reliability of the research instruments, and data analysis.

Chapter 4 reports the results of the research study.

Chapter 5 begins with the analysis of the research findings, followed by the research conclusions, the research contributions, and the limitations of the study. Recommendations for future research opportunities are finally presented in the last chapter.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Essentially, this chapter provides a critical review and analysis of the literature relevant to the present study; to provide a background of this study, the review of literature begins with an overview of the international programs offered at the tertiary educational level, followed by presentation of selected previous research undertaken on international programs at the university level. The general background of the university under investigation is then discussed in the third section. The focus of the fourth section is on reviewing the relevant issues of effective learning environment for foreign language learning, which is then followed by a review of some previous research studies on foreign language learning environment. Next, the conceptual framework and the differences between ESL and EFL environments are presented. The chapter then explores some other related factors contributing to the success in learning English as a foreign language. The final section addresses the English proficiency level of non-native speakers of English.

2.1 International Programs in Higher Education Institutions

This section is purposefully designed to provide the background to the present study by starting with the principles and practices of international programs, followed by an overview of international programs, operated at the tertiary level in Thailand.

2.1.1 Principles and Practices of International Programs

Obviously, an English medium instruction or an international program is considered a type of content-based instruction (CBI) where the academic subject is used as a vehicle for the second or foreign language teaching and learning (Chang, 2010; Grabe & Stoller, 1997). In other words, students acquire the foreign language

through the study of academic disciplines such as Mathematics, Marketing, Business Management, and so on. Typically, content-based instruction (CBI) draws on the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) on the grounds that the teachings and the classroom procedures involve real communication through the use of the target language (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). At this point, it is clear that this method aims to help students become proficient in the foreign language as well as master the academic content simultaneously. By using this kind of instruction, students learn the language as a by-product of learning the real-world content (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

It is apparent that an English-medium instruction (EMI) provides students, especially those who have little to no exposure to English in their daily life, with an optimum opportunity to hone their English proficiency. To date, a number of researchers (e.g. Chalapati, 2007; Chang, 2010; Dupuy, 2000; Ibrahim, 2001; Wongsothorn, Hiranburana, & Chinnawongs, 2002) have claimed that the advantages of studying in international programs far outweigh other types of study in many aspects. In support of this claim, Ibrahim (2001) pointed out:

EMI (using English to teach content subjects) can be a better means of solving learners' language problems than teaching English as a subject, because it allows learners more exposure to the language (comprehensible input) and more opportunity to use it (comprehensible output). (p. 121)

Furthermore, Chang (2010) also emphasized that an English-medium instruction (EMI) policy is believed to promote students' interest and motivation in learning the English language. This results in the improvement of their English proficiency as well as simultaneously facilitating their academic performance. Hence, graduates of international programs would be given more job opportunities and advancement as they have both academic and foreign language competence. Very similar to the statements of Chang (2010) and Ibrahim (2001), Chalapati (2007) and Wongsothorn et al. (2002) also asserted that studying in international programs using English as the sole medium of instruction not only helps learners gain

successful career paths in the future but also allows them to access up-to-date and valuable information through printed materials and the Internet. In summarizing the advantages of this kind of instruction, Dupuy (2000) offers the following perspective:

In sum, there is evidence that CBI has a worthwhile “payoff” for students at all levels and in a variety of acquisition contexts, including the university. This “payoff” encompasses four broad areas: (1) enhanced foreign language competence; (2) enhanced subject matter knowledge; (3) enhanced self-confidence in their ability to comprehend and use the target language; and (4) enhanced motivation to continue a foreign language study beyond the requirement. (p. 215)

Typically, using English as the sole medium of instruction and communication could also be regarded as the practice of a monolingual approach where there is no use of students’ mother tongue in the classroom. In *The Natural Approach: Language Acquisition in the Classroom* of Krashen and Terrell (1995), these two well-known proponents of the monolingual approach claimed that learners acquire a foreign language by following the same path from which they acquire their first language (L1); therefore, the use of the mother tongue in the foreign language learning process should be minimized. In general, the reasons why only the target language should be used in the classroom are based on the following three assumptions:

(1) The learning of an L2 should model the learning of an L1 (through maximum exposure to the L2), (2) successful learning involves the separation and distinction of L1 and L2, and (3) students should be shown the importance of L2 through its continual use. (Cook, 2001, as cited in Kafes, 2011, p. 129)

2.1.2 An Overview of International Programs offered by Thai Higher Education Institutions

It is definite that in this era of globalization, there is an increasing concern in the adoption of English as a medium of instruction in Higher Education. Normally, the term “English-medium instruction program”, where English is used as the sole medium of instruction, can be used interchangeably with the term “international program” by Thai universities (Hengsadeeikul et al., 2010). According to the Ministry of Education, Office of the Higher Education Commission, Thailand (OHEC), a number of public and private universities in Thailand offer a wide variety of English-medium programs or international programs in many disciplines at both undergraduate and graduate levels. In 2012, there were a total number of 1,017 international programs offered by Thai public and private universities. The total numbers of international programs at Thai tertiary level in 2012, classified by levels of study and by types of institution, can be shown in Figure 2.1 and table 2.1 respectively.

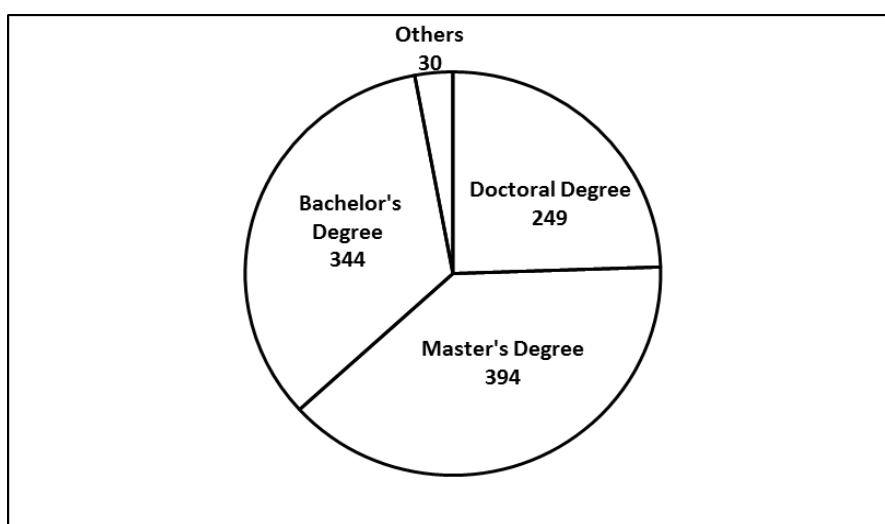


Figure 2.1 Number of International Programs in 2012 Classified by Level of Study

Source: Office of the Higher Education Commission, 2013

Table 2.1 Number of International Programs in 2012 Classified by Type of Institution

Degree/Type of Institution	Public Higher Education Institutions	Private Higher Education Institutions
Doctoral Degree	217	32
Master's Degree	308	86
Bachelor's Degree	191	153
Others	21	9

Source: Office of the Higher Education Commission, 2013

Moreover, it is obvious that a number of international programs offered by Thai higher education institutions are annually rising in response to the growth in international education and the increasing demand from both Thai and non-Thai non-native English speaking students who aim to become proficient in English. A survey by OHEC from 2004 to 2012 with regard to the number of international programs offered by Thai higher education institutions showed that there is a significant increase in the number of international programs in Thailand from 465 in 2004 to 520 in 2005, 727 in 2006, 844 in 2007, 884 in 2008, 981 in 2010, and 1017 programs in 2012 (see Table 2.2). However, it was noted that the statistical data in years 2009 and 2011 cannot be mentioned in this paper as they are not provided by the Office of the Higher Education Commission.

Table 2.2 Number of International Programs between 2004-2012

Degree/Year	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2010	2012
Doctoral Degree	109	127	178	220	215	225	249
Master's Degree	203	217	290	327	350	389	394
Bachelor's Degree	153	176	241	277	296	342	344
Others	0	0	18	20	23	25	30
Total	465	520	727	844	884	981	1,017

Sources: Office of the Higher Education Commission, 2008

Office of the Higher Education Commission, 2013

The number of international programs shown in Table 2.2 clearly indicates that the number of international programs in 2012 had increased exponentially when compared with those in 2004. Not surprisingly, given the fact that English has increasingly become essential in both local and global contexts, the number of international programs at Thai tertiary level continues to increase sharply responding to the high needs of both Thai and foreign students. With the importance of English as a global language, many universities in Thailand which previously operated in Thai L1 only are currently providing an English-medium program or an international program as an option (Hengsadeeikul et al., 2010). Obviously, international programs are offered so as to help boost Thai students' English performance. Furthermore, it is also reported that not only Thai but also numerous European universities offer programs in English on the grounds that an English program can help prepare domestic students for the global market, raise the profile of the institutions, and attract international students (Costa & Coleman, 2013; Doiz, Lasagabaste, & Sierra, 2011).

As for the number of international students in Thai higher education institutions, a survey reported by the Office of the Higher Education Commission (OHEC) revealed that in 2011, there were 20,309 foreign students enrolled in 103 universities in Thailand. The top five Thai universities having the highest number of foreign students can be shown in the table below:

Table 2.3 Number of Foreign Students Enrolled in Thai Higher Education Institutions in 2011

Universities	Number of Foreign Students
Assumption University	4,179
Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University	1,279
Mahidol University	1,233
Ramkhamhaeng University	1,004
Dhurakij Pundit University	635

Source: Office of the Higher Education Commission, 2013

In general, irrespective of the programs of study, Thai or international, a Thai academic year generally comprises of two semesters, approximately sixteen weeks each, plus a summer session.

- 1) First semester : June – October
- 2) Second semester : November - March
- 3) Summer session : April – May

However, the above academic year is not adopted by all universities. Some universities' academic year starts in September, going on till December and then again from January to May. In contrast, some other universities adopt a trimester academic year.

Of more consequence, in 2012, the Minister of Education (Thailand) made an announcement calling for a change in the structure of the academic year. In short, all higher education institutions in Thailand are requested to shift the beginning of the

academic year (first semester) to August or September in order to match the international academic calendar. In preparation for the regional economic integration in 2015, this system is expected to be launched in 2014.

2.2 Previous Research on International Programs at Higher Education Institutions

Surprisingly, despite an apparent increase in the number of international programs offered by Thai universities, a review of the literature reveals that there has relatively been only a small number of research studies conducted with Thai undergraduates studying in international programs. Evidently, most of the previous researches have predominantly focused on English language problems encountered by university students of international programs, thereby overlooking other important issues such as the learning environment, in spite of its importance as one of the major factors affecting students' English language competence. Some of the previous studies conducted with university students of international programs can be briefly critiqued as follows.

With the goal of providing some valuable facts in relation to English learning problems faced by Thai students, Pawapatcharandom (2007) conducted a study with Thai undergraduate students from the international programs of Mahidol University. Her study revealed that the most serious problem reported by the participants was pertaining to English writing skills. To be more precise, the three most serious writing skill problems encountered by her participants were described as being unable to finish an essay within a limited time, being unable to write an academic paper in English, and being unable to use the correct grammatical rules in the writing of any paper.

Likewise, other difficulties encountered by Thai students of a college in Thailand engaging an English language-medium were also reported in the study of Adamson (2004). His study demonstrated that the participants normally have both methodology and comprehension-related problems with lectures by the native English-speaking teachers. Regarding the methodology-related problems, Thai students are more familiar with drilling, memorization, and grammar-translation

methods which are not employed by native English teachers. With respect to the comprehension-related problems, many students admitted that they are nervous and afraid of making mistakes and having a communication break-down when interacting with native English teachers since they sometimes have difficulty understanding their teachers' pronunciation; on the contrary, they are less nervous when communicating with non-native English speakers who normally speak in a more grammatically simplified version. Interestingly, Adamson (2004) further reported that "lecturers too complained of silent classes, non-responsive students, plagiarism and a general lack of self-dependence" (p. 48).

Supposedly, not only Thai but also other non-native English students encounter English language problems when enrolling in an international program. For example, Evans and Morrison's (2011) study indicated some challenges confronting undergraduates entering English-medium higher education in Hong Kong. Precisely, understanding specialist vocabulary items, comprehending lectures, and writing in an appropriate academic style are highlighted as the most significant difficulties experienced by local undergraduates when studying in English.

It is important, at this stage, to point out another recurring theme. Even though many students find it difficult to learn the English language, they continue to enroll in English-medium programs based on the fact that taking such a program offers them greater opportunities to have successful career paths in the future. The study of Chalapati (2007) clearly supports this claim when it shows that students who are enrolled for graduate programs in business studies in Thailand are strongly motivated by a desire for the social status and career opportunities provided by English proficiency which is certainly required by almost all industries in Thailand. All the participants are aware of the importance of English as an international lingua franca; thus, it can be said that globalization is the key driving force behind the reason why numerous Thai students pursue a Master's degree from international programs. Very similar to the study of Chalapati (2007), from the findings of Pyvis and Chapman's (2007) investigation, it appears that the primary reason why Malaysian students chose to study at an offshore campus of an Australian university in Malaysia is that receiving an international education is viewed as giving a competitive advantage in a global labor market as well as being a valued passport to employment with the

Western or multinational corporations operating in Malaysia. Unquestionably, English is viewed as one of the significant requirements for future success since having a good command of English provides students with greater opportunities to work with famous companies.

2.3 A General Background to the Teaching and Learning Context of the University under Investigation

The research site of the present study is the first private international university in Thailand. It envisions itself as an international community of scholars. According to the university policy, English is the officially approved medium of instruction at this university. However, some courses are in the Thai language but only for Thai speaking students; students whose native tongue is not Thai are also required to study specific courses in English.

Fundamentally, this section begins with a brief review of the four main English language courses offered by the Institute for English Language Education (IELE), which is one of the departments of the university. A discussion of the Bachelor's degree programs operating at the considered university is then presented. To end the section, the general information regarding the number of faculty members and students is provided so as to help the readers better understand the context of the selected university.

2.3.1 Academic English Courses (Main Courses)

During their undergraduate studies, students need to take four academic English courses (English I through IV). A minimum passing grade of C is required of all students for these four compulsory English courses; otherwise, they need to retake the course. Certainly, each course has a different objective and the description of each academic English course appears in Appendix A.

Certainly, as this university is one of the leading international universities in Thailand and in line with the general university policy, all the four academic English courses are conducted in English, the same as most other academic subjects. Before moving on, it should be noted that in order to fulfill the requirement necessary for

graduation from the university, students of all departments, apart from studying the content subjects of their fields of study in English, need to take at least four main English courses (Appendix A). For this reason, it is proved that this university aims to make all students reach a high level of English proficiency.

2.3.2 A Review of the Bachelor's Degree Programs

There are 10 fields of study operating within the undergraduate level of this university: School of Management, School of Arts, School of Music, School of Nursing Science, School of Science and Technology, School of Engineering, School of Communication Arts, School of Architecture and Design, School of Law, and School of Biotechnology.

However, taking a closer look at the university academic curriculum, the researcher notices that all courses offered by the Department of Business English are most relevant to enhancing students' English language competence, compared against those of other departments. As shown in Appendix B, all the major required and major elective courses offered by the Department of Business English are exclusively designed to improve students' English language skills and are thus relevant to the object of this study's inquiry that aims to examine students' English language competence in relation to the university's environmental influence.

According to the university's academic curriculum, Business English students, in addition to completing other general education courses in English, are required to complete 12 major required courses with a total of 36 credits and 3 major elective courses with a total of 9 credits. Moreover, in order to enroll in the first Business English major course, they must also complete at least English III, one of the four required English courses mentioned earlier. In other words, English III serves as a prerequisite for enrolling in any Business English major course. Nonetheless, as a Business English graduate of this university, the researcher has noted that more than a small number of students still cannot perform well in English despite taking the stated English language-related courses. This anomaly has provided the impetus for the purposive choice of the teachers and students of the Business English Department as the target group for this research investigation.

2.3.3 Number of Faculty Members in 2012

The university under investigation had a total of 1,082 full time faculty members in the year 2012. Being an international English-medium tertiary institution in Thailand, the university consists of a large number of both Thai and foreign faculty members such as American, Australian, Indian, Burmese, Chinese, and Japanese. It is reported that this university has the highest number of international faculty members compared with other Thai universities offering similar English programs. The number of faculty members of this university categorized by nationalities can be demonstrated in Figure 2.2.

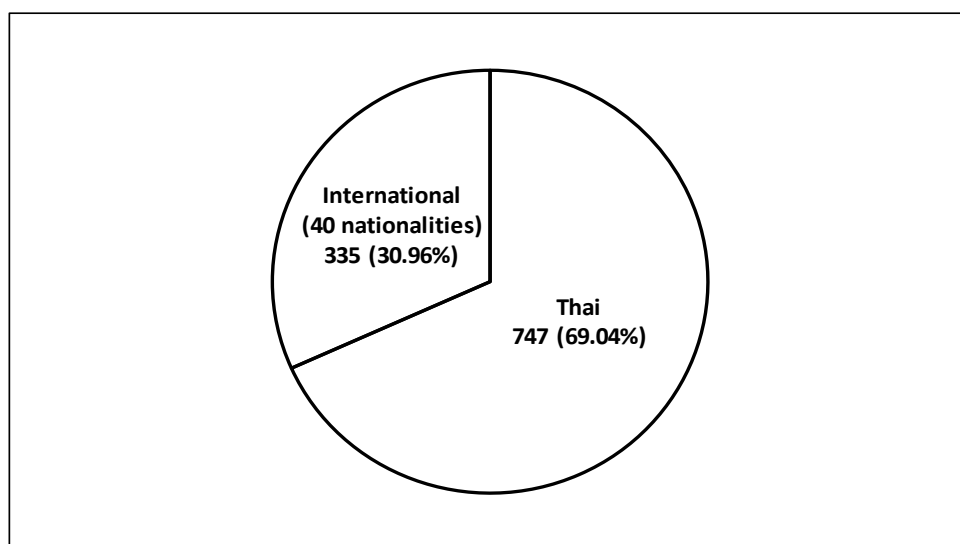


Figure 2.2 Number of Faculty Members Classified by Nationality in 2012

Source: Assumption University, 2012

2.3.4 Number of Students in 2012

In 2012, there were a total of 17,708 students who had enrolled in the university under investigation. Characterized as the first international university in Thailand, it undoubtedly attracts a number of international students from various nations worldwide. The university currently ranks first for having the highest number of international students which represent approximately 80 nationalities as diverse as Bangladeshi, Burmese, Chinese, German, Indian, Japanese, Korean, Pakistani, Russian, and other Asian and European countries around the globe. Currently, the

Chinese students make up the highest number of foreign students. Figure 2.3 below represents the number of students categorized by nationality.

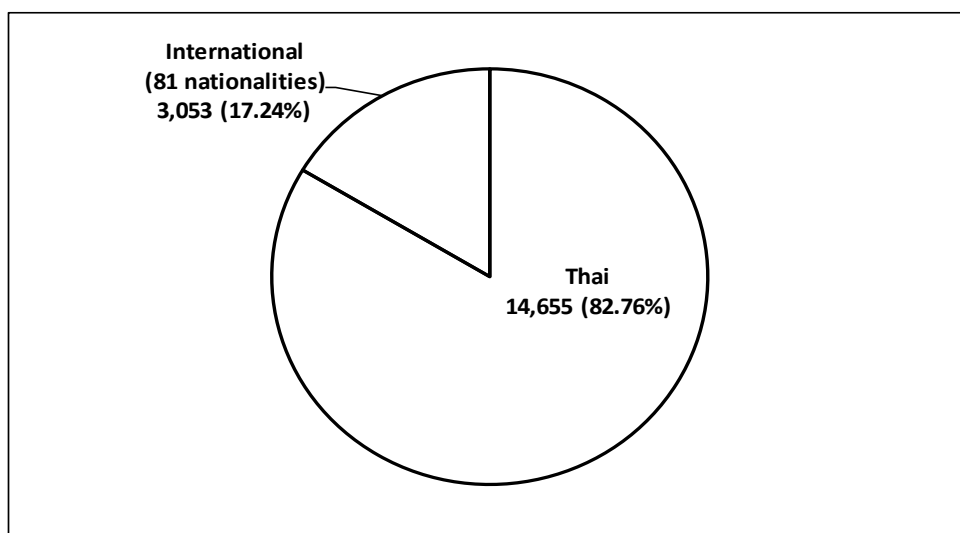


Figure 2.3 Number of Students Classified by Nationality in 2012

Source: Assumption University, 2012

2.4 An Effective Learning Environment for Foreign Language Learning

The previous section demonstrates that English-medium instruction or an international program is aimed at helping students not only to master the subject content but also to attain the highest level of English proficiency. However, in order to be competent in a foreign language, a number of researchers (Collentine & Freed, 2004; Firth & Wagner, 1997; Tarone, 2007) remarked that it is necessary to take into consideration the issue of the learning environment, for it serves as one of the major factors promoting successful language learning.

Both historically and currently, numerous researchers have conducted studies on the significance of the learning environment for foreign language learning. Therefore, a review of the related literature conducted in this section aims to provide the basis for the study of how a learning environment contributes to the success in learning English as a foreign language.

2.4.1 The Concept of a Learning Environment

According to Collentine and Freed (2004), Firth and Wagner (1997), and Tarone (2007), the context of learning is of great importance as it is seen to be directly related to students' learning outcomes. Woolner (2007) stated that most of the journals on learning environment research typically concentrate on the aspects of the educational experience in terms of cooperation between students and teachers, teacher's use of language, styles of teaching, classroom environment, learning processes, and so on, where little to no concern is paid to the physical surroundings such as the workspace and visual environment. In the same vein, the claim made by Woolner (2007) seems to be in line with that of Akinsanmi (2008) who stated:

There are many theories that explain the learning process. Researchers often base their theories on physiological, psychological and sociological changes that take place when learning occurs and often exclude the physical/material conditions that surround the learning process. As a result, learning environments are often described in terms of pedagogical philosophy, curriculum design and social climate and there is little research on the role the physical environment plays in the learning process. (para. 1)

Accordingly, the following review of literature is somewhat constrained to learner-external, contextual factors that characterize the particular language learning situation, regardless of the physical environments.

In general, learning a language other than one's mother tongue can take place both inside and outside the classroom (Housen et al., 2011). In this respect, Housen et al. (2011) coined the terms "educational or curricular context" and "extra-curricular context" as the contextual factors affecting students' language learning and competence. As for "educational or curricular context", Housen et al. (2011) defined it as the classroom context that is shaped by institutional factors, the school's ethos and language/educational policy, curriculum design, and pedagogical approaches and methods which in turn determine classroom practices in the case of student and

teacher roles and relations, learner's focus of attention, activities used, the language input and output opportunities created in the classroom, and so on.

Besides, they also pointed out that the educational or curricular context can be further distinguished into two sub-types of learning contexts which operate at classroom level:

- 1) Language-content classroom refers to the classroom where the foreign language functions as a medium of instruction and communication.
- 2) Language-subject classroom is the classroom where the foreign language functions as the object of learning.

On the contrary, Housen et al. (2011) stated, "the extra-curricular context comprises the wider sociolinguistic, demographic, cultural and institutional conditions both inside and outside the school that are somehow beyond the direct control of curricular intervention" (p. 87). Again, as further explained by Housen et al. (2011), extra-curricular context can be divided into two sub-levels, namely the school level and the community level.

- 1) The school level involves aspects of opportunities for exposure to the foreign language in informal contacts with peers, staff, and so on, through extracurricular activities.
- 2) The community level involves aspects of opportunities for exposure to the foreign language in the society at large.

Based on a review of the relevant literature, an "educational or curricular context" and an "extra-curricular context" are the two main contexts selected to be observed in the present study. However, to narrow down the scope, the investigation is somewhat restricted by not investigating the foreign language exposure at the community level; that is, the investigation is conducted only within the institution, namely the classroom level and the school/university level.

The following sections will focus exclusively on some compelling issues that fall under two major contexts: the educational or curricular context (the classroom level) and the extra-curricular context (the university level). In other words, only the relevant literature and issues that are chosen to be objects of this research inquiry will feature in the following discussion.

2.4.2 The Key Aspects of Learning Environment for Foreign Language Learning

On the whole, the emphasis of this section is on reviewing the major characteristics of a learning environment in relation to foreign language learning. Based on reviewing the related literature, five major characteristics that are of concern include (1) the role of language prominence at classroom level, (2) the role of language prominence at university level, (3) teaching practices and learning activities, (4) motivating and supportive classroom environment, and (5) quality of teachers.

2.4.2.1 Language Prominence (Input-Output Opportunities)

As mentioned earlier, Ibrahim (2001) posited the view that the learning context of an English-medium instruction program generally creates high opportunities for English input and output which can help enhance the students' English skills and, at the same time, increase their academic performance. Typically, it is said that this kind of learning context can be referred to as a high language prominence context as it allows students to practice all four English skills.

Related to the literature reviewed above, Housen et al. (2011) stated that language prominence is related to the number and nature of linguistic input and output opportunities provided for language learners in the curricular and extra-curricular learning contexts. It is generally believed that "the more prominent the L2 is in the learning context, and the less prominent the L1, the more L2 acquisition will be promoted" (Housen et al, 2011, p. 88). Baker and Hengeveld (2012) also presented a similar viewpoint in favor of Housen et al.'s (2011) claim by expressing that contact with the target language plays an essential role in foreign language learning since "the time and opportunities you have for using the target language will strongly influence the speed of second language acquisition" (p. 68).

In detail, linguistic input is thought of as an essential component for language learning in that it helps to provide the learners with information about what is possible or grammatical in the language (Ellis, 2003; Gass & Mackey, 2007; Krashen, 1985). Apart from the opportunities for extensive input, the learners also need to be given the opportunities to engage in meaningful interaction in order to produce meaningful output. This in turn pushes the learners to notice a gap in their linguistic knowledge of the second language (Hedge, 2000; Swain, 1985, as cited in

Wang & Castro, 2010). In addition, as suggested by Mackey (1999) and Pica, Lincoln-Porter, Paninos, and Linnell (1996), engaging in a meaningful interaction in the target language not only provides the learners with the opportunities for linguistic input and output but also allows them to receive feedback which is said to play a key role in facilitating foreign language learning and development.

Up to this point, it is certainly necessary to investigate whether and to what extent the L1 or the foreign language plays a role in the learning settings. Housen et al. (2011) call for an examination of whether the L1 or the foreign language is widely used by most of the school population (e.g. students, staff, and teachers) and to what extent the foreign language functions as media of classroom communication, instruction, and so on. Concisely, the degree of English language prominence at both classroom and university level of the chosen university context still remains unknown and therefore needs to be examined.

2.4.2.2 Teaching Practices and Learning Activities

Theoretically, an English medium instruction or an international program is regarded as content-based instruction (CBI) that draws on the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in such a way that the teaching and the classroom procedures involve real communication through the use of the target language (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). In this sense, students will acquire both academic content and English knowledge at the same time, for the foreign language, such as English, is used as a means to convey information content, rather than being the immediate object of study (Grabe & Stoller, 1997). To support this notion, Vernier, Barbuzza, Giusti, and Moral (2008) reported:

Students are likely to get involved with all the language skills as the instructors have the students reading, discussing, solving problems, analyzing data, writing reports, etc. Thus, students practice all the language skills in a highly integrated communicative fashion while learning content, such as science, mathematics, and social studies. (p. 270)

As for classroom practice, Wong (2010) emphasized that in a monolingual society, maximizing the students' exposure to English should be the primary concern since allowing native language to be used in a classroom results in depriving the students of excellent opportunities to learn and use English. In his study, Wong (2010) investigated the effectiveness of using English as the sole medium of instruction in Hong Kong. The findings show that the English proficiency of the students who were strictly required to use only English in class grew faster and better than those in the class where the use of Cantonese (the students' mother tongue) was permitted.

However, in contrast to the statement made by Wong (2010), some other researchers (Jacobson, n.d., as cited in Ibrahim, 2001; Chang, 2010) posit another proposition. It is also possible for teachers to switch, to some extent, from one language to another during the class because such a strategy can help to reinforce concepts, to review points, to clarify some difficult concepts, to capture the students' attention.

An added point to this issue provided by Wang (2009) as to the amount of students' participation in classroom activities. In order to help students acquire a foreign language effectively, giving them opportunities to participate in the teaching and learning process should not be ignored because it allows them to develop their strategic competence as well as to practise communicative strategies. Similarly, Ibrahim (2001) maintained that providing various learning activities, especially communicative-related activities, should be a high priority.

Another idea was expressed by Goldenberg (2008) explaining that explicit teaching and ample opportunities to use a foreign language are both necessary for second language development. Explicit teaching can help students directly learn features and forms of the second language and also how to use the language appropriately; in contrast, ample opportunities to use the second language in meaningful situations certainly allow learners to put their knowledge of English into practice. However, Krashen (n.d.) showed a strong opposing view to the idea of explicit teaching and said that the language should be implicitly acquired through natural settings, not learned explicitly (as cited in Hedge, 2000).

2.4.2.3 Motivating and Supportive Classroom Environment

It has long been believed that a positive and motivating classroom climate is considered a factor contributing to the attainment of a successful language learning outcome (Bahous, Bacha, & Nabhani, 2011; Dörnyei, 2007). According to Michigan Department of Education (2011), “In a supportive and responsive environment, students feel more confident and capable of accessing the language and content” (p. 1).

Principally, this issue is related to “Affective Filter Hypothesis” which demonstrates that a comfortable, motivating, and tension-free classroom environment can help in leading to a low affective filter, allowing students to learn the language faster and better (Krashen, 1982, as cited in VanPatten & Williams, 2007). A tense classroom climate, on the other hand, can undermine learning and demotivate learners (Thanasoulas, 2002). To support this claim, 30 Lao learners of English, participating in Souriyavongsa’s (2013) study asserted that unsupportive classroom learning environment is one of the major causes of their poor English performance. Unsupportive classroom climate makes them afraid and feel ashamed when making English mistakes, with the result that they lack confidence in their spoken English.

To date, it is believed that a teacher is the key to motivating language learners. Dörnyei (2007) and Wong (2010) assert that the teacher can play a significant role in creating the student’s necessary motivating character within the educational context through conscious intervention; an individual teacher plays a deciding role in creating and fostering the teaching and learning atmosphere. For example, Azarnoosh and Tabatabaee (2008) conducted a study with a group of Iranian EFL students. It was found that the teachers’ communicative style is related to the students’ motivation to study as it leads to a reduction in anxiety and a promotion of the students’ involvement – all of which can result in positive language learning outcomes.

Likewise, the study of Thanasoulas (2002) also emphasized that the teachers’ skill in motivating students to learn is of great importance. Teachers can employ motivational strategies by increasing their learners’ self-confidence in using the target language, creating learners’ autonomy such as allowing them to generate to some extent their ideas on what activities should be involved in the classroom, and

encouraging positive self-evaluation such as providing motivational feedback regarding their language skills.

To summarize, motivation to learn is not only counted as the variable students bring to the classroom but also one that teachers can implement and promote in the classroom so as to enhance language learning (Winke, 2005). As such, teachers as well as the classroom atmosphere can certainly be counted as key motivational components of language learning, just as they can either facilitate or hinder students' language learning process and development.

2.4.2.4 Quality of Teachers

It is undoubtedly true that teachers play a leading role in raising and developing the quality of education which in turn affects the students' learning outcomes. According to Punthumasen (2007), the quality of a teacher is regarded as the most important school/university-related factor influencing students' learning outcomes. However, a review of relevant literature uncovers that there appears to be a conflict between expectation and reality. While there is clear evidence that teacher quality is a key determinant of students' learning outcomes, in reality, not all teachers are yet highly qualified. The evidence to support this fact was presented in the study of Costa and Coleman (2013) which indicates that a number of teachers in Italy were compelled to participate in English-taught Programs (ETPs) regardless of their proficiency in English. Remarkably, the results of their study are somewhat similar to those of Wongsothorn et al. (2002) and Aguilar and Rodríguez (2012) claiming that a teacher's insufficient level of English is considered one of the major concerns in today's language teaching.

Also, a contrasting and significant situation analysis study on teachers of an English program in Southern Africa conducted by Uys, Walt, Berg, and Botha (2007) revealed that subject content teachers acknowledge their responsibility to help students acquire language skills in the subject content classroom, but, in reality, they are likely to be unaware of this task and fail to perform this duty in their actual practice. This, in turn, can be seen as a hindrance of their students to fully acquire language skills, which leads to a lack of academic achievement. Strikingly, Uys et al. (2007) summarized five main reasons for teachers' seeming inability to practice language skills in the subject content classroom:

(1) Teachers were often unaware of their inability to meet the language related needs of their pupils, (2) teachers not only lacked the knowledge and skills for teaching the four language skills, but also lacked the insight to identify strategies that would promote effective L2MI (L2 Medium instruction), (3) teachers lacked the personal language proficiency required (both spoken and written) to assist their learners in the acquisition of academic literacy, (4) language proficiency was still regarded as the single most important prerequisite for effective L2MI. Teachers disregarded, or were ignorant of, the importance of applying methodological skills, and (5) none of the teachers had received training that equipped them with skills for effectively teaching through the medium of English. (p. 77)

Similarly, another compelling point of view was claimed by Li (2009) and Shoenbottom (2011) who insisted that language learners who learn English as a foreign language will make faster progress in English if their teachers do not only use English in teaching academic subjects but also are responsible for students' overall English language development.

Apparently, all of these studies showed that the problem pertaining to English language teaching does not arise from the status of being a nonnative English-speaking teacher. As Maum (2002) and Medgyes (2001) stated, while a native English-speaking teacher can be a "good language model" for the students, a nonnative English-speaking teacher, on the other hand, can be viewed as a "good learner model" since they have gone through the experience of learning English as a second (or third or fourth) language similar to their students. Yet, one of the biggest problems in the language education system at present appears to be the quality-level of the teachers, those using English as a medium of instruction in particular. However, it is still unclear whether this also reflects the case in Thailand. Consequently, it is necessary to explore the matter from this particular perspective in the current study.

2.5 Previous Research on Learning Environment for Foreign Language

Learning

The issue of language learning environment has received much attention in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT) and Second Language Acquisition (SLA). So far, numerous researchers (Collentine & Freed, 2004; Housen et al., 2011; Wang 2009) have conducted studies on the significance of effective foreign language learning environment for the sake of promoting successful foreign language learning.

As previously discussed, learning environment can be defined as settings, both inside and outside the classroom, in which second or foreign language learning can be taken place. The learning environment is said to influence the language learning process and eventually affect the learning outcomes with regard to language proficiency (Ellis, 2008, as cited in Housen et al., 2011). In order to facilitate language learning development, Nikitina (2011) and Wang (2009) pointed out that foreign language learning environment must be created in such a way that it leads to authentic learning. As Nikitina (2011) suggested, using authentic and communicative learning activities could be a means of creating real-life experiences in the foreign language classroom, for it stimulates the authentic use of the target language.

Another interesting point pertaining to effective learning environment is related to the emotional aspect of learning environment. Several researchers (e.g. Azarnoosh & Tabatabaee, 2012; Dörnyei, 2007; Thanasoulas, 2002) claimed that successful foreign language learning cannot be taken place if the learning context does not provide students with learning motivation. According to Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning (2011), students experience the learning environment as not just an intellectual space, but also as an emotional one.

By investigating the relationship between the learning contexts and students' language learning outcomes, Collentine and Freed (2004) and Schoonjans (2012) highlighted that high exposure to the target language leads to high level of oral speed fluency which can be defined in terms of ease and smoothness of speech. Likewise, Housen et al.'s (2011) study revealed that learners in a learning context with high opportunities for language input and output tend to have high level of language proficiency, particularly in aspects of lexical diversity, accuracy, and fluency. On the

contrary, Wang (2009) remarked that some learners of English successfully pass the examinations, but they in practice find it difficult to successfully communicate with others in English since they have little exposure to real communicative English.

To conclude, recognized as having the potential to provide rich sources for foreign language learning, learning environment is one of the major factors promoting successful language learning. Creating the environment that supports language learning definitely results in students having much better language performance.

2.6 Conceptual Framework

Obviously, a review of the relevant literature with regard to the contexts of learning enables the researcher of this present study to explore the foundation and major concepts under the areas of investigation. This, in turn, allows the researcher to generate her own conceptual framework used to conduct an effective research study

The conceptual framework for this research is illustrated in Figure 2.4 below. It presents the relationship among key variables in terms of the major characteristics of a learning environment in relation to foreign language learning. The construction of this proposed model of analysis was based on a review of the existing research literature discussed earlier.

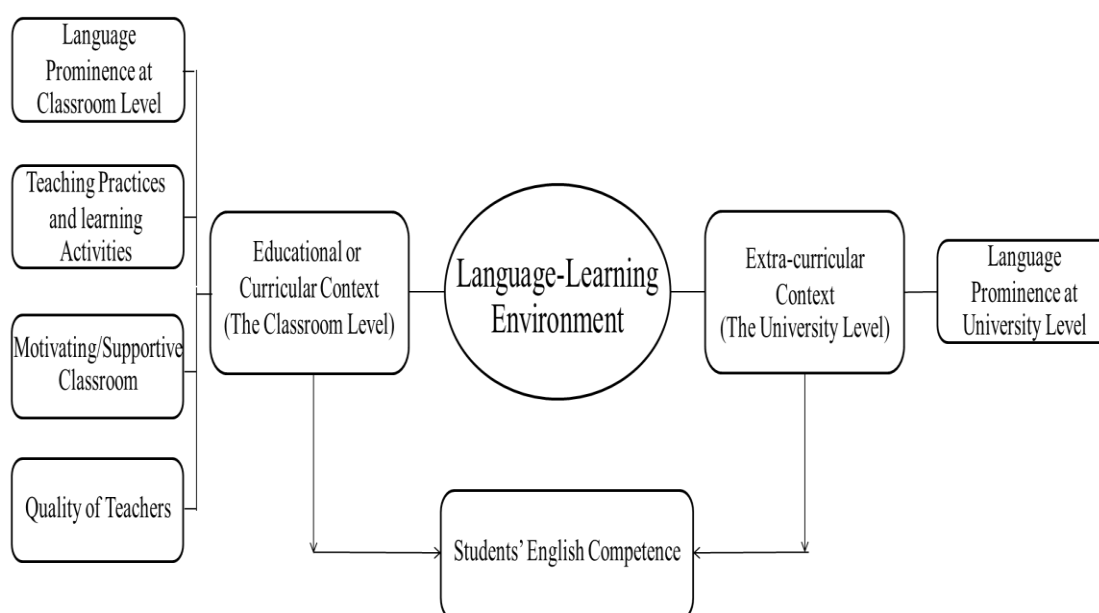


Figure 2.4 Conceptual Framework

2.7 Differences between ESL and EFL Environment

Purposefully, this section aims to explicate the fundamental concepts of ESL (English as a second language) and EFL (English as a foreign language) so as to provide a better understanding of the English language teaching and learning environment.

According to Baker and Hengeveld (2012), English as a second language (ESL) typically refers to the teaching and learning of English as the target language in the community or environment where English is spoken or used as the primary language of interaction in the society; for instance, Thai speakers learn English in the UK. In contrast, English as a foreign language (EFL) principally refers to the teaching and learning of English in the community or environment where English is not commonly used in that particular society or the teaching and learning of English is in the environment of learner's native language; for example, Thai speakers learn English in their hometown, in Thailand. In this study, the environment of the university under investigation is said to be an EFL environment.

Seemingly, the major difference between second language acquisition and foreign language learning lies in that the second language acquirers have opportunities to practice the target language outside the classroom, while foreign language learners only have limited opportunities to learn English in the classroom (Ozsevik, 2010; Wang & Castro, 2010).

With respect to the issue of a classroom setting, an ESL classroom usually consists of classmates of different nationalities; thus, ESL learners are normally exposed to a high level of English as it is basically used as the sole medium of communication with their peers. In contrast, an EFL classroom generally consists of students with a shared language and culture; as a result, EFL learners generally have limited exposure to English as they are indirectly tempted to use their native language when interacting with their classmates (Khatib, Rezaei, & Derakhshan, 2011; Oxford University Press ELT, 2011). Likewise, Pica et al. (1996) mentioned that for many learners in foreign language contexts, the opportunity for extensive or wide-ranging interaction with native English speakers is infrequent and often simply impossible since the classrooms normally consist of non-native teachers and learners.

2.8 Other Factors Contributing to Success in Learning English as a Foreign Language

It is generally accepted that English language competence has become a baseline skill in a number of countries where English is used as a foreign language. This in turn leads to a growing number of people studying English as a foreign language, particularly young adults (Graddol, 2006). However, it is noticeable and not always explicable why some people seem to learn languages very quickly while others spend a long time trying to learn but still make little progress in their language development (Alsayed, 2003). One reason presented is because mastering a foreign language, as proposed by Ellis (2003), cannot rely on any single factor. For this reason, even though the emphasis of this study is on learning contexts, it seems incomplete to totally exclude other factors. Accordingly, this section aims to shed some light on other important factors that play a crucial role in contributing to the success of foreign language learning. Furthermore, this section would be helpful for analyzing and interpreting the data in the subsequent chapter.

Typically, the factors affecting the process of foreign language learning can be broadly categorized into internal factors and external factors (Madrid, 1995; Shoebottom, 2011). Internal factors, as defined by Shoebottom (2011), refer to those that individuals bring with them to the particular learning situation; whereas, external factors are those that characterize the particular language learning situation. Seemingly, learning environments discussed in the previous section are considered external factors which play a significant role in the process of language learning as they involve the issues of instruction, language exposure, quality of teachers, and so on. However, in addition to educational environment as discussed earlier, Ellis (2003) stated that other crucial factors, namely individual differences, also need to be taken into consideration. In this section, the four main individual factors chosen to be discussed are motivation, attitude, personality, and language aptitude.

2.8.1 Motivation

Motivation is believed to be one of the important factors affecting the speed and success of foreign language learning. Gilakjani, Leong, and Sabouri (2012) stated that motivation refers to encouragement, desire, and effort to do a particular thing in order to achieve the set of goals. Obviously, individuals have different reasons for learning a particular language which can be typically divided into two basic types of motivation: integrative and instrumental (Gardner, 1985). “Integrative motivation” typically refers to the desire to communicate with or integrate into a target language community, whereas “instrumental motivation” is the desire to learn the target language because it opens up educational and economic opportunities for learners (Ellis, 2003).

In addition, some researchers in second language acquisition (SLA) have incorporated the psychological dimension into the motivation factor. In particular, they propose another two basic types of motivation, namely intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Carreira, 2005). Intrinsic (internal) motivation is driven by an interest or enjoyment in doing the activity itself; while, extrinsic (external) motivation is the desire to achieve external goals or receive rewards such as money, a grade, a better job (Ryan & Deci, 2000). However, according to Klinger (2002), instrumental and extrinsic motivation can be categorized as the same type of motivation because they refer to the desire to achieve an external goal.

2.8.2 Attitude

Attitude to the target language and that language community are also considered important factors in learning a foreign language. It is clear that if we have a positive attitude towards the target language, its speakers, social and cultural customs and community, we can learn that particular language faster and more effectively than other languages (Baker & Hengeveld, 2012). In addition, attitude towards the classroom and teacher is also related to language learning; for instance, the student who feels at ease in the classroom and likes the teacher tends to learn the language more effectively than those with negative attitudes (Krashen, 1981).

2.8.3 Personality Traits

Presumably, students with high self-esteem, high self-confidence, and an outgoing personality normally have little to no anxiety and are willing to take risks which enable them to learn faster as they are not worried about making mistakes, thus allowing them more opportunities to practice the target language. On the contrary, introverted students usually make slow progress in language learning as they are less likely to seek out opportunities to practice the language (Krashen 1981; Shoebottom, 2011). Precisely, being passive learners, being too shy to speak English with classmates, and lacking in responsibility for their own learning are regarded as the main personality traits not contributing to the success of foreign language learning (Biyaem, 1997, as cited in Wiriyachitra, 2002).

2.8.4 Language Aptitude

Noticeably, some people are quicker, better and more successful in learning a second language than others. This fact can be explained by an individual's language aptitude which refers to a special ability to master language learning (Baker & Hengeveld, 2012). Obviously, individuals have different levels of intelligence and aptitude. Some people, for example, have an ability to store new words and sounds in their memory, while others may find it difficult to comprehend new words and sounds of the target language (Ellis, 2003).

2.9 Previous Research on English Proficiency of Non-Native Speakers of English

It is undeniable that globalization has dramatically changed the role of English. As a result, English proficiency is accepted as a basic skill needed for today's workforce (Hengsadeeikul et al., 2010). Interestingly, Education First (2012) reported that three-fourths of English speakers today are non-native since English is used daily as a language of communication among them, especially as a language for business.

Up until now, a number of scholars (e.g. Pawapatcharandom, 2007; Prapphal, 2003; Wongsothorn, 1996) have conducted studies to investigate the proficiency of learners of English. Surprisingly, there is considerable evidence showing that many learners still do not master English despite spending a long time studying it at every level of education. In 2003, Prapphal investigated the English proficiency of Thai students who took the Chulalongkorn University Test of English Proficiency (CU-TEP) in 2001. It was found that a majority of the students could not meet the standard required to study at graduate level at Chulalongkorn University indicating that Thai university students have poor English competence. Likewise, the study of Prapphal (2003) is virtually similar to those of Pawapatcharandom (2007) and Wongsothorn (1996) claiming that Thai university students are somewhat weak in English, writing skill in particular. It is noticeable that although the studies of Pawapatcharandom (2007), Prapphal (2003), and Wongsothorn (1996) had been conducted over different years, the results regarding the English competence among Thai university students remain unchanged. Consequently, it can be deduced that despite work undertaken over a lengthy period of time to shed light on the reasons, Thai university students still have difficulty using the English language.

Besides, the study of Chang (2010) called attention to the English competence of Taiwanese undergraduate students of international programs. Based on the results obtained from a self-evaluation questionnaire, the findings showed that half of the 370 participants rate themselves as having moderate English competence despite studying in an English-medium program. In detail, among the four English skills, listening was the skill that most students (73%) felt it had improved the most after taking the program, followed by their reading skill (28%). Surprisingly, less than 10% of the student participants felt that they made progress in English speaking and writing. Furthermore, in assessing the students' comprehension level of English lectures, most of the participants admitted that they were able to understand only 50-74% of the lectures. Specifically, more than one-third rated their listening proficiency as poor to very poor.

Moreover, it is noteworthy that even though Malaysians, as reported by Runckles (2012), are considered as having good English competence in comparison with other Asian countries, in fact they also have some English language problems. This claim received support from the study of Jalaluddin, Awal, and Bakar (2008) and Musa, Lie, and Azman (2012) which found that a number of Malaysian students have unsatisfactory English proficiency, especially when compared to the number of years undertaken to learn English in almost all academic levels. More precisely, the most obvious weakness of the Malaysian students, as claimed by Jalaluddin et al. (2008), is in the area of grammar. In addition, a study by Yasin, Shaupil, Mukhtar, Ghani, and Rashid (2010) on civil engineering students of a Malaysian polytechnic institute through the use of a self-reported questionnaire revealed that the students' ability to use the English language was somewhat low. To be more precise, students opined that their actual English skills did not meet the standards required to perform engineering job-related tasks as they did not have a good understanding of the technical documents and terms.

Furthermore, research on Arab students' English skills has received extensive attention by a number of scholars. One such study was conducted on the faculty members of the University of Jordan by Ibrahim (1983, as cited in Rabab'ah, 2002). Surprisingly, most faculty members revealed that they were totally unhappy with the English skills of their students and even somewhat embarrassed with the quality of the English of their graduates. In the same vein, Maleki & Zangani (2007) stated that a majority of Iranian students were unable to communicate effectively and confidently in English after graduating from the university.

Another similar research study undertaken with Arab learners of English was done by Rabab'ah (2002). The study indicated that Arabs, in general, faced many problems caused by a lack of English language of all the basic skills; listening, reading, writing, and speaking. However, the most serious problem faced by Arab EFL university students was that they normally had difficulty using English for communication. Precisely, Arab students generally lack necessary vocabulary to enable them to convey their exact meaning when engaging in authentic communicative situations. Another study carried out with Arab students was conducted by Al-Khasawneh (2010). Her study shed light on the fact that the major

English writing problems confronting Arab postgraduate students were related to vocabulary, register, grammatical knowledge, and organization of ideas.

Very similar to the studies of Al-Khasawneh (2010) and Rabab'ah (2002), a study by Bouangeune, Sakigawa, and Hirakawa (2008) conducted with Lao secondary school students yielded similar results. The study revealed that most participants had a problem with vocabulary, which in turn affected not only their speaking skills as mentioned in Rabab'ah's (2002) study but also their reading comprehension. At this point, it is clearly seen that aside from the English writing problems mentioned earlier, another major problem faced by non-native learners of English was that of vocabulary knowledge which indisputably affected the students' English language speaking, writing, and reading skills.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents an overview of the methodology used to conduct the present study. Basically, this chapter consists of six major sections, including the theoretical framework, research design, participants, data collection methods, validity and reliability of the research instruments as well as the data analysis required for the research.

3.1 Theoretical Framework

Theoretically, the research conducted is based on the constructivist theory proposed by Jerome Bruner. According to Bruner (1996), constructivist theory is the theoretical framework supporting the belief that humans construct new ideas, knowledge and their own understanding based upon existing knowledge and through experiencing things. That is to say, learning is an active process in which meaning or knowledge of anything is constructed by individuals through their experiences within a particular context. The active process of learning includes selection and transformation of information, generating hypothesis, and making meaning from information and experiences.

Based on the concept of constructivism, this study attempts to uncover and interpret meanings received from those who live in the area of study as it is believed that particular knowledge of something can best be gained from those in that particular context. In this study, teachers who have lived in the particular context of study as well as students who have experienced the real situation are able to construct their own knowledge and understanding based upon their existing knowledge and experiences in the university, which cannot be counted as true or false but undeniably reflect the reality of an area of study from the views of those who live in it.

In essence, this study aims to explore how the research participants construct reality in terms of the extent to which the actual university learning environment affects their English language learning and competence.

3.2 Research Design

The present study is qualitative research in design, partly supported by the use of a quantitative technique. Principally, in *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*, Merriam (2009) stated that the key concern of qualitative research is achieving meaning and understanding the situation from the participants' perspective, rather than that of the researcher. Seemingly, since understanding is the goal of this research, the researcher therefore serves as "the primary instrument for data collection and analysis" and the one who is able to immediately process data, clarify and summarize material, check with respondents for accuracy of interpretation, and so on. Moreover, the outcome of qualitative inquiry in nature is likely to be "descriptions of the context, the participants involved, and the activities of interest"; thus, data in the form of quotes from documents, field notes, or participant interviews are normally used in support of the findings (Merriam, 2009, pp. 15-16).

Given that constructivism serves as a theoretical framework, this study was conducted within an interpretive framework since constructivism, as said by Marcel (2001), is based on hermeneutics or interpretive epistemology. Accordingly, Merriam (2009) clarified that based on the constructivist paradigm, individuals normally construct reality by interacting with their social worlds. Thus, the researchers conducting this kind of study need to find out "(1) how people interpret their experiences; (2) how they construct their worlds; and (3) what meaning they attribute to their experiences" (p. 22). Likewise, as Schwandt (1994) stated, "An interpretive qualitative study provides a deep insight into the complex world of lived experience from the point of view of those who live it" (as cited in Andrade, 2009, p. 43). Hence, it is said that this style of approach can be used by the researcher who is interested in how the participants make meaning of a particular situation or phenomenon.

On the whole, this study is based on an interpretive approach aiming to understand phenomena through accessing the meanings participants assign to them. More specifically, the study was designed in an attempt to gain deep insight into the participants' perceptions regarding the characteristics of the university learning environment, as well as its influences on students' English competence. It could also be said that this study was designed to indirectly give students opportunities to voice their concerns about their learning experiences which can reflect the realities of the phenomena. More importantly, such feedback undeniably leads to the improvement in the quality of the current context of learning.

To continue, as mentioned above, this study is partially supported by a quantitative technique on the grounds that a mixed-method approach allows the researcher to gain more valid and reliable data as well as to obtain more insights into the issue under inquiry. It would then make sense to say that although a mixed-method approach with the use of interviews and questionnaires was chosen as the methodology for this research investigation, this research is qualitative in nature as it was conducted within an interpretive framework, aiming to understand the phenomena and make sense of the participants' perspectives.

3.3 Research Participants

The participants for this study are divided into two groups: (1) teachers and (2) students.

3.3.1 Teachers

Undoubtedly, as one of the leading international universities in Thailand, the university under investigation consists of a large number of both Thai and foreign faculty members. However, only Thai teachers were selected to participate in the interview procedure since the use of a common mother tongue (Thai L1) as the medium of communication helps to ensure efficiency in communication, thus allowing the researcher to get a clear and in-depth insight into the participants' views.

In the selection of teacher informants, the researcher chose a non-probability purposive sampling technique by first creating a list of criteria that are essential for choosing the participants. As a result, the researcher purposively selected Thai teachers of the Business English department of the university under investigation to be the interview respondents on the grounds that they directly deal with the issue of the current inquiry. That is, they have extensive experience in teaching at an international English-medium university, and their areas of teaching are most relevant to enhancing students' English language competence, compared with those of other departments. Moreover, in order to make sure that the data obtained was credible, valuable and plentiful, Thai instructors with more than 10 years of teaching experience at this university context were chosen as they were professionals with longer experience in teaching and were better able to provide a broad perspective regarding the areas under inquiry.

Table 3.1 Years of Experience in Teaching at the University under Inquiry

Years of Teaching Experience	Number of Teachers
20 – 25 years	7
15 - 19 years	15
11 – 14 years	8
6 – 10 years	4
1 – 5 years	3

Table 3.1 shows that there are a total of 30 Thai teachers of the Business English major who have more than 10 years of teaching experience. Of these 30 teachers, 10 participants were selected as interview respondents based on their voluntariness as well as the limited timeframe for conducting this study.

3.3.2 Students

The fourth year undergraduate Thai students majoring in Business English were purposively selected as the target respondents. The primary reason this group was selected to be representatives of the Thai students of the university under

investigation was that they were currently in their last academic year, reflecting that this group of respondents had been exposed to much learning experience in the university and thus had broader perspective on it, compared with those at lower year levels. This chosen group of respondents would have the strongest potential to bring valuable and interesting points regarding their past and actual learning experiences. In addition, (2) due to the time constraint, it was somewhat impossible to conduct the study with students of all faculties, and thus the researcher needed to select subjects who were as closely relevant to the research topic as possible. Even though the university aims to produce graduates of all faculties with the strongest English proficiency, a review of the academic curricula of the university under investigation revealed that the required courses for the Department of Business English (see Appendix B) are most directly related to improving students' English proficiency and therefore relevant to the present study aiming to investigate students' English competence. For these reasons, the chosen group was considered to be an ideal group of student respondents for the present study.

In determining the sample size for the questionnaire survey, the researcher used the Taro Yamane formula (1967) to select an appropriate number of student participants for this study thereby ensuring that the sample size is large enough to draw conclusions.

The equation below represents the Taro Yamane formula that was used to calculate the sample size where n is the sample size, N is the population size, and e is the level of precision or sampling error (Israel, 1992).

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

By applying this formula, N is equal to 310 representing the total number of the fourth year undergraduate Thai students majoring in Business English.

$$\begin{aligned} n &= \frac{310}{1 + 310(0.05)^2} \\ &= \frac{310}{1.775} \\ n &= 175 \text{ students} \end{aligned}$$

Accordingly, the student participants for this study were 175 students with allowable sampling error of 0.05, indicating that a 95% confidence level was selected. Of these 175 students, 15 were then chosen for a subsequent interview. Based on their voluntary participation, the student participants for the interview were also selected on the basis of their responses to the questionnaire (Section III) that asks for their overall perception and satisfaction of the actual university language-learning environment. In practice, the 15 students who rated different degree of agreement on a five-point scale were selected to ensure that various perspectives were obtained during the interviews.

3.4 Data Collection Methods and Procedures

In this study, a semi-structured interview and a questionnaire survey with closed-ended questions were used as the two main research instruments.

3.4.1 A Semi-Structured Interview

A semi-structured interview was employed to answer the research questions that ask for the teachers' perceptions of the ideal university learning environment for foreign language learning (research question I) as well as the students' perceptions of the influences of the actual university learning environment on their English learning and competence (research question III).

According to Guion, Diehl, and McDonald (2011), an interview, as opposed to a survey which is normally conducted with a large sample, is most appropriate for situations in which the researcher would like to elicit depth of information from a relatively fewer number of people in order to explore more deeply the respondent's feelings and perspectives of a particular subject. Principally, there are three major types of interview structures, namely the standardized (formal or structured) interview, the unstandardized (informal or non-directive) interview, and the semi-standardized (guided-semi-structured or focused) interview which is located half-way between the completely structured and the completely unstructured interviews (Berg, 2001). Berg (2001) further described that the semi-structured interview is conducted "in a systematic and consistent order, but ... the interviewers are permitted (in fact, expected) to probe far beyond the answers to their prepared and standardized

questions” (p. 70). As such, this type of interview is guided by a list of questions, but there is no predetermined wording or specific order which allows the interviewer to respond immediately to the new ideas and perspectives received from the interviewees (Merriam, 2009).

Regarding this, the semi-structured interview was chosen for gathering the data, for it allows the researcher to stimulate responses from the interviewees and to ask additional questions based on the responses of the interviewees. This would result in gaining a deeper understanding of the areas under investigation, obtaining more complete data as well as allowing new ideas to be brought up during the interview as a result of what the interviewees might share.

The items for the interviews which are shown in Appendix D were largely developed from the reviewed literature presented in Chapter 2. In practice, the individual interview was conducted in Thai by the researcher. The researcher’s mother tongue, Thai L1, could help ensure efficiency in communication resulting in a more complete understanding between the researcher and the participants. In this study, each interview lasted about twenty minutes.

3.4.2 A Questionnaire Survey

A Likert five-point scale questionnaire was employed to answer the research question II asking for the students’ perception of the actual university learning environment for foreign language learning. In order to satisfy one of the main objectives of this study that aims to discover whether there is any significant discrepancy between the ideal university learning environment perceived by the teachers and the actual university learning environment experienced by the students, it is necessary that the questionnaire items be deliberately constructed and designed by the researcher and thus based on the interview results with teachers obtained from the research question I. As such, a comparison could be made and that the questionnaire items were properly adjusted for the current study (see Appendix E for the English version and Appendix F for the Thai version).

The questionnaire format consisted of three major sections which can be outlined as follows:

1) Section I: Personal information of the student participants.

Generally, this section is concerned with individual and academic characteristics such as gender, age, learning background, and contact information.

2) Section II: Students' perceptions of the actual university

language-learning environment. This section was designed to encourage student responses that reflect their perceptions of the actual university learning environment. Specifically, this section was divided into five categories: (1) language prominence at classroom level, (2) language prominence at university level, (3) teaching practices and learning activities, (4) motivating and supportive classroom environment, and (5) quality of teachers. In this section, the students were required to rate each statement on a given five-point scale, ranging from strongly disagree (#1) to strongly agree (#5).

3) Section III: Students' overall perception and satisfaction of the

actual university learning environment. This section was designed to ask the students to rate their overall perception and satisfaction on a five-point scale. Purposefully, this section serves in helping the researcher to select the student participants for the subsequent interviews.

It is noted that the questionnaire was given in Thai for the reason that the students' mother tongue, Thai L1, can help ensure efficiency in communication.

As described by Eiselen and Uys (2005), one of the major advantages of using a questionnaire as a data collection instrument is that it allows the researcher to collect a large amount of data quickly and economically from a great number of people. According to Malhotra (2006), there are several types of closed-ended questionnaires. One of these is a Likert scale which is considered to be one of the most widely used itemized scales allowing the respondents to indicate their degree of agreement. On this basis, the student respondents were asked to rate their degree of agreement concerning their perceptions of the actual university language-learning environment by checking one of five response categories. Such rating is based on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.

It should be noted that a five-point scale with a middle or neutral point is used because excluding a neutral point may mean that the respondents could be inadvertently forced to take a stance on an issue about which they feel neutral. That is, they need to choose either of the two extremely opposing sides (Eiselen & Uys, 2005). Likewise, Garland (1991) also added that omitting the midpoint can bring along a task-related negative effect, meaning that ambivalent respondents are likely to have negative thoughts and express disagreement towards the statement in the absence of a midpoint which in turn yields an unreliable response. Accordingly, in order to avoid the potential problems stated above, the researcher decided to use a questionnaire survey with an odd number of response categories.

In summary, the data collection methods used for conducting the present study were outlined in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 Data Collection Methods

Areas of Study	Instruments for Data Collection	Respondents	
The ideal learning environment of an international English-medium university			
The Classroom Level:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Language prominence- Teaching practices and learning activities- Motivating and supportive classroom- Quality of teachers	A semi-structured interview	10 Business English major teachers	
The University Level:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Language prominence			
The actual university-learning environment			
The Classroom Level:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Language prominence- Teaching practices and learning activities- Motivating and supportive classroom- Quality of teachers	A questionnaire with closed ended questions (a five-point Likert scale)	175 fourth-year Business English major students	
The University Level:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Language prominence			
The impact of the actual university learning environment on students' English competence			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Problem areas affecting students' English language competence- The impact of the actual learning environment on students' four English skills (speaking, listening, reading, and writing)	A semi-structured interview	15 fourth-year Business English major students	

3.5 The Construction and Development of the Research Instruments

So as to assure the researcher and the participants of the appropriateness and correctness of the instruments, the Index of Item Objective Congruence (IOC) and Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient were applied. Besides, prior to a large-scale investigation, a pilot study was also conducted to assess the likelihood of success of the main study.

3.5.1 Validity of the Research Instrument

Practically speaking, it is claimed that "The content validity of a measurement instrument for a theoretical construct reflects the degree to which the measurement instrument spans the domain of the construct's theoretical definition" (Rungtusanatham, 1998, p. 11). Similarly, Yaghmaie (2003) stated that "content validity refers to the degree that the instrument covers the content that it is supposed to measure" (p. 25). As measuring the content validity of research instruments are of paramount importance and necessity, the Index of Item Objective Congruence (IOC) was then applied to assess the content validity of the questionnaire survey as well as the interview questions.

According to Rovinelli and Hambleton (1997), the value of index of item objective congruence (IOC) can be calculated by using the following equation:

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

IOC means the congruence between the items and the objectives or content, whereas $\sum R$ represents sum of scores checked by at least three specialists in the field and N is equal to number of specialists.

The range of the scores for each item is -1 to +1. A score of -1 indicates that the test is not congruent with the objectives or content. A score of 0 signifies that the degree of measurement is unclear. Lastly, the score of +1 indicates that the test is congruent with the objectives or content. If the obtained IOC value is higher than 0.5, the test or the particular item is considered acceptable.

Specifically, the interview questions and the questionnaire items were revised and adjusted in accordance with the suggestions of three experts in the field. Index of

Item-Objective Congruence Evaluation Results for the interview is shown in Appendix G and that of the questionnaire survey is shown in Appendix H.

3.5.2 Reliability of the Research Instrument

As J. Gliem and R. Glime (2003) explained, “When using Likert-type scales it is imperative to calculate and report Cronbach’s alpha coefficient for internal consistency reliability for any scales or subscales one may be using” (p. 88). For this reason, the researcher used Cronbach’s Alpha Coefficient to assess the reliability of a questionnaire survey. In this study, the coefficient alpha was 0.923.

3.5.3 Pilot Study

In addition, the questionnaire was first piloted with 20 graduates of Business English major prior to the actual administration of the questionnaire survey and thus the design of final questionnaire was based on their comments.

3.6 Data Analysis

3.6.1 Questionnaire Data Analysis

Section I: The data concerning the general information of student participants were calculated and presented in frequency and percentage.

Section II: The data gathered through the questionnaire were computed and analyzed with the help of the software package, SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences), which is used for statistical analysis in terms of mean descriptive statistics and standard deviation (SD). This is to measure the perceptions of students towards the actual university language-learning environment.

Section III: The data concerning students’ overall perception and satisfaction of the actual university language-learning environment was again calculated and presented in terms of mean scores and standard deviation.

According to Greasley (2008), in order to produce a summary of the information about items, such as rating scales, it is necessary to provide measures of central tendency and “the arithmetic mean is the most common measure of central tendency” (p. 10). Therefore, in this study, the arithmetic mean was used to find the

mean score of each questionnaire item. Based on a five-point rating scale, the interval data of response category is equal to 0.8 which can be summarized as in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3 Interpretation of Score Results

Scale	Score Range	Data Interpretation
5	4.21 - 5.00	Strongly Agree
4	3.41 – 4. 20	Agree
3	2.61 – 3.40	Moderately Agree
2	1.81 – 2.60	Disagree
1	1.00 – 1.80	Strongly Disagree

The mean score was used to interpret the average score of each questionnaire statement. The highest mean score, ranging from 4.21-5.00, indicates that the participant strongly agrees with the statement, whereas the lowest mean score, ranging from 1.00-1.80, indicates strong disagreement.

As indicated above, the construction of the questionnaire items was based on the interview results obtained from the teachers of the university under investigation. Thus, the average score of each questionnaire item can be used not only to see how students perceive their actual learning environment but also to analyze whether or not there is any considerable discrepancy or similarity between the ideal and the actual university learning environment, perceived by the teachers and experienced by the students respectively.

3.6.2 Interview Data Analysis

In analyzing the qualitative interview data, an interpretive approach was employed. As pointed out earlier, an interpretive study allows a researcher to gain a deeper insight into how the participants make meaning of a situation or phenomenon (Merriam, 2009; Schwandt, 1994, as cited in Andrade, 2009). Besides, this approach, as explained further by Mingers (2001), requires the interaction between the researcher and the participants and consequently permits the researcher to become a vehicle for revealing the reality constructed and perceived by the participants. That is,

the researcher plays an important role in understanding and interpreting how the participants make sense of their lives as well as their experience.

Due to the fact that the researcher's interpretation is of great importance in this study, the researcher needs to systematically and deliberately analyze the data gathered during the interviews. Fortunately, as the researcher of this study is a former undergraduate student at the university under investigation, she shares a similar background to those of the student participants. As a result, the researcher, to a certain degree, can take advantage of holding the insider's point of view which can help to better understand their perspectives and therefore avoid a false conclusion. Furthermore, the review of literature clearly provides the guidelines for the interview data analysis. In consequence of this, the researcher received great benefits from both reviewing the related literature in the previous chapter and being a former student of this university context. These two aspects serve as valuable tools and are thus essential for helping the researcher understand and interpret the data.

Furthermore, to ensure that everything said is preserved for accurate analysis, the choice was made to record the interviews. All the interview transcripts were carefully read and analyzed for the researcher to transpose the content into the appropriate predetermined categories. As for research question 1, the interview data were analyzed based on five main categories: language prominence at classroom level, language prominence at university level, teaching practices and learning activities, motivating and supportive classroom environment, and quality of teachers. The interview data derived from student participants' responses to research question 3 were analyzed conscientiously so that the impact of the actual university learning environment on students' English competence could be precisely discerned.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Chapter 4 reports the results of this research study including those obtained from a semi-structured interview as well as a questionnaire survey. First of all, the results of the interviews with the teachers from the Business English Department are reported. Then, SPSS program was used to analyze the data from the questionnaires, which were distributed to fourth-year Thai students majoring in Business English. Finally, the follow-up interview data from the student respondents were analyzed and are reported in the findings of the researcher.

4.1 Results of the Interviews with Teachers from Business English Department

This first section is aimed at reporting the interview results obtained from 10 Business English teachers regarding their perceptions of the ideal learning environment for the context of an international university in relation to foreign language learning (research question I).

In this section, the analyses of the interview data were based on five main categories comprising language prominence at classroom level, language prominence at university level, teaching practices and learning activities, motivating and supportive classroom environment, and quality of teachers. All of these can be described in the following sections:

4.1.1 Language Prominence at Classroom Level

In the interviews, all the teacher respondents reported that in order for the students to acquire a high level of English proficiency, English must be used not only as a medium of instruction but also as a medium of social communication. In this regard, the teachers further stated that in order to give their students maximum exposure to the target language, all the activities in the classroom, including informal face-to-face conversations, must be in fact carried out in English. Idealistically, the use of students' mother tongue in the classroom should be discouraged and minimized because excessive use of students' Thai L1 certainly deprives them of the chance of using English in real conversations.

To further emphasize this point of view, three respondents reinforced that so as to bring students to the highest level of English proficiency and thus have multiple competences in English, the learning of an L2 should follow the same path of learning an L1 through being exposed to extensive input and having lots of opportunities to produce output. More specifically, the respondents added that teachers are said to play a key role in creating English-rich learning environment as one of them explained:

It is our responsibilities to speak English with students first and also respond to students' Thai questions only in English. Doing so not only helps to create authentic English environment but also lets students automatically realize that they need to speak English.

At this point, it is reasonable to sum up that all the 10 teacher respondents expressed their concerns for encouraging the use of English as a medium of communication among students themselves as well as between teachers and students. It is necessary for students to be given the maximum real English exposure as frequently as possible when they are in the classroom. Interestingly, one of them even emphasized that it was favorable for an English program or an international school or university to enforce the "English-only policy" so as to establish a more conducive atmosphere for English language learning.

4.1.2 Language Prominence at University Level

All the teacher participants agreed on the same point that in order to help students become proficient in English and therefore have good communicative skills, students' English exposure must not be limited only to the classroom setting; it is for the environment outside the classroom to be conducted in a way conducive to English learning as well.

It was largely reported that an effective learning environment for an international university should basically consist of a large number of teachers and students from different nationalities because such an environment is believed to indirectly force students to use English in social conversations outside the classroom with their teachers and also with their classmates through working together on academic assignments. Besides, all reading materials, such as notices, billboards and posters, attached all around the campus must be written in English as well.

However, in relation to replicating a real English environment outside the classroom, a number of teacher respondents admitted that it was, to a certain degree, difficult to do so. Anyway, an alternative to solving this problem was further identified. Almost all the respondents agreed that teachers definitely play a significant role in helping students to have access to extensive input outside the classroom. To create more English learning opportunities, teachers need to make resources available for students by using English with them all the time.

For the purpose of creating a real English language environment, three respondents even suggested that students should be encouraged to be fully involved in the extra-curricular activities that enable them to participate in authentic communicative activities outside the academic arena. As a result, English is forcefully implemented to be used in natural circumstances; students can engage in totally natural and spontaneous conversations. In relation to this point, one of them shared:

I think the university should conduct more out-of-class English-related activities or occasions that encourage Thai students to spend time and work with others of different nationalities. This is to create a real English learning environment.

4.1.3 Teaching Practices and Learning Activities

All the participants reported that teaching practices should be conducted in a way actively involving students in the teaching and learning process. Creating an interactive classroom by asking students questions while teaching, conducting in-class activities, and asking them to express their own opinions or provide their own examples on the discussed topics appears to be an ideal style of effective teaching. In view of the fact that creating an interactive classroom experience is of the utmost importance, one teacher emphasized:

Involving students to participate actively in the class is very important as it not only increases their attention on the subject contents but also fosters the development of their English communicative skills.

Furthermore, when asked about the necessity of teaching English-related matters like English grammar, vocabulary, and some other aspects of the English language while teaching subject contents, all respondents reported that it is thought of as something that teachers actually should not overlook as it can help students to realize how to use the language correctly and appropriately in the real contexts. While three respondents strongly expressed that it is totally necessary to do so during the class hours, the rest revealed that the frequency of doing so depends on the nature of each subject.

In terms of learning activities, all the respondents asserted that it is of great necessity to provide students with a wide variety of learning activities such as class discussion, role play, individual and group project based assignments, presentation, and written assignment, to name a few. In addition, they all agreed that the activities must be carried out in a way engaging students in authentic and communicative situations. One teacher explained:

It is very important to use only authentic and communicative learning activities in order that students can put their knowledge acquired in the university into practice.

When asked whether or not it was acceptable for an international program to permit the use of students' mother tongue (Thai L1) in teaching academic content, all teachers expressed that Thai L1 in fact must be totally excluded from teaching academic content as each class normally consists of both Thai and foreign students. However, almost all of them accepted that judicious use of L1 in the classroom sometimes plays a positive role in teaching and learning process, but its usage should be allowed only in a very extreme case.

Another important point revealed by the teachers is related to the necessity of giving English-related feedback. All agreed that it is very crucial for teachers to show their concerns over students' English competence by giving them feedback on their performance because such feedback is undoubtedly viewed as a great input that helps them realize their strengths and weaknesses. All of them continued that giving feedback is viewed as an effective way to help students achieve English accuracy. In an attempt to underline the necessity of giving feedback, one of the teacher respondents reported:

Students would learn a lot by making mistakes and getting feedback. They will not know their level of English competence unless we give them feedback ... I think language correction is another job of teachers.

4.1.4 Motivating and Supportive Classroom Environment

According to the interview results, all the respondents agreed that it was the teachers' responsibility to establish and maintain their motivation and also create a supportive classroom environment in order to help students feel comfortable and have a positive attitude towards learning English. Encouraging students to think individually or as a group and motivating them to answer questions are what was mostly reported by the respondents as the ways to promote class participation. Motivating students to participate in class-activities was viewed as an effective way to help them fully engage in the English learning process. As one claimed:

Since Thai students are shy and passive, I need to motivate them to be actively involved in the teaching and learning process. I try to encourage them to be more confident with their own English competence and enjoy learning English in the classroom.

More than half of the respondents indicated that teaching style is another factor that plays a key role in creating and fostering a motivating teaching and learning atmosphere. This in turn is said to promote students' motivation to learn and consequently leads to successful learning outcomes. Aside from trying to encourage students to be actively involved in the teaching process, the way teachers interact with their students was also crucial for creating a supportive classroom for English learning. More specifically, providing students with only positive feedback like using only positive words and phrases or stating something negative in a positive manner was reported to be one of the major concerns that could make students feel relaxed and dare to use English in the classroom. As one explained:

Giving feedback is an art ... I've never laughed at my students' English mistakes; I just don't want them to feel embarrassed. I noticed that providing only good feedback can help students to have a positive attitude towards learning English and not be afraid of using it.

4.1.5 Quality of Teachers

This research has found that English proficiency and cultural understandings were the major advantages native-English speaking teachers have over their non-native counterparts since English is their mother tongue. Not surprisingly, all the participants viewed themselves as having less linguistic competence as compared to their native counterparts.

However, all the respondents did not think that they are inferior to their native counterparts in terms of English teaching since there are so many other aspects needed to be taken into account when considering qualified teachers of English. Speaking English with clear and correct pronunciation, being able to use English correctly in terms of grammar, having good English communicative skills, and trying

to learn new English-related knowledge all the time were reported to be major qualifications of qualified non-native English-speaking teachers.

Apart from attaining high level of English proficiency, having good communicative skills and mastering their subject matters, all respondents similarly posited other pertinent points to the issue of quality of teachers by claiming that good teachers need to be warm, accessible, caring, and making themselves available to students. All the respondents agreed that for an English-medium instruction program, giving attention to both students' English language and academic performance is of central interest. Teachers need to act as facilitators of language learning who always guide, suggest, and pay attention to students' English performance. All of these are reported to be some other basic qualifications of teachers which can help students become better foreign language learners. As one clarified:

It is impossible to teach students everything in the classroom. What we can do is to guide and suggest students on how to be successful language learners ... I always encourage my students to learn and use English outside the classroom.

In addition, all the teachers even expressed that non-native teachers, to a certain degree, perform better than native English-speaking teachers in some aspects as they have gone through the process of learning English as an additional language similar to their students. It was revealed that a non-native teacher is said to be “a role model” for students and living proof that being a successful language learner is achievable. As one of them asserted:

As a non-native teacher, I share the same background with my students. This can make me deeply and clearly understand English problems my students are encountering and therefore able to help them overcome their difficulties in English learning better than native teachers who have English as their first language.

4.2 Results of the Questionnaire Survey

In this section, the results of a questionnaire survey gathered from 175 fourth-year Thai students majoring in Business English that asks for their perceptions of the actual university learning environment in relation to foreign language learning (research question II) were computed and analyzed with the help of SPSS program.

Basically, the analyses of the questionnaire data can be divided into three subsections, including (1) personal information of the student participants, (2) the students' perceptions of the actual university language-learning environment, and (3) the students' overall perception and satisfaction of the university learning environment. It is noted that the construction of the questionnaire items was based on the interview results obtained from the teachers shown in the previous section.

4.2.1 Personal Information of the Student Participants

Most of the participants (69.1%) were aged 22 years. Of these 175 students, 137 participants were female (78.3%); 38 of them were male (21.7%). A larger number of female participants could be due to the fact that female students are fond of studying the language, as compared to males.

Furthermore, the majority of the student participants (64.6%) have never studied in an English-medium education system before going to an international university. Besides, while some of them (17.7%) have had the opportunities to study or take summer courses in English-speaking countries, a majority of them (81.7) have not. Demographic data of the student participants is provided in Appendix C.

4.2.2 Students' Perceptions of the Actual University Language-Learning Environment

This section reports the survey results concerning the students' perceptions of the actual university language-learning environment. The students were asked to rate their degree of agreement on a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree (#5) to strongly disagree (#1).

The data presented were based on the five main categories comprising language prominence at classroom level, language prominence at university level, teaching practices and learning activities, motivating and supportive classroom environment, and quality of teachers. In each category, the questionnaire items are presented in respective order from the highest mean scores to the lowest mean scores.

Table 4.1 Mean and Standard Deviation Regarding Language Prominence at Classroom Level

Item No.	Language Prominence (Classroom Level)	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1	In order to establish an English-rich classroom environment, my teachers always try to discourage and minimize the use of students' mother tongue in the classroom.	3.62	0.69	Agree
7	Overall, English is a major medium of communication in the classroom.	3.61	0.79	Agree
4	English is used not only as a medium of instruction but also as a medium of social communication.	3.49	0.87	Moderately Agree
2	Thai teachers always speak English with Thai students in all circumstances (e.g. during the class time, informal talks between Thai teachers and Thai students are always conducted in English).	3.38	0.73	Moderately Agree
6	The actual classroom environment encourages me to use English and thus fosters my English language learning.	3.38	0.81	Moderately Agree
5	I am always engaged in real English conversations when I am in the classroom.	3.01	0.86	Moderately Agree
3	I always speak English with my classmates.	2.49	0.63	Disagree

As seen in Table 4.1, the item that is of concern is item no. 3 as it obtained the lowest mean score which was calculated as 2.49. This indicated that most students disagree with the statement no. 3. It can be interpreted that students rarely use English with their classmates. On the other hand, the highest mean scores were shown in items no. 1 (3.62) and 7 (3.61) respectively. These revealed that teachers try to minimize the use of students' mother tongue in the classroom and that English is perceived as a major medium of communication in the classroom.

Table 4.2 Mean and Standard Deviation Regarding Language Prominence at University Level

Item No.	Language Prominence (University Level)	Mean	SD	Interpretation
3	The university consists of a large number of teachers and students from different nationalities.	4.13	0.67	Moderately Agree
2	The actual university environment encourages me to learn English outside the classroom.	3.18	0.86	Moderately Agree
1	The actual university environment replicates authentic English language environment.	3.15	0.93	Moderately Agree
4	Teachers always help students have extensive L2 input by always using English with students outside the classroom.	2.99	0.71	Moderately Agree
6	I am encouraged to become involved in extra-curricular activities which allow me to engage in authentic communicative activities.	2.77	0.77	Moderately Agree
8	I always spend time working on assignments/projects with classmates from different nationalities, which certainly forces me to engage in natural and spontaneous English conversations outside the classroom.	2.75	2.91	Moderately Agree
5	There are opportunities for me to practice practical and functional use of language for meaningful purposes outside the classroom.	2.59	0.75	Disagree
9	Overall, English is a major medium of communication outside the classroom.	2.59	0.62	Disagree
7	I have lots of foreign friends, which in turn forces me to use English outside the classroom.	2.57	0.83	Disagree

From the Table 4.2, questionnaire items no. 7, 5, and 9 are the three items having the lowest mean scores respectively. Noticeably, students were unlikely to have many foreign friends (2.57) despite the fact that the university consists of a number of people from different nationalities. Further, the researcher also found that English was not generally perceived by most of the students as a major medium of communication outside the classroom (2.59). That is why students reported having few opportunities to use the language for meaningful purposes outside the classroom (2.59).

From the positive view, a majority of student participants agreed on the point that the university consists of a large number of teachers and students from different nationalities as this statement obtained the highest mean score of 4.13.

Table 4.3 Mean and Standard Deviation Regarding Teaching Practices and Learning Activities

Item No.	Teaching Practices and Learning activities	Mean	SD	Interpretation
2	Instruction is all the time imparted in English, except for some courses that are designed to be conducted in Thai e.g. Translation).	4.21	0.80	Strongly Agree
1	The teaching is conducted in an interactive approach by giving students the opportunity to engage in the teaching and learning process.	3.78	0.76	Agree
3	There is a wide variety of learning activities	3.72	0.85	Agree
4	All the learning activities are authentic and they thus allow me to put my English knowledge into practice.	3.69	0.72	Agree
7	The learning activities used really help to develop my overall English competence.	3.66	0.81	Agree
6	The learning activities used really help to promote my English communication skills	3.55	0.74	Agree
5	Learning activities are interesting and thus make me feel motivated to make an effort in the learning process.	3.53	0.79	Agree
9	My teachers try to teach students English-related matters (e.g. some interesting sentence structures, useful vocabulary, any other useful English knowledge, etc.) while teaching academic contents.	3.49	0.84	Agree
8	I always get feedback on my English performance from my teachers.	3.21	0.83	Moderately Agree

As seen in Table 4.3, most students agreed that an instruction is always conducted in English as it earned the highest mean score (4.21). It was also seen that the actual teaching practices were conducted in an interactive approach (3.78). Besides, with the mean score of 3.72, it was found that a number of students reported having a wide variety of learning activities. However, receiving feedback on students' English performance gained the lowest mean score (3.21), followed by the frequency of the teachers' teaching English-related knowledge during class time (3.49).

Table 4.4 Mean and Standard Deviation Regarding Motivating and Supportive Classroom Environment

Item No.	Motivating and Supportive Classroom Environment	Mean	SD	Interpretation
8	Overall, my teachers try to maintain and establish a motivating and supportive classroom atmosphere for English learning.	3.88	3.77	Agree
7	I enjoy learning English when I am in the classroom.	3.75	0.72	Agree
1	My teachers always encouraged me to be an active learner of English while I am in the classroom.	3.70	0.71	Agree
5	In the classroom, I am always motivated to actively participate in the teaching and learning process.	3.67	0.78	Agree
2	The actual classroom environment is relaxed and therefore motivates me to use and learn English.	3.66	0.69	Agree
6	I am always encouraged to use English as much as possible when I am in the classroom.	3.60	3.90	Agree
3	The actual classroom environment helps to promote my confidence in using English.	3.54	0.79	Agree
4	I always receive only positive feedback on my English performance from my teachers.	3.46	0.81	Agree

Of these 8 questionnaire items, item no. 8 obtained the highest score with the mean of 3.88; this indicated that teachers try to maintain and establish a motivating and supportive classroom atmosphere for English learning. Moreover, the statement ranked the second place with the highest mean score goes to item no. 7 (3.75) meaning that students enjoy learning English in the classroom. On the other side, the two statements obtained the lowest mean scores go to item no. 4, “I always receive only positive feedback on my English performance from my teachers” (3.46) and item no. 3, “The actual classroom environment helps to promote my confidence in using English” (3.54).

As shown in Table 4.4, the highest mean score (no. 8) and the lowest mean score (no. 4) are not much different. The mean scores of all the items are in the same range of 3 ranging from 3.46-3.88. This implies that the student participants agree on the point that the actual classroom environment in relation to English language learning is generally perceived to be motivating and supportive.

Table 4.5 Mean and Standard Deviation Regarding Quality of Teachers

Item No.	Quality of Teachers	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1	My teachers are proficient in English.	4.29	0.73	Strongly Agree
3	My teachers are knowledgeable about the English language.	4.27	0.69	Strongly Agree
2	My teachers speak English with clear and accurate pronunciation.	4.07	0.80	Agree
9	My teachers are always accessible and available when I have problems with my learning.	3.85	0.78	Agree
10	My teachers always help me overcome difficulties in my English language learning.	3.77	0.77	Agree
4	My teachers are good at providing students with feedback on their English performance.	3.74	0.83	Agree
5	My teachers not only act as instructors but are also facilitators of language learning.	3.66	0.85	Agree
7	My teachers always encourage me to learn and use English outside the classroom.	3.37	0.85	Moderately Agree
8	My teachers always pay attention to students' English language performance.	3.28	0.80	Moderately Agree
6	My teachers always advise me learning strategies in how to successfully learn English outside the classroom.	3.27	0.75	Moderately Agree

The results in Table 4.5 show that teachers are largely reported to be proficient in English and also knowledgeable about the language as these two items gained the highest mean scores of 4.29 and 4.27 respectively. Yet, the item with the lowest mean scores was for statement no. 6 (3.27) as regards the frequency of teachers' advising students language learning strategies or how to successfully learn English outside the classroom, followed by no. 8 (3.28) related to attention teachers pay to students' English performance.

Although teachers are generally perceived as capable of English, they in practice appear to be unaware of their duty to take full responsibility for students' English language learning and development. These could possibly be seen as a hindrance of their students to fully acquire language skills and thus result in them having rather low performance in English.

4.2.3 Students' Overall Perception and Satisfaction of the University Learning Environment in Relation to English Language Learning

Table 4.6 Mean and Standard Deviation Regarding Students' Overall Perception and Satisfaction of the University Learning Environment

Item No.	Students' Overall Perception and Satisfaction	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1	The overall actual university learning environment of both inside and outside the classroom fosters my English language learning and development.	3.76	0.65	Agree
2	I am satisfied with the overall learning environment in relation to English language learning and competence.	3.83	0.71	Agree

As indicated in Table 4.6, the overall actual university learning environment of both inside and outside the classroom, as reported by 175 student participants, helps to foster their English language learning and development (3.76). Besides, with the mean score of 3.83, it can be interpreted that students are satisfied with the overall learning environment in relation to English language learning and competence.

4.3 Results of the Interviews with Students from Business English Department

This section highlights the interview results obtained from 15 selective fourth-year Thai students majoring in Business English. It is concerned with how the students view the influences of the actual learning environment on their English language learning and competence (research question III).

The students' interview results can be summarized into two categories. The major problem areas that were perceived to affect students' English learning and competence are first presented, followed by a report on the extent to which the actual university learning environment affects the students' English speaking, listening, reading, and writing competence.

4.3.1 Students' Major Concerns over the Actual Learning Problems in the Environment

The report on the unsupportive learning environment that affects students' English language learning and competence can be deliberately summarized into four major categories: (1) a lack of English exposure outside the classroom, (2) little opportunity for social English, (3) little English-related feedback from teachers, and (4) having few native English-speaking teachers. All of which could indirectly be regarded as the ideal language-learning environment perceived by the students.

4.3.1.1 A Lack of Enough English Exposure Outside the Classroom

At university level, all the students reported that they have little, or to some extent, no direct contact with the target language outside the classroom in spite of studying in an international university. English generally serves as a primary language in the classroom which is mainly used as a means to convey academic content and instructions. There was little opportunity to use English outside the classroom because English was not commonly used as a medium of communication outside the classroom. As reported, Thai still functioned as the primary language of everyday communication between Thai teachers and Thai students and also among the students themselves. Specifically, inadequate practice of English on a daily basis

was considered one of the major concerns reported by the students. As one of them said:

I rarely use English outside the classroom, or rather, never ... I think the overall learning atmosphere does not encourage me to use practical English. The curriculum here is good, but just learning all the subjects in English is not enough for achieving effective everyday communication skills.

Similar to the survey responses, many students reported that a large number of foreign students contribute to the unique and outstanding character of this university as compared to other Thai universities offering similar English programs. Nonetheless, despite the cultural diversity among the students, Thai still functions as a major language of communication because students of the same nationalities always group together. One student respondent provided attention-grabbing comment in relation to this issue:

I always use Thai because most of my friends are Thai. I have been here for 4 years, but I have very few foreign friends. I use English only when I am in the classroom as a language for study.

As indicated above, it could be summed up that the actual university atmosphere, especially the context outside the classroom, is not fully implemented in a way conducive to English learning and development since the exposure to English and the opportunity to use it are somewhat restricted only to the classroom setting.

4.3.1.2 Little Opportunity for Social English

Referring to the results obtained from the questionnaire survey, most of the student participants moderately agreed on the point that English is generally considered a major medium of communication when they are in the classroom. Nevertheless, as further revealed in the interviews, “English communication” in this case is somewhat confined to academic-related matters.

To be more precise, the respondents said that though English is the major language they are exposed to in the classroom, English communication in the classroom is reported to be mainly informative and purely related to academic topics. As revealed, a mere exposure to the language related to academic content is not sufficient for students to develop their social English, the skill necessary to operate effectively in the real world contexts. This kind of situation, together with the fact that Thai L1 is used as a major medium of communication outside the classroom, is said by almost all the respondents to impede the development of their practical English. In particular, one participant pointed out:

Listening to lectures and instructions, taking notes, reading English textbooks, writing assignments, and making oral presentations in English were the major ways I have been exposed to English. All of these are completely related to academic issues ... Don't ask me about colloquial English, slang, idioms – I know nothing.

Consistent with what is shown in the questionnaire survey, the vast majority of respondents in this study unveiled that although their teachers do a really good job in trying to minimize and discourage the use of students' mother tongue during the teaching and learning process, interpersonal communications between Thai teachers and Thai students are still usually conducted in their Thai L1. Sharing the same mother tongue with each other directly tempts them to automatically use Thai whenever possible.

Moreover, over half of the respondents added that the language used in the classroom setting is different from what is widely used in the real context. Teachers' instructional talks tend to be in full, formal, and complete sentences, whereas Real English is normally spoken in fast speed with lots of phrasal verbs, idioms, slang, natural pronunciations with contractions, etc. All of these were reported to be the major causes of students' inability to use social English effectively.

4.3.1.3 Little English-Related Feedback from Teachers

Strikingly, it was discovered that the majority of teachers, as reported by 12 student respondents, are prone to pay more attention to teaching academic content than to students' English performance. The following comment from one student clearly reflects this matter:

Most teachers in practice tend to give feedback on the point related to academic content. This can help me have a better understanding of the subject contents, but not that of English usage. I think it's better if students get more feedback on their English performance.

From the positive viewpoint, another three of the fifteen respondents reported that some teachers do a really good job in helping to improve students' English knowledge; some of them always give feedback on students' English as well as correct students' English pronunciation. These three students further emphasized that this really helps them have a better English performance. To represent this idea, one student revealed:

Some of my teachers pay great attention to students' English language performance. Some even prepare additional materials for helping to improve students' English grammar. It would be great if all teachers do it this way.

Remarkably, of these 15 students, only three of them stated that with little English-related feedback received from teachers, they can still be a good learner of English and are somewhat satisfied with their overall current English levels. However, a very interesting point is that these students identified their personal hard work and efforts as major factors contributing to their success in English language learning. As one said:

I always use online resources to correct my English grammar and try to learn new English-related knowledge all the time by watching YouTube videos, watching English movies, and reading English novels. I try to learn English on my own.

Above all, this indicated that both internal factors, namely personal efforts, and external factors, such as feedback from teachers, are believed to play an important role in helping students succeed in foreign language learning.

4.3.1.4 Having Few Native English-Speaking Teachers

In the interviews, all students expressed their concerns over the fact that there are a very small number of native English-speaking teachers despite being renowned as an English-medium university. All students, in consequence, complained about having limited direct contact with native speakers since the majority of teachers are Thai and other non-native speakers of English.

In their views, nonnative English-speaking teachers in practice seem to have less credibility and competence in the areas of the appropriateness of language use, linguistic competence, word choices, and English pronunciation, as compared to native English-speaking teachers or those who have English as their first language. However, none of the student participants showed strong dissatisfaction with studying with non-native teachers. This issue was emphasized when one of them said:

I enjoy being exposed to a variety of English accents, but I actually prefer studying English with native speakers – just to ensure that the input I get is correct in all aspects – or at least to get used to the ‘standard’ English accent.

More specifically, more than half of the students added another interesting point to this by claiming that studying with native speakers is believed to help them learn more about useful English expressions and phrases that are widely and frequently spoken in everyday situations which they might not be able to learn from non-native speakers of English. However, when it comes to the matter of

teaching academic subjects, all the participants agreed that native English-speaking teachers are not superior to their non-native counterparts; the two groups have an equal chance of success as good subject content teachers.

Concisely, the majority of the interview respondents agreed on the same point that it is not necessarily true that native English-speaking teachers are all the time considered better, but having more native teachers seems to be more of great value as they by nature appear to be more qualified than non-native speakers in terms of English language proficiency in particular. To conclude, none of the respondents expressed negative attitudes towards studying with non-native English speaking teachers; they just reported the need for more native teachers.

4.3.2 The Influences of the Actual University Learning Environment on the Development of Students' Four skills of English

This sub-section reports the students' perceptions of the extent to which the actual learning environment affects their four skills of English. The influences of the actual learning context on students' English speaking, listening, reading, and writing competence are presented as follows:

4.3.2.1 English Speaking Skill

When asked about the improvement of their English speaking skill, all the respondents expressed that they feel much more confident when interacting with others in English. On the contrary, they in the past tried to avoid speaking English because they just simply did not know how to express themselves in English.

However, in spite of having much more progress in English speaking, a significant number of them admitted that their speaking skill was still not proficient, especially when it comes to unprepared situations. As reported, their inability to use the language professionally and fluently in natural circumstances could arise from the fact that their English speaking practices are heavily done in the form of prepared presentations. That is, a lack of enough opportunities to fully engage in authentic communicative situations is a major cause of the students' inability to effectively put their English knowledge into practice. This claim was strengthened by the following comment revealed by one of the students:

I am quite confident when making oral presentations in front of the class because I have prepared it ahead of time, but I am a bit stunned and quite excited when I am asked to speak English abruptly.

In addition, nearly half of the respondents admitted that they do not have much confidence when speaking English with native speakers. They are somewhat confident when interacting with other non-native speakers. It was revealed that a lack of confidence to interact with native speakers is probably due to having less direct contact with them.

Even though all the respondents acknowledged having more confidence in speaking English, three of them perceived that their current spoken English is rather unacceptable for international undergraduate level as one of the students emphasized:

Everyone expects that students of international programs must have very strong command of English and be able to speak English fluently, but in reality, this is not always the case ... I still speak English with lots of grammatical mistakes.

4.3.2.2 English Listening Skill

Among the four skills of English, a majority of the 15 students felt that their listening skill had improved the most. As revealed, their strong progress in listening demonstrated their rich experience in listening to lectures given by teachers of different nationalities. As one student illustrated:

Now I can understand a variety of English accents in which I found it difficult to comprehend in the past – Indian English, Chinese English, Burmese English – all these are not difficult for me anymore.

However, even though all respondents reported their progress in English listening ability, a number of them said that they at times have difficulty fully understanding what is naturally said in real-life conversations. The students attributed this English listening problem to the teachers' unnatural rate of speech which is somewhat slower than the natural rate of speech spoken in everyday conversations. This implies that listening to the lectures is, to a certain degree, the major way students are given to practicing their English listening skill. The students further added that they find it somewhat easier to understand what non-native speakers say as compared with what is naturally spoken by native speakers of English. When this is the case, one student remarked:

I find it hard to catch what is naturally said in the real contexts, like what the native speakers are saying in English TV, news, movies and talk shows. I think that's because I'm used to the style of my teacher talk – slow speed with complete sentences, formal words, and long pauses between utterances.

4.3.2.3 English Reading Skill

With regard to English reading competence, all students observed that their reading ability is getting much better after enrolling in an English-medium education system. Seemingly, their better performance in English reading, as reported by all the students, can be ascribed to the fact that they need to read lots of the textbooks and handouts which are all in the English language. As revealed, reading all the materials in English helps to expand their English vocabulary knowledge and improve their grammar. A number of them also reported that they can read faster and get to the main point easier than ever before. As one of them shared:

Studying in an international program directly forces me to read everything in English. If you want to pass the exam, you have to read and read. That's why I think I'm a good English reader, but not a good English speaker.

However, even if getting better at reading competence, nearly half of the participants emphasized that they still lack some reading skills necessary to fully comprehend some types of English texts. They pointed out that they have no problems with reading English textbooks or articles related to their fields of study. Yet, when it comes to texts interacting among speakers of English, including those appearing on Facebook page or online blog, they admitted that they at times find it somewhat difficult to fully understand the content. Precisely, a lack of adequate English vocabulary, including slang and idioms, is considered the major cause of this problem. As one of them noted:

I admit that I find it a bit hard to read some types of English texts comfortably since I always come across a bunch of unknown words, idioms, slang, and phrasal verbs that are not used in academic textbooks.

4.3.2.4 English Writing Skill

All 15 student respondents reported that they have progress in English writing, but only three of them emphasized that their English writing skill has been improved enormously and that they satisfied with their current writing performance. As revealed in the interviews, more than two-thirds of the respondents perceived writing skill as their most serious English language competence problem.

The major English writing problems were reported to be having poor English grammar and having inadequate vocabulary and phrases necessary for effective writing. It was highlighted by almost all the respondents that these factors have so far been considered the major causes of their poor English writing performance that also make it difficult for them to compose a good English essay within a given limited time. As one of them remarked:

For me, it is very difficult to write in a professional manner. I practice lots of English writing, but that my writing is still full of grammatical mistakes – grammar is a pain. You know, it really takes me a lot of time to complete each of my written assignments.

Likewise, another added:

I'm getting much better at English writing, but it is still my worst English skill. I think my problem is not about how to generate the ideas, but how to express my ideas clearly and accurately in English.

Three out of 15 respondents attributed another cause of their poor writing performance to getting little feedback on their writing from teachers. Interestingly, some students expressed that each teacher normally prefers different styles of writing. Therefore, receiving feedback from teachers is believed to be of great importance as it helps them to realize their weaknesses and thus to minimize their errors in the next written assignments. To stress this point of view, one student suggested:

I just hope to get more comments on my papers. I want my teachers to specifically point out my writing problems and also offer more suggestions for the improvement.

4.4 Conclusion of the Findings

In order to create an effective foreign language learning environment, the teachers perceived their responsibilities for providing students with maximum English exposure both inside and outside the classroom. Other useful sources of successful foreign language learning are reported to be using interactive teaching technique with various types of authentic and communicative learning activities. Furthermore, establishing a motivating and supportive classroom environment, having a very good command of English, as well as placing an emphasis on both students' academic outcomes and language performance are considered other major qualifications of English-medium instruction program teachers.

In contrast, having limited exposure to English outside the classroom, being exposed to little social English, getting little English-related feedback, and having few native English teachers were considered to be the actual learning problems in the environment, which the students felt, needed correction. Overall, though getting better at all the four language skills after enrolling in an English-medium education system, a number of students are currently having difficulty in using English; writing and grammar were reported to be the most serious language problems, whereas English listening is the skill that the students felt, had the most improvement. The analyses of some major findings are further described in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

In this chapter, a discussion of the findings is first presented, followed by conclusions and some useful implications derived from the analyses of the results. Limitations of the study and recommendations for future research opportunities are also presented in this last chapter.

5.1 Discussion of the Findings

This section presents a discussion vis-à-vis the analyses of the questionnaires and the interviews. Based on the research results presented in Chapter 4, some interesting issues that are worthy of attention are discussed as follows:

5.1.1 Language Prominence in the Actual Classroom and its Influence on Students' English Competence

This sub-section discusses the inconsistency in the responses of the teachers and the students regarding the role and degree of English language prominence at classroom level. Also, the extent to which the actual role and degree of language prominence in the classroom affects students' English competence is discussed.

Even though English is idealistically perceived by all the teacher respondents as the language of informal communications in the classroom, the majority of students revealed that they, in reality, rarely use English in informal conversations. This surely leads to students having difficulty communicating in English socially. Such findings are in accordance with what Ibrahim (2001) found in his study that typical classroom environment of an English medium instruction program typically provides students only with a formal register of language since the purpose of communication is mainly informative and the topics to be discussed are mainly related to academic matters.

That is to say, students are merely expected to comprehend English textbooks and handouts, understand lectures, take notes, and ask or answer some academic questions.

Considering the chosen university context, Thai teachers and Thai students are in the majority. Regarding this, sharing the same mother tongue definitely results in them ending up using Thai with each other whenever possible, especially when it comes to interpersonal communications. That is why English is regarded as the major language that the students are exposed to when they are in the classroom, but the language used is still confined to the academic-related topics. This circumstance is said to impede the development of students' practical English.

The students' responses in this study regarding their rather low performance in natural English communicative competence align with those revealed by Maleki and Zangani (2007), Ozsevik (2010), Rabab'ah (2002), and Wang (2009). All these studies indicated that one of the biggest English problems confronting learners of English is their inability to communicate professionally and fluently in natural English.

5.1.2 English Language Prominence at the International English-Medium University in Thailand

Another major issue is to do with the degree of language prominence at university level. As presented in chapter 4, there is a marked contrast between the ideal degree of English exposure outside the classroom perceived by the teachers and the actual one experienced by the students.

While the teachers believed that English must be commonly used as the major medium of communication outside the classroom, the vast majority of student participants, on the other hand, revealed that they are mostly exposed to English only in the classroom in spite of studying at an international English-medium university.

The view of the teacher participants correspond to the findings of earlier research (Ellis, 2003; Gass & Mackey, 2007; Krashen, 1985) suggesting that it is very necessary to provide students with ample opportunities to have access to maximum English exposure as frequently as possible. Obviously, this notion reflects the fact that the way we learn a foreign language, to a certain degree, should be similar to the way we learn our native language.

Apart from being exposed to extensive input, the teachers said that having ample opportunities to produce output in meaningful and authentic communicative situations is also of great importance and necessity. Similarly, this statement was previously mentioned by Hedge (2000) and Swain (1985, as cited in Wang & Castro, 2010) who described that having opportunities to produce meaningful output plays a significant role in the process of foreign language learning. Up to this point, it can be concluded that both receptive and productive language skills need to be equally developed as they are both important for effective communication.

In relation to the students' point of view, the issue regarding EFL students' inadequate practices on English was largely stressed by a number of scholars (Khamkhien, 2010; Oxford University Press ELT, 2011; Punthumasen, 2007; Wiriyachitra, 2002). This is certainly due to the fact that the English learning taking place in a foreign language context was mostly limited only to classroom settings. Although all education institutions in Thailand are aware of the importance of English as a world language, the school or university learning environment, in fact, does not facilitate students to practice their English in daily lives. In this regard, it is reasonable to argue that having insufficient opportunities to use English outside the classroom has been so far counted as one of the major causes of Thai students' low performance in English.

More interestingly, though the survey results revealed that the chosen university consists of a number of teachers and students from different nationalities, Thai L1 is still functioned as a major language that the students use to communicate with others. As a former undergraduate student of this university, the researcher attributes the causes of this low level of English language prominence, especially in the extracurricular activities, to a lack of strong policy to enforce the use of English at all levels as well as a lack of encouragement to use English outside the classroom. This certainly contributes to students having less chance of exposure to real English.

5.1.3 The Impact of the Actual Teaching Practices and Learning

Activities on Students' English Competence

Though there was no major difference between the ideal and the actual teaching practices and learning activities, the students are still not proficient in English. This implies that a mere exposure to effective teaching practices and learning activities does not guarantee students' success in foreign language learning.

The results with regard to the effective teaching practices obtained in this study align with what was previously described by Wang (2009) and Wirth and Perkins (2008) and. All these studies demonstrated that an interactive approach that gives students opportunities to participate in the teaching and learning process is widely perceived as an ideal teaching practice as it allows students to develop their English communicative skills.

The teachers' responses with respect to the necessity of creating a wide variety of authentic learning activities were also in line with what had been expressed by Ibrahim (2001) and Ozverir and Herrington (2011). Undoubtedly, various kinds of authentic communicative tasks must be carried out on account of the fact that they not only provide students with significant opportunities for language development but also help them to operate effectively in the real world context. As Ozverir and Herrington (2011) clarified, assigning tasks that are authentic and challenging allows students to gain real-life experiences through accessing the authentic use of the target language. Consequently, students are able to apply the skills they gain in the classroom in real-life contexts.

Although a number of student participants agreed that they are exposed to an interactive way of teaching and a wide variety of authentic learning activities, they still reported having difficulty using English in some aspects. This indicates that providing students with only a variety of authentic learning activities does not necessarily guarantee students' success in foreign language learning. According to Ellis (2003), mastering a foreign language cannot rely on any single factor. Other crucial factors, such as language prominence, quality of teachers, and classroom atmosphere, definitely contribute to the success in foreign language learning as well. Hence, it is essential to take into consideration other sources of language learning in order to fully promote students' language learning outcomes.

5.1.4 Teachers' Inability to Perform their Perceived Duty in the Actual Practice

The fourth interesting outcome of this study pertains to the responsibility of English-medium instruction program's teachers. The findings showed that the teachers' responses regarding their perceived duty are inconsistent with their actual practice reported by the students in some aspects. The conflicts between perceived duty and actual practice were reported to be one of the major causes of students' inability to attain high English proficiency.

This study demonstrated that the teachers acknowledged their responsibilities for providing students with English-related feedback and having an emphasis on both students' academic outcomes and language performance. In the interviews, the teachers believed that giving meaningful and positive feedback was of paramount importance in the process of foreign language learning because it helped students achieve English accuracy and realize their own strengths and weaknesses. This similar point was also reported by Gass and Mackey (2007), Mackey (1999), and Pica et al. (1996). Giving feedback is therefore considered another contributing factor in developing students' English proficiency.

Yet, the majority of students reported that teachers, in fact, are likely to place an emphasis on students' academic-related achievement, rather than students' English language performance. Both students' interview and questionnaire responses show that the students do not receive much English-related feedback from their teachers; feedback is normally given on the point related to academic content. Obviously, this can help the students to have a better understanding of the subject content, but not the English language usage itself.

The findings are similar to those found in the earlier work of Uys et al. (2007) stating that though a number of English-medium instruction's teachers are aware of their responsibility to help students acquire language skills in the subject content classroom, they in reality are likely to be unaware of this task and fail to perform this duty in their actual practice. The results were also confirmed in Costa and Coleman's (2012) study indicating that a number of universities in Italy that provide English-taught Programs (ETPs) place great emphasis on content subjects over language, contributing to students having rather low performance in English. Clearly, all these

findings stress the need for improving the quality of an English-medium education system. So as to help students attain high level of English proficiency, more attention should be paid to the issue of the quality and responsibility of teachers since the teacher is considered the key determinant of students' language learning outcomes (Punthumasen, 2007; Uys et al., 2007).

It is possible that more focus on the subject content over language could probably be due to limited hours of instruction per week which might not be sufficient for the teachers to equally focus on both students' academic and language achievement. Obviously, paying little attention to the development of students' English performance could result in students having difficulty using English accurately, thereby being unable to attain high levels of English proficiency despite studying in English-medium instruction programs.

5.1.5 Thai Students' Major English Problems

This section highlights the impacts of the actual university learning environment on students' four skills of English by emphasizing the skills that were largely reported to be the students' most serious language problems.

In this study, grammatical and writing problems were reported to be the most difficult English language problems the students are currently facing. Remarkably, the findings of this study coincide with those found in the studies of Degang (2010), Pawapatcharaudom (2007), Prapphal (2003), and Wongsothorn (1996). Very interestingly, despite being conducted over different years, the results pertaining to Thai students' poor performance in English writing and grammar remain unchanged. It can be deduced that English accuracy or linguistic competence has so far been the major English problem faced by Thai students.

In the words of Hedge (2000), "Linguistic competence is a fundamental component of communicative language ability" (p. 61). Therefore, ensuring students' understanding of how language works as a system must be one of the foremost concerns in the area of foreign language teaching and learning (Hedge, 2000). With the findings that large numbers of Thai students have rather low levels of English accuracy, training and practice on students' English writing skills and grammatical

knowledge are therefore urgently required. This is believed to help Thai students communicate in English more intelligibly and professionally.

5.1.6 The Analyses of the Students' Overall English Skills in Relation to the University's Environmental Influences.

Regarding the students' perceptions of the university's environmental influences on their overall English competence, English listening was reported by most of the students to be the most improved skill.

The results obtained from this study regarding the students' overall English language competence are virtually similar to those from Chang's (2010) and Degang's (2010) studies. Most of the students agreed that they are making much progress with their listening skill after attending English-medium instruction programs. These might be because listening is the skill most frequently used in the class through listening to the English lectures and instructions. However, despite getting much better at listening, the students admitted that they still have English listening problems.

In contributing to this claim, listening problems revealed by the student participants were consistent with those reported by Thai undergraduates of an English program in the study of Pawapatcharandom (2007). Specifically, a significant number of English program students have trouble understanding real English naturally spoken by native speakers at normal speed. Such findings could be attributed to the fact that Thai students obviously have little chance of engaging in real English listening situations since the majority of teachers and students are Thai. As revealed in this study, having less direct contact with native English speakers is another cause of these students' English listening problem. This implies that exposing students to real-life listening situations is needed; an alternative to this could be incorporating real English listening tasks in the teaching and learning process. This is to help Thai students become familiar with natural English spoken in real situations, thereby overcoming their English listening problems.

5.1.7 Another Major Source of Language Learning Success

Even though the emphasis of this study is on examining the influences of the external factor, namely learning environment on students' English competence, the students' interview results showed that the improvement in their English competence are partly affected by their internal factors.

As identified in the literature, internal factors are also of great influence in helping students become better language learners. It is therefore not surprising that some of this study's participants partly ascribed their success in language learning to their internal factors. Evidently, these results are in line with those stated by a number of scholars (Ellis, 2003; Gardner, 1985; Krashen, 1981; Shoebottom, 2011) discussed earlier in Chapter 2 claiming that in addition to external factors, the process of learning a foreign language is also crucially affected by internal factors such as learners' motivation and their own personalities. For example, extroverted students with an outgoing personality normally have little anxiety and thus learn faster than introverted students who are less likely to seek out opportunities to practice the foreign language. This study confirms that an internal factor is another major source of successful language learning.

5.2 Conclusions

This study was undertaken to examine the ideal and the actual university learning environment and to investigate the actual environmental influence on the students' English language competence. This is to understand why a number of Thai university students of English-medium instruction programs are still unable to attain high levels of English proficiency despite learning in an educational system, where the medium of instruction is English.

With the use of a semi-structured interview and a questionnaire, the researcher has found that there are some discrepancies between the ideal learning environment perceived by the teachers and the actual learning environment experienced by the students. The major differences between the teachers' and the students' responses that are worthy of attention are related to the nature and amount of English exposure as well as the responsibility of the English-medium instruction program's teachers.

In spite of studying at an international English-medium university, the students reported that they have limited exposure to English outside the classroom and also have little direct contact with real English naturally spoken in everyday situations since English communication is mainly informative and purely related to academic topics. Besides, teachers in reality are likely to place more emphasis on teaching academic content than on students' English language performance. These discrepancies between the ideal and the actual learning environment are certainly counted as the major causes of the students' inability to use English effectively. Moreover, the analyses show that the students are unable to attain high levels of English proficiency despite engaging in an English-medium education system. The most difficult language problems are those of English writing and grammar, which have so far been considered the major English problems faced by students of both Thai and English-medium instruction programs.

This implies that there is an urgent need for the improvement in the actual university learning environment in order to help Thai students, particularly those of English-medium instruction programs, become better language users. Improving the learning environment indeed helps to consolidate Thai students' English skills as well as train them for maximum language proficiency. Regarding this, such analyses could be served as guidelines for institutions to improve the teaching and learning environment for successful foreign language learning. Derived from the analyses of the results, the implications of this study are described in detail in the following section.

5.3 Implications of the Study

This section details the valuable implications and key information which could be used as the strategies or guidelines for the improvement of the English language teaching and learning environment. These implications are believed to result in enhancing Thai students' English competences and thus bringing them to the highest level of English proficiency, the skill needed to successfully work in such a competitive market.

This research highlights some major factors that appear to hinder students' English learning process and development. The vast majority of students pointed out that despite studying in an international university, they are mainly exposed to English only in the classroom as a language for delivering content matters and instructions. In this regard, the first implication of this study is that students must be given ample opportunities to be exposed to real English as much as possible when they are both inside and outside the classroom.

In the classroom setting, aside from using English as a medium of general instruction, social interactions should be conducted in English as well in order for the students to be exposed to a variety of English usage and thus have multiple competences in the language. In a nutshell, giving students opportunities to continually practice social English must be the part of the classroom procedure as it plays a key role in helping them operate effectively in the real world contexts.

Besides, as the university under investigation is an international English-medium university, the use of English should not be limited only to the classroom context. It is crucial that in order to replicate an English language environment, all the activities should be conducted in English. For a variety of practical reasons, the use of English should be enforced at all levels by making English a part of students' daily lives. More specifically, it seems favorable to conduct more extra-curricular programs. This is to encourage natural and spontaneous interactions among students of different nationalities in order to help them develop their practical English outside the classroom.

Furthermore, given that language used in the classroom setting through teaching is, to a large degree, different from what is naturally used in the real context, a more real communicative environment therefore needs to be developed as it enables students to be fully immersed in the English language. With a focus on developing students' practical English competence, it is worthy of implementing the English-only policy between teachers and students, or to some extent, among students themselves; otherwise, students will definitely end up using Thai with one another and thus lessen their chance of practicing functional use of the language. This is especially significant when English is not used as a primary language in the society at large.

In short, an abundance of exposure to English in its natural use must be a top priority as it allows students to practice authentic, practical, and functional use of language for meaningful purposes. It is suggested that teachers help EFL students to have extensive input by maximizing the use of natural English inside the classroom as well as creating opportunities for students to engage in real English situations outside the classroom.

In addition, as an internal factor is another source of successful language learning, teachers need to acknowledge these individual differences and examine which teaching approach best suits each student or each class. Using the right approach certainly facilitates students' language learning process as it leads to a reduction in anxiety, resulting in positive language learning outcomes.

Another vital issue needed to be taken into consideration is that apart from mainly concentrating on students' academic outcomes, very close and full attention should be paid to their actual English performance. It is urgent that special attention be paid to enhancing students' English proficiency since a number of students lay more emphasis on the difficulty of using the language accurately. Accordingly, focusing on both students' academic achievement and language competence must be equally perceived as the foremost concerns.

Hence, it is imperative that teachers not merely act as instructors or lecturers but also facilitators who always help and support students' English language learning and development. This can be done by paying greater attention to students' language by giving them more feedback on their English usage, teaching them English-related knowledge as frequently as possible as well as advising them language learning strategies. Doing so is believed to result in them being able to use the language more accurately and professionally.

Notably, even though it is somewhat impossible to give students feedback or correct their mistakes all the time, ignoring students' mistakes might mislead them to believe that it does not matter to use inaccurate English as long as what they produce is comprehensible. Therefore, monitoring them and giving feedback is considered an essential part of foreign language learning.

Apparently, grammatical and writing skills are the major English-related problems being faced by a number of students. This indicates that much more writing trainings and practices are needed in order to help students perform a writing skill in a more professional manner. On this basis, it is worth offering students non-credit tutorial courses in the hope of helping them overcome difficulties with their English writing. In such a way, students would be trained to become more professional in English writing and knowledgeable about grammar.

The last implication is related to the proportion of native English-speaking teachers to non-native English speaking teachers. Although the issue regarding the exact proportion of native to non-native English-speaking teachers remains unanswered, a number of student respondents expressed their need for more native English-speaking teachers. Having more native teachers would be advantageous to not only students but also to the university's reputation as one of the leading international universities in Thailand.

Instead of hiring more native English-speaking teachers, another alternative is that learning activities might be designed in such a way that it helps students to become familiar with the language naturally spoken by native speakers of English as students revealed that they still have problems with listening to native speakers or those spoken in real context. Even though it is a good idea to expose students to a variety of English used by people of different nationalities, exposing them to real natural English used by native speakers should not be overlooked.

5.4 Limitations of the Study

There are some certain limitations that make the present study unable to yet provide a full picture of the actual Thai university learning environment as well as its influences on Thai students' English language competence. In this study, certain limitations can be described as follows:

The first limitation is related to the research site. Obviously, the research site of this study is specific to only one study context; a private international university in Thailand. As such, it cannot be generalized that the research findings represent the actual university teaching and learning environment of all higher education

institutions in Thailand. This implies that the findings of the same theme in other Thai universities offering similar English-medium instruction programs may significantly yield different results.

Another limitation pertains to research participants. It should be noted that those who participated in the current study were teachers and students of the Business English department only; they do not represent all those in the university. That is, other various groups of teachers and students, i.e., those from other majors, departments and faculties within the considered university are excluded. Hence, it is said that conducting the research with only one specific university context and one group of research participants, to some degree, might not be large enough to draw general conclusions.

Furthermore, the analysis of data was somewhat limited to only the perceptions of the fourth-year undergraduate Thai students majoring in Business English. From this perspective, the findings might have yielded more reliable results if students of other year levels and also of different nationalities were chosen to play a part in this study.

The last limitation can be attributed to the data collection procedure. Remarkably, the study might have provided a better understanding of the actual university learning environment if observation was included. Using data from multiple sources including those obtained from observing the actual learning environment might help to generate a broader perspective on the area of inquiry and thus benefit the overall results of this study.

5.5 Recommendations for Future Research

It was noticeable that many relevant questions remain unanswered; they could potentially be served as interesting issues for further related research studies. Largely based on those limitations discussed earlier, some recommendations for future research prospects can be summarized as follows:

First of all, as indicated above, the research site of this study represents only one private English-medium university in Thailand. What this means is that the findings derived from this study, to some extent, might not be able to directly be

applied elsewhere. Further research is thus needed to be conducted with some other institutions that offer English-medium instruction programs. That is, the exploration of the same theme in other institutional settings is recommended so as to generalize the conclusion about the effectiveness of English language learning environments at Thai higher education institutions.

Second, as the research participants of the present study were somewhat confined to only teachers and students of Business English department, the need to further explore other groups of participants is suggested. To get a broader perspective, a replication of this study could be further conducted with teachers and students of other departments and faculties as it can help to provide a wide spectrum of opinions as well as generate better knowledge of the areas of inquiry. Certainly, the feedback obtained can result in the improvement in the quality of the teaching and learning environment. If the findings of further studies appear similar to those of the present study, the conclusion is thus said to be more generalized. Future studies can be conducted on a wider or larger scale in order to obtain more accurate results, than what has been found in this research.

Obviously, this study only focuses on examining Thai students' perceptions of the actual learning environment; the perceptions of foreign students are totally excluded. Therefore, it would be worthwhile for further study to be conducted with foreign students. This would result in gaining various perspectives and more insightful ideas regarding the actual learning environments of the university under investigation.

Besides, in order to extend the analyses as well as confirm the findings of this study, conducting further research with Thai graduates of international programs or employers of graduates from international programs is also recommended. At this point, their answers can definitely offer invaluable information as to whether graduates can put their knowledge of English acquired in the universities into practice. For instance, to examine whether or not they possess sufficient English language skills for successfully working in today's globalized market or pursuing higher education. If not, what English-related problems they perceive as a hindrance to both their academic and career success.

In addition, as the findings of this study revealed that there are inconsistencies in the ideal learning environment perceived by teachers and the actual one experienced by students, an investigation of further study should be extended to find out the reasons for these discrepancies. Certainly, this can bring further information into the subjects of investigation as it could help reveal the reasons for teachers' inability to do so. It is obvious that such findings could help generate useful strategies in overcoming the difficulties in doing so.

Finally, as the major observed variables in this study are exclusively concerned with external factors; that is, the learning environments of the considered university, it is recommended that future research intensify the focus on some other factors internal to the students. Doing so is believed to provide useful guidelines for the university in developing the English teaching and learning process.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
ACADEMIC ENGLISH COURSE DESCRIPTION

Academic English Course Description

Academic English Course	Course Description
English I	Lower intermediate academic English, with activities to foster reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills in English through communicative activities in a meaningful academic context.
English II	Intermediate academic English, reinforcing fluency and grammar with task-driven oral and writing exercises, developing vocabulary and sentence writing skills with combined reading comprehension, exercises and writing practices.
English III	Advanced English for academic and career purposes, emphasizing organization of ideas and clarity of expression and understanding.
English IV	Advanced English for academic and career purposes, emphasizing critical and analytical skills and formulating logical and coherent opinions.

Source: Institute for English Language Education (IELE), 2013

APPENDIX B

DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS ENGLISH: MAJOR REQUIRED AND MAJOR ELECTIVE COURSES

Department of Business English: Major Required Courses

Major Required Courses	
Listening and Speaking	Reading in Business English
Business Communication in English I	Reading in English Newspapers
Business Communication in English II	Critical and Analytical Reading
Translation: English-Thai	Business Conversation
Translation: Thai-English	Public Speaking in English
Understanding, Note-taking and Summarizing	Introduction to Business Research
	Writing

Department of Business English: Major Elective Courses

Major Elective Courses	
English Pronunciation I	Article Writing
English Pronunciation II	English for Tourism
English for International Trade	English for Hotels
Academic Writing	English for Property Development
Introduction to Public Relations Writing	English for Office Management
English for Music Business	English for Airline Business
Reading Thai Literary Works in English	Aspects of American Culture

Source: Assumption University, 2013

APPENDIX C
DEMOGRAPHIC DATA OF THE STUDENT PARTICIPANTS

Demographic Data of the Student Participants

Demographic Data		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	21	35	20.0
	22	121	69.1
	23	11	6.3
	24	4	2.3
	25	4	2.3
Gender	Male	38	21.7
	Female	137	78.3
Education Background			
- Have you studied in an English-medium education system before going to the university?	Yes	61	34.9
	No	113	64.6
	N/A	1	0.6
- Have you studied in any English-speaking country?	Yes	31	17.7
	No	143	81.7
	N/A	1	0.6

APPENDIX D
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

Interview Questions for Teachers (Research Question I)

As a semi-structure interview is employed, the interviewer can ask some additional questions beyond the items listed below. That is to say, additional questions can be immediately formed at hand based on the responses received from the particular interviewees.

1. Language Prominence at Classroom Level

1.1 How could you create a language-rich classroom environment in order to provide students with high opportunities for English L2 input and output in the classroom?

1.1.1 Is English used by a teacher as the medium of both instruction and social communication?

1.1.2 To what extent is student's Thai L1 allowed in the classroom?

1.1.3 Is English used in an interaction with both peers and teachers to create a more language-rich environment?

1.2 In your view, what are the effective ways to help students have multiple competences in English? (e.g., formal and informal register of language, etc.)

1.3 Given that Thai students have few opportunities to use English in the wider society, how could you help them overcome this lack of English exposure and thus enhance their English skills?

1.3.1 How to help students achieve English accuracy (linguistic competence), fluency (e.g. communicative competence), and other functional domains in the classroom?

2. Teaching Practices and Learning Activities

2.1 How could you define the major goals or purposes of an effective international program? (e.g. to produce individuals who are knowledgeable about both academic content and language, are able to effectively put their knowledge into practice, are able to use English with confidence, etc.)

2.2 Could you describe the ideal teaching styles for an international program? (e.g. teaching explicit grammar in class or letting students acquire on their own, teaching vocabulary items along with teaching subject content, making interaction with students in English while teaching, etc.)

2.3 Is it acceptable for an international program to permit the use of students' mother tongue (Thai L1) in teaching academic content? Why / Why not?

2.4 Do you find it necessary to provide students with feedback and correction on their English language errors, or is it better to let them acquire it on their own? Why?

2.5 What kinds of activities do you find essential for helping students develop all the English skills and become proficient in the language? (e.g. in-class activities/ out-of-class assignments, etc.)

2.6 What is your opinion about the incorporation of the use of authentic materials and tasks in the classroom?

3. A Motivating and Supportive Classroom Environment

3.1 Could you describe what you think the ideal motivating and supportive classroom environment in relation to English language learning should be like?

3.2 In your view, how can teachers help motivate and support students' English language learning in the classroom? (e.g. teaching styles, kinds of activities, teacher's communicative styles and behaviors.)

4. Quality of Teachers

4.1 Could you define the characteristics of effective English-medium instruction teachers in relation to enhancing students' English competence? (e.g. being knowledgeable about both subject content and language, teaching language learning strategies to students, putting emphasis on both students' language and academic performance, providing feedback on students' English language, exposing students to an L2 as much as possible, encouraging students to use English, etc.)

4.2 In your opinion, what is a qualified nonnative-speaking-English teacher like? (e.g., accent, pronunciation, grammar, being able to use English in a variety of ways, etc.)

4.3 In your view, what are the benefits students receive from learning English with nonnative-speaking-English teachers as compared to native-English-speaking teachers?

4.4 In your opinion, how can good teachers help students overcome difficulties they encounter in their English learning?

5. Language Prominence at University Level

5.1 In your view, what is the learning environment of an international university like?

5.2 How could the (1) university and (2) teachers help students of an international university develop English skills outside the classroom?

5.3 What is your attitude towards the statement “the more prominent the L2 is in the learning context, the more L2 acquisition will be promoted”?

Interview Questions for Students (Research Question III)

1. How was your English before attending university?

2. How is your English at the moment? For example,

2.1 To what degree is your English improved?

2.2 Do you have difficulties using English at the moment?

2.3 How about your four skills of English?

2.4 Do you achieve both language accuracy and fluency?

2.5 Do you have multiple competences in English? (Language register: formal, informal, slang/ idiomatic expressions, etc.)

3. Are you satisfied with your current English level? Why / Why not?

3.1 Do you use English with ease and confidence when interacting with both native and other non-native English speakers?

3.2 Are you confident in competing in an international market (e.g. AEC) where English is used as the dominant language?

3.3 Do you reach the English level that you had expected before attending university?

4. What are the reasons why you decided to attend international university? What do you expect to get after graduation?

5. Do you think the current context of learning helps to improve your English? How and to what extent?

6. Are you satisfied with the actual university learning environment? Why / Why not?

7. In what way is the university learning environment you have actually experienced similar to or different from what you have expected?

8. In your opinion, does improving the university learning environment definitely help to improve your English competence?

9. Have you ever encountered any situation you think the university learning environment hinder your English language learning? Please explain.

10. What do you think about improving the quality of the university learning environment in relation to English language learning? Suggestion?

APPENDIX E
QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY (AN ENGLISH VERSION)

Questionnaire Survey

Title: Environmental Influences on Competence in English as a foreign language: A Study of Thai Undergraduates at an International University in Thailand

About the Survey:

- 1) This questionnaire is designed for students of international programs at Thai higher education institution. Purposefully, this survey aims to explore students' perceptions of the actual university language-learning environment.
- 2) This survey is composed of three major sections

Section I: Students' Personal Information.

Section II: Students' Perceptions of the Actual University Learning Environment in relation to English Language Learning

Section III: Students' Overall Perception and Satisfaction of the Actual University Learning Environment in relation to English Language Learning

Section I: Personal Information
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1. Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female
2. Age:
3. Year of study:
4. Have you ever studied in an English-medium education system before attending the university?
 ☐ No
 ☐ Yes. How long? year(s) month(s)
5. Have you ever studied in English-speaking countries?
 ☐ No
 ☐ Yes. How long? year(s) month(s)
6. Contact Number
7. Email.....

Section II: Students' Perceptions of the Actual University Learning Environment in relation to English Language Learning

Note: Please rate your degree of agreement regarding the actual university learning environment in relation to English language Learning by circling only one number for each statement.

Rating Scales: 5 = Strongly Agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Moderately Agree
2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly Disagree

Items	Rating Score				
1. Language Prominence (The Classroom Level)					
1.1 In order to establish an English-rich classroom environment, my teachers always try to discourage and minimize the use of students’ mother tongue in the classroom.	5	4	3	2	1
1.2 Thai teachers always speak English with Thai students in all circumstances (e.g., during the class time, informal talks between Thai teachers and Thai students are always conducted in English).	5	4	3	2	1
1.3 I always speak English with my classmates.	5	4	3	2	1
1.4 English is used not only as a medium of instruction but also as a medium of social communication.	5	4	3	2	1
1.5 I am always engaged in real English conversations when I am in the classroom.	5	4	3	2	1
1.6 The actual classroom environment encourages me to use English and thus fosters my English language learning.	5	4	3	2	1
1.7 Overall, English is a major medium of communication in the classroom.	5	4	3	2	1
2. Language Prominence (The University Level)					
2.1 The actual university environment replicates authentic English language environment.	5	4	3	2	1
2.2 The actual university environment encourages me to learn English outside the classroom.	5	4	3	2	1
2.3 The university consists of a large number of teachers and students from different nationalities.	5	4	3	2	1
2.4 Teachers always help students have extensive L2 input by always using English with students outside the classroom.	5	4	3	2	1
2.5 There are opportunities for me to practice practical and functional use of language for meaningful purposes outside the classroom.	5	4	3	2	1
2.6 I am encouraged to become involved in extra-curricular activities which allow me to engage in authentic communicative activities.	5	4	3	2	1

2.7 I have lots of foreign friends, which in turn forces me to use English outside the classroom.	5	4	3	2	1
2.8 I always spend time working on assignments/projects with classmates from different nationalities, which certainly forces me to engage in natural and spontaneous English conversations outside the classroom.	5	4	3	2	1
2.9 Overall, English is a major medium of communication outside the classroom.	5	4	3	2	1
3. Teaching Practices and Learning Activities					
3.1 The teaching is conducted in an interactive approach by giving students the opportunity to engage in the teaching and learning process.	5	4	3	2	1
3.2 Instruction is all the time imparted in English, except for some courses that are designed to be conducted in Thai e.g., Translation).	5	4	3	2	1
3.3 There is a wide variety of learning activities	5	4	3	2	1
1.4 All the learning activities are authentic and they thus allow me to put my English knowledge into practice.	5	4	3	2	1
3.5 Learning activities are interesting and thus make me feel motivated to make an effort in the learning process.	5	4	3	2	1
3.6 The learning activities used really help to promote my English communication skills.	5	4	3	2	1
3.7 The learning activities used really help to develop my overall English competence.	5	4	3	2	1
3.8 I always get feedback on my English performance from my teachers.	5	4	3	2	1
3.9 My teachers try to teach students English-related matters (e.g. some interesting sentence structures, useful vocabulary, any other useful English knowledge, etc.) while teaching academic contents.	5	4	3	2	1
4. A Motivating and Supportive Classroom Environment					
4.1 My teachers always encouraged me to be an active learner of English while I am in the classroom.	5	4	3	2	1
4.2 The actual classroom environment is relaxed and therefore motivates me to use and learn English.	5	4	3	2	1
4.3 The actual classroom environment helps to promote my confidence in using English.	5	4	3	2	1
4.4 I always receive only positive feedback on my English performance from my teachers.	5	4	3	2	1
4.5 In the classroom, I am always motivated to actively participate in the teaching and learning process.	5	4	3	2	1
4.6 I am always encouraged to use English as much as possible when I am in the classroom.	5	4	3	2	1
4.7 I enjoy learning English when I am in the classroom.	5	4	3	2	1

4.8 Overall, my teachers try to maintain and establish a motivating and supportive classroom atmosphere for English learning	5	4	3	2	1
5. Quality of Teachers					
5.1 My teachers are proficient in English.	5	4	3	2	1
5.2 My teachers speak English with clear and accurate pronunciation.	5	4	3	2	1
5.3 My teachers are knowledgeable about the English language.	5	4	3	2	1
5.4 My teachers are good at providing students with feedback on their English performance.	5	4	3	2	1
5.5 My teachers not only act as instructors but are also facilitators of language learning.	5	4	3	2	1
5.6 My teachers always advise me learning strategies in how to successfully learn English outside the classroom.	5	4	3	2	1
5.7 My teachers always encourage me to learn and use English outside the classroom.	5	4	3	2	1
5.8 My teachers always pay attention to students' English language performance.	5	4	3	2	1
5.9 My teachers are always accessible and available when I have problems with my learning.	5	4	3	2	1
5.10 My teachers always help me overcome difficulties in my English language learning.	5	4	3	2	1

Section III: Students' Overall Perception and Satisfaction of the Actual University Learning Environment in relation to English Language Learning

1. The overall actual university learning environment of both inside and outside the classroom fosters my English language learning and development.	5	4	3	2	1
2. I am satisfied with the overall learning environment in relation to English language learning and competence.	5	4	3	2	1

****Thank you very much for your cooperation****

APPENDIX F
QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY (A THAI VERSION)

แบบสอบถาม

เรื่อง “Environmental Influences on Competence in English as a Foreign Language: A Study of Thai Undergraduates at an International University in Thailand”

คำชี้แจง

- 1) แบบสอบถามฉบับนี้จัดทำขึ้นเพื่อประเมินทัศนคติของนักศึกษามหาวิทยาลัยนานาชาติ ที่มีต่อสภาพแวดล้อมของมหาวิทยาลัยในด้านการเรียนรู้ภาษาอังกฤษ
- 2) แบบสอบถามแบ่งออกเป็น 3 ส่วน ประกอบด้วย
 - ส่วนที่ 1: ข้อมูลทั่วไปของผู้ตอบแบบสอบถาม
 - ส่วนที่ 2: ทัศนคติของนักศึกษาที่มีต่อสภาพแวดล้อมในการเรียนรู้ภาษาอังกฤษของมหาวิทยาลัยที่กำลังศึกษาอยู่
 - ส่วนที่ 3: การประเมินระดับทัศนคติและความพึงพอใจโดยรวมที่มีต่อสภาพแวดล้อมในการเรียนรู้ภาษาอังกฤษของมหาวิทยาลัย

ส่วนที่ 1: ข้อมูลทั่วไปของผู้ตอบแบบสอบถาม

1. เพศ: [] ชาย [] หญิง
2. อายุ:
3. ชั้นปี:
4. ก่อนที่จะเข้ามาศึกษาในระดับมหาวิทยาลัย ได้เคยศึกษาในระบบการเรียนการสอนที่ใช้ภาษาอังกฤษเป็นสื่อกลางมาก่อนหรือไม่?
 [] ไม่เคย [] เคย เป็นระยะเวลา ปี เดือน
5. เคยมีโอกาสดำเนินการศึกษาในประเทศที่ใช้ภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาหลักหรือไม่?
 [] ไม่เคย [] เคย เป็นระยะเวลา ปี เดือน
6. เบอร์โทรศัพท์
7. E-mail.....

(ข้อมูลส่วนตัวนี้จะถูกนำมาใช้เพื่อขอติดต่อสัมภาษณ์ในภายหลังเท่านั้น)

ส่วนที่ 2: ทศนคติของนักศึกษาที่มีต่อสภาพแวดล้อมปัจจุบันในการเรียนรู้ภาษาอังกฤษของมหาวิทยาลัยที่กำลังศึกษาอยู่

คำแนะนำ: กรุณาระบุคะแนนการประเมิน โดย “วงกลม” ล้อมรอบตัวเลขคะแนน โดยในแต่ละข้อคำถาม

กรุณาเลือกเพียง**คำตอบเดียว**เท่านั้น

ค่าคะแนน: 5 = เห็นด้วยอย่างยิ่ง, 4 = เห็นด้วย, 3 = เห็นด้วยปานกลาง, 2 = ไม่เห็นด้วย,

1 = ไม่เห็นด้วยอย่างยิ่ง

รายละเอียด		ค่าคะแนน				
1. ระดับการใช้และเรียนรู้ภาษาอังกฤษในห้องเรียน						
1.1	เพื่อสร้างสภาพแวดล้อมการเรียนรู้ภาษาอังกฤษในห้องเรียน อาจารย์มักจะพยายามจำกัดการใช้ภาษาไทยในห้องเรียน เพื่อส่งเสริมให้นักศึกษาใช้ภาษาอังกฤษในห้องเรียนให้ได้มากที่สุด	5	4	3	2	1
1.2	อาจารย์ไทยมักจะพูดภาษาอังกฤษกับนักศึกษาไทยในทุกๆสถานการณ์ เช่น การพูดคุยเล่นใน เรื่องต่างๆ ระหว่างอาจารย์ไทยและนักศึกษาไทยมักเป็นในภาษาอังกฤษ	5	4	3	2	1
1.3	ฉันมักจะใช้ภาษาอังกฤษกับเพื่อนร่วมห้อง	5	4	3	2	1
1.4	โดยภาพรวม นอกจากจะมีการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษเป็นสื่อการเรียนการสอนแล้ว ภาษาอังกฤษยังใช้เป็นภาษาหลักในการสื่อสารเรื่องทั่วไปอีกด้วย	5	4	3	2	1
1.5	เมื่อเวลาอยู่ในห้องเรียน ฉันมักจะมีส่วนร่วมในบทสนทนาต่างๆในชีวิตประจำวันเป็นภาษาอังกฤษ	5	4	3	2	1
1.6	สภาพแวดล้อมในห้องเรียนที่เป็นอยู่ช่วยส่งเสริมการใช้และเรียนรู้ภาษาอังกฤษของฉันเป็นอย่างดี	5	4	3	2	1
1.7	โดยภาพรวม ภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาหลักที่ใช้ในการสื่อสารในห้องเรียน	5	4	3	2	1
2. ระดับการใช้และเรียนรู้ภาษาอังกฤษภายในมหาวิทยาลัย (นอกห้องเรียน)						
2.1	สภาพแวดล้อมปัจจุบันของมหาวิทยาลัยเหมือนกับสภาพแวดล้อมที่มีการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษจริง	5	4	3	2	1
2.2	สภาพแวดล้อมปัจจุบันของมหาวิทยาลัยช่วยส่งเสริมการเรียนรู้ภาษาอังกฤษภายนอกห้องเรียน	5	4	3	2	1
2.3	มหาวิทยาลัยประกอบด้วยอาจารย์และนักศึกษาต่างชาติที่หลากหลาย	5	4	3	2	1
2.4	อาจารย์มักจะช่วยให้นักศึกษาได้พัฒนาภาษาอังกฤษ โดยการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษกับนักศึกษาภายนอกห้องเรียน	5	4	3	2	1
2.5	ฉันมักมีโอกาสดูใช้ภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อการสื่อสารจริงในชีวิตประจำวันภายนอกห้องเรียน	5	4	3	2	1
2.6	ฉันมักได้รับการส่งเสริมให้มีส่วนร่วมในกิจกรรมภายนอกห้องเรียน ที่มีผลต่อการพัฒนาการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษของฉัน	5	4	3	2	1

2.7 ฉันมีเพื่อนต่างชาติมากมาย ซึ่งทำให้ฉันมักมีโอกาสได้ใช้ภาษาอังกฤษภายนอกห้องเรียน	5	4	3	2	1
2.8 ฉันมักใช้เวลาภายนอกห้องเรียนในการทำงานต่างๆที่ได้รับมอบหมายกับเพื่อนต่างชาติ ซึ่งมีผลต่อการพัฒนาการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษในชีวิตประจำวันของฉัน	5	4	3	2	1
2.9 โดยภาพรวม ภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาหลักที่ใช้ในการสื่อสารภายนอกห้องเรียน	5	4	3	2	1
3. รูปแบบการเรียนการสอนและกิจกรรมที่ใช้					
3.1 รูปแบบการเรียนการสอน ยึดหลักแนวคิดการสร้างปฏิสัมพันธ์ ด้วยการให้ผู้เรียนมีส่วนร่วมในชั้นเรียน	5	4	3	2	1
3.2 การเรียนการสอนในห้องเรียนใช้เป็นภาษาอังกฤษตลอดเวลา ยกเว้นบางรายวิชาที่กำหนดให้ใช้ภาษาไทย เช่น วิชาการแปล	5	4	3	2	1
3.3 กิจกรรมการเรียนที่ใช้มีความหลากหลาย	5	4	3	2	1
3.4 กิจกรรมการเรียนที่ใช้ เน้นกิจกรรมจริง ที่มีส่วนช่วยให้ฉันนำความรู้ทางภาษาอังกฤษไปใช้ในชีวิตจริงได้เป็นอย่างดี	5	4	3	2	1
3.5 กิจกรรมการเรียนที่ใช้มีความน่าสนใจ ซึ่งทำให้ฉันรู้สึกอยากมีส่วนร่วมในกระบวนการเรียนรู้	5	4	3	2	1
3.6 กิจกรรมที่ใช้ช่วยพัฒนาทักษะทางการสื่อสารภาษาอังกฤษของฉันได้เป็นอย่างดี	5	4	3	2	1
3.7 โดยภาพรวมแล้ว กิจกรรมที่ใช้ช่วยพัฒนาความรู้ความสามารถทางภาษาอังกฤษของฉันได้เป็นอย่างดี	5	4	3	2	1
3.8 ฉันมักได้รับคำติชมเกี่ยวกับการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษของฉันจากอาจารย์ผู้สอนอยู่เสมอ	5	4	3	2	1
3.9 อาจารย์ผู้สอนพยายามสอดแทรก เพิ่มพูนความรู้ทางภาษาอังกฤษไปพร้อมๆกับการสอนเนื้อหาทางวิชาการ	5	4	3	2	1
4. สภาพแวดล้อมในห้องเรียนที่ส่งเสริมให้เกิดการเรียนรู้ภาษาอังกฤษ					
4.1 อาจารย์มักจะกระตุ้นส่งเสริมให้ฉันเรียนรู้ภาษาอังกฤษในห้องเรียนอย่างกระตือรือร้น	5	4	3	2	1
4.2 สภาพแวดล้อมในห้องเรียนที่เป็นอยู่ทำให้ฉันรู้สึกผ่อนคลาย ซึ่งมีผลให้ฉันรู้สึกอยากใช้และเรียนรู้ภาษาอังกฤษ	5	4	3	2	1
4.3 สภาพแวดล้อมในห้องเรียนที่เป็นอยู่ ช่วยส่งเสริมให้ฉันมีความมั่นใจในการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษ	5	4	3	2	1
4.4 ฉันได้รับคำติชมด้านบวกเกี่ยวกับการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษจากอาจารย์ผู้สอนอยู่เสมอ	5	4	3	2	1
4.5 อาจารย์มักจะกระตุ้นให้ฉันมีส่วนร่วมในกระบวนการเรียนการสอนในชั้นเรียน	5	4	3	2	1
4.6 อาจารย์มักจะกระตุ้นให้ฉันใช้ภาษาอังกฤษในห้องเรียนให้ได้มากที่สุด	5	4	3	2	1
4.7 ฉันสนุกกับการเรียนภาษาอังกฤษในห้องเรียน	5	4	3	2	1
4.8 โดยภาพรวมแล้ว อาจารย์พยายามรักษาและสร้างบรรยากาศในห้องเรียน ที่ช่วยกระตุ้นและส่งเสริมให้เกิดการเรียนรู้ภาษาอังกฤษ	5	4	3	2	1

5. คุณภาพของอาจารย์ผู้สอนโดยรวม					
5.1 อาจารย์ของฉันสามารถใช้ภาษาอังกฤษได้เป็นอย่างดี	5	4	3	2	1
5.2 อาจารย์ออกเสียงภาษาอังกฤษได้อย่างถูกต้องชัดเจน	5	4	3	2	1
5.3 อาจารย์มีความรู้ทางภาษาอังกฤษเป็นอย่างดี	5	4	3	2	1
5.4 อาจารย์มีเทคนิคที่ดีในการให้คำติชมเกี่ยวกับการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษของนักศึกษา	5	4	3	2	1
5.5 อาจารย์ของฉันนอกจากจะทำหน้าที่เป็นผู้ถ่ายทอดความรู้แล้ว ยังเป็นผู้ช่วยแนะแนวทางการเรียนรู้ภาษาอังกฤษของฉันอีกด้วย	5	4	3	2	1
5.6 อาจารย์มักจะแนะนำกลวิธีต่างๆ ที่ช่วยให้ฉันประสบความสำเร็จในการเรียนรู้ภาษาอังกฤษนอกห้องเรียน	5	4	3	2	1
5.7 อาจารย์ของฉันมักจะกระตุ้นให้ฉันเรียนรู้และใช้ภาษาอังกฤษนอกห้องเรียน	5	4	3	2	1
5.8 อาจารย์ของฉันเอาใจใส่กับการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษของนักศึกษาอยู่เสมอ	5	4	3	2	1
5.9 อาจารย์ของฉันมีเวลาให้อยู่เสมอ เมื่อฉันมีปัญหาเกี่ยวกับการเรียนและต้องการขอความช่วยเหลือหรือคำปรึกษา	5	4	3	2	1
5.10 อาจารย์มักจะช่วยให้ฉันสามารถจัดการกับอุปสรรคในการเรียนรู้ภาษาอังกฤษ	5	4	3	2	1

**ส่วนที่ 3: ระดับความพึงพอใจโดยรวมที่มีต่อสภาพแวดล้อม
ในการเรียนรู้ภาษาอังกฤษของมหาวิทยาลัย**

1. สภาพแวดล้อมโดยรวมของมหาวิทยาลัยทั้งภายในและภายนอกห้องเรียนเอื้อต่อการเรียนรู้และพัฒนาภาษาอังกฤษ	5	4	3	2	1
2. ฉันพอใจกับสภาพแวดล้อมการเรียนโดยรวมที่เป็นอยู่ ที่มีผลต่อการเรียนรู้และความสามารถในการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษของฉัน	5	4	3	2	1

****ขอแสดงความขอบคุณอย่างสูง****

APPENDIX G
INDEX OF ITEM-OBJECTIVE CONGRUENCE EVALUATION
RESULTS (INTERVIEW QUESTIONS)

Index of Item-Objective Congruence Evaluation Results

(Research Question I)

The following interview questions were designed in an attempt to gain insight into the teachers' perceptions regarding what an effective teaching and learning environment of an international English-medium university in relation to foreign language learning is like.

Please rate the items below according to their ability to measure the specific objective.

Notes: 1. "+1" for the item that is congruent with the objective.

2. "0" for the item with ambiguous degree of measurement.

3. "-1" for the item that is *not* congruent with the objective.

The Semi-Structured Interview Questions (For Teachers)	Results			Average
	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	
Language Prominence (The Classroom Level)				
1. How could you create a language-rich classroom environment in order to provide students with high opportunities for English L2 input and output in the classroom? - English is used by a teacher as the medium of both instruction and social communication? - To what extent is student’s Thai L1 allowed in the classroom? - Using English in interaction with both peers and teachers to create a more language-rich environment?	1	1	1	1
2. In your view, what are the effective ways to help students have multiple competences in English? (e.g., formal and informal register of language, etc.)	1	1	1	1

The Semi-Structured Interview Questions (For Teachers)	Results			Average
	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	
3. Given that Thai students have few opportunities to use English in the wider society, how could you help them overcome this lack of English exposure and thus enhance their English skills? - How to help students achieve English accuracy (linguistic competence), fluency (e.g., communicative competence), and other functional domains in the classroom?	1	1	1	1
Teaching Practices and Learning Activities				
1. How could you define the major goals or purposes of an effective international program? e.g.) To produce individuals who: - are knowledgeable about both academic content and language? - are able to effectively put their knowledge into practice? - are able to use English with confidence?, etc.	1	1	1	1
2. Could you describe the ideal teaching styles for an international program? - Teaching explicit grammar in class or letting students acquire on their own? - Teaching vocabulary items along with teaching subject content? - Making interaction with students in English while teaching?, etc.	1	1	1	1
3. Is it acceptable for an international program to permit the use of students' mother tongue (Thai L1) in teaching academic content? Why / Why not?	1	1	0	0.67

The Semi-Structured Interview Questions (For Teachers)	Results			Average
	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	
4. Do you find it necessary to provide students with feedback and correction on their English language errors, or is it better to let them acquire it on their own? Why?	1	1	1	1
5. What kinds of activities do you find essential for helping students develop all the English skills and become proficient in the language? e.g., in-class activities/out-of-class assignments, etc.	1	1	1	1
6. What is your opinion about the incorporation of the use of authentic materials and tasks in the classroom?	1	1	1	1
A Motivating and Supportive Classroom Environment				
1. Could you describe what you think the ideal motivating and supportive classroom environment in relation to English language learning should be like?	1	1	1	1
2. In your view, how can teachers help motivate and support students' English language learning in the classroom? - Teaching styles - Kinds of activities - Teacher's communicative styles and behaviors	1	1	1	1

The Semi-Structured Interview Questions (For Teachers)	Results			Average
	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	
Quality of Teachers				
1. Could you define the characteristics of effective English-medium instruction teachers in relation to enhancing students' English competence? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Be knowledgeable about both subject content and language? - Teaching language learning strategies to students? - Putting emphasis on both students' language and academic performance? - Providing feedback on students' English language? - Exposing students to an L2 as much as possible? - Encouraging students to use English?, etc. 	1	0	1	0.67
2. In your opinion, what is a qualified nonnative-speaking-English teacher like? (e.g., accent, pronunciation, grammar, being able to use English in a variety of ways, etc.)	1	0	1	0.67
3. In your view, what are the benefits students receive from learning English with nonnative-speaking-English teachers as compared to native-English-speaking teachers?	1	1	1	1
4. In your opinion, how can good teachers help students overcome difficulties they encounter in their English learning?	1	1	1	1
Language Prominence (The University Level)				
1. In your view, what is the learning environment of an international university like?	1	1	1	1
2. How could the (1) university and (2) teachers help students of an international university develop English skills outside the classroom?	1	0	1	0.67

The Semi-Structured Interview Questions (For Teachers)	Results			Average
	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	
3. What is your attitude towards the statement “the more prominent the L2 is in the learning context, the more L2 acquisition will be promoted”?	1	1	1	1

**Index of Item-Objective Congruence Evaluation Results
(Research Question III)**

The Semi-Structured Interview Questions (For Students)	Results			Average
	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	
1. How was your English before attending university?	1	1	1	1
2. How is your English at the moment? 10. To what degree is your English improved? 11. Have difficulties using English at the moment? 12. How about your four skills of English? (writing, reading, speaking, listening) 13. Language accuracy/fluency 14. Have multiple competences in English? (Language register: formal, informal, slang/idiomatic expressions, etc.)	1	1	1	1
3. Are you satisfied with your current English level? Why / Why not? - Be able to use English with ease and confidence when interacting with both native and other non-native English speakers? - Be confident to compete in an international market (e.g. AEC) where English is used as the dominant language? - Be able to reach the English level that you had expected before attending university?	1	0	1	0.67

The Semi-Structured Interview Questions (For Students)	Results			Average
	1st	2nd	3rd	
4. What are the reasons why you decided to attend international university? What do you expect to get after graduation?	1	1	0	0.67
5. Do you think the current context of learning helps to improve your English? How and to what extent?	1	1	0	0.67
6. Are you satisfied with the actual university learning environment? Why / Why not?	1	1	1	1
7. In what way is the university learning environment you have actually experienced similar to or different from what you have expected?	1	1	1	1
8. In your opinion, does improving the university learning environment definitely help to improve your English competence?	1	1	1	1
9. Have you ever encountered any situation you think the university learning environment hinder your English language learning? Please explain.	1	0	1	0.67
10. What do you think about improving the quality of the university learning environment in relation to English language learning? Suggestion?	1	0	1	0.67

APPENDIX H
INDEX OF ITEM-OBJECTIVE CONGRUENCE EVALUATION
RESULTS (QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY)

Index of Item-Objective Congruence Evaluation Form

The construction of the survey questionnaire was based on the interview results obtained from the teachers regarding what an effective teaching and learning environment of an international English-medium university in relation to foreign language learning is like.

Purposefully, the following questionnaire items were designed in an attempt to examine the students' perceptions of the actual university language-learning environment

The survey is in the form of a five-point Likert scale ranging from "5 = strongly agree to 1 = strongly disagree".

Please rate the items below according to their ability to measure the specific objective.

Notes: 1. "+1" for the item that is congruent with the objective.

2. "0" for the item with ambiguous degree of measurement.

3. "-1" for the item that is *not* congruent with the objective.

Students' Perceptions of the Actual University Learning Environment in relation to English Language Learning

Items	Results			Average
	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	
1. Language Prominence (The Classroom Level)				
ระดับการใช้และเรียนรู้ภาษาอังกฤษในห้องเรียน				
1. In order to establish an English-rich classroom environment, my teachers always try to discourage and minimize the use of students’ mother tongue in the classroom. (เพื่อสร้างสภาพแวดล้อมการเรียนรู้ภาษาอังกฤษในห้องเรียน อาจารย์มักจะพยายามจำกัดการใช้ภาษาไทยในห้องเรียน เพื่อส่งเสริมให้นักศึกษาใช้ภาษาอังกฤษในห้องเรียนให้ได้มากที่สุด)	1	1	1	1

Items	Results			Average
	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	
2. In Thai teachers always speak English with Thai students in all circumstances (e.g., during the class time, informal talks between Thai teachers and Thai students are always conducted in English). (อาจารย์ไทยมักจะพูดภาษาอังกฤษกับนักศึกษาไทยในทุกๆสถานการณ์ เช่น การ พูดคุยเล่นใน เรื่องต่างๆ ระหว่างอาจารย์ไทยและนักศึกษาไทยมักเป็นใน ภาษาอังกฤษ)	1	1	1	1
3. I always speak English with my classmates. (ฉันมักจะใช้ภาษาอังกฤษกับเพื่อนร่วมห้อง)	1	1	1	1
4. English is used not only as a medium of instruction but also as a medium of social communication. (โดยภาพรวม นอกจากจะมีการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษเป็นสื่อการเรียนการสอนแล้ว ภาษาอังกฤษยังใช้เป็นภาษาหลักในการสื่อสารเรื่องทั่วไปอีกด้วย)	1	1	1	1
5. I am always engaged in real English conversations when I am in the classroom. (เมื่อเวลาอยู่ในห้องเรียน ฉันมักจะมีส่วนร่วมในบทสนทนาต่างๆใน ชีวิตประจำวันเป็นภาษาอังกฤษ)	1	1	1	1
6. I am always engaged in real English conversations when I am in the classroom. (สภาพแวดล้อมในห้องเรียนที่เป็นอยู่ช่วยส่งเสริมการใช้และเรียนรู้ ภาษาอังกฤษของฉันเป็นอย่างดี)	1	1	1	1
7. Overall, English is a major medium of communication in the classroom. (โดยภาพรวม ภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาหลักที่ใช้ในการสื่อสารในห้องเรียน)	1	1	1	1
2. Language Prominence (The University Level) ระดับการใช้และเรียนรู้ภาษาอังกฤษภายในมหาวิทยาลัย (นอกห้องเรียน)				
1. The actual university environment replicates authentic English language environment. (สภาพแวดล้อมปัจจุบันของมหาวิทยาลัยเหมือนกับสภาพแวดล้อมที่มีการใช้ ภาษาอังกฤษจริง)	1	1	1	1

Items	Results			Average
	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	
2. The actual university environment encourages me to learn English outside the classroom. (สภาพแวดล้อมปัจจุบันของมหาวิทยาลัยช่วยส่งเสริมการเรียนรู้ภาษาอังกฤษภายนอกห้องเรียน)	1	1	1	1
3. The university consists of a large number of teachers and students from different nationalities. (มหาวิทยาลัยประกอบด้วยอาจารย์และนักศึกษาต่างชาติที่หลากหลาย)	1	1	1	1
4. Teachers always help students have extensive L2 input by always using English with students outside the classroom. (อาจารย์มักจะช่วยให้นักศึกษาได้พัฒนาภาษาอังกฤษ โดยการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษกับนักศึกษาภายนอกห้องเรียน)	1	1	1	1
5. There are opportunities for me to practice practical and functional use of language for meaningful purposes outside the classroom. (ฉันมักมีโอกาสได้ใช้ภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อการสื่อสารจริงในชีวิตประจำวันภายนอกห้องเรียน)	1	1	1	1
6. I am encouraged to become involved in extra-curricular activities which allow me to engage in authentic communicative activities. (ฉันมักได้รับการส่งเสริมให้มีส่วนร่วมในกิจกรรมภายนอกห้องเรียน ที่มีผลต่อการพัฒนาการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษของฉัน)	1	1	1	1
7. I have lots of foreign friends, which in turn forces me to use English outside the classroom. (ฉันมีเพื่อนต่างชาติมากมาย ซึ่งทำให้ฉันมักมีโอกาสได้ใช้ภาษาอังกฤษภายนอกห้องเรียน)	1	1	1	1

Items	Results			Average
	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	
8. I always spend time working on assignments/projects with classmates from different nationalities, which certainly forces me to engage in natural and spontaneous English conversations outside the classroom. (ฉันมักใช้เวลาภายนอกห้องเรียนในการทำงานต่างๆที่ได้รับมอบหมายกับเพื่อนต่างชาติ ซึ่งมีผลต่อการพัฒนาการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษในชีวิตประจำวันของฉัน)	1	1	1	1
9. Overall, English is a major medium of communication outside the classroom. (โดยภาพรวม ภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาหลักที่ใช้ในการสื่อสารภายนอกห้องเรียน)	1	1	1	1
3. Teaching Practices and Learning Activities / รูปแบบการเรียนการสอนและกิจกรรมที่ใช้				
1. The teaching is conducted in an interactive approach by giving students the opportunity to engage in the teaching and learning process. (รูปแบบการเรียนการสอน ยึดหลักแนวคิดการสร้างปฏิสัมพันธ์ ด้วยการให้ผู้เรียนมีส่วนร่วมในชั้นเรียน)	1	0	1	0.67
2. Instruction is all the time imparted in English, except for some courses that are designed to be conducted in Thai e.g., Translation). (การเรียนการสอนในห้องเรียนใช้เป็นภาษาอังกฤษตลอดเวลา ยกเว้นบางรายวิชาที่กำหนดให้ใช้ภาษาไทย เช่น วิชาการแปล)	1	1	1	1
3. There is a wide variety of learning activities (กิจกรรมการเรียนที่ใช้มีความหลากหลาย)	1	0	1	1
4. All the learning activities are authentic and they thus allow me to put my English knowledge into practice. (กิจกรรมการเรียนที่ใช้ เน้นกิจกรรมจริง ที่มีส่วนช่วยให้ฉันนำความรู้ทางภาษาอังกฤษไปใช้ในชีวิตจริงได้เป็นอย่างดี)	1	1	1	1
5. Learning activities are interesting and thus make me feel motivated to make an effort in the learning process. (กิจกรรมการเรียนที่ใช้มีความน่าสนใจ ซึ่งทำให้ฉันรู้สึกอยากมีส่วนร่วมในกระบวนการเรียนรู้)	1	1	1	1

Items	Results			Average
	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	
6. The learning activities used really help to promote my English communication skills. (กิจกรรมที่ใช้ช่วยพัฒนาทักษะทางการสื่อสารภาษาอังกฤษของฉันได้เป็นอย่างดี)	1	1	1	1
7. The learning activities used really help to develop my overall English competence. (โดยภาพรวมแล้ว กิจกรรมที่ใช้ช่วยพัฒนาความรู้ความสามารถทางภาษาอังกฤษของฉันได้เป็นอย่างดี)	1	1	1	1
8. I always get feedback on my English performance from my teachers. (ฉันมักได้รับคำติชมเกี่ยวกับการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษจากอาจารย์ผู้สอนอยู่เสมอ)	1	1	1	1
9. My teachers try to teach students English-related matters (e.g. some interesting sentence structures, useful vocabulary, any other useful English knowledge, etc.) while teaching academic contents. (อาจารย์ผู้สอนพยายามสอดแทรก เพิ่มพูนความรู้ทางภาษาอังกฤษไปพร้อมๆ กับการสอนเนื้อหาทางวิชาการ)	1	1	0	0.67
4. A Motivating and Supportive Classroom Environment สภาพแวดล้อมในห้องเรียนที่ส่งเสริมให้เกิดการเรียนรู้ภาษาอังกฤษ				
1. My teachers always encouraged me to be an active learner of English while I am in the classroom. (อาจารย์มักจะกระตุ้นส่งเสริมให้ฉันเรียนรู้ภาษาอังกฤษในห้องเรียนอย่างกระตือรือร้น)	1	1	1	1
2. The actual classroom environment is relaxed and therefore motivates me to use and learn English. (สภาพแวดล้อมในห้องเรียนที่เป็นอยู่ทำให้ฉันรู้สึกผ่อนคลาย ซึ่งมีผลให้ฉันรู้สึกอยากใช้และเรียนรู้ภาษาอังกฤษ)	1	1	1	1
3. The actual classroom environment helps to promote my confidence in using English. (สภาพแวดล้อมในห้องเรียนที่เป็นอยู่ ช่วยส่งเสริมให้ฉันมีความมั่นใจในการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษ)	1	1	0	0.67

Items	Results			Average
	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	
4. I always receive only positive feedback on my English performance from my teachers. (ฉันได้รับคำติชมด้านบวกเกี่ยวกับการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษจากอาจารย์ผู้สอนอยู่เสมอ)	1	1	1	1
5. In the classroom, I am always motivated to actively participate in the teaching and learning process. (อาจารย์มักจะกระตุ้นให้ฉันมีส่วนร่วมในกระบวนการเรียนการสอนในชั้นเรียน)	1	1	1	1
6. I am always encouraged to use English as much as possible when I am in the classroom. (อาจารย์มักจะกระตุ้นให้ฉันใช้ภาษาอังกฤษในห้องเรียนให้ได้มากที่สุด)	1	1	1	1
7. I enjoy learning English when I am in the classroom. (ฉันสนุกกับการเรียนภาษาอังกฤษในห้องเรียน)	1	0	1	0.67
8. Overall, my teachers try to maintain and establish a motivating and supportive classroom atmosphere for English learning. (โดยภาพรวมแล้ว อาจารย์พยายามรักษาและสร้างบรรยากาศในห้องเรียน ที่ช่วยกระตุ้นและส่งเสริมให้เกิดการเรียนรู้ภาษาอังกฤษ)	1	1	1	1
5. Quality of Teachers / คุณภาพอาจารย์ผู้สอน				
1. My teachers are proficient in English. (อาจารย์ของฉันสามารถใช้ภาษาอังกฤษได้เป็นอย่างดี)	1	1	1	1
2. My teachers speak English with clear and accurate pronunciation. (อาจารย์ออกเสียงภาษาอังกฤษได้อย่างถูกต้องชัดเจน)	1	1	1	1
3. My teachers are knowledgeable about the English language. (อาจารย์มีความรู้ทางภาษาอังกฤษเป็นอย่างดี)	1	1	1	1
4. My teachers are good at providing students with feedback on their English performance. (อาจารย์มีเทคนิคที่ดีในการให้คำติชมเกี่ยวกับการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษของนักศึกษา)	1	1	1	1

Items	Results			Average
	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	
5. My teachers not only act as instructors but are also facilitators of language learning. (อาจารย์ของฉันนอกจากจะทำหน้าที่เป็นผู้ถ่ายทอดความรู้แล้ว ยังเป็นผู้ช่วยแนะแนวทางการเรียนรู้ภาษาอังกฤษของฉันอีกด้วย)	1	1	1	1
6. My teachers always advise me learning strategies in how to successfully learn English outside the classroom. (อาจารย์มักจะแนะนำกลวิธีต่างๆ ที่ช่วยให้ฉันประสบความสำเร็จในการเรียนรู้ภาษาอังกฤษนอกห้องเรียน)	1	1	0	0.67
7. My teachers always encourage me to learn and use English outside the classroom. (อาจารย์ของฉันมักจะกระตุ้นให้ฉันเรียนรู้และใช้ภาษาอังกฤษนอกห้องเรียน)	1	0	1	0.67
8. My teachers always pay attention to students' English language performance. (อาจารย์ของฉันใส่ใจกับการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษของนักศึกษาอยู่เสมอ)	1	1	1	1
9. My teachers are always accessible and available when I have problems with my learning. (อาจารย์ของฉันมีเวลาให้อยู่เสมอ เมื่อฉันมีปัญหาเกี่ยวกับการเรียนและต้องการขอความช่วยเหลือหรือคำปรึกษา)	1	1	1	1
10. My teachers always help me overcome difficulties in my English language learning. (อาจารย์มักจะช่วยให้ฉันสามารถจัดการกับอุปสรรคในการเรียนรู้ภาษาอังกฤษ)	1	1	1	1

**Students' Overall Perception and Satisfaction of the University Learning
Environment in Relation to English Language Learning**

Items	Results			Average
	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	
1. The overall actual university learning environment of both inside and outside the classroom fosters my English language learning and development. (สภาพแวดล้อมโดยรวมของมหาวิทยาลัยทั้งภายในและภายนอกห้องเรียนเอื้อต่อการเรียนรู้และพัฒนาภาษาอังกฤษ)	1	1	1	1
2. I am satisfied with the overall learning environment in relation to English language learning and competence. (ฉันพอใจกับสภาพแวดล้อมการเรียนรู้โดยรวมที่เป็นอยู่ ที่มีผลต่อการเรียนรู้และความสามารถในการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษของฉัน)	1	1	1	1

BIOGRAPHY

NAME

Miss Jirada Ueasiriwatthanachai

ACADEMIC BACKGROUND

Bachelor of Arts in Business English
Assumption University, 2011
Second-Class Honors

EXPERIENCES

ABAC Scholarship, “The 60th
Anniversary of the King’s Accession to
the Throne Scholarship”, 2007

A President’s Certificate of Honors from
Assumption University, 2007 and 2010

Academic Program Coordinator
Assumption University, 2011-2012