



The Demands of Employers and the English Competency of the Workforce in the Eastern Economic Corridor of Thailand

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ABSTRACT

The Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC) is a promising project which aims to elevate the living standards of the Thai people. Large numbers of skilled workers with a good command of the English language are urgently needed. The present study aims to examine the English proficiency of Thai employees and explore the expectations of employers in the EEC. The instruments used in the study include an English proficiency test, interviews, and a survey of employees. The findings indicate that employees working with the top management level, (e.g., managers and supervisors) are expected to be more proficient in English than those working at the operational level. Among four modes of communication, the performance of most participants in reception and production were in the

	<p>same range (A2 – B2). On the other hand, the performance in interaction and mediation fell into the lower range (A1 – B1). New employees are expected to be able to communicate in English at a good level and then learn to use technical English in their fields.</p> <p>Keywords: English competency, language assessment, English at the workplace</p>
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Introduction

With the rise of the Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC) project in Thailand, there is the high demand for a skilled workforce in the target industries. The English proficiency level of the workforce is one of the crucial factors that attracts international investment. Effective communication between employees and employers in international companies affects the decisions of investors. According to a Cambridge study entitled *English at Work* (English & Symonds, 2016), almost 70% of global employers viewed English as important to companies located in the non-English speaking countries. For companies, the limited English competency of a workforce may lead to missing business opportunities and misleading cross-cultural communication, which may negatively impact the competitiveness of the companies (EF English Proficiency Index for Companies, 2016). Unfortunately, the picture of the employees in the EEC as the language users is unclear.

At international workplaces, a good command of English is compulsory. The Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) scores have been widely used in recruitment and human resources development for decades. According to the TOEIC Report on Test Takers Worldwide (Educational Testing Service, 2018), 80% of Thai test takers were undergraduate students and around 50% of the test takers took the test for job application purposes. The mean score of Thais in the TOEIC Listening and Reading tests was 478 out of 990 (Educational Testing Service, 2018). In Thailand, it is common to find job postings that look for candidates who have attained more than 500 points in the TOEIC tests. For competitive positions in the large companies, the candidates must obtain at least 600 points in the TOEIC tests (JobsDB, 2022). At a Thai ICT company, an applicant for a finance officer position requires a TOEIC score of 550, while a senior finance officer position requires at least a TOEIC score of 600. At an international motorcycle distributor company, there was a range of TOEIC score requirements from 500 to 700.

Certain global organizations have examined the English proficiency of people from different countries (EF English Proficiency Index for Companies, 2014; Cambridge Assessment English, 2016). The EF studied the English proficiency of test takers working in different industries and developed the English Proficiency Index for Companies (EPIC) in 2016. The index was developed from the study on the English proficiency of employees in 32 countries (Damerow et al., 2013). The researchers examined the use of English at the workplaces of 283 companies that had an annual turnover ranging from 1 million USD to over 100 billion USD. The employees who worked for these companies took an English proficiency test and responded to a questionnaire. The set of required skills of English in different jobs were reported. The levels of English proficiency of workforces in several Asian countries (e.g., Korea, Vietnam, Taiwan, Japan, and China) were reported. However, the information about the proficiency of the Thai workforce was not reported.

Another study conducted by Cambridge Assessment English entitled *English at Work* (English and Symonds 2016) is similar to EPIC. A test was used to measure the English proficiency of employees. The expectations of employers in different industries from 38 countries were examined. More than 5,000 respondents completed a survey on the needs of English at workplaces. These respondents were from either the countries where English is an official language (i.e., the UK, the USA, Canada, Australia, Ireland, and New Zealand) or countries where English is not officially used (China, Russia, Korea, Brazil, Kazakhstan, Japan, France, Mexico, Italy, Venezuela, Germany, Chile, Indonesia, Portugal, Argentina, Lithuania, Spain, Ukraine, Taiwan, Peru, Egypt, Switzerland, Iraq, Jordan, Belgium, Denmark, Saudi Arabia, and Colombia). The data were collected from different companies around the world; however, no information about the Thai workforce was mentioned. The researchers included the countries and territories with survey responses from at least 20 employers. Due to the number of responses, the information relating to the Thai workforce was not reported.

There were some studies on the English proficiency of workforces in several Asian countries apart from Thailand (EF English Proficiency Index for Companies, 2016; Cambridge Assessment English, 2016). A number of studies in Thailand examined the needs of English across positions, i.e., hotel front staff in Loei and Ubon Ratchathani (Kijpooonphol & Linh, 2021; Nawarattanaporn, 2014), logistics officers and engineers in Chonburi (Buthphorm, 2020; Kosashunhanan, 2016), and different positions in Bangkok (Numbenjapol, 1996; Yim-on, 2014) and Ranong (Ananmana et al., 2018). The EEC is the area that targets international business. To attract investment, the workforce in the area has to be either skillful or competent in communicating with foreigners. The information about the ability of the

Thai workforce to communicate in English at work in the EEC area needs to be extensively examined.

To investigate the competency of the Thai workforce in EEC, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), which has been globally accepted, should be used. The CEFR is an international standard that provides a comprehensive framework of descriptors of language proficiency to educators, language policy makers, teachers, and other stakeholders in language learning, teaching, and assessment (Council of Europe, 2001). This framework is highly important to English language learning in Thailand since it is a part of the language policy set by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation. Personnel in educational institutions (teachers and students) are required to reach a certain level of CEFR. According to the Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment or ONESQA (ONESQA, 2020), the expected level of CEFR was B1. At B1 level, language users are able to use English in their professions. There is a high demand of skilled workforce in EEC area. However, the information about English proficiency of the Thai workforce in the EEC is limited.

Aligned with previous studies examined the English proficiency of the workforce (Damerow et al., 2013; English & Symonds 2016), the present study refers to CEFR and sheds light on the English proficiency of the Thai workforce in the EEC area. The present study investigated employers' expectation and employees' proficiency level. The employee's proficiency level was explored with an English proficiency test and a self-assessment survey. To make the precise learning, the findings can be used to set language learning goals for students in EEC area.

The objectives were as follows:

1. To examine employers' expectations regarding the English competency of the workforce in the Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC).
2. To investigate the English competency levels of employees working in an English-speaking environment.

Research Design

The present study utilized mixed methods research in which the employees' performance was examined quantitatively and the employers' expectations were explored qualitatively.

Participants

Two groups of participants included 12 employers and 90 employees who were Thai citizens and worked for the organizations and companies

located in the EEC area. All of them worked for 3 types of companies, i.e., aviation and logistics, automotive, tourism and hotels, and the medical profession. Seven companies accepted the invitation to join the study. Most of the participating companies were doing business overseas, which meant that employees needed to communicate with colleagues and clients from different countries. The size of companies ranged from very large to medium (from over 10,000 to 100 employees).

The Employers

The convenient sampling technique was used to select the employer group. The researchers sent invitations to the companies and asked to interview at least two employers from each company. The employers refer to the top management positions or HR positions who made recruitment decisions. All of the participants were Thai.

The Employees

The stratified random sampling technique was conducted to obtain the employee group. Ten to fifteen employees from each company were selected by the companies to join the study. Since the information of the employees was confidential to the participating companies, the employers selected employees who could join the study. The positions of the employees ranged from the operational level to positions close to middle management (e.g., Trainee, Coordinator, Officer, Analyst, Supervisor, Manager, etc.). The participants held either a diploma or Bachelor's Degree. The companies were asked to allow the employees who had a good command of English and were able to use English at work with ease to participate in the study.

Instruments

The instruments utilized in this study included an English proficiency test, interview questions, and a survey of employees.

The English Proficiency Test

The present study employed an English Proficiency Test, i.e., the Burapha University Communicative English Test (BUU-CET), to examine the level of proficiency of the employees. BUU-CET is the institutional-based test which was developed by aligning with the CEFR and mapped with the TOEIC scores. The contents of the test were related to real world situations occurring internationally and in Thailand. The test takers spent around 60

minutes completing the test. The test examined receptive skills of the test takers (listening and reading) for the following domains of language (see Table 1).

Table 1

Domains of Language in the BUU-CET

Listening	Reading
Oral comprehension	1. Overall reading comprehension
1. Overall oral comprehension	2. Reading correspondence
2. Understanding conversation between other people	3. Reading for orientation
3. Understanding announcements and instructions	4. Reading for information and argument
	5. Reading instructions
	6. Reading as a leisure activity
	7. Identifying cues and inferring (spoken, signed and written)
Audio-visual comprehension	
1. Understanding audio (or signed) media and recordings	

As presented in Table 1, the domain of language derived from CEFR descriptors (2020) was employed to develop the test constructs. The test results were reported in bands which aligned with the CEFR, i.e., band 1 (A1), band 2 (A2 ~ A2+), band 3 (A2+ ~ B1), and band 4 (B1 ~ and above).

The Employees' Survey

The employees' survey, which was developed by the researchers, requested the employees to engage in self-assessment on their English proficiency. The survey was divided into three parts: part 1 related to types of businesses and job positions, part 2 involved English language skills, and part 3 assessed the employees' use of English as a medium to mediate and communicate with other people. The CEFR descriptors for communicative language activities (self-assessment grid) were used to develop the statements in part 2 and 3 so that they were comparable with the levels of proficiency assessed from the proficiency test. The selected descriptors were presented in Appendix A. The frequencies of the CEFR level in each mode of communication were examined.

The Interviews

The interviews about the expectation of the employers were conducted with a group of upper-level management in organizations and

companies in the EEC. The researchers conducted the interviews at the companies. Each participant was interviewed for about 30 minutes. The interviews were semi-structured, focusing on the importance of English at particular workplaces. The questions were related to the need for English proficiency at the relevant workplaces, the positions with high requirements of English fluency, and the effect of English proficiency on the promotion of employees or recruitment decisions (see Appendix B). The content analysis was employed to analyze the data.

Results and Discussion

In this section, the employer's expectations and the employees' English proficiency level were reported and discussed.

Employers' Expectations

The employers' expectations regarding the English proficiency of the workforce in the EEC were illustrated in this section. The findings revealed that the positions expected to have good command of English can be divided into 2 groups. The first group were the executives who work closely with the presidents of the companies (e.g., Vice President, Financial Controller, Manager, Accounting Manager, Assistant Accounting Manager, Supervisor, and Assistant HR Manager). The second group were the people who commonly communicate with customers and foreign colleagues (e.g., Recruitment Officer, Organization Development Officer, Engineer, Senior System Analyst, System Analyst, Business Analyst, Sales, Salesperson, Interpreter, and Customer Services).

The findings conform with Hiranburana (2020), which found that employees at senior levels (e.g., Manager, Director, Supervisor) were required to possess higher language abilities than employees at the operational level. The senior employees need to interact with and mediate messages between employers and other employees. Either oral or written communication among the executives demand good understanding of particular professions and topics. In other words, communication among executives and senior employees require knowledge of technical English words. Meanwhile, the employees who communicate with customers and colleagues tend to used more specific expressions and phrases (e.g., greeting, email corresponding, etc.).

At international companies and organizations where many positions in the top management are multinational, English is used as a medium of communication among colleagues. One of the participants who was a senior

HR manager works for a Chinese company. He reported that English is a medium of communication at the company. *Employer A* revealed,

Our boss is Taiwanese. However, we used English to communicate in company located in Thailand. English is a minimum requirement of all staff. Chinese language is an optional for some positions.

Another situation was the Thai companies that have foreign clients. The positions in which employees were expected to be fluent in English included the company representatives and receptionists. The HR manager at an organization expressed the view that receptionists were the front gate who should be able to communicate with clients in English fluently. *Employer B* reported that,

The front office staff are the first group who have contact with foreign clients. They need to be able to talk with clients. At least, they should be able to introduce basic information of the organization.

Besides, there were positions which required talking to co-workers and clients and using technical words in communication (English & Symonds, 2016; Franco & Roach, 2018; Kijpooonphol & Linh, 2021; Kosashunhanan, 2016; Numbenjapol, 1996; Yim-On, 2016).

It could be noticed that the English needs were different for different roles. Receptionists were expected to generally talk to clients. However, the other positions such as sales representatives and engineers were expected to be able to mediate conversations containing many technical words.

One of the participating companies took English proficiency into consideration when deciding whether to promote employees. The HR manager required the employees to take an English proficiency test. The persons who got promoted to become one of the executives in the department had to be high-achievers in English tests.

The findings showed that companies did not expect the candidates to be able to communicate in English with technical words. They commonly checked whether the potential candidates can use English at a good level. Some companies have developed in-house tests primarily to check whether the candidates were able to use English with ease. These tests were varied. Some companies relied on oral tests. Others used paper tests which examine the use of grammar and vocabulary, as well as reading skills. Such in-house language testing was used to cross-check the candidates' English performance.

The English Proficiency Levels of Employees

The findings from the English proficiency test revealed that the English proficiency of most of the participants (93.33%) was above the A2 level of CEFR. More than half of them (60%) were at level A2+ and above.

Table 2

English Proficiency of Employees (n = 90)

CEFR Level	No. of test takers	%
A1	6	6.67
A2 ~ A2+	30	33.33
A2+ ~ B1	27	30.00
B1 ~ B1+	27	30.00

The results of the English proficiency test were consistent with the findings from the employees' survey. According to the survey, the range of abilities in listening, reading, speaking, and writing was from levels A2 to B2 (see Table 2).

Table 3

Employees' English Language Skills Performance (n = 70)

CEFR	Reception		Production	
	Listening (%)	Reading (%)	Speaking (%)	Writing (%)
Pre-A1	2 (02.86%)	1 (01.43%)	1 (01.43%)	1 (01.43%)
A1	9 (12.86%)	3 (04.29%)	3 (04.29%)	8 (11.43%)
A2	10 (14.29%)	16 (22.86%)	20 (28.57%)	6 (08.57%)
B1	33 (47.14%)	29 (41.43%)	31 (44.29%)	29 (41.43%)
B2	10 (14.29%)	11 (15.71%)	10 (14.29%)	18 (25.71%)
C1	3 (04.29%)	8 (11.43%)	2 (02.86%)	5 (07.14%)
C2	3 (04.29%)	2 (02.86%)	3 (04.29%)	3 (04.29%)

Table 3 shows that the listening, reading, and speaking skills of most participants ranged from levels A2 to B2. The participants' performance on written production seems to be better than other skills (B1 to B2 level). Most participants reported that they were able to tackle either receptive or productive tasks at level B1 and above (listening = 70.01%, reading = 71.43%, speaking = 65.73%, and writing = 78.57%).

According to *English at Work* (English and Symonds, 2016), global companies believe that reading and speaking skills are compulsory. The

findings of this study contrast with the *English at Work* conclusion that global companies need employees who are good at speaking and reading. It has to be noted that the participants of the present study were selected by the companies to be representatives of employees who had good command of English. It could be assumed that the participants had to compose work-related documents which required them to write reports and compose writing on familiar topics. Such written production was practiced mostly at work so that they rated their writing production performance at level B1 and above in a large proportion (78.57%).

The findings from the Thai employees' self-rated survey indicated that the four language skills (i.e., listening, speaking, reading, and writing) were important to their work (mean = 3.73, S.D. = 0.45). It was consistent with English and Symonds (2016), which showed that all four language skills were crucial for international companies and that employers viewed all four language skills as equally important. The study also suggested that the gap between the required skills and the availability of employees with all four skills was quite large (a skill gap of around 40%). The findings from the present study suggested that the participants were comfortable with written production tasks (B1 and above = 78.5%). In contrast, 65.71% of employees rated their speaking skills at level B1 and above. It indicates that Thai employees were not confident in their speaking as much as writing. And the spoken production required for these employees were simpler than the written tasks.

Apart from reception (listening and reading) and production (speaking and writing), interaction and mediation are two important modes of communication that should be examined (Council of Europe, 2018). Interaction involves speaking, writing, and online language activities. Interaction is considered to be the co-constructing discourse that language users need to employ strategies like turn-taking, cooperating and asking for clarification. In addition, written and online interaction deals with the exchange of ideas, which employs similar strategies with speaking production (i.e., asking for clarification, asking for help with formulation, and repairing misunderstandings).

Figure 1

Employees' Speaking and Writing Performance (n = 70)

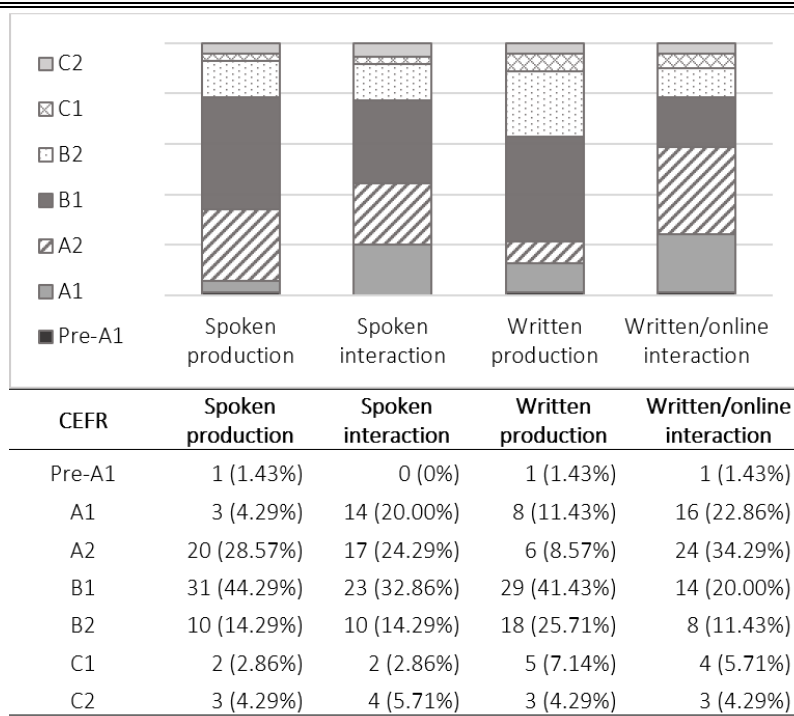


Figure 1 shows the relationship between the employees' performance in production and interaction. The numbers of participants who reported that they were level B1 and above in spoken production (65.73%) was higher than spoken interaction (55.72%). There were 78.57% of the participants who were at level B1 and above in the written production. In contrast, only 41.43% of them were above level B1 in the written and online interaction. As determined using a one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), there was a significant difference between written production and interaction ($F(1, 138) = 8.64, p = 0.004$). This indicates that the participants were more competent in producing than interacting in the speaking and writing tasks.

According to Council of Europe (2018), interaction is an ability that requires language users to integrate their receptive skills (listening or reading) with their productive skills (speaking or writing). It could be assumed that the participants were able to conduct the written productions which did not required them to interact. In other words, the participants can do the writing tasks which are not demanding or require integrated skills. And the participants may feel reluctant to communicate in the situations that they were unprepared or unfamiliar.

The results revealed that the level of spoken production was at level B1 (44.29%) and above (21.44%). According to CEFR descriptor (2018), at level B1, the participants were able to describe experiences and events as well

as briefly give reasons for a plan. One fifth of the participants (21.44%), who were at level B2 and above, could give a clear and detailed presentation related to work. They could share a viewpoint on the advantages and disadvantages of an issue. In addition, most participants reported that their spoken interaction performance was at around level B1 (32.86%) and above (22.86%). At the level B1, the employees were able to communicate in English and handle an unprepared conversation on familiar topics (e.g., daily routines, work, and current events). Almost a quarter of them (22.86%) were at the level B2 and above. This group of participants were able to interact with proficient speakers fluently.

Most participants reported in the self-assessment survey that their written production was at the threshold level and vantage level (B1 = 41.43%, B2 and above = 37.14%). According to the Council of Europe (2018), the language users who are at level B1 and above can produce a clear and detailed text, write a report, and express their points of view. On the other hand, written interaction seems to be more challenging than production. The participants' abilities in written interaction were quite varied (A1 to B1). More than half of them (58.58%) were reluctant to interact with foreigners. They reported that their abilities were at levels A1 and A2. It could be assumed that this group of employees were confident that they were able to complete some simple transactions, post and react to the post with simple and short statements, and interact with groups working on projects with visual aids to clarify complex concepts (Council of Europe, 2018). They were comfortable with written tasks that did not require them to mediate complicated messages.

Figure 2

The Relationship Between Reception, Production, Interaction, and Mediation (Council of Europe, 2018).

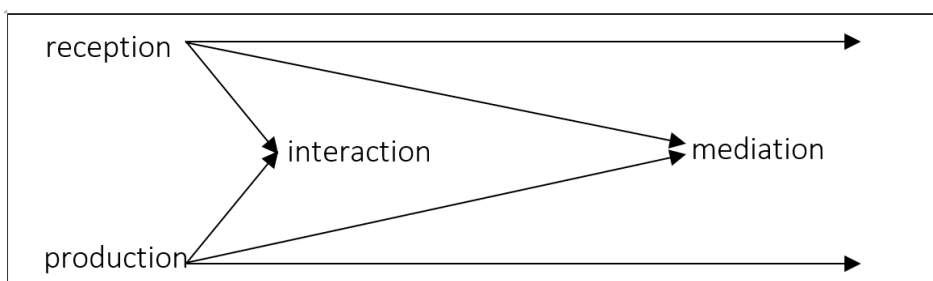
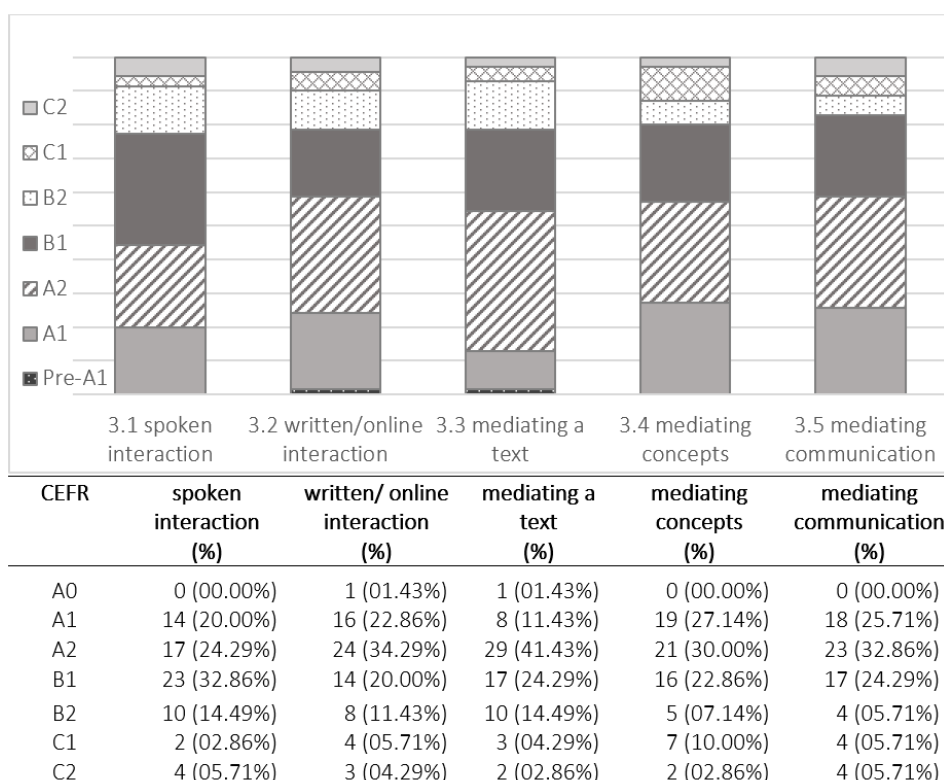


Figure 2 illustrates the relationship among four modes of communication (i.e., reception (reading and listening), production (speaking and writing), interaction, and mediation). To be able to interact, both

reception and production are required. In addition, mediation leads to successful communication. Mediation involves understanding of multi-cultural awareness, translation or interpretation, paraphrasing and cross-linguistics understanding. With mediation, the language users make communication possible for two groups of people who are unable to understand each other. The findings supported this model, i.e., the relationship between reception, production, interaction, and mediation (Council of Europe, 2018). Although more than half of the participants were confident with written production, they were not comfortable with written interaction. It could be assumed that the participants engaged in written production tasks more frequently than interaction tasks. These participants may either have limited opportunities to produce written interactions or avoid engaging in such tasks. The limited ability to correspond leads to difficulty in mediation of written communication.

Figure 3

Employees' Interaction and Mediation Performance (n =70)



The results from the self-assessment survey suggested that most of the participants' interaction and mediation performance was between the A2 and B1 levels of CEFR (see Figure 3). At this level of CEFR, the participants were able to deal with spoken and/or written interaction at the pre-intermediate level. They were able to communicate in English on familiar topics (see Appendix A). Hiranburana (2020) pointed out that, in Thailand, employers' expectations on English language competency were diverse (ranging from A1+ to C2). The researchers suggested that it would be more fruitful for educators and language trainers to examine the needs of particular professions and set specific goals for language learners.

The findings from *English at Work* (English & Symonds, 2016) suggest that most of the jobs require intermediate to advanced English. The needs were varied across fields. The researchers highlighted that the employees in the business sectors (e.g., banking, finance, and law) had to use many technical words and complex language. In tourism and hospitality, the workforce engaged in everyday and simple English. According to Hiranburana (2020), the levels of English skills required across business sectors are not varied; however, different types of jobs demand employees to use English at different levels. The taxi driver and hotel room attendant should be at A1 and A2; meanwhile, the tourist guide, engineer and hotel general manager need to be proficient users of language at B2 and C1 level. The findings of the present study conform with Hiranburana (2020) that the English levels vary from position to position. The top management positions require higher levels of English than the operations.

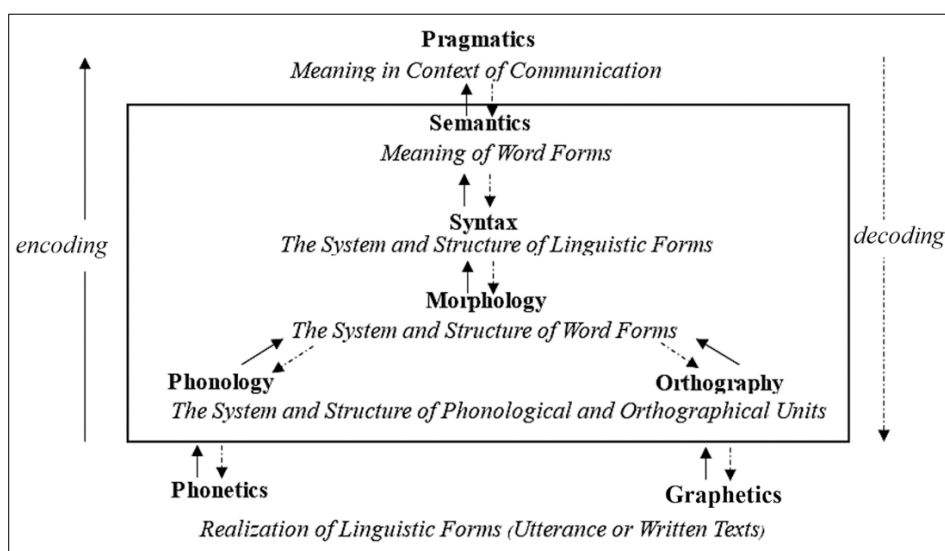
Most participants rated themselves at level B1 and above in the following performances: spoken interaction (55.92%), written interaction (41.43%), mediating a text (45.93%), mediating concepts (42.86%), and mediating communication (41.42%) (see Figure 3). The numbers of participants who were competent in the spoken interaction were larger than those in the written interactions and the mediations. It could be assumed that there were more complicated speaking tasks that employees need to interact with other people than the written tasks. However, the participants may not employ complicated mediations in communication as much as interactions.

Luksaneeyanawin (2007) pointed out that the message is being mediated through the process (see Figure 4). According to the theory of language and communication (Luksaneeyanawin, 2007), a language user is an encoder and decoder at the same time. When the linguistic information received auditorily or visually is being decrypted, the language user uses linguistic knowledge (morphology, syntax, and semantics) to comprehend the message and uses the context of communication (pragmatics) to interpret the meaning of the message. This process can be exemplified with a reading activity. When a language user reads an email, he or she needs to have

knowledge of word forms and meanings. To understand the exact intention of the writer, the language user who reads the email may need pragmatics. On the other hand, the writer of the email is considered a decoder who employs a reverse process. He or she starts with the meaning in context (pragmatics) and uses knowledge of words' form, structure and meaning to produce written texts.

Figure 4

The Theory of Language and Communication (Luksaneeyanawin, 2007)



The findings contribute to the theory of language and communication (Luksaneeyanawin, 2007) that the participants of the present study were able to be the decoders and encoders of language with limitations. As presented in Figure 1, the participants reported that they were more competent in written production than interaction. Most participants rated their performance in the spoken production (44.29%) and spoken interaction (32.86%) at level B1. For writing, most of them rated their written production at B1 (41.43%), but written interaction at A2 (32.29%). It could be assumed that the participants were capable of producing speaking and writing tasks which do not require much knowledge of meaning in context or pragmatics (e.g., writing an email with provided templates or patterns, talking to customers using the familiar expressions). The participants were able to tackle the exposed language in the certain levels (levels A1 – B1). Most participants rated their mediation performance at level A2 (mediating a text 41.43%, mediating concepts = 30.00%, and mediating communication = 32.86%).

They had limits to perform reception, production, interaction, and mediation of language being exposed to. To be the effective language users, the participants need to acquire and employ knowledge of phonology, orthography, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics respectively.

Conclusion

The present study explored the employers' expectations on the English competency of the workforce in the EEC area and the employees' English language competency. The findings indicated that the employers' needs were diverse. The employees who worked closely with the top management of the international companies were normally required to have advanced English. The employees who work in specific position, e.g., front office staff, were expected to possess good listening and speaking skills and use of expressions for particular fields. In addition, the results showed that the range of performance of most participants in reception and production was at levels A2 – B2 which was higher than the performance in interaction and mediation (levels A1 – B1).

The findings of the present study make a contribution to the learning and teaching of English. As the future workforce, learners need to understand that the requirements for different positions are varied. Teachers and learners can use this information to set learning goals to meet the requirements of target jobs or positions so that their learning becomes or remains purposeful. Further studies may employ interviews or observations to investigate the use English by employees in different position at workplaces.

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Appendix A

CEFR descriptors for the A2 to B2 levels: self-assessment grid (reception, production, spoken interaction, written interaction, mediating a text, mediating concepts, and mediating communication) (Council of Europe, 2018)

Modes of Communication	
CEFR	Listening (Reception)
A2	I can understand phrases and the highest frequency vocabulary related to areas of most immediate personal relevance (e.g., very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment).
	I can catch the main point in short, clear, simple messages and announcements.
B1	I can understand the main points of clear standard speech on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc.
	I can understand the main point of many radios or TV programs on current affairs or topics of personal or professional interest when the delivery is relatively slow and clear.

B2	<p>I can understand extended speech and lectures and follow even complex lines of argument provided the topic is reasonably familiar.</p> <p>I can understand most TV news and current affairs programs.</p> <p>I can understand the majority of films in standard dialect.</p>
CEFR	Reading (Reception)
A2	<p>I can read very short, simple texts.</p> <p>I can find specific, predictable information in simple everyday material such as advertisements, prospectuses, menus and timetables and I can understand short simple personal letters.</p>
B1	<p>I can understand texts that consist mainly of high frequency everyday or job-related language.</p> <p>I can understand the description of events, feelings and wishes in personal letters.</p>
B2	<p>I can read articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems in which the writers adopt particular stances or viewpoints.</p> <p>I can understand contemporary literary prose.</p>
CEFR	Spoken Production
A2	<p>I can use a series of phrases and sentences to describe in simple terms my family and other people, living conditions, my educational background and my present or most recent job.</p>
B1	<p>I can connect phrases in a simple way in order to describe experiences and events, my dreams, hopes & ambitions.</p> <p>I can briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.</p> <p>I can narrate a story or relate the plot of a book or film and describe my reactions.</p>
B2	<p>I can present clear, detailed descriptions on a wide range of subjects related to my field of interest.</p> <p>I can explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.</p>
CEFR	Written Production
A2	<p>I can write a series of simple phrases and sentences linked with simple connectors like “and”, “but” and “because”.</p>
B1	<p>I can write straightforward connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest.</p>
B2	<p>I can write clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects related to my interests.</p>

I can write an essay or report, passing on information or giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view.

CEFR	Spoken Interaction
A2	<p>I can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar topics and activities.</p> <p>I can handle very short social exchanges, even though I can't usually understand enough to keep the conversation going myself.</p>
B1	<p>I can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken.</p> <p>I can enter unprepared into conversation on topics that are familiar, of personal interest or pertinent to everyday life (e.g., family, hobbies, work, travel and current events).</p>
B2	<p>I can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible.</p> <p>I can take an active part in discussion in familiar contexts, accounting for and sustaining my views.</p>
CEFR	Written/ Online Interaction
A1	<p>I can post short, simple greetings as statements about what I did and how I liked it, and can respond to comments in a very simple way.</p> <p>I can react simply to other posts, images and media.</p> <p>I can complete a very simple purchase, filling in forms with personal details.</p>
A2	<p>I can engage in basic social interaction, expressing how I feel, what I am doing or what I need, and responding to comments with thanks, apology or answers to questions.</p> <p>I can complete simple transactions such as ordering goods, can follow simple instructions and can collaborate in a shared task with a supportive interlocutor.</p>
A2	<p>I can engage in basic social interaction, expressing how I feel, what I am doing or what I need, and responding to comments with thanks, apology or answers to questions.</p> <p>I can complete simple transactions such as ordering goods, can follow simple instructions and can collaborate in a shared task with a supportive interlocutor.</p>
B1	<p>I can interact about experiences, events, impressions and feelings provided that I can prepare beforehand.</p> <p>I can ask for or give simple clarifications and can respond to comments and questions in some detail.</p>

	I can interact with a group working on a project, provided there are visual aids such as images, statistics and graphs to clarify more complex concepts.
B2	<p>I can interact with several people, linking my contributions to theirs and handling misunderstandings or disagreements, provided the others avoid complex language, allow me time and are generally cooperative.</p> <p>I can highlight the significance of facts, events and experiences, justify ideas and support collaboration.</p>
CEFR	Mediating a Text
A2	I can convey the main point(s) involved in short, simple texts on everyday subjects of immediate interest provided these are expressed clearly in simple language.
B1	I can convey information given in clear, well-structured informational texts on subjects that are familiar or of personal or current interest.
B2	I can convey detailed information and arguments reliably, e.g. the significant point(s) contained in complex but well-structured, texts within my fields of professional, academic and personal interest.
CEFR	mediating concepts
A2	<p>I can collaborate in simple, practical tasks, asking what others think, making suggestions and understanding responses, provided I can ask for repetition or reformulation from time to time.</p> <p>I can make suggestions in a simple way to move the discussion forward and can ask what people think of certain ideas.</p>
B1	<p>I can help define a task in basic terms and ask others to contribute their expertise.</p> <p>I can invite other people to speak, to clarify the reason(s) for their views or to elaborate on specific points they made.</p> <p>I can ask appropriate questions to check understanding of concepts and can repeat back part of what someone has said to confirm mutual understanding.</p>
B2	<p>I can encourage participation and pose questions that invite reactions from other group members' perspectives or ask people to expand on their thinking and clarify their opinions.</p> <p>I can further develop other people's ideas and link them into coherent lines of thinking, considering different sides of an issue.</p>
CEFR	Mediating Communication

A2	<p>I can contribute to communication by using simple words to invite people to explain things, indicating when I understand and/or agree.</p> <p>I can communicate the main point of what is said in predictable, everyday situations about personal wants and needs.</p> <p>I can recognize when speakers disagree or when difficulties occur and can use simple phrases to seek compromise and agreement.</p>
B1	<p>I can support a shared communication culture by introducing people, exchanging information about priorities, and making simple requests for confirmation and/or clarification.</p> <p>I can communicate the main sense of what is said on subjects of personal interest, provided that speakers articulate clearly and that I can pause to plan how to express things.</p>
B2	<p>I can encourage a shared communication culture by adapting the way I proceed, by expressing appreciation of different ideas, feelings and view-points, and inviting participants to react to each other's ideas.</p> <p>I can communicate the significance of important statements and viewpoints on subjects within my fields of interest, provided speakers give clarifications if needed.</p>

Appendix B

Employer's interview questions

1. At your organization/company, how do people use English? Does everyone have to communicate in English? When do people use English for communication?
2. What positions need to use English? Can you explain how do they use English? Could you give examples of tasks or assignments that they do in English?
3. In the recruitment or promotion, do you consider the English proficiency of the candidates? How do you do that?