

## English Receptive Skills of Undergraduate Students in Thai Higher Education Institutions

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### Abstract

This study aimed to determine the proficiency of English receptive skills of the undergraduate students studying in Thai higher education institutions, and investigate the factors affecting the English receptive skills proficiency. The participants in this study were 320 undergraduates randomly sampled from different eight autonomous universities in four regions of Thailand, namely North, Northeast, Southern, and Central. The 40 students selected from each university both males and females studying in different majors were asked to take the actual English standardized test, TOEIC, and the data were, then, analyzed, and shown in Standard Deviation (S.D.), Mean, Min, and Max scores. To confirm if there are some significant differences between and within variables, the Dunnett T3 Paired Samples t-Test has been applied. The findings revealed that all variables in this study (universities, genders, years of study, and majors of study) compared both between groups and within groups of the English receptive skills, listening, reading, and both skills have significant difference. The students' TOEIC listening mean scores were 204.41, while the reading mean scores were 138.14. Interestingly, the TOEIC total mean score was only 342.55 out of 990. Considering other variables of the students' ethnography, the female students have achieved higher mean scores than that of male students, and the social science students have performed higher scores than that of the students from science majors while the years of study had no significant difference. To summarize, the proficiency of English receptive skills of Thai undergraduate students studying in

Thai higher education institutions can be considered as the “Basic User” level following The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR).

**Keywords:** English receptive skills; Thai higher education institutions; Undergraduates

## Introduction

One of the most important 21st century skills needed for nowadays students or graduates is the skill of communication, which can be coined as the receptive skills, especially English receptive skills (Binkley *et al.*, 2010) as the skills have been mentioned from time to time by the company as a fundamental essence of being working officers or workers employed in almost every organization. However, they have been considered at the lower satisfaction level of the skills by their employers or managers since they cannot perform well in listening for comprehension leading to misunderstanding in the important messages. Not only listening, but the managers also mentioned that the workers cannot understand well the written messages in the e-mail generating frequent mistakes (Weligamage & Siengthai, 2003). Considering, the overall English receptive skills of Thai undergraduates who are working in the company reflected by the TOEIC and IELTS scores taken before applying for a job, the Thai test takers' score have been considered significantly low compared to other test takers from the neighbor countries in South-East Asia (Khamkhien, 2010). The “Basic User” or the level A1 following The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) can be explained about the Thai undergraduates' proficiency of English receptive skills. The A1 language commanders are referred to the ones who can use and understand only familiar everyday expressions, and any basic phrases purposively aimed at the level of satisfaction of needs (Prapphal, 2003).

This phenomenon can be centralized to the problem of the language teaching and learning curriculum which the more focused consideration is needed. Though there were some studies conducted previously concerning the Thai English proficiency in general, the recent efficient data of the Thai higher education institution undergraduates' English proficiency, especially the receptive skills were still limited, and were not up to date. This study, therefore, aimed to investigate the recently up to date data and other factors affecting the Thai undergraduate students' proficiency of English receptive skills for assisting the English educators who can later apply the results from this study in developing new teaching methodology for mastering the Thai higher education institution

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undergraduate students' English receptive skills preparing them for the 21<sup>st</sup> century professional workers.

## Research Objectives

1. To determine the proficiency of English receptive skills of undergraduate students studying in Thai higher education institutions.
2. To investigate the factors affecting the proficiency of English receptive skills of undergraduate students studying in Thai higher education institutions.

## Scope of Research

The population in this study were the undergraduates studying English as a required General Education subject in autonomous Thai higher education institutions. The required English subject is for those whose English proficiency do not meet the university English standard requirement. The students who have passed or met the university standard requirement by having one of standardized tests such as TOEIC, IELTS, or TOEFL can waive the course and they are excluded from this study.

## Literature Review

'Receptive skills' are referred to the 'Passive Skills' which can be more easily explained as the listening and reading skills. The skills are also contrasted to the productive skills which are referred to the speaking and writing skills. All the skills mentioned have complex relationship as they are related to each other in developing the language learner's improvement. To illustrate, when the language learners are mastering their listening skills, the speaking skills are also developed while the reading skills can support the learners' writing capability improved. However, the learners' receptive skills are considered more challenging as they are the means for communication between the native speakers and the non-native speakers as the language learners might not recognize the patterns of any connected speech or even the idioms applied naturally by the native speakers. So that communicating can be unsuccessful as speaking and listening while communicating is such a real-time processing of commanding language which the non-native speakers have less support from the contents or the grammatical knowledge, they have learnt than the opposite skill like writing.

They cannot get back to re-consider the contents again after they listen while communication which is totally different from the reading one (Ferris & Tagg, 1996).

Research or study into productive skills, writing and speaking are much more popular among the linguistics researchers compared to the receptive skills as comprehensive skills like listening and reading though asking or rating concerning the importance of them among four skills have been ranked the reading and the listening highest among the faculty ( Powers, 1986) . This phenomenon happened not only in English learning as a foreign language study, but the Korean language as a foreign language study has also been neglected. Most studies have focused more on comprehensive skills like writing and speaking compared to the receptive skills of listening and reading. To be more specific, both reading and listening skills are related to their subskills which the listening is more integrated and holistic understanding of the messages compared to the reading skills ( Reves & Levine, 1988) . That is to say, the language learners can understand the messages while communicating by ignoring the unfamiliar vocabulary through listening, but the learners can understand the message while reading from other contexts such as grammatical patterns or the linkers appeared ( Buck, 1992) . This phenomenon is also indicated that there was an evidence mentioning that the listening comprehension is once separated the trait from the reading comprehension (Buck, 1991). Intensive studies concerning these two separated skills are, therefore, needed for the curriculum development in teaching language learning and mastering the students' all four skills more successfully (Richards, 1983).

Though English educators have been struggling to apply any proper pedagogy for mastering Thai students' English proficiency, the level of English proficiency of Thai students are considered extremely low compared to other neighbor countries as some Thais are proud of their mother tongue which has never been colonized by other European countries ( Wiriyachitra, 2002) . Though there was a government consideration of changing the curriculum concerning English learning for Thai students in each level in 1960 (Khamkhien, 2010) by pushing any policy to schools for applying the new teaching methodology ( Khamkhien, 2006) , the level of English of Thai students has been ranked incredibly low mentioned in many studies by Bolton ( 2008) and Wiriyachitra ( 2001) . To illustrate, the overall TOEIC and IELTS scores taken by the Thai test takers have been considered significantly low, and this phenomenon can be centralized to the problem of the language teaching and learning curriculum ( Khamkhien, 2010) . In other words, the government policy concerning this issue has been launched specifically by the Ministry of University Affairs which was considered as

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the reform of English language teaching and learning in Thai higher education institutions. This change has not only been issued for the procedure of admission and graduation, but the government also proposed the ideas of the change by showing any standardized English scores on the graduation transcript of the students. However, numerous different tests have been launched for a try and see if the change can lead to the Thai students' English proficiency better. The study found that Thai English level of proficiency has been considered no difference (Wiriyachitra, 2010).

## Research Methodology

This quantitative study aimed to investigate the proficiency of English receptive skills of the undergraduate students studying in Thai higher education institutions by employing the research instruments and its methodology as follows:

### Participants

Though the original number of the population in this study were 450 students, only 320 undergraduate students were randomly sampled from eight autonomous universities which had their own administrative structure, the budget system for self-governance, and full autonomy in decision making on administrative and management by the universities themselves. The participants sampled were studying in different majors from four regions of Thailand, namely North, Northeast, Southern, and Central. The 40 students in each university were randomly sampled as they had been considered having the same English background of finishing the university required English subjects for undergraduates. The ones who were not considered having similar background were reasonably omitted.

### Research instrument

The actual Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) has been employed as a research instrument as it was the international standardized test consisting of listening and reading tests, which was reasonably advised for this study as the objectives were exploring the students' English language listening and reading skills' proficiency.

### Data collection

After having done taking the actual test in the standardized setting set at each university host certified by the TOEIC provider license holder, ETS Thailand organization, the researcher collected the TOEIC scores taken, and the scores were, then, analyzed.

## Data analysis

The data collected from the actual TOEIC test scores taken by the students have been analyzed, and shown in standard deviation (S.D.), Mean, Min, and Max scores. Additional variables of participants' ethnography such as the different university, genders, majors of study, and the years of study were analyzed by Dunnett T3 Paired Samples t-Test. The results from the t-Test can show if there were some significant differences between paired variables both between and within groups.

## Results

After analyzing the data, the students' proficiency of English receptive skills can be illustrated in the following tables.

**Table 1** Collected Data Categorized by Universities

Universities	Listening Scores				Reading Scores				Total TOEIC Scores			
	S.D.	Mean	Min	Max	S.D.	Mean	Min	Max	S.D.	Mean	Min	Max
North Uni1	45.325	199.63	120	275	43.030	141.00	75	220	80.997	340.63	200	490
North Uni2	56.295	194.13	50	295	37.398	132.88	65	210	82.693	327.00	165	490
NE Uni1	34.964	233.25	155	300	32.929	161.25	105	230	54.347	394.50	280	495
NE Uni2	55.132	199.50	50	290	46.241	139.50	65	220	92.294	339.00	165	490
Cen Uni1	43.764	222.25	125	300	37.510	153.88	75	230	73.984	376.13	200	495
Cen Uni2	46.029	185.75	120	275	35.956	126.63	70	195	73.441	312.38	190	440
South Uni1	45.445	205.88	130	315	40.143	125.25	75	210	75.723	331.13	225	475
South Uni2	46.278	194.88	105	310	41.955	124.75	60	200	78.548	319.63	180	495
Total	48.845	204.41	50	315	41.186	138.14	60	230	80.827	342.55	165	495

Table 1 showed the collected TOEIC scores data categorized by different universities the participants were studying. In terms of listening scores, the mean of the scores was 204.41 which the North-east university 2 was ranked the highest at 233.25, and the lowest was the central university 2 at 185.75. Though the mean scores done by the students in the north-east university 2 was ranked the highest, the student from the south university 2 was considered the highest listening score test taker with the score of 315, yet the lowest scores in this part were performed by both students from the north 1 university, and the north-east university 2 with the score of 50. In terms of reading, the mean score was 138.14 which the students from the north-east university 1 can perform the highest with the score of 161.25, yet the lowest was the scores performed by the students from the south university 2 with the score of 124.75. Though the performance of the

students from the north-east university 1 was ranked the highest of the mean score, the highest reading scores were performed by the students from both universities in the north-east 1, and in the central 1 with the score of 230. In contrast, the lowest score was performed by the student from the university in the south 2 with the score of 60. Interestingly, the total TOEIC mean score was 342.55 while the highest and the lowest mean scores were 394.50 performed by the students from the north-east university 1, and 312.38 performed by the students from the central university 2, respectively. Considering the total TOEIC mean scores, the students from the north-east university 1 can be ranked having the highest English receptive skills background while the students the students from the central university 2 can be ranked the lowest compared to other universities in this study.

To confirm if there are some significant differences between and within variables affecting the English receptive skills considering from the TOEIC scores performed by the students in this study, the data has been analyzed by Dunnett T3 Paired Samples t-Test and shown in the following tables.

**Table 2** University Variable Results of the TOEIC Listening Scores Analyzed by Dunnett T3 Paired Samples t-Test.

Variables	$\bar{x}$	North	North	NE	NE	Cen	Cen	South	South
	Listening	Uni1	Uni2	Uni1	Uni2	Uni1	Uni2	Uni1	Uni2
North Uni1	199.63	–							
North Uni2	194.13	–5.500	–						
NE Uni1	233.25	33.625*	39.125*	–					
NE Uni2	199.50	–.125	5.375	–33.750*	–				
Cen Uni 1	222.25	22.625	28.125	–11.000	22.750	–			
Cen Uni 2	185.75	–13.875	–8.375	–74.500*	–13.750	–36.500*	–		
South Uni1	205.88	6.250	11.750	–27.375	6.375	–16.375	20.125	–	
South Uni2	194.88	–4.750	.750	–38.375*	–4.625	–27.375	9.125	–11.000	–

Table 2 can clearly show that there were statistic significant differences at .05 between the variables. To illustrate, the mean score performed by the students from the north-east university 1 (233.25) was higher than that of the performance performed by the students from the north university 1 (199.63). Similarly, the score of the north-east university students (233.25) was higher than that of the north university 2 students' performance (194.13). Moreover, the TOEIC listening mean score of the north-east university 1 students (233.25) was higher than that of the score

performed by the students from the north-east university 2 (199.50). Comparing the central university 2 and the north-east university 1, the listening mean score of the north-east university 1 students (233.25) was higher than that of the score performed by the students from the central university 2 (185.75). Besides, the listening mean score of the central university 1 students (222.25) was higher than that of the score performed by the students from the central university 2 (185.75). In addition, the TOEIC listening mean score of the north-east university 1 students (233.25) was higher than that of the south university 2 students (194.88). However, there were no significant differences in other paired variables.

**Table 3** University Variable Results of the TOEIC Reading Scores Analyzed by Dunnett T3 Paired Samples t-Test.

Variables	$\bar{x}$	North	North	NE	NE	Cen	Cen	South	South
	Reading	Uni1	Uni2	Uni1	Uni2	Uni1	Uni2	Uni1	Uni2
North Uni1	141.00	–							
North Uni2	132.88	-8.125	–						
NE Uni1	161.25	20.250	28.375*	–					
NE Uni2	139.50	-1.500	6.625	-21.750	–				
Cen Uni1	153.88	12.875	21.000	-7.375	14.375	–			
Cen Uni2	126.63	-14.375	-6.250	-34.625*	-12.875	-27.250	–		
South Uni1	125.25	-15.750	-7.625	-36.000*	-14.250	-28.625*	-1.375	–	
South Uni2	124.75	-16.250	-8.125	-36.500*	-14.750	-29.125*	-1.875	-0.500	–

Table 3 illustrated that there were statistic significant differences at .05 between the variables. To be more specific, the reading mean score of the north-east university 1 students (161.25) was higher than that of the score performed by the students from the north university 2 (132.88). Also, the mean score of the students from the north-east university 1 (161.25) was higher than that of the one performed by the students from the central university 2 (126.63). The table also portrays that the reading mean score of the students from the north-east university 1 (161.25) was higher than that of the one performed by the students from the south university 1 (125.25). Comparing the south university 1 and the central university 1, the reading mean score of the central university 1 students (153.88) was higher than that of the score performed by the students from the south university 1 (125.25). Besides, the reading mean score performed by the students from the north-east university 1 (161.25) was higher than that of the score performed by the students from the south university 2 (124.75). Finally, the reading mean score of the central university 1

students (153.88) was higher than that performed by the students from the south university 2 (124.75). However, there were no significant differences in other paired variables.

**Table 4** University Variable Results of Total TOEIC Listening and Reading Scores Analyzed by Dunnett T3 Paired Samples t-Test.

Variables	$\bar{x}$ Total TOEIC	North Uni1	North Uni2	NE Uni1	NE Uni2	Cen Uni1	Cen Uni2	South Uni1	South Uni2
North Uni1	340.63	–							
North Uni2	327.00	–13.625	–						
NE Uni1	394.50	53.875*	67.500*	–					
NE Uni2	339.00	–1.625	12.000	–55.500*	–				
Cen Uni1	376.13	35.500	49.125	–18.375	37.125	–			
Cen Uni2	312.38	–28.250	–14.625	–82.125*	–26.625	–63.750*	–		
South Uni1	331.13	–9.500	4.125	–63.375*	–7.875	–45.000	18.750	–	
South Uni2	319.63	–21.000	–7.375	–74.875*	–19.375	–56.500*	7.250	–11.500	–

Table 4 clearly showed that there were statistic significant differences at .05 between the variables. To illustrate, the total TOEIC mean score performed by the students from the north-east university 1 (394.50) was higher than that of the performance of the students from the north university 1 (340.63). Similarly, the students' performance of total TOEIC mean score from the north-east university 1 had a different statistic significant at .05 compared to the score performed by the students from the north university 2 (340.63), and it was considered higher than that of the north university 2 students' score (327.00). Moreover, the table portrays that the total TOEIC mean score of the students from the north-east university 2 (339.00) was higher than that of the score performed by the students from the north-east university 1 (394.50). Comparing the central university 2 and the north-east university 1, the total TOEIC mean score performed by the students from the north-east university 1 (340.63) was higher than that of the students from the central university 2 (312.38). Besides, the total TOEIC mean score of the students from the central university 1 (376.13) was higher than that of the central university 2 student performance (312.38). In the same way, the total TOEIC mean score of the north-east university 1 students (394.50) was higher than that of score performed by the students from the south university 1 (331.13). Also, the total TOEIC mean score of the north-east university 1 students (394.5) was higher than that of the south university 2 student performance (319.63). Finally, the total TOEIC mean score of 376.13 was

higher than that of the students' performance from the south university 2 (319.63). However, there are not any significant differences in other paired variables.

**Table 5** Collected Data Categorized by Genders

Genders	Listening Scores				Reading Scores				Total TOEIC Scores			
	S.D.	Mean	Min	Max	S.D.	Mean	Min	Max	S.D.	Mean	Min	Max
Males	45.295	194.17	120	290	40.751	129.91	60	220	79.350	324.08	180	475
Females	49.867	209.69	50	315	40.858	142.39	65	230	80.110	352.09	165	495
Total	48.845	204.41	50	315	41.186	138.14	60	230	80.827	342.55	165	495

Table 5 portrays the data collected categorized by the students' genders. The total number of the students in this study were 320, divided into 109 males, and other 211 females. Though the total mean scores of TOEIC listening was 204.41, it can be clearly seen that the mean scores of the TOEIC listening performed by the female students was higher than that of males with the scores of 209.69 and 194.17, respectively. Interestingly, both highest and lowest scores of this TOEIC listening were 315 and 50, respectively, and they both were performed by the females. In terms of reading scores, the mean score was 138.14 which was lower than that of listening performance, and the highest score was achieved by the female with the score of 230, and the lowest was from the male with the score of 60. In summary, the total TOEIC mean score of the female was higher than that of males with the scores of 352.09 and 324.08, respectively. Both highest and lowest scores were performed by the females with the scores of 495 and 165, respectively.

**Table 6** Genders Variable Results of Total TOEIC Scores Analyzed by Dunnett T3 Paired Samples t-Test.

Variables	$\bar{x}$	Male	Female	Variables	$\bar{x}$	Male	Female	Variables	$\bar{x}$	Male	Female
Male	194.17	–	-15.518*	Male	129.91	–	-12.485*	Male	324.08	–	-28.003*
Female	209.69	–	–	Female	142.39	–	–	Female	352.09	–	–

To see if there were some significant differences between and within the gender variables, Table 6 clearly show that the female students in this study have achieved the higher scores than that of males' score in all mean scores, listening, reading and the total TOEIC scores with a different statistic significant at .05. That is to say, the female listening mean score of 209.69 was higher than that of males', 194.17. The females also had better mean score in the reading part as they

can achieve the score of 142.39 which was higher than males', 129.91. Therefore, the female total TOEIC mean score of 352.09 was higher than male score of 324.08.

**Table 7** Collected Data Categorized by Majors of Study

Majors of Study	Listening Scores				Reading Scores				Total TOEIC Scores			
	S.D.	Mean	Min	Max	S.D.	Mean	Min	Max	S.D.	Mean	Min	Max
Soc Science	50.648	215.92	105	300	42.329	148.90	70	220	85.237	364.82	180	490
Science	45.774	195.90	50	315	38.544	130.19	60	230	73.400	326.09	165	495
Total	48.845	204.41	50	315	41.186	138.14	60	230	80.827	342.55	165	495

Table 7 shows the data collected categorized by different majors of study of the students. The students participated in this study were from different majors of social science and science. There were 184 students from science and the other 136 were from social science majors. We can clearly see that the highest mean score of both listening and reading were achieved by the social science students with the scores of 215.92 and 148.90, respectively. However, both highest and lowest scores of both listening and reading skills were performed by the students from science majors which was similarly to the highest and lowest total TOEIC scores at 495 and 165, respectively though the highest total TOEIC mean score was at 364.82 achieved by the student from the social science major.

**Table 8** Majors of Study Variable Results of Total TOEIC Listening and Reading Scores Analyzed by ANOVA and Dunnott T3 Paired Samples t-Test.

Variables	$\bar{x}$ Listening	Social science		Variables	$\bar{x}$ Reading	Social science		Variables	$\bar{x}$ Total TOEIC	Social science	
		Science	Science			Science	Science			Science	Science
Social science	215.92	–	20.022*	Social science	148.90	–	18.707*	Social science	364.82	–	38.729*
Science	195.90	–	–	Science	130.19	–	–	Science	326.09	–	–

Table 8 clearly showed the mean scores of different variables of the students' majors of study. To be more specific, the students studying in social science majors have achieved the higher scores than that of scores performed by the science students in all mean scores, listening, reading and the total TOEIC scores, with a different statistic significant at .05. That is to say, the social science student listening mean score of 215.92 was higher than that of the score performed by the students from science with the score of 195.90. The students studying in social science majors have

also performed better in the reading part as their mean score was 148.90 which was higher than science students' score of 130.19. Therefore, the social science student total TOEIC mean score of 364.82 was higher than science students' score of 326.09.

**Table 9** Collected Data Categorized by Student Years of Study

Years of Study	Listening Scores				Reading Scores				Total TOEIC Scores			
	S.D.	Mean	Min	Max	S.D.	Mean	Min	Max	S.D.	Mean	Min	Max
Year 1	49.547	207.62	50	315	38.119	138.41	70	220	76.671	346.03	165	490
Year 2	49.283	202.97	50	310	44.078	139.68	60	230	84.991	342.66	165	495
Year 3	46.669	199.61	115	310	43.131	134.84	65	220	83.286	334.45	190	495
Total	48.845	204.41	50	315	41.186	138.14	60	230	80.827	342.55	165	495

Another ethnography data collected were from the students' year of study. Table 7 clearly illustrated that the students in this study were from three groups of the students, freshmen, sophomores, and the junior students. The TOEIC listening mean score of the freshmen was ranked the highest at 207.62 while the other two from the sophomores and the juniors were lower at 202.97 and 199.61, respectively. Interestingly, both highest and lowest scores were achieved by the freshmen with the scores of 315 and 50, respectively. In terms of reading, the highest mean score of the reading was performed by the sophomores with the score of 139.68, but the lowest was from the juniors though both highest and lowest scores were achieved by the sophomores with the scores of 230 and 60, respectively. However, the total TOEIC mean score of the freshmen was ranked highest and the juniors' score was the lowest with the scores of 346.03 and 334.45, respectively. Surprisingly, the total highest and lowest scores were performed by sophomores with the scores of 495 and 165, respectively.

## Discussion

The results from this study showed that the total average English TOEIC listening and reading scores performed by the higher education students studying at different autonomous universities participated in this study was at the lower than the required scores set by the Thai universities which was between 450 and 600 scores as a requirement for graduation. This phenomenon can reflect the problems of how the English language teaching and learning in Thailand driven by the government considered policy of changing curriculum of English learning for Thai students in each

level since 1960 (Khamkhien, 2010). By pushing this policy to schools for applying the new teaching methodology (Khamkhien, 2006), the level of English of Thai students reflected by the overall TOEIC scores here, both listening and reading which were considered as the English receptive skills has been ranked incredibly low similarly to the study confirmed by Bolton (2008) and Wiriachitra (2001). The analyzed data mentioned in the earlier sections referred to the average scores collected from the students studying at eight different universities in Thailand located in different regions, the north, north-east, central, and the south of Thailand. The results clearly showed that all mean scores performed by the students were considered lower than expected. To be more specific, the TOEIC listening mean scores performed by the students was 204.41 which the students from the north-east university 2 can perform the highest with the score of 233.25, and the lowest was performed by the students from the central university 2 with the score of 185.75. Comparing with other English learners in ASEAN countries, Thai students' English listening proficiency level was still ranked lower than that of the score performed by the student from other ASEAN countries. The study by Prapphal (2003) mentioned that the Singaporean graduates had been ranked the highest, the Laotian graduates ranked the last, and the students who can attend colleges in the West without taking any English courses are those from Singapore and the Philippines (Prapphal, 2003).

Similar with the listening skill, the mean score of reading performed by the students was also lower than that of required by the university regulation. The study shows the lower standard of the students' English reading skill resulting from the reading TOEIC mean scores of 138.14 which the north-east university 1 students can perform the highest at 161.25, and the lowest was the score performed by the students from the south university with the score of 124.75. The failure of developing such skill has been investigated by previous researchers and the same results have been confirmed. To be more specific, the reading proficiency of Thai students especially who were studying at higher education levels were at a low level (Wongsuwan, 1992). They had reading problems in understanding the sentence structure, vocabulary in context, and the paragraph organization. They have had difficulties with English reading as they could not read any English correspondence or e-mail clearly (Sucompa, 1998).

In summary, the students participated in this study had poor English receptive skills as the TOEIC total mean score of 342.55, the lowest was 165 and the highest was 495 out of 990 which can be considered at the level of Elementary Proficiency (255–400), which was lower than that of the score of the university requirement of not less than 450 total TOEIC scores. The results of the

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TOEIC scores taken by Thai test takers were considered extremely low compared to other test takers from the neighbor countries in South-East Asia. In other words, the average scores of the Thai students in this study can be considered as the “Basic User” level following The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) which can be shown between A1–A2 levels. The A1 language commanders were referred to the ones who can use and understand only familiar everyday expressions, and any basic phrases purposefully aimed at the level of satisfaction of needs. They can also command the phrases for introduction of themselves, and others, and ask and answer questions about the basic personal details slowly and carefully in the context of living their routine.

The mentioned phenomena might have been driven from inadequate time of teaching and learning in the class for the students to master the skills since they are required an outside classroom practice independently (Dickinson, 1995). Even though the language teachers have been struggling in teaching their students to master the skills within a limited time in the class, the students finally do not fully develop their language skills as fully as expected. Another significant factor negatively affected language development, especially the English receptive skill while learning in the classroom was the students’ engagement.

## Conclusion

The results can be confirmed that the Thai undergraduates are still lack of the communicative skills especially English receptive skills both reading and listening. The skills were needed to be focused by both the English educators and the learners themselves as the employers’ perspectives on the 21st century skills needed for the new era graduates. As the skills were also mentioned from time to time as being professional nowadays working officers or workers in addition to other skills such as information technology, analytical skills, and creative skills (Weligamage & Siengthai, 2003).

## Recommendation

The English educators were suggested to explore the interesting teaching methodologies for mastering their students’ English receptive skills as passive learning regularly happened in hour-long lectures deprive the students and get them bored from acquiring the nourishment as confirmed by the low proficiency of their English skills mentioned in this study. By encouraging the learning environment through any effective learning application and materials (Bishop & Verleger, 2013) to master the students’ skills was advised. Moreover, the other English learners studying in different

levels such as high schools, or primary schools, different types of the university such as private universities or local government universities were advised to be explored more. The other English skills such as productive skills, speaking and writing together with more in-depth research concerning the variables of genders, years and majors of study related to the same topic were highly suggested as the interesting further research interests.

## New Knowledge

Considering from the research results, the nowadays Thai students studying in Thai higher education institutions had poor English receptive skills considered from their English TOEIC score performance which was lower than that of the score of the university requirement of not less than 450 total TOEIC scores. This were considered extremely low compared to other university student test takers from the neighbor countries in South-East Asia. In other words, the average scores of the Thai students in this study can be considered as the “Basic User” level following The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). Though different variables such as genders, years of study, majors of study were explored if they had any impact on students’ English receptive skills, the number of years students studying at the university had not any significant impacts.

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