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## rammar and Communicative English Language Teaching in the Thai Educational Context

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### Abstract

Communicating in English is truly important for graduates when the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) takes full effect by the end of 2015. With limited exposure to English, most Thai students who will soon be a part of the community are at risk of being disadvantaged language users, compared to those from other member countries. The communicative input for practicing speaking and grammar, the backbone of writing, should be balanced appropriately to enable students to have language fluency and accuracy at an acceptable level. The integration of grammar and communicative activities is a challenge within the limitation of the Thai educational context.

**Keywords:** Communicative English language teaching, Grammar, Thai educational context

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## I

# วैयाกรณ์กับการสอนภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อ การสื่อสารในบริบทการศึกษาไทย

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## บทคัดย่อ

การสื่อสารเป็นภาษาอังกฤษนับเป็นสิ่งสำคัญอย่างมากสำหรับบัณฑิต เมื่อประชาคมเศรษฐกิจอาเซียนมีผลอย่างสมบูรณ์ปลายปี 2558 นักศึกษาไทยส่วนใหญ่ผู้ซึ่งจะเป็นส่วนหนึ่งของประชาคมมีโอกาสในการฝึกฝนและใช้ภาษาอังกฤษอย่างจำกัด จึงมีความเสี่ยงที่จะเป็นผู้มีความสามารถทางภาษาด้อยกว่าเพื่อนบ้านในอาเซียน การรักษาสมดุลย์อย่างเหมาะสมระหว่างการฝึกฝนการพูดเพื่อการสื่อสารและการใช้ไวยากรณ์อย่างถูกต้องซึ่งเป็นหลักสำคัญสำหรับการเขียน จะทำให้ผู้เรียนมีความสามารถในการใช้ภาษาได้อย่างคล่องแคล่วและถูกต้องในระดับที่เป็นที่ยอมรับ การผสมผสานไวยากรณ์กับกิจกรรมการสอนเพื่อการสื่อสารจึงเป็นสิ่งที่ท้าทายภายใต้ข้อจำกัดทางบริบทของการศึกษาไทย

**คำสำคัญ:** การสอนภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อการสื่อสาร ไวยากรณ์ บริบทการศึกษาไทย

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## **Introduction**

English has been perceived as a lingua franca in Thailand and as the working language of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC). Its importance has been increasing over time, from the period of global impact in the past from colonization and globalization to the regional impact at present from AEC integration. English is at the forefront of the country's development goals in order to increase the workforce and graduates' English proficiency (Thailand, Office of Higher Education Commission, 2015). Due to the fact that Thailand was not colonized in the past, English is not used as the first or official second language. The country is classified as an "expanding circle" country according to Kachru (1992) in which English is used as a means of communication. Nevertheless, English has been a compulsory subject in schools and universities for many decades. Though the world focus has shifted to Asia and Asian languages, like Chinese and Japanese, English is still the global language for trade and communication. There is even more growing demand of English usage nowadays in various sectors in Thailand, such as international trade, logistics, industries and the hospitality business, especially when the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) takes full effect by the end of 2015.

English, as the working language of the AEC, has become more important and necessary than in the past because new

graduates, whether they want to work abroad or in Thailand, will have to cooperate with the workforce and colleagues from other member countries since working mobility is one of the agreements in the AEC blueprint. Many companies are adjusting to the new situation by asking their employees to use and improve their English in the workplace (Thailand ranks near bottom in English proficiency: Survey, n.d.).

Regarding English teaching, the traditional grammar translation method which focused on grammar and structure was implemented in the past, so students were taught grammar points and practiced a lot of reading and writing skills. Students studying with this method were not able to speak English fluently; therefore, communicative language teaching was introduced in Thailand and embraced by Thai educators. This new approach was assigned to be used in schools and the traditional methods were abandoned because of their limitations. Widdowson (1990) explained the differences between the communicative approach and the grammar translation method. The communicative approach emphasizes concepts and notions with the idea of expression as key; whereas the grammar translation method emphasizes forms, words and sentence patterns.

Unfortunately, after more than three decades of using the communicative approach at all levels of English instruction, the English proficiency of Thai students has not improved,

neither listening and speaking which were emphasized, nor reading and writing skills. The average TOEFL ITP score of Thai test takers decreased from 472 in 2012 to 470 in 2014 ([www.ets.org/toeflitp](http://www.ets.org/toeflitp)). Thai students have been expected to be able to use the language efficiently after several years of studying English. However, it recently showed that Thai people's English proficiency was categorized as 'very low proficiency', ranking 62nd out of 70 countries where English is not used as their first language (EF English proficiency index 2015, 2015). This means most Thai graduates who will have to work in the international setting, like the AEC, still cannot effectively communicate in English. One of the aims of the English curriculum reform in 1999 was to enable students to communicate correctly and appropriately in both local and international situations; however, the majority of Thai teachers failed to achieve the goals set (Foley, 2005). Teachers had minimal training in English which led to misunderstandings and inconsideration of the teaching context.

Now it is a major concern for the government and private sectors that most Thai graduates and workforces do not have sufficient English knowledge and skills for the AEC working environments as Thailand has been ranked 'very low proficiency' for five consecutive years and the third worst in Asia in 2015 (EF English proficiency index 2015, 2015).

Wiriyaichitra (2015) mentioned that English curriculum in Thai universities cannot meet the demands for English used in the workplace. Most teachers have the experience of students saying, "I want to speak but I don't know how to say it in English." This reflects the fact that students do not have the necessary knowledge of the English language structure to construct sentences on their own for both speaking and writing. Watanasin (2015) reckoned that students struggled to express ideas in English due to their low English proficiency. They came to class with minimal ability because of their limited communicative competence. Though they have practiced speaking with native speaker teachers, they study English oral skills following expressions in textbooks. When they want to convey their own ideas, they do not know how to express them. The expectation of students' better capability in English skills by changing the teaching method to communicative language teaching has not been accomplished and adjustments need to be carefully implemented. There are many factors for the communicative approach not yielding high results as expected.

## **Factors affecting communicative approach teaching efficiency in Thailand**

### **1. Misconception of communicative approach teaching**

### 1.1 Focus only on oral skills

Communicative language teaching (CLT) was initiated to meet the demand of a foreign language at work in the European Common Market in 1960s where there was an urgent need of speaking the target language. It was developed based on the functional use of language by British and American linguists, giving primacy to the spoken language (Thompson, 1996). It was adopted in Thailand in the early 1980s due to its popularity of emphasis on meaningful communication. Though the communicative approach was introduced through conferences and training programs, Thai teachers did not fully understand its whole concept and interpreted it in different ways. Wanchai (2015) mentioned that EFL teachers need more assistance for learning opportunities to understand the basic concepts of communicative language teaching and to obtain more practical input in order to increase their confidence in developing communicative activities. English teaching has mainly been focused on listening and speaking with the attempt to solve the problem of students not being able to speak English. However, in Thailand, the practice has been limited to only around three hours per week on average in the classroom, following the conversation patterns in the commercial textbooks chosen. Furthermore, activities to enhance speaking capabilities have not sufficiently added. Though the expressions studied are the ones expected

to be frequently used, communication in real situations expands more than the commonly used patterns studied. Students learn these conversations by rote, leading to the inability to apply or adapt what has been learnt to new situations. Methitham and Chamcharatsri (2011) stated that Thai English teachers willingly adopt the teaching methods from the West unaware that the teaching contexts are quite different. Therefore, only practicing what is in the textbooks is not enough; students need to be able to make their own sentences according to the situations at hand.

### 1.2 Not teaching grammar

Since communicative language teaching emphasizes the fluency of using the language, teachers have a misconception of practicing only speaking, with less consideration on accuracy. Mistakes in spoken language are more tolerant than in written language as context and nonverbal cues during communication will foster understanding. This misconception leads to the overlooking of teaching grammar. Watanasin (2015) mentioned in his study that some teachers seemed to be unsure of the role of grammar in communicative classroom. However, for Thai students, they cannot acquire the English language the same way as they acquire their first language and use it automatically without the need to study the language structure. Moreover, their exposure to the English language is rather

limited; therefore, the opportunities to acquire the language naturally are minimal. The Ministry of Education (2006) marked ‘communicative English environment’ as one of the key areas to be tackled. When students feel not capable of speaking comprehensible English, they are shy to speak. The expectation that students can assimilate the rules of using the language correctly and appropriately hardly becomes true. In the coming AEC environment, the productive skills to be used in working situations will not be limited only to speaking. Written communication will also be critically important; at least exchanging emails can be expected. Mistakes in written messages can lead to confusion and damage in business or financial matters. Integrating grammar points into each lesson is necessary for Thai students studying English as a foreign language. For example, “tenses” is a very obvious topic that needs to be taught as there is no verb conjugation in the Thai language. Grammar is the foundation of the language that students can use to generate sentences or messages they want to convey.

## **2. Limited context for practicing English skills**

Thailand is a monolingual country; as a result, there is no official use of the English language in everyday life if a person is not involved in the hospitality or international business. Though tourism is one of the main

sources of income of the country, the number of people involved being able to speak English is still at a very low percentage. The English language environment in Thailand is very limited compared to western countries where opportunities for learners to be exposed to the target language outside the classroom are abundant. Thai students stated that limited exposure to English was one of the factors contributing to their English speaking problems (Jindathai, 2015). Opportunities for acquiring language competence naturally are insufficient; as a result, practicing English language outside the classroom is not easy to implement. For example, some teachers assign students to speak with foreign tourists as an activity to try and put students in real communication situations; but sometimes they cannot get the cooperation from the target groups. Students mostly practice English skills in the classroom with controlled activities due to large class sizes. However, in real life or working situations in their future career, they cannot expect people to communicate with them following the patterns studied in class. With limited context of using the language, opportunities for experiencing real or genuine situations, or “learning by doing” are scarce.

## **3. Commercial textbooks used in schools and universities**

Most commercial textbooks are written focusing on listening and speaking activities

with structures and grammar briefly explained in accordance with the activities presented. They are appropriate for learners who have plenty of opportunities to be exposed to the English language, for example, immigrants to English speaking countries or students in countries that use English as a second language. These learners have strong motivation and countless chances to employ knowledge in their everyday life activities or working situations to enhance their competence.

However, when textbooks are chosen for Thai students, the opportunities to use expressions studied are so few and grammar points presented are discrete. Students learn various grammar points which can be compared to jigsaws. Cowan (2008) commented that the discrete grammar points in each chapter in textbooks cause a misleading impression that students have learnt grammar. However, they cannot put all small pieces of the jigsaw together to make the whole picture. Therefore, when they want to use it in their productive skills, -speaking and writing- they cannot produce the message that can fully convey their ideas or make themselves clearly understood.

Furthermore, most commercial textbook activities aim at giving practice for students to speak in contexts they may not be familiar with. Burke (2007) suggested that authentic materials such as magazines, newspapers, or travel guides are important in promoting students'

communicative competence. Teachers should not sequentially follow a textbook nor do they need to cover everything and, as Savignon (1997) pointed out, there is no such thing as an ideal textbook.

#### **4. Differences between the English and Thai languages**

English and Thai are in different language families; consequently, their language patterns are not harmonious. The differences can be seen in major parts of the structure that can lead to misunderstandings. Major differences between the two languages are, for example, the use of various different tenses, passive voice, word placement, questions and answer patterns - especially negative questions and answers. The answer of a negative question in the Thai language is not similar to and seems to be not logical in English. Here are examples of the negative question and answer in the Thai language:

e.g. Are you not going to the movie tonight?

Yes, I'm not going tonight.

This can cause confusion because of first language interference and students tend to use it without noticing the different use in English.

When students do not have knowledge of the English language structures and do not realize the differences between the two

languages, they tend to translate from Thai to English word by word, both in speaking and writing, and that causes meaningless messages for foreigners such as:

My sister really likes a beautiful fairy tale book picture came to buy mom.

*(My sister really likes a beautiful fairy tale picture book my mom bought.)*

His father remarried with Caucasian blue eyes.

*(His father remarried a blue-eyed Caucasian.)*

## **The role of grammar in English communicative teaching**

There are still some controversies over the importance of teaching grammar. By implication, communicative language teaching involves equipping students with vocabulary, structures and functions, as well as strategies, to enable students to interact successfully (Belchamber, 2015). According to Chomsky (1965) and Hymes (1972), communicative competence consists of 4 aspects: linguistic competence; discourse competence; sociolinguistic competence; and strategic competence. Grammar is an element of linguistic competence. Krashen (1988) argued that grammar teaching is unnecessary because it can only be acquired unconsciously through spontaneous conversations in the target

language. Of course, there are many examples of successful second language acquisition with no instruction of grammar. It is obvious that exposure to understandable language input is extremely significant for language acquisition, including grammar.

However, Richards and Ranandya (2011) stated that people now agree that grammar is too important to be ignored, and that without a good knowledge of grammar, learners' language development will be severely constrained. Moreover, Savignon (2005) pointed out that communicative language teaching does not exclude a focus on knowledge of rules of syntax. This idea was echoed by Swan (2006) who suggested that where time is limited and learners have little out-of-class exposure, mastering structural features and an adequate understanding and use of these features can only be brought about with the help of pedagogic intervention.

As there is not enough or appropriate English environment available for students to experience, learn and apply the language, conscious classroom learning is a necessary choice. Moreover, the differences between the Thai and English languages make it necessary for Thai students to learn grammar so that they can properly communicate. It is worth mentioning here that communication does not limit itself only to listening and speaking. Written communication which is heavily based

on grammar and structure also becomes the main channel in most business transactions. However, language teaching focuses on all four skills; therefore, it is not a polarization of either oral skills of listening-speaking or grammar reading and writing. Swan (2011) indicated that knowing how to build and use certain structures makes it possible to communicate common types of meaning successfully because it is difficult to make comprehensible sentences without these structures. In addition, for countries whose first language is not English, there is still a need for structural practices so that communication activities can be performed based on the foundation of linguistic knowledge. Knowing and being able to apply grammar rules helps students understand and make utterances clear and understood.

In real situations, the listener could get the intended meaning from the context by guessing or by using communicative strategies - mistakes being acceptable to a certain extent; writing, on the other hand, needs more accuracy, especially concerning business issues. In the international working environment, clear and correct messages can avoid unnecessary problems and can create a good impression and trust. Bosuwan (2013) concluded that students made syntactic errors in their writing due to first language interference, incomplete application of rules and overgeneralization. This shows that grammar

plays a vital role in developing students' communicative capabilities

From the points mentioned, it is necessary to teach grammar because it is fundamental and it is the backbone of any language. Grammar knowledge can be helpful in producing accurate forms of spoken and written language. It provides students with the structures needed to organize and transmit messages and ideas. Cowan (2010) indicated that the ability to arrange the words of a second language into meaningful sentences is absolutely basic to communicating in that language. Teaching grammar here does not mean the traditional grammar translation method. Nassaji and Fotos (2011) suggested that a focus on grammar must be incorporated into language instruction to develop students' communicative competence and to enable them to use language fluently and accurately. Moreover, they also emphasized that incorporating grammar into target language use and applying it to communicative practices allows for the development of both accuracy and fluency. However, the learning context of each class should also be taken into consideration.

Therefore, in order to enable students to be able to communicate correctly, both in spoken and written forms, with learning context and limitations in Thailand, teaching grammar should also be balanced and properly emphasized in communicative language

lessons. The question is how grammar can be appropriately mingled with communicative input in English language teaching. The teaching of grammar can be done explicitly and implicitly. The teacher is the one who knows well which way works best with his/her students.

### **Explicit or implicit grammar integration**

According to Richards (2002), a communicative approach to grammar teaching would provide students with a range of opportunities to focus on the accurate grammatical forms and also employ acceptable meanings in communicative activities. The question is how to equip students with certain necessary forms that can be used later in communication.

#### **Explicit grammar teaching**

Explicit grammar teaching, or ‘Focus on Forms’ (FonFs) as Long (2015) coined it, refers to a formal instruction that students are presented with discrete points of grammar structures with emphasis on form in separate non-communicative lessons. Students are encouraged to master each linguistic item through conscious learning, drills and practices. These practices are commonly associated with grammar rules, repetition of models, and transformation exercises. Nassaji and Fotos (2011) explained explicit input as overt form-focused intervention in which the teacher explicitly leads learners’ attention to particular

linguistics features through explanation and rule presentation. Richards (2002) also suggested that language learners might have better understanding of the foreign language structure when they are taught with grammatical forms in an explicit way. This idea was confirmed by Nazari (2013) who found that students who were taught under explicit conditions generally outperformed those who had been exposed to implicit presentation, especially in writing. Moreover, some basic features of the English language grammar structures are illogical and easily misunderstood as well as often completely different from expressions in students’ first language, so explicit teaching may be required.

However, Long (2015) stated that FonFs or explicit teaching leads to lessons which are dry and consist of teaching linguistic forms with little concern about communicative use as there is no learners’ needs analysis. The teacher just provides the knowledge of grammar leading to conscious learning.

#### **Implicit grammar teaching**

Implicit grammar teaching consists of multiple exposures to target language forms so that students have opportunities to notice and analyze them in order to be able to conclude how they work without overt reference to rules or forms. The target grammatical form is presented in a communicative context with many examples containing that grammatical

feature. Brown (2007) defined implicit learning as learning without conscious attention or awareness where students acquire knowledge through the exposure of information. Being exposed to many examples to explore, students can be trained to be active thinkers because they have to notice, make assumptions, and draw conclusions. Exercises or activities that require a reproduction of the form studied can be assigned as follow-ups which will reinforce students' awareness of the structure. Students are expected to have active understanding and to be able to conclude the rules. It is important to recognize that implicit teaching of grammar may require a high degree of proficiency and knowledge of students as they have to be able to see similar and different uses of the language.

### **Adapting teaching grammar to Thai context**

It is generally believed that there is no single best method that meets all teaching contexts, goals and needs. Though there is a necessity to teach grammar to Thai students, this does not mean to return to traditional grammar translation methods, only teaching grammar rules. It needs to be taught and assessed as a part of communicative performance, especially the productive skills of writing and speaking in order to suit the needs to develop a communicative capability (Richards & Reppen, 2014). The appropriate

way is to integrate teaching grammar into the communicative approach, and select the grammar points relevant to students' needs. There are several suggestions; however, it depends on the situation, students' level of English, class size, time, and teaching - learning context as Swan (2011:152) stated that "what points of grammar we choose to teach will depend on our circumstances and our learners' aims". Practices in communicative contexts can foster students to transfer form to meaning by implementing structures in real-life communication.

Here are some steps that can be adapted and applied to each class on the basis of students' performance on communicative activities, no matter what the teaching method is.

First, students should be introduced to new language points in a familiar comprehensible context such as authentic dialogues or reading texts so that they are able to understand the meanings and functions of the language points introduced. Teachers need to select activities appropriate to students' proficiency to enable their understanding (Ghazali, Setia, Muthusamy, & Jusoff, 2009). Teachers can provide various types of activities which can encourage students to develop their listening and speaking skills to reach a certain level of fluency and also help them notice the form studied. The use of communicative tasks plus the teacher's

positive corrective feedback on errors can foster acceptable levels of accuracy and fluency.

Second, after students get the meanings and functions intended, they should be guided to turn their attention to notice grammar points used in the materials studied. In groups, they should point out the grammar points presented in the text, discuss the usage of grammar points and conclude the rules. It is preferable to let students get the rule by themselves because this will lead to a deeper understanding and awareness of the usage of grammar. Richards and Ranandya (2011) pointed out that in advocating the use of activities, the assumption is that learners will develop not only communicative skills but also an acceptable standard of performance through tasks. Task work is seen as part of the process by which linguistic and communicative competence is developed. At this point, though the discussion among themselves is overt and explicit, students can practice critical thinking and discussion techniques to reach mutual conclusions. In this way, students can be active thinkers by contributing their knowledge to the group and they can acquire new knowledge in an informal way.

Third, teachers can ask students to present their grammar points discovered or teachers can confirm students' understandings to make sure that students get the correct and accurate knowledge. Moreover, teachers

can add more points related to the grammar features students have discovered in order that students have the whole concept of the grammar points studied and can apply them appropriately. This intervention is necessary as Richards (2002) claimed that the teacher's feedback on errors during activities completion may not be sufficient. Any irregularities of the grammar points, exception of the rules, or features that are completely different from the first language can be explained.

Last, students should be provided with activities or assignments to practice the points studied. The assignments can be efficient if they are in the production, not recognition, level and students need to apply the knowledge acquired in class. These assignments can be a guarantee that students fully understand and can appropriately apply them in the given context.

However, each class has its own characteristics and needs; the teaching will vary to serve those needs appropriately. Teachers need to orchestrate the teaching by balancing grammar teaching and communicative input, taking into account teaching context conditions. The proportion of skills practiced and steps suggested can be adjusted according to students' need and circumstances. Well-organized plans based on the students' English levels are, of course, essential. A concrete example is suggested as follows:

Steps	Goals and skills / methods	Activities
Step 1 Introduction of new language points in a familiar comprehensible context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Listening and recognizing the use of “should” for making suggestions</li> <li>- speaking (making suggestions)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students listen to a company meeting (script on the following page) and figure out in which situations “should” is used.</li> <li>-Teacher lists sentences containing “should”.</li> <li>- In pairs, students practice speaking in the situations given.</li> <li>-In groups, students can participate in simulated meetings.</li> </ul>
Step 2 Noticing and discussing grammar points presented in the conversation studied	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- active and critical thinking</li> <li>- implicit grammar teaching</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-In groups, search for more sentences from various suggested websites and discuss the function, usage of “should” and conclude the rules.</li> </ul>
Step 3 Presenting grammar points discovered and teacher’s explanation added	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Implicit and explicit grammar teaching</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students present rules, explanation and examples to class or the teacher.</li> <li>- Teacher asks students to search for other expressions that can be used for making suggestions.</li> <li>- Teacher adds more points related to “should” and “shouldn’t” such as               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Other expressions for making suggestions (Should we...?, How about....?, Why not....?, Let’s....., I suggest.....)</li> <li>2. Other modals (can ,could, may, might, must, have to, will, would)</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
Step 4 Practicing in productive skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Speaking and writing sentences/ paragraphs using modals in situations given</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students do the activity in language focus (on the following page) and other activities provided by the teacher.</li> <li>- Students compose a piece of writing and/or a conversation using should, other expressions or other modals</li> </ul>

**Content:** Knight & O'Neil, 2007, 44

**Script of listening activity (step 1)**

Boss: What do you think Paul?

Paul: We shouldn't ask customers to talk about problems with our products. This may leave them with a negative feeling.

Boss: Agreed. What should we ask them for?

Sheila: I think we should ask them to make positive suggestions.

Boss: Everyone agree?

All: Yes.

Boss: OK. So we've decided that we need to get this kind of feedback from our customers. The question is, how do we get it?

Mary: May I suggest something?

Boss: Sure, go ahead.

Mary: I think we should send a questionnaire to the cust...

Sheila: The problem with questionnaires is that people don't return them.

Paul: Umm....

Boss: Yes Paul?

Paul: I agree. I think we should ask our customers face-to-face when we meet them.

Mary: I'm not sure about that. We shouldn't ask people face-to-face because they might not be honest in their answers.

Boss: That's true.

Mary: Er... How about offering a free gift if customers return our questionnaire?

Boss: Good idea. We should send out a questionnaire offering a free gift if people respond.

**Activity: Language focus (step 4)**

**Use should or shouldn't to fill the gaps.**

1. Manager: Nobody checks the email from the company website. This ..... happen.  
Colleague: You're right. We ..... assign one person to check every day.
2. Manager: Everyone go to lunch at the same time and no one is left to answer the phone.  
Colleague: I guess we ..... all go together. Some .....go at twelve and some at one.
3. Manager: Customers are complaining that when they call the office, they are left on hold.  
We ..... keep people waiting.  
Colleague: We ..... organize a training workshop.

**Comprehensibility, acceptability and accuracy**

Considering the urgent need of graduates with English skills and proficiency to work in AEC environments or international settings, teachers need to be able to equip them with abilities to understand others accurately and make themselves understood. Comprehensibility may take a high priority. For example, the incorrect use of active or passive voice can have a substantial effect on understanding and further actions as in these two following sentences:

Our company has taken over ABC Co., Ltd.

Our company has been taken over by ABC Co., Ltd.

Though context may facilitate understanding, a mistake which causes miscommunication and damage can occur.

Students with limited exposure to English and knowledge of structure and grammar may have limitations in using appropriate and accurate language. Tolerance of grammatical inaccuracies that do not interfere too much with meaning should be accepted. Inaccuracy in speaking situations can be taken less seriously as there are more chances that understanding can be corrected. However, in written communication, a correct use of language is more preferable and acceptable, even essential. Mistakes in written communication can seriously damage business and relationships but can be avoided because the writer can review his or her use of language.

All in all, comprehensibility should take priority in communication. Accuracy is more important in written messages than in oral communication, and acceptability can be varied according to the situations and contexts. Moreover, fluency and accuracy alter according

to genre, significance of the communicative situation and purpose.

## Conclusion

The main goal of English teaching to Thai students is to equip them with the language that can be used in everyday communication and at work in an acceptably accurate and comprehensible way. Teachers need to balance communicative and grammar practice to appropriately serve the goals and teaching context. There is no single best method to suit all conditions and students; therefore, careful planning is essential to the success in equipping students with workable English proficiency. Since accuracy in the language used is quite important for work-related communication, incorporating the teaching of grammar into communicative English teaching and learning would lead to more accuracy in speaking and writing. Whether it is an old-style or modern method of teaching, the best one is the one that suits the teaching context of each class and can maximize students' capabilities under the limitations we are facing.

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