

Original Research Article

Terminology Proficiency in Management of Business Students in International Business Program: Difference between Three Countries

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Abstract: This study aims at examining terminology proficiency in management among business students in international business program (English Program) at Rajamangala University of Technology Phra Nakhon. A total of twenty-nine students from three different countries – Bhutan, China, and Thailand was a participant in this study. Data were collected through a newly developed ‘key terms in management’ worksheet, which thirty-four basic words in management used to measure students’ understanding of the meaning. Results indicated that the most understood key term of this group of students was ‘planning’ whereas ‘conceptual skills’ was reported as the least understood key term in management. To compare terminology proficiency in management among students in three different countries, findings revealed that Bhutanese had the highest terminology proficiency in management (79.1%) following by Thai students (57%), and Chinese students (45%), respectively. Discussion and recommendations for further studies were also conferred.

Keywords: Terminology proficiency, Key terms in management, International business, Business students

INTRODUCTION

As numerous universities have developed BBA international programs or English programs, competition in recruiting students to join the program for a specific university has increasingly heated up. The latest report revealed that almost three quarters of Thai universities have a possibility to discontinue their operations in the next decade due to low registration and increased competition from international competitors (Fredrickson, 2017).

An International Business Program (English Program) at Rajamangala University of Technology Phra Nakhon (RMUTP) is currently under pressure and needs to improve its students’ recruitment in order to effectively attract more domestic and international students to the program. The BBA program in International Business major (English Program) at Rajamangala University of Technology Phra Nakhon (RMUTP) has been offered the degree to both Thais and international students for almost a decade. The class size of this program is about 25-35 students per one batch. The majority of students in this program are Thais following by Bhutanese, and Chinese. As this international business program has signed plenty of

Memorandum of Agreement (MOU) with highly prestigious universities from abroad, this enhances the opportunities for both faculty and students of the contracted institutions to reciprocate their knowledge and cultures and internationally gain experience in the host country. As a consequence, this program constantly has visiting professors from famous universities to deliver the lectures as well as exchange students to take courses in the program. However, the number of international students who enroll as a full-time student in this program is quite low. Even though the program has a lot of strengths in providing a high quality of instruction, a small group of students decided to apply for this program. In addition, many students in this program have been struggling with English proficiency problem, which hinders them to learn the subject matters excellently despite this program establishes English proficiency requirement for admission (RMUTP, 2019).

The latest survey of English proficiency for non-native speaking countries indicated that China and Thailand has been ranked in a group of low proficiency among the 88 listed countries. However, Bhutan is not on the list of EF English Proficiency Index (EF

Quick Response Code



Journal homepage:

<http://www.easpublisher.com/easjebm/>

Article History

Received: 24.12.2018

Accepted: 12.01.2019

Published: 12.01.2019

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Education First, 2019). This implies that students who come from these countries may have some difficulties using English as a medium language for communication in academic programs though they are required to have at least moderate level of English proficiency, according to program requirements. Nevertheless, many academic programs provide the opportunities for these students to study in international programs or English program because of financial problems.

Among various key factors to successfully study in an international program or an English program, English proficiency plays a vital role and is important for students to survive. Failure to accept students who do not have sufficient English proficiency to the program can destructively influence both students and program reputation. English proficiency is a key factor of academic success for both local and international students. Previous research exposed the relationship between English language proficiency and international students' academic performance (Martirosyan, Hwang, & Wanjohi, 2015). Past research also revealed that language literacy and communication have been perceived as the major problem in studying in the international program (Vinke & Jochems, 1993).

Vinke and Jochems (1993) noted that the degree of English proficiency requirements for academic success may differ depending on major or institution. At International Business program at RMUTP, students are required to have a fair level of English proficiency to study in the program. However, a "fair" level of English literacy might not be sufficient to study in business program where terminology or key terms are very complex and multifaceted. The evidence based on direct experience of faculty in this program leads to the conclusion that students in this international business program have difficulties understanding terminology in business and management due to their low English proficiency. As a consequence, this present study aims at investigating terminology proficiency in management among international business students with the hope that the results of this study will be providing comprehensions and visions for management team and faculty members in this program to develop and modify new approaches that can help promote international students' academic success.

LITERATURE REVIEWS

Woodrow (2006) studied the correlation between English language proficiency and academic success of international postgraduate students using the International English Language Testing Service (IELTS) and GPA as indicators. Data were collected from 82 international students in postgraduate programs. Using Pearson bivariate correlations, this study found the relationship between English language proficiency and academic success (GPA). To look closely at each subset of English proficiency, results found no significant relationship between reading and

GPA. Kaliyadan et al. (2015) also addressed the importance of English proficiency for academic success. In their study, they collected data from 103 medical students and found a significant positive association between English language proficiency and the medical assessment examination. Additionally,

Martirosyan, Hwang, and Wanjohi (2015) explored the effect of English proficiency and multilingualism on the academic performance of international students in the U.S. through GPA measurement. Data were gathered from 59 undergraduate students who studied in a four-year program at a university in Louisiana through a survey questionnaire. Analysis of ANOVA and multiple regressions indicated the association between English proficiency, multilingualism, and academic performance. This study confirmed the results of previous research relating to the relationship between English language proficiency and academic success, and also examined the correlation between the number of language spoken and academic success. Besides, Khamkhong (2017) investigated factors that impeded students' English proficiency development and enhancement. This study used qualitative method through an in-depth interview with 35 participants including students and teachers at one international college in Bangkok. In students' perspective, results found key factors that help change in learning language, which were self-motivation, attitude, experience to English language, and time management.

METHODOLOGY

This study was a descriptive study. A "key terms in management" worksheet was developed and distributed to international business students who had been registered in Principles of Management on the first day of the class. This course was part of core courses in international business program (English Program) delivered by Rajamangala University of Technology Phra Nakhon. According to registrar office report, thirty-nine students had been officially registered in this class including students from three different countries – Bhutan, China, and Thailand. A worksheet of key terms in management consisted of 34 key words in management such as management, manager, organizational resources, planning, effectiveness, and efficiency, etc. These key terms were developed based on a guideline from "Modern Management" textbook written by Certo and Certo (2016). A student was asked to complete a worksheet by considering key terms in management and asking oneself whether he/she knew the meaning of these words when translated into his/her language without using google translate or a dictionary. If he/she understood the meaning of each word, he/she was required to mark "✓" on "Yes" column. On the other hand, if he/she did not know the meaning, he/she was asked to write "X" on "No" column. Out of 39 students who enrolled in Principles of Management class, only 29 students completed a worksheet and returned it to an instructor.

RESULTS

Among 29 students who completed the worksheet in key terms in management, 19 of them were a Bhutanese (65.5%), 7 of them were a Chinese

(24.1%), and the rest of them were a Thai (10.3%). Figure 1 demonstrated the percentage of students in three different countries who participated in this study.

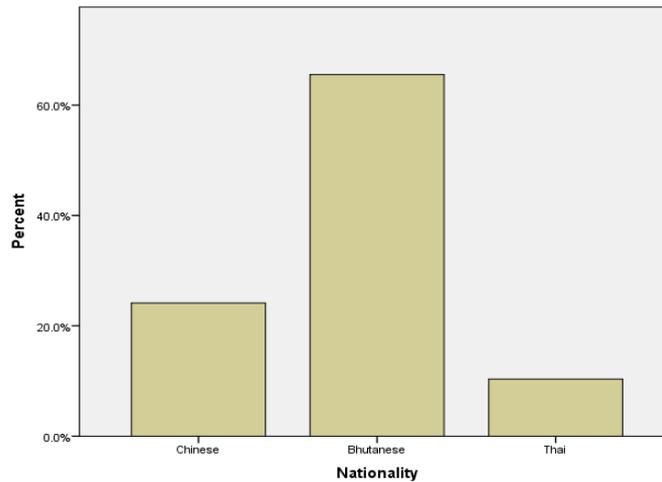


Fig-1: Percentage of Students in Three Different Countries

Table-1 showed the overall understanding in terminology proficiency in management of international business students. Results indicated that key terms that students knew the meaning 80 percent and above consisted of 8 words including ‘management’ (93.1%), ‘manager’ (89.7%), ‘management skill’ (82.9%), ‘planning’ (96.6%), ‘organizing’ (89.7%), ‘leading’ (82.8%), ‘financial resource’ (82.8%), and physical resource’ (89.7%). In addition, findings revealed that 7 key terms in management that students knew about 70-79 percent comprised of ‘human skills’ (79.3%), ‘profit’ (79.3%), ‘controlling’ (75.9%), ‘supervisor’

(75.9%), ‘human resource’ (79.3%), ‘informational resource’ (75.9%), and ‘business environment’ (75.9%). Also, results found that students understood the meaning of 8 vocabularies in management about 60-69 percent, and 11 words were reported as the least understood key terms in management as these words were rated ‘yes’ below 60 percent. Most interestingly, this study found that the least understood terminology in management of this group of students was ‘conceptual skills’ (31%) following by ‘corporate social responsibility’ (34.5%).

Table-1: Percentage of Terminology Proficiency in Management of International Business Program Students

Key Terms	Yes	No	Key Terms	Yes	No
Management	93.1%	6.9%	Management levels	55.2%	44.8%
Management functions	58.6%	41.4%	Top management	48.3%	51.7%
Organizational resources	58.6%	41.4%	Middle management	41.4%	58.6%
Organizational goals	69%	31%	First-line management	41.4%	58.6%
Manager	89.7%	10.3%	Supervisor	75.9%	24.1%
Effectiveness	69%	31%	Chief Executive Officer	65.5%	34.5%
Efficiency	62.1%	37.9%	Planning	96.6%	34.4%
Management Skill	82.9%	17.2%	Organizing	89.7%	10.3%
Technical skills	58.6%	41.4%	Leading	82.8%	17.2%
Human skills	79.3%	20.7%	Controlling	75.9%	24.1%
Conceptual skills	31%	69%	Motivation	65.5%	34.5%
Sustainability	65.5%	34.5%	Human resources	79.3%	20.7%
Competitive advantage	51.7%	48.3%	Financial resources	82.8%	17.2%
Corporate Social Responsibility	34.5%	65.5%	Physical resources	89.7%	10.3%
Corporation	69%	31%	Informational resources	75.9%	24.1%
Profits	79.3%	20.7%	Business environment	75.9%	24.1%
Business Ethics	58.6%	41.4%	Strategy	69%	31%

To compare differences in terminology proficiency of international business students from three countries, percentage was used as a descriptive statistic to determine the most and the least understood key

terms in management of students with different nationalities. Findings reported the overall results of terminology proficiency of students with different nationalities, which Bhutanese had the highest

terminology proficiency in management (79.1%) following by Thai students (57%), and Chinese students (45%), respectively. However, if used the criterion of passing at 60 percent, only Bhutanese students had passed this criterion and had terminology proficiency in management above the average. To be more specific, results also indicated that the most understood key terms in management of Chinese students were 'management skill' (100%), 'middle management' (100%), and 'physical resource' (100%). In contrast, the least understood key terms in management of Chinese students were 'efficiency' (0%) and 'motivation' (0%). For Bhutanese students, the most understood key words in management consisted of 'manager', 'effectiveness', 'profits', 'planning', 'organizing', 'financial resource', and 'physical resource'. On the other hand, 'first-line management' was reported as the least understood

vocabulary of Bhutanese. In addition, Thai students replied that they perfectly understood many key terms in management including 'management', 'manager', 'effectiveness', 'management skill', 'technical skills', 'human skills', 'management levels', 'top management', 'middle management', 'first-line management', 'supervisor', 'planning', 'organizing', 'controlling', and business environment. Conversely, numerous vocabularies in management were not understood at all by this group of Thai students including 'management functions', 'organizational resources', 'organizational goals', 'efficiency', 'conceptual skills', 'sustainability', 'competitive advantage', 'corporate social responsibility', 'business ethics', 'Chief Executive Officers', 'physical resource', and 'strategy' (Table-2).

Table-2: Terminology Proficiency in Management among Students from Three Countries

Key Terms	Nationality					
	Chinese		Bhutanese		Thai	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Management	85.7%	14.3%	94.7%	5.3%	100%	0%
Management functions	42.9%	57.1%	73.7%	26.3%	0%	100%
Organizational resources	57.1%	42.9%	68.4%	31.6%	0%	100%
Organizational goals	71.4%	28.6%	78.9%	21.1%	0%	100%
Manager	57.1%	42.9%	100%	0%	100%	0%
Effectiveness	14.3%	85.7%	100%	0%	100%	0%
Efficiency	0%	100%	94.7%	5.3%	0%	100%
Management Skill	100%	0%	73.7%	26.3%	100%	0%
Technical skills	28.6%	71.4%	63.2%	36.8%	100%	0%
Human skills	57.1%	42.9%	84.2%	15.8%	100%	0%
Conceptual skills	42.9%	57.1%	31.6%	68.4%	0%	100%
Sustainability	28.6%	71.4%	89.5%	10.5%	0%	100%
Competitive advantage	14.3%	85.7%	73.7%	26.3%	0%	100%
Corporate Social Responsibility	28.6%	71.4%	42.1%	57.9%	0%	100%
Corporation	28.6%	71.4%	84.2%	15.8%	66.7%	33.3%
Profits	14.3%	85.7%	100%	0%	100%	0%
Business Ethics	28.6%	71.4%	78.9%	21.1%	0%	100%
Management levels	57.1%	42.9%	47.4%	52.6%	100%	0%
Top management	71.4%	28.6%	31.6%	68.4%	100%	0%
Middle management	100%	0%	10.5%	89.5%	100%	0%
First-line management	57.1%	42.9%	26.3%	73.3%	100%	0%
Supervisor	14.3%	85.7%	94.7%	5.3%	100%	0%
Chief Executive Officer	14.3%	85.7%	94.7%	5.3%	0%	100%
Planning	85.7%	14.3%	100%	0%	100%	0%
Organizing	57.1%	42.9%	100%	0%	100%	0%
Leading	57.1%	42.9%	94.7%	5.3%	66.7%	33.3%
Controlling	14.3%	85.7%	94.7%	5.3%	100%	0%
Motivation	0%	100%	94.7%	5.3%	33.3%	67.7%
Human resources	57.1%	42.9%	94.7%	5.3%	33.3%	67.7%
Financial resources	42.9%	57.1%	100%	0%	66.7%	33.3%
Physical resources	100%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%
Informational resources	42.9%	57.1%	89.5%	10.5%	66.7%	33.3%
Business environment	28.6%	71.4%	89.5%	10.5%	100%	0%
Strategy	28.6%	71.4%	94.7%	5.3%	0%	100%
Total	45%	55 %	79.1%	20.9%	57%	43%

CONCLUSION, DISCUSSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The objective of this study was to investigate terminology proficiency in management among business students in international business program (English Program) at Rajamangala University of Technology Phra Nakhon. Twenty-nine undergraduate students who enrolled in Principles of Management class participated in data collection. Data were collected through a newly developed 'key terms in management' worksheet, which thirty-four basic words in management used to measure students' understanding of the meaning. Results indicated that the most understood key term of this group of students was 'planning' whereas 'conceptual skills' was reported as the least understood key term in management. To compare terminology proficiency in management among students in three different countries, findings revealed the ranking of terminology proficiency in management as Bhutanese ranked 1st among the three countries and had good terminology proficiency while Thai and Chinese students had a poor proficiency. The results of this study can provide insights for management team of this university and faculty members to modify the program admission requirement and instruction that help improve quality of learning for students leading to academic success.

This present study has some limitations. Firstly, this study focused on only one international business program in one institution. Thus, the further study should expand its focus on many international programs in business or institutions. Secondly, instrument utilized for data collection to measure terminology proficiency in management was not conducted a validity or a reliability test. Hence, the next study should develop a valid and reliable tool to measure proficiency of students in terms of their understanding in key terms in management. Lastly, this study attempted to investigate terminology proficiency in management solely without considering other factors as a predictor for academic success. Therefore, the future research should be placed more emphasis on other factors and examined the relationship between terminology proficiency in management and academic performance as well.

Acknowledgement

I am very thankful to Rajamangala University of Technology Phra Nakhon for facility support and sponsorship for publication.

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