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PERCEPTIONS OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS AND FACULTY MEMBERS
FROM THE FACULTY OF AGRICULTURAL TECHNOLOGY TOWARDS THE
UNIVERSITY'S ENGLISH PROFICIENCY GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS



ณัฐริณันท์ ปันเฉย
NUTTARINAN PANCHOEI

วิทยานิพนธ์นี้เป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษาตามหลักสูตรศิลปศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต
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คณะศิลปศาสตร์

สถาบันเทคโนโลยีพระจอมเกล้าเจ้าคุณทหารลาดกระบัง

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TECHNOLOGY TOWARDS THE UNIVERSITY'S ENGLISH
PROFICIENCY GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS



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สาขาวิชา

พ.ศ.
อาจารย์ที่ปรึกษาวิทยานิพนธ์

การรับรู้ของนักศึกษาระดับปริญญาตรีและอาจารย์
จากคณะเทคโนโลยีการเกษตรที่มีต่อการใช้เกณฑ์
สมรรถภาพทางภาษาอังกฤษสำหรับการจบ
การศึกษาของมหาวิทยาลัย
นางสาวณัฐริณันท์ ปันเฉย
61616006
ศิลปศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต
ภาษาศาสตร์ประยุกต์ – ภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อ
วัตถุประสงค์ทางวิชาชีพ
2565
ดร.ประมาณ ทรัพย์ผดุงชนม์

บทคัดย่อ

มหาวิทยาลัยในประเทศไทยจำนวนมากได้กำหนดนโยบายเกณฑ์มาตรฐานภาษาอังกฤษสำหรับการสำเร็จการศึกษาและได้พัฒนาข้อสอบวัดทักษะความรู้ภาษาอังกฤษของมหาวิทยาลัยตนเอง เพื่อให้แน่ใจว่านักศึกษาระดับปริญญาตรีจะได้รับความรู้ภาษาอังกฤษในระดับที่เพียงพอสำหรับการประกอบอาชีพในอนาคต อย่างไรก็ตาม การรับรู้ของผู้มีส่วนได้ส่วนเสียต่อนโยบายนี้ยังไม่ได้รับการสำรวจอย่างทั่วถึง การศึกษานี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อสำรวจการรับรู้ของนักศึกษาระดับปริญญาตรีและคณาจารย์ที่มีต่อเกณฑ์สมรรถภาพทางภาษาอังกฤษสำหรับการจบการศึกษาของมหาวิทยาลัย การศึกษานี้ได้ใช้การออกแบบการวิจัยแบบผสมผสาน เครื่องมือวิจัยคือแบบสอบถามและแบบสัมภาษณ์แบบกึ่งโครงสร้าง ผู้เข้าร่วมการศึกษาคือ นักศึกษาระดับปริญญาตรีระดับชั้นปีที่ ๔ จำนวน ๒๔๓ คน และอาจารย์จากคณะเทคโนโลยีการเกษตร ณ มหาวิทยาลัยแห่งหนึ่งในกรุงเทพมหานคร ประเทศไทย จำนวน ๔ ท่าน นักศึกษาเหล่านี้ได้ตอบแบบสอบถามทางออนไลน์และนักศึกษาจำนวน ๑๒ คน รวมทั้งอาจารย์ทั้ง ๔ ท่าน ได้เข้าร่วมการสัมภาษณ์แบบกึ่งโครงสร้างผ่านแพลตฟอร์มออนไลน์ งานวิจัยนี้วิเคราะห์ข้อมูลเชิงปริมาณโดยใช้สถิติเชิงพรรณนา ส่วนข้อมูลเชิงคุณภาพได้วิเคราะห์โดยใช้การวิเคราะห์เนื้อหา ผลการศึกษาพบว่านักศึกษาส่วนใหญ่มีทัศนคติเชิงบวกต่อการดำเนินการตามนโยบายของมหาวิทยาลัย แม้ว่าจะต้องเผชิญกับความท้าทายในการสอบวัดทักษะความรู้ภาษาอังกฤษของมหาวิทยาลัยก็ตาม นักศึกษาส่วนใหญ่มีความคิดเห็นว่านโยบายนี้กระตุ้นให้พัฒนาความสามารถทางภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อเตรียมพร้อมสำหรับการประกอบอาชีพในอนาคต อย่างไรก็ตาม นโยบายนี้ได้สร้างความกังวลเช่นกัน โดยเฉพาะอย่างยิ่งในแง่ของการบริหารเวลา เนื่องจากนักศึกษาต้องฝึกงานหรือทำโครงการต่าง ๆ ในช่วงปีสุดท้าย ส่วนอาจารย์ที่ได้ให้สัมภาษณ์มีมุมมองร่วมกันทั้งในด้านบวกและด้านลบต่อนโยบายนี้ ผลการศึกษาในครั้งนี้ยังแสดงให้เห็นว่านักศึกษาได้เผชิญกับความท้าทายหลายอย่างในการสอบวัดระดับทักษะภาษาอังกฤษและได้ใช้กลยุทธ์ที่แตกต่างกันในการรับมือกับความท้าทายเหล่านี้ เช่นการศึกษาจากเอกสารเตรียมสอบ การฝึกฝนทำข้อสอบ และการปรึกษากับครูผู้สอนภาษาอังกฤษ ข้อเสนอแนะจากการศึกษาในครั้งนี้คือ อาจารย์ผู้สอนภาษาอังกฤษ อาจารย์ผู้สอนในสาขาวิชาต่าง ๆ ผู้กำหนดนโยบาย และผู้พัฒนาข้อสอบ ควรรับฟังความคิดเห็นของนักศึกษาและร่วมมือกันเพื่อเตรียมความพร้อมให้นักศึกษาทุกคนในการรับมือกับเกณฑ์ภาษาอังกฤษสำหรับการจบการศึกษาของมหาวิทยาลัย

Thesis Title	Perceptions of Undergraduate Students and Faculty Members from the Faculty of Agricultural Technology towards the University's English Proficiency Graduation Requirements
Student	Miss Nuttarinan Panchoei
Student ID.	61616006
Degree	Master of Arts
Program	Applied Linguistics – English for Professional Purposes
Year	2022
Thesis Advisor	Dr. Pramarn Subphadoongchone

ABSTRACT

A large number of Thai universities have established the English benchmark policy for graduation requirements and developed their own English exit exam. This is to ensure that undergraduate students have acquired a sufficient level of English proficiency necessary for their future career. Nonetheless, stakeholders' perceptions towards this policy have been underexplored. The present study aimed to investigate undergraduate students' and faculty members' perceptions towards the university's English proficiency graduation requirements. This study adopted a mixed-methods research design. The research instruments of this study were a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview. The participants of the study were 243 fourth-year undergraduate students and four faculty members from the Faculty of Agricultural Technology at one university in Bangkok, Thailand. These students completed the questionnaires online, and 12 of them took part in a semi-structured interview session. The four lecturers were also subsequently interviewed. All interviews were conducted via online platform. All interviews with the students and the lecturers were conducted via Microsoft Teams platform. The quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics whereas the qualitative data were analyzed using content analysis. The results revealed that most of the students expressed positive perceptions towards this policy implementation, despite encountering challenges in taking the university's English exit examination. Most students thought that this policy motivated them to enhance their English proficiency as preparation for their future careers. Nevertheless, this policy posed anxiety to them, particularly in terms of time management due to their engagement in a final year internship or project, and its effect on their graduation. The faculty members, on the other hand, shared both positive and negative perceptions on this policy. The results also showed that the students had a variety of challenges in taking the English exit exam, and they used different strategies in coping with them. These included studying test-preparation materials, taking test-preparation training, and consulting English teachers. This study suggests that English language teachers, disciplinary lecturers, policy makers, and test developers should listen to their students' voices and thus work collaboratively to prepare the students to cope with the demand in meeting the English graduation requirements.

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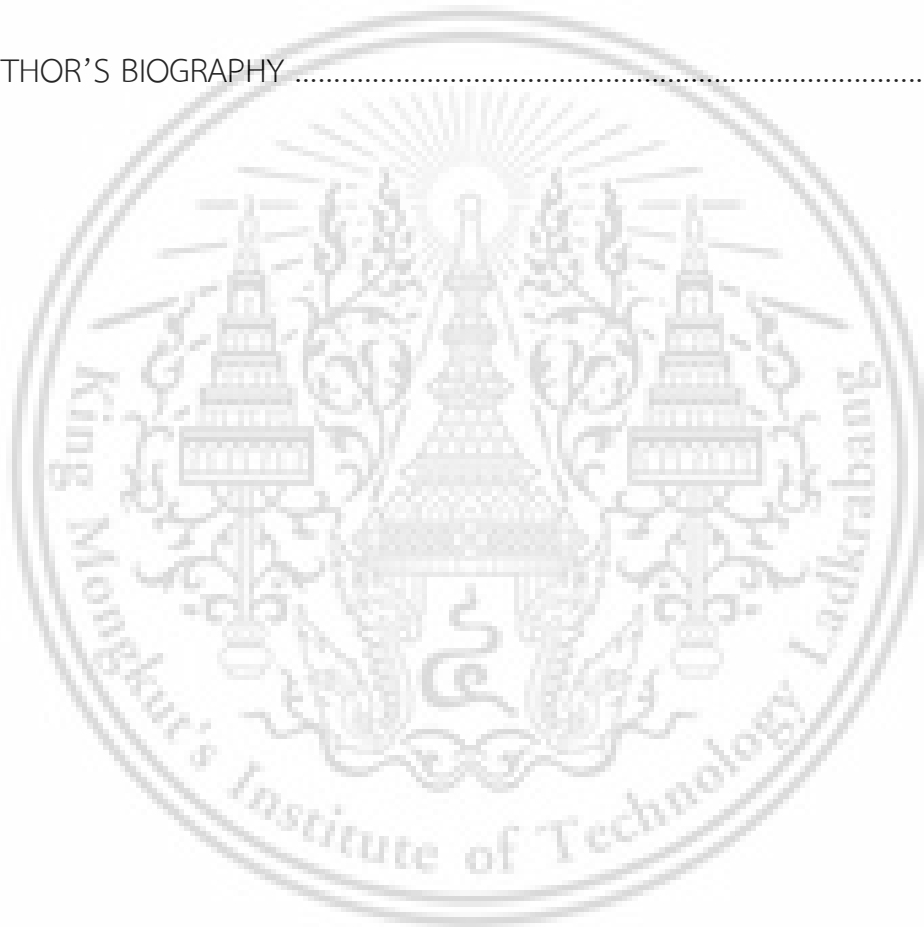
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This study aims at investigating the perceptions of undergraduate students and faculty members from the Faculty of Agricultural Technology in one public university in Thailand, towards the policy on English language proficiency graduation requirements. This introductory chapter discusses the impetus and overview of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

Over the past decades, a great number of universities in different countries have put effort into setting the English language proficiency thresholds and implementing the English benchmark policy for graduation requirements to their students. The major purpose behind such requirements is to increase an awareness of improving university students' English language proficiency (ELP) in order for them to cope with high competition in the world's labor market, achieve the ELP requirements of their prospective careers, and equip themselves with adequate ELP for further studies (Shih, 2009, 2010, 2012, as cited in Hsieh, 2017; Pham & Bui, 2019). To illustrate, in the context of the English graduation benchmark policy in Asia, educational establishments, particularly those in China, Taiwan and Vietnam, seem to be leaders in laying emphasis on setting their own English proficiency graduation requirements for their undergraduate students of all study programs (Chu & Yeh, 2017; Hsieh, 2017; Li et al., 2012; Pham & Bui, 2019).

In order to show a proof of evidence of their English proficiency, students can choose to take different English language proficiency tests as approved by their universities. While some universities have developed their own English proficiency tests for this particular purpose, other universities may adopt the tests available on the market as developed and administered by different trustworthy educational and testing organizations. A study by Li et al. (2012), for example, indicates that most Chinese students choose to take the College English Test (CET), the most influential

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English language proficiency test in China developed and administered by the Chinese Ministry of Education. In Taiwanese universities, students are required to select from a list of recommended English language proficiency tests for graduation: the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC), the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), and the General English Proficiency Test (GEPT) (Chu & Yeh, 2017; Pan & Roever, 2016). In addition, students in universities in Vietnam can choose one of the recommended English language proficiency tests developed by domestic or international testing institutes. These include the Vietnamese Standardized Test of English Proficiency, IELTS, TOEIC, TOEFL, Cambridge Preliminary Test (PET), and First Certificate of English (FCE) (Le, 2017; Nguyen, 2013, as cited in Pham and Bui, 2019). Overall, previous studies (e.g. Chu & Yeh, 2017; Hsieh, 2017; Li et al., 2012; Pan & Roever, 2016; Pham & Bui, 2019) have demonstrated that students who are non-native speakers of English studying in universities in non-Anglophone countries are expected to reach a satisfactory score of English language proficiency, as established by their universities as part of their English graduation policy.

Even though previous studies reveal that students had positive perceptions regarding the English graduation benchmark policy, they also reported that the policy seemed to exert negative impacts on their affective conditions. For instance, students strongly agreed that the graduation requirements of the English benchmark policy encouraged them to become active English language learners through greater efforts in preparing for the examination, and this helped them to improve their English language proficiency and create their future prospects of employment (Hsieh, 2017; Li et al., 2012; Pham & Bui, 2019; Sriwilaijaroen & Piamsai, 2018). However, students also experienced an increase in anxiety and pressure when preparing and taking the test as graduation requirements (Li et al., 2012; Pham & Bui, 2019).

In the Thai educational context, several universities have started to set their own English graduation benchmark policies, allowing students to take both international English language proficiency tests for non-native speakers such as TOEFL, IELTS, and TOEIC; and university-developed English language proficiency. According to Prapphal (2008), university students in Thailand in every program should take one English language proficiency test which serves as an English exit

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examination, as approved by their universities, before their graduation. This is beneficial because the test results can be used to inform their prospective employers of the students' English language proficiency which may, or may not, meet the employers' expectations. It is also useful for the students themselves since they can reflect on their English proficiency and thus consider how they can maintain or improve their English ability where appropriate and necessary.

Over the past decades, many universities in Thailand have their own language institutes or English departments, responsible for developing and administering a university-based test of English language proficiency. For example, two leading universities, Chulalongkorn University and Thammasat University, have their own tests known as “Chulalongkorn University Test of English Proficiency (CU-TEP)” and “Thammasat University General English Test (TU-GET)” respectively. Results from these tests are used as part of admission requirements for some undergraduate programs and for all postgraduate programs. They are also used as graduation requirements for all postgraduate programs. Although both universities have encouraged their undergraduate students to take the test before graduation, the universities have not yet had a clear policy regarding the English proficiency graduation requirements.

Like Chulalongkorn University and Thammasat University, many universities in Thailand, be they private or public, have not had issued a clear policy on the use of the English proficiency graduation requirements for their undergraduate students. However, it is interesting to find that some universities have recently announced their implementation of the English proficiency graduation requirements. Even though there have been studies on issues surrounding the English proficiency graduation requirements for undergraduate students in various educational contexts, it seems that perceptions of Thai undergraduate students towards the policy have not yet been insightfully explored in the Thai context. In particular, there is no research investigating the implemented policy and its accompanying university-developed exit exam, from the perspectives of lecturers from discipline-specific fields.

To fill such a gap, this leads to the intention of this study to investigate perceptions in relation to the English language proficiency graduation requirements of undergraduate students and teachers at the Faculty of Agricultural Technology in

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one public university in Thailand. The findings of this study will bridge the research gap and then provide both theoretical and pedagogical implications, particularly for those involved in planning, issuing and implementing the policy.

The reasons why this study places emphasis on only one selected university and one faculty are as follows. First, the university under investigation set its own English graduation policy for undergraduate students and developed its own English language proficiency test as an exit exam. All undergraduate students graduating in the academic year 2020 were the first cohort that was required to meet the minimum score set by the university. Therefore, a study focusing on this particular university, with a new policy and an exit exam still in their infancy and in the process of trial and error, is worth investigating.

Second, research conducted at one particular university and faculty will allow the researcher to insightfully delve into useful context-laden information to better understand the issues under investigation. This is because as it is undeniable that each university's policy has its own unique characteristics and implications, it should be understood in its own situated context. In addition, when the research is geared towards a particular faculty, findings will can be specifically tailored in order to meet the particular pedagogical needs and expectations of that studied faculty.

Finally, the impetus of this study has been from the researcher's own experience in discussing the issues with undergraduate students from the Faculty of Agricultural Technology and some English teachers. It was found that many students from this faculty had a variety of challenges in learning English, and many of them had expressed their concern about the policy due to their limited English proficiency. It is also important to note that students from different disciplines may possess different levels of English language proficiency, hold different degrees of motivations and attitudes towards learning and practicing English, and have different kinds of language problems. In addition, the Faculty of Agricultural Technology was also aware of possible challenges to be encountered by their students, as induced by this new policy. It is therefore methodologically justifiable to conduct this proposed research by focusing on one particular faculty in order to offer the pedagogical implications for the Faculty of Agricultural Technology.

1.2 Purposes of the Study

This study aimed to investigate the perceptions of the undergraduate students and the faculty members from the Faculty of Agricultural Technology towards English proficiency graduation requirements. The study took place at one public university in Thailand.

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To investigate the students' and faculty members' views of the policy on English language proficiency graduation requirements.
2. To explore the challenges encountered by the students in taking the university's English exit examination.

Based on the above research purposes, the research questions of this study are as follows:

1. How do the students and the faculty members view the policy on English language proficiency graduation requirements?
2. What challenges do the students encounter in taking the university's English exit examination?

1.3 Scope of the Study

This study took place at one public university in Bangkok, Thailand. The participants under investigation were fourth-year undergraduate students and the faculty members from the Faculty of Agricultural Technology. The focus of the study was mainly on the students' and faculty members' perspectives of the policy on English language graduation requirements implemented by their university. It is also important to note that the data of the study were based on the perspectives of the research participants, which were drawn out through a questionnaire survey and a semi-structured interview. No observation on the students' test taking practices and

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preparation was made. It is also important to note that this study did not focus on the interplay between gender differences and the participants' perceptions.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study would provide useful implications for those responsible for setting the English graduation benchmark policy for undergraduate students. In particular, the findings would inform the policy makers of how undergraduate students and lecturers from the Faculty of Agricultural Technology perceived the policy, the English exit examination, and the challenges the students encountered in taking the English exit examination. This would provide the policy makers and test developers with useful feedback on the implementation of the policy, with reference to issues pertaining to desired and undesired impacts of the policy.

As the study was conducted at the Faculty of Agricultural Technology, the findings particularly raised awareness among faculty members, particularly those of the administration, of the challenges that their students perceived in attempting to meet the English proficiency graduation requirements. Based upon the findings, the faculty members could work with English lecturers to discuss ways in which they could collaboratively design and deliver appropriate academic and pastoral support for the students.

This study has also contributed to the body of knowledge about the washback of the English graduation requirements in the Thai context. Even though universities in Thailand have started implementing this policy, this issue has less been explored. Therefore, this study can serve as a steppingstone for other researchers interested in delving into issues related to the implementation of English graduation requirements and subsequently designing support to meet the needs and expectations of students in a particular context.

1.5 Definition of Terms

1. **Washback** refers to impacts of the policy of English language graduation requirements and testing on perceptions of undergraduate students and lecturers from the faculty of Agricultural Technology at the university under investigation. Consequences of the test effects can result in positive and negative ways which also lead to the students' thoughts, behaviors, and self-preparation methods before taking the test, and the lecturers' support for their students.
2. **English exit exam** refers to the test of English proficiency developed by the university under investigation, aiming at assessing the undergraduate students' English proficiency before their graduation.
3. **Test Format 1** refers to a paper-based English exit exam with multiple-choice items developed based upon the B1+ descriptors of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). It is the main test format administered on-site to the students, except during the period when the university announced the implementation of online teaching policy due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
4. **Test Format 2** refers to an alternative form of the English exit exam with two main components: writing tasks and an oral interview based on a selected news article. This test format was administered online to the students in lieu of Test Format 1 in order to mitigate possible health risks during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 5 **English language graduation requirements** refer to minimum score requirements of different English language proficiency tests accepted by the university under investigation. The undergraduate students must reach the requirements to be eligible to graduate.
6. **Undergraduate students** refer to fourth-year undergraduate students studying in the Faculty of Agricultural Technology at the university under investigation. They also studied English as a Foreign Language.
7. **Faculty members** refer to lecturers teaching in any courses of all bachelor's degree programs in the Faculty of Agricultural Technology at the university where the study took place.

8. **Disciplinary lecturers** refer to lecturers teaching any courses, except English, of all bachelor's degree programs at the university under investigation.

1.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter has provided an overview of the study, introducing the background of the study, the purpose of the study, the scope of the study, the significance of the study, and the definition of terms. Both theoretical perspectives and empirical studies regarding the study of the policy on English language proficiency graduate requirements will be reviewed in the following chapter.



CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides a review of the relevant literature underlying this study. The chapter discusses issues surrounding language testing and foreign language learning and teaching, English benchmark policies, the concepts of washback in language testing and assessment, English language proficiency tests, test-taking strategies, and related empirical studies.

2.1 Language Testing and Foreign Language Learning and Teaching

Testing issues have been discussed among experts from various fields of studies. This is because human life involves testing, and they have been tested to demonstrate their potential or establish their credentials. Testing to measure an individual's capabilities, particularly concerning a threshold of performance, has developed into significant social institutions and serves as a gatekeeping mechanism for several vital societal roles (McNamara, 2000).

In the domain of language testing and assessment, language testing, according to Roever and McNamara (2006), has its origins in traditions of linguistics, psychology, and measurement, which emphasize the individual's cognitive differences and restrain the treatment of the social dimensions of assessment to what can be identified by psychometric methods. Alderson and Banerjee (2002), as cited in Gu (2014), refer to language testing as a comprehending of what language is and what it takes to learn and use. As a result, interpreting test results as evidence of knowledge or abilities of one sort or another is a necessary component of testing, and language tests significantly affect people's lives, serving as entry points at memorably transitional moments in education, employment, and also in the immigration protocol (McNamara, 2000).

Focusing on language testing in an educational context, language tests have been broadly implemented at all levels since test results are used in deducing individuals' language proficiency and guiding judgments about them (Bachman, 2004,

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as cited in Roever & McNamara, 2006), and also serving as a significant accountability indicator which leads to a variety of intended and unforeseen impacts of the tests (Roever & McNamara, 2006). Language testing, according to Roever and McNamara (2006), has gained popularity in becoming a central position in the execution of the language policy and providing both positive and negative test effects for test takers. McNamara (2000), therefore, concludes that it is essential for people directly involved in developing language tests and, more generally, for those who use tests or the information they provide in practical or academic contexts to understand the nature of language testing.

More recently, the notion of using assessments to promote students' growth in learning has gained recognition it deserves in EFL teaching classes (Davison, 2019). According to Brown (1999), the roles of testing and assessment influence curriculum design, development, and implementation in terms of analyzing students' needs and expectations, establishing goals and objectives, developing tests at the program level, preparing suitable teaching materials, delivering instruction, and assessing program effectiveness. It is important to note that language testing also provides students with the opportunity to learn the target language and allows them to study that language from test preparation, during the test, and also from feedback after testing (Tomlinson, 2005).

Hence, language teachers should possess adequate assessment literacy as they are key factors in comprehending and implementing the assessment to enhance students' learning progress. They should also recognize how the social, political, and economic contributions affect and shape their assessment practices (Fleer 2015, as cited in Davison, 2019). Teachers, in addition, necessarily engage in the learning and assessment process rather than treating students as recipients of English language test results (Ministry of Education of China, 2017, as cited in Wu et al., 2021). Davison (2019), for example, states that teachers are required to take part as students' supporters who dedicate sufficient time to offering efforts to prove their best, and teachers as self-assessors can confidently evaluate their outcomes and reflect on their assessment and testing practices of students' language proficiency and accomplishments.

It is without a shadow a doubt that increasing expectations and accountability in foreign language education have resulted in the growing use of language testing and assessment. As Hughes and Hughes (2020) emphasize, language teachers should be aware that the testing system they create can consistently and accurately provide measures of precisely the abilities in which the test aims to test. In other words, the test should be able to identify the students' strengths and weaknesses in learning a foreign language. As for the teachers, they should be able to develop the testing system that has a beneficial effect on learning and teaching.

2.2 English Benchmark Policy for Graduation

According to the Article 34 of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Charter, English is considered as the official lingua franca used as a medium of communication through the ASEAN community. It reads "The working language of ASEAN shall be English" (ASEAN, 2008, p.29). In recent years, the implementation of this policy has resulted in the educational reforms among a group of ASEAN member countries so as to improve their English educational systems at all educational stages, from a primary level to a tertiary education.

For the tertiary level in particular, Vietnam is one of ASEAN member countries, proactively revising the country's English language policy to improve students' English proficiency. The Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) in Vietnam set the English graduation benchmark policy to higher education institutes (HEIs), with the aim of raising Vietnamese students' awareness of improving their English language proficiency of all four communication skills (Pham & Bui, 2019). Students at the higher education level in Vietnam have their own rights to select their favorable tests from an array of English language proficiency tests (ELPTs) provided by domestic and international testing institutes, such as the Vietnamese Standardized Test of English Proficiency, the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC), and the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) (Le, 2017; Nguyen, 2013, as cited in Pham & Bui, 2019). However, according to Phuong (2017), as cited by Pham and Bui (2019), Vietnamese students are required to meet a satisfactory level of cut score

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criterion, corresponding to the national language proficiency framework called Vietnam Foreign Language Framework (VFLF), which is developed based upon the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), in order to receive the bachelor's degree.

Another example of the language policy implementation at the tertiary level is in Taiwan. English plays a vital role in Taiwan as it takes part in helping Taiwanese to be able to enter the world's competitive labor market where the ability to communicate in English is expected. As Taiwanese administrators have realized the importance of English for Taiwan, university students are allowed to graduate only when they reach the satisfactory level of English and Chinese competence because of a higher demand of mastery of both languages in Taiwan and other countries (Chen & Han, 2001, as cited in Pan & Roever, 2016). Thus, the Ministry of Education (MOE) in Taiwan has embodied a graduation benchmark policy of English for all students at higher education institutes since 2005, aiming at promoting Taiwan's globalization (Chu & Yeh, 2017). The criterion of the exit requirement policy is authorized and formulated by each institute, depending on students' language learning and communication needs, and students' English proficiency levels. Nonetheless, the MOE has suggested that universities should adopt the B1 level or above of the CEFR levels as a graduation requirement, and technical colleges should set the English language graduation criteria at the A2 level of the CEFR levels (Shih, 2010, 2012, as cited in Hsieh, 2017).

Since Thailand participated in the ASEAN community in 1967, the Thai Ministry of Education has attempted to improve standards of the educational system through the reformation of the National Education Act (NEA) in 1999, focusing on basic educational needs and investment for all education levels in order to compete with other countries in Asia, especially the ASEAN member states in the globalization age (Kaur & Young & Kirkpatrick, 2016). With an attempt to become one of top-tier countries among the ASEAN nations, educational administrators in Thailand has put effort into setting the policy of "English Exit Exam" to students at a higher education level, in order to assess students' English competencies of four communication skills needed before embarking on high competitiveness in the world's labor market, and

ensure to all future employees that Thai graduates are well equipped to use English in their workplaces (Baker & Jarunthawatchai, 2017; Darasawang, 2007).

Baker and Jarunthawatchai's (2017) study revealed the announcement of the Office of Higher Education Commission (OHEC) regarding the implementation of the language benchmark policy at a higher education level in 2016, to standardize university students' English proficiency levels. The policy recommends the improvement of three main educational aspects covering the English language policy in universities, the English language teaching (ELT) practices, and the English language proficiency test for students (Baker & Jarunthawatchai, 2017). All details of the policy are provided below.

- 1) A university formulates its own English benchmark policy to increase standardized levels of students' English competencies.
- 2) A university modifies its English learning and teaching practices and emphasizes students' successes in learning the language.
- 3) A university offers extra curricula and activities, and even language learning resources and environment, to facilitate students' lifelong learning of English.
- 4) A university develops its own English proficiency standardized test or considers one of international standardized tests, to assess students' level of English proficiency of all four skills. The test results may not be reported through students' certificates or university transcripts.

(Commission of Higher Education, 2016, as cited in Baker & Jarunthawatchai, 2017, p.7-8)

Hence, focusing on the policy of English proficiency assessments for university students, a number of universities in Thailand have applied this policy by setting their own English benchmark policy for graduation to their students in both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. The study of Prapphal (2008) reviewed that the concept of "exit exam" requires university students to take the English language proficiency test as graduation requirements before they leave a university, in order to ensure that they are ready to use English in every workplace. According to Sriwilajaroen and Piamsai's (2018) study of the implementation of the English

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language policy at Chulalongkorn University, postgraduate students are required to take one of acceptable English proficiency tests as a graduation requirement, such as TOEFL, IELTS, and Chulalongkorn University Test of English Proficiency or CU-TEP, and to meet a satisfactory minimum score for graduation as stipulated by the university. However, it is important to note that the English language graduation policy is implemented only for the postgraduate level. As for undergraduate level, there is no clear policy by the university.

Due to the advent and implementation of the English graduation requirement policy, many scholars and educators have found certain serious problems. For example, the implementation of the language policy can reduce students' intrinsic motivation in learning English (Ryan & Weinstein, 2009, as cited in Pham & Bui, 2019). Moreover, Pham and Bui (2019) pointed out that the implementation of the one-size-fit-all policy can provide continuous faults in terms of the unfairness, the test-driven orientation in learning and teaching English, and the increase of stakeholders' dissatisfaction. All these severe issues lead to the higher test anxiety in students and teachers concerned as well (Chen & Squires, 2010, as cited in Pham & Bui, 2019).

To achieve goals of the policy, stakeholders involved in this issue, such as teachers, university members, test developers, administrators, and policy makers, should collaborate with each other to solve all flaws as soon as possible. Policy makers should work together with each university member to understand the actual objective of the policy, the nature of each testing and assessment in terms of strengths and weaknesses, and the test development when evaluating students' test results and learning products (Prapphal, 2008). For instance, test administrators should offer appropriate support in English preparation courses for the test to all students by providing necessary information about the policy and acceptable standardized tests. This includes the test objectives, the test content, the type of test, the English language skills to be tested, and the test allocation. Furthermore, each university should provide students who cannot pass the English language test with alternatives, such as taking extra English courses to reach a graduation requirement instead and retaking the language test in order to build chances in passing the test (Chu & Yeh, 2017).

In addition, according to Chu and Yeh (2017), policy makers, test administrators, even test developers should listen to test takers' and influence individuals' voices, especially students and teachers who are directly affected by the implementation of the language policy in order to solve all these flaws and serve as supplementary ideas in developing authentic and measurable standardized tests. According to Kirkland (1971), students are the most important group of stakeholders who provide major decisions in setting the policy, based on their test results. In addition, Prapphal (2008) noted that teachers are key factors who can certainly observe their students' progresses through the use of the policy, and then provide educational administrators and test developers with students' progress indicators. Therefore, higher education institutes in each country should make an effort into conducting more empirical studies on students' and teachers' perceptions and attitudes on the English language graduation policy and internal and external English standardized tests, since they are significant stakeholders who are first affected by the policy (Pham & Bui, 2019).

It can be summarized that the importance of the implementation of the English graduation benchmark policy at a tertiary level is to assess students' English communicative competences and provide students and stakeholders involved with useful pedagogical feedback. In this study, the researcher will investigate the perceptions of students and lecturers from the Faculty of Agricultural Technology in one university, towards the implementation of English graduation requirement policy. To insightfully understand those perceptions, this study will be theoretically guided by the concepts of washback, which will be discussed below.

2.3 Washback in Language Testing and Assessment

The issue on washback has been widely studied due to its importance over past few decades. Altowaim (2015) indicated that examination always comes about test impacts on the lives of influence stakeholders, emphasizing examinees and a high authority of that testing. As a result, the significance of washback effects, dealing with an exploration of how testing influences learning and teaching processes, has generated plenty of studies in a field of language testing and assessment. A large

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number of researchers have attempted to put their efforts in investigating how such test effects operate and proposed several definitions, notions, hypotheses, and frameworks of washback.

2.3.1 Definitions of washback

Scholars in the field of applied linguistics have provided different definitions of the term “washback” or “backwash” as follows.

The definition of washback or backwash by Hughes (1989) is broadly known as “the effect of testing on teaching and learning” (p.1). Hughes (1993) proposed the trichotomy of the washback model consisting of *participants*, *processes*, and *products* to explain how a test affects these three components. To elaborate, a test can affect participants’ perceptions and attitudes which can lead to what they perform (processes) to foster their abilities of learning and teaching, including material development, syllabus design, change in teaching methodology, test-taking strategies, and so on. Finally, the process of learning and teaching can bring about the quality of learning and teaching outcomes or products such as facts, skills, and fluency (Lunrasri, 2014).

Alderson and Wall (1993) defined washback as “teachers and learners [who] do things they would not necessarily otherwise do because of the test” (p.117), and investigated possible washback hypotheses. These hypotheses of washback specify certain areas of washback effects in relation to the learning and teaching in terms of contents, methods, rates, sequences, degrees, and depths. A series of washback hypotheses is categorized into five groups as follows.

1) Hypothesis regarding washback effects on teaching

A test will influence teaching on what and how teachers teach. Also, a test will influence the rate and sequence of teaching, and degree and depth of teaching.

2) Hypothesis regarding washback effects on learning

A test will influence learning on what and how learners learn. Also, a test will influence the rate and sequence of learning, and degree and depth of learning.

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3) Hypothesis regarding washback effects on teaching and learning attitudes

A test will influence attitudes to the content, method, etc. of teaching and learning.

4) Hypothesis regarding washback effects on stake of the test

Tests that have important consequences will have washback. Conversely, tests that do not have important consequences will have no washback.

5) Hypothesis regarding washback effects on teachers and learners

Tests will have washback on all learners and teachers. However, tests will have washback effects for some learners and some teachers, but not for others.

(Lunrasri, 2014, p. 22)

Bailey (1996) indicated that the influence of testing toward learning and teaching is considered as washback and presented an idea of “washback to the learners” and “washback to the program”. The concept of washback to the learner refers to “the effects of test-derived information provided to the test-takers”, while “results of test-derived information provided to teachers, administrators, curriculum developers, counsellors, etc.” are referred as washback to the program (p.264). However, it is important to note that Bailey’s (1996) notion of washback seems to focus on participants’ possible interactions to produce products or outcomes rather than indicating possible differences of test effects on each individual.

Bachman and Palmer (1996) referred to washback as an aspect of test impacts on processes of learning and instruction which affect individuals, educational systems, and society at large, and further explained that test impacts can affect at two levels: *a micro level* and *a macro level*. At the micro level, washback influences individuals who are affected by the implementation of the test such as test takers, teachers, test takers’ colleagues, and future employers. For example, the experience of preparing for the test affects test takers’ learning behaviors since they may spend a lot of time preparing individually for the test. Washback also provides test effects

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at the macro level in terms of goals and values that inform the use of a language test to the whole educational system and society.

In conclusion, according to the definitions of washback or backwash as provided by some representative scholars, washback or backwash can be summarized as test impacts, effects, or consequences on learning and teaching. Washback can be attributed to effects of the test implementation to stakeholders (participants) who are influenced by a test in both educational and social contexts, especially students and teachers in the classroom setting or in a particular program of studies. The impact of the test can affect students' learning practices and teachers' teaching performance (processes), leading to students' quality of learning outcomes (products).

2.3.2 Types of washback

Washback can be broadly divided into positive washback and negative washback. Positive washback enhances excellent students' learning performances and effective teaching methods to teachers, leading to advantageous test consequences. According to Alderson and Wall (1993), positive washback would offer beneficial test effects in promoting students' and teachers' learning and teaching activities, motivating more appropriate learning and teaching practices, and encouraging participants' positive attitudes in relation to the influence tests, resulting in students' lifelong learning to study English. For instance, teachers may create the positive test washback if their tests encourage their students to make great efforts into preparing for the test and reviewing lessons thoroughly (Djurić, 2008).

Negative washback, however, reflects learning and teaching processes in undesirable ways. It may create a test anxiety and pressure to both students and teachers, resulting in poor learning and teaching performances. This may make students and teachers only focus on the content of the test and skills tested instead of actual students' English skill needs for their lifelong language learning (Cheng, 2005; Taylor, 2005; Tsagari, 2011). For example, teachers may produce disadvantageous test impacts if they are concerned that their students will receive poor test results (Djurić, 2008). Therefore, they may coach their students on how to do the tests, such as using test-taking strategies or reviewing only certain points

covered in the tests, rather than teaching contents as required by the curriculum. This may result in the students receiving higher test results, but they may not be able to use the language in real situations.

Another example of washback effects can be found in the Thai educational context. For example, Thai students at Grade 6, Grade 9, and Grade 12 are required to take the Ordinary National Educational Test (O-NET) before graduation. Therefore, possible positive and negative washback impacts can occur. The study of Lunrasri (2014) investigating the washback effects of the O-NET on English language teaching and learning in Grade 9 found that positive washback effects emerged when students attempted to concentrate on learning communicative skills and studied English harder to improve their English proficiency levels. On the other hand, the washback effect was that the students spent much more time in test preparation and had a high level of test anxiety towards the test implementation.

2.3.3 Shih's washback model of learning

There are several theoretical frameworks of washback such as Hughes' s Washback Trichotomy (1993), Alderson and Wall's Washback Hypotheses (1993), Bailey's Basic Model of Washback (1996), and Bachman and Palmer's Washback (1996). In this study, the researcher will adopt the washback model of Shih (2007) as a theoretical framework because it places emphasis on students' learning. The washback model of students' learning proposed by Shih (2007), built on possible washback hypotheses of Alderson and Wall (1993) and Bailey's (1996) washback model, presents factors causing test impacts on students' learning and psychology. According to the washback framework of students' learning as shown in Figure 2.1., all factors comprising of extrinsic and intrinsic factors, and test factors are interconnected with each other. Washback effects of the test on students' learning and psychology can be divided into five main aspects in terms of content of learning, total time on learning, learning strategies, learning motivation, and test anxiety.

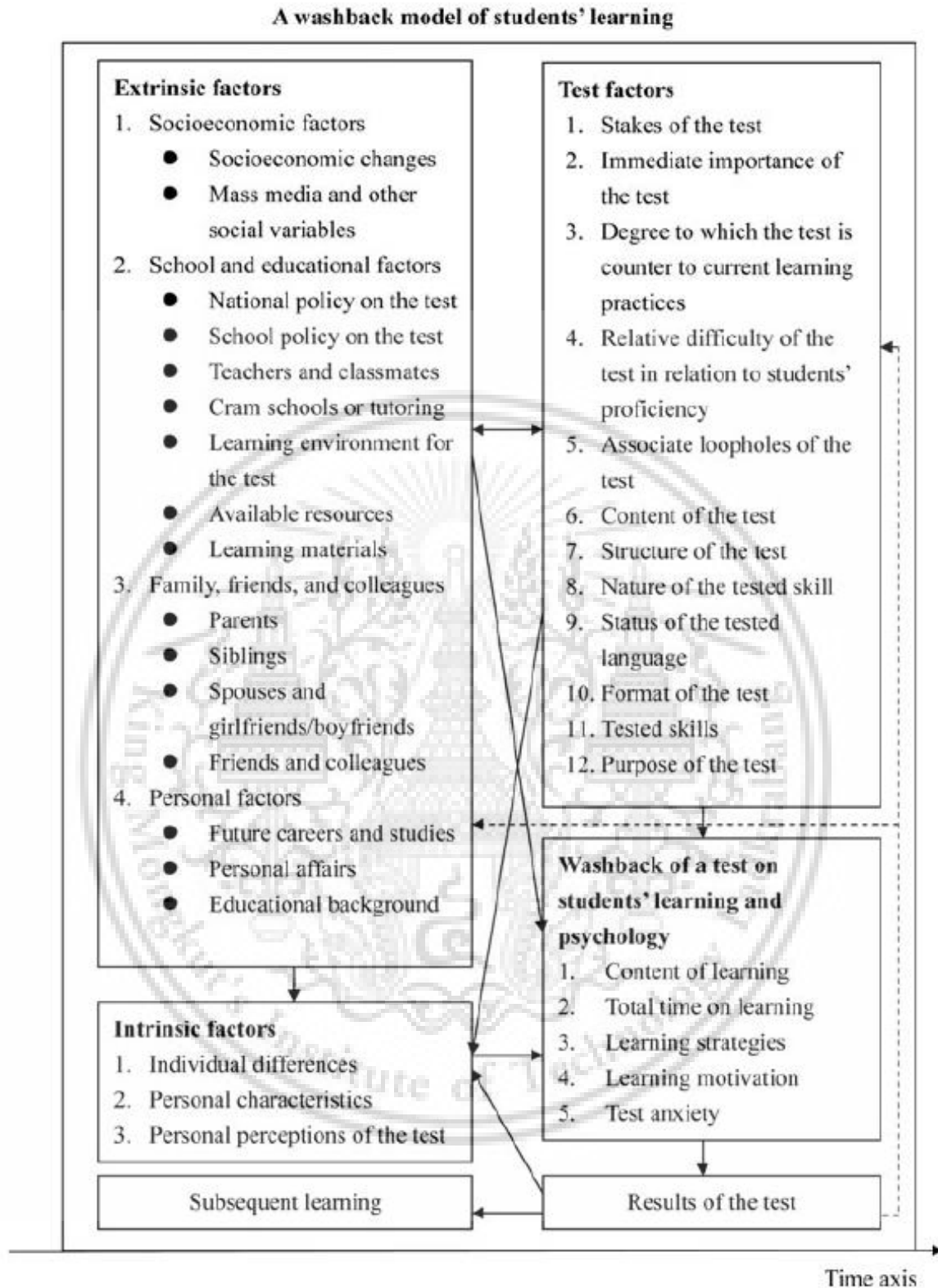


Figure 2.1 Shih's washback model of students' learning (Shih, 2007, p.151)

Washback on learning and psychology

Five aspects of washback effects on students' learning and psychology examined by Shih (2007) consist of content of learning, total time of learning, learning strategies, learning motivation, and test anxiety. They will be employed to guide this study, serving as a research framework in exploring the students' and the lecturers' perceptions towards their university's implementation of the English language proficiency policy as graduation requirements, and the English exit exam.

Content of learning

Content of learning, as defined by the International Bureau of Education (2020), is referred as “the topics, themes, beliefs, behaviors, concepts and facts, often grouped within each subject or learning area under knowledge, skills, values and attitudes, that are expected to be learned and form the basis of teaching and learning.” The implementation of a language test can affect students' learning in relation to the content of learning. The study by Hường and Mai (2018), which investigated washback on non-English majored students' preparation strategies for the graduation proficiency assessment (GPA) as exit requirement in Vietnam National University, showed that seniors practiced test-like materials before taking a standardized test. Meanwhile, the first-year students were likely to practice general English tasks instead. In the classroom setting, a test-oriented teaching method used by teachers, which only stressed on students' test-taking skills instead of their communicative skills needed, led to negative washback impacts on students' learning of English (Stoneman, 2006).

Total time on learning

Total time on learning refers to the amount of time in which students use to study foreign languages or to prepare for a language test (Gashaya, 2012, as cited in Lunrasri, 2014). Students' test preparation can bring about test impacts on their learning in several ways. The study of Hsieh (2017) investigating perceptions of Taiwanese college students on the language requirement policy and the efficacy of

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the TOEIC as an exit test found that students had optimistic views toward the test implementation. This is because they believed that preparing for the test seemed to provide them with positive impacts on their language proficiency levels and future employment prospects. Hường and Mai's (2018) research also revealed that students differently prepared for a language test, depending on their years of studying. The last-year students spent more time on test preparation and did some tasks which were similar to the test, whereas freshmen seemed to put their little efforts on test preparation.

Learning strategies

Language learning strategies can be referred to as “ behaviors, steps, or techniques that language learners apply to facilitate language learning” (Rigney, 1978; Rubin, 1987, p. 136, as cited in Lee, 2010). According to the study of Oxford (1990), as cited in Lee (2010), aspects of the language learning strategies can be divided into two major classifications: direct strategies and indirect strategies. Direct strategies include three specific strategies: (1) memory strategies: learners applying them to remember new formation; (2) cognitive strategies: learners applying them to understand and produce language; and (3) compensation strategies: learners applying them in spite of the lack of knowledge. Direct strategies also contain three particular strategies: (1) metacognitive strategies: learners applying them to correlate with their learning processes; (2) affective strategies: learners applying them to monitor their emotion; and (3) social strategies: learners applying them to learn language with others.

Language learning strategies that students employ to enhance their levels of English proficiency can cause impacts of the test affecting students' learning. According to Stoneman (2006), students used traditional learning strategies such as reading textbooks, memorizing vocabulary and idioms, and practicing previous tests as their test preparation methods. Furthermore, the study of Hường and Mai (2018) disclosed that most students decided to study for the test by themselves in order to save their budgets. Other students, however, sought after English teachers and accessed the website of that language test to gain more information about the test.

Learning motivation

Phetpongkam and Zayed (2015) defined the term *motivation* as “the drive or desire process that causes behavior to occur” (p.3). Learning motivation can be separated into four types: intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, instrumental motivation, and integrative motivation. Intrinsic motivation is considered as an inward motivation pushing students to learn foreign languages (Lunrasri, 2014). Extrinsic motivation is an action that students learn foreign languages so as to receive some extrinsic rewards such as good grades, good future careers, and satisfaction, and alternatively to avoid a punishment as well (Phetpongkam & Zayed, 2015; Ortega, 2009). An external motivation for social educational purposes in studying foreign languages is referred to as instrumental motivation, whereas integrative motivation is a desire to learn foreign languages for social purposes such as interaction, communication, and socialization (Gardner, 2007).

Impacts of washback can affect students’ learning motivation. Hường and Mai (2018) advocated that students had positive attitudes toward the test use as it helped to motivate and increase their English language proficiency levels. The study of Sriwilaijaroen and Piamsai (2018) about washback on students’ and lecturers’ perceptions toward the implementation of University English Proficiency Test also revealed that students became active learners and paid more attention to study English because of the implementation of the language test as an exit requirement. Nevertheless, the test use can also decrease learners’ motivation in learning foreign languages in certain situations as well (Özmen, 2011, as cited in Lunrasri, 2014).

Test anxiety

Spielberger (2010) defined *anxiety* as “subjective feelings of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry, and by activation or arousal of the automatic nervous system” (p.4). Anxiety is also one of significant aspects of negative washback effects caused by the use of a language test. The study of Hường and Mai (2018) found that students felt nervous before taking the test because they were unfamiliar with the test format and had a test-taking pressure. Moreover, Stoneman (2006)

reviewed that students with a low English proficiency are more likely to feel worry about the test requirement than those with a higher English proficiency.

In summary, there are five significant areas of washback effects on students' learning and psychology: content of learning, total time of learning, learning strategies, learning motivation, and test anxiety. It is important to note that washback plays a crucial role in a field of language testing and assessment for more than 30 years as it can be defined as impacts, effects, and consequences of a particular test on learning and teaching. It has been pointed out by scholars in the field that positive washback can offer several advantages to students in terms of promoting their learning outcomes, encouraging the English language learning for long run, and motivating their intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to learn English. On the contrary, negative washback of the test can increase students' and teachers' test anxiety, fear, and pressure in regard to preparation for the test.

2.4 English Language Proficiency Test

Brown and Abeywickrama (2010) indicated that proficiency test “is designed to measure people's ability in a language, regardless of any training they may have had in that language” (p.11). To elaborate on this notion, a proficiency test is also defined as the students' English language assessment of all four commutative skills, consisting of listening, speaking, reading, and writing which can be evaluated by testing and assessing students' learning progress of accumulative academic practices (Gardner, 2007).

In the Thai context, both international English standardized tests and some English tests developed by universities are widely accepted to use as assessment tools of Thai students' English proficiency. They include, to name a few, the TOEIC, TOEFL, IELTS, CU-TEP, TU-GET, and PSU-TEP.

2.4.1 International English standardized tests

The Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC)

The TOEIC is a global standardized test for assessing English language skills needed in workplace communication of those who are not English native speakers. The test is developed and administered by the Educational Testing Service (ETS). The TOEIC consists of two separate tests of Listening and Reading, and Speaking and Writing. The TOEIC Listening and Reading test is a multiple-choice test, consisting of 200 questions divided into two sections: listening section (100 questions) and reading section (100 questions). In the listening part, examinees will be asked to respond to questions based on a variety of statements, questions, conversations, and talks recorded in English. This part takes approximately 45 minutes. In the reading part, examinees are required to read various materials and answer the questions based upon the provided materials. This part takes around 75 minutes (ETS, 2020).

Another type of the TOEIC is the TOEIC Speaking and Writing Test, consisting of 11 questions in the speaking section and eight questions in the writing section. Examinees will read a text aloud, describe a picture, respond to questions using information provided, propose a solution, and express an opinion. This part takes about 20 minutes. In the writing part, examinees write a sentence based on a picture, respond to a written request, and write an opinion essay. This part lasts approximately 60 minutes. The total points of the TOEIC test are 990 points (ETS, 2020).

The Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL)

The TOEFL is a high standardized test of English proficiency accepted and preferred by many universities around the world. It is developed and administered by American Educational Testing Service (EST). The test is used to evaluate English competencies of examinees who are non-native speakers of English. The test comprises of four parts based on academic English skills (reading, listening, speaking, and writing). Firstly, the reading section deals with reading passages and responding to questions, taking around 70 minutes. Secondly, the listening part allows examinees to answer questions based on brief lectures or classroom discussions,

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taking approximately 50 minutes. Thirdly, in the speaking part, examinees talk about a familiar topic and discuss the provided material. This part takes around 20 minutes. Lastly, in the writing section, examinees are provided with a reading passage and a listening task, and required to write their response based on the writing task. This part takes approximately 50 minutes. Each section has a maximum score of 30, making a total of 120. To sum up, the testing time is around four hours (ETS, 2020).

The International English Language Testing System (IELTS)

The IELTS is an international English language proficiency test sponsored by the British Council, IDP: IELTS Australia and Cambridge Assessment English. The objective of the IELTS is to assess English language skills of individuals who desire to study at a higher education. All four language skills are tested in the IELTS, including listening, reading, writing and speaking.

Various test types of questions are provided in the listening part: multiple choice, matching, plan or map or diagram labelling, form completion, note completion, table completion, flow-chart completion, summary completion, sentence completion, and short-answer questions. The maximum score of this part is 40, and the time allotment of this part is approximately 30 minutes.

For the reading section, a variety of questions are employed: multiple choice, identifying information (True or False or Not Given), identifying a writer's views or claims (Yes or No or Not Given), matching information, matching headings, matching features, matching sentence endings, sentence completion, summary completion, note completion, table completion, flow-chart completion, diagram label completion, and short-answer questions. Similar to the listening part, this part has a total score of 40, but the time allotment of this part is approximately 60 minutes.

The writing part consists of two writing tasks, one with at least 150 words and the other with at least 250 words in length. The test score of this part is evaluated based on each task performance by certificated IELTS examiners, following to the IELTS Writing test assessment criteria (Task Achievement or Response, Coherence and Cohesion, Lexical Resource, and Grammatical Range and Accuracy). The time allotment for this part is about 60 minutes.

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The last section of the IELTS is speaking, offering three tasks: introduction and interview (4 -5 minutes), individual long turn (3 - 4 minutes), and two-way discussion (4-5 minutes). The test score of this section is measured based on each task performance by certificated IELTS examiners, following to the IELTS Speaking test assessment criteria (Fluency and Coherence, Lexical Resource, Grammatical Range and Accuracy, and Pronunciation). The total test period of time allowed for this part is 11-14 minutes (IELTS, 2019).

2.4.2 English language proficiency tests developed by Thai universities

The Chulalongkorn University Test of English Proficiency (CU-TEP)

The CU-TEP is one of the most prestigious English proficiency tests in Thailand. It is administered by the Chulalongkorn University Academic Testing Center, aiming at measuring examinees' ability to use the English language for academic. The CU-TEP consists of three sections: listening, reading, and writing, with four-options of a multiple-choice format. The maximum score of the listening and writing sections is 30 each. The reading section has a maximum score of 60. All the three sections make up a total of 120 points. An allocation of the test time period in the three sections is 30 minutes (listening), 70 minutes (reading), and 30 minutes (writing) (Chulalongkorn University Academic Testing Center, 2017).

The Thammasat University General English Test (TU-GET)

The TU-GET is an English language proficiency test developed by Language Institute of Thammasat University (LITU). The purpose of the TU-GET is to assess test takers' English language proficiency in language use, especially Thammasat University's students and individuals who require to enroll in Thammasat University at both undergraduate and graduate levels. The TU-GET is recently divided into two types of the test: the TU-GET Paper-based (PBT) and the TU-GET Computer-based (CBT). Both TU-GET (PBT and CBT) include four sections of reading, listening, speaking, and writing. The test items in the listening and reading parts are multiple-choices with four options. In the speaking and writing sections, there are two speaking tasks (a narrative speech and an opinion speech), and one essay writing task. Each skill makes up 30 points to set the total point of 120. In addition, test results of the TU-GET can

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be equated with TOEFL (iBT) scores (Language Institute of Thammasat University, 2019).

The Prince of Songkla University Test of English Proficiency (PSU-TEP)

The PSU-TEP is an in-house English proficiency test developed by the Faculty of Liberal Arts, Prince of Songkla University. The PSU-TEP has an aim to assess levels of English competences of each four-communicative skill of students at Prince of Songkla University and other individuals planning to pursue their studies at this university. The PSU-TEP composes of four parts based on each set of skills tested: reading skills, listening skills, writing skills, and speaking skills. The test of reading skills consists of 50 questions, each with four-multiple choices. The reading test is also separated into three sections including error recognition, gap-filling, and reading comprehension. This part of the PSU-TEP takes 2 hours. The test of listening skills contains 30 questions divided into three parts in order to measure examinees' ability in understanding short ordinary conversations and talks in daily life, longer dialogues about college life, and longer academic or non-academic talks. This section takes an hour. For the writing skills, examinees are required to write an essay based on a given topic within an hour. For the speaking part, examinees are required to answer the given questions within three minutes (Faculty of Liberal Arts PSU, 2020).

In summary, in Thailand different tests, such as TOEIC, TOEFL, IELTS, CU-TEP, TU-GET, and PSU-TEP, are used to assess student's English language proficiency. It can be seen that these tests have certain similarities and differences in terms of test formats, contents and skills tested, score allocations, and time allotment. They are used as major tools in assessing examinees' English proficiency, and the results will be used by universities as admission and/or graduation requirements.

2.5 Test-Taking Strategies and EFL Students

Over the last few decades, theoretical and pedagogical issues on learner strategies in the context of foreign language assessment have been widely researched. One of the most investigated issues is the students' use of test-taking strategies. Dodeen et al. (2014), as cited in Mohammed (2021), advocate that it is crucial for a test taker to be able to manage anxiety and maintain motivation when taking an exam to be successful and adopt effective test-taking strategies such as risk-taking (Bicak 2013, as cited in Mohammed, 2021). This is because test-taking strategies can to a certain extent empower test takers to cope with linguistic barriers and demands of item responses in the examination (Cohen, 2006, as cited in Lee, 2019). Consequently, the importance of employing test-taking strategies among EFL students has motivated a great number of researchers to relentlessly explore this issue.

2.5.1 Definitions of test-taking strategies

In the context of foreign language learning and teaching, scholars in the field have provided various definitions of “test-taking strategies” as follows. Cohen (2006), as cited in Huang (2016), defines test-taking strategies as selected methods that test takers utilize to cope with both the language challenges and the item-response demands in the test tasks at hand. These strategies represent those test-taking methods that test takers have chosen and are aware of, at least to some extent (Cohen & Upton, 2007, as cited in Bumbálková, 2021). Cohen (2007), as cited in Bulushi et al. (2018), further elaborates that test-taking strategies in language assessment are usually referred to as learning tactics test takers can employ in completing language proficiency tests. It is important to note that the use of test-taking strategies as well as language learner strategies is based on an individual's strategic competence, which refers to the ability to muster strategies to cope with an actual communicative situation and maintain the communication channel open (Canale & Swain, 1980, as cited in Huang, 2016).

In foreign language assessment, test-taking strategies are viewed as a form of strategic competence that can result in construct-relevant or construct-irrelevant variation in test scores (Bachman, 1990; Cohen, 2014, as cited in Suvorov, 2018).

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Bumbálková (2021) concludes that what is meant by test-taking strategies is dependent on the test takers' techniques and processes. Nevertheless, test-taking strategies can be characterized differently according to question types (e.g. writing an essay, answering questions with multiple-choice items, or completing a cloze test); language skills (e.g. techniques used in reading tests, writing tests, or speaking tests); task types (e.g. techniques used in role-playing) (Amer, 2007; Mohammed, 2021). Test-taking strategies, thus, are widely used in practically all language testing circumstances and test types and formats, including oral tests, paper-based tests, and computerized tests (Cohen & Upton, 2007, as cited in Ketworrachai & Sappapan, 2022).

Test-taking strategies can be identified as to test takers' procedures for answering the questions and completing the test tasks, as well as their perceptions towards the questions and tests before, during, and after responding to them (Cohen, 1998, as cited in Sam-arng, 2015). Ketworrachai and Sappapan (2022) also emphasize that test-taking strategies can be regarded as the analytical and problem-solving techniques test takers use to answer questions in testing circumstances. To put it another way, test-taking strategies can be considered as methods or approaches adopted by individual test takers to avoid difficulty or undesirable issues in completing exams (Nikolov, 2006, as cited in Ketworrachai & Sappapan, 2022).

According to Mohammed (2021), test-taking strategies evolve from the notion of test-wiseness strategies, which are described as one's ability to enhance test scores by manipulating test characteristics and formats and test-taking situations. Gebril (2018), as cited in Lee (2019), advocates that introducing test-taking strategies to students could help them improve their test performances. This is because test-taking strategies are shown to be positively correlated with language-testing performance, making it more straightforward for test takers to grasp what they should do in the examination (Huang, 2016; Phakiti, 2003; Zhang et al., 2014, as cited in Lee, 2019), and to help test takers realize things unrelated to what is being assessed such as recognizing patterns in test items or allocating appropriate time to different test sections or items (Winke & Lim, 2017, as cited in Lee, 2019).

2.5.2 Taxonomies of test-taking strategies

The taxonomies of test-taking strategies have been proposed by different scholars from the fields of language education and assessment. The acclaimed taxonomies seem to be those provided by Cohen (1998) and Bachman and Palmer (1996).

Cohen's Taxonomy

Cohen (1998), as cited in Amer (2007), proposes the taxonomy of test-taking strategies and indicates that test-taking strategies could be considered relevant to second language learner strategies. These language learner strategies, according to Cohen, are differentiated between two main categories: *second language learning strategies* and *second language use strategies*. Both are behaviors that learners choose intentionally to enhance their learning or use of the language.

The strategies language learners employ to complete the test tasks by integrating basic language knowledge and skills of writing, reading, speaking, listening, and lexical, grammatical, and translation knowledge and experiences are identified as language learning strategies (Cohen & Upton, 2006; Cohen, 2013, as cited in Ketworrachai & Sappapan, 2022). In addition, language learning strategies are referred to as the strategies the learners use to wisely identify the material that needs to be learned, distinguish it from other material, if necessary, group it for more accessible learning, review the material through classroom exercises or homework assignments, and employ memory techniques to learn the material (Amer, 2007). In brief, Bremmer (1999), as cited in Amer (2007), defines these language strategies as integrated skills incorporating receptive and productive skills.

Language use strategies are strategies for utilizing the material consisting of four primary techniques: *retrieval strategies* utilized for recalling linguistic material; *rehearsal strategies* utilized for rehearsing target language structures; *cover strategies* utilized for control over the material; and *communication strategies* utilized for delivering a meaningful and instructive message to the listener or reader. Test takers apply all these language use strategies as test-taking strategies in testing conditions. This is because they must retrieve material for the test, practice it before using it in speaking or writing activities, use some cover strategies to look professional, and

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even genuinely communicate if the test requires so (Cohen, 1998, as cited in Amer, 2007).

Bachman and Palmer's Taxonomy

Bachman and Palmer (1996, pp. 70-71), as cited in Amer (2007), propose an interesting conceptualization and taxonomy for language test-taking strategies based upon the concept of "strategic competence," described as a set of metacognitive components, or strategies, which can be considered as higher order executive processes. These metacognitive language test-taking strategies can be divided into three groups as follows.

- 1) Goal setting: Deciding what one is going to do
 - a. Identifying the test tasks
 - b. Choosing one or more tasks from a set of possible tasks
 - c. Deciding whether or not to attempt to complete the task(s) selected
- 2) Assessment: Taking stock of what is needed, what one has to work with, and how well one has done
 - a. Assessing the characteristics of the test task to determine the desirability and feasibility of successfully completing it and what is needed to complete it
 - b. Assessing our knowledge components to see if relevant areas of knowledge are available for successfully completing the test task
 - c. Assessing the correctness or appropriateness of the response to the test task
- 3) Planning: Deciding how to use what one has
 - a. Selecting elements from the areas of knowledge for successfully completing the test task

- b. Formulating one or more plans for implementing these elements in a response to the test task
- c. Selecting one plan for initial implementation as a response to the test task

In summary, even though the definitive meanings of test-taking strategies, as proposed by some representative scholars, are dependent on an individual's interpretations, it can be concluded that test-taking strategies have a significant role to play in terms of their beneficial impacts on the test takers' test performances when these strategies are appropriately applied. Test-taking strategies can thus enable test takers to effectively handle the exam, and it can be said that test-taking strategies are an essential element for helping test takers to not only cope with the demands in taking a given test but also enhance their foreign language learning.

2.6 Relevant Empirical Studies

This section discusses previous studies that explored perceptions towards the policy on English language proficiency graduation requirements in the Asian context. It also discusses some studies on EFL students' use of test-taking strategies in completing English language proficiency tests.

2.6.1 Studies on perceptions towards the policy on English language proficiency graduation requirements

Although language assessment has drawn a lot of attention from English language teachers and researchers, there have been only a few studies investigating EFL students' and teachers' views towards the implementation of the policy on English proficiency graduation requirements.

Using the concept of washback, Hường and Mai (2018) studied undergraduate students' preparation strategies for the Graduation Proficiency Assessment (GPA) and their attitudes toward the test in Vietnam National University, Hanoi (VNUH). The participants of the study were 123 students from the School of Law, VNUH. The

questionnaire was administered to the participants, and eight students took part in a semi-structured interview session. The findings revealed that students expressed their positive perceptions towards the graduation proficiency assessment although they felt that the test had exerted little effect on their test preparation. Students belonging to different years of studies tended to prepare for the test in different ways. However, they shared the optimistic attitudes toward the test. Moreover, two different major results showed that the seniors studied more test-like materials while the freshmen were likely to focus their study on general English tasks. The findings of this study suggest that teachers and test administrators should understand the washback of the test on students' test preparation and perceptions in order to provide students with appropriate support. In addition, teachers should provide their students with more practical exercises apart from test-similar materials and templates in order to help the students to apply what they have learnt in their daily situations.

A study by Sriwilajaroen and Piamsai (2018) studied postgraduate students' and lecturers' perceptions towards the university English proficiency test and types of support expected by the students. The participants were 134 postgraduate students, who had experience in taking the CU-TEP and were required to pass the test as graduation requirements. A questionnaire was used to collect the data from the students. Four lecturers teaching in the postgraduate program were also interviewed to obtain more data. The results of the study showed both positive and negative perceptions in various aspects, depending on the students' characteristics, educational background, and levels of English proficiency. The results revealed eight challenges, with four possible solutions and six types of support provided by the faculty. This study suggests that faculty members and thesis/ dissertation advisors should critically plan, design, and deliver academic support programs for their students. Furthermore, test developers should clearly listen and understand the test takers' voices which can be used as a guideline in improving the quality of the test.

Hsieh's (2017) research aimed at investigating the perceptions of Taiwanese college students on the language requirement policy and the efficacy of the TOEIC as an exit test. The participants of the study were 1,527 college students who had received valid TOEIC LR scores in Taiwan and 26 randomly selected survey

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respondents who expressed their interests in participating in the follow-up interviews. The instruments used in collecting the data were an online student survey and a semi-structured interview through a phone call. The findings of the study indicated that the students had positive views about the use of the TOEIC test scores for graduation. They believed that preparing to take the test had a positive impact on their language proficiency and future employment prospects. Besides, most of them favored the use of the TOEIC test, believing that it had a high level of reliability and validity. The implications of this study are that EFL teachers should create educational materials for helping to build the students' assessment literacy. In addition, the teachers and language educators should inform the students of the test objectives, test design, as well as score interpretations. Lastly, as it is important, the policy makers should be aware of the student's perceptions toward the test, which can be used as a guideline in policy implementation.

Chu and Yeh (2017) investigated and reflected on the implementation of the English benchmark policy for graduation, where external standardized language tests were used as exit exams. The participants of the study were 633 students studying at two technological universities in Taiwan. The questionnaire was administered to the students, and ten teachers, six administrators, and 32 students at both schools were interviewed. The results of this study demonstrated that the English benchmark policy for graduation did not seem to have achieved the expectations due to its limited and weak washback on teaching and learning even though there was a social consensus about the implementation of the policy. Based on the results of the study, it is recommended that the English graduation requirements should be modified in the subsequent policies for more meaningful and practical results.

A study by Pan and Roever (2016) investigated the social impact of a policy requiring university graduates to pass an English proficiency test by examining the consequences of test use in the workplace in Taiwan. The participants of the study were 19 business people who hired the graduates from a technological university in southern Taiwan. They were in charge of recruiting potential employees in 17 industries across Taiwan. The instrument used in collecting the data was a semi-structured interview protocol. The findings unfolded that a few employers required English certificates as a hiring criterion although they were favorably disposed

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towards the policy of English language proficiency test for graduation requirements. Also, the test impacts remained weak. This study suggests that not all of companies actually used English certificates in assessing their job applicants even though all of the business representatives in this study claimed to support the policy of English language graduation requirements.

Li, Zhong and Suen's (2012) research aimed at investigating students' perceptions of the impact of the College English Test (CET) on their English-learning practices and their affective conditions in China. The participants of this study were 150 undergraduate students at a university in Beijing, China. The researcher used a questionnaire as a research instrument in this study. The results showed that the CET had a greater impact on the majority of the participants on what they studied than on how they studied. Furthermore, most students felt the CET had motivated them to make greater efforts into learning English. As a result of taking or preparing for the CET, half of the students reported having a higher level of self-efficacy in their overall English ability and some specific English skills. However, many students experienced an increase in pressure and anxiety in relation to learning English. The results of this study suggest that the CET committee should be the great agent in offering such efforts to researchers in case of further conducting the research to validate or invalidate certain ways of using the CET test results for any purposes.

A study by Pham and Bui (2019) inquired into differences of Northern, Central and Southern Vietnamese students' voices on the English graduation benchmark policy and how these students at elementary, intermediate and upper intermediate levels perceived the policy. The participants of the study were 902 students who completed the survey questionnaire. Therefore, the instruments used in collecting the data was a questionnaire. The findings of the study showed that the setting of the English graduation benchmark policy helped improve Vietnamese students' limited English proficiency. However, the policy seemed to bring about certain negative impacts on the students' learning, including anxiety and test-oriented learning. Moreover, according to levels of the English proficiency in each region, there were variations in the students' voices on a few factors: benefits, anxiety, and test-oriented learning. Based on the findings, the study suggests that the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) should conduct more research by examining opinions

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from different stakeholders, such as teachers, employers, and especially students who are directly impacted by test results, to evaluate the implementation of the English graduation benchmark policy. Significantly, the quality in teaching and learning English in Vietnam should be increased to ensure the success in using the policy.

2.6.2 Studies on EFL students' use of test-taking strategies

A number of studies investigated EFL students' use of test-taking strategies and the effects of test-taking strategies training on EFL students' learning. The following are some studies worth discussing.

A study by Sam-arng (2015) investigated the differences in the use of test-taking, cognitive and metacognitive strategies between perceived and actual use in an English reading comprehension test. The study also explored gender differences in the use of those perceived strategies and actual use strategies. The participants were 250 Grade 10 Thai students. Strategy questionnaires, including a perceived strategy questionnaire and an actual use strategy questionnaire, and an English reading comprehension test were employed as the research instruments of this study. The findings revealed no significant differences in the use of test-taking and cognitive and metacognitive strategies under testing conditions between perceived and actual usage. Gender differences slightly affected the students' use of cognitive and metacognitive strategies in perceived strategies. In other words, female students frequently used cognitive strategies to make the text more intelligible and accessible than their male counterparts. However, only a few male and female students used cognitive and metacognitive strategies differently in actual use in the testing conditions. The findings of the study suggest that it is not essential for teachers to offer different reading strategy instruction for male and female students. In addition, the teachers should explicitly introduce both male and female students to the use of appropriate reading strategies in the actual reading task.

Ketworrachai and Sappapan's (2022) research examined the relationship between the students' test-taking strategies and their reading comprehension test performance. The study also delved into the types and frequency of the test-taking strategies used among high and low proficiency students. The participants of this

study were 84 undergraduate students who enrolled in the *English I* course offered by Institute for English Language Education (IELE) at an international university in Thailand. The instruments used in collecting the data were a reading comprehension proficiency test and a test-taking strategies questionnaire. The findings unfolded that students' reading comprehension test performances improved dramatically due to their use of the test-taking strategies. Even though high proficiency students employed test-taking strategies more frequently than low-proficiency students, both groups of the students were shown to use a wide range of techniques to deal with the difficulties in the reading test. The findings of this study suggest that it is necessary to provide students with sufficient time and practice with a variety of tests in order to prepare them with adequate test-taking strategies knowledge.

Bulushi et al. (2018) conducted a quasi-experimental study to explore the effect of using test-taking strategies on Omani grade 11 students' performance in listening comprehension tests. This study also found out the students' perceptions regarding the importance of the test-taking strategies in listening comprehension tests and their employment of these strategies in general. The study participants were grade 11 students from a government school who were divided into two groups: a control group and an experimental group. A listening comprehension test and a student perceptions questionnaire were used to collect the data for the analysis. The results disclosed that the students in the experimental group performed better than their counterparts in the control group in the listening comprehension test, and the use of test-taking strategies improved the students' performances. The results also indicated that the experimental students thought employing test-taking strategies in the listening comprehension tests was highly significant. The students used a variety of cognitive, metacognitive, and affective strategies for all phases of listening, ranging from high to extremely high. The results of the study suggest that teachers should offer practical training courses to their students to help them learn how to selectively use test-taking strategies in their classrooms, and promote the students' use of test-taking strategies in other skill areas and even expand to other subjects.

A study by Huang (2016) studied the test-taking strategies associated with the Test of English for International Communication Speaking Test (TOEIC-S) and their relationship with test performance. The participants of the study were 215 Taiwanese

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English learners from various academic disciplines. Two sets of TOEIC-S and a custom-made strategy inventory were employed to collect the quantitative data for the study. The findings revealed that TOEIC-S test-taking strategy use was a multi-faceted concept involving a variety of strategic behaviors: Cognitive strategy use (COG), Communication strategy use (COM), and Affective strategy use (ASU). These strategic behaviors were similar to those that allowed test-takers to communicate in real life and at work. Finally, the findings showed that adopting both communicative and cognitive strategies substantially impacted TOEIC-S performance. The findings of the study suggest that EFL teachers should consider incorporating a strategy instruction component in TOEIC-S preparation courses to teach students how to utilize these strategies effectively.

It can be summarized that many studies on testing and assessment have examined students' and teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards the English language proficiency test, especially national standardized tests of English proficiency as a graduation requirement administered by educational administrators of a particular country or university. Various results are found among these studies. There are both positive and negative views expressed by students and teachers on the implementation of the English graduation benchmark policy. The studies also revealed the impacts of the students' use of test-taking strategies in order to help them effectively and strategically deal with a given test administered to them. The results of these previous studies can serve as a guideline for stakeholders concerned, such as policy makers, test administrators, and test developers, to improve the standard and approval of this policy implementation. They also provide EFL practitioners and researchers with both theoretical and pedagogical implications for introducing EFL students to the effective and appropriate use of test-taking strategies in testing and learning situations.

2.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented the literature review of this study, discussing the theoretical perspectives of washback in a field of language testing and assessment, This material is reserved for educational use only, not allowed for commercial use.

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the English benchmark policy for graduation, and the English language proficiency tests employed in Thai context. This chapter also discusses empirical studies on washback effects of different English proficiency tests. In the following chapter, the research methodology of this study will be discussed.



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CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the research methodology of this study. It includes the research design, the research setting, research participants, research instruments, and data collection procedures and data analysis. This chapter also discusses ethical issues in conducting this research.

3.1 Overview of the Research Design

This study adopted a mixed-methods research design. The main study was designed based upon the methodological framework recommended by Creswell (2014) and the preliminary study conducted by the researcher, as discussed below.

3.1.1 Preliminary study

Prior to designing the main study, the researcher conducted a small-scale preliminary study with five student participants in November 2019 and collected additional information about the English language proficiency requirements and the English exit exam from the university's website as released by the university in subsequent months. This preliminary study aimed at considering the feasibility of the study, gathering basic information about the English language proficiency policy and the exit exam, listening to prospective research participants' voices, locating the research gap and scope of the main study, and finding a suitable theoretical framework for the main study.

The participants of the preliminary study consisted of five recent alumni from the Faculty of Agricultural Technology of the university where the main study took place. They had never taken the standardized English language proficiency tests, such as TOEFL, IELTS, TOEIC, CU-TEP and TU-GET. These students sat the English exit examination administered by the university when they were in their final year. However, at that time, the university had not yet set "a pass or fail score" for this exam. This means that, although all students were required to sit the exit exam, the

results of the exam were not used as a graduation requirement. In other words, any student who completed all required credits stipulated by the study program and took the English exit exam, no matter what score on the exam she or he received, would be allowed to graduate.

In terms of data collection procedures, the researcher gathered information about the English language graduation requirements and the exit exam from the university's website. In addition, an online questionnaire, with both closed-ended and open-ended questions, was administered to the five participants. Subsequent emails and telephone communication were also used to gain more in-depth data and clarify those data given in the questionnaire.

The findings from the preliminary study revealed that before leaving their undergraduate programs of studies, students were required to take the English exit exam developed and administered by the university. Most participants had a positive perception toward the policy on the use of English proficiency as graduation requirements for undergraduate studies. For example, the participants thought that taking the exit exam, as required by the university, could motivate them to brush up their English. Some of them attended a short English course specially designed to help them prepare for the exit exam. This course was offered by their Faculty. Despite being aware of the importance of the exam in motivating them to revise their English knowledge, the students reported having varying degrees of challenges in taking the exam, such as the difficulty level of the exam and time allocation.

The participants of the preliminary study also gave some useful feedback on the policy and its accompanying exam. First, they expressed that the policy should be clearly articulated and informed to all stakeholders. Second, they reported that the contents of the tests covered what they had studied, but certain aspects should be revised in order to avoid any discipline-specific biases so that the test would be fair to students with different disciplinary backgrounds. Third, all the participants mentioned that the exam result report should be more informative. That is, the report should not have simply contained the total marks obtained without additional detailed information. Rather, it would be more beneficial if the report provided the examinee with the marks obtained based upon individual sections. In addition, the result report should provide more information about the strengths and weaknesses

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of the examinee's English abilities, with some recommendations on room for improvement. Finally, the university should provide more English language courses to help the students prepare for the exam, particular those who wanted to re-sit the exam because they were unsatisfied with their previous exam results.

In addition to the participants' perceptions, the researcher also obtained information about the English language policy and the exit exam, which can be summarized as follows:

The exit exam is paper-based and developed based upon the B1+ descriptors of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). The exam has 80 items, with a four multiple-choice item format. The time allotment is three hours. The exam consists of four parts (80 items/80 marks) as follows:

- 1) Grammar (Direct testing – Sentence completion): 20 items (20 marks)
- 2) Reading (Direct testing – Reading passages with questions): 20 items (20 marks)
- 3) Writing (Indirect testing - Error detection): 20 items (20 marks)
- 4) Language Function (Indirect testing – Conversation completion): 20 items (20 marks)

As noted above, when the preliminary study was conducted with the five participants, the university did not set the pass and fail score. Later, the university announced that those who would graduate in the academic year 2020 were required to pass the English exit exam with a score of at least 32 marks out of 80 marks (or 40% of the total score). The students were also allowed to show an alternative proof of evidence of their English language proficiency, including IELTS (at least 4), TOEFL IPT (at least 450), TOEFL iBT (at least 45), TOEIC (at least 500), CU-TEP (at least 45), and TU-GET (at least 500).

It is also important to note that this paper-based English exit exam with multiple-choice items, which will be referred to as Test Format 1, was the main test format administered on-site to the students, except during the period when the university announced the implementation of online teaching policy due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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In order to mitigate possible health risks during the COVID-19 pandemic, the university also developed an alternative form of the English exit exam. This alternative test format, henceforth referred to as Test Format 2, was administered online to the students during the period when the university announced the closure of all on-site classes. Test Format 2 consists of two main parts (80 marks) as follows:

1) Reading, Writing and Grammar (Direct testing)

Task 1: The student chooses a news article (500-750 words in length) based on the topic given and writes a summary of about 150-250 words in length. (40 marks)

Task 2: The student writes a reflection of about 100-150 words in length to express her/his thoughts on the chosen news. (20 marks)

2) Language Function: Listening and Speaking (Direct testing)

Task: The student attends an oral interview via online platform (MS Teams or LINE Application). The interview focuses on checking the student's understanding of the selected news and examining the oral ability in summarizing and expressing opinions about the news. It also aims to evaluate the student's general listening and speaking, and interview skills. The interview takes around 15 minutes. (20 marks)

Each student was given instructions about how to complete the tasks and required to submit the completed tasks via email. The submission deadline was about one week after the student received the instructions. The student was called for an oral interview around a week after the writing tasks were submitted. Each student's writing tasks and interview were evaluated by one teacher, all of which were also evaluated by the same teacher. The evaluation was based on the rubrics prepared by a team of test writers. There were around 15 English teachers who served as raters for Test Format 2 in each round, and all of them were native speakers of Thai. Each teacher was responsible for 20 to 40 students in each round, depending on the number of students who registers for the exam.

The results of the preliminary study, which were based on the student's perceptions of Test Format 1, showed that the students had certain challenges in taking the English exit exam. The main study therefore took into consideration the students' concerns and recommendations. In addition, the main study also aimed to further investigate the students' perceptions towards Test Format 2, which was administered during the implementation of the online teaching policy. Since the preliminary study involved a small number of participants and employed only a qualitative research method, the main study aimed to recruit more participants in order to yield more insightful results and thus offer more concrete pedagogical implications. Therefore, a mixed-methods research design was considered appropriate for this study.

3.1.2 Research design of the main study

The main study employed a mixed-methods research design, consisting of both quantitative and qualitative research methods. As Creswell (2014) advocates, the mixed-methods research approach is employed to collect both quantitative-oriented and qualitative-oriented data within one study. It is therefore an effective research design which provides researchers with a more comprehensive view on research problems under investigation. This is because both the breadth and depth of data are taken into consideration. As this study followed this research tradition, it first dealt with quantitative inquiry via the administration of questionnaires in order to gain an overview of the issues under investigation. This was followed by qualitative inquiry through the use of semi-structured interviews so as to elicit rich data to augment those quantitative data. It is important to note that although the questionnaire was the main research instrument used for collecting quantitative data based on closed-ended questions, the questionnaire also contained some open-ended questions in order to allow the participants to provide additional data which might not be covered by predetermined, closed-ended questions. Simply put, the data obtained could complement each other, and the researcher could then gain insights into the research problems posed.

3.2 Research Setting

This research was conducted at the Faculty of Agricultural Technology in a public university in Bangkok, Thailand. Its mission is to develop Thai agriculture for its advancement and sustainability. This faculty is one of the largest faculties of the university. It is also one of the most prestigious agricultural technology-oriented faculties of the country, highly regarded as an educational sector with high quality education in agricultural science and technology. The faculty offers three major disciplines in both undergraduate and postgraduate levels: plant production technology, animal production technology and fisheries, and agricultural development and resource management. The medium of instruction in this faculty is Thai, and students take four required English as foreign language courses (two foundation English courses and two English for Academic Purposes courses). All English courses are taught in a combination of English and Thai. All undergraduate students who graduated in the academic year 2020 were required to take the English exit exam developed by the university. They were the first cohort required to fulfill this requirement. They could also opt for taking other international tests, including TOEIC, TOEFL and IELTS, and were required to meet the minimum score stipulated by the university.

3.3 Population

The population of this study was 510 fourth year undergraduate students from the Faculty of Agricultural Technology, who were to graduate in the academic year 2020. In order to find the exact number of the population of this study, the researcher sent a letter to the University Office of the Registrar to request for the information. Table 3.1 shows the total number of the students from each department.

Table 3.1 The number of fourth-year undergraduate students studying in the Faculty of Agricultural Technology (Academic year 2020)

Department	Number of Students
Department of Plant Production Technology	209
Department of Animal Production Technology and Fisheries	154
Department of Agricultural Development and Resource Management	147
Total	510

3.4 Participants

The main research participants of this study were sampled from the population mentioned in the previous section. 243 undergraduate students were recruited as research participants. This number was based on Yamane's formula of simple size calculation (1973), with a confidence level of 95% ($e = \pm 5\%$) for the quantitative research. The researcher used a proportionate stratified random sampling method in recruiting prospective research participants of this study to ensure that they were good representatives of the population (Creswell, 2015). In other words, by using a proportionate stratified random sampling method, the researcher could draw the size of the sample from each department, which was proportional to the relative size of that department in the target population. These sampled participants were asked to complete a questionnaire.

However, it is important to note that not all 510 students took the exit exam by the time this study took place. It is because the university allowed the students to take the exit exam throughout the year, and the exam was likely administered once a month. In this case, answers to Research Question 1 were based on data

provided by the sample size stated above. Meanwhile, answers to Research Question 2 were restricted to data derived from those who had taken the exit exam.

In addition to data to be collected through the questionnaire, the interview data were also sought. This kind of data was elicited from two groups of participants: 12 students who took the exit exam and completed the questionnaire, and three lecturers (one from each department) and the Deputy Dean of Academic Affairs.

3.5 Research Instruments

The research instruments used in this study were a survey questionnaire and a semi-structured interview.

3.5.1 Questionnaires

A survey questionnaire served as one of the research instruments in collecting the data from the research participants. According to Cohen et al (2013), the use of a questionnaire is practical as the researcher can use it to collect a large amount of data from a large number of people, resulting in the researcher receiving multiple perspectives from those involved. In addition, the questionnaire also allows the research participants to maintain their anonymity, which maximizes comfort for the participants when completing the questionnaire. This is because the anonymity will put the participants at ease and thus encourage them to answer truthfully. This will result in the researcher receiving valid data for the study.

In this study, the survey questionnaire and the list of interview questions were designed on the basis of the conceptual framework of the washback model on students' learning (Shih, 2007) and other relevant empirical studies on the English language proficiency graduation requirements and test washback (e.g. Hsieh, 2017; Li et al., 2012; Pham & Bui, 2019; Sriwilajaroen & Piamsai, 2018). Findings from a preliminary study conducted by the researcher (See Section 3.1.1) were also used in designing the research instruments.

The survey questionnaire was divided into four parts:

1) the participants' background information,

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- 2) their views of the policy on the English language proficiency as part of graduation requirements,
- 3) their perceived challenges in taking the English exit exam, and
- 4) types of English language support preferred by the students in helping them cope with the English language proficiency requirements.

The survey questionnaire was based on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The five-point Likert scale was adopted because it could be used to increase the response rate and response quality in addition to reducing respondents' frustration level (Babakus & Mangold 1992; Sachdev & Verma, 2004). There was also one open-ended question for the participants to express additional opinions about the policy. While the closed-ended items with a five-point Likert scale were used in order to objectively quantify data, the open-ended items were meant to complement the data received from the closed-ended part. This would make the data from the questionnaires more exhaustive.

According to Berg (2004), and Creswell and Piano Clark, (2017), the single use of the questionnaire seems to be inadequate in collecting the data from the participants since the questionnaire does not seem to allow the researcher to explore the participants' perspectives and context in an in-depth fashion. In addition, the questionnaire does not offer the participants a sufficient opportunity to express their perceptions or attitudes in detail in certain aspects that are not included in the questionnaire. Therefore, this study complemented the questionnaire data with interview data in order to obtain richer data to insightfully understand the issues under investigation.

3.5.2 Semi-structured interviews

A semi-structured interview was used as the other research instrument in this study, with the purpose of gaining essentially qualitative explanations for the findings. The researcher considered that a semi-structured interview was an effective tool for investigating people's experiences from their own words and points of view. In addition, it involved the use of predetermined interview questions, but it also allowed the researcher to simultaneously probe far beyond the initial answers to the

prepared questions. This characteristics of the semi-structured interview thus allow the research participants and the researcher to pursue relevant issues of interest, of which the researcher may not have previously considered (Cohen et al, 2013; Marshall & Rossman, 2014). Consequently, the interview would be conducive, providing in-depth and useful information on the participants' understanding, perspectives, and attitudes toward the English language proficiency requirements for the researcher.

In this study, the semi-structured interview was designed along with the survey questionnaire to achieve parallel foci. The interview questions were prepared for both the students and the lecturers who were willing to participate in this study. The questions for the students were developed based on three main aspects:

- 1) the perspectives towards the English language proficiency requirements,
- 2) their challenges in taking the exit exam, and
- 3) types of the English language support they preferred in helping them deal with the English language proficiency requirements.

For the lecturers' interview, the questions focused on the following aspects:

- 1) their perspectives towards the English language proficiency requirements
- 2) their perceptions towards the students' challenges in meeting the requirements, and
- 3) their opinions about types of support that should be provided for the students.

3.5.3 Quality of the research instruments

The questionnaire and the interview questions were sent to three experts for content validation. The experts were Thai university lecturers with over 15 years of experience teaching English at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. All of them had a doctoral degree specializing in TESOL. They also had experiences in writing an English exit exam for their own university. The three experts were provided with

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background information about the research project, the instruments, and an Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) form for validating the content of the instruments. Both English and Thai versions of the instruments were sent to the experts, and they were also requested to check the accuracy, completeness and appropriateness in translation of both versions.

After the IOC forms from the three experts were returned to the researcher, an Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) was calculated. Items which had the Index of IOC lower than 0.5 were revised based upon the experts' suggestions. The revised instruments were sent to the experts for another round for approval before they were used for collecting the data for the main study.

3.6 Data Collection Procedures

The data collection procedures were as follows.

1. The researcher sent an official letter, as issued by the MA program, to the Dean of the Faculty of Agricultural Technology to ask for permission to conduct this research. A summary of the research proposal was also given so that the faculty's management team could consider whether conducting the research at their faculty should be allowed.

2. The researcher contacted prospective research participants and provided them with background information about the research project, the type of their involvement in the research process, and their rights as research participants. The prospective participants were requested to complete the questionnaire sent to them, which was in Thai. Those who had completed the questionnaire were invited to attend an interview session based upon a voluntary basis. They were also requested to complete a consent form to serve as research participants.

3. The completed questionnaires were analyzed when they were returned to the researcher. The results from the questionnaires and the prepared interview questions were used as a guideline for an individual interview with the 12 student participants and the four lecturers. The interview was conducted online via Microsoft Teams and Zoom application on a one-on-one basis. This would make the

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participant feel comfortable to share her/his perspectives with the researcher, particularly for sensitive issues. In order to avoid any language barrier, the interview was conducted in Thai, which was the first language of both the participants and the researcher. This would help the researcher to gain the data with high validity for the study. All the interviews were audio-recorded with the participants' permission.

3.7 Data Analysis

Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected for this study. They were analyzed as follows.

3.7.1 Quantitative data analysis

The statistical package was used to analyze the quantitative data from the returned questionnaires. In order to analyze the data, this study employed descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, arithmetic mean, and standard deviation. The results drawn from the five-point Likert scale items were interpreted based on five ranges with assigned meaning, as underpinned by Jenkins (2007). For instance, the mean scores of the levels of the students' perceptions toward the university's English language proficiency graduation requirements were interpreted as follows:

Highest level = 4.21 – 5.00

High level = 3.41 – 4.20

Moderate level = 2.61 – 3.40

Low level = 1.81 – 2.60

Lowest level = 1.00 – 1.80

3.7.2 Qualitative data analysis

Content analysis was used in analyzing qualitative data. The analysis procedures adopted followed those underpinned by Pole and Lampard (2002) and Rubin and Rubin (2005) as follows.

1. The researcher listened to all interview recordings, which were in the Thai version, in order to obtain an overview of the data. The researcher then transcribed the interviews.
2. Guided by the two research questions of the study and the main issues embedded in the questionnaire and the interview questions, the researcher developed rudimentary coding categories or themes for analyzing the interview transcripts.
3. With the rudimentary coding categories, the researcher reread 20 percent of the interview transcripts and then used the coding categories to code the transcript. When new themes emerged while the researcher went through the transcript, these new themes were added to the list of the rudimentary coding categories to form a revised list of coding categories.
4. The researcher used the revised list of the coding categories to analyze all of the data. After completing the first round of data analysis, the researcher reanalyzed the data for another round in order to identify any discrepancies in the analysis. This helped the researcher to achieve a high intra-coder reliability (Marshall & Rossman, 2006) in analyzing the qualitative data.
5. After finishing analyzing all of the data, the researcher selected exemplary interview segments or extracts to be reported. As all of the interviews were conducted in Thai, the researcher needed to translate the exemplary interview segments from Thai into English. To make sure that all chosen interview segments were correctly translated, the researcher gave both Thai and English versions of all selected segments to the thesis advisor to recheck the accuracy, completeness and appropriacy of the translation. About 20 percent of the translated interview segments were

also randomly selected and subsequently rechecked by one of the experts who validated the research instruments of this study.

3.8 Ethical Issues

It is important to pay attention to ethical issues which could occur in all phases of the research process. Therefore, the researcher sent a brief research proposal and an official letter issued by the MA Program to the Dean of the Faculty of Agricultural technology to ask for a permission to conduct this research before collecting the data from the participants. With the permission from the Dean, the researcher contacted prospective research participants and informed them of background information about the research project. In addition, the participants were provided with additional information about their rights as research participants and their involvement in the research process. The participants were invited to participate in this study on a voluntary basis and with their informed consent. They were also informed that the data received from them was used only for research, academic conferences, and publication purposes.

This study also took ethical issues regarding protecting the anonymity and confidentiality of the research sites and the research participants into serious consideration. In other words, the name of the university which served as a research setting did not be disclosed. However, “a public university in Bangkok” was used when the university was mentioned in this study. The code was assigned to the participants when extracts from qualitative data obtained from them were used in reporting research results. Also, the participants were indicated that the raw data received from them was not be revealed to others.

3.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter has discussed the research methodology of this study. The use of a mixed-method research design was implemented to investigate the undergraduate students’ and lecturers’ perceptions towards the English proficiency as graduation requirements. This chapter could therefore serve as a guideline for the

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researcher to conduct this research in an effective and systematic way. The information informed in this chapter also provided readers with a backdrop for understanding the results of the study.



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CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This study aimed to investigate the perceptions of undergraduate students and faculty members from the Faculty of Agricultural Technology regarding English proficiency graduation requirements. The data were collected from 243 fourth-year undergraduate students and four faculty members from the Faculty of Agricultural Technology at one public university. The results of this study will be reported in the following sections.

4.1 Background Information about the Participants

This section reports on the background information of the participants. It is divided into three parts: information about the students responding to the administered questionnaire, information about the students taking part in the semi-structured interview, and information about the lecturers taking part in the semi-structured interview.

4.1.1 Background information about the students responding to the questionnaires

The total number of the student participants who responded to the questionnaire was 243. It was found that 72.02 percent of them were female, while 27.98 percent were male. The students ranged in age from 22 to 26. The highest number of the students was from Plant Production Technology, representing 39.10 percent. This is followed by Animal Production Technology and Fisheries, and Agricultural Development and Resource Management, each of which is responsible for 30.45 percent. The majority of the students (95.48 percent) had never taken English language proficiency examinations such as the TOEIC, TOEFL, IELTS, CU-TEP, or TU-GET. Only 3.29 percent of them had experience studying or training overseas. Concerning the students' self-assessment of their overall levels of current English language proficiency, the highest proportion of the students (41.87) rated it as

“good”. Table 4.1 presents the overall findings on the students' background information.

Table 4.1 Background information of the students from the Faculty of Agricultural Technology for questionnaires (n = 243)

		Male	Female	Total
		n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
Gender		68 (27.98)	175 (72.02)	243 (100)
Age	Less than 22 years	5 (2.05)	11 (4.53)	16 (6.58)
	22-26 years	63 (25.93)	163 (67.08)	226 (93.01)
	Not given	-	1 (0.41)	1 (0.41)
Field of study	Plant Production Technology	26 (10.70)	69 (28.40)	95 (39.10)
	Animal Production Technology and Fisheries	14 (5.76)	60 (24.69)	74 (30.45)
	Agricultural Development and Resource Management	28 (11.52)	46 (18.93)	74 (30.45)
Experience in taking the English language proficiency tests	TOEIC	2 (0.82)	3 (1.24)	5 (2.06)
	TOEFL	-	1 (0.41)	1 (0.41)
	IELTS	-	1 (0.41)	1 (0.41)
	TU-GET	-	1 (0.41)	1 (0.41)
	TOEIC, IELTS	1 (0.41)	-	1 (0.41)
	IELTS, TU-GET	-	1 (0.41)	1 (0.41)
	TOEIC, TOEFL, CU-TEP, SAT	-	1 (0.41)	1 (0.41)
	None	65 (26.75)	167 (68.73)	232 (95.48)

Table 4.1 Background information of the students from the Faculty of Agricultural Technology for questionnaires (n = 243) (Continued)

		Male	Female	Total
		n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
Experience in studying or training abroad	No	67 (27.57)	168 (69.14)	235 (96.71)
	Yes	1 (0.41)	7 (2.88)	8 (3.29)
Overall levels of the current English language proficiency	Excellent	1 (0.41)	1 (0.31)	2 (0.72)
	Very Good	11 (4.63)	15 (6.38)	26 (11.01)
	Good	28 (11.52)	74 (30.35)	102 (41.87)
	Fair	22 (9.05)	62 (25.62)	84 (34.67)
	Poor	6 (2.37)	23 (9.36)	29 (11.73)
Times in taking the exam	one time	28 (11.52)	62 (25.52)	90 (37.04)
	two times	18 (7.41)	61 (25.10)	79 (32.51)
	three times	16 (6.58)	37 (15.23)	53 (21.81)
	more than three times	6 (2.47)	15 (6.17)	21 (8.64)
The highest score received for the exit exam	1-20	2 (0.82)	2 (0.82)	4 (1.64)
	21-40	50 (20.58)	133 (54.74)	183 (75.32)
	41-60	13 (5.35)	33 (13.58)	46 (18.93)
	61-80	2 (0.82)	1 (0.41)	3 (1.23)
	Not given	1 (0.41)	6 (2.47)	7 (2.88)
Exam format previously taken	Format 1	17 (7)	47 (19.34)	64 (26.34)
	Format 2	23 (9.47)	40 (16.46)	63 (25.93)
	Format 1 & Format 2	28 (11.52)	88 (36.21)	116 (47.73)

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Table 4.1 Background information of the students from the Faculty of Agricultural Technology for questionnaires (n = 243) (Continued)

		Male	Female	Total
		n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
The highest score received from the test format 1	1-20	1 (0.56)	17 (9.44)	18 (10)
	21-40	37 (20.56)	101 (56.11)	138 (76.67)
	41-60	3 (1.67)	6 (3.33)	9 (5)
	Not given	4 (2.22)	11 (6.11)	15 (8.33)
The highest score received from the test format 2	1-20	2 (1.12)	4 (2.23)	6 (3.35)
	21-40	35 (19.55)	92 (51.40)	127 (70.95)
	41-60	8 (4.47)	24 (13.41)	32 (17.88)
	61-80	3 (1.68)	1 (0.55)	4 (2.23)
	Not given	3 (1.68)	7 (3.91)	10 (5.59)

4.1.2 Background information about the students taking part in the semi-structured interview

The total number of students who voluntarily participated in the semi-structured interview was twelve. Females made up 66.67 percent of the total, while men made up 33.33 percent. Agricultural Development and Resource Management students made up 41.66 percent of the total. Animal Production Technology and Fisheries accounted for 33.34 percent, while Plant Production Technology accounted for 25 percent. It was found that 66.68 percent of the interviewed students took the exam only once, and their scores ranged from 31 to 40. It was also found that 58.34 percent of the students took Test Format 1 (the multiple-choice format). The students' background information was shown in more detail in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Background information of the students from the Faculty of Agricultural Technology for semi-structured interviews (n = 12)

		Male	Female	Total
		n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
Gender		4 (33.33)	8 (66.67)	12 (100)
Field of study	Plant Production Technology	2 (16.67)	1 (8.33)	3 (25)
	Animal Production Technology and Fisheries	2 (16.67)	2 (16.67)	4 (33.34)
	Agricultural Development and Resource Management	-	5 (41.66)	5 (41.66)
Times in taking the Exit Exam	one time	2 (16.68)	6 (50)	8 (66.68)
	two times	1 (8.33)	1 (8.33)	2 (16.66)
	three times	1 (8.33)	1 (8.33)	2 (16.66)
The highest score received from the exit exam	20-30	-	1 (8.33)	1 (8.33)
	31-40	2 (16.67)	5 (41.68)	7 (58.35)
	41-50	1 (8.33)	1 (8.33)	2 (16.66)
	51-60	-	1 (8.33)	1 (8.33)
	Not given	1 (8.33)	-	1 (8.33)
Exam format previously taken	Test Format 1	2 (16.67)	5 (41.67)	7 (58.34)
	Test Format 2	1 (8.33)	2 (16.67)	3 (25)
	Test Formats 1 & 2	1 (8.33)	1 (8.33)	2 (16.66)

4.1.3 Background information about the faculty members taking part in the semi-structured interview

There were four faculty members involved in the semi-structured interviews: three Departmental Heads and the Deputy Dean of Academic Affairs. Three of them

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were male, while the other professor was female. Their teaching experience in agricultural disciplines ranged from 21-30 years. Table 4.3 shows the background information of faculty members of this study.

Table 4.3 Background information of faculty members (n = 4)

		Male	Female	Total
		n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
Gender		3 (75)	1 (25)	4 (100)
Age	51-55 years	1 (25)	-	1 (25)
	56-60 years	2 (50)	1 (25)	3 (75)
Teaching experience	11-20 years	1 (25)	-	1 (25)
	21-30 years	2 (50)	1 (25)	3 (75)

4.2 The Students' and the Faculty Members' Perceptions towards the Policy on the English Language Proficiency as Part of Graduation Requirements

This section reports the findings on the participants' perspectives towards the policy on the use of English proficiency as graduation requirements for undergraduate studies. They were drawn from the questionnaires and the semi-structured interviews. The results from the students' questionnaire were analyzed by using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation. Content analysis was used to analyze the data from the semi-structured interviews. The results are presented in four main areas: impacts on learning motivation; anxiety posed by the policy; usefulness, fairness, and practicality; and exam administration.

4.2.1 The perceptions towards the impacts on learning motivation

The results from the questionnaires administered to 243 students in order to examine the students' perceptions towards the impacts of the policy on their learning motivation are presented in Table 4.4 below.

Table 4.4 The students' perceptions towards impacts on learning motivation (n = 243)

Impacts on learning motivation	Mean	SD	Interpretation
The policy makes me become more active in learning and practicing English.	3.21	0.96	moderate
The policy makes me devote more time to studying and preparing for the English exit exam.	3.16	0.94	moderate
The policy encourages me to discuss with friends how to deal with the English exit exam.	3.53	0.99	high
The policy encourages me to find more opportunities to use English in daily life.	3.19	1.02	moderate
The policy encourages me to improve English as preparation for my future career and/or further education.	3.30	0.99	moderate
Total	3.28	0.98	moderate

The following criteria are used in interpreting the results of the questionnaires.

Highest level of impact = 4.21 – 5.00

High level of impact = 3.41 – 4.20

Moderate level of impact = 2.61 – 3.40

Low level of impact = 1.81 – 2.60

Lowest level of impact = 1.00 – 1.80

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As shown in Table 4.4, the students perceived that the overall level of the impacts of the policy was considered moderate (Mean = 3.28, SD = 0.98). Of the five aspects of the impacts, one was rated at a high level that the policy encouraged them to discuss with friends how to deal with the English exit exam (Mean = 3.53, SD = 0.99), and the other four aspects were rated at a moderate level.

This seems to be consistent with the findings of the students' interviews, which revealed that many students expressed a positive attitude towards implementing this language policy. This is because they thought that taking the English exit exam as required by the university would motivate them to improve their English for future careers, as mentioned in Excerpt 1.

Excerpt 1:

“The policy affected my motivation in learning English. Due to a limited timeframe in preparation for the exam, I studied a lot of grammar lessons because I was worried that I would not graduate. So, I searched for online video clips about English on the Internet and learned through them.”

(Student 2, May 8, 2021)

Moreover, Excerpt 2 also supported that taking the exam motivated her to spend more time learning English in preparation for her future employment.

Excerpt 2:

“I had to prepare for the exam by reading books or relevant materials to get a good score to meet the test requirement...When I took the English exit exam, I knew my weak points or which part I could not do well...If I want to speak English and progress in my future career or contact foreigners or something like that, I had to go back to learn and practice English to improve my English proficiency.”

(Student 5, May 9, 2021)

However, six students had a negative perception regarding this policy implementation on their English learning motivation. They thought that this policy forced them to acquire English only to meet the university's test requirements, as stated in Excerpt 3.

Excerpt 3:

“This policy did not boost my motivation in learning English at all. I studied English because I wanted to meet the test requirements. I didn’t actually want to improve my English.”

(Student 1, May 8, 2021)

According to the results of the faculty members’ interviews, three faculty members had a negative perspective regarding the impacts of the policy on learning motivation. They thought that completing the university-mandated English exit exam would not push their students to be more engaged in studying and practicing English in the long term. Excerpt 4, for example, shows that this policy could not encourage the students to learn and practice English since most students seemed to study English only to meet the graduation requirements.

Excerpt 4:

“As I knew, the students accepted the implementation of this English language policy, which required them to meet the test requirements for graduation. But they did not seem to pay much attention to studying a lot of English lessons. They were not interested in devoting their time to learning English. It was just a mission that they were aware that they had to deal with.”

(Lecturer 2, May 18, 2021)

This section has reported the impacts of the policy on learning motivation as perceived by the students and the faculty members. The next section will report the perceptions about anxiety caused by the policy.

4.2.2 The perceptions towards anxiety posed by the policy

The following table shows the results of the questionnaires regarding the students' perceptions towards anxiety posed by the policy.

Table 4.5 The students' perceptions towards anxiety posed by the policy (n = 243)

Anxiety posed by the policy	Mean	SD	Interpretation
The policy makes me worried about my time management due to my engagement in a final year internship/project.	4.13	1.02	high
The policy makes me worried about its effect on my graduation.	4.26	0.97	highest
The policy makes my family worried about its effect on my graduation.	3.44	1.30	high
The policy makes me worried about extra expenses for test preparation and test fees if I fail the exam for several times.	4.05	1.13	high
Total	3.97	1.11	high

The following criteria are used in interpreting the results of the questionnaires.

Highest level of anxiety = 4.21 – 5.00

High level of anxiety = 3.41 – 4.20

Moderate level of anxiety = 2.61 – 3.40

Low level of anxiety = 1.81 – 2.60

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Lowest level of anxiety = 1.00 – 1.80

According to Table 4.5, it can be seen that the overall anxiety posed by the policy was perceived at a high level (Mean = 3.97, SD = 1.11). The students reported that the policy made them worried about its effect on their graduation at the highest level (Mean = 4.26, SD = 0.97), while the other three aspects of anxiety, including time management (Mean = 4.13, SD = 1.02), family's concerns (Mean = 3.44, SD = 1.30), and extra expenses (Mean = 4.05, SD = 1.13), were all reported at a high level.

The student interviews revealed that the majority of the students were well aware of the anxiety caused by the policy. As noted in Excerpt 5, this policy made them worry in terms of time management and the impact on their graduation.

Excerpt 5:

“This policy brought me a lot of anxiety and worries because I had a ton of assignments to submit to my teachers...I had to prepare for the oral interview session as part of the exit exam, but unfortunately, I failed the exam.”

(Student 1, May 8, 2021)

Another student also expressed their anxiety caused by this policy, stating that this policy made her concerned about her graduation.

Excerpt 6:

“I was so stressed. I also told my mother that I was worried about unable to meet the test requirement. A minimum score of 32 seemed like not much, but it was a high score for me because I was very weak at grammar and not good at reading.”

(Student 6, May 10, 2021)

Despite the fact that this policy may cause many students to be concerned about their graduation, one student said it did not cause her any worries.

Excerpt 7:

“For me, I was not stressed...There was a tutorial course for the English exit exam offered to students in my faculty...I was not much worried since there was a practice exam to do for preparation.”

(Student 3, May 8, 2021)

According to the lecturers' interviews, all faculty members expressed both positive and negative attitudes towards the policy with reference to possible anxiety-inducing effects. One lecturer, for example, indicated that this policy concerned her since the students' test results may have an impact on the program's curriculum and image.

Excerpt 8:

“I'm worried because if my students don't meet the English language requirements, they can't graduate. This policy was not part of graduation requirements initially stipulated by our degree program. It was recently decided by the university...I'm worried but I'm not in a position to do anything with it...If the students do not graduate, it tremendously affects the program and credentials of the faculty.”

(Lecturer 1, May 17, 2021)

Nonetheless, one faculty member said that that this policy did not make him concerned about his students since he felt they would be able to ultimately meet the university's exam requirements.

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Excerpt 9:

“I was not too worried because my students, to some extent, had the potential to pass the English exit exam. But they may not get a satisfactorily high score; they just got the borderline score. As I reiterated, the students’ mindset was to do whatever they could so as to pass the test.”

(Lecturer 2, May 18, 2021)

This section has showed the anxiety posed by the policy as perceived by the students and the faculty members. The next section will report the perceptions about usefulness, fairness, and practicality of the English exit exam.

4.2.3 The perceptions towards usefulness, fairness, and practicality

The results from the questionnaires administered to 243 students in order to investigate the students’ perceptions towards usefulness, fairness, and practicality of the English exit exam are reported in Table 4.6 below.

Table 4.6 The students’ perceptions towards usefulness, fairness, and practicality (n = 243)

Usefulness, fairness, and practicality	Mean	SD	Interpretation
The English exit exam score accurately reflects my English proficiency.	3.11	1.15	moderate
It is fair that students from all faculties/fields of study are required to obtain a minimum score of 32 (out of 80) to pass the exit exam.	3.34	1.20	moderate
It is reasonable to use the English exit exam score to judge if students can graduate from the program.	2.80	1.25	moderate
Total	3.08	1.20	moderate

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The following criteria are used in interpreting the results of the questionnaires.

Highest level	= 4.21 – 5.00
High level	= 3.41 – 4.20
Moderate level	= 2.61 – 3.40
Low level	= 1.81 – 2.60
Lowest level	= 1.00 – 1.80

According to Table 4.6, it can be seen that the overall level of the students' perceptions about the usefulness, fairness, and practicality of the English exit exam was at a moderate level (Mean = 3.08, SD = 1.20). When scrutinizing each aspect in detail, it can be seen that their perceptions about the usefulness (Mean = 3.11, SD = 1.15), the fairness (Mean = 3.34, SD = 1.20), and the practicality (Mean = 2.80, SD = 1.25) were all at a moderate level.

The students' interview results showed that eight students were pleased with the usefulness, fairness, and practicality of the policy implementation. As mentioned in Excerpt 10, the student thought that this policy implementation was beneficial to her since it allowed her to assess her English language skills before graduation.

Excerpt 10:

“For me, I thought that the English exit exam could effectively reflect my English proficiency. It was a thing that could show my basic English skills. As the exit exam was divided into grammar and reading parts, I could see my weaknesses in these areas.”

(Student 3, May 8, 2021)

However, three students agreed that this policy should not have been set as a graduation requirement. One of the students stated that using the English exit exam score to determine if she could graduate from the program was unreasonable.

Excerpt 11:

“In my opinion, the university should allow every undergraduate student to take the exit exam to assess their strengths and weaknesses in terms of their English language proficiency. Some students might use this English assessment as important feedback to improve their English abilities. However, this policy should not be considered a criterion for passing or failing the students, nor should it be used as the graduation requirement.”

(Student 5, May 9, 2021)

Seven students also agreed that it was fair that students from all faculties/fields of study had to achieve a minimum score of 32 (out of 80) to pass the English exit exam. For example, one student said that it was suitable to use this cut-off score for all students from all faculties and fields of study and that the same testing standard should be adopted for all students.

Excerpt 12:

“I think that the cut-off score is fine and seems to help students from all faculties who may not be good at English. I think that a passing score of 40% is not too difficult for the students to get.”

(Student 4, May 8, 2021)

On the other hand, only three students indicated that applying the same criterion of the exam requirements was unfair since students from each faculty studied and were exposed to English at varying degrees, as described in Excerpt 13.

Excerpt 13:

“I think that the faculty that the students need to use English more should raise the passing score. Other faculties or programs that the students rarely use or have exposure to English should require a lower cut-off score. This means that there should be two sets of requirements: one for the students with less exposure to English and the other for the students with high exposure to English.”

(Student 12, May 28, 2021)

For the faculty members, all of them expressed a positive attitude towards the policy in terms of its usefulness, fairness, and practicality. As noted in Excerpt 14, one faculty member agreed that every student should take the English language proficiency test before graduation. However, four faculty members felt that this language policy should not have been set as a graduation requirement.

Excerpt 14:

“I agree with the policy that all students should be required to take the English proficiency, or the English exit exam, before graduation.”

(Lecturer 1, May 17, 2021)

One lecturer stated that the university should not have assigned a pass or fail score to the exit exam, nor should the university have applied the English exit exam scores as a graduation requirement. Three faculty members also noted that requiring students from all faculties and fields of study to attain a minimum score of 32 (out of 80) to pass the English exit test was unreasonable.

Excerpt 15:

“I do not oppose the policy...From my understanding is that the students who didn't pass the test couldn't graduate. It

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should not have been like that because the students studied for four years. As the objective of the policy is to improve the students' English skills, the university should have been responsible for the student's English language progress in 4 years of their studies. It means that the university has to take some serious action to help the students, not just paying lip service to the idea. I think this is unfair to the students.”

(Lecturer 3, May 19, 2021)

In addition, another faculty member indicated that using the same assessment criteria for all students was inappropriate. All faculty members reiterated that each faculty should have an English exit exam that focused on English used in its context.

Excerpt 16:

“We often said that we wanted to know whether these students had improved their English skills or not. We couldn't gauge their progress or improvement by simply and solely relying on the passing score of 32. But we should know their English proficiency level on their entry to the program. After four courses and four years of studies, we should assess how much they have improved or what skills they have developed. This should be the right way to see how the students have improved. And the students from different faculties or disciplines use or require different English skills. This means that setting the same standard or requirement for all seems to be unreasonable.”

(Lecturer 2, May 18, 2021)

As shown in Excerpt 17, one lecturer also said that it was appropriate that the English exit test was developed only by a team of English teachers from the School of Liberal Arts.

Excerpt 17:

“I think it’s appropriate to let the School of Liberal Arts be responsible for developing the English exit exam. Although I believe that each faculty should have their own exit exam corresponding to the respective students’ language needs and use, disciplinary lecturers are not experts in English. English teachers have expertise in doing this job, so we should let them do it. They know how to assess the students’ English proficiency. But we can work collaboratively to help identify the types of English required or expected by individual disciplines. This will help test writers to develop a test suitable for each context or discipline.”

(Lecturer 4, May 22, 2021)

This section has revealed the usefulness, fairness, and practicality of the English exit test as perceived by the students and the faculty members. The next section will report the perceptions about the exam administration.

4.2.4 The perceptions towards exam administration

The following table presents the results of the questionnaires regarding the students’ perceptions towards the exam administration.

Table 4.7 The students’ perceptions towards exam administration (n = 243)

Exam administration	Mean	SD	Interpretation
The university provided me with adequate information about the policy and the exit exam.	3.09	1.07	moderate

Table 4.7 The students' perceptions towards exam administration (n = 243)

(Continued)

Exam administration	Mean	SD	Interpretation
It is reasonable that the university administered the exit exam once a month.	3.36	1.16	moderate
It is easy for me to ask for more information about the exit exam from the test administration unit.	3.07	1.04	moderate
The application process for the exit exam is efficient.	3.19	1.09	moderate
The exam administration procedure/proctoring is efficient.	3.23	1.14	moderate
The announcement of the exam results is made in a timely manner and with easy access.	3.72	1.09	high
Total	3.28	1.10	moderate

The following criteria are used in interpreting the results of the questionnaires.

Highest level of agreement = 4.21 – 5.00

High level of agreement = 3.41 – 4.20

Moderate level of agreement = 2.61 – 3.40

Low level of agreement = 1.81 – 2.60

Lowest level of agreement = 1.00 – 1.80

As shown in Table 4.7, the students perceived that the overall level of the efficiency in the English exit exam administration was considered moderate (Mean = 3.28, SD = 1.10). Of the six aspects of the students' perceptions towards the test administration, one aspect (the announcement of the test results was made in a timely manner and with easy access) was rated at a high level (Mean = 3.72, SD = 1.09). The other five aspects were rated at a moderate level.

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The interview data revealed that the students had a positive attitude towards the exam administration. They stated that the exam administration, the proctoring method, and the application process for the English exit exam were efficient. One student, for example, expressed that completing the English exit test from start to finish was simple and convenient, as can be seen in Excerpt 18.

Excerpt 18:

“I thought that the exam administration was done well. The timing was right. It was appropriate... The English exit exam was usually held once a month. It was good because the examination could sufficiently accommodate students in the institute who were about to graduate...It was easy to register. It was not hard...I was informed of the test score quickly. It could view it easily, and it was convenient.”

(Student 7, May 11, 2021)

Another student also said that the exam results were announced promptly (within seven days).

Excerpt 19:

“The announcement of the exam results was fast. I could check everything about the exam from the announcement posted. There was no problem...It was not difficult. I could register following the instructions given...It was okay and fast...It was probably less than a week to get the test results.”

(Student 8, May 15, 2021)

However, one student stated that the test administration unit did not appear to be helpful in assisting the students when they had questions or problems about the English exit exam.

Excerpt 20:

“Overall, it was not bad, but it was not that good...Lately, my friend had a problem with the test score. He thought that his test result was not what he expected...He contacted the admin staff at the School of Liberal Arts...Yet, the staff did not seem to do a great job or offer any useful help. My suggestion is that if you question something about the exam results, let file a complaint or do something...They didn't seem to be helpful as they were expected.”

(Student 6, May 10, 2021)

Two faculty members seemed to have a negative attitude about the exam administration. One staff member, for example, thought that the exam administration criteria in each round were inconsistent, which was unfair to the students, as mentioned in Excerpt 21.

Excerpt 21:

“I believe that the standard of the English exit exam of each round is inconsistent. The standard of the exam (levels of difficulty) of each round seemed to be affected by the COVID-19 situation. Different formats were developed for use in response to the pandemic situation. This was unfair to students who took the exit exam in each round...I heard the students complaining that sometimes they paid to take the test, but it was like...they had already paid, but their names were not on the list.”

(Lecturer 1, May 17, 2021)

Furthermore, another said that the English exit exam results seemed to simply reflect the students' own English background. That is, the students with a

strong background in English would get a higher score than those with a poor background in English. The exam did not seem to reflect what the students had really learned from the courses offered by the university.

Excerpt 22:

“The exam is meant to be used as a tool to collect the score to fulfill the policy, just that. From my view, the exam could provide us with insight into the students’ progress in improving their English. The students who got good English grades when they were first or second year students would get a high score for the exit exam. Those with low English ability when they were first or second students would get a lower score for the exit exam. In other words, students with a poor English background would be the one who suffered from this kind of policy; they encountered a lot of challenges in passing the exam.”

(Lecturer 4, May 22, 2021)

This section has disclosed the research participants’ perceptions of the policy towards the exit exam administration. It can be seen that the students and the faculty members shared certain similarities and differences in their perceptions with particular reference to the impacts on learning motivation; the anxiety posed by the policy; the usefulness, fairness, and practicality of the policy; and the exam administration.

4.3 Challenges Encountered by Students and Strategies Used in Taking the University’s English Exit Examination

This section discusses the results obtained from the questionnaires and the semi-structured interviews. These include the students’ challenges regarding taking the English exit exam: multiple-choice format (Test Format 1), news summary and

oral interview (Test Format 2), and strategies they employed for handling the exit exam. The results will be presented in three main parts: students' challenges in taking Test Format 1 and Test Format 2, and strategies used in handling the exit exam.

4.3.1 Students' challenges in taking Test Format 1

Table 4.8 The students' challenges in taking the written exam (Test Format 1) (n = 180)

Challenges encountered in taking the written exam	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Having a limited knowledge of grammar and sentence structure to do the exam	3.56	0.93	high
Having a limited knowledge of vocabulary in doing the exam	3.58	0.93	high
Having problems in understanding idioms and slangs found in the exam	3.73	1.01	high
Finding main ideas of the reading passages	3.49	1.02	high
Finding supporting details of the reading passages	3.58	1.00	high
Having problems in understanding expressions used in conversations (when doing a conversation completion section)	3.51	1.00	high
Lacking background knowledge of some reading texts or conversations in the exam (e.g. You find it difficult to understand a text about politics because you do not have much background knowledge about it.)	3.50	1.03	high
Having problems with time allocation (unable to finish the exam in time due to the length of the exam)	3.03	1.23	moderate
Total	3.50	1.02	high

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The following criteria are used in interpreting the results of the questionnaires.

Highest level of the seriousness of the problem	= 4.21 – 5.00
High level of the seriousness of the problem	= 3.41 – 4.20
Moderate level of the seriousness of the problem	= 2.61 – 3.40
Low level of the seriousness of the problem	= 1.81 – 2.60
Lowest level of the seriousness of the problem	= 1.00 – 1.80

Table 4.8 presents the results from the questionnaires administered to 180 students who took Test Format 1 of the English exit exam. The overall seriousness of the problems was at a high level (Mean = 3.50, SD = 1.02). Of the eight problems, the students reported that understanding idioms and slangs found in the exam was the most challenging problem (Mean = 3.73, SD = 1.01), while they had the slightest problem with time allocation when taking the test (unable to finish the exam in time due to the length of the exam) (Mean = 3.03, SD = 1.23).

For the students' interviews, four students expressed that the vocabulary found in the exam caused a lot of problems to them. One student, for example, stated that she struggled with the reading part of the exam because she did not know the meaning of those words found in the passage, as indicated in Excerpt 23.

Excerpt 23:

“There were a lot of exam items in the reading part...too many. When there were many items and many words I did not know, it turned out that I could not find the main idea of the passage in the reading part.”

(Student 6, May 10, 2021)

Another student also revealed that he encountered difficulty completing the exam because of his limited vocabulary knowledge.

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Excerpt 24:

“The most challenging problem was vocabulary found in each part. For example, the conversation part also needed the knowledge of vocabulary. Oftentimes, I had difficulty taking the test as there were many unfamiliar words in it.”

(Student 7, May 11, 2021)

Moreover, some students expressed that the test difficulty levels brought about certain challenges to them while completing the test. One student, for instance, said that every part of the English exit exam was difficult, which was attributed to the limited vocabulary knowledge.

Excerpt 25:

“I found that I could not understand those words at all. Some vocabulary items seemed to be hard...Every part was hard for me.”

(Student 9, May 15, 2021)

Another also reiterated that the first format of the test was very hard for her due to her lack of vocabulary knowledge.

Excerpt 26:

“It was difficult...For Test Format 1, I felt it was hard. The test was really hard! I felt vocabulary was hard. I did not see some words in the test in my everyday life.”

(Student 11, May 21, 2021)

Apart from the results derived from the students’ interviews, faculty members’ perspectives on their students’ challenges in taking Test Format 1 were also collected via semi-structured interviews. One lecturer, for instance, stated that he was concerned about his students’ grammatical knowledge because he thought that his students still lacked it.

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Excerpt 27:

“I think that the students might forget the grammar rules or couldn’t use them correctly. This is a huge problem. Actually, there are not too many grammar rules in English that the students need to know so that they can communicate in English and cope with the exam. Unfortunately, this is the weakness of Thai students. Ironically, many like to say that Thai students know a lot of grammar; I think it’s not true.”

(Lecturer 3, May 19, 2021)

Another lecturer also supported that he was worried about his students’ fundamental English competencies. He thought that his students lacked practice using English in daily life and needed to be trained to pass the test.

Excerpt 28:

“The major problem is that the students had a poor English background since their secondary school education. When they came to this faculty and took the four Foundation English courses, they still couldn’t improve their English. This might be an issue that the School of Liberal Arts might be responsible for helping them develop their English abilities to help the students pass the English exit exam. If there is no support available for the students, the low-English proficiency students will not be trained and improve their English after class. This could bring about a serious problem, and the students will need to take the test several times.”

(Lecturer 4, May 22, 2021)

4.3.2 Students' challenges in taking Test Format 2

The challenges that the students encountered in completing Test Format 2 can be divided into two main areas based on the types of the test: students' challenges in summarizing the news article, and their participation in an online interview as follows.

4.3.2.1 Students' challenges in summarizing the news article

Table 4.9 The students' challenges in summarizing the news article and writing an opinion paragraph (Test Format 2) (n =179)

Summarizing the news article and writing an opinion paragraph about it	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Finding a news article suitable for my English proficiency	3.08	1.10	moderate
Finding main ideas of the selected news	3.00	1.05	moderate
Finding supporting details of the selected news	3.02	1.02	moderate
Having a limited knowledge of vocabulary	3.42	1.03	high
Having a limited knowledge of idioms and slangs	3.60	0.96	high
Having a limited knowledge of grammar and sentence structure	3.55	0.93	high
Lacking background knowledge of the selected news	3.16	1.06	moderate
Having problems about paraphrasing source texts	3.23	1.09	moderate
Having problems about writing a well-organized summary	3.26	1.11	moderate
Having problems about expressing opinions on the news (showing my personal feelings or viewpoints about the news)	3.11	1.10	moderate
Total	3.24	1.04	moderate

The following criteria are used in interpreting the results of the questionnaires.

Highest level of the challenge	= 4.21 – 5.00
High level of the challenge	= 3.41 – 4.20
Moderate level of the challenge	= 2.61 – 3.40
Low level of the challenge	= 1.81 – 2.60
Lowest level of the challenge	= 1.00 – 1.80

Table 4.9 shows the results from the questionnaires administered to 179 students who took Test Format 2 of the English exit exam. The students rated the overall level of the seriousness of the challenges at a moderate level (Mean = 3.24, SD = 1.04). Of the nine problems, the most serious problem the students confronted was having limited knowledge of idioms and slangs (Mean = 3.60, SD = 0.96), and the problem with the lowest mean score (Mean = 3.00, SD = 1.05) was the difficulty in finding main ideas of the selected news, which was at a moderate level.

The semi-structured interview data also revealed the students' perceptions regarding difficulties they faced in handling the news summary part of Test Format 2. Three students claimed that finding relevant news articles for the exit exam and paraphrasing the source texts they selected were their major challenges. This is because they lacked sentence structure knowledge and had limited time to complete the assigned task.

Excerpt 29:

“I had problems when I searched for the news and then wrote a summary of it...And I also had a problem with the given time for completing the task. I got a lot of assignments to do, so when I needed to do Test Format 2, I did not have much time to check and revise the task (the news summary).

I needed to juggle between doing the assignments and the

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exit exam task. Then, I just submitted the task which was not as good as I expected. This might be the reason why I got a low score”

(Student 1, May 8, 2021)

Excerpt 30:

“When I took the exam in the first round, I was required to search for the news related to the world’s current events. Then, I did not know whether I chose the right news that matched the examiner’s taste. Something like this...I thought this was my problem...I also had a problem writing the news summary because I was not good at English structure and writing paragraphs.”

(Student 2, May 8, 2021)

Excerpt 31:

“Like most of my friends, the problem I got was finding the news. I had to check whether the news I selected was related to the given topic or not. Sometimes, the news I selected was irrelevant to the topic, so I needed to search for a new one...I could read and write English a little bit...Well, I translated some parts of the news and found that it was irrelevant to the topic assigned, so I had to find another one instead.”

(Student 10, May 19, 2021)

4.3.2.2 Students' challenges in taking an online interview with an English teacher

Table 4.10 The students' challenges in responding to interview questions via online interview (Test Format 2) (n = 179)

Challenges in engaging in an online interview	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Not understanding the questions asked by the interviewer	3.00	1.12	moderate
Finding suitable words to use in answering the question	3.72	0.98	high
Using appropriate grammar and sentence structure in answering the question	3.81	0.95	high
Having problems with pronunciation and intonation when answering the question	3.56	1.06	high
Feeling nervous in a face-to-face interview via an online mode	3.92	1.07	high
Having technical problems such as unclear voices and Internet connection	3.40	1.27	moderate
Total	3.57	1.08	high

The following criteria are used in interpreting the results of the questionnaires.

Highest level of the challenge = 4.21 – 5.00

High level of the challenge = 3.41 – 4.20

Moderate level of the challenge = 2.61 – 3.40

Low level of the challenge = 1.81 – 2.60

Lowest level of the challenge = 1.00 – 1.80

Table 4.10 shows the results from the questionnaires administered to 179 students who completed the second format of the English exit exam. The overall seriousness of the challenges was perceived at a high level (Mean = 3.57, SD = 1.08). Of the six problems, feeling nervous in attending a face-to-face interview via online mode with the interviewer was rated at a high level with the highest mean score (Mean = 3.92, SD = 1.08). The challenge regarding the students' difficulty in understanding the questions asked by the interviewer received the lowest mean score (Mean = 3.00, SD = 1.12). This kind of challenge was at a moderate level.

According to the students' interview results, many students encountered various challenges during online interviews with their English language teachers. For example, the students reported having problems comprehending the questions asked by the interviewers, as stated in Excerpts 32 and 33.

Excerpt 32:

“The teacher said some words so fast, and she rarely listened to what I said. When I could not understand her words, she told me that I had to go practice and then retook the test. And then, she stopped the interview.”

(Student 1, May 8, 2021)

Excerpt 33:

“I was not good at English. Anyway, the interviewer spoke very fast to me with dense information. I couldn't catch her words sometimes, so I didn't understand the questions...the interviewer asked me a question with long sentences.”

(Student 2, May 8, 2021)

Furthermore, one student said that technical problems such as Internet connection and electronic gadgets were found as challenges in taking the test.

Excerpt 34:

“Some friends had unexpected technical problems with the Internet and the computer. This could also cause us problems and stress during the interview.”

(Student 4, May 8, 2021)

Another disclosed that he felt nervous when he was interviewed by the teachers.

Excerpt 35:

“There might be some problems during the interview like...I couldn't figure out some words. This is because I was so nervous. These were my major problems.”

(Student 10, May 19, 2021)

From the results gained from the interviews, one faculty member was worried that technical problems such as unclear voices and poor Internet connection could interrupt the interview process between students and interviewers as described in Excerpt 36. She also stated her concerns about the interviewer's bias toward students who had failed the exam several times.

Excerpt 36:

“Some students encountered unexpected problems about the Internet. Not all students could have access to good Internet connection. The sound signal or other signals were choppy. The students could not hear well. The students complained about this...Another issue was about the teacher I mentioned earlier. The same teacher interviewed the student three times, and she [the student] thought that this teacher was biased against her. So, the teacher did not let the student pass the exam. This was what the student told me.”

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(Lecturer 1, May 17, 2021)

Moreover, one faculty member expressed his worries about the students' confidence and preparation in communicating in English with the interviewers during the interview session.

Excerpt 37:

“Students from the Department of Agricultural Communication might face fewer problems about expressing themselves during the interviews than those of other departments. This was a big issue for some students in dealing with Test Format 2. Well, this might be also attributed to how well individual students prepared themselves for the interview.”

(Lecturer 2, May 18, 2021)

4.3.3 Strategies in handling the English exit exam

The results from the questionnaires administered to 243 students in order to investigate their use of strategies in handling the English exit exam are shown in Table 4.11 below.

Table 4.11 The students' use of strategies in handling the exit exam (n = 243)

Strategies in handling the exit exam	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Studying test-preparation materials (self-study)	156	64.20
Taking a test-preparation class/training organized by the university	75	30.86
Taking a general English class/training organized by the university	23	9.47
Taking a test-preparation class in a private tutorial school	5	2.06
Taking a general English class in a private tutorial school	9	3.70

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Table 4.11 The students' use of strategies in handling the exit exam (n = 243)
(Continued)

Strategies in handling the exit exam	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Forming a study group with friends to prepare for the exit exam	52	21.40
Asking a friend with a high English language proficiency to help write a summary and an opinion paragraph (when doing Exam Format 2)	54	22.22
Using Google Translate when writing a summary and an opinion paragraph (when doing Exam Format 2)	133	54.73

According to Table 4.11, it can be seen that the students used a variety of strategies in preparing for the exit exam. The top three strategies employed by the students were studying test-preparation materials (64.20%), followed using Google Translate when writing a summary and an opinion paragraph (54.73%) and taking a test-preparation class/training organized by the university (30.86%).

Besides the results derived from the survey questionnaire, twelve students from the interview sessions disclosed several strategies they used in coping with the English exit exam. One student, for instance, prepared for Test Format 1 by studying English textbooks and tutorial materials, and memorizing grammatical rules as test preparation strategies.

Excerpt 38:

“Well, it took me two weeks to quickly go through the test preparation materials...Reading for the exam was not just only reading textbooks from the English classes. We also had to read other materials from outside sources too because the language used in the textbooks was not easy to understand. We needed to read tutorial or test preparation materials too because the main contents to be tested were

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summarized. This would make our life easier...I mainly brushed up on grammar; this was what we needed to memorize. I only read grammar, and then I went to sit the exam.”

(Student 6, May 10, 2021)

Eight students also revealed that they studied through test-like materials and attended a test-preparation program organized by the School of Liberal Arts in order to handle Test Format 1.

Excerpt 39:

“I did the sample practice tests that the School of Liberal Arts had provided...I only did these and discussed with my friends how to prepare for the tests. Unfortunately, only a few samples of the test were provided to us. I went through only these few items of the exams.”

(Student 7, May 11, 2021)

Excerpt 40:

“When I found out that we were required to take the English exit exam, I attended the free test-preparation class and training provided by our programs...I also did the mock exam on the website. That’s all. I did not really know what and how I should do in order to prepare for the exit exam!”

(Student 9, May 15, 2021)

Several students reported using different techniques in dealing with Test Format 2. One student, for example, searched for various tactics to satisfactorily respond to the questions asked by the interviewer.

Excerpt 41:

“I looked for meanings of unknown words and some additional background information about the selected news.

I also searched for some techniques which could be used in

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handling the interview questions. I searched the Internet myself to find this information, and I also discussed this with my friends.”

(Student 1, May 8, 2021)

Moreover, another student attempted to practice asking and answering the interview questions that she thought the interviewer might ask her.

Excerpt 42:

“When writing a news summary, I did not prepare much. I simply looked for the news and then just summarized it. But for the oral interview, I prepared myself by thinking of possible questions that I thought the teacher or interviewer would ask me. I made a list of them and practiced answering those questions.”

(Student 5, May 9, 2021)

One student also summarized the news article he selected and tried to comprehend the story. He also read it fluently throughout the interview.

Excerpt 43:

“The preparation was that when I got the news, I read it slowly and attentively many times. I did my best to understand the content of the news by translating it into Thai. Then I extracted the main points of the news paragraph by paragraph. I went through all those main points and combined them into one coherent summary based on my own understanding and interpretation of the news. As for the preparation for the interview, I read the news and my summary several times to make sure that I could understand the news thoroughly. I read it out loud to make sure that my pronunciation was correct and tried to remember it. This would help me during the interview as I needed to orally

summarize the news for the teacher at the beginning of the interview.”

(Student 10, May 19, 2021)

4.4 Suggestions on Support Expected from the University and Additional Comments on the Policy

This part highlights the students’ suggestions on support they expected from the university. It also reports on the students’ and the faculty members’ additional comments on the policy. The results will be reported into two main parts: the students’ suggestions on support expected from the university, and the students’ and the faculty members’ additional comments on the English language policy implemented by the university.

4.4.1 Students’ suggestions on support expected from the university

The following table shows the results of the questionnaires regarding the students’ suggestions on support expected from the university.

Table 4.12 The students’ suggestions on support expected from the university (n = 243)

Suggestions on support expected from the university	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Exam preparation training (onsite training)	153	62.96
Exam preparation training (online training)	126	51.85
Exam preparation materials for self-study	153	62.96
A practice exam/mock exam with further recommendations based on each students’ exam result	150	61.73
A one-on-one consultation session on exam preparation with a teacher of English	106	43.62

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According to Table 4.12, it can be seen that of all the types of support the students were requested to rate, onsite exam preparation training (62.96%) and the provision of exam preparation materials for self-study (62.96%) were the types of support expected the most from the students. In addition, over half of the students also expected that the university would provide them with a practice or mock exam with further recommendations based on individual students' exam result (61.73%) and online exam preparation training (51.85%).

The semi-structured interviews also helped confirm the students' needs and expectations for support from the university. Many students reiterated that the university should provide the students who had failed the exam many times with a mock exam and test-preparation training course. This was considered very important, as they put it, because it would help them to boost confidence and increase more opportunities to pass the test. However, another student suggested that the university should provide those unsuccessful in taking the exit exam with an alternative to taking the exit exam.

Excerpt 44:

“Perhaps, the university should offer additional tutorial sessions to prepare the students who are going to take the exam. The students should have more exposures to the mock exam; they should practice doing it as much as they can. This would help, I believe.”

(Student 3, May 8, 2021)

Excerpt 45:

“Before the exam takes place, the university should offer tutorial or preparation courses for the students to help them grasp what they will encounter in the exam. They should have access to mock exams like those who take other tests like TOEIC or TOEFL. They should have several sets of mock

exams to do. This will help them familiarize themselves with the exam, and thus learn how to deal with the exit exam.”

(Student 5, May 9, 2021)

Excerpt 46:

“I want the university to offer the kind of support as I reiterated. That is, when the students could not pass the exams twice, they should not be expected to take it for the third time. Rather, they should be provided with an alternative. They should be able to opt for attending an English class in lieu of retaking the exam. This will help the students to save the fees for the exit exam. More importantly, this kind of English class can help the students to reflect on their weaknesses...these are what I couldn't do...This will provide the students with an opportunity to brush up on their English. I think this is a more useful and practical option. Well, the students need to attend all required class meetings. I think this is worth it; it's much better than having the students take the test again and again.”

(Student 6, May 10, 2021)

Excerpt 47:

“I think the university should provide the students with a full set of a mock exam. That is, the students should have access to an 80-item exam, similar to the real exit exam. What we received from the university was only a few test items as examples. This was not very useful as we didn't clearly see what the exam was like. The university should turn the exams administered in previous years into mock exams. This will be more useful for the students; they will know what they are going to cope with in the real exam situation.”

(Student 7, May 11, 2021)

Excerpt 48:

“The university should offer test-preparation training to the students. The topics may include an explanation of the test application process, techniques or strategies in doing the test, practice in speaking skills for the interviews, strategies to deal with interview questions...something like this.”

(Student 10, May 19, 2021)

4.4.2 The students’ and the faculty members’ additional comments on the policy

Additional comments provided by the students and the faculty members, as drawn from the questionnaires and semi-structured interviews are worth mentioning. They are reported in three parts: suggestions based on the students’ questionnaires, suggestions based on the students’ interviews, and suggestions based on the faculty members’ interviews.

4.4.2.1 Suggestions based on the students’ questionnaires

The students reported several advantages and disadvantages of the English language policy implementation as a graduation requirement for undergraduate studies. Furthermore, seven students provided valuable comments on the policy for the university. Two students agreed that this policy implementation was beneficial to the students. They also believed that the policy could motivate them to improve their English. The university’s exit exam was an excellent assessment that seemed to accurately reflect the students’ English language proficiency levels.

Excerpt 49:

“It was good. It was a tool for assessing my English to check if I could handle English. From my experience, I could not pass the exam for the first round. Then I put more effort in brushing up on my English, and then I finally pass it. It’s me who benefited a great deal from this.”

(Student 24, May 7, 2021)

Excerpt 50:

“This was considered beneficial to the students, and it helped to identify the students’ strengths and weaknesses in terms of their English. The students will be aware of these, and they can then fix those weaknesses and improve their English to meet with the demand in their prospective career which they are going to embark on very soon.”

(Student 105, May 12, 2021)

However, three students strongly disagreed with this policy because they thought that the one-size-fits-all policy should not be applied as a graduation requirement to all undergraduate students who had different levels of English language proficiency. They also held the belief that the exit exam could not genuinely assess the students’ English language proficiency. Hence, this policy might disrupt students’ graduation.

Excerpt 51:

“Referring to the multiple-choice exam, we can see that some students just went to the exam room but didn’t pay attention to it. They just used guessing strategies in completing the exam. guessed the possible answers. For the news summary task, many students as I was aware of did not even do it themselves. They just looked for someone to

help. These situations make us believe that the exam or the policy cannot actually reflect the test takers' actual English proficiency.”

(Student 20, May 6, 2021)

Excerpt 52:

“Individual students have different levels of English proficiency. They have different levels of exposure to English due to the demands of English in particular degree programs. Some may have taken more English courses as required by their degree or future career. It is thus unfair to use the same criteria to judge all students who may have different English backgrounds or needs.”

(Student 69, May 7, 2021)

Excerpt 53:

“I strongly disagree with this policy because some students have good grades in subjects of their degree program, but they might not be good at English. So, this policy is one of the main obstacles to their graduation. It is not fair to these students. I think there is no need to require the students to take this exam. The students should be able to choose whether they want to take it or not on a voluntarily basis. Or it may be required for only for those who need to use a lot of English in their career.”

(Student 83, May 7, 2021)

Two students proposed suggestions to the university to make the policy more standardized and tailor it to students' needs. One student advised that the university offer a comprehensive English training course to those students who had failed the exam several times to bolster their potential and confidence.

Excerpt 54:

“There should be tutorial sessions specifically designed for those who failed the exam for several times. The students’ problems should be carefully diagnosed, and they should be then placed in classes according to their problems and needs. To put it another way, to successfully help these students, the teachers should be aware that individual students have specific problems and needs. With this awareness, they can provide support for the students in response to their actual needs and expectations.”

(Student 6, May 6, 2021)

In addition, another student demonstrated that the university should inform the students of the information about the exam administration and the criterion of graduation requirements for students in advance. This would help students feel more confident and less worried about the test.

Excerpt 55:

“I found that the policy and the criteria used in judging the students seemed unclear. For example, what should the students do next in case that they fail the exam? Those who can’t pass the exam are unavoidably worried and stressed out. A clear policy in terms of assessment criteria and exam administration will help the students to mitigate their exam stress; they can stay focused on their exam preparation.”

(Student 191, May 21, 2021)

4.4.2.2 Suggestions based on the students’ interview session

Four students added valuable comments regarding the policy implementation. Their suggestions were to a certain extent similar to those

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mentioned in the questionnaires. For example, some students expressed that this policy should not have been set as a graduation requirement for undergraduate students. This is because this policy caused the students to feel unfair and anxious. However, some students agreed with the policy's implementation but requested additional support from the university to solve any problems induced by the policy.

Excerpt 56:

“I think this policy should not have existed. This is what I've thought for a long time since I saw my friends took it. I felt pity for them and other students in the following years. If this policy was cancelled, the students would not have to suffer tremendous stress and worries. They should invest their time and effort in studying other subjects of their degree program.”

(Student 6, May 10, 2021)

Excerpt 57:

“The exit exam results should not be used as a benchmark for determining whether one can graduate or not. Different students have different English abilities, and they need different levels of English in their career and daily life. It's not fair to simply use the English ability to determine the students' future. Rather, the university should look for different means if it wants to ensure that the students have sound English knowledge before leaving the university.”

(Student 10, May 19, 2021)

Excerpt 58:

“I want the university to have a clearer plan to help the students who took the exit exam several times but were still unsuccessful. Perhaps, there were not many students in this

group, but they still deserved help and prompt support from the university. These students may not be able to improve their English by themselves to meet such requirements. I think this is an urgent provision that the university should take serious action.”

(Student 4, May 8, 2021)

Excerpt 59:

“In my opinion, the students should be able to take the exam when they are still taking required English courses. When they are first or second year students, if they want, they should be allowed to take this exam. When they proceed to their final year, they do not study English for a long time. They seemingly forget what they have studied. And I also think that the exam should be free of charge. The students should be allowed to take it as often as they want, without paying the exam fees. I’m aware that the exam fees will help the university to reduce financial burdens in administering the exam. Yet, don’t forget that this is the policy initiated by the university, so the university should be responsible for this. The university should not leave this burden on the students.”

(Student 11, May 21, 2021)

4.4.2.3 Suggestions based on the faculty members’ interview sessions

The faculty members provided valuable guidance for implementing the English language policy. Two lecturers indicated that the university should adjust and develop the standard of the exam administration protocols to make the policy more effective and powerful.

Excerpt 60:

“I would comment on the standard of the test in each round. All sets should be of the same standard. I agree that the university should set the same benchmark for assessing the students of all faculties. But agricultural students have a low level of English proficiency. On their entry to university, they got lower scores than those from engineering or architecture. The university should then have additional support for the students with poor English background, perhaps the provision of a test kits or mock tests. This will help the students to familiarize themselves with the test before the actual exam.”

(Lecturer 1, May 17, 2021)

Excerpt 61:

“I would highlight the importance of the placement test when the students are accepted to study. We should know their level of English on entry, so we will be able to place them in an appropriate class. This will help them to progress in their English study based on their ability. I agree with the policy, but as I stated, we need to be aware of their English background, take care of them since they are accepted to study, and then continually help them improve their English throughout the study. The university needs to have a well-planned support system for the students in order to make it fair to all students who are required to take the exit exam in their fourth year.”

(Lecturer 2, May 18, 2021)

Nevertheless, one lecturer demonstrated that the university should separate students into groups of English language proficiency levels and provide them with

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English classes, depending on their English performance. This would be a better option than having all students take the university's English language proficiency test prior to graduation.

Excerpt 62:

“I've no objection to the idea of equipping the students with English ability before they leave the university. But this should be done in another way around. The curriculum should include more English courses. The exit exam policy is not a good choice. The fact that those who can't pass it can't graduate is useless. If you want the students to have a higher English proficiency, have them take more English classes as part of the curriculum!”

(Lecturer 3, May 19, 2021)

According to the results from the questionnaires and semi-structured interviews administered to the students and faculty members, it can be seen that the students had various types of challenges, with varying degrees, in completing the English exit exam. They then resorted to different types of strategies in preparing for the exam. In addition, the students and the faculty members expressed both positive and negative opinions about the policy implementation. They also offered useful suggestions on support that they expected from the university in helping the students to cope with the high academic demands posed by the policy.

4.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter has reported the findings of this study, including background of the participants, the students' and faculty members' perceptions towards the policy on the English language proficiency as part of graduation requirements and the challenges encountered by the students in taking the university's English exit examination. This chapter has also reported the participants' suggestions on support

expected from the university and the program of studies. The conclusion and discussion of the current study will be discussed in the following chapter.



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CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This chapter presents a summary and discussion of the major findings. It also offers pedagogical and theoretical implications of the study, identifies limitations of the study, and discusses recommendations for further studies.

5.1 Summary of the Findings

The purpose of this study was to investigate undergraduate students' and faculty members' attitudes towards the university's English proficiency graduation requirements. The population of the study consisted of fourth-year undergraduate students in Academic Year 2020 and faculty members from the Faculty of Agricultural Technology at one public university in Bangkok, Thailand. The online questionnaire was completed by 243 students. Twelve of the students and four faculty members were requested to take part in a semi-structured interview via Microsoft Teams platform. Means and Standard deviation were used to examine the data drawn from the questionnaire surveys. The data from the semi-structured interviews were analyzed using content analysis.

Based upon the questionnaire results, it was found that female undergraduate students outnumbered male students by a wide margin. Their ages varied from 22 to 26. Most of them had never taken English language proficiency tests, nor did they study or train overseas. For the faculty members who took part in the interviews, their ages ranged from 56 to 60 years and their experiences in teaching in the agriculture discipline were from 21 to 30 years.

The findings of this study revealed that most of the students were aware of the importance of the policy on the English language proficiency as part of graduation requirements. In terms of the effects on learning motivation, this policy was believed to encourage most students to become more active in studying English for their future careers. Given the policy's effects on anxiety, the students were concerned about the policy's implications on their graduation. Most of the students

also held the belief that it was fair that students from all faculties/fields of study were expected to meet a minimum score of 32 (out of 80) to pass the university's English exit examination. They were also satisfied with the exam administration procedures, stating that they were effectively operated.

As for the faculty members, they had varying opinions towards the implementation of this English benchmark policy for graduation. Regarding the effects on learning motivation, most lecturers believed that this policy could temporarily stimulate their students to become active in studying and practicing English. The policy was also reported to pose anxiety among lecturers and the programs' committee members because the students' exam results may affect the program's and the faculty's image. Additionally, some lecturers opined that this policy should not have been set as a requirement for graduation. They suggested that the university should carefully examine the students' English language proficiency levels and offer appropriate academic support to meet the students' needs before adopting this policy. With reference to the exam administration, most lecturers shared a negative attitude towards it, questioning the consistent standard of exam administration. Therefore, they urged the university to systematically improve the standard of the English exit examination administration.

The study revealed that the majority of the students had encountered challenges when taking the English exit examination. There were two main exam formats: a multiple-choice format (Test Format 1), and a news summary and an oral interview (Test Format 2). Most students admitted that when completing Test Format 1, they had difficulty comprehending idioms and slangs. They also had a limited vocabulary knowledge and problems in identifying supporting elements in the reading passages. For the Test Format 2, most students reported having difficulty completing the task due to their lack of understanding of idioms and slangs, sentence structure, and vocabulary. Furthermore, most students reported having difficulty in a face-to-face interview with an English teacher via online mode due to their nervousness. They were also concerned about using correct grammar and sentence structures in answering the questions. It is interesting to find that the majority of the students used diverse strategies such as studying test-preparation

materials, using Google Translate, and attending a test-preparation class/training in coping with the English exit exam.

In terms of suggestions on support expected from the university, most of the students identified some types of assistance that the university should offer to them in preparation for the English exit examination. For example, the students thought the university should offer the exam preparation training, exam preparation materials for self-study, and a practice exam/mock exam. This should then be accompanied with recommendations based on each students' exam performance. Moreover, some students stated that the university should offer alternative testing approaches. In particular, the university should provide students who failed the exam for many times with additional support in order to help them to meet the graduation requirements.

5.2 Discussion of the Findings

The major findings of the study will be discussed below.

5.2.1 Discussion of the findings from Research Question 1

It is common that individual test-takers and other stakeholders have multiple perspectives towards English language graduation requirements, which can be attributed to their personal test-taking experiences and engagement in test administration (McGuire, Lindzey, & Aronson, 1985, as cited in Sirikanjanawong, 2016). According to the findings, the undergraduate students and faculty members from the Faculty of Agricultural Technology shared both positive and negative perceptions towards the implementation of the English benchmark policy as a graduation requirement stipulated by the university. With reference to the washback effects on the students' learning, this policy implementation could exert both positive and negative test impacts. For instance, this policy may promote the students' motivation to brush up on their English for their future career paths. On the other hand, it could bring about a lot of worries to the students because the students needed to juggle between completing final year projects and internship, and preparing for the exit exam. These findings are consistent with those reported in

Shih's study (2007) in that testing is one of the factors generating test impacts on students' learning and psychology in various aspects, including content of learning, total time on learning, learning strategies, learning motivation, and test anxiety.

In term of content of learning, the use of this language test can affect the students' English language learning while preparing for the exam. Most students practiced test-preparation materials before taking the test, and this self-study might emphasize the students' test-taking skills or strategies instead of all English language skills needed, leading to a negative test impact to the students' English language learning (Stoneman, 2006). The students' test preparation to overcome the exam can generate test consequences on their English learning. A great number of the students believed that putting a huge effort in preparation for the exam could enhance their English language proficiency levels, and create great opportunities to their future employment prospects. However, the students' test preparation in a limited timeframe can bring about disadvantageous effects to their learning conditions. This would, for example, decrease students' capabilities in acquiring English and increase the level of pressure, anxiety, and fear on them while preparing for the test within a short period.

In addition, English language learning strategies that the students employed in handling the exam can significantly affect the students' learning progress. Most students utilized traditional learning strategies like studying from previous tests and practicing test-like materials by themselves as their test preparation approaches. This learning style can bring about positive test impacts on the students' growth in learning English. In terms of learning motivation, even though this language test implementation can positively encourage the students' motivation to improve their English language abilities, this policy can induce negative text effects and thus reduce the students' self-driving force in learning languages in certain situations sometimes (Özmen, 2011, as cited in Lunrasri, 2014). In other words, negative test effects can decrease the students' potential to learn English and increase test anxiety, fear, and pressure to the students. For example, most students felt worried about the test requirements because such requirements directly affected their graduation, and this would possibly result in their demotivation in learning English.

It is surprising to find that the majority of the students showed their positive attitudes towards the implementation of this policy. This is because they thought that the core objective of this English language policy would be assessing their overall English proficiency levels before entering to the highly competitive labor market. For example, most students felt that this policy could motivate them to brush up on their English to meet the test requirements. Therefore, possible positive washback effects emerged when the students put a lot of efforts to prepare themselves for the university's English exit exam by using different strategies in order to meet the requirements. This study appeared to confirm the study by Alderson and Wall (1993) in that positive washback would provide favorable test effects in increasing students' learning, motivating more suitable learning practices, and encouraging participants' positive attitudes towards the influence tests, resulting in students' lifelong learning to study English. What is important here is that some lecturers positively agreed with the implementation of this English benchmark policy, and they believed that this policy would inspire the students to develop their English language proficiency levels for the bright future careers. However, all lecturers strongly disagree that this English language policy had been set as an indicator for graduation by the university. This is because they thought that the policy's objective was to assess the students' English language proficiency levels and motivate them to develop their English potential prior to graduation. To them, it was unfair to punish the students who had completed all courses required by the four-year program but did not pass the exit exam by not allowing them to graduate.

The findings of this current study also revealed that some students and their lecturers expressed negative feelings with various reasons, regarding this English language policy implemented by the university. For instance, some students thought that it was unreasonable to use this English language policy as a criterion for graduation since this policy was likely to unnecessarily pose examination stress and anxiety to them. Most students were concerned about their time management in handling their mandatory final-year internship or project while they were also preparing for the English exit exam. They were also worried about the effect of the exam results on their graduation and extra expenses for the test fees in case that they failed the exam for many times. As a result, the implementation of this policy

exerted negative washback effects on the students, including test-induced fear, unexpected pressure, anxiety and frustration. These negative washback effects were also reported by Hường and Mai (2018).

Based on the findings drawn from the lecturers' interview, it is surprising to find that the lecturers held the belief that the use of this English language proficiency as a graduation requirement and the English exit exam were, to a certain extent, disadvantageous in terms of usefulness, fairness, and practicality. This is line with the study by Pham and Bui (2019), which demonstrated that the use of the one-size-fit-all policy may result in continuous flaws with reference to the unfairness, the test-driven orientation in learning, and the rise of stakeholders' dissatisfaction. Some lecturers strongly felt that the exam administration procedures or the proctoring procedures run by the university was inefficient, and this policy could not effectively encourage their students to develop their English language proficiency or put more efforts in studying English. They also further indicated that it was unfair to use the English exit exam score to judge if students could graduate from the program. This is because the English exit examination administered during the COVID-19 pandemic was different in each round and divided into two types of test formats: the multiple-choice format, and the news summary and oral interview format. Hence, the implementation of the two distinctive test formats as the university English language proficiency test for graduation might cause undesirable test impacts in terms of the reliability of the tests threatened by the test and scorer's biases.

5.2.2 Discussion of the findings from Research Question 2

It is interesting to find that the students reported having a variety of challenges regarding taking the university's English exit examination, which was attributed to the test formats. This is line with the study by Mahmud (2014), explaining that students taking the English language proficiency tests encountered several problems that could affect their exam success. As usual, Test Format 1 (a paper-based test with multiple-choice items) was administrated by the university. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the students were required to undertake Test Format 2 (writing tasks and an online oral interview based on a selected news article) instead, in order to mitigate possible health risks.

As regards the students' difficulties in relation to Test Format 1, it is unsurprising to find that the most students who took this test format had several difficulties in understanding idioms, slangs and unfamiliar vocabulary, as well as finding supporting details of the reading passages. According to the findings drawn from the interviews, they expressed that this paper-based test seemed to be more difficult than Test Format 2. This may be because the students had difficulty understanding the English language used in the exam. They were also confronted with problems in dealing with certain sections of the exit exam, particularly reading and grammar. This would result in challenges in answering the questions. This is consistent with the study by Zahrani et al. (2020), indicating that primary challenges facing the students in taking the reading section of the English language proficiency test were the test takers' lack of vocabulary knowledge and difficulty in comprehending the questions, making the test takers unable to respond to the questions. Nevertheless, most students agreed that Test Format 1 of the exit exam, which was an in-class invigilated exam, was the most suitable English language proficiency test to use as the university's English exit exam. This is because the invigilated exam with a discrete, multiple-choice test format has high levels of objectivity, reliability, and fairness due to its characteristics and the test administration method. This would thus result in the test score being able to reflect the test takers' actual ability in using English.

The findings also disclosed that the students encountered some problems in coping with idioms and slangs, grammar and sentence structure, and vocabulary in completing the news summary section of Test Format 2. For the oral interview section, most students felt nervous in participating in a face-to-face interview with an English teacher via online mode. They were also worried about using appropriate words, grammar, and sentence structure to respond to the question. Surprisingly, according to the findings from the interviews, the students felt that Test Format 2 was more useful than Test Format 1 since the former could assess the students' performance which reflected everyday English communication in real-life situations, such as attending a job interview, expressing an opinion, and engaging in casual conversation. This is in line with what the students in Raharjo's study (2020) reported. However, what is critically raised by some students is that Test Format 2

did not seem to be appropriate and fair because some students might not do the exam tasks on their own. In addition, the students viewed that the interviewers' rating and scoring could be unavoidably subjective, and it was not easy for the interviewers to take the bias out of the interviews. These problematic aspects could be exacerbated because many teachers served as interviewers, each teacher was responsible for interviewing a large number of students, and there were many rounds of the interviews. In other words, the students seemed to be concerned about the intra-rater and inter-rater reliability of the interview task of the exam. The study by Sundqvist et al. (2018) concludes that the use of teachers as examiners could bring about problematic consequences in regard to the assessment of learning and standardization of the language proficiency test, leading to the unreliability of the exam. This would be further supported by the results drawn from the study by Hayati and Askari (2008), which demonstrates that evaluators in a speaking session might employ the subjective scoring method in which the examinee's overall communication skill might be rated and grounded on their individual judgments and experiences. Thus, scores received from this speaking test may be to a certain extent unreliable and invalid.

What is intriguing is the ways in which the students adopted different test taking strategies to handle the English exit exam. The students employed different kinds of strategies for their test preparation depending on their motivation, thoughts, and proficiency. This is similar to what the students reported in the study by Ghavamnia et al. (2011), as cited in the study by Mahmud (2014). This is because they wanted to pass the test and meet the requirements for graduation. Brown (2000), as cited in Mahmud (2014), supports that students' achievement is significantly influenced by their individual investment of time, effort, and attention to the improvement of their English performance.

According to the quantitative and qualitative data, the findings revealed that the majority of the students preferred to study test-preparation materials to deal with the exit exam due to their time constraints in preparation before taking the test. This is similar to the findings of the study by Fitriah (2020) in that the students focused on studying and practicing the Test of English Proficiency (TEP) exercises as a strategy in preparing themselves to cope with the demands of taking the exam. This

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is because they had a limited timeframe for the test preparation. In addition, most students taking Test Format 2 used the Google Translate application as a tool in completing the summary and opinion tasks. This is in line with the study by Zahruni et al. (2020), which stated that the students employed various kinds of solutions to overcoming challenges regarding taking the English language proficiency test. These included self-tutoring, studying with friends and teachers, and using online or technological tools.

As discussed above, the students provided suggestions for the faculty members and the university with reference to preparation for the English language proficiency requirements. The majority of the students recommended that the university should provide the exam preparation training and exam preparation materials for the students' self-study. Furthermore, the university should have given a practice exam/mock exam with further recommendations based on each student's exam result. The recommended support would help the students to well prepare for the English exit exam with more confidence and thus pass the exam to meet the graduation requirements. This is consistent with the study by Pan (2009), as cited in Mahmud (2014), which noted that it is essential to offer students test-preparatory classes or test-related materials in the English language so that the students will be far more familiar with the test and have a better understanding of what and how to prepare for the test.

Finally, it was observed from the findings that the majority of the students recommended that the university and faculty members should offer extra support to help the students who took the English exit exam for several times but still could not meet the graduation requirements. Chu and Yeh's study (2017) also advocated that each university should offer students who fail the English language test with alternatives, such as taking extra English courses to fulfill a graduation requirement instead, or retaking the language test after completing a special test-preparation training course. Moreover, this suggestion seems to confirm the study by Raharjo (2020), which recommended that assessing students' English language proficiencies should not simply rely solely on commercial assessments or other objective tests, such as TOEFL, IELTS, and TOEIC. Although a number of universities require the students to submit to a certificate from those commercial examinations, it is

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important to note that other kinds of alternative assessments, such as portfolio assessment, peer assessment, and other performance-based tasks should be used to evaluate the students' English proficiency. This would, as the study suggested, help offer more opportunities to the students to pass the test. This kind of support by the university, if agreed upon by individuals concerned, could help motivate the students' eagerness to study hard in preparation for the test in order to obtain the score they preferred (Jee & Kim, 2003, as cited in Wongsu, 2018).

5.3 Implications of the Findings

In this section, the implications of this study are discussed and presented into three parts: implications for English language teachers, implications for disciplinary lecturers, and implications for the university's policy makers.

5.3.1 Implications for English language teachers

The findings of the current study revealed that the undergraduate students encountered a variety of difficulties regarding taking the English exit exam in order to meet the English graduation requirements. They also expressed their needs for support with reference to preparation for the exit examination, including English language training or test preparation courses from the university and their program of studies. In this regard, the findings have important implications for English language teachers who teach Foundation English (FE) courses and English for Academic Purposes (EAP) courses, which are compulsory courses for first- and second-year undergraduate students.

It is reasonable to say that English language teachers are considered to play a crucial role in fostering the students' motivation in learning English. They should encourage the students to improve and maintain their English language proficiency necessary for passing the English exit exam. In other words, the teachers should raise the students' awareness of the importance of English, which is not only for completing FE and EAP courses but also for meeting the English language proficiency requirements before leaving their program of studies. The teachers should thus introduce the students to autonomous learning (Rakaj, 2021; Swatevacharkul &

Boonma, 2021) by organizing learning activities to empower the students to take control and responsibility for their own learning, both in terms of what they learn and how they learn it. This can serve as a steppingstone to encourage the students to develop an independent, proactive approach to earnestly improving their English even after completing the FE and EAP courses.

In addition, it is significant to note that English language teachers responsible for training the students for the exit exam know and be critically aware of the students' English language background before the training course takes place. It is imperative that teachers conduct a contextualized needs analysis in order to investigate the students' English learning experiences and needs for support in preparing for English proficiency tests. The findings drawn from the needs analysis can serve as guidelines for the teachers to organize appropriate training courses in order to help the students to achieve the goals of this English benchmark policy.

5.3.2 Implications for disciplinary lecturers

As reported in this study, the students reiterated their needs for English language support expected from the university and faculty members to help them cope with the English graduation requirements. It is important to note that disciplinary lecturers who are the students' academic advisors can serve as a mediator to send the students' messages and problems regarding taking the English exit exam to the English teachers and university's administration. To put it another way, the disciplinary lecturers should work in close collaboration with the English teachers and the university's administrator in preparing, designing, and delivering English language support for the students.

There are several strategies for the disciplinary lecturers to help their students to cope with the demands in meeting the university's English language requirements. First, it is recommended that the disciplinary lecturers inform the students from the very beginning of their study in the program of this policy implementation. They should also remind their students that they must proactively prepare for the exit exam in advance and encourage them to voice their needs for English language support. The disciplinary lecturers, as mediators, can then inform the board administrators of the faculty to provide those students with expected

support. As Tsay (2013) has noted, the positive washback on students' learning towards the implementation of the English graduation benchmark policy will be generated if their needs for language support are carefully taken into consideration.

Furthermore, the disciplinary lecturers may invite the alumni to share their ideas, strategies and techniques in improving their English and preparing for the English exit exam. As the alumni and the current students have shared certain academic and English language backgrounds as well as challenges in meeting the English requirements, the alumni can well convince the current students of the importance of effective preparation practices for such requirements.

The findings of this study also unfold that many students took the English exit exam for several times in order to meet the university's graduation requirement. With this regard, the disciplinary lecturers and the university's administrators should make every effort to optimally help these students. The study by Chu and Yeh (2017) has advocated that each university should provide students who fail the English exit exam with alternatives, such as offering extra English courses, specifically designed to help this group of students in taking the test. It is also interesting to seek different qualitative assessment methods, such as the use of language portfolios and project-based assessments, in accommodating these students who may find it too challenging to take the test with a more discrete, objective format.

Another alternative is that the university may design an additional English course where the students can take the course and use the grade from the course as a graduation pathway option. It is recommended that when designing and delivering a given course with this kind of pathway option, the teachers should employ more performance-based, formative assessment in their course.

5.3.3 Implications for the university's policy makers

According to the findings, even though most undergraduate students shared a positive perception towards the policy on the use of English proficiency as graduation requirements, this policy also posed certain levels of anxiety to them in various aspects, such as their time management and the unintended impacts of the policy on their graduation. In this regard, it is undeniable that the findings of this study

can provide important implications for the university's policy makers who play a pivotal role in setting and implementing the English benchmark policy for graduation.

The findings can inform the university's policy makers of how undergraduate students and disciplinary lecturers from the Faculty of Agricultural Technology perceive the policy, the English exit examination, and the challenges the students encounter in taking the English exit examination. The findings thus provide the university's policy makers with useful feedback on the implementation of the policy, with particular reference to issues pertaining to desired and undesired impacts of the policy. This will encourage the university's policy makers to consider ways in which the policy should be amended, where necessary and appropriate, for the optimal benefits of all stakeholders.

As the findings revealed, the university's policy makers should listen to the students' voices in terms of their needs and perceptions towards the use of this language policy and the English exit exam. This is because what they have heard from the students can help them in making an important decision pertaining to this policy in order to achieve goals of the policy. This is line with the study by Hsieh (2017) revealing that students' perspectives towards the test use play the most significant mediating role in policy implementation since their views always may not be in parallel with the purposes of the language policy implementation.

Also important is that the university's policy makers should listen to the disciplinary lecturers' voices regarding challenges their students confront in taking the English exit exam, and reasons why some students fail the exam for several times. In other words, the policy maker should promote university-wide research collaborations where the English language lecturers are recommended to partner with their counterparts from other disciplines to investigate the issues surrounding the policy. The policy makers can subsequently use the findings to guide the amendment of the policy.

As Shih (2013) points out, university administrators and those in top authority should rethink how to better reform the English graduation benchmark policy to make it optimally advantageous to students. Therefore, it is suggested that university authorities and English language lecturers should work in tandem to set the right

path of educational directions for realistic and effective assessment of students' English learning outcomes.

5.4 Limitations of the Study

Even though this present study was meticulously designed and carried out, it is acknowledged that limitations are inherent. The study has three limitations that must be addressed for future studies.

To begin, the challenges and needs for support related to the English language proficiency graduation requirements, as reported in this study, were based upon the students' own perceptions. If additional data from other stakeholders involving in the students' learning process, such as English language instructors, disciplinary lecturers, the university's policy makers, and test developers had been acquired, this study would have reflected multiple aspects of the students' challenges and support. This would portray a clearer picture of the students' challenges and needs.

Secondly, this study recruited a small number of participants for the interview. In addition, no observation data were collected, especially ways in which the students prepared for their examination. Therefore, it could not delve into the participants' personal literacy histories, which may have profound effects on their challenges in preparing and taking the exit exam, and their needs for support. This study would have been more exhaustive had in-dept qualitative data been collected.

Thirdly, as this present study collected data from participants from only one faculty at one public university located in Bangkok, the findings of this study may not be generalizable to the whole university and other educational contexts. Should the university administrators and those in top authorities want to revise the English language proficiency graduation requirements, they may need to seek additional research findings to augment those reported in this study. Along with the findings from this current study, the additional findings which can be derived from further

studies, as will be discussed in the subsequent section, will contribute a great deal to the improvement of the revised policy.

Finally, the current researcher would acknowledge that the findings of this study, to some extent, were influenced by the researcher's biases. According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2008), Lincoln and Guba (2000), and Marshall and Rossman, (2006), it is not easy for researchers to eliminate all biases during the processes of collecting, analyzing, interpreting, and reporting qualitative data. This is because the researchers' perspectives, impressions, and personal experiences may have influenced, to a certain extent, their decision-making processes in such activities. Drawing on Miles and Huberman (1994), Conrad and Serlin (2005) note that the researchers should be aware of their own assumptions, values, practices, and biases during the research process. Being well aware of this, the current researcher put effort into dealing with her own biases that may have affected the findings by carefully transcribing, analyzing, interpreting, and translating and reporting the interview data. In so doing, the researcher could minimize her biases in conducting this research.

5.5 Recommendations for Further Studies

Based on evidence of the findings and conclusions of the study, the limitations and some unexplored aspects of the test impacts have created room for further studies as follows.

First, according to the limitations mentioned in the previous section, it is recommended that more stakeholders be recruited for further studies. More studies should be undertaken with undergraduate students from different faculties or universities with heterogeneous English-proficiency levels and educational backgrounds in order to explore individuals' differences related to their perceptions. This will improve the study's generalizability in educational settings.

Second, more studies may focus on a qualitative research design, aiming at collecting more in-depth data and placing critical emphasis on the participants' literacy histories. These data will be particularly useful in an attempt to insightfully

understand the English language background of the students. Consequently, the researcher will better understand the challenges the students encounter and the needs for support they expect, as beyond a shadow of a doubt these two aspects are to a large extent affected by the students' English language background.

Third, further in-depth studies should investigate English language teachers' perceptions with reference to the English language proficiency graduation requirements for undergraduate students. Since these teachers are directly responsible for the students' improvement of English language proficiency while they are studying at the university level, the English language teachers can also serve as a good complementary data source to reflect the students' perceptions, challenges, and support regarding taking the English exit exam.

Fourth, more in-depth studies should be conducted to investigate the issues surrounding examination-related activities from the perspectives and experiences of test writers, test examiners, and disciplinary lecturers. It is recommended that further studies adopt focus group discussions as a research method to collect data from these three parties since this method can trigger contributions from different members who may hold different perspectives (Stewart et al., 2007). By using this approach, the researcher can obtain in-depth data which can resonate with challenges, as perceived by each group of individuals, and possible solutions to such challenges. For example, test writers can use constructive feedback from the examiners, who served as interviewers and used those interview questions in previous examinations, in improving the quality of interview questions for subsequent examinations. The examiners can also receive useful feedback from disciplinary lecturers, reflecting their students' challenges in participating in the interview session and their concerns about the biases in judging the students' interview performance. The disciplinary lecturers will also learn more about the expectations of the test writers and the examiners, which will be useful for them in developing a collaborative support system to help their students prepare for the exam. To put it another way, more studies allowing these individuals to share their predicaments, concerns, challenges, and solutions as well as to seek collaborations from one another will help the university to implement the policy in a more effective fashion.

Fifth, it is suggested that researchers investigate the university's administrative team's and policy makers' perceptions of the English language proficiency graduation requirements for undergraduate students. Findings from this prospective research could be compared with those drawn from studies focusing on students' perceptions. This will provide the researchers with a more insightful understanding of the policy from different perspectives, resulting in having sufficient evidence useful for revising the policy as needed and where appropriate.

Finally, the policy implementation of the English language proficiency graduation requirements at the undergraduate level can bring about broader social consequences to the society. It is thus imperative that further studies be conducted to explore employers' perceptions of the English exit requirement policy in the workplace. This is because their voices can practically reflect whether the policy stipulated by the university is truly beneficial to the workplace.

5.6 Chapter Summary

This research aimed at exploring the students' and lecturers' perceptions towards the policy on English language proficiency graduation requirements. The participants were selected fourth-year students and lecturers from the Faculty of Agricultural Technology at one public university in Bangkok, Thailand. The study drew on Shih's washback model of learning and psychology, comprising of content of learning, total time of learning, learning strategies, learning motivation, and test anxiety. This study has raised the awareness of those involved in issuing and implementing the policy in terms of its impacts on the students and the Faculty of Agricultural Technology. This study has also provided pedagogical implications for English language lecturers, disciplinary lecturers, and policy makers in helping the students to cope with the demands in meeting the expectations of the policy.

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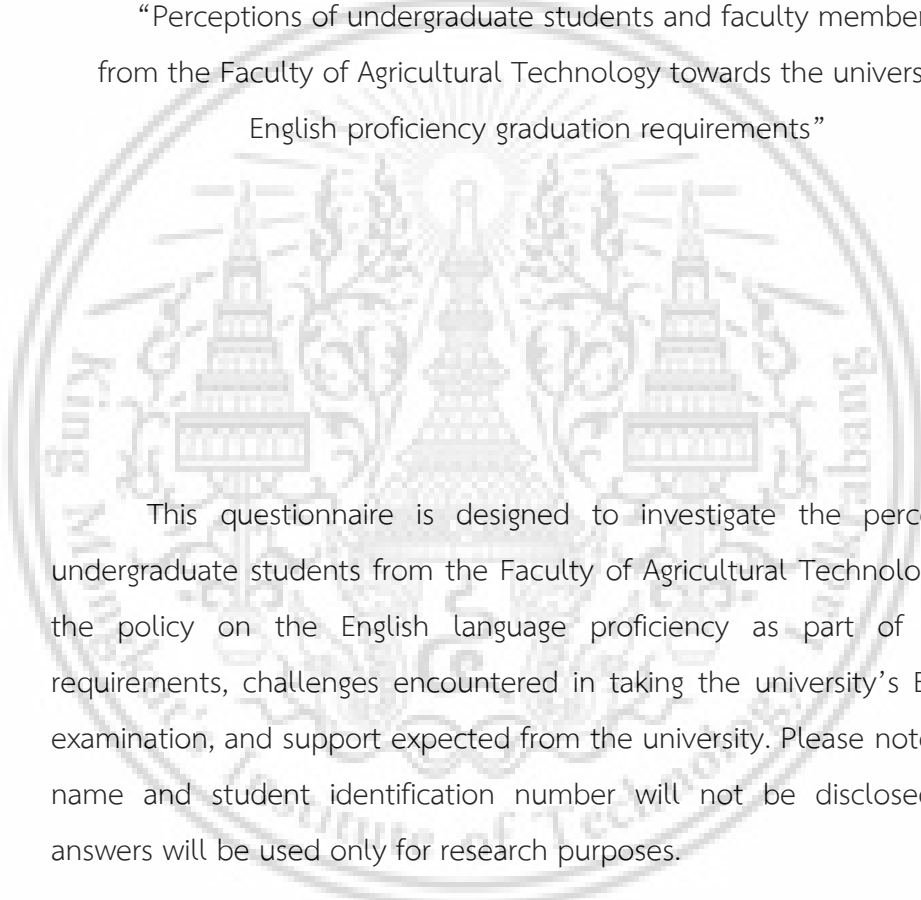
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Appendix A

Students' Questionnaire (English Version)

“Perceptions of undergraduate students and faculty members
from the Faculty of Agricultural Technology towards the university’s
English proficiency graduation requirements”



This questionnaire is designed to investigate the perceptions of undergraduate students from the Faculty of Agricultural Technology towards the policy on the English language proficiency as part of graduation requirements, challenges encountered in taking the university’s English exit examination, and support expected from the university. Please note that your name and student identification number will not be disclosed, and all answers will be used only for research purposes.

Nuttarinan Panchoei

MA student in Applied Linguistics - English for Professional Purposes Program

The School of Liberal Arts, King Mongkut’s Institute Technology Ladkrabang

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This questionnaire consists of four parts as follows:

Part 1: Student's Background Information

Part 2: Students' Perceptions towards the Policy on the English Language Proficiency as Part of Graduation Requirements

Part 3: Challenges Encountered by Students in Taking the University's English Exit Examination

Part 4: Students' Suggestions on Support Expected from the University and Additional Comments on the policy

Part 1: Student's Background Information

Directions: Please provide your information by placing a tick (✓) in the box (☐) and filling in the blank provided.

1. Gender

Female

Male

2. Age _____ years old

3. Educational Background

Major: _____

Department of Plant Production Technology

Department of Animal Production Technology and Fisheries

Department of Agricultural Development and Resource Management

4. Experience in taking the following English language proficiency tests

(Please identify the types of test taken.)

You can choose more than one item.

- TOEIC (Highest score received: _____)
- TOEFL (Highest score received: _____)
- IELTS (Highest score received: _____)
- CU-TEP (Highest score received: _____)
- TU-GET (Highest score received: _____)
- Others (please specify): _____
- None

5. Have you ever studied or been trained abroad?

 NO YES

Country: _____ Year: _____

Length of study: _____ (months)

Type of course or program: (e.g. English language training, student exchange program, internship) _____

6. Please self-assess overall levels of your current English language proficiency

Skills	Excellent (5)	Very Good (4)	Good (3)	Fair (2)	Poor (1)
Listening					
Speaking					
Reading					
Writing					

Part 2: Students' Perceptions towards the Policy on the English Language Proficiency as Part of Graduation Requirements

Directions: Please place a tick (✓) in the appropriate column to identify your level of agreement towards the policy on the English language proficiency as part of graduation requirements.

The criteria are as follows:

5 = Strongly agree

4 = Agree

3 = Neutral

2 = Disagree

1 = Strongly disagree

Impacts on learning motivation	5	4	3	2	1
1. The policy makes me become more active in learning and practicing English.					
2. The policy makes me devote more time to studying and preparing for the English exit exam.					
3. The policy encourages me to discuss with friends how to deal with the English exit exam.					
4. The policy encourages me to find more opportunities to use English in daily life.					
5. The policy encourages me to improve English as preparation for my future career and/or further education.					

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Anxiety posed by the policy	5	4	3	2	1
6. The policy makes me worried about my time management due to my engagement in a final year internship/project.					
7. The policy makes me worried about its effect on my graduation.					
8. The policy makes my family worried about its effect on my graduation.					
9. The policy makes me worried about extra expenses for test preparation and test fees if I fail the exam for several times.					
Usefulness, fairness, and practicality	5	4	3	2	1
10. The English exit exam score accurately reflects my English proficiency.					
11. It is fair that students from all faculties/fields of study are required to obtain a minimum score of 32 (out of 80) to pass the exit exam.					
12. It is reasonable to use the English exit exam score to judge if students can graduate from the program.					
Exam administration	5	4	3	2	1
13. The university provided me with adequate information about the policy and the exit exam.					
14. It is reasonable that the university administered the exit exam once a month.					
15. It is easy for me to ask for more information about the exit exam from the test administration unit.					
16. The application process for the exit exam is efficient.					
17. The exam administration procedure/proctoring is efficient.					

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Exam administration	5	4	3	2	1
18. The announcement of the exam results is made in a timely manner and with easy access.					

Part 3: Challenges Encountered by Students in Taking the University's English Exit Examination

A: Students' challenges in taking the exit exam

Directions: Please answer the following questions by placing a tick in front of the appropriate box or filling in information in the space provided.

1. How many times did you take the exit exam?

1 2 3 more than 3 times

The highest score received: _____

2. Did you take the Exit Exam: Format 1 (multiple-choice format)?

Yes (Highest score received: _____) No

If your answer is YES, please identify the challenges you encountered in taking the test.

The criteria are as follows:

5 = Highest

4 = High

3 = Moderate

2 = Low

1 = Lowest

Challenges encountered in taking the written exam	5	4	3	2	1
1. Having a limited knowledge of grammar and sentence structure to do the exam					
2. Having a limited knowledge of vocabulary in doing the exam					
3. Having problems in understanding idioms and slangs found in the exam					
4. Finding main ideas of the reading passages					
5. Finding supporting details of the reading passages					
6. Having problems in understanding expressions used in conversations (when doing a conversation completion section)					
7. Lacking background knowledge of some reading texts or conversations in the exam (e.g. You find it difficult to understand a text about politics because you do not have much background knowledge about it.)					
8. Having problems with time allocation (unable to finish the exam in time due to the length of the exam)					

3. Did you take the Exit Exam: Format 2 (news summary and oral interview)?

Yes (Highest score received: _____) No

If your answer is YES, please identify the levels of challenges you encountered in taking the test.

The criteria are as follows:

5 = Highest

4 = High

3 = Moderate

2 = Low

1 = Lowest

Summarizing the news article and writing an opinion paragraph about it	5	4	3	2	1
1. Finding a news article suitable for my English proficiency					
2. Finding main ideas of the selected news					
3. Finding supporting details of the selected news					
4. Having a limited knowledge of vocabulary					
5. Having a limited knowledge of idioms and slangs					
6. Having a limited knowledge of grammar and sentence structure					
7. Lacking background knowledge of the selected news					
8. Having problems about paraphrasing source texts					
9. Having problems about writing a well-organized summary					
10. Having problems about expressing opinions on the news (showing my personal feelings or viewpoints about the news)					

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Responding to questions via an online interview	5	4	3	2	1
11. Not understanding the questions asked by the interviewer					
12. Finding suitable words to use in answering the question					
13. Using appropriate grammar and sentence structure in answering the question					
14. Having problems with pronunciation and intonation when answering the question					
15. Feeling nervous in a face-to-face interview via an online mode					
16. Having technical problems such as unclear voices and Internet connection					

B: Strategies in handling the exit exam

Directions: Based on your experience, please identify the strategies you use in preparing yourself for the university's English exit examination. Place a tick (✓) in front of the selected solutions. You can choose more than one item.

- Studying test-preparation materials (self-study)
- Taking a test-preparation class/training organized by the university
- Taking a general English class/training organized by the university
- Taking a test-preparation class in a private tutorial school
- Taking a general English class in a private tutorial school
- Forming a study group with friends to prepare for the exit exam
- Asking a friend with a high English language proficiency to help write a summary and an opinion paragraph (when doing Exam Format 2)
- Using Google Translate when writing a summary and an opinion paragraph (when doing Exam Format 2)

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Others (please specify): _____

Part 4: Students’ Suggestions on Support Expected from the University and their Additional Comments on the Policy

A: Suggestions on Support Expected from the University

Directions: Please specify the types of support that the university should provide for the students in preparation for the exit exam. (You can choose more than one item).

- Exam preparation training (onsite training)
 - Exam preparation training (online training)
 - Exam preparation materials for self-study
 - A practice exam/mock exam with further recommendations based on each students’ exam result
 - A one-on-one consultation session on exam preparation with a teacher of English
- Other recommendations (Please specify) _____

B. Additional Comments on the Policy

Directions: Based on your experience, please write your additional comments the policy on the English language proficiency as part of graduation requirements and the university’s English exit examination in the provided space.

.....

.....

.....

Thank you for your cooperation.

Additional information

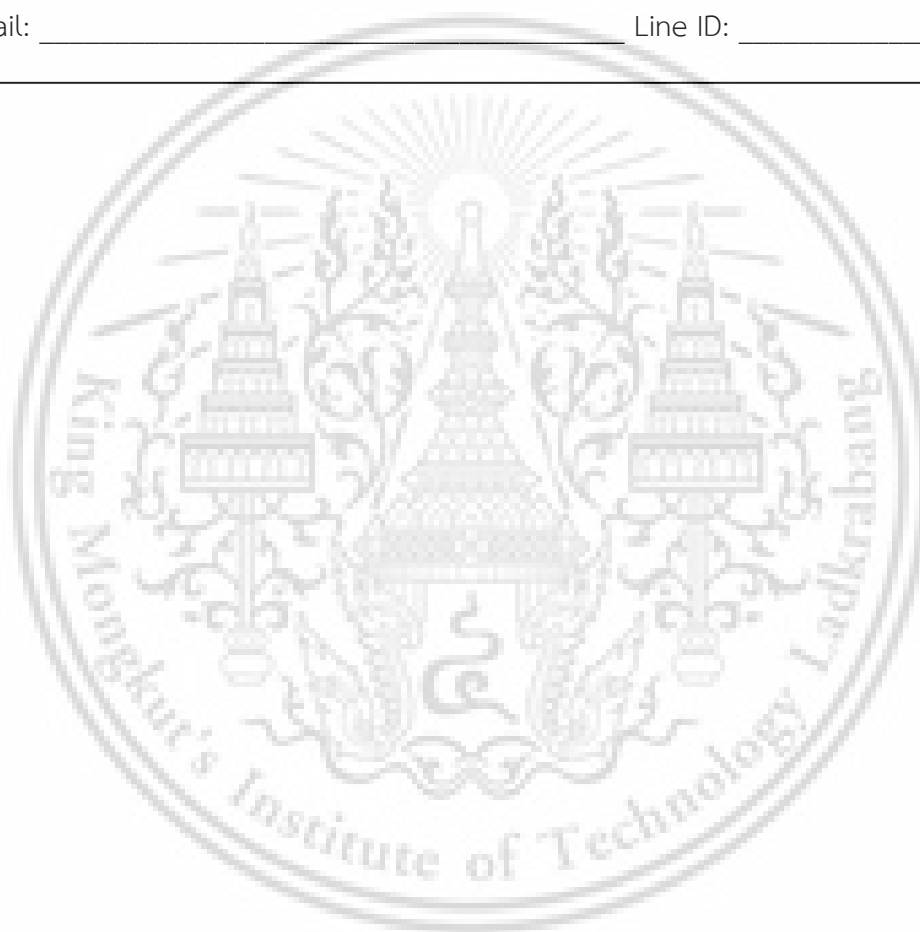
I'd appreciate it if I could interview some students to obtain more information. If you agree to be interviewed, please provide me with your contact information. Please note that your personal information will be kept confidential, and it will be used for contacting you only.

I do not agree to be interviewed.

I agree to be interviewed.

Name: _____ Major: _____ Tel no. _____

Email: _____ Line ID: _____



Appendix B

Semi-Structured Interview Questions for Students (English Version)

The following questions will be used for a semi-structured interview with fourth-year undergraduate students from the Faculty of Agricultural Technology who serve as research participants.

1. Did you receive adequate information about the policy on English language proficiency graduation requirements? Where did you get it from?
2. Did you receive information about the exit exam in terms of test formats, test contents, and skills tested? Where did you get the information from?
3. In your opinion, what is the main purpose of this policy? (In other words, why does the university have this policy?)
4. How did the policy affect your motivation in learning English?
5. How did the policy pose any anxiety on you?
6. What do you think about the policy in terms of its usefulness, fairness, and practicality?
7. What are your opinions about the exam administration?
8. Did you take both Format 1 and Format 2? How many times?
9. What challenges did you encounter in taking the exit exam (Format 1)?
10. What challenges did you encounter in taking the exit exam (Format 2)?
11. Please tell me how you prepared for the exam. Was it satisfactory?
12. What do you think about the levels of difficulty in taking the exam for Format 1 and Format 2?
13. What do you think about the oral interview? (Is it fair when there are many interviewers? Is it useful?)
14. Some people say Exit Exam Format 1 is more useful than Exit Exam Format 2 because it requires all students to do the exam by themselves in the exam room. As a result, this kind of test is fair because it is used to assess the students' actual ability. What do you think about this?
15. Some people say Exit Exam Format 2 is more useful than Exit Exam Format 1 because it deals with everyday English communication in a real life situation.

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For example, in our real life we can consult a dictionary when we find some unfamiliar words, but we cannot do this when taking Format 1. When we apply for a job, we may be interviewed in English. What do you think about this?

16. Some people say that Exit Exam Format 2 is not appropriate because some students may not do it on their own. What do you think about this? Have you heard that some students asked others to help?
17. Do you think the way in which the exam results are reported is useful? (Giving only the pass/fail score) Do you have any suggestions on this?
18. Do you think it is fair that you are required to have a minimum score of 32 (out of 80) like students from other faculties, such as those from Liberal Arts and Engineering? Why?
19. What do you think the university or your teacher should do if some of your friends fail the exit exam for many times? What options and kinds of help should be offered to them?
20. Did you receive any kinds of help and support regarding taking the university's English exit examination from your teachers, faculty and university? How?
21. What kinds of suggestions would you give to the university with reference to the policy?

Appendix C

Semi-Structured Interview Questions for Faculty Members (English Version)

The following questions will be used for a semi-structured interview with teachers from the Faculty of Agricultural Technology who serve as research participants.

1. Did you receive adequate information about the policy on English language proficiency graduation requirements? Where did you get it from?
2. Did you receive information about the exit exam in terms of test formats, test contents, and skills tested? Where did you get the information from?
3. In your opinion, what is the main purpose of this policy? (In other words, why does the university have this policy?) Do you agree with this policy? Why?
4. In your opinion, how did the policy affect your students' motivation in learning English? (In other words, did the policy make your students want to pay more attention to learning English?)
5. How did the policy pose any concern on you or the program (such as students' anxiety and the program's quality assurance)?
6. What do you think about the policy in terms of its usefulness, fairness, and practicality?
7. What are your opinions about the exam administration?
8. In your opinion, what challenges did your students encounter in taking the exit exam (Format 1)?
9. What challenges did your students encounter in taking the exit exam (Format 2)?
10. What do you think about the oral interview? (Is it fair when there are many interviewers? Is it useful?)
11. Some people say Exit Exam Format 1 is more useful than Exit Exam Format 2 because it requires all students to do the exam by themselves in the exam room. As a result, this kind of test is fair because it is used to assess the students' actual ability. What do you think about this?

12. Some people say Exit Exam Format 2 is more useful than Exit Exam Format 1 because it deals with everyday English communication in a real life situation. For example, in our real life we can consult a dictionary when we find some unfamiliar words, but we cannot do this when taking Format 1. When we apply for a job, we may be interviewed in English. What do you think about this?
13. Some people say that Exit Exam Format 2 is not appropriate because some students may not do it on their own. What do you think about this? Have you heard that some students asked others to help?
14. Do you think the way in which the exam results are reported is useful? (Giving only the pass/fail score) Do you have any suggestions on this?
15. Do you think it is fair that students from all faculties/fields of study are required to have a minimum score of 32 (out of 80)? Why?
16. Do you think it is possible that each faculty or field of study has its own English exit exam focusing on English used in its context?
17. What do you think the university or your faculty should do if some of your students fail the exit exam for many times? What options and kinds of help should be offered to them?
18. Did your faculty or department offer any particular support for your students to prepare them for the exit exam? How?
19. What kinds of suggestions would you give to the university with reference to the policy?

Appendix D

Students' Questionnaire (Thai Version)

การรับรู้ของนักศึกษาระดับปริญญาตรีและอาจารย์จากคณะเทคโนโลยีการเกษตร
ที่มีต่อการใช้เกณฑ์สมิทธิภาพทางภาษาอังกฤษสำหรับการจบการศึกษาของมหาวิทยาลัย

แบบสอบถามฉบับนี้ถูกสร้างขึ้นเพื่อศึกษาการรับรู้ของนักศึกษาระดับปริญญาตรีและอาจารย์จากคณะเทคโนโลยีการเกษตรที่มีต่อการใช้เกณฑ์สมิทธิภาพ (ความสามารถ) ทางภาษาอังกฤษสำหรับการจบการศึกษาของมหาวิทยาลัย ปัญหาที่นักศึกษาประสบจากการสอบวัดระดับความรู้ทางภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อสำเร็จการศึกษา (Exit Exam) และการช่วยเหลือและสนับสนุนที่นักศึกษาคาดหวังจากทางมหาวิทยาลัย ทั้งนี้ชื่อและรหัสประจำตัวนักศึกษาที่ตอบแบบสอบถามจะไม่ถูกเปิดเผย และคำตอบจากแบบสอบถามนี้ทั้งหมดจะถูกนำไปใช้เพื่อวัตถุประสงค์ในการวิจัยเท่านั้น

ณัฐริณันท์ ปั่นเฉย

นักศึกษาหลักสูตรศิลปศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต

สาขาวิชาภาษาศาสตร์ประยุกต์ – ภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อวัตถุประสงค์ทางวิชาชีพ

คณะศิลปศาสตร์ สถาบันเทคโนโลยีพระจอมเกล้าเจ้าคุณทหารลาดกระบัง

แบบสอบถามแบ่งออกเป็น 4 ตอนดังนี้

ตอนที่ 1: ข้อมูลพื้นฐานของนักศึกษา

ตอนที่ 2: การรับรู้ของนักศึกษาที่มีต่อนโยบายการใช้เกณฑ์สมิทธิภาพทางภาษาอังกฤษสำหรับการจบการศึกษา

ตอนที่ 3: ปัญหาที่นักศึกษาพบจากการสอบ Exit Exam ของสถาบัน ฯ

ตอนที่ 4: ข้อเสนอแนะของนักศึกษาเกี่ยวกับการช่วยเหลือและสนับสนุนที่คาดหวังจากสถาบัน ฯ และความคิดเห็นเพิ่มเติมเกี่ยวกับ นโยบายการใช้เกณฑ์ Exit Exam

ตอนที่ 1: ข้อมูลพื้นฐานของนักศึกษา

คำสั่ง: กรุณาให้ข้อมูลของท่านโดยใส่เครื่องหมายถูก (✓) ในช่องสี่เหลี่ยม (□) และกรอกข้อมูลในช่องว่างที่มีให้

1. เพศ

ชาย หญิง

2. อายุ _____ ปี

3. ประวัติการศึกษา

- ภาควิชาเทคโนโลยีการผลิตพืช
- ภาควิชาเทคโนโลยีการผลิตสัตว์และประมง
- ภาควิชานวัตกรรมการสื่อสารและพัฒนาการเกษตร (เทคนิคเกษตร)

4. มีประสบการณ์การสอบวัดระดับความรู้ทางภาษาอังกฤษดังต่อไปนี้
(โปรดระบุประเภทของการทดสอบ) ท่านสามารถเลือกได้มากกว่าหนึ่งรายการ

TOEIC

TOEFL

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- IELTS
- CU-TEP
- TU-GET
- ไม่มี/ไม่เคยสอบ
- อื่น ๆ (โปรดระบุ): _____

5. ท่านเคยเรียนหรือได้รับการฝึกอบรมในต่างประเทศหรือไม่?

- ไม่เคย
- เคย

5.1 ถ้าคำตอบในข้อ 5 คือ เคย โปรดระบุประเทศและปี พ.ศ. ที่ท่านเคยเรียนหรือได้รับการฝึกอบรมในต่างประเทศ

ประเทศ: _____ ปี พ.ศ.: _____

5.2 ถ้าคำตอบในข้อ 5 คือเคย โปรดระบุระยะเวลาการศึกษา/ฝึกอบรมของท่าน (เดือน)

ระยะเวลาการศึกษา/ฝึกอบรม: _____ (เดือน)

5.3 ถ้าคำตอบในข้อ 5 คือ เคย โปรดระบุประเภทหลักสูตรหรือโปรแกรมที่ท่านเคยเรียนหรือได้รับการฝึกอบรมในต่างประเทศ

ประเภทหลักสูตรหรือโปรแกรม: (เช่น การฝึกอบรมภาษาอังกฤษ โครงการแลกเปลี่ยนนักศึกษา การฝึกงาน)

6. โปรดประเมินตนเองในภาพรวมของระดับความรู้ทางภาษาอังกฤษของท่านในปัจจุบัน

ทักษะ	ดีมาก (5)	ดี (4)	ปานกลาง (3)	พอใช้ (2)	ควรปรับปรุง (1)
การฟัง					
การพูด					
การอ่าน					
การเขียน					

ตอนที่ 2: การรับรู้ของนักศึกษาที่มีต่อนโยบายการใช้เกณฑ์สมรรถภาพทางภาษาอังกฤษสำหรับการจบการศึกษา

คำสั่ง: โปรดใส่เครื่องหมายถูก (✓) ในช่องที่เหมาะสมเพื่อระบุระดับความคิดเห็นของท่านที่มีต่อนโยบายการใช้เกณฑ์สมรรถภาพทางภาษาอังกฤษ (เกณฑ์คะแนนจาก Exit Exam) สำหรับการจบการศึกษา

หมายเลขมีความหมายดังนี้	
5	หมายถึงเห็นด้วยอย่างยิ่ง
4	หมายถึงเห็นด้วย
3	หมายถึงเห็นด้วยปานกลาง
2	หมายถึงไม่เห็นด้วย
1	หมายถึงไม่เห็นด้วยอย่างยิ่ง

ผลกระทบต่อแรงจูงใจในการเรียนรู้	5	4	3	2	1
1. นโยบายนี้ทำให้ฉันกระตือรือร้นในการเรียนรู้และฝึกฝนภาษาอังกฤษมากขึ้น					
2. นโยบายนี้ทำให้ฉันทุ่มเทเวลาให้กับการเรียนภาษาอังกฤษและการเตรียมตัวสำหรับการสอบ Exit Exam มากขึ้น					
3. นโยบายนี้ส่งเสริมให้ฉันปรึกษาหารือกับเพื่อน ๆ ในการหาวิธีรับมือ (เตรียมตัวสอบ) กับการสอบ Exit Exam มากขึ้น					
4. นโยบายนี้ส่งเสริมให้ฉันหาโอกาสที่จะใช้ภาษาอังกฤษในชีวิตประจำวันมากขึ้น					
5. นโยบายนี้ส่งเสริมให้ฉันพัฒนาภาษาอังกฤษให้ดีขึ้นเพื่อเป็นการเตรียมตัวสำหรับการประกอบอาชีพในอนาคตและ / หรือเพื่อการศึกษาต่อ					
ความวิตกกังวลที่เกิดจากนโยบายการสอบ Exit Exam	5	4	3	2	1
6. นโยบายนี้ทำให้ฉันกังวลใจในเรื่องการบริหารเวลา เนื่องจากฉันต้องฝึกงานหรือทำโครงการวิจัยในปีสุดท้ายด้วย					

7. นโยบายนี้ทำให้ฉันกังวลใจเกี่ยวกับผลสอบที่อาจส่งผลกระทบต่อ การสำเร็จการศึกษาของฉัน					
8. นโยบายนี้ทำให้ครอบครัวของฉันกังวลใจเกี่ยวกับผลสอบที่อาจ ส่งผลกระทบต่อความสำเร็จการศึกษาของฉัน					
9. นโยบายนี้ทำให้ฉันกังวลใจเกี่ยวกับค่าใช้จ่ายเพิ่มเติมสำหรับการ เตรียมตัวสอบและค่าธรรมเนียมสำหรับการทดสอบหากสอบไม่ ผ่านหลายครั้ง					
ประโยชน์ ความยุติธรรมและการนำไปปฏิบัติได้จริง	5	4	3	2	1
10. คะแนนจากการสอบ Exit Exam สะท้อนถึงความรู้ ความสามารถทางภาษาอังกฤษของฉันอย่างแท้จริง					
11. เป็นเรื่องยุติธรรมแล้วที่นักศึกษาจากทุกคณะหรือทุกสาขาวิชา จะต้องได้คะแนนขั้นต่ำ 32 คะแนน (จาก 80 คะแนน) จึงจะผ่าน เกณฑ์ Exit Exam (ทุกคณะควรใช้คะแนนเกณฑ์ ผ่าน-ตก ที่ เท่ากัน)					
12. มีความสมเหตุสมผลที่จะใช้คะแนน Exit Exam เป็นเกณฑ์หนึ่ง ที่ตัดสินว่านักศึกษาสามารถสำเร็จการศึกษาจากหลักสูตรนั้น ๆ ได้ หรือไม่					
การจัดการสอบและดำเนินการ	5	4	3	2	1
13. สถาบัน ฯ ให้ข้อมูลที่เพียงพอกับนักศึกษาเกี่ยวกับนโยบายการ ใช้เกณฑ์ภาษาอังกฤษและการสอบ Exit Exam เพื่อสำเร็จ การศึกษา					
14. เป็นเรื่องสมเหตุสมผลที่สถาบัน ฯ จะจัดรอบการสอบ Exit Exam ให้นักศึกษาได้สอบเดือนละครั้ง					
15. เป็นเรื่องง่ายสำหรับฉันที่จะติดต่อขอข้อมูลเพิ่มเติมเกี่ยวกับการ สอบ Exit Exam จากหน่วยงานที่จัดสอบ (คณะศิลปศาสตร์) หากฉันมีข้อสงสัยหรือต้องการข้อมูลเพิ่มเติม					
16. กระบวนการสมัครสอบ Exit Exam มีประสิทธิภาพ (เช่น มี ขั้นตอนที่ชัดเจน ไม่ซับซ้อน สะดวก รวดเร็ว)					
17. ขั้นตอนการจัดสอบหรือการคุมสอบ Exit Exam มีประสิทธิภาพ (เช่น มีการคุมสอบอย่างเข้มงวด ยุติธรรม ตรงเวลา ผู้คุมสอบให้ คำแนะนำนักศึกษาหากมีข้อสงสัยในการทำข้อสอบ)					

18. มีการประกาศผลสอบ Exit Exam รวดเร็ว และผู้สอบสามารถ เข้าไปดูผลสอบได้ง่าย					
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ตอนที่ 3: ปัญหาที่นักศึกษาพบจากการสอบ Exit Exam ของสถาบัน ฯ

ก: ปัญหาที่นักศึกษาพบจากการสอบ Exit Exam

คำสั่ง: กรุณาตอบคำถามต่อไปนี้โดยทำเครื่องหมายถูกที่ช่องสี่เหลี่ยมหรือกรอกข้อมูลในช่องว่างที่ให้ไว้

1. ท่านได้สอบ Exit Exam มาแล้วกี่ครั้ง

1 2 3 มากกว่า 3 ครั้ง

คะแนนสูงสุดที่ได้รับ: _____

2. ท่านเคยสอบ Exit Exam รูปแบบที่ 1 (รูปแบบข้อเขียนปรนัย) หรือไม่

เคยสอบ ไม่เคยสอบ

2.1 คะแนน Exit Exam รูปแบบที่ 1 สูงสุดที่ได้รับ: _____

หากคำตอบของท่านคือ เคยสอบ โปรดระบุปัญหาที่พบในการทำ Exit Exam

หมายเลขมีความหมายดังนี้

- | | |
|---|---------------------------|
| 5 | หมายถึง พบปัญหามากที่สุด |
| 4 | หมายถึง พบปัญหามาก |
| 3 | หมายถึง พบปัญหาปานกลาง |
| 2 | หมายถึง พบปัญหาน้อย |
| 1 | หมายถึง พบปัญหาน้อยที่สุด |

ปัญหาที่พบในการสอบข้อเขียน	5	4	3	2	1
1. ท่านมีความรู้ด้านไวยากรณ์และโครงสร้างประโยคที่จำกัด					
2. ท่านมีความรู้ด้านคำศัพท์ที่จำกัด					
3. ท่านมีปัญหาในการทำความเข้าใจสำนวน (Idiom) และคำแสลง (Slang) ที่พบในข้อสอบ					
4. ท่านมีปัญหาในการหาใจความสำคัญ (main idea) ของบทความที่อ่านในข้อสอบ					
5. ท่านมีปัญหาในการหารายละเอียดสนับสนุน (Supporting details) ของบทความที่อ่านในข้อสอบ					
6. ท่านมีปัญหาในการทำความเข้าใจสำนวนและรูปแบบภาษา (Expression) ที่ใช้ในบทสนทนา (Conversation) ของข้อสอบ (เมื่อท่านทำข้อสอบที่ให้เลือกคำตอบที่ให้มา นำไปเติมบทสนทนาให้สมบูรณ์)					
7. ท่านขาดความรู้พื้นฐาน (ความรู้แบ็คกราวด์) เกี่ยวกับเรื่องที่อ่านหรือบทสนทนาบางเรื่องในข้อสอบ (เช่น ท่านพบว่ามันยากที่จะเข้าใจข้อสอบที่มีบทความเกี่ยวกับการเมือง เนื่องจากท่านไม่มีความรู้พื้นฐานเกี่ยวกับเรื่องนี้มากนัก)					
8. ท่านมีปัญหาในการจัดสรรเวลาในการทำข้อสอบ (ไม่สามารถทำข้อสอบให้เสร็จทันเวลา เนื่องจากข้อสอบมีจำนวนมาก)					

3. ท่านเคยสอบ Exit Exam รูปแบบที่ 2 (การสรุปข่าวและสัมภาษณ์ปากเปล่า) หรือไม่

เคยสอบ

ไม่เคยสอบ

3.1 คะแนนสูงสุด Exit Exam รูปแบบที่ 2 ที่ได้รับ: _____

หากคำตอบของท่านคือ **เคยสอบ** โปรดระบุปัญหาที่ท่านพบในการทำ Exit Exam

ตัวเลขมีความหมายดังนี้	
5	หมายถึง พบปัญหาในระดับมากที่สุด
4	หมายถึง พบปัญหาในระดับมาก
3	หมายถึง พบปัญหาในระดับปานกลาง
2	หมายถึง พบปัญหาในระดับน้อย
1	หมายถึง พบปัญหาในระดับน้อยที่สุด

การสรุปบทความข่าวและการเขียนย่อหน้า แสดงความคิดเห็นเกี่ยวกับข่าว	5	4	3	2	1
1. ฉันมีปัญหาในการหาข่าวที่มีความเหมาะสมกับระดับความรู้ ภาษาอังกฤษของฉัน					
2. ฉันมีปัญหาในการหาใจความสำคัญ (Main idea) ของข่าวที่ฉัน เลือกมา					
3. ฉันมีปัญหาในการหารายละเอียดสนับสนุน (Supporting details) ของข่าวที่ฉันเลือกมา					
4. ฉันมีความรู้คำศัพท์ที่จำกัด					
5. ฉันมีความรู้ในสำนวน (Idiom) และคำแสลง (Slang) ที่จำกัด					
6. ฉันมีความรู้ด้านไวยากรณ์และโครงสร้างประโยคที่จำกัด					
7. ฉันขาดความรู้พื้นฐาน (แบ็คกราวด์) เกี่ยวกับข่าวที่ฉันเลือกมา					
8. เมื่อฉันอ่านข้อความในข่าวและต้องการนำมาเขียนสรุปความ (Summary) ฉันจะมีปัญหาเกี่ยวกับการเขียนเรียบเรียงใหม่ (Paraphrasing) จากข้อความต้นฉบับ					
9. ฉันมีปัญหาเกี่ยวกับการเขียนเรียบเรียงเนื้อหาข่าวให้เป็นย่อ หน้าที่สามารถเข้าใจง่าย (Organization) เมื่อเขียนสรุปความข่าว (Summary)					
10. ฉันมีปัญหาเกี่ยวกับการเขียนแสดงความคิดเห็นที่มีต่อข่าวที่ เลือกมา (แสดงความรู้สึกส่วนตัวหรือมุมมองที่มีต่อข่าว)					

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การตอบคำถามผ่านการสัมภาษณ์ออนไลน์	5	4	3	2	1
11. ฉันไม่เข้าใจคำถามที่ผู้สัมภาษณ์ถาม					
12. ฉันมีปัญหาในการหาคำที่เหมาะสม (การเลือกใช้คำศัพท์เพื่ออธิบายสิ่งที่ต้องการพูด) เพื่อใช้ในการตอบคำถาม					
13. ฉันมีปัญหาในการใช้ไวยากรณ์และโครงสร้างประโยคที่เหมาะสมในการตอบคำถาม					
14. ฉันมีปัญหาในการออกเสียง (Pronunciation) และการใช้เสียงสูง-ต่ำ (Intonation) เมื่อพูดตอบคำถาม					
15. ฉันรู้สึกประหม่าในการสอบสัมภาษณ์แบบตัวต่อตัวผ่านทางออนไลน์					
16. ฉันพบปัญหาทางเทคนิค เช่น ได้ยินเสียงที่ไม่ชัดเจนจากอาจารย์ผู้สอบสัมภาษณ์ และสัญญาณการเชื่อมต่ออินเทอร์เน็ตไม่ดี					

ข: กลยุทธ์ในการรับมือกับการสอบ Exit Exam

คำสั่ง: จากประสบการณ์ของท่าน โปรดระบุกลยุทธ์ที่ท่านใช้ในการเตรียมตัวสำหรับการสอบ Exit Exam ของมหาวิทยาลัย โดยทำเครื่องหมายถูก (✓) หน้าวิธีการแก้ปัญหาที่ท่านเลือก ท่านสามารถเลือกได้มากกว่าหนึ่งรายการ

- ศึกษาจากเอกสารเตรียมสอบ/หนังสือเตรียมสอบภาษาอังกฤษ (ศึกษาด้วยตนเอง)
- ลงเรียนหรือฝึกอบรบการเตรียมตัวสอบ Exit Exam โดยเฉพาะ ที่จัดโดยสถาบัน ๓
- ลงเรียนหรือฝึกอบรบภาษาอังกฤษทั่วไป ที่จัดโดยสถาบัน ๓
- ลงเรียนเตรียมสอบ Exit Exam ในโรงเรียนกวดวิชา/สถาบันสอนภาษาเอกชน
- ลงเรียนภาษาอังกฤษทั่วไปในโรงเรียนกวดวิชา/สถาบันสอนภาษาเอกชน
- รวมกลุ่มติวหนังสือกับเพื่อน ๆ เพื่อเตรียมความพร้อมสำหรับการสอบ Exit Exam
- ขอให้เพื่อนที่มีความรู้ภาษาอังกฤษที่ดีกว่าช่วยเขียนสรุปและเขียนย่อหน้าแสดงความคิดเห็นให้ (เมื่อทำข้อสอบรูปแบบที่ 2: การเขียนสรุปข่าว)
- ใช้ Google Translate เป็นเครื่องมือช่วยในการเขียนสรุปและเขียนย่อหน้าแสดงความคิดเห็น (เมื่อทำข้อสอบรูปแบบที่ 2)
- อื่น ๆ (โปรดระบุ): _____

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ตอนที่ 4: ข้อเสนอแนะของนักศึกษาเกี่ยวกับการช่วยเหลือและสนับสนุนที่คาดหวังจากสถาบัน ฯ
และความคิดเห็นเพิ่มเติมเกี่ยวกับนโยบายการใช้เกณฑ์ Exit Exam

ก: ข้อเสนอแนะเกี่ยวกับการช่วยเหลือและสนับสนุนที่คาดหวังจากทางสถาบัน ฯ

คำชี้แจง: โปรดระบุประเภทของการช่วยเหลือและสนับสนุนที่ทางสถาบัน ฯ ควรจัดเตรียมให้แก่
นักศึกษา เพื่อเตรียมความพร้อมสำหรับการสอบ Exit Exam (สามารถเลือกได้มากกว่าหนึ่ง
รายการ)

- จัดการสอน/ฝึกอบรมเพื่อเตรียมสอบ Exit Exam (จัดในห้องเรียนปกติที่สถาบัน ฯ)
- จัดการสอน/ฝึกอบรมเพื่อเตรียมสอบ Exit Exam (จัดผ่านระบบออนไลน์)
- จัดหาเอกสารเตรียมตัวสอบ (เช่น หนังสือภาษาอังกฤษ คู่มือเตรียมสอบ) สำหรับให้
นักศึกษาได้เรียนด้วยตัวเองเมื่อสะดวก
- จัดการสอบ Exit Exam จำลอง เพื่อให้ให้นักศึกษาได้ลองสอบ และให้คำแนะนำในการ
เตรียมตัวเพิ่มเติมเป็นรายบุคคลโดยอิงจากผลสอบในสถานการณ์จำลองนั้น
- การจัดให้มีคำปรึกษาแบบตัวต่อตัวกับอาจารย์สอนภาษาอังกฤษในเรื่องการเตรียมสอบ
Exit Exam
- อื่น ๆ (โปรดระบุ) _____

ข. ความคิดเห็นเพิ่มเติมเกี่ยวกับนโยบายการใช้ผล Exit Exam สำหรับการจบการศึกษาของ
สถาบัน ฯ

คำชี้แจง: จากประสบการณ์ของท่าน โปรดเขียนแสดงความคิดเห็นเพิ่มเติมที่มีต่อนโยบายการใช้
เกณฑ์ผล Exit Exam และประเด็นต่าง ๆ เกี่ยวกับการจัดสอบ Exit Exam ของสถาบัน ฯ

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– ขอขอบคุณอย่างยิ่งที่สละเวลาตอบแบบสอบถาม –

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ข้อมูลเพิ่มเติม

ผู้วิจัยขอขอบคุณเป็นอย่างยิ่งหากสามารถสัมภาษณ์นักศึกษาบางท่านเพื่อเก็บข้อมูลเพิ่มเติมได้ หากท่านตกลงที่จะให้สัมภาษณ์ โปรดให้ข้อมูลติดต่อ ทั้งนี้ข้อมูลส่วนบุคคลของท่านจะถูกเก็บไว้เป็นความลับและจะใช้สำหรับการติดต่อกับท่านเท่านั้น

ไม่ยินดีที่จะให้สัมภาษณ์

ยินดีที่จะให้สัมภาษณ์

ชื่อ: _____ สาขาวิชา: _____ เบอร์โทรศัพท์: _____

อีเมล: _____ Line ID: _____



Appendix E

Semi-Structured Interview Questions for Students (Thai Version)

คำถามต่อไปนี้จะถูกใช้ในการสัมภาษณ์แบบกึ่งโครงสร้างกับนักศึกษาระดับปริญญาตรีชั้นปีที่ 4 จากคณะเทคโนโลยีการเกษตร ซึ่งเป็นผู้เข้าร่วมงานวิจัย

1. ท่านได้รับทราบข้อมูลที่เกี่ยวข้องกับนโยบายการใช้เกณฑ์ความสามารถภาษาอังกฤษสำหรับการจบการศึกษาก่อนทำการสอบวัดระดับความรู้ทางภาษาอังกฤษหรือข้อสอบ Exit Exam ของสถาบัน ๆ หรือไม่ รับทราบข้อมูลจากไหน
2. ท่านได้รับข้อมูลเกี่ยวกับการสอบวัดระดับความรู้ทางภาษาอังกฤษหรือข้อสอบ Exit Exam ก่อนสำเร็จการศึกษาในแง่ของรูปแบบการทดสอบ เนื้อหาที่ใช้สอบและทักษะที่ทดสอบ ก่อนที่จะสอบหรือไม่ ได้รับข้อมูลเหล่านี้จากไหน
3. ในความคิดเห็นของท่าน คิดว่าวัตถุประสงค์หลักของนโยบายนี้คืออะไร (หรือท่านคิดว่าทำไมสถาบัน ๆ ถึงมีนโยบายการใช้คะแนนภาษาอังกฤษนี้เป็นเกณฑ์หนึ่งในการจบการศึกษา)
4. นโยบายนี้ส่งผลต่อแรงจูงใจในการเรียนภาษาอังกฤษของท่านอย่างไร
5. นโยบายนี้สร้างความวิตกกังวลให้กับท่านอย่างไร
6. ท่านคิดอย่างไรเกี่ยวกับนโยบายนี้ (หรือการที่นักศึกษาต้องสอบ Exit Exam และได้คะแนนผ่านตามเกณฑ์ถึงจบการศึกษาได้) ในแง่ของความเป็นประโยชน์ ความยุติธรรมและการนำไปปฏิบัติได้จริงของนโยบายนี้
7. ท่านมีความคิดเห็นอย่างไรเกี่ยวกับการจัดการและดำเนินการสอบ Exit Exam
8. ท่านสอบ Exit Exam ทั้งรูปแบบที่ 1 (ข้อสอบช้อยส์) และรูปแบบที่ 2 (ข้อสอบสรุปข่าวและสอบสัมภาษณ์) ใช่หรือไม่ สอบกี่ครั้ง
9. ท่านพบปัญหาอะไรบ้างในการสอบ Exit Exam (รูปแบบที่ 1)
10. ท่านพบปัญหาอะไรบ้างในการสอบ Exit Exam (รูปแบบที่ 2)
11. โปรดบอกถึงวิธีการเตรียมตัวสำหรับการสอบ Exit Exam การเตรียมตัวทำให้การสอบเป็นที่น่าสนใจหรือไม่
12. ท่านมีความคิดเห็นอย่างไรเกี่ยวกับระดับความยาก-ง่ายในการทำข้อสอบรูปแบบที่ 1 และรูปแบบที่ 2
13. ท่านมีความคิดเห็นอย่างไรเกี่ยวกับการสอบสัมภาษณ์ปากเปล่า ซึ่งเป็นส่วนหนึ่งของรูปแบบที่ 2 (เช่น ยุติธรรมหรือไม่เมื่อมีผู้สอบสัมภาษณ์หลายท่าน มีประโยชน์จริงหรือไม่)

14. มีบางคนบอกว่า Exit Exam รูปแบบที่ 1 มีประโยชน์มากกว่าการสอบ Exit Exam รูปแบบที่ 2 เพราะเป็นการทดสอบภาษาที่นักศึกษาต้องทำด้วยตนเองในห้องสอบ จึงมีความยุติธรรมในการวัดความสามารถที่แท้จริง ท่านมีความคิดเห็นอย่างไรเกี่ยวกับเรื่องนี้
15. มีบางคนบอกว่า Exit Exam รูปแบบที่ 2 มีประโยชน์มากกว่าการสอบ Exit Exam รูปแบบที่ 1 เพราะเกี่ยวข้องกับการสื่อสารภาษาอังกฤษในชีวิตประจำวันและในสถานการณ์จริง ตัวอย่างเช่น ในชีวิตจริงของเรา เราสามารถค้นหาข้อมูลจากพจนานุกรมเมื่อพบกับคำศัพท์ที่ไม่คุ้นเคย แต่เราไม่สามารถทำได้เมื่อทำการสอบรูปแบบที่ 1 และเมื่อเราสมัครงาน เราอาจถูกสัมภาษณ์เป็นภาษาอังกฤษ ท่านมีความคิดเห็นอย่างไรเกี่ยวกับเรื่องนี้
16. มีบางคนบอกว่า การสอบ Exit Exam รูปแบบที่ 2 ไม่เหมาะสมเพราะนักศึกษาบางท่านอาจไม่ได้ทำข้อสอบด้วยตนเอง ท่านคิดอย่างไรเกี่ยวกับเรื่องนี้ ท่านเคยได้ยินว่านักศึกษาบางท่านขอให้ผู้อื่นช่วยบ้างหรือไม่
17. ท่านคิดว่าวิธีการรายงานผลการสอบมีประโยชน์หรือไม่ (บอกเพียงเฉพาะคะแนนผ่านหรือไม่ผ่าน) ท่านมีข้อเสนอแนะเกี่ยวกับเรื่องนี้ไหม
18. ท่านคิดว่ามันยุติธรรมหรือไม่ที่ท่านจะต้องมีคะแนนขั้นต่ำ 32 คะแนน (จาก 80 คะแนน) เหมือนกับนักศึกษาจากคณะอื่น ๆ เช่น คณะศิลปศาสตร์และคณะวิศวกรรมศาสตร์ ทำไมถึงคิดเช่นนี้
19. ท่านคิดว่าสถาบัน ฯ หรืออาจารย์ของท่านควรจัดการอย่างไร หากเพื่อนบางคนของท่านสอบ Exit Exam ไม่ผ่านหลายครั้ง และท่านคิดว่าควรเสนอทางเลือกและความช่วยเหลืออะไรให้กับพวกเขาเหล่านั้นบ้าง
20. ท่านได้รับความช่วยเหลือและการสนับสนุนในการสอบ Exit Exam จากทางคณาจารย์ คณะ และสถาบัน ฯ ของท่านหรือไม่ อย่างไร
21. ท่านมีข้อเสนอแนะอะไรเกี่ยวกับนโยบายนี้ ที่ท่านอยากจะเสนอให้กับทางสถาบัน ฯ

Appendix F

Semi-Structured Interview Questions for Faculty Members (English Version)

คำถามต่อไปนี้จะถูกใช้ในการสัมภาษณ์แบบกึ่งโครงสร้างกับคณาจารย์จากคณะเทคโนโลยีการเกษตร ซึ่งทำหน้าที่เป็นผู้เข้าร่วมงานวิจัย

1. ท่านได้รับทราบข้อมูลที่เพียงพอเกี่ยวกับนโยบายการใช้เกณฑ์ความสามารถภาษาอังกฤษสำหรับการจบการศึกษาหรือไม่ รับทราบข้อมูลจากไหน
2. ท่านได้รับข้อมูลเกี่ยวกับการสอบวัดระดับความรู้ทางภาษาอังกฤษหรือข้อสอบ Exit Exam ก่อนสำเร็จการศึกษาในแง่ของรูปแบบการทดสอบ เนื้อหาที่ใช้สอบและทักษะที่ทดสอบหรือไม่ ได้รับข้อมูลเหล่านี้จากไหน
3. ในความคิดเห็นของท่าน คิดว่าวัตถุประสงค์หลักของนโยบายนี้คืออะไร (หรือท่านคิดว่าทำไมสถาบัน ฯ ถึงมีนโยบายการใช้คะแนนภาษาอังกฤษนี้เป็นเกณฑ์หนึ่งในการจบการศึกษา) ท่านเห็นด้วยกับนโยบายนี้หรือไม่ อย่างไร
4. ในความคิดเห็นของท่าน นโยบายนี้ส่งผลต่อแรงจูงใจในการเรียนภาษาอังกฤษของนักศึกษาของท่านอย่างไร (หรือท่านคิดว่านโยบายนี้ทำให้นักศึกษาของท่านให้ความสนใจกับการเรียนภาษาอังกฤษมากขึ้นหรือไม่)
5. นโยบายนี้สร้างความวิตกกังวลให้กับท่านหรือหลักสูตรอย่างไร (เช่น ความวิตกกังวลของนักศึกษาและการประกันคุณภาพหลักสูตร)
6. ท่านคิดอย่างไรเกี่ยวกับนโยบายนี้ (หรือการที่นักศึกษาต้องสอบ Exit Exam และได้คะแนนผ่านตามเกณฑ์ถึงจบการศึกษาได้) ในแง่ของความเป็นประโยชน์ ความยุติธรรมและการนำไปปฏิบัติได้จริงของนโยบายนี้
7. ท่านมีความคิดเห็นอย่างไรเกี่ยวกับการจัดการและดำเนินการสอบ Exit Exam
8. ในความคิดเห็นของท่าน คิดว่านักศึกษาของท่านพบปัญหาอะไรบ้างในการสอบ Exit Exam (รูปแบบที่ 1)
9. ท่านคิดว่านักศึกษาของท่านพบปัญหาอะไรบ้างในการสอบ Exit Exam (รูปแบบที่ 2)
10. ท่านมีความคิดเห็นอย่างไรเกี่ยวกับการสอบสัมภาษณ์ปากเปล่า ซึ่งเป็นส่วนหนึ่งของรูปแบบที่ 2 (เช่น ยุติธรรมหรือไม่เมื่อมีผู้สอบสัมภาษณ์หลายท่าน มีประโยชน์จริงหรือไม่)
11. มีบางคนบอกว่า Exit Exam รูปแบบที่ 1 มีประโยชน์มากกว่าการสอบ Exit Exam รูปแบบที่ 2 เพราะเป็นการทดสอบภาษาที่นักศึกษาต้องทำด้วยตนเองในห้องสอบ จึงมีความยุติธรรมในการวัดความสามารถที่แท้จริง ท่านมีความคิดเห็นอย่างไรเกี่ยวกับเรื่องนี้

12. มีบางคนบอกว่า Exit Exam รูปแบบที่ 2 มีประโยชน์มากกว่าการสอบ Exit Exam รูปแบบที่ 1 เพราะเกี่ยวข้องกับการสื่อสารภาษาอังกฤษในชีวิตประจำวันและในสถานการณ์จริง ตัวอย่างเช่น ในชีวิตจริงของเรา เราสามารถค้นหาข้อมูลจากพจนานุกรมเมื่อพบกับคำศัพท์ที่ไม่คุ้นเคย แต่เราไม่สามารถทำได้เมื่อทำการสอบรูปแบบที่ 1 และเมื่อเราสมัครงาน เราอาจถูกสัมภาษณ์เป็นภาษาอังกฤษ ท่านมีความคิดเห็นอย่างไรเกี่ยวกับเรื่องนี้
13. มีบางคนบอกว่าการสอบ Exit Exam รูปแบบที่ 2 ไม่เหมาะสมเพราะนักศึกษาบางท่านอาจไม่ได้ทำข้อสอบด้วยตนเอง ท่านคิดอย่างไรเกี่ยวกับเรื่องนี้ ท่านเคยได้ยินว่านักศึกษาบางท่านขอให้ผู้อื่นช่วยบ้างหรือไม่
14. ท่านคิดว่าวิธีการรายงานผลการสอบมีประโยชน์หรือไม่ (บอกเพียงเฉพาะคะแนนผ่านหรือไม่ผ่าน) ท่านมีข้อเสนอแนะเกี่ยวกับเรื่องนี้ไหม
15. ท่านคิดว่ามันยุติธรรมหรือไม่ที่นักศึกษาจากทุกคณะหรือทุกภาควิชาจะต้องมีคะแนนขั้นต่ำ 32 คะแนน (จาก 80 คะแนน) ทำไมถึงคิดเช่นนั้น
16. ท่านคิดว่าเป็นไปได้หรือไม่ที่แต่ละคณะหรือแต่ละภาควิชาจะมีการสอบ Exit Exam เป็นของตนเอง โดยมุ่งเน้นที่ใช้ภาษาอังกฤษตามแต่ละบริษัท
17. ท่านคิดว่าสถาบัน ฯ หรือคณะของท่านควรจัดการอย่างไร หากนักศึกษาของท่านบางท่านสอบ Exit Exam ไม่ผ่านหลายครั้ง และท่านคิดว่าควรเสนอทางเลือกและความช่วยเหลืออะไรให้กับพวกเขาเหล่านั้นบ้าง
18. ทางคณะหรือทางภาควิชาของท่านได้ให้การสนับสนุนแก่นักศึกษาของท่านสำหรับการเตรียมตัวสอบ Exit Exam หรือไม่ อย่างไร
19. ท่านมีข้อเสนอแนะอะไรเกี่ยวกับนโยบายนี้ ที่ท่านอยากจะเสนอให้กับทางสถาบัน ฯ

Appendix G

Item Objective Congruence Form (IOC Form) for a Survey Questionnaire (Undergraduate Students from the Faculty of Agricultural Technology)

Description: This form is used for validating questionnaire items. Please indicate your agreement according to the following scales by placing a tick (✓) in the appropriate box. Please also give additional suggestions or comments on the items in the space provided.

Scoring +1 = The expert agrees that the question/statement is appropriate.

Scoring 0 = The expert neither agrees nor disagrees that the question/statement is appropriate.

Scoring -1 = The expert agrees that the question/statement is not appropriate and requires revision.

Questionnaire for Fourth-Year Undergraduate Students

Research Topic: Perceptions of Undergraduate Students and Faculty Members from the Faculty of Agricultural Technology towards the University's English Proficiency Graduation Requirements

This questionnaire consists of four parts as follows:

Part 1: Student's Background Information

Part 2: Students' Perceptions towards the Policy on the English Language Proficiency as Part of Graduation Requirements

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Part 3: Challenges Encountered by Students in Taking the University's English Exit Examination

Part 4: Students' Suggestions on Support Expected from the University and Additional Comments on the policy

Part 1: Student's Background Information

Directions: Please provide your information by placing a tick (✓) in the box (☐) and filling in the blank provided.

Student's Background Information	Expert's opinion			Comments/ Suggestions
	+1	0	-1	
1. Gender <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Male				
2. Age _____ years				
3. Educational background Major: _____				
4. Experience in taking the following English language proficiency tests (Please identify the types of test taken.) You can choose more than one item. <input type="checkbox"/> TOEIC (Highest score received: _____) <input type="checkbox"/> TOEFL (Highest score received: _____) <input type="checkbox"/> IELTS (Highest score received: _____) <input type="checkbox"/> CU-TEP (Highest score received: _____) <input type="checkbox"/> TU-GET (Highest score received: _____)				

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Student's Background Information	Expert's opinion			Comments/ Suggestions																														
	+1	0	-1																															
<input type="checkbox"/> Others (please specify): _____ <input type="checkbox"/> None																																		
5. Have you ever studied or been trained abroad? <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES Country: _____ Year: _____ Length of study: _____ (months) Type of course or program: (e.g. English language training, student exchange program, internship) _____																																		
6. Please self-assess overall levels of your current English language proficiency <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center;"> <thead> <tr> <th>Skills</th> <th>Excellent (5)</th> <th>Very Good (4)</th> <th>Good (3)</th> <th>Fair (2)</th> <th>Poor (1)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Listening</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Speaking</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Reading</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Writing</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Skills	Excellent (5)	Very Good (4)	Good (3)	Fair (2)	Poor (1)	Listening						Speaking						Reading						Writing									
Skills	Excellent (5)	Very Good (4)	Good (3)	Fair (2)	Poor (1)																													
Listening																																		
Speaking																																		
Reading																																		
Writing																																		

The expert's additional comments

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Part 2: Students' Perceptions towards the Policy on the English Language Proficiency as Part of Graduation Requirements

Directions: Please place a tick (✓) in the appropriate column to identify your level of agreement towards the policy on the English language proficiency as part of graduation requirements.

The criteria are as follows:

- 5 = strongly agree
- 4 = agree
- 3 = neutral
- 2 = disagree
- 1 = strongly disagree

1. Impacts on learning motivation

Impacts on learning motivation	Expert's opinion			Comments / Suggestions
	+1	0	-1	
1. The policy makes me become more active in learning and practicing English.				
2. The policy makes me devote more time to studying and preparing for the English exit				

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Impacts on learning motivation	Expert's opinion			Comments / Suggestions
	+1	0	-1	
exam.				
3. The policy encourages me to discuss with friends how to deal with the English exit exam.				
4. The policy encourages me to find more opportunities to use English in daily life.				
5. The policy encourages me to improve English as preparation for my future career and/or further education.				

The expert's additional comments

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2. Anxiety posed by the policy

Anxiety posed by the policy	Expert's opinion			Comments / Suggestions
	-1	0	1	
1. The policy makes me worried about my time management due to my engagement in a final year internship/project.				
2. The policy makes me worried about its effect on my graduation.				
3. The policy makes my family worried about its effect on my graduation.				
4. The policy makes me worried about extra expenses for test preparation and test fees if I fail the exam for several times.				

The expert's additional comments

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3. Usefulness, fairness, and practicality

Usefulness, fairness, and practicality	Expert's opinion			Comments / Suggestions
	+1	0	-1	
1. The English exit exam score accurately reflects my English proficiency.				
2. It is fair that students from all faculties/fields of study are required to obtain a minimum score of 32 (out of 80) to pass the exit exam.				
3. It is reasonable to use the English exit exam score to judge if students can graduate from the program.				

The expert's additional comments

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4. Exam administration

Exam administration	Expert's opinion			Comments / Suggestions
	+1	0	-1	
1. The university provided me with adequate information about the policy and the exit exam.				
2. It is reasonable that the university administered the exit exam once a month.				
3. It is easy for me to ask for more information about the exit exam from the test administration unit.				
4. The application process for the exit exam is efficient.				
5. The exam administration procedure/proctoring is efficient.				
6. The exam administration procedure/proctoring is efficient.				

The expert's additional comments

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Part 3: Challenges Encountered by Students in Taking the University's English Exit Examination

A: Students' challenges in taking the exit exam

Directions: Please answer the following questions by placing a tick in front of the appropriate box or filling in information in the space provided.

Questions	Expert's opinion			Comments / Suggestions
	+1	0	-1	
<p>1. How many times did you take the exit exam?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> more than 3 times</p> <p>The highest score received: _____</p>				
<p>2. Did you take the Exit Exam: Format 1 (multiple-choice format)?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes (Highest score received: _____)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>If your answer is YES, please identify the challenges you encountered in taking the test.</p>				

The criteria are as follows:

5 = Highest

4 = High

3 = Moderate

2 = Low

1 = Lowest

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Challenges encountered in taking the written exam	Expert's opinion			Comments / Suggestions
	+1	0	-1	
1. Having a limited knowledge of grammar and sentence structure to do the exam				
2. Having a limited knowledge of vocabulary in doing the exam				
3. Having problems in understanding idioms and slangs found in the exam				
4. Finding main ideas of the reading passages				
5. Finding supporting details of the reading passages				
6. Having problems in understanding expressions used in conversations (when doing a conversation completion section)				
7. Lacking background knowledge of some reading texts or conversations in the exam (e.g. You find it difficult to understand a text about politics because you do not have much background knowledge about it.)				
8. Having problems with time allocation (unable to finish the exam in time due to the length of the exam)				

Questions	Expert's opinion			Comments / Suggestions
	+1	0	-1	
<p>1. Did you take the Exit Exam: Format 2 (news summary and oral interview)?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes (Highest score received: _____) <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>If your answer is YES, please identify the levels of challenges you encountered in taking the test.</p>				

The criteria are as follows:

5 = Highest

4 = High

3 = Moderate

2 = Low

1 = Lowest

Summarizing the news article and writing an opinion paragraph about it	Expert's opinion			Comments / Suggestions
	+1	0	-1	
1. Finding a news article suitable for my English proficiency				
2. Finding main ideas of the selected news				
3. Finding supporting details of the selected news				

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Summarizing the news article and writing an opinion paragraph about it	Expert's opinion			Comments / Suggestions
	+1	0	-1	
4. Having a limited knowledge of vocabulary				
5. Having a limited knowledge of idioms and slangs				
6. Having a limited knowledge of grammar and sentence structure				
7. Lacking background knowledge of the selected news				
8. Having problems about paraphrasing source texts				
9. Having problems about writing a well-organized summary				
10. Having problems about expressing opinions on the news (showing my personal feelings or viewpoints about the news)				

Responding to questions via an online interview	Expert's opinion			Comments / Suggestions
	+1	0	-1	
1. Not understanding the questions asked by the interviewer				
2. Finding suitable words to use in answering the question				

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Responding to questions via an online interview	Expert's opinion			Comments / Suggestions
	+1	0	-1	
3. Using appropriate grammar and sentence structure in answering the question				
4. Having problems with pronunciation and intonation when answering the question				
5. Feeling nervous in a face-to-face interview via an online mode				
6. Having technical problems such as unclear voices and Internet connection				

The expert's additional comments

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B: Strategies in handling the exit exam

Directions: Based on your experience, please identify the strategies you use in preparing yourself for the university's English exit examination. Place a tick (✓) in front of the selected solutions. You can choose more than one item.

Strategies in handling the exit exam	Expert's opinion			Comments / Suggestions
	+1	0	-1	
<input type="checkbox"/> Studying test-preparation materials (self-study)				
<input type="checkbox"/> Taking a test-preparation class/training organized by the university				
<input type="checkbox"/> Taking a test-preparation class in a private tutorial school				
<input type="checkbox"/> Taking a general English class in a private tutorial school				
<input type="checkbox"/> Forming a study group with friends to prepare for the exit exam				
<input type="checkbox"/> Asking a friend with a high English language proficiency to help write a summary and an opinion paragraph (when doing Exam Format 2)				
<input type="checkbox"/> Using Google Translate when writing a summary and an opinion paragraph (when doing Exam Format 2)				
<input type="checkbox"/> Others (please specify): _____				

The expert's additional comments

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Part 4: Students' Suggestions on Support Expected from the University and their Additional Comments on the Policy

A: Suggestions on Support Expected from the University

Directions: Please specify the types of support that the university should provide for the students in preparation for the exit exam. (You can choose more than one item).

Suggestions on Support Expected from the University	Expert's opinion			Comments / Suggestions
	+1	0	-1	
<input type="checkbox"/> Exam preparation training (onsite training)				
<input type="checkbox"/> Exam preparation training (online training)				
<input type="checkbox"/> Exam preparation materials for self-study				
<input type="checkbox"/> A practice exam/mock exam with further recommendations based on each students' exam result				
<input type="checkbox"/> A one-on-one consultation session on exam preparation with a teacher of English				
Other recommendations (Please specify): _____				

B. Additional Comments on the Policy

Directions: Based on your experience, please write your additional comments the policy on the English language proficiency as part of graduation requirements and the university's English exit examination in the provided space.

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The expert's additional comments

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The expert's opinion about the English-Thai translation

Quality of Translation	Expert's opinion			Comments / Suggestions
	+1	0	-1	
1. The questionnaire questions/items are correctly and appropriately translated from English into Thai.				

Thank you for your cooperation.

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Additional information

I'd appreciate it if I could interview some students to obtain more information. If you agree to be interviewed, please provide me with your contact information. Please note that your personal information will be kept confidential, and it will be used for contacting you only.

I do not agree to be interviewed.

I agree to be interviewed.

Name: _____ Major: _____ Tel no. _____

Email: _____ Line ID: _____



Appendix H

Item Objective Congruence Form (IOC Form) for a Semi-Structured Interview

(Students and Faculty Members)

Description: This form is used for validating semi-structured interview questions. Please indicate your agreement according to the following scales by placing a tick (✓) in the appropriate box. Please also give additional suggestions or comments on the question in the space provided.

- Scoring +1 = The expert agrees that the question is appropriate.
- Scoring 0 = The expert neither agrees nor disagrees that the question is appropriate.
- Scoring -1 = The expert agrees that the question is not appropriate and requires revision.

Semi-Structured Interview Questions

The following questions will be used for a semi-structured interview with fourth-year undergraduate students from the Faculty of Agricultural Technology who serve as research participants.

I. I Content of the interview

Semi-Structured Interview Questions	Expert's opinion			Comments / Suggestions
	+1	0	-1	
1. Did you receive adequate information about the policy on English language proficiency				

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Semi-Structured Interview Questions	Expert's opinion			Comments / Suggestions
	+1	0	-1	
graduation requirements before taking the university's English exit examination? Where did you get it from?				
2. Did you receive information about the exit exam in terms of test formats, test contents, and skills tested before taking it? Where did you get the information from?				
3. In your opinion, what is the main purpose of this policy? (In other words, why does the university have this policy?)				
4. How did the policy affect your motivation in learning English?				
5. How did the policy pose any anxiety on you?				
6. What do you think about the policy in terms of its usefulness, fairness, and practicality?				
7. What are your opinions about the exam administration?				
8. Did you take both Format 1 and Format 2? How many times?				
9. What challenges did you encounter in taking the exit exam (Format 1)?				
10. What challenges did you encounter in taking the exit exam (Format 2)?				
11. Please tell me how you prepared for the exam. Was it satisfactory?				

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Semi-Structured Interview Questions	Expert's opinion			Comments / Suggestions
	+1	0	-1	
12. What do you think about the levels of difficulty in taking the exam for Format 1 and Format 2?				
13. What do you think about the oral interview? (Is it fair when there are many interviewers? Is it useful?)				
14. Some people say Exit Exam Format 1 is more useful than Exit Exam Format 2 because it requires all students to do the exam by themselves in the exam room. As a result, this kind of test is fair because it is used to assess the students' actual ability. What do you think about this?				
15. Some people say Exit Exam Format 2 is more useful than Exit Exam Format 1 because it deals with everyday English communication in a real life situation. For example, in our real life we can consult a dictionary when we find some unfamiliar words, but we cannot do this when taking Format 1. When we apply for a job, we may be interviewed in English. What do you think about this?				
16. Some people say that Exit Exam Format 2 is not appropriate because some students may not do it on their own. What do you think about this? Have you heard that some students asked others to help?				

Semi-Structured Interview Questions	Expert's opinion			Comments / Suggestions
	+1	0	-1	
17. Do you think the way in which the exam results are reported is useful? (Giving only the pass/fail score) Do you have any suggestions on this?				
18. Do you think it is fair that you are required to have a minimum score of 32 (out of 80) like students from other faculties, such as those from Liberal Arts and Engineering? Why?				
19. What do you think the university or your teacher should do if some of your friends fail the exit exam for many times? What options and kinds of help should be offered to them?				
20. Did you receive any kinds of help and support regarding taking the university's English exit examination from your teachers, faculty and university? How?				
21. What kinds of suggestions would you give to the university with reference to the policy?				

The following questions will be used for a semi-structured interview with teachers from the Faculty of Agricultural Technology who serve as research participants.

I. II Content of the interview

Semi-Structured Interview Questions	Expert's opinion			Comments / Suggestions
	+1	0	-1	
1. Did you receive adequate information about the policy on English language proficiency graduation requirements? Where did you get it from?				
2. Did you receive information about the exit exam in terms of test formats, test contents, and skills tested? Where did you get the information from?				
3. In your opinion, what is the main purpose of this policy? (In other words, why does the university have this policy?) Do you agree with this policy? Why?				
4. In your opinion, how did the policy affect your students' motivation in learning English? (In other words, did the policy make your students want to pay more attention to learning English?)				
5. How did the policy pose any concern on you or the program (such as students' anxiety and the program's quality assurance)?				
6. What do you think about the policy in terms of its usefulness, fairness, and				

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Semi-Structured Interview Questions	Expert's opinion			Comments / Suggestions
	+1	0	-1	
practicality?				
7. What are your opinions about the exam administration?				
8. In your opinion, what challenges did your students encounter in taking the exit exam (Format 1)?				
9. What challenges did your students encounter in taking the exit exam (Format 2)?				
10. What do you think about the oral interview? (Is it fair when there are many interviewers? Is it useful?)				
11. Some people say Exit Exam Format 1 is more useful than Exit Exam Format 2 because it requires all students to do the exam by themselves in the exam room. As a result, this kind of test is fair because it is used to assess the students' actual ability. What do you think about this?				
12. Some people say Exit Exam Format 2 is more useful than Exit Exam Format 1 because it deals with everyday English communication in a real life situation. For example, in our real life we can consult a dictionary when we find some unfamiliar words, but we cannot do this when taking Format 1. When we apply for a job, we				

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Semi-Structured Interview Questions	Expert's opinion			Comments / Suggestions
	+1	0	-1	
may be interviewed in English. What do you think about this?				
13. Some people say that Exit Exam Format 2 is not appropriate because some students may not do it on their own. What do you think about this? Have you heard that some students asked others to help?				
14. Do you think the way in which the exam results are reported is useful? (Giving only the pass/fail score) Do you have any suggestions on this?				
15. Do you think it is fair that students from all faculties/fields of study are required to have a minimum score of 32 (out of 80)? Why?				
16. Do you think it is possible that each faculty or field of study has its own English exit exam focusing on English used in its context?				
17. What do you think the university or your faculty should do if some of your students fail the exit exam for many times? What options and kinds of help should be offered to them?				
18. Did your faculty or department offer any particular support for your students to prepare them for the exit exam? How?				

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Semi-Structured Interview Questions	Expert's opinion			Comments / Suggestions
	+1	0	-1	
19. What kinds of suggestions would you give to the university with reference to the policy?				

II. English-Thai translation

Quality of Translation	Expert's opinion			Comments / Suggestions
	+1	0	-1	
1. The interview questions are correctly and appropriately translated from English into Thai.				

III. The expert's additional comments

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Name: _____

Signature: _____

Affiliation: _____

Date: _____

Appendix I

List of Experts Validating Instruments

1. Assistant Professor Dr. Paweena Chatsungnoen
(Ph.D. in Language Education, Massey University, New Zealand)
Faculty of Liberal Arts, Maejo University, Thailand

2. Dr. Juthamas Thongsongsee
(Ed.D. in TESOL, Bristol University, United Kingdom)
Chulalongkorn University Language Institute, Chulalongkorn University,
Thailand

3. Dr. Usa Intharaksa
(Ed.D. in Applied Educational Studies, Oklahoma State University, U.S.A)
Faculty of Liberal Arts, Prince of Songkla University, Thailand

AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Name : Miss Nuttarinan Panchoei

Date of Birth : November 19, 1995

Place of Birth : Bangkok

Address : 1/80 Chao Phraya
Suvarnabhumi Village,
Khumklao Rd., Lampatiew
Sub-District, Ladkrabang
District, Bangkok 10520

Educational Background :

2013 Mathayom 6 from Marialai School, Bangkok

2017 Bachelor of Arts (English) (2nd class-honors), King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang, Bangkok

Work Experience :

2018 to present Freelance English tutor