

## TEACHING ENGLISH PATTERNS IN THE NEXT DECADE (2017-2027): TRENDS AND CHALLENGES\*

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### **Abstract**

The purposes of this research were to investigate the trends and approaches of the English language teaching that may emerge in the next decade (2017-2027) in a number of dimensions. These include internal and external factors of education, teaching methods, contents, activities, teaching materials, recommendations, new bodies of knowledge and strategies in the optimistic-realistic scenario, pessimistic-realistic scenario and most-probable scenario in the context of Thailand. Ethnographic Delphi Futures Research (EDFR) technique was used on a total of 17 scholars from 17 higher education institutions from four regions of Thailand by purposive sampling. The tools used for data collection included (1) semi-structured interview using open-ended questions for In-depth interview, and (2) close-ended questionnaire with a 5-point rating scale. Data analyses were median (Med.) and interquartile range (IQR.) The results are as follows:

The scenarios of English language teaching during the next decade (2017-2027) were envisioned as a result of combining the English language with other sciences (Combined Degree). Under the work-integrated learning approach, learners have an opportunity to integrate academic learning with practical workplace experiences. An emphasis of this approach is to enable the learners to execute social transactions effectively through the communication and interaction both face-to-face and via technology, to have creative ideas, to create their works and careers by using the English language as a communication and interaction tool. Thailand must be prepared for teaching English online for lifelong learning in order to efficiently handle the country's aging society in the future.

**Keywords:** English language teaching, Future research, Lifelong learning, Next decade, Work-integrated Learning

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## **Introduction**

English is a key skill of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, from scientific advancement and technology in a rapidly changing society. This skill impacts economics, politics, culture, and technology. There are innovations that give rise to new technological advances every day. As a result, new knowledge and old knowledge are changing at all times without borders (Romchat, 2005).

English is an important factor in a society that promotes human development around the world. English education needs to be modified in concept, patterns, processes, and teaching methods in line with the changing world we live in. Each organization responsible for educational management must adapt by accelerating educational reforms to keep pace with the changing world. We must have clear goals in Thailand to step into internationalism with English as our mediating tool because English is very influential in the education industry, especially as the critical aspect of the saying “Internationalization” (Phan Le Ha, 2013). In order to develop Thailand into an international country, universities need to develop English education.

The importance and necessity of the departments that teach English in the higher education institutions of Thailand need to coordinate their trends of Teaching English with suitability for future global social change. In the writing of the future (Scenarios), academics, administrators, instructors, staff, and all stakeholders, both internal and external, can apply the research results to guide the Teaching English pedagogy in the next decade. To be effective and in line with the changing 21<sup>st</sup> century and the true needs of the learners.

## **Research Objectives**

The purpose of this research was to investigate the experts’ opinions on the trends of Teaching English patterns in the next decade (2017-2027), on the following issues:

1.1) External and internal factors that influence the trends of English language teaching

1.2) Suitability/unsuitability and recommendations for improving English language teaching patterns

1.3) Recommendations and new additional strategies of English language teaching patterns

### **Definition of key terms**

1) Teaching English Patterns mean the overall context of Thailand in the present with respect to teaching patterns and methods, textbook contents, instructional activities and teaching materials at the higher education level.

2) EDFR (Ethnographic Delphi Futures Research) means a future research technique that attempts to investigate future trends of a specific matter based on experts' opinions. EDFR consists of five steps as follows: (1) designation and preparation of experts; (2) in-depth interview; (3) analysis and synthesis of data obtained from the interview; (4) questionnaire development; (5) data collection; (6) determination of statistics for data analysis to reach a consensus (MacMillan, 1971; Poolpatarachewin, 2016) and (7) scenario writing.

3) Trends and Challenges mean the overall trends with respect to desired English teaching of higher education institutions in Thailand that are expected to occur in the next decade.

### **Literature Review**

#### ***EDFR (Ethnographic Delphi Futures Research)***

EDFR is a futures research technique based on a belief that future is a matter that can be studied systematically. People's beliefs influence their decision-making in the future so they can build the future. The objective of future research is not to predict accurately, but to survey the possibilities, both desired and undesired, in order to find out how to make the desired trends occur and eliminate or minimize the undesired ones. Therefore, future research is beneficial to policy development, planning, and decision-making to lead to creation of a desired future (Poolpatarachewin, 2005).

Textor (1990a) differentiates futures research from other methods that aim to study the future in a way that futures research does not involve "prediction" of future. Instead of making predictions, a futures research approach is a practice in the art of anticipation, which is defined as "the building of reasonable, plausible, conditional visions of the future. These take the form of projections, forecasts and scenarios" (p.40).

#### ***Futures research techniques***

There are several futures research techniques, but this paper presents three of the most popular techniques as follows: (1) Delphi forecasting; (2) Ethnographic Future Research (EFR); and (3) Ethnographic Delphi Future Research (EDFR). Delphi forecasting technique

studies experts' opinions and collects data relating to future expectations from those regarded as experts in a particular field of study. The number of experts is mainly dependent upon characteristics of the group and an issue being studied. The Delphi method is an independent futures study to build a new future without having to take the past and present trends into consideration. Results of this kind of study will make it easier to make a decision since it can replace other alternative decisions. The Delphi is mostly used to make predictions in terms of educational technology and other fields (Bell, 1997, p. 272). With regard to Ethnographic Future Research (EFR), the scenario is obtained from one round of interview and the trend with the most consensus is selected. Ethnographic Delphi Future Research (EDFR) is a research methodology that make use of EFR in the first round, followed by the Delphi technique in the second and third rounds (Ieamvijarn, 2007, p. 93). This futures research technique has become more popular since it combines the strengths and eliminates the weaknesses of both Delphi and EFR (Poolpatarachewin, 2005).

### **Methodology**

EDFR (Ethnographic Delphi Futures Research) was a future research technique that combines EFR (Ethnographic Futures Research) and Delphi methods (Poolpatarachewin, 2016). The procedural steps of EDFR, generally, were similar to those of the Delphi technique, but improvement has been made to make it a more flexible research technique. EDFR consists of five phases as follows:

#### **Phase 1: designation and preparation of experts**

##### ***Step 1.1 – Experts***

It is essential to designate experts since the experts would provide reliable information. MacMillan (1971) found that if there are at least 17 experts or more, the error reduction rate will be minimal until it begins to be stable at 0.02. Therefore, in this research the number of experts is set at 17, provided that purposive sampling method is used to select the experts. Macmillan's study results are used as a guideline to determine the number of experts. Details of error reduction are shown below.

Experts	Error value	Discrepancies
1 - 5	1.20 - 0.70	0.5
5 - 9	0.70 - 0.58	0.12
9 - 13	0.58 - 0.54	0.04
13 - 17	0.54 - 0.50	0.04
17 - 21	0.50 - 0.48	0.02*
21 - 25	0.48 - 0.46	0.02*
25 - 29	0.46 - 0.44	0.02*

\* ( $\leq 0.02$ )

Qualifications of an eligible expert are as follows: (1) working as an English instructor at a higher education institution in the Faculty of Education, Arts, Humanities, Applied Arts, and Humanities and Social Sciences, divided into four regions as follows: (1.1) Central: Thammasat University, Silpakorn University, King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi, King Mongkut's University of Technology North Bangkok, Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University, Kasetsart University; (1.2) Northern: Naresuan University, Chiang Mai University, Maejo University; (1.3) Southern: Prince of Songkla University, Rajamangala University of Technology Rattanakosin Wangkraikangwon Campus, Thaksin University, Prince of Songkla University, Suratthani Campus; (1.4) Northeastern: Buriram Rajabhat University, Suranaree University of Technology, Khon Kaen University, Ubon Ratchathani University; (2) having graduated with a master's or doctoral degree in English, Teaching English, Linguistics, English Literature, Applied Linguistics and/or other relevant fields; and (3) holding academic position, including assistant professor, associate professor or professor, having not less than 10 years of teaching experience either at the central, regional or campus level, and being well known in Thailand's academic community.

## **Phase 2: developing the instruments**

### ***Step 2.1 – Study the source of data***

This step involved documentary research of reviewing related theories and human resource management from textbooks, websites, journals, and related research.

### ***Step 2.2 – Semi-structured interview (EDFR 1<sup>st</sup>)***

The semi-structured interview consisted of three parts of open-ended questions with a total of 10 questions. *Index of item-objective congruence* (IOC) was determined by three experts, apart from the 17 selected experts. The IOC of every question was higher than 0.50. However, recommendations were made for improving the wording of some questions to make them clearer and more suitable. The researcher made the modifications as recommended and

rechecked for correctness until a complete set of semi-structured interview questions undergoing reliability and validity testing was obtained and used for In-depth interviews. As suggested in the literature review, the interview (EDFR round 1) started with an optimistic but realistic scenario which was followed by a pessimistic realistic scenario and then a most probable scenario to obtain a diversity of answers, respectively. The interview was conducted in November – December 2017. Responses from interviewees were analyzed and synthesized in order to further develop English teaching trends for the questionnaire.

### ***Step 2.3 – Questionnaire***

The close-ended questionnaire was composed of three sections based on the research objectives, notes and transcribed protocol from in-depth interviews. Main points of the interviews were summarized, and repeated points were merged into a single statement with details beyond research framework removed. As a result, different points were obtained and used to develop questions. In writing the questions, one trend was used for each question. The questions were then analyzed/synthesized and re-categorized yielding. There are total of 134 questions. Their content validity and *index of item-objective congruence* (IOC) were determined by the same set of three experts. The IOC of every question was higher than 0.50, and there were no recommendations for improvement of wording. The questionnaire was administered to a total of 30 English instructors working in higher education institutions, not the group of 17 experts. Cronbach's alpha coefficient by item and the overall questionnaire was equal to 0.90. The questionnaire included five-point Likert scale and was developed in Google Form and administered between January and February 2018.

### **Phase 3: data collections (EDFR 2<sup>nd</sup>)**

Before filling out the questionnaire, each expert received interview feedback from every person, which was information from the in-depth interviews from the first round of EDFR. This information was not arranged in order of the names of the scholars in each region to prevent bias in answering the questions. Information was sent by mail and the link of the complete questionnaire via email, and the researcher waited for responses from all persons. The interpretations of each section of the questionnaire are as follows:

- 5 means the strongly agree with the item or question asked;
- 4 means the agree with the item or question asked;
- 3 means the undecided with the item or question asked;
- 2 means the disagree with the item or question asked;

1 means the strongly disagree with the item or question asked;  
(Poolpatarachewin, 2016; Textor, 1990; Waggoner et al., 2016).

#### **Phase 4: data analysis and synthesis (EDFR 2<sup>nd</sup>)**

In conducting EDFR round 2, data were analyzed by a statistical package in which the median (Med.) must be 3.50 or over and interquartile range (IQR.) must be equal to or lower than 1.5 for each item (Poolpatarachewin, 2016; Textor, 1990; Waggoner et al., 2016). The experts' index of consistency was considered to reach a consensus. When EDFR technique is used, results are obtained from the second round or the third round at most due to the fact that the research tool has undergone systematic development process from the beginning (Poolpatarachewin, 2016; Textor, 1990; Waggoner et al., 2016).

#### **Phase 5: scenario writing**

##### ***Step 5.1 – Trends and challenges***

The scenario was considered from statistic values and procedures for conducting EDFR round 2. A report was written to comprise three scenarios, including the positive, the negative and the most probable one, based on consistency between the answers and criteria established.

### **Results**

The analyzed data by order of purposes and experts' opinions on the second round of EDFR are presented as follows:

#### **1. External and internal factors that influence the trends of teaching English language in higher educational institutions in Thailand are as follows:**

1.1) External factors of education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century that influence English teaching patterns in the next decade (2017-2027) and which higher educational institutions in Thailand should realize and focus on are shown in Table 1:

Table 1: External factors of education

<b>Item</b>	<b>External factors of education</b>	<b>Med.</b>	<b>IQR.</b>
9	Economic condition and change in the global education policy	4.00	0.50

There were a total of 16 statements that were presented to the experts for Table 1. Of these, item 9 was the recommendations to be taken into consideration. The external factor that Thai higher education institutions should be aware of or put in the first priority when determining the pattern of English teaching in the next decade since it has a median of 4.00 and the lowest interquartile range of 0.50.

1.2) Internal factors of education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century that influence English teaching patterns in the next decade (2017-2027) and which the higher educational institutions in Thailand should realize and focus on are shown in Table 2:

Table 2: Internal factors of education

Item	Internal factors of education	Med.	IQR.
4	Exchanging learners in foreign countries in the context that support the use of English.	4.00	0.00

There were a total of 16 statements that were presented to the experts for Table 2. Of these, item 4 was the recommendations to be taken into consideration. The external factor that Thai higher education institutions should be aware of or put in the first priority since it has a median of 4.00 and the lowest interquartile range of 0.00, and is most consistent with the opinion of experts.

## **2. Suitability/unsuitability and recommendations for improving current English language teaching patterns in higher educational institutions in Thailand in overall aspects**

2.1) English teaching patterns in higher educational institutions in Thailand are shown in Table 3-4.

Table 3: Suitability

<b>Item</b>	<b>Supporting reasons</b>	<b>Med.</b>	<b>IQR.</b>
1	Most higher educational institutions have introduced teaching patterns which focus on the communicative approach and have adapted the teaching patterns to practical experiences instead of practicing English with texts (bookish English).	4.00	1.00
2	Some sectors such as independent or private sectors have good educational management.	4.00	1.00
3	Teaching and learning English language via technology is suitable for learners who are responsible and have a good background in English.	4.00	1.00
4	A blended-learning approach emphasizes integrated learning, and evaluation emphasizes the practice of communication.	4.00	1.00

In Table 3, there are a total of four statements and experts agree that the reasons in all of the four statements support suitability with the pattern of English teaching of Thai higher education institutions today. All of the four statements have the same median of 4.00 and interquartile range of 1.00, which is lower than the established criterion.

Table 4: Unsuitability

<b>Item</b>	<b>Unsuitability and recommendations for improvement</b>	<b>Med.</b>	<b>IQR.</b>
3	The curriculums of language teaching in many educational institutions do not correlate with learners' interest, or too easy or too difficult for learners. Moreover, the number of professional instructors and good teaching materials is inadequate.	5.00	0.50

There were a total of 12 statements that were presented to the experts for Table 4. Of these, item 3 was the recommendations to be taken into consideration. The most since it has the lowest interquartile range of 0.50 and the highest median of 5.00.

2.2 Principles and concepts of teaching English language (Conceptual Design) that can solve problems and develop learners are shown in Tables 5-6.

Table 5: Suitability

Item	Supporting reasons	Med.	IQR.
3	The purpose is to solve problems that occur while teaching, to improve achievement and to enhance communication skills; however, it may take some time to integrate solutions into classroom contexts.	4.00	0.00

There were a total of eight statements that were presented to the experts for Table 5. Of these, item 3 was the recommendations to be taken into consideration and being the most suitable since it has a high median of 4.00 and the lowest interquartile range of 0.00.

Table 6: Unsuitability

Item	Unsuitability and recommendations for improvement	Med.	IQR.
2	The curriculums should focus on differences to create identity and creative ideas relating to community and institutions in each area. They should not focus on similarities that rely on central standard criteria as occurs at the present. The same curriculums do not create educational diversity and creativity.	4.00	0.00

There were a total of six statements that were presented to the experts for Table 6. Of these, item 2 was the recommendations to be taken into consideration. It has a high median of 4.00 and the lowest interquartile range of 0.00.

2.3 The content of current English teaching textbooks is shown in Tables 7-8.

Table 7: Suitability

Item	Supporting reasons	Med.	IQR.
2	The higher educational institutions are flexible and in accordance with the objectives of the curriculums and programs.	4.00	0.00
4	It depends on the use. Specially, various teaching materials and activities that allow learners to enhance listening skills should be chosen.	4.00	0.00

There were a total of eight statements that were presented to the experts for Table 7. Of these, item 2 and 4 were the recommendations to be taken into consideration. To promote suitability of contents of English textbooks today since they have a median of 4.00 and interquartile range of 0.00.

Table 8: Unsuitability

<b>Item</b>	<b>Unsuitability and recommendations for improvement</b>	<b>Med.</b>	<b>IQR.</b>
4	Each institution uses different textbooks, but they try to follow the guidelines of the Ministry of Education indicating that persons who graduate from the higher educational institutions must have English level at B2 or C1.	4.00	0.50

There were a total of five statements that were presented to the experts for Table 8. Of these, item 4 was the recommendations to be taken into consideration for improvement since it has a high median of 4.00 and the lowest interquartile range of 0.50.

2.4 Current English teaching activities are shown in Tables 9-10.

Table 9: Suitability

<b>Item</b>	<b>Supporting reasons</b>	<b>Med.</b>	<b>IQR.</b>
1	Learners have an opportunity to practice English with simulation techniques in real places.	4.00	0.50

There were a total of two statements, and experts agree with the suitability of statement 1, which has the median and interquartile range of 4.00 and 0.50, respectively.

Table 10: Unsuitability

<b>Item</b>	<b>Unsuitability and recommendations for improvement</b>	<b>Med.</b>	<b>IQR.</b>
7	There are various scenarios among the higher educational institutions so instructional activities chosen were different to fit the needs of the particular institutions. Students' achievement was regarded as the most important factor.	4.00	0.00

9	CLT instructional activities need the variety of English in real conversations. The learners should have the right to deal with communication involving personal identity, accents, expression of ideas, use of idioms, and expression of cultural identity; therefore, it was regarded as the teaching of English as an international language.	4.00	0.00
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There are a total of 11 statements, and experts agree that all of the 11 statements should be taken into consideration for improvement. Statements 7 and 9 were the issues that should be considered the most since they have equal median and interquartile range of 4.00 and 0.00, respectively.

2.5 The current English language teaching materials are shown in Tables 11-12.

Table 11: Suitability

Item	Supporting reasons	Med.	IQR.
3	Currently, there are a number of good and effective teaching materials that support English teaching, so the teaching materials chosen by the instructors were different to fit the needs of particular skills.	4.00	1.00
5	Teaching materials are convenient to use, but with a high price, the government should support the production of effective teaching materials to reduce expenses for sourcing them.	4.00	1.00

There are a total of five statements with statements 3 and 5 supporting suitability and having the same median and interquartile range of 4.00 and 1.00, respectively.

Table 12: Unsuitability

Item	Unsuitability and recommendations for improvement	Med.	IQR.
1	Technology is not employed in every educational institution, depending on the situation and the condition of the institutions. The educational institutions should employ suitable teaching materials which enable learners to engage in learning via up-to-date technology.	4.00	0.50

There were a total of six statements with statement 1 being agreed upon by experts for the purpose of improvement and having the same median, and interquartile range of 4.00 and 0.50, respectively.

2.6 Factors that make English language teaching and learning in the higher educational institutions in Thailand unsuccessful are shown in Table 13.

Table 13: Factors of non-success

<b>Item</b>	<b>Factors of non-success</b>	<b>Med.</b>	<b>IQR.</b>
4	Government policy does not pay attention on the English language proficiency test when recruiting new officers while the language arts field does.	4.00	0.50
5	Executives and persons authorized to make decisions on turning the future wheels of the country do not understand the nature and learning of languages.	5.00	1.00
10	Learners are not interested in the development of English (No self-discipline of learning English), and basic knowledge of the learners does not reach the standard.	5.00	1.00
11	The learners do not pay attention to the importance of learning English and, lack motivation to learn the language and self-study.	5.00	1.00
12	The number of learners per class is too many for active learning.	5.00	1.00

There were a total of 17 statements, and the statements that experts agreed with the most were statements 4, 5, 10, 11 and 12, respectively.

### **3. Strategies of new bodies of knowledge in teaching English language in the 21<sup>st</sup> century**

3.1 Core new bodies of knowledge in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills) or recommendations and new additional strategies in Teaching English language are shown in Table 14.

Table 14: New bodies of knowledge in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills) or recommendations

Item	New bodies of knowledge, recommendations and additional strategies	Med.	IQR.
1	21 <sup>st</sup> Century Skills will focus on critical thinking, teamwork, and communication which balance the content and process.	5.00	0.50
9	Enforcing the Exit Exam for Master Degree and Doctoral Degree will be employed by raising the English proficiency score. A university's entrance exam should include a speaking test. The first-grade learners should be taught English that emphasizes variety, activities, leaning style of students by proficient instructors.	4.00	0.50

There were a total of 11 statements, and experts agreed that statement 1 was the most important strategy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century since it has the highest median of 5.00 and the lowest interquartile range of 0.50, followed by statement 9 respectively.

3.2 English teaching patterns in the next decade (2017-2027) are shown in Table 15.

Table 15: Trends of English teaching patterns in the next decade (2017-2027).

Item	Trends of English teaching patterns in the next decade (2017-2027)	Med.	IQR.
1	Combining English language with other sciences (Combined Degree) will be employed to raise awareness of the importance of English as a key communication tool in the next 10 years, during which the use of language will increase by more than 50%.	4.00	1.00
2	Teaching English online is for lifelong learning of people of all ages (Lifelong online learning).	5.00	1.50
4	English language teaching patterns in the next decade should focus on enabling the learners to integrate academic learning with practical workplace experiences. WIL (work-integrated learning) teaching pattern will be employed to raise their awareness and to be consistent with reality after their graduation.	4.00	1.00
7	An emphasis of English language teaching patterns in the next decade will enable the learners to execute social transactions effectively through the	4.00	1.00

communication and interaction both face-to-face and via technology, to have creative ideas, to create their works and careers by using the English language as a communication and interaction tool, and to build an identity, value, reliability for themselves and their organizations properly via the global communication network.

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There were a total of seven statements, and experts agree with many issues, namely statements 1, 2, 4 and 7, all of which have the medians higher than the established criterion between 4.00 and 5.00 and the interquartile range of 1.50 – 1.00, respectively.

### **Conclusion and discussion**

#### ***1. External and internal factors of education that influence the trends of English language teaching***

1.1) External factors of education in the 21<sup>th</sup> century must be recognized or prioritized by higher educational institutions in Thailand in order to respond to changing situations such as an aging society, economic conditions, and the changes in world education policy.

Thailand will transition from an “aging” to “aged” society in 2020 with the population aged 65 or more equaling 10% of the total population or over 7 million people (United Nations, 2017) and a declining birth rate. Higher education institutions must be prepared since this circumstance signals that Thailand is about to face the effects of falling birthrates, which change the population structure. The declining birth rate will definitely affect educational institutions in the future, starting from schools to colleges and eventually universities. A university may not be able to open certain programs or it may be necessary to close some programs or even merge universities, which will result in universities seriously competing with each other to attract students. Thus, it raises a concern that universities may decrease their examination standards in order to get a desired number of students. The Office of the Education Council has conducted documentary research to study the situation and the trends of global education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and found that, as a whole, the world tends to give importance to the right to education and good governance, food and water, energy, information and digital technology, and economy, provided that each aspect is connected with educational development. This means that education is involved with almost all aspects of social development, and if we think about a trend, which refers to a general direction, tendency or a

popular taste at a given time, the economic situation and changes in world's education policies have to be taken into account.

1.2) The internal factors of education consist of English teachers who are non-native English speakers. This is consistent with the study of Boriboon (2011) entitled "English Language Teaching in Thailand: A Paradigm Shift from English as a Foreign Language to English as an International Language", and also creates a variety of World Englishes as a second language.

Thailand must promote exchange students in foreign countries in the context that facilitates continuous and concrete use of English. Experts suggest that improvement should be made or PLC (Professional Learning Community) should be added to academic institutions, and learning and sharing should always be encouraged. Moreover, with regard to the economic and social development plan for Thailand 4.0 policy, importance should be given to English for the purpose of innovation creation, and the focus of programs should be put on enabling learners to think innovatively with assistance of other sciences. The goal of education management must be reviewed to ensure that it is in line with the changing society. Additionally, language measurement and evaluation systems should be more flexible, diverse, and original.

## ***2. Suitability/unsuitability and recommendations for improving English language teaching patterns***

2.1) English teaching patterns in higher educational institutions in Thailand as follows:

2.1.1) Maintaining Suitability: there are four aspects. Some sectors have good learning management systems; for example, many independent or private organizations and most universities have begun to adopt communication-centered instruction and adjust English language teaching to ensure that learners will be able to use the English language in their daily life, not only bookish English. Furthermore, universities have introduced technologies to facilitate language teaching and learning. However, this may be limited to those students who have good knowledge and are responsible for using such technologies. Another solution that experts think fit is the instruction that focuses on blended-learning (Allen & Seaman, 2005; Bernath, 2012; Driscoll, 2002; Graham, 2012; Horn & Staker, 2011) in combination with measurement and evaluation of students' performance via an integration of computer

technology and ordinary learning and teaching to promote improvement of learning efficiency and effectiveness.

2.1.2) Maintaining Unsuitability: most experts agree that the current English language teaching styles of Thai higher education institutions are not quite appropriate, and they have made the following recommendations for improvement: (1) the government's policy is not in line with the actual approach; for example, the government needs universities to teach English for communication, but learners do not dare to speak. In this regard, teachers should revise their process or method to allow students to practice speaking in the classroom by focusing on using English for communication as much as possible. (2) regarding classroom management, the numbers are too high. According to Robelen (1998), the learning processes that are possible in small classes can maximize learning since teachers can devote more time to each student and many research studies (Anderson, 2000; Betts, et al., 1999; Blatchford, et al., 2003; Goldstein, et al., 1998; Slavin, 1989) have supported such idea; for example, advantages of a small classroom are that it increases students' participation in class activities, less students have deviated behavior, and teachers have more time to focus on each student and are able to concentrate their time on teaching rather than classroom management.

2.2) Principles and concepts of teaching English language (Conceptual Design) that can solve problems and develop learners as follows:

2.2.1) Suitability: Experts concur that principles and concepts play an important role. Objectives exist for the purpose of solving problems found with learning and teaching with emphases on improving achievement and promoting communication ability. However, it may take time to suitably apply those principles and concepts to classroom contexts. Good principles and concepts affect the efficiency of instructional design, such as learner analysis, SWOT analysis, objectives of learning management, learning materials, and other relevant factors.

2.2.2) Unsuitability: The curriculum should focus on differences to create identity (Norton, 1997; Seidlhofer, 2003; Widdowson, 1994) and creativity of the community and institutions in each area, not on similarities that rely on central standard criteria as occurs at the present. This is consistent with the similar curriculums which do not create educational diversity and creativity. New concepts begin to have influence on educational management, especially the current educational reform in Thailand because each learner is different and unique since Thailand has several regions with differences in terms of language, traditions,

customs and cultures. The experts stated that the same curriculum would not create diversity and educational creativity. Thus, the principles and concepts of educational management must be adjusted, and such aspects must be taken into consideration.

2.3) Regarding the content of current English teaching textbooks, the learners can gain knowledge from various sources, so the textbook should not be limited to just one book. The content relies on the needs of the learners.

2.3.1) Maintaining Suitability should be as follows: at the higher education level, it is quite flexible and must agree with objectives of programs and courses. Due to the fact that the current textbooks are diverse, they may be produced by the higher education institutions themselves or selected from various printing houses to meet the objectives of particular programs and courses. Some courses have unique content, so selection of textbooks must be flexible. Instructors have to keep in mind what to teach, who the target group or learners are, and how to use the textbooks to make students want to study and understand the content that instructors are trying to teach. In the future, textbooks may not be limited to the hard copy format, but may include other formats available today.

2.3.2) Unsuitability: Experts believe that the textbooks it should be taken into consideration, and recommendations for improvement were the following: Each institution uses different textbooks, but they try to follow the guidelines of the Ministry of Education indicating that persons who graduate from the higher educational institutions must have English level at B2 or C1. Each university can choose textbooks on its own, but it has to examine carefully what learners have to know and learn in order to use the language to communicate effectively in a number of contexts, including cultural contexts, in accordance with CEFR. The scale of language proficiency must be determined in different levels (A1-C2) to set clear goals for learners to improve themselves and to serve as criteria for learners to evaluate their achievement. Experts disagree with setting B2 or C1 as the achievement goal for students who graduate with a bachelor degree because the English language instruction reform in Thailand using CEFR as the foundation for this reform is a new and challenging attempt that gives hope to relevant parties, both to the policymaker, which is the Ministry of Education, and to operators, i.e. English teachers. What to keep an eye on next is to which direction and how far CEFR will move and what change it will make to the English language learning and teaching in Thailand.

2.4) Regarding current English teaching activities, the specialists still focus on teacher-centered activities. The activities should be adjusted to allow learners to participate in activity planning (Student-centered activities) and provide them opportunities to think, analyze, create, apply to real experiences, create practical leadership, and focus on active and interactive learning. The activities should also support the use of English language via project/problem-based activities.

2.4.1) Suitability: Experts agree with only two aspects, indicating that universities' current instructional activities are not very appropriate.

2.4.2) Recommendations for improvement of the current English language instructional activities are as follows: due to the fact that certain aspects are related to abovementioned objectives, in Thailand, the classroom is usually too large to carry out some activities because of limited time and too many students, so the experts suggest that project-based learning be used, and there should be classroom presentation or discussion (depending on learners' levels). A task-based approach or peer evaluation and idea sharing encourages students to become more responsible and motivated to learn new things on their own (joy of discovery).

The experts also focused on the issue that instructors still emphasize activities that require them to think, plan or make all arrangements for the students. Ideally, students should be encouraged to take part in planning the activities and be provided with an opportunity to think, analyze, create, and apply what they see around them. In this regard, students should serve as leaders, and focus should be given on active and interactive learning activities that promote the use of English via projects or problems. Alternatively, there should be instructional activities both in and outside classroom with actual workplaces in the form of cooperative education. This approach will also enable students to understand and learn from doing, which will further encourage them to improve professional skills and eventually possess the skills that workplaces require the most with cooperative education serving as concrete cooperation mechanism between workplaces and universities in a manner that corresponds to the actual situation. Students will be proud to improve themselves, and both workplaces and universities can benefit each other.

Research findings also indicate that skills of the next decade should focus on communication activities that do not focus too much on accents. Such a finding is in line with previous research on English as an international language and the right to possession of the English language: Research findings indicate that students agree that British English and American English are international English. However, a diversity of the English language used

throughout the world and acceptance of Thai version of English must be taken into consideration as well (Kachamart, 2008; Rajagopalan, 2012). When students are worried too much about being able to communicate like native speakers, they are shy to speak or afraid of making a mistake. Most of the current learning activities focus on grammar and reading. Experts suggest the application of outcome-based education to guide the improvement of activities. However, measurement and evaluation of each skill in students' activities should comply with the criteria set forth for each level of CEFR, which should be diverse and flexible. They recommend that technological activities or flipped classroom (Aaron & Jonathan, 2012) should be adopted. A flipped classroom could be a new dimension of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. A virtual classroom that enables students to carry out activities is a solution recommended by experts to overcome certain limitations of doing activities in higher education institutions. A critical point that experts agree with the most is that instructors and students do not use relevant media and contents in learning the English language effectively or that the available media are not used to their best.

It can be concluded from the research findings that each university has diverse methods of selecting instructional activities based on suitability and learners' achievement. Experts agree the most on the issue that when adopting *communicative language teaching (CLT)*, universities must be aware of a diversity of the English language in actual conversations, and students should have the right to communicate in their own unique ways, such as use of an accent, expression of ideas, use of idioms, and display of unique culture, so that it can be called the teaching of English as an international language in the next decade.

2.5) Regarding current English language teaching materials, the critical point that the experts have the same opinions on is that the instructors and students do not apply available teaching materials in teaching and learning English language to their full potential. Experts agree the most that instructors and students do not use relevant media and contents in learning English effectively or that the available media are not used to their best.

2.6) Factors that make English language teaching and learning in the higher educational institutions in Thailand unsuccessful are as follows:

2.6.1) Executives and persons authorized to make a decision on the future of the country do not understand the nature and learning of languages. Any change made to or any enforcement of policy must be correlated at all educational levels. For example, when there is

a new government or new Minister of Education, a new policy would be formulated, resulting in operators having to revise their paradigm or teaching direction to meet the new policy. As a result, there is interruption in education. Experts recommend promoting research on second/foreign language acquisition to lay a foundation for learning and teaching development since such research in the field in Thailand is not as developed as it should have been, causing difficulty in developing language teaching in Thailand.

2.6.2) The instructors still give priority to grammar, reading, translation, multiple-choice tests and evaluations emphasizing grammar and vocabulary (passive skill) over the use of English in everyday communication (active skill), so experts want teaching processes, methods, and activities to be changed to suit the changing situation because teaching the English language with a focus on grammar and translation does not foster language learning since it does not focus on listening and speaking. Memorizing a variety of rules is hard and boring for students. English should be treated in a way that it is not only a required course in which students only have to pass the exam.

2.6.3) Learners have no self-discipline of learning English, and basic English knowledge of the learners does not reach the standard, so they need continuous development. Apart from this, they do not pay attention on the importance of learning English, lack motivation to learn and study by themselves. This conclusion is consistent with the findings of Thepsiri, et al. (2012) that the attitude to learning English and identities are the factors that bring success or failure in learning. Thus, instructors should promote students' motivation and good attitude towards learning and expectation for successful language learning in the future.

### ***3. Recommendations and additional strategies of English language teaching***

3.1) Core new bodies of knowledge in the 21<sup>st</sup> century ( 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills) or recommendations and new additional strategies in teaching English will focus on critical thinking, teamwork, and communication which balance the content and process by adjusting the paradigm to blend English into every subject. The instructors teaching other subjects need to be active in the use of English language for communication as a tool for self-study in all professions. That is, adjusting the paradigm and having the English language inserted into every course is needed. Instructors of other subjects have to be alert to the use of English for communication by stimulating the employment of language as a tool to search for knowledge in every program of study. Moreover, the government has the policies to encourage all Thai people to study English skills and to require inclusion of the English language to every course

in every level of the educational system (combined degrees). No matter what course an instructor teaches, he or she must encourage and support students to have improved English knowledge and skills. Relevant departments and organizations must determine how to include the English language into other courses. One approach recommended for use by instructors is to insert English into those courses for which they are responsible.

3.1.1) The application of English language teaching approaches and theories such as constructivism, classroom interaction strategy, CLT, blended learning, flipped classroom, basic digital literacy and media literacy of both instructors and learners should integrate English perception and English for specific purposes. Experts consider that family is a part of a community or society so if members of each family have good occupations and incomes and can expect progress in their careers, the result will be strengthened and independent community. If family members can earn a living for themselves and their families and the unemployment rate is reduced, this change will help the government solve social problems. When people in the society have a better living, and resources within a community are used effectively to generate income, the overall economic situation will be improved for family, community, society and the country in the future.

3.1.2) Application of suggestopedia to destroy and get rid of students' obstacles, especially their negative ideas, will encourage the students to dare to learn and overcome such obstacles. Further recommendations that experts agree with each other on are that exit exam be strictly enforced by increasing required English scores for Masters and Ph.D. students and that a speaking test be taken during the entrance examination for admission of bachelor's degree students to evaluate their English communication skills.

3.2) Regarding English language teaching patterns in the next decade (2017-2027), the results of the data analysis focus on learning together with practical experience in the context of working experience via WIL (Work-integrated Learning). This is consistent with the principles and concepts of integrated educational management and practical working experience proposed by Kramer et al. (2011). With regard to experiential learning management, experts agree that students must have an opportunity to apply their knowledge, work-related skills and specialized skills that are related to their profession, and learn about actual work life before graduation. There are four types of work integrated learning (WIL) in Thailand (Office of the Education Council, 2010, pp.108-115), namely (1) dual vocational; (2) cooperative; (3) apprentice; and (4) internship. The purpose of WIL is to link the academic

world with business and industry sectors in order to provide the country with human resources with higher capabilities through a variety of activities, such as problem-solving, administration, and use of research processes to promote cooperation in curriculum development with workplaces and the creation of new knowledge. The success factors and conditions are as follows: 1) students have direct experience from their apprenticeship in a workplace so that they have more understanding of the characteristics of their professions; 2) it is easy to find a workplace because the workplace understands the nature of apprenticeships; and 3) to get students well prepared for the job market and have increased opportunity to get a job in the future, which will be good for both the students and the academic institution. Experts point out another issue that they are worried about, which is aging society, and suggest that it is necessary to prepare for teaching English online for lifelong online learning or out of class learning where instructors may teach either in classroom or online in the same manner as online English tutoring. The courses developed should be based on learners' interests and needs and respond to the changing social conditions. The preparation of teaching English online for lifelong learning for people at all ages (Lifelong online learning) will help deal with the upcoming elderly population in Thailand.

Thailand has given importance to lifelong learning. This can be clearly seen from the vision of the National Education Plan 2017-2036 that, "All Thais must be able to receive a high quality of education and life-long learning. They must be able to lead a happy life in line with the principle of self-sufficiency economy and changes in the 21<sup>st</sup> century world" (p.78). Moreover, one of the development goals stated in the Twelfth National Economic and Social Development *Plan* (2017-2021) is that, "Thai people receive a high quality of education meeting international standards and are able to learn on their own continually" (The Twelfth National Economic and Social Development *Plan* (2017-2021), p.11). This goal is in accordance with Ueangchokchai et al. (2016). Rapid changes in various aspects of the world society encourage Thai youth, who are the key force in the development of the country in the future, to have the practice of lifelong learning.

### **Recommendations for further studies**

1) Results of this study should be examined in further studies in order to define the direction of English language teaching patterns. The trends obtained from the study should be used to create a questionnaire for collecting data from practitioners and other stakeholders in order that the data are analyzed for possibility via Factor Analysis. The size of experts group

(n) used may be increased by at least 5-10 times (Field, 2005), or further studies could be conducted to analyze confirmatory factors (Confirmatory Factor Analysis: Steven, 2009). Furthermore, these opinions should also be disseminated to the practitioners.

2) There should be further studies conducted to examine Learning Language Strategy (LLS) and anxiety in learning all four English skills, which have not been studied. This is to cover all aspects and to be useful for further planning and development.

3) There should be further studies on the issue regarding conflicting opinions among the experts who have their own reasons to support their own opinions.

4) There should be studies on the patterns or trends of teaching English language in particular aspects for specific development such as the teaching styles of the famous and popular tutorial centers in Thailand.

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