

An Exploration of Salespersons' Communication Apprehension in English Communication: A Case of a Private Company in Thailand

Penpitcha Prakaiborisuth

Thammasat University, Bangkok, Thailand

penpitcha.prakaiborisuth@gmail.com

Article information	
Abstract	Communicating in a foreign language can be a traumatic experience for a large number of language users, and having to use a foreign language can lead to anxiety or communication apprehension. In cases of salespersons, communication apprehension can adversely affect sales performance and the ability to engage customers and close deals. The present study aimed at investigating the levels of communication apprehension among Thai salespersons during oral sales presentations in English, explore the perceived effects of communication apprehension on sales presentations, and identify coping strategies employed by Thai salespersons to manage their communication apprehension. Quantitative data from self-report questionnaires and qualitative data from semi-structured interviews were gathered, and descriptive statistics were used to analyze quantitative data and thematic analysis was employed to analyze qualitative data. The results revealed that the overall level of communication apprehension among Thai salespersons during oral sales presentations in English was moderate. As for the perceived effects of communication apprehension on sales performance, salespersons in this study felt that high communication apprehension led to negative effects such as low self-esteem, dependence on peers, and avoidance of customer interactions. In contrast, low

	communication apprehension resulted in customer enjoyment and a positive impression. Finally, in terms of coping strategies, Thai salespersons employed strategies similar to the ones generally used by second-language learners including circumlocution, semantic avoidance, word coinage, language switch, asking for clarification, non-verbal strategies, and avoidance. The findings of this study could be utilized as baseline data for development of a training program to help salespersons cope with their communication apprehension.
Keywords	Communication apprehension (CA), Thai salespersons, English communication, coping strategies
APA citation:	Prakaiborisuth, P. (2023). An exploration of salespersons' levels of anxiety and motivation in English communication: A case of Thailand. <i>PASAA</i> , 65, 263–297.

1. Introduction

Salespersons are not just employees who sell company products or services, but also represent the image of their company to potential customers. When interacting with customers, salespersons should be able to design a persuasive and intriguing sale pitch so that they will have higher chances to close sales. In general, in order to prepare and deliver an effective and persuasive sales pitch, salespersons need to have extensive knowledge of what they are trying to sell as well as language skills that enable them to engage in effective communication with their customers.

Profound knowledge of the product can be well studied and prepared by salespersons. However, how to deliver that knowledge to persuade customers to make a purchase is an essential skill that might not be easy to develop. Therefore, effective communication skills of salespersons should be considered a key to a company's success. Effective communication comprises linguistic ability, communication strategies, confidence, and self-esteem (Benson et al., 2013). Professional salespersons usually possess all the four elements. However, there

are a number of salespersons who are unable to apply all four elements of effective communication when making a sales pitch in another language that is not their mother tongue. When making presentations in a non-native language, linguistic ability can be a main factor affecting the quality of the presentation.

A large number of English as a second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language (EFL) users, including salespersons, encounter difficulties when having to engage in oral communication (Furmark et al., 1999). Previous studies have indicated that one of the most problematic areas in English communication among Thai salespersons who have to communicate with foreign customers in English is speaking due to a lack of linguistic knowledge including sentence structures and vocabulary (Phuangmanee, 2016; Pruksanubal, 2006; Phongpichitphoom, 2017). These limitations can lead to misunderstanding, confusion, and a waste of time (Phuangmanee, 2016).

Salespersons who are required to communicate with foreign customers cannot avoid using English as a medium of communication, regardless of their English proficiency. Performing a job with a language that they are not truly proficient in can cause a high level of anxiety or communication apprehension (CA) for salespersons. As a result, salespersons with high levels of communication apprehension may fail to properly transmit their messages, resulting in misunderstandings and significant sales loss (Neuliep & McCroskey, 1997).

There are numerous studies on the effect of communication apprehension in various fields, such as engineering (Kakepoto et al., 2020), aviation industry (Vanzo, 2017), and education (Martin et al., 2009). However, the effects of communication apprehension on sales communication has not been widely researched. Therefore, this study aimed to investigate the levels of communication apprehension among Thai salespersons, explore their perceived effects of communication apprehension on their sales presentations, and determine the strategies used by salespersons to cope with their communication apprehension

during sales presentations. It was anticipated that findings of this study would contribute to the literature on communication apprehension in the Thai context and lead to a better understanding of how private businesses can effectively support their salespersons when they are performing their job. Besides this, understanding the coping strategies employed by salespersons in response to communication apprehension would enable organizations to develop targeted interventions and training programs that enhance salespersons' ability to manage their sales presentations, hence benefiting both salespersons and companies in the Thai market.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Communication Apprehension (CA)

Communication Apprehension (CA) was firstly mentioned by McCroskey (1977) as “an individual's level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons” (p. 78). In fact, this fear is stimulated by either the expected or sensed judgment from the audience or the speakers themselves. Communication apprehension can occur any time and in any situation such as while speaking on stage in front of a crowd, in a small group discussion, or between the speaker and another person.

Previously, communication apprehension was divided into two main categories: trait CA and state CA (McCroskey, 1982, 1984). Later on, it was recategorized into four types: (1) trait-like CA, (2) context-based CA, (3) audience-based CA, and (4) situational CA (McCroskey & Beatty, 1998).

To begin with, trait-like CA relates to a person's personality which cannot be easily changed (McCroskey et al., 2009). People with high trait-like CA tend to avoid interaction with others as they fear an interlocutor's judgment of them. As such, they tend to be anxious about having to engage in oral communication in all contexts.

Context-based CA refers to anxiety triggered by a specific context like group discussions, meetings, interpersonal conversations, and public speaking (McCroskey, 1982). This type of communication apprehension is easier to handle compared to trait-like CA as people can get used to a specific situation through repeated encounters and personal experiences.

Audience-based CA occurs when a person faces a certain person or group of people (McCroskey, 1984). Some individuals find it more comfortable to speak to someone with particular characteristics. To further clarify, the success rate of having oral communication depends on the speaker's similarity and familiarity with the audience, audience size, and the audience's status. People tend to be more relaxed when communicating with someone who they think is similar or familiar to them as similarity and familiarity can reduce the chance of getting a disappointing or unexpected reaction from the audience.

Finally, situational CA is defined as “response to the situational constraints generated by the other person or group” (McCroskey, 1984, p. 18). This type of communication apprehension is only triggered by a particular combination of audience and context which leads to a less comfortable scenario to the speaker. Simple factors like being tired, topics going wrong, or not being ready for a presentation, as well as more modern factors from remote communication such as a lack of familiarity with technology or equipment and unstable Internet connectivity are considered special situations that can bring about situational CA.

2.2 Causes of Communication Apprehension

According to McCrosky & Andersen (1976), almost every person can experience communication apprehension to a certain degree. However, the causes of communication apprehension vary depending on the types of communication apprehension. Condit (2000) has pointed out that communication apprehension could be affected by the surrounding environment, culture, and heredity. McCroskey (1984), however, proposed two major causes of communication

apprehension: (1) rational CA and (2) non-rational CA. The lack of or limited communication skills and inadequate preparation on the topic for presentation are considered as factors contributing to rational CA (Gee-Whai Kho & Ting, 2021), while non-rational CA refers to heredity like inherited personality traits or the existence of high levels of anxiety despite having fine levels of communication skills. Non-rational CA can be a cause of trait-like CA, as Beatty and McCroskey (2001) explained that 80 percent of trait-like CA is a result of genetics. In contrast, the other 20 percent is stimulated by the surrounding environments like demographics, cultures, and socio-economic factors (Alley-Young, 2005).

2.3 Effects of Communication Apprehension

People with high levels of communication apprehension usually exhibit deterioration of the quality and quantity of communication (Freimuth, 2006). Therefore, they are likely to be quiet and low task-oriented. They also try to avoid interpersonal conversation. This can lead to undesirable consequences including difficulty securing a job, receiving job promotion, and earning high incomes. In terms of personality, people with high communication apprehension have a high tendency to be introverts, whereas those with low communication apprehension are likely to be extroverts (Opt & Loffredo, 2000). Regarding learning styles, previous studies (e.g. Russ, 2012; Dwyer, 1998) have indicated that communication apprehension levels are significantly correlated with learning styles. For example, females with low communication apprehension are more eager to learn through exploring (McCarthy, 1987).

Therefore, when considering possible effects of communication apprehension, it can be assumed that successful salespersons need to have a low level of communication apprehension in order to successfully perform their sales presentations. A study that sheds more light on communication apprehension of salespersons is called for.

2.4 Communication Apprehension and Salesperson Performance

Apparently, being a salesperson means you need to regularly engage in communication. In other words, salespersons cannot avoid communicating with their customers. Thus, it is a job that may lead to stress and high communication apprehension level, particularly when salespersons are aware of their lack of the language ability required. In fact, it is generally believed that levels of communication apprehension vary across professions. For instance, Byrne et al. (2009) have reported that salespersons tend to have higher levels of communication apprehension compared to people in other professions such as accountants. Furthermore, there is a variation in communication apprehension levels among salespersons with different positions. According to Butler (1996), salespersons with entry-level positions tend to have a higher level of communication apprehension. This affects their job performance, as well as career advancement, as they may choose avoidance behavior to cope with their communication apprehension, hence poorer sales performance compared to fellow salespersons with lower levels of communication apprehension. On the organizational level, having a high level of communication apprehension can have an influence on productivity of a company (Byrne et al., 2009; Watson & Bossley, 1995). A previous study carried out by Pitt and Ramaseshan (1990) has pinpointed a negative relationship between high communication apprehension levels and salespersons' job performance. Simply put, when salespersons had high levels of communication apprehension, they could become too self-focused, which, in turn, affected their ability to communicate with customers. In fact, when salespersons are anxious and stricken with communication apprehension, they are less likely to be able to explore and discover their customers' needs, explain the interesting features and benefits of products or services, and convey messages necessary to close sales (Pitt & Ramaseshan, 1990; Boorom et al., 1998). For this reason, high communication apprehension levels of salespersons could be considered a barrier to successful job performance and career advancement, so better understanding of salespersons' communication apprehension is deemed necessary.

3. Methodology

This study employed a sequential explanatory design in order to answer the research questions. According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2018), sequential explanatory design is a mixed methods research technique in which quantitative data are collected and analyzed first, followed by qualitative data. This is to draw on potential strengths of both quantitative and qualitative methodologies.

3.1 Participants

The participants in the quantitative part of this study were 45 Thai salespersons who were employed by a private company in Thailand. Two criteria were used for the participant selection. First, the prospective salespersons had to have been working for the company for at least two years. This is because a period of two years was assumed to be long enough for them to gain the necessary knowledge and understanding of their line of work. Secondly, salespersons were recruited from shops located in locations that predominantly catered to overseas customers, all of which were situated right in the heart of Bangkok and were considered high-end shopping centers. This was to make sure that the recruited salespersons constantly had the chance to use English when communicating with foreign customers.

Main responsibilities of the selected participants were related to four oral communication contexts including group discussions, meetings, interpersonal conversations, and public speaking. As for group discussions, salespersons had to engage in group discussion with potential clients, especially when sales presentations had to be done between business and business settings. They also needed to contribute their ideas and insights in English during a small group discussion with foreign teams aboard. Besides, sales meetings with international teams were organized every month. As for interpersonal communication, this involved a one-on-one communication with foreign customers, be it face-to-face, over the phone, or via emails. Lastly, regarding public speaking contexts,

salespersons had to give presentations to potential clients during public events organized by the company, both on-site and online settings.

With regard to the qualitative part, data collection was done using a semi-structured in-depth interview protocol. Six interview participants were chosen using stratified random sampling. This type of random sampling method involved the division of a population into groups which shared similar attributes before participants were randomly selected from each group. Using this sampling method in the present study ensured that the interviews were conducted with salespersons who represented those with different communication apprehension levels—low, moderate, and high, with two salespersons from each level.

3.2 Research Instruments

A questionnaire was utilized as the primary data collection instrument to shed light on the degrees of communication apprehension experienced by Thai salespersons of a private company when speaking English. McCroskey (1977, 1982, 2005) developed and subsequently revised the Personal Report of Communication Apprehension Measurement (PRCA-24) to assess communication apprehension. The PRCA-24 Thai version translated from the original English version by Rimkeeratikul (2008) and Booncherd (2016) was utilized to collect data from participants in this study. To ensure content validity of the questionnaire, it was submitted to a panel of three experts who were university lecturers with specialization in the fields of English linguistics, language assessment and evaluation, and English language instruction, respectively. The Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) index was calculated to ensure that the questionnaire items could accurately capture the relevant constructs and were suitable for use with Thai salespersons. The first part of the questionnaire consisted of eight multiple-choice items which elicited data regarding demographic characteristics of the participants including gender, age, educational background, numbers of years working as a salesperson, income, opinion toward commission rates, self-perceived language skills, and confidence in English communication. The second

part, or the Personal Report of Communication Measurement (PRCA-24), consisted of 24 self-administered items that depict frequent communication scenarios in four dimensions. This questionnaire is generally used to measure trait-like CA. The items were arranged in a five-point Likert scale, ranging from one to five, with one reflecting strong agreement and five indicating strong disagreement. There were four dimensions in the questionnaire as follows: speaking in small groups or group discussions (items 1-6), speaking in a meeting context (items 7 -12), interpersonal conversations (items 13-18), and public speaking (items 19-24).

To obtain valuable insights into the salespersons' perceived effects of communication apprehension on sales performance, a semi-structured in-depth interview was conducted. The five interview questions were designed by the researcher based on a review of literature, and the interview protocol was also validated by the same panel of experts to ensure content validity and language appropriateness. To help participants overcome language barriers and to ensure comprehensiveness of the collected data, the interviews were conducted in Thai.

3.3 Data Collection

The questionnaire was distributed to all 45 participants during an online company meeting via Zoom application as it was during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown. The instructions explaining how to complete the form and consent statements of both the questionnaire survey and the interview were included in the form. The participants had to click 'agree' before continuing the questionnaire survey. If they wanted to give more in-depth information, they were asked to leave their contact details at the end of the form.

After that, a face-to-face interview was carried out to gain in-depth information about salespersons' perceived effects of communication apprehension and the strategies they used in their sales presentations. The participants, who voluntarily agreed to be interviewed, were informed that their identities would be

concealed, the data collected from them would be kept strictly confidential and reported only as group data or with pseudonyms, and their responses would not affect their work or annual sales performance evaluation in any way. The interview of each participant was audio-recorded after permission was granted by the participants, before it was later transcribed for data analysis. Each interview lasted approximately 30 minutes.

3.4 Data Analysis

The data collected from the questionnaire analysis process in this study involved two distinct phases, namely quantitative and qualitative analyses. In the quantitative phase, the communication apprehension levels of the salespersons were calculated from the scores obtained from the PRCA-24, divided into four dimensions, as proposed by Richmond and McCroskey (1998).

The levels of communication apprehension among the salespersons were assessed using the PRCA-24, a five-point Likert scale questionnaire. The questionnaire provided scores for four dimensions of communication apprehension, which were used to calculate the total scores for each individual. The calculation formula for the PRCA-24 was developed by Richmond and McCroskey (1998) and offers a method for determining CA levels in different contexts. Specifically, for group discussions, the sub-score was calculated by summing the scores from items 2, 4, and 6 and subtracting the scores from items 1, 3, and 5, with an additional 18 points. Similarly, for meetings, the sub-score was obtained by adding the scores from items 1, 3, and 5 and subtracting the scores from items 7, 10, and 11, with an additional 18 points. In the case of interpersonal conversations, the sub-score was derived by summing the scores from items 14, 16, and 17 and subtracting the scores from items 13, 15, and 18, also with an additional 18 points. Finally, for public speaking, the sub-score was calculated by summing the scores from items 19, 21, and 23 and subtracting the scores from items 20, 22, and 24, with an additional 18 points. The subtraction of scores in certain items was necessary because they varied in polarity, with some items being

positive and others negative, requiring one group to be subtracted from the other. These calculation formulas are based on the seminal work of Richmond and McCroskey (1998).

The possible total scores ranged from 24 to 120 points (McCroskey, 2005). The scores below 51 points reflected a low level of communication apprehension, the scores between 51 and 80 indicated a moderate level of communication apprehension, and the scores higher than 80 suggested a high level of communication apprehension.

On the other hand, thematic analysis was used to analyze qualitative data as it is considered a flexible method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns or themes in qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006) gathered from interviews, focus groups, or other qualitative sources. The analysis processes involved multiple stages, starting with familiarization with the data, followed by the generation of initial codes, and ending with organization of codes into meaningful themes (King et al., 2019). Table 1 provides details of steps in each of the three stages of thematic analysis.

Table 1

A Summary of the Three Stages in the Process of Thematic Analysis (King et al., 2019, p.204)

Stages	Description
Stage 1: Data familiarization	The researcher reads and re-reads the data, getting familiar with it and noting down initial ideas and impressions. The researcher then generates initial codes, which are labels that describe different aspects of the data.
Stage 2: Generating themes	The researcher reviews the initial codes, grouping similar codes together to form potential themes. The researcher then reviews and refines the

Stages	Description
	themes, defining and naming them, and mapping out their relationships to one another.
Stage 3: Theme revision and report writing	The researcher reviews and refines the themes further, checking them against the data to ensure they accurately represent the data. The researcher then writes up the results in a report, using quotes from the data to illustrate the themes and their significance.

King et al. (2019) recommend the use of independent coding throughout the data analysis process as a quality check. Two approaches, code-confirming and code-defining, involve critical review and independent analysis, respectively. Both approaches were employed in the present study to ensure coding reliability, with the analysis aligned with the interview questions.

4. Findings

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Thai Salespersons

The study collected eight types of demographic data from salespersons including gender, age, education, years of work, average income, perceived impact of commission rates on willingness to communicate with foreign customers, self-rated language proficiency, and confidence in English communication. Two-thirds (66.67%) of the participants were female, and 33.33% were male. They ranged in age from 27 to 56 years old. Almost half of them, or 46.67%, graduated with a bachelor's degree, while 28.89% were high school graduates and 24.44% held a master's degree. In terms of years of work, over half of the participants (53.33%) had been working with the company for more than 10 years (53.33%). A little over one-third (37.78%) reported a monthly sales base salary between 15,000 and 25,000 Thai Baht. When considering the perceived impact of commission rates on willingness to communicate with foreign customers, it was found that 40.00% of the participants reported a high impact, 40.00% perceived a moderate impact, and

20.00% reported a low impact. They self-identified as intermediate language users (46.67%), beginner users (40.00%), and advanced users (13.33%). As for confidence in English communication, approximately half of the participants (53.33%) reported being not confident, while 40.00% expressed moderate confidence and only 6.67% reported high confidence. These demographic characteristics provided important contexts for understanding salespersons' communication apprehension.

4.2 Communication Apprehension Levels among Thai Salespersons during Oral Sales Presentations in English

The overall communication apprehension level was determined from the PRCA-24 scores across four communication contexts: group discussions, meetings, interpersonal contact, and public speaking. Across all communication situations, it could be seen that 20.89% of the participants reported high communication apprehension levels, 66.11% reported moderate communication apprehension levels, and 12.00% reported low communication apprehension levels, as shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2

Participants' communication apprehension levels

Overall communication apprehension Levels	Percentage	N
Low communication apprehension (50 points and lower)	12.00	9
Moderate CA (51–79 points)	66.11	30
High CA (higher than 80 points)	20.89	6

4.3 Thai Salespersons' Perception of the Effects of CA on their Sales Presentations

The subsequent thematic analysis showed that the participants' perspectives varied. However, several common themes emerged as can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3*The Effects of Having High and Low CA Levels on Sales Presentations*

Effects of Having a High CA Level	Effects of Having a Low CA Level
Low self-esteem	Enjoyment
Relying on peers	Making good impression on customers
Avoiding engaging in interaction with customers	

Having a high CA level led to low self-esteem which resulted in either relying on peers or avoiding engaging in interaction with customers altogether, as can be seen in the excerpts below:

“I have to rely on others to speak on my behalf most of the time. Sometimes, the interpreter doesn’t convey the message to the customer the way I want it to be. It’s not what I have in mind or what I want it to be.” (Salesperson C)

Nevertheless, the participants insisted on the importance of salespersons making an attempt to provide sales presentations regardless of their language proficiency or lack thereof. Customers valued salespersons’ effort, dedication, and readiness to interact during a sales presentation. Some mentioned that they perceived the language barriers as an enjoyment. It is interesting to discover that some salespersons perceived that encounters with foreign customers was in fact an opportunity for self-improvement, as exemplified below:

“For me, when I feel less anxious, I can pitch my sales very comfortably. It’s like I become more confident in speaking. Customers can sense that, too, and it helps build their trust in me.” (Salesperson N)

“Personally, I see it as an opportunity for self-improvement. Even though my English may not be perfect, I am delighted to have the chance to converse with international customers.” (Salesperson F)

Thai salespersons perceived the presence of communication apprehension as a hindrance to their ability to communicate effectively with foreign customers during sales presentations. This, in turn, led to a decreased willingness to engage in communication for some. The experience of self-disappointment arising from the inability to deliver successful sales presentations and the necessity to rely on colleagues further reinforced their reluctance to communicate.

However, it is worth noting that there was one salesperson who realized that customers could somehow form a positive impression when salespersons made an effort to conduct sales interactions in English, regardless of their limited language proficiency. Hence, language ability itself did not emerge as a significant factor for customers, at least to a certain extent. These findings suggested that despite the challenges posed by communication apprehension, making an attempt to pitch sales in English could still positively influence customer perceptions and interactions.

4.4 Salespersons’ Strategies to Cope with Communication Apprehension during Sales Presentations

Researchers in the field of second-language (L2) acquisition have not reached a consensus on a definitive compilation of communication strategies that can be employed by language learners (Ellis, 2008), particularly those with a lower level of English proficiency. However, there were several frequently employed strategies that were identified by the participants of the present study, including circumlocution, word coinage, language switch, non-verbal strategies, and avoidance. Examples of the use of these strategies can be seen in the following sentiments:

“Alternatively, when I don’t know a specific word, I can substitute it with another word that I know. They may not be 100% accurate, but the customers still understand me.” (Salesperson R)

“Moreover, if I need to explain something using complex terms, I might struggle and have to find simpler words to use instead. However, most of the time customers still understand what I want to say.” (Salesperson N)

Word coinage is a strategy in which learners create new words or phrases to represent unfamiliar terms (Ellis, 1997). The excerpt reflecting how such a strategy was used by salespersons is displayed as follows:

“If I can’t recall a specific word, I may use alternative words or phrases. Customers can understand me even if I use simpler terms. For example, one time, I could not think of the term ‘art gallery,’ and I had to use the words a ‘picture place,’ but the customer still got it.” (Salesperson F)

Language switch is a strategy where learners incorporate words from their first language, Thai in this case, into their speech in the hope that their interlocutor will understand the message they intend to convey (Richards & Schmidt, 2009). This strategy relies on the assumption that the interlocutor shares some knowledge or familiarity with the learner’s native language, facilitating communication. However, in this study, language switch was used for a different reason. It was used because salespersons did not know the English words and had to figure out ways to keep the conversation going. Even though the foreign customers did not understand Thai, this strategy seemed to help the salespersons keep the conversation going, as they described:

“Actually, I even use some Thai words to talk to the customers when I don’t know what a particular word is in English.” (Salesperson R)

“I sometimes use Thai words while pointing at a product.”
(Salesperson N)

Non-verbal strategies play a significant role in communication as well (Dörnyei et al, 1997; Richards & Schmidt, 2009). Learners may employ gestures and mime to complement or substitute verbal communication, enhancing their ability to convey meaning effectively. The use of non-verbal strategies by salespersons who had difficulty communicating in English with their foreign customers can be seen in the excerpts below:

“I mostly rely on hand gestures during communication. Customers understand me better when I use hand gestures together with verbal communication.” (Salesperson F)

“Even if I can’t speak English fluently, I can still make successful sales by showing the items directly to customers and explaining them through hand and body gestures.” (Salesperson R)

“I use a pointing gesture or hand over the products to customers when explaining. It is easier for customers to understand when I visually demonstrate rather than using many words, especially since I don't have an extensive amount of vocabulary.”
(Salesperson N)

Finally, strategic avoidance was found to be the final resource that some of the participants used. It was found that when salespersons had communication apprehension and felt that they may not be able to carry out sales successfully, they would avoid making sales, as the participants described below:

“Usually, if there’s another person whose English skills are better than mine, I’ll let them handle the sales instead of me.”
(Salesperson M)

“But if I truly don’t understand what the customers are trying to say to me and if there is no one around who can help me out, I’ll just ask the customers for their contact information and let the English-speaking salesperson at the office explain the products to them later on my behalf.” (Salesperson C)

Based on the aforementioned findings, it could be concluded that even though there was no identification of optimal strategies for salespersons to cope with communication apprehension when dealing with foreign customers, this study identified several commonly used strategies including circumlocution, word coinage, language switching, non-verbal strategies, and avoidance. Salespersons reported using these strategies to their advantage in order to transcend language barriers and achieve most effective possible communication with customers. By substituting unfamiliar words with known alternatives, incorporating words from their native language, leveraging non-verbal cues, and, in some instances, deferring sales interactions to more proficient colleagues or arranging follow-up explanations, salespersons were able to adapt and succeed in their sales endeavors. These findings underscore the valuable role played by these strategies in empowering salespersons to navigate linguistic challenges and secure successful sales outcomes despite the existence of communication apprehension.

5. Discussion

Communication apprehension is a significant factor affecting the quality of sales presentations among Thai salespersons. The present study revealed that Thai salespersons generally exhibited a moderate level of communication apprehension, suggesting that a large number of salespersons in this study experienced anxiety and fear during communication when orally performing their job. Such a finding was consistent with a study carried out by Noor et al. (2015) which reported that speaking or oral activities put language learners ‘in the spot,’ hence high levels of communication apprehension. As communication apprehension levels increased, salespersons faced challenges in how to effectively

articulate their ideas and persuade potential customers to buy their products. One significant factor was the presence of language barriers faced by Thai salespersons, whose English proficiency may be limited and their lack of language proficiency becomes a hindrance and they are unable to achieve clear and accurate communication. Previous research has consistently found a significant correlation between communication apprehension and self-perceived communication competence, emphasizing the role of language proficiency in successful oral communication outcomes (Morreale & Pearson, 2008; Hussin & Makmur, 2021).

Contrary to the claim that self-perceived language proficiency directly influences overall communication apprehension levels, the data from the participants' self-rated language proficiency revealed a different picture. The majority of the participants reported that they had advanced or intermediate level of English proficiency, with only a small number feeling that they were still beginners. This may have stemmed from the highest level of education they attained, as the majority of the participants in this study held either a bachelor's degree or a master's degree. However, in the Thai context, a degree is not always an accurate indicator of English proficiency. Such a discrepancy has been reported in various studies (Tantiwicha & Sinwongsawat, 2021; Phong-a-ran et al., 2019), suggesting a significant disparity in perceived English proficiency levels and the actual level of proficiency that enables ones to effectively communicate in the language.

In addition to language proficiency, the participants' higher levels of communication apprehension may be attributed to their lack of confidence during sales presentations. More than half of the participants reported a lack of confidence during their sales presentations. This finding aligned with existing evidence indicating a significant relationship between communication apprehension levels and perceived self-efficacy or confidence in one's ability to use the language (Tsai, 2013; Tahsildar & Kabiri, 2019; Cong & Li, 2022). In other

words, the participants' lack of confidence made them feel that they were unable to communicate well enough in English, leading to communication apprehension.

The interviews indicated that professional knowledge and knowledge of the products ones were trying to sell also played a role in onset of communication apprehension. In this study, the participants who had better knowledge of their products seemed to be able to continue their communication with potential customers and eventually close sales regardless of their limited English proficiency. Previous research suggests that as individuals gain more years of work experience, their communication apprehension levels tend to decrease (Marcel, 2019). This implies that, with increasing work experience, salespersons could acquire the necessary vocabulary and industry-specific knowledge, which, in turn, enables them to more adequately communicate during sales presentations. While their language proficiency may not be fully developed, it may still be sufficient for effective customer communication, emphasizing the significance of content knowledge in sales contexts.

In addition, salespersons with limited proficiency in the English language often employed communication strategies as a means to surmount challenges despite having communication apprehension. These strategies included circumlocution, word coinage, language switching, non-verbal techniques, and avoidance, which seemed to help facilitate effective interaction with foreign customers, thus yielding favorable sales outcomes. Empirical evidence (Basori, 2012; Asmah, 2010) has revealed frequent utilization of communication strategies such as code switching, circumlocution, and word coinage that could help language users with limited English proficiency get by during oral communication. The findings of the present study align with earlier research that highlights the potential benefits of communication strategies to augment listening and speaking skills among second language learners (Mahdi, 2015). By employing these strategies, salespersons in the present study were better equipped to navigate

linguistic barriers and communicate with increased confidence and efficacy during sales presentations.

6. Implications of Findings

The findings of this study shed light on the importance of designing training programs that should not only develop salespersons' language proficiency but also equip them with communication strategies to alleviate communication apprehension. To effectively cater to the diverse needs of salespersons across different levels of communication apprehension, training programs should incorporate promotion of a wide variety of strategies that can be adopted by salespersons with various levels of language proficiency.

Fostering a supportive and inclusive environment that encourages open discussion and knowledge sharing among salespersons with varying communication apprehension levels is instrumental. A team-based selling approach enables moderate communication apprehension individuals to learn from the experiences and techniques employed by salespersons with both high and low levels of communication apprehension (Obeta, 2006), thereby broadening their repertoire of communication strategies (Ellis, 2008). Techniques such as systematic desensitization, where individuals are progressively exposed to increasingly challenging communication scenarios, can help moderate language learners and users with communication apprehension overcome their communication apprehension and develop effective communication skills (Open Textbook Library University of Minnesota, 2013).

Furthermore, mentorship programs can be organized to provide personalized guidance and support to salespersons with moderate communication apprehension levels (Jones & Procopio, 2017; Friend et al., 2013). Assigning experienced mentors who can share their expertise, offer constructive feedback, and serve as role models can greatly assist in the development of communication skills and overall confidence.

7. Limitations of the Study

This study was subject to several limitations that warrant careful consideration. Firstly, the present study was undertaken when Thailand was still in the lockdown period due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This limited access to salespersons working for different private companies and in different sales contexts. In addition, due to compliance with the Personal Data Protection Act (PDPA) and the company's commitment to maintaining business confidentiality, accessibility to the salespersons was restricted. This limitation posed challenges in obtaining a larger sample size and conducting in-depth interviews, potentially impacting the breadth and depth of the study findings.

8. Recommendations for Further Research

The present study primarily focused on the perceptions and strategies employed by Thai salespersons without examining the effectiveness and outcomes of these tactics in achieving sales goals. For this reason, further research should be carried out to examine the effects of different communication strategies on sales performance. Besides this, in this study, data regarding demographic characteristics of salespersons were gathered to ensure understanding of the sales context. Future investigations may also look into how demographic characteristics including personality trait and the mismatch between salespersons' perceived level of English proficiency and actual level of proficiency have an influence on their communication apprehension. Finally, research, employing both quantitative and qualitative methodologies, should also be undertaken to explore the degree to which different oral communication dimensions—speaking in small groups or group discussions, speaking in a meeting context, interpersonal conversations, and public speaking—affect salespersons' communication apprehension and whether different communication strategies are used to cope with different dimensions as well as how salespersons perceive effectiveness of communication strategies so as to shed more light on communication apprehension of salespersons and how to cope with it.

9. Conclusion

Understanding and addressing communication apprehension levels among Thai salespersons are critical to enhancing the quality of sales presentations. To improve sales presentation outcomes, private businesses and organizations should organize training programs to assist salespersons across all communication apprehension levels. By fostering an inclusive environment, providing targeted interventions, and implementing mentorship programs, companies are more likely to effectively reduce communication apprehension levels and enhance the confidence and overall performance of salespersons working for them.

10. About the Author

Penpitcha Prakaiborisuth is a Ph.D. candidate in the English Language Studies Program of the Faculty of Liberal Arts, Thammasat University, Bangkok, Thailand. She received a master's degree in English as an International Language from Chulalongkorn University. Her areas of interest include language and emotion, the CLIL approach, and language development in children.

11. Acknowledgement

The author would love to express our gratitude to the reviewing team of PASAA journal for constructive feedback. My heartfelt thanks specially go to the editor for her reliable efforts and supports during the revision process of the manuscript.

12. References

- Alley-Young, G. (2005). An Individual's Experience: A Socio-cultural critique of communication apprehension research. *Texas Speech Communication Journal*, 30(1), 36–46.
- Asmah, R. (2010). Communication Strategies used by the 2009 1st Year Students of English Department at the North Sumatera University: A Case Study English Department: Universitas Sumatera Utara.

- Basori, I. (2012). *Communication strategies used by English teachers in teaching English in acceleration class at MTsN Kanigoro Kras Kediri Academic Year 2011/2012*. [Master's thesis, State Islamic College]. State Islamic College. <http://repo.uinsatu.ac.id/1439/>
- Beatty, M. J., & McCroskey, J. C. (2001). *The biology of communication. A communibiological perspective*. Hampton Press.
- Benson, S., Fischer, D., Geluso, J., & Von Joo, L. (2013). Effects of communication strategy training on EFL students' performance in small-group discussions. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching Journal*, 3(2), 245–259.
- Booncherd, N. (2016). *Communication apprehension when speaking L2 (English): A case study of personnel in the Bureau of Tuberculosis, Department of Disease Control, Ministry of Public Health*. [Master's thesis, Thammasat University]. Thammasat University. http://ethesisarchive.library.tu.ac.th/thesis/2016/TU_2016_5621030104_6993_5312.pdf
- Boorum, M., Goolsby, J. R., & Ramsey, R. P. (1998). Relational communication traits and their effect on adaptiveness and sales performance. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 26, 16 – 30. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0092070398261003>
- Butler, C. (1996). Why the Bad Rap? *Sales and Marketing Management*, 148(6), 58–66.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Byrne, M., Flood, B., & Shanahan, D. (2009). Communication apprehension among business and accounting students in Ireland. *Irish Accounting Review*, 16, 1–19.
- Condit, C. (2000). Culture and biology in human communication: Toward a multi-causal model. *Communication Education*, 49, 7–24. <https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1080/03634520009379188>

- Cong, W., & Li, P. (2022). The relationship between EFL learners' communication apprehension, self-efficacy, and emotional intelligence. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13, Article 847383. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.847383>
- Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2018). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research* (3rd ed.). SAGE.
- Dörnyei, Z., & Scott, M. L. (1997). Communication strategies in a second language: Definitions and taxonomies. *Language Learning*, 47(1), 173–210. <https://doi.org/10.1111/0023-8333.51997005>
- Dwyer, K. K. (1998). Communication apprehension and learning style preference: Correlations and implications for teaching. *Communication Education*, 47(2), 137–150.
- Ellis, R. (1997). *The study of second language acquisition*. Oxford University Press.
- Ellis, R. (2008). *The study of second language acquisition* (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Falcione, R. L., McCroskey, J. C., & Daly, J. A. (1977). Job satisfaction as a function of employees' communication apprehension, self-esteem and perceptions of their immediate supervisor. *Annals of the International Communication Association*, 1(1), 363–375. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/23808985.1977.11923692>
- Freimuth, V. (2006). The effects of communication apprehension on communication effectiveness. *Human Communication Research*, 2(3), 289–298.
- Friend, S., Hartmann, N. N., Rutherford, B. N., & Hamwi, A. (2013). The effects of mentoring on salesperson commitment. *Journal of Business Research*, 66(11), 2294–2300. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2012.03.001>
- Furmark, T., Tilfors, M., Everz, P., Marteinsdottir, I., Gefvert, O., & Fredrikson, M. (1999). Social phobia in the general population: Prevalence and sociodemographic profile. *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology*, 34(8), 416–424. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s001270050163>

- Gee-Whai Kho, M., & Ting, S. (2021). Oral communication apprehension in oral presentation among polytechnic students. *Human Behavior, Development and Society, 22*(2), 17–26.
- Hussin, S. H., & Makmur, A. N. (2021). Speaking in English: Oral communication apprehension and self-perceived communication competence among marketing undergraduates in Malaysia. *Human Behavior, Development and Society, 22*(3), 74–83.
- Jones, K., & Procopio, C. H. (2017). *Mentoring At-Risk Middle School Students to Reduce Communication Apprehension*. [Master's Thesis, George Fox University]. George Fox University.
https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1034&context=comm_fac
- Takepoto, I., Said, H., Habil, H., & Umrani, A. I., Memon, I. A. (2020). Analyzing oral communication apprehension prevailing among engineers in engineering workplace of Pakistan. *Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development, 4*(3), 255–261.
- King, N., Brooks, J., & Tabari, S. (2018). Template analysis in business and management research. In Ciesielska, M., & Jemielniak, D. (Eds.), *Qualitative methodologies in organization studies* (pp. 173–195). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007%2F978-3-319-65442-3_8
- Mahdi, D. A. (2015). Relationship between oral communication apprehension and competence among EFL Students. *King Khalid University Journal of Humanities, 24*, 289–299.
- Marcel, M. (2019). Communication apprehension across the career span. *Communication Research Reports, 59*(4), 476–486.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/2329488419856803>
- Martin, M. M., Valencic, K. M., & Heisel, A. D. (2009). The relationship between students' communication apprehension and their motives for communicating with their instructors. *Communication Research Reports, 19*(1), 1–7. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08824090209384826>

- McCarthy, B. (1987). *The 4MAT System: Teaching to learning styles with right/left mode techniques*. About Learning Inc
- McCroskey, J. C. (1977). Oral communication apprehension: A summary of recent theory and research. *Human Communication Research*, 4(1), 78–96.
<https://doi/10.1111/j.1468-2958.1977.tb00599.x>
- McCroskey, J. C. (1982). *An introduction to rhetorical communication* (4th ed.). Prentice-Hall.
- McCroskey, J. C. (1984). The communication apprehension prospective. In J. Daly & J. McCroskey (Eds.), *Avoiding communication: Shyness, reticence and communication apprehension* (pp. 13–38). SAGE.
- McCroskey, J. C. (2005). *An introduction to rhetorical communication* (9 ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315663791>
- McCroskey, J. C., & Anderson, J. F. (1976). The relationship between communication apprehension and academic achievement among college students. *Human Communication Research*, 3, 73–81.
- McCroskey, J. C., & Beatty, M. J. (1998). Communication apprehension. In J. C. McCroskey (Ed.), *Communication personality: Trait perspectives* (pp. 215–231). Hampton Press.
- McCroskey, J. C., & Beatty, M. J. (2009). The communibiological perspective: Implications for communication in instruction. *Communication Education*, 49(1), 1–6. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03634520009379187>
- McCroskey, J. C., & Richmond, V. P. (1982). Communication apprehension and shyness: Conceptual and operational distinctions. *Central States Speech Journal*, 33, 458–468.
- McCroskey, J. C., & Richmond, V. P. (1987). Willingness to communicate. In J. C. McCroskey and J. A. Daly (Eds.), *Personality and Interpersonal Communication* (pp. 129–155). Sage.
- McCroskey, J. C., Richmond, V. P., & McCroskey, L. L. (2009). Willingness to communicate, communication apprehension, self-perceived communication competence, and compulsive communication: Conceptualizations and perspectives. In J. Ayres, T. Hopf, J. C. McCroskey,

- J. A. Daly, D. M. Sonandre, & T. K. Wongprasert (Eds.). *Avoiding communication: Shyness, reticence, and communication apprehension* (3 ed., pp. 97–129). Hampton Press.
- McCroskey, J. C., Richmond, V. P., Daly, J. A., & Falcione, R. L. (1977). Studies of the relationship between communication apprehension and self-esteem. *Human Communication Research, 3*(3). <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2958.1977.tb00525.x>
- Morreale, S. P., & Pearson, J. (2008). Why communication education is important: The centrality of the discipline in the 21st century. *Communication Education, 57*(2), 224–240
- Neuliep, J. W., & McCroskey, J. C. (1997). The development of a U.S. and generalized communication apprehension scale. *Communication Research Reports, 14*(2), 137–147.
- Noor, A. M., Rafek, M., Khalid, P. Z. M., & Mohammad, R. (2015). Communication apprehension in language learning: Is it serious? *International Journal of Arts & Sciences, 8*(2), 311–320.
- Obeta, C. E. (2006). Team Selling Approach as an effective sales management strategy. *Journal of Business Management, 1*(1), 118–130.
- Opt, S. K., & Loffredo, D. A. (2000). Rethinking communication apprehension: A Myers-Briggs perspective. *Journal of Psychology, 134*, 556–570.
- Open Textbook Library University of Minnesota. (2013). *Communication in the real world: An introduction to communication studies, managing public speaking anxiety*. https://saylordotorg.github.io/text_communication-in-the-real-world/s14-01-managing-public-speaking-anx.html
- Phong-a-ran, N., Luksup, S., & Chaisoda, P. (2019). English Proficiency of Thai undergraduate students using CEFR in Khonkaen. *Journal of Buddhist Education and Research, 5*(2), 160–172. <https://so06.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/jber/article/view/242222/164482>
- Phongpichitphoom, P. (2017). *English communication problems affecting Thai employees performances in international online travel agencies*. [Master's Independent Study, Thammasat University]. Thammasat University.

http://ethesisarchive.library.tu.ac.th/thesis/2017/TU_2017_5921040241_8870_6998.pdf

Phuangmanee, N. (2016). *Problems in English language communication perceived by salespeople at a telecommunication company in Bangkok, Thailand*. [Master's Independent Study, Thammasat University].
Thammasat University.

http://ethesisarchive.library.tu.ac.th/thesis/2016/TU_2016_5821040267_6960_4813.pdf

Pitt, L. F., & Ramaseshan, B. (1990). Apprehension about communication and salespersons' performance. *Psychological Reports*, 67(3), 1355 – 1362.

Pruksanubal, O. (2006). *An Exploration of Communication Problems among Thai Vendors and Foreigners at Khaosan Road*. [Master's Thesis, Srinakharinwirot University]. Srinakharinwirot University.

http://thesis.swu.ac.th/swuthesis/Bus_Eng_Int_Com/Orapat_P.pdf

Richards, J. C., & Schmidt, R. (Eds.). (2009). *Communication strategy*. In *Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics*. Longman.

Richmond, V. P., & McCroskey, J. C. (1998). *Communication apprehension, avoidance, and effectiveness* (5th ed.). Allyn & Bacon.

Rimkeeraatikul, S. (2008). *Communication apprehension: The construct validity of its measurement (PRCA-24) and factors influencing CA scores among a Thai sample*. [Unpublished Doctoral dissertation (Ph.D.), Bangkok University in full cooperation with Ohio University, Faculty of Communication].

Russ, T. L. (2012). The relationship between communication apprehension and learning preferences in an organizational setting. *The Journal of Business Communication*, 49(4), 312–331.

Tabari, S., King, N., & Egan, D. (2020). Potential application of template analysis in qualitative hospitality management research. *Hospitality & Society*, 10(2). 197–216.

Tahsildar, N., & Kabiri, A. (2019). The Relationship between Afghanistan EFL Students' academic self-efficacy and English language speaking anxiety.

Academic Journal of Education Sciences, 3(2), 190–202.

<https://doi.org/10.31805/acjes.636591>

Tantiwicha, K., & Sinwongsuwat, K. (2021). Thai University Students' Problems of Language Use in English Conversation. *LEARN Journal*, 14(2), 598-626.

<https://so04.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/LEARN/index>

Tsai, C. C. (2013). The impact of foreign language anxiety, test anxiety, and self-efficacy among senior high school students in Taiwan. *International Journal of Language and Linguistics Research*, 1(3), 1–17.

<https://doi.org/10.5296/ijld.v3i4.4247>

Vanzo, M. (2017). *Communication apprehension in L1 and L2 of Thai flight attendants in an international airline*. [Master's Independent Study, Thammasat University]. Thammasat University.

http://ethesisarchive.library.tu.ac.th/thesis/2017/TU_2017_5521032143_6898_4700.pdf

Watson, A. K., & Bossley, J. R. (1995). Taking the sweat out of communication anxiety. *Personnel Journal*, 75(4), 111–115.

Watson, A. K., & Bossley, J. R. (1995). Taking the sweat out of communication anxiety. *Personnel Journal*, 75(4), 111–115.

13. Appendix

Appendix A

Questionnaire

This questionnaire is part of a study for the Doctor of Philosophy Program in English Language Education (International Program) at the Faculty of Liberal Arts, Thammasat University. The purpose of this questionnaire is to assess salespersons' communication apprehension when communicating in English with foreign customers. Please read the questionnaire carefully and provide the most truthful answers. Your responses will be kept confidential and used solely for educational purposes. Thank you very much for your cooperation and for taking the time to answer these questions.

This questionnaire consists of two parts: Part 1 Demographic Information and Part 2 The Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA-24) Questionnaire.

Part 1: Demographic Information

Please check (✓) in the box where relevant

1. Gender

 Male Female Not specify

2. Age

 Younger than 30
years old between 30 and 45
years old Over than 45 years
old

3. Education level

 High school graduate
or the equivalent Bachelor's degree Master's degree

4. How long have you been working for the company?

 2 – 5 years 6 – 10 years More than 10 years

5. Sales base salary (per month)

 15,000 – 25,000 Thai
Baht 25,001 – 35,000
Thai Baht More than 35,000
Thai baht

6. To what extent does the commission rate you receive affect your willingness to communicate with customers in English?

 High Moderate Low

7. What is your proficiency level in English?

 Advanced Intermediate Beginner

8. How confident are you when speaking English during sales activities?

 Very confident Confident Not confident**Part 2: PRCA-24 Questionnaire**

Instructions: This section of the questionnaire consists of questions regarding your knowledge and skills during face-to-face communication with others in various situations that occur during English conversations. Please select your responses quickly and choose the answer based on your immediate feelings after reading each question.

Please indicate your feelings by marking (✓) in the box corresponding to the number that aligns with your emotions when you are in the following situations using English language:

- 1 = Strongly Agree
 2 = Agree
 3 = Neutral/Undecided
 4 = Disagree
 5 = Strongly Disagree

1.	I dislike participating in group discussions.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Generally, I am comfortable while participating in group discussions.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	I am tense and nervous while participating in group discussions.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	I like to get involved in group discussions.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Engaging in a group discussion with new people makes me tense and nervous.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	I am calm and relaxed while participating in group discussions.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Generally, I am nervous when I have to participate in a meeting.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	Usually, I am comfortable when I have to participate in a meeting.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	I am very calm and relaxed when I am called upon to express an opinion at a meeting.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	I am afraid to express myself at meetings.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	Communicating at meetings usually makes me uncomfortable.	1	2	3	4	5

12.	I am very relaxed when answering questions at a meeting.	1	2	3	4	5
13.	While participating in a conversation with a new acquaintance, I feel very nervous.	1	2	3	4	5
14.	I have no fear of speaking up in conversations.	1	2	3	4	5
15.	I am always very tense and nervous in conversations.	1	2	3	4	5
16.	I am always very calm and relaxed when I am having a conversation with someone.	1	2	3	4	5
17.	While conversing with a new acquaintance, I feel very relaxed.	1	2	3	4	5
18.	I am afraid to speak up while I am having a conversation with someone.	1	2	3	4	5
19.	I have no fear of giving a speech.	1	2	3	4	5
20.	Certain parts of my body feel very tense and rigid while I am giving a speech.	1	2	3	4	5
21.	I feel relaxed while I am giving a speech.	1	2	3	4	5
22.	My thoughts become confused and jumbled when I am giving a speech.	1	2	3	4	5
23.	I face the prospect of giving a speech with confidence.	1	2	3	4	5
24.	While giving a speech, I get so nervous I forget facts I know very well.	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix B

Semi-Structured Interview Questions

1. How often do you have to communicate in English while working? Can you give examples?
2. Usually, when you use English to communicate with foreign customers, how do you feel? Can you please explain your feeling in that kind of situations?
3. Do you feel anxious when using English for communication? Could you provide an example of a situation that makes you feel anxious?
4. Do you think the feelings of nervousness and anxiety affect your ability to communicate in English? Have you ever felt so nervous that you cannot communicate in English?
5. What do you do if you feel that you cannot communicate in English with your foreign customers? Can you give examples?
6. Normally, what methods or techniques do you use to manage anxiety, and how effective are they?