

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter reviews the literature in 5 main points: The definition and basic model of communication, communication in business organizations, communication between culture, cross-cultural problems and barriers in international business, and relevant research.

2.1 THE DEFINITION AND BASIC MODEL OF COMMUNICATION

“Communication is the process of people sharing thoughts, ideas, and feelings with each other in commonly understandable ways” (Hamilton & Parker, 1997).

According to Hamilton and Parker’s explanation in “*Communicating for Results*”, when a person is communicating with only one person, in a small group, or even with many people, the fundamental process happens and the same misunderstandings are able to arise. The communicators who succeed in their business and profession owe a large part of their success to their ability because they can minimize potential misunderstandings. This ability is the outcome of knowing the basic communication procedure and the role that each foundation performs. In fact, the basic elements of the communication process can be divided as follows:

1. Sender and Receiver

The sender means the source of the message whereas the receiver can be defined as the interpreter of the message.

2. Stimulus and Motivation

Before the sender wants to send a message, two things must occur. Firstly, the sender must be stimulated. Some type of stimulus arouses thought that in turn stimulates the communication need. In fact, a stimulus can be either internal or external. However, only the stimulus is not enough to activate communication. Secondly, sending a message must require sufficient motivation.

3. Encoding and Decoding

Hamilton and Parker explained that encoding is the process of putting a message into the form that has to be communicated. So, the sender is often referred to

as the encoder. On the other hand, the process where the receiver tries to interpret the accurate meaning of the message is called decoding. Hence, the receiver is referred to as the decoder.

4. Frame of Reference

The frame of reference is the background and experience of both sender and receiver such as educational background, race, gender, where the person grew up, what his or her parents were like, attitudes, personalities, all past experiences, and so on.

5. A Communication Fallacy

In “*Communicating for Results*”, Hamilton and Parker also write, “Misunderstanding in communication can lead to a communication breakdown. The effective communicator, in contrast, knows that 100 percent communication is highly unlikely and prepares for misunderstanding ahead of time”.

6. Code

Code means the symbols that carry the message. The basic communication codes consist of:

Verbal code (language) is spoken or written words used to communicate thought and emotions.

Vocal code (paralanguage) is the vocal foundations going along with spoken language like tone of voice, pitch, rate, volume, and emphasis.

Visual code (nonverbal) is facial expressions, eye contact, gestures, appearance, posture, size and location, and time, both unintentional and intentional.

7. Channel

It is also called medium chosen to carry the message such as face-to-face communication, memos, magazines, newsletters, radio, telephone and television.

8. Feedback

Referring to Hamilton and Parker’s description, feedback can be defined as both verbal and nonverbal responses to messages. Feedback is self-monitoring responses that allow each person to modify his or her behavior until it meets expectations. Moreover, it is the only method that the person can know if messages delivered are interpreted as the intention.

9. Environment

The environment refers to the time, place, physical and social surroundings that the communicators can find themselves.

10. Noise

It refers to anything that intervenes in communication by distorting and blocking the message.

2.2 COMMUNICATION IN BUSINESS ORGANIZATIONS

In “*Reading in Interpersonal and Organizational Communication*,” Samuel Eilon (1972) writes,

“Information flow in a communication network is the lifeline of a business enterprise; it is like blood flowing through the veins and arteries of the body”, (p.32).

2.2.1 Pattern of Communication flow

To achieve the business goals, communications in an organization should flow smoothly and directly.

When we put some effort in visualizing the significance of communication in the world of business, we would only have to imagine the world where communication as a business function, were to cease. Then we quickly see that all activities in the business world depend on communication- oral or written, formal or informal, stated or implied.

2.2.2 Individual Versus Group Communication

There are three available sources of information for every individual related to any issue: (a) direct personal observation, (b) observation of other people’s personal investigation, and (c) reports (oral, written, visual, etc.) from many sources. As an individual, we normally have direct observations and written reports available to us, when we try to resolve a problem ourselves. On the contrary, in a group, all these information forms are present and suddenly available. Even though a highly skillful individual may analyze a problem alone which brings a more effective and efficient outcome than does a group, this is usually impossible in some situations. Thus, most organizations still depend on working or discussing in groups when making important

decisions. The main differences between the processes of individual and group communication can be found in the nature of the task, the presence of other people, and the increased information available (Schneider, Donaghy, & Newman, 1975).

2.3 THE NATURE OF LANGUAGE

2.3.1 Grammatical Meaning and Form

Referring to Cook (1991), language has patterns and rules used to convey meanings, some of which make up their grammar. The word order is part of the grammar. Grammatical knowledge is thought by many people to be the central area of a language system. Anyhow, other language components are important since they are related to each other through grammar. Grammar is also the most remarkable aspect of language, having features and many claims that are exclusive to language and hence learnt in different ways from anything else that people learn. In some ways, L2 learners are able to easily study grammar because it is highly systematic and its effects are usually fairly noticeable in their speech. For this reason, many researchers studying the L2 learning of the 70s and 80s concentrated on grammar.

Wilkins (1975) also explains even though we say that grammatical systems express the same kinds of meaning, in fact, the grammatical meaning considerably varies from language to language. Moreover, the grammatical devices themselves may be radically different. Grammatical forms and meanings stand for the two sides of the same coin. It is impossible to examine the grammatical meaning without referring to the forms that carry the meaning and the formal systems cannot be considered in isolation from the meanings they convey. Thus, there are exact general facts about grammatical systems that are crucial for the language learners as follows:

1. The syntax or the relations between words in the sentence

To satisfy the account of the language structure, it is significant to recognize that it can be developed into units of different sizes or we can account for the words' behavior in sentences by recognizing that they belong to classes such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, and so on.

2. The word order

Languages may have a relatively free or relatively fixed word order.

3. The category of voice (active, middle, passive voices)

It enables the same syntactic relation to be expressed in different forms of the sentence as well as giving different degrees of emphasis and prominence to the various parts of the sentence.

4. The grammatical meaning

It is probably better to focus on the extent to which grammatical meanings differ from language to language.

2.3.2 Vocabulary

Cook (1991) describes in “Second Language Learning and Language Teaching” that grammar furnishes the overall patterns, vocabulary is the material put in the patterns. Dictionaries are sometimes able to give a false idea that vocabulary is a word list with one or more meanings attached to each word. However, words are related to each other in a variety of ways and this is how they are remembered and stored. Some students still learn lists of vocabulary where each L1 word has a one-word L2 translation. For example, in English, the word “man” is “homme” in French. Nevertheless, the relationships between words are as essential as the meaning of the word in isolation- how “man” contrasts with “woman” and with “boy” is as significant as the meaning of the word itself.

Therefore, learning a second language can simply mean seeing the word in a different way. For instance, in English, the word “brown” does not definitely refer to the same color as French word “brun”. This is an effect of the first language (Caskey-Sirmons & Hickerson, 1977).

The popular outlook of words is that words serve as labels for natural classes of objects and for ‘concept’. Hence, when learning another language, a part of the task is attaching fresh labels to familiar things and ideas. It is a mistaken notion about vocabulary as it is about syntax, because the lexical structure of the language we speak determines our classification of the physical and abstract world itself. It means that we have to learn the new way of classifying things if we learn a new language. Although it never completes our identity, there may be fairly close correspondences between parts of lexical systems. When there are unrelated languages, the semantic differences will be probably quite obvious (Wilkins, 1975).

The problem is not only in learning L2 words, but also in remembering them. Bahrck (1984) explains that a word, learned after only one or two presentations, is

remembered better than one that takes several presentations to learn. The way people can remember something well depends on how deeply they process it.

An additional question is the extent to which the first language vocabulary influences the second language. This is not as apparent as with grammar. Learners may fill in their knowledge gaps of the new language with items from the first. Kellerman (1986) examined how students learn English words with several meanings such as the word “eye” that ranges from “potato eye”, “peacock’s eye”, “electric eye”, “human eye”, eye of a dice, to “eye of a needle”. He investigated the word “eye” since in Dutch, the word “oog” happens to have the same range of meanings. So, we should anticipate Dutch learners of English to have no problems with transferring the meanings of “oog” to English. This case exhibits that the closer the meaning was to the base meaning of the word, the more likely it was to be transferred.

Another question often asked by psychologists is whether the L2 user has two mental dictionaries or one. Referring to research of the processing of semantic meanings it showed that people spend about the same time to say whether a “table” is “furniture” in their L1 as their L2 (Caramazza & Broun, 1980). Consequently, they seem to have one mental store of words. However, other research has exhibited that hearing another word in the same language rather than a word in the speaker’s other language helps increase the speed of mental access to a word (Kirsner et al, 1980). This hints that the two dictionaries are separated in the mind. Thus, the simple question about one dictionary or two now is unable to be answered. One suggestion is that there are exact two separate underlying stores of knowledge but that they interact during speech processing in ways that are out of the speaker’s control (Cook, 1991).

2.3.3 Phonology

With occasional pauses, speech is transmitted as a continuum of sound. Each sound that a speaker combines into the continuum of speech differs vastly. If we instrumentally examine speech, we will find that even when the same speaker repeats the same word, it will not be identically produced on the two occasions. Despite being one’s mother-tongue, we are able to perceive something far less than the total, objectively various sounds.

In order to obtain a second language, the learners' task is not so much to reach the pronunciation standard of a native speaker. In fact, it is not the real expectation. They need to acquire pronunciation accurate enough for the important sounds to be distinctive from one another. It is unnecessary that a single pronunciation of the sound will enable them to do this. Therefore, in pronunciation, a sound cannot only be produced adequately in isolation, but it also depends on how well it is formed in the phonological contexts that it occurs in the target language. A sound may not be intrinsically hard for a learner; however, in an unfamiliar context, the learner may discover that it is difficult to correctly produce the sound as he or she would if it were a totally novel sound to him. The particular sound combinations in a language may cause problems as well. The clusters of initial and final consonant can be especially difficult for learners whose own languages do not possess them (Wilkins, 1975).

Languages are also different in terms of intonation (Cook, 1991). Languages have specific ways of using the pitch of voice. It followed recognized contours of movement, emphasizing by means of stress or change of direction on particular parts of the utterance. In spite of difficult meaning assignment to a particular contour in the abstract, the accurate interpretation of any spoken utterance would not be quite possible without taking intonation account. The intonation functions are not necessarily the same in every language, and certainly the actual forms and meaning of intonation patterns are different. For instance, the English intonation may have an effective function. We can express emotions such as, surprise, irony, sympathy, doubt or contempt, but it can express grammatical meanings at the same time. Due to redundancy of language, a mistake in pronunciation of an individual sound rarely affects communication; nevertheless, an error intonation can cause a different interpretation in an utterance. In short, the acquisition of a correct intonation may be a higher priority than the individual sound learning (Wilkins, 1975).

2.4 OBSTACLES TO LEARNING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

2.4.1 Attitude and Motivation

Chandrasegaran (1981) explains in "Problems of Learning English as a Second Language," that attitude and motivation are as significant factors as the variable attainment among individuals learning a second language under the same

conditions. This generally means a positive attitude towards foreign language learning and towards the target language is one factor that stimulates learners' effort required to learn a second language.

Referring to the definitions of the word "motivation" given by the Working Committee and Motivation in Foreign Language Learning at the North East Conference of 1970, motivation means "...the process of providing someone with a motive or motives, the stimulation and maintenance of an active interest in foreign languages", (the Working Committee and Motivation in Foreign Language Learning, 1970).

This definition matches with Jakobovits' distinction between "being interested" and "being motivated" (1970, p.243).

Gardner and Lambert (1972) describes that attitude and motivation are associated with the second language learning achievement. In addition, motivation of an integrative orientation, particularly, makes for more successful learning than motivation of an instrumental orientation. For example, in Montreal Study of 1959, it was found that among English-speaking students of French, the students with an integrative orientation were more successful in learning French than those who were instrumentally motivated.

2.4.2 Learning Strategies

O'Malley and Chamot (1990) divide the learning strategies used by L2 learners into three main types, based on cognitive psychology:

Metacognitive strategies focus on planning and thinking about learning, like planning one's learning, monitoring one's own speech or writing, and evaluating oneself after the processes mentioned.

Cognitive strategies focus on conscious ways of tackling learning, including taking note, resourcing from dictionaries or other resources, and relating new information to old.

Social Strategies can be defined as learning by interacting with other people.

One of the interesting themes for language learners is "the Good Language Learner (GLL) Strategies" explained by Naiman, Frohlich, Stern, and Todesco

(1978). From these themes, they found six broad strategies for people good at learning languages:

1. Find the best learning style that is suitable for them. For example, some learners can learn the second language by reading grammar books at home, whereas, the others found that it would be better for them to seek out communicative encounters to help them understand well, apart from studying in the classroom.

5. Let themselves be a part of the language learning process such as practicing the second language by listening to the news in L2 on the radio, seeing films in L2, and so on.

6. Develop the language awareness both as a system and as communication. Good learners realize that language is not only a complex system of rules, but it is also used for a purpose; they combine grammatical and pragmatical competence. Hence, good language learners always treat language as communication and academic knowledge at the same time.

7. Constantly concentrate on the expansion of their language knowledge. The L2 learners should be content with their L2 knowledge as well as always trying to improve it. They should make guesses about what they do not understand and examine if they are right or wrong by comparing their speech with the new language they had or even ask native speakers to correct them. From the explanation of good language learners by Rubin (1975, p. 45), “a willing and accurate guesser” is an inherent part of inferring-meaning method through the use of contextual clues in the lexis, grammar, or in the communication situation.

8. Used a separate system to develop L2. Good language learners should not relate everything to their first language, on the other hand, they should make the L2 a separate system by silently engaging their monologues to practice the L2 (Naiman, Frohlich, Stren, & Todesco, 1978).

9. Take into account the demand that the L2 learning imposes. Good L2 learners seek every available opportunity to bring their newly acquired competence into use (Stern, 1975). It means that they have to accept that they may make mistakes (Rubin, 1975).

Besides, there are still more themes of good language learner’s strategies. “Active task Approach” is one of the necessary strategies described by Naiman. For

instance, good L2 learners develop and use specific learning techniques such as memorizing and practicing pronunciation. Another strategy of good L2 learners is “Willing to practice” like repeating aloud, role-playing, memorizing structures and vocabulary, and reading magazines, newspaper, and comics (Naiman, 1976). Finally, “Memorizing” is also essential for learning language. Carroll (1962) states that memorization plays a significant role in learning vocabulary and structure.

2.4.3 The Effects of Age on L2 Learning

1. To be older leads to better learning in the short term, other things being equal
2. Some research still favors child superiority at pronunciation but this is not reliable
3. Children get to a higher level of proficiency in the long term than those who start L2 learning while older, perhaps because adults slow down” (Cook, 1991, p.86).

2.4.4 Other Individual Variations

Aptitude: There are connections between intelligence and aptitude with the learning performance of an individual’s mental make up (Genesee, 1976).

Sex differences: These facts have also been examined. According to the US Assessment of Performance Unit in 1986, English girls were better at French than English boys in every skill except speaking skill.

Level of first language: Skehan (1988) writes the L1’s knowledge level is also relevant. For example, children being more advanced in their L1 can be better at their L2.

2.5 CAUSE OF POOR LISTENING IN COMMUNICATION

2.5.1 Physical Barriers

In “Communicating for Results”, Hamilton (2005) states that these barriers are a hearing loss, noisy office equipment, a loud conversation, visual distraction, and so on. Because these factors are uncontrollable or difficult to eliminate, we have to control ourselves when these distractions emerge.

2.5.2 Personal Barriers

Illness, fatigue, discomfort or any other symptoms that affect our physical well-being are examples of personal barriers for listening process. Besides, physical

distraction or personal problems, and attitudinal biases against the speaker are other personal barriers to listening skills.

2.5.3 Gender Barriers

Without paying attention, different genders are able to cause barriers to listening.

2.5.4 Semantic Barriers

Various ideas, objects, and actions cannot be referred to by only one word. Moreover, many single words have various different meanings. Semantic barriers are able to be frustrating since the roots of this problem are from the oddities of language, not from the listeners' lack of attempt.

2.5.5 Bad Listening Habits

- The listeners have already assumed that the topic was boring.
- The listeners comment on the speaker's delivery.
- The listeners interfere to disagree with the speaker or try to be against the speaker's ideas.
- The listeners listen only for the speaker's facts, feelings, and any principles
- The listeners concentrate on taking notes without any real listening intention.
- The listeners only pretend to listen to the speaker.
- The listeners allow or create distractions.
- The listeners suddenly tune out when the topic consists of difficult material or technical terms.
- The listeners have emotional reactions to some message by tuning out the speaker.
- The listeners daydream during long presentations.

2.6 COMMUNICATION BETWEEN CULTURES

2.6.1 Culture Characteristics and Cross-Cultural Values in Communication

Culture can be defined as the entirety of learned and accumulated experience socially transmitted from generation to generation. Culture gives each person in both conscious and subconscious ways, behavior modes, thinking patterns, beliefs, attitudes, ideas, values, and various individuals' habits. We must know that culture can bring us to a communication event so that we are able to understand people with

whom we attempt to communicate. To understand cross-cultural values in communication, we should consider a culture's value in formality and informality. These two points cover language, content, and delivery. For example, the USA is a rather informal culture, whereas, cultures in Germany, Japan, Egypt, and Great Britain are formal. As we can see, last names are used instead of first; these norms might keep us from achieving our specific speech purpose (Mills, 1998).

2.6.2 A Definition of Intercultural Communication

In "*Communication between Cultures*", Samovar, Porter, and Stefani (1998) write, "Intercultural communication is the communication between people whose cultural perceptions and symbol systems are distinct enough to alter the communication event".

2.6.3 Language and Culture

Language influences human behavior. We can give life to our ideas through our use of sounds and symbols. Henry Ward Beecher once wrote, "Thought is a blossom; language the opening bud; action the fruit behind it" (Samovar, Porter, & Stefani, 1998).

Samovar, Porter, and Stefani (1998) also describe in their book that all people, according to their backgrounds, determine the meaning of a word. People who have similar meanings are expected to have similar experiences. Consequently, when we are communicating with a person from our own culture, the way we use words to represent our experiences is much easier than when people from distinct cultures are communicating, different experiences are involved and the process is more difficult.

In "*Introducing Social Change*", Arensberg and Niehoff (1964) quote, "Nothing more clearly distinguished one culture from another than its language".

In "*Communication between Cultures*", Samovar, Porter, and Stefani (1998) also stated, to comprehend how language serves this adaptive function, we need to look at several cultures and how they differently employ language to conduct their affairs as in the examples below:

1. English

Though English is commonly used and the most familiar, it is differently used among the variety of English-speaking cultures. For example, in Great Britain,

euphemisms are interspersed in order to help the speaker avoid strong feeling expressions. The sentences “I may be wrong, but....” or “There is just one thing in all that you have been saying that worries me a little.” are the examples of this subtle form of speech.

2. Thai

In Thai, there are a lot of necessary forms of pronouns to address members from different levels in the social hierarchy. Besides, it is possible to classify four Thai language levels according to different forms of different classes: the royal, the ecclesiastic, the common or familiar, and slang.

3. Japanese

To properly use the Japanese language, it is essential to have a maximum awareness of social relationships and proper vocabulary to address other people according to their levels in the hierarchy. Due to having specific grammar structures used to identify a social status, the communication between Japanese and Western societies are the most different. In addition, to understand the structure of Japanese sentences is difficult because of high and often ambiguous context with verbs coming at the end of the sentences. Furthermore, the Japanese culture does not encourage nonverbal communication.

Therefore, language is also a cultural reflection. Many co-cultures develop language codes as a part of their cultural experience. It is necessary to understand differences in the language usage being even keener when the person is from a culture in which English is the second language. Supposed that you did not fully understand what an English native speaker had said “*Now that we know the bottom line, we need to go for broke and stop this beating around the bush.*” This case shows that besides the communicative circumstances, the language and language style we use, primarily reflect on our cultural function (Mills, 1998)

2.6.4 Importance of Language

The ability to make appropriate word choice in an appropriate way is one of the attractive points of language. In fact, words are powerful and once they are gained they have a commanding effect on people. Robert Burton, an English writer, said “A blow with a word strikes deeper than a blow with a sword.” It is noticeable that

language serves us in a variety of ways. It allows us to gather information from other people. It provides us a way for giving and receiving comfort as well as letting us know ourselves.

2.6.5 Nature and Limitations of Language

Language means “thought as an organized system of symbols, both verbal and nonverbal, used in a common and uniform way by persons who are able to manipulate these symbols to express and communicate their thought and feeling” (Mills, 1988).

Moreover, Mills (1988, p.256) divided the language’s nature and limitations, based on the verbal symbols, as per the following:

1. *Words are only symbols*

Words are ‘*arbitrary symbols*’. People sharing the same culture and language have simply agreed that a certain sound or combination of sounds represent a given thing, concept, or experience.

2. *Words have many uses*

Generally, the two thousand words most commonly used have approximately fourteen thousand different meanings. In short, it is very important to select your words in order to avoid ambiguity and confusion when speaking to persons from diverse cultures. To be aware of the language principles “words have many uses”, some of which are tied directly to culture.

3. *Words reflect our experiences*

“Our meaning for any word is determined by our experiences with that word”.

In other words, the word meanings are developed by the meaning we have learned. Meanings are in people, and because of different experiences, they will have differences in meaning. We can see that “language is a collection of symbols that stand for the experiences of a group of people within geographic or cultural community. Imagine how people from different cultures, with their sole backgrounds and experiences, might define the words like *abortion*, *AIDS*, *affirmative action*, *sexual harassment*, *free choice* and *manifest destiny*. Due to over three thousand languages in the world, you are able to see why the list of cultural definitions is endless.

2.6.6 The International Business Context: Cultural Views toward Management and Managers Peterson (1993) states in “*Managers and National Culture*,” “Achievement and success, belief in hard work, pragmatism, Puritanism, rationality, impersonality in interpersonal work relationships, equality of opportunity, acceptance of competition and individualism” are dominant values of management in the United States.

In German culture, the manager is not a hero because of very strong concepts of management. The German workers, who are highly skillful and responsible, do not really need a manager, American-style, to encourage them. Those workers anticipate their Meister (boss) to assign their tasks including being the expert so that he can solve the technical problems (Hofstede, 1993).

In France, management also differs from the American style. In America, both managers and employees have a fair contract; however, each class in France is honored according to a “*stratified society*”. It means that managers perform in very superior roles, whereas, French employees have to accept rigid role positions as well as expecting them (Samovar, Porter, & Stefani, 1998).

Business values in China also focus on kinship, interpersonal connections, elderly expectation, and hierarchy. These values are an outcome of “*the Iron Rice Bowl*” (Samovar, Porter, & Stefani, 1998).

2.7 CROSS-CULTURAL PROBLEMS AND BARRIERS IN INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS

2.7.1 Definition of Cross-cultural Communication Problems

Cross-cultural communication problems mean the communication of people coming from different cultures. This kind of problem affects different perceptions and interpretations of people lacking shared experiences or frames of reference and then leads to misunderstandings.

The main causes of cross-cultural communication problems are as follow:

1. “*The barriers of cognition*” means the lack of commonly used language and the ways to use appropriate levels of language as well as its connotation.
2. “*The barriers of attitude and feeling*” refers to the lack of perception stability, stereotype, jumping to conclusion, bias, ethnocentrism, and so on.

3. “*The barriers of behavior* is the lack of intention to learn and absorb cultural surroundings, avoiding meeting strangers, a lack of effort to adjust oneself in new and different cultures, and so on (เมตตา วิวัฒนากุล, 2548).

2.7.2 The Dilemma of Multiple Cultures

In fact, there are many worldwide cultures enormously arrayed. Some definitely differ from each other whereas the others slightly differ. The company operated in one country has to deal with a variety of different subcultures. It is always impossible, or undesirable involved. It is important that the integrator should be intimately familiar with multiple cultures. In addition, they should be objective in the relation of ethnic problems in the areas where they do not tend to be expected (Maddox, 1993)

2.8 RELEVANT RESEARCH

According to the study of “*Communication Patterns of Thai People in a Non-Thai Context*”, Wiwat Rojjanaprayon (1997) states that various major problems are found as follows:

1. The language barrier is the significant problem for Thais when communicating with non-Thais. In the study results, several Thais accepted that they were unable to, effectively speak and listen to non-Thai’s English, especially Americans. Some of them could not understand the sense of humor and figurative speech like anecdotes, similes and metaphors in English. Moreover, they complained that it was difficult to speak their minds through English and were not pleased with their English capability or proficiency because of limited word choices to construct English sentences, especially for unfamiliar topics.

2. Cultural barriers are another problem found in this study. Thais did not know much about American culture, whereas, Americans are likely to realize differences. In addition, Thais still exhibited Thai values when they were hierarchical such as social hierarchy and elder respect. In other words, they are hierarchical and indirect. These problems affect non-Thais’ understanding and confidence in communication.

Sa-nguan Ampaipisut (2007) summarizes in his study of “*The Communication Problems of Foreign Tourists with Travel Services in Thailand,*” and there are many problems found as follows:

1. Inefficiency of language is the major problem of foreign tourists dealing with travel services in Thailand. The study found that most foreign tourists did not understand Thai service staff when they spoke. Moreover, they thought that those Thai staff could not follow when communicating with them including using the wrong pronunciation or accent.
2. Inappropriate language use and cultural differences are also problems that the foreign tourists have to confront. According to the study, although the participants found that Thai service staff did not use inappropriate language, they thought that those Thai staff did not express their opinions and were astonished when the participants did something unexpected. Besides, a participant commented that some Thai service staff did not understand the manner of the foreign tourists and thought that the tourist was angry.

In the study of “*The Cross-Cultural Problems Faced by Thai Who Deal with Western Colleagues,*” Orathai Sriring (2005) explained that there are a variety of significant problems found as follows:

1. Lack of “*assertiveness*” of Thai people when dealing with western colleagues is the main problems of the study. Referring to this study, Thai people were not assertive, especially when wishing to oppose the ideas of their western colleagues. In spite of being able to express themselves, they never expressed their viewpoints, whether they agreed or not.
2. Inefficient English language skill is the second major problem. The researcher describes that the participants found that it was difficult to understand certain peculiar words and expressions including colloquial speech and unusual accents. Though Thai people had English proficiency, they were still not confident that their western counterparts could understand what they had spoken in English. So, English speaking skill is the most essential skill that needs to be improved, followed by writing, listening, and reading skills.
3. Expressing or gaining feedback is another problem in this study. The study found that it was difficult for Thai people to explain their negative comments to their western colleagues, yet the positive ones encountered no problems. Moreover, they were

not confident if the ideas expressed were significant enough to be considered.

Furthermore, they would not give their feedback when the incident was incorrect, even if it was believed that feedback was important to achieve in business communication.

4. Receiving and giving instructions are the next problem that should be considered. When considering the instructions, Thai people were more inactive, but they preferred gaining the instructions from their western colleagues instead. They believe that it was easier to receive instructions instead of giving them. Besides, they thought that giving written instructions was better, since they were not confident that their spoken instructions would be understood.