

English Reading Needs and Problems of Graduate Students of Business, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Burapha University

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Abstract

This research examined types of English reading skills that graduate students of business need. In addition, it tried to identify their English reading problems. The researcher used questionnaires to collect the data from 154 subjects who were graduate students in the Department of Business Administration, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Burapha University. The questionnaire consisted of three sections: the demographic data, the frequency of English reading, and the self-identification of English reading problems. The statistical analyses used to describe the data were frequency, mean, standard deviation, and one-way ANOVA.

The research found that most of the graduate students of business were female, aged between 20 and 35, holding a bachelor's degree in business, humanities/social sciences,

and sciences/engineering, respectively. Almost all of them were employed, with about 10% in an executive position, 35% in supervising positions, and about 50% in operational positions. They graded themselves C for their English language ability. Types of materials they read most often were e-mails, website contents, short notes, product details, academic texts, manuals, and reports, respectively. Students with executive positions read English documents more significantly often than students with supervising positions and operation positions. Students' English reading problems rank from moderate to high level. They had a high level of problems in limited vocabulary. They had a moderate level of problems in inability to interpret idioms and expressions, slow reading, find main ideas and

supporting details, understand the author's viewpoints, and understand the English structure, etc. The hypothesis testing found that students who had been trained abroad still have the same level of English reading problem as those who had not.

The research findings indicate that an English course for graduate students of business should contain materials such as, e-mails, website contents, short notes, etc. In addition, the course should aim to seriously develop students' reading ability and reduce their reading problems because their levels of reading problem were obvious. Further research should be an experimental research studying the effectiveness of instruction used to improve students' reading ability.

Introduction

At present, it is undisputable that English language is the key to learning and acquiring knowledge in many fields, including business and management. Therefore, a large number of business schools require students to have a good command of English. Students who lack this ability are enrolled in an English class and required to have a satisfactory grade to be able to pass the program requirement. English courses offered to graduate students by Thai universities are relatively diverse. Some universities offer a course that integrates four skills in one semester. For example, the Chulalongkorn

University Language Institute offers the Academic English for Graduate Students course, which aims to enable students to: 1. read academic or professional articles, 2. read and write research proposals, abstracts and reports, 3. write summaries of articles, 4. communicate orally in the academic or professional contexts... (CULI, 2003). However, courses at some universities put emphasis on reading skills because students are supposed and expected to read course materials and research literature which are mostly in English. National Institute for Development Administration (NIDA), for example, provides courses entitled Reading Skills Development in English for Specific Purposes for students in a variety of majors. This course is tailored specifically to each area like, Reading Skills Development in English for Business Administration and Reading Skills Development in English for Computer Science. Burapha University, a state comprehensive university located in the East of Thailand, also offers a course that accentuates reading skills. The EN500 (Reading) course aims to develop graduate students' reading ability by using various strategies, namely skimming, scanning, guessing meaning of words from contexts, recognizing patterns of text, etc. Students have a chance to apply the skills they learned to the mid-term and the final exams, and the passing point is 50%.

Although the reading strategies taught in

the EN500 course are necessary for graduate students, there is another factor that deserves attention—reading materials. Reading materials used to practice students are worthy of note because different types of reading material require different types of reading skills. Reading experts also recommend readers read different types of texts, including, books, magazines, and the Internet (Afflerbach, 2006) because being able to read effectively involves understanding the structure of texts, understanding how to read for different purposes, and how to reflect on what is read (TRHS Library Media Center, 2006).

This research was inspired by the fact that reading materials play a significant role in an English reading course. Therefore, it aimed to examine the types of English sources that graduate students of business read the most. In addition, it sought to identify reading problems that graduate students of business encounter when carrying out their English reading activities.

Research Questions

1. What types of English reading materials do graduate students of business read the most?
2. What are the reading problems of graduate students of business?
3. Do students with executive positions read more often than those who are operation staff?
4. Do students who have been trained

abroad have different reading problems from those who have not?

Significance of the Study

The results of this research will be very useful for designing English reading instructions. Reading teachers will learn about students' reading problems and the types of reading that students use so that the teacher can prepare the right materials for them. Putting the right materials and strategies in the right course will not only help students to develop their reading ability, but also create motivation for reading and learning. Students will develop a life-long learning skill and be autonomous learners if they find the reading materials interesting and useful.

Literature Review

The review of literature related to the teaching and learning of reading has found that reading instructions has shifted from the traditional views of reading based on behaviorism to visions of reading and readers based on cognitive psychology (Knuth & Jones, 1991). The goal of reading has changed from mastery of isolated facts and skills to constructing meaning and self-regulated learning. Moreover, the reading process has shifted from mechanically decoding words and memorizing by rote to interacting among the reader, the text, and the context. In addition, the role of the readers has changed from being

passive to active and strategic ones. Thus, with this underlying paradigm, many reading instructors have embraced the idea of teaching students to read strategically. The strategies such as the SQ3R, the ACTIVE (Anderson, 2002) have been largely adopted. Frequently taught strategies are skimming, scanning, finding the thesis statement, determining the text structure, questioning the author, and guessing the meaning from the text (Webb, 2005). In addition to strategies, many instructors realize that good readers always read with a purpose (e.g., to get information or for pleasure) and understand the purpose of different texts, for example, ads to encourage buying, editorials to present and influence opinions, and recipes to give instructions, etc (VanDuzer, 1999). Beare (2006) mentioned that although readers need to employ strategies, it is important that they know when to use appropriate strategies; this leads to another crucial, yet often unnoticed, element of effective reading; that is to understand that there are different types of reading materials. Different types of readings need different strategies. When approaching an English text, students first identify what type of reading skill needs to be applied to the specific text at hand.

Because the awareness of different types of texts and reading purposes is very vital for effective reading in English, many researchers have conducted need analyses and survey research to determine the types of reading

materials used by nonnative English readers. For example, in 1987, Wutinat Chirapan surveyed the needs of English among graduate students at Mahidol University. The researcher collected the data by using questionnaires eliciting the extent of academic-English needs and using 154 students and 54 instructors. It was found that among the four skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) students needed reading skills the most extensively, especially students and instructors in the field of applied linguistics, who indicated that they need English reading skills persistently. When compared the English-related activities that students do for their studies, graduate students use English to write a thesis, read textbooks, read academic journals or research papers and read examination questions. Polmanee and Sinsuwan (2001) conducted a similar study to investigate the English reading behaviors of graduate students at Chiang Mai University. The subjects were 60 students majoring in teaching social studies, teaching Thai language, and teaching English. The instruments were questionnaires and interviews designed to collect the data in several aspects such as, English use, problems, needs, and solutions to the problems related to English for graduate studies. In the use of reading skill, the materials that the graduate students in the field of teaching social studies read the most were teacher's assignments, the Internet, newspapers, textbooks and e-mails, respectively.

The materials that graduate students of teaching Thai language read the most were the Internet, instructors' assignments, e-mails and research respectively. The materials that graduate students in the major of teaching English read the most were textbooks, the Internet, research, instructors' assignments and research, and e-mails respectively. Nomsiri (2005) conducted a survey using a questionnaire to assess the needs of reading materials to be included in a business reading course. The subjects were 150 undergraduate students majoring in marketing, accounting, and business computer. The research found that they wanted the course to include reading materials such as information in computer or e-mails, general articles in newspapers/magazines, instructions/directions, business letters, notices/advertisements, memorandum/short notes, office instrument manuals, business news/ articles, business documents, and meeting minutes. The researcher also interviewed the students to find out their reading problems. The researcher found that the students had problems in understanding vocabulary, grammar rules, parts of speech, and sentence structures which affected meanings of messages in English-language documents.

The research studies cited above demonstrate that educators have realized the

importance of the awareness of different types of reading materials used and needed by students, and the researchers have discovered some useful insights about the English materials that Thai students read. However, there are some gaps that need to be filled. For example, although Chirapan's research (1987) addressed the issues of academic English, it focused only on the academic English of graduate students in the science majors. In addition, the questionnaire elicited only the use of English for graduate studies; it did not touch upon the English use at work and everyday life. As well, the research of Polmanee and Sinsuwan (2001) mentioned only graduate students from education majors, and the number of subjects was too small, thus making the research result inconclusive. The research of Nomsiri (2005), although related to business English and yielded useful results related to problems and reading materials, focused only on the needs of undergraduate students. There might be a difference between the reading materials read and needed by undergraduate students and those read and used by graduate ones. In addition, graduate students who are from different majors may read different types of materials. Therefore, there is a gap for studying English reading needs and problems of graduate students of business, and this research is taking

up this niche.

Research Methodology

Research Participants

The research participants were students at a graduate level majoring in business administration and management. According to the 2006 roster, there were 246 graduate students of business at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Burapha University. They were studying in various areas of concentration such as human resources management, accountancy, and small and medium enterprise management. The students came to class at different period of time because most of them were working-students. For example, some students studied

during weekend from 9 A.M. to 4 P.M., while some studied in the evening from 6:30 P.M. to 9:30 P.M. All students needed to take and pass the EN500 (Reading) course. Some of them had taken the course already, but some were taking the course at the time of data collection. Out of 246 students, 19 students were asked to try out the questionnaire. Therefore, the population remained at 227. The researcher aimed to collect the data from 70% of them. Therefore, 227 questionnaires were distributed to students in each batch. The questionnaires were administered to the students with assistance from the instructors of the EN500 course and the departmental officials who were taking care of the master's degree students. After three weeks, 154 questionnaires were returned; the return rate was 68%. Thus, the data analysis was based on 154 samples, or 68% of the total.

Table 1 Demographic information

	Gender		Age			Education			
	N	%	Yrs	N	%	Bachelor's Degree in	N	%	
Female	117	76.0	20-25	37	24.0	Business	85	55.2	
Male	37	24.0	26-30	58	37.7	Humanities/Social Sci.	50	32.5	
Total	154	100.0	31-35	31	20.1	Sciences/Engineering	19	12.3	
Training Abroad			36-40	12	7.8	Total	154	100	
	N	%	41-45	10	6.5	Employment		N	%
Yes	25	16.0	46-50	3	1.9	Employed	136	88.3	
No	129	84.0	51 up	3	1.9	Unemployed	18	11.7	
Total	154	100.0	Total	154	100.0	Total	154	100	

Table 1 provides the participants' demographic data on gender, age, education, training, and employment. As can be seen, most of the respondents were female. The number of

female was over three times larger than the number of male participants. Most of the participants were between 26 and 30 as the number of this age group was almost twice more

than the other two high-ranking groups. There were comparable numbers of participants aged between 20 and 25, and 31 and 35. It was quite interesting to find that only a very small number of them were over 46 because students in a graduate program in business were expected to be senior executives. When considering their education background, over half of the participants held a bachelor's degree in the business

fields. Participants with humanities and social sciences degrees ranked second, followed by science and engineering degrees. On the topic of training experience abroad, only 16% of the participants had been abroad for training. However, the length of training and the country are not taken into account in this research. For the data concerning employment, it was found that nearly all of the respondents were employed; only slightly over 10% were without a job.

Table 2 (continued)

Level of Position	Opinion on the Necessity of English						
			at work		at school		
	N	%		N	%	N	%
Executive	13	9.6	Not necessary	5	3.2	0	0
Supervisor	48	35.5	Necessary sometimes	33	21.4	1	0.6
Operation	67	49.3	Necessary	40	26.0	43	27.9
Others	8	5.9	Very necessary	76	49.4	110	71.4
Total	136	100.0	Total	154	100	154	100

Table 2 displays the participants' level of positions and their opinions on the necessity of English at their work and at school. As the figure shows, almost half of the participants worked in operation position, about one thirds worked as supervisors, and about 10% worked as executives. The 'others', which accounted for about 9%, stated that they work as professionals,

specialists, and business owners. In responding to the question regarding the necessity of English at work, about three quarters of the participant stated that English was necessary at work. As well, almost all of the participants expressed that English was necessary and very necessary for studying for a master's degree.

Table 3 Participants' self-evaluated English grade

Education Background		A	B	C	D	F	Total	\bar{x}	S.D.	No.	Grade
Business	N	0	10	38	34	3	85	1.58	.735	3	C
	%	.0%	6.5%	24.7%	22.1%	1.9%					
Humanities & Social Sciences	N	2	14	25	6	3	50	2.12	.895	1	C
	%	1.3%	9.1%	16.2%	3.9%	1.9%					
Sciences & Engineering	N	0	0	14	4	1	19	1.68	.582	2	C
	%	.0%	.0%	9.1%	2.6%	.0%					
Total	N	2	24	77	44	7	154	1.81	.801		C
	%	1.3%	15.6%	50.0%	28.6%	4.5%	100%				

Table 3 offers the information on the self-assessed English ability. It should be noted here that since the researcher did not use an exam to measure participants' English ability, the grade might not present the accurate ability of the participants. Rather, they offered their own judgment on their English language ability. However, as can be seen, although the grades of participants in all educational background fell

into the C level, there seemed to be a difference between the grades. Participants who had background in humanities and social sciences showed the strongest English ability. The first runner up was the group of participants with the degree in sciences and engineering. Participants with a bachelor's degree in business ranked third, but stood closely with the sciences and engineering degree holders.

Table 4 Frequency of English language use

English Skills	Every day	1-2 times / week	Once/ 2 weeks	Once a Month	Never	M	S.D.	No.	Frequency of Use
Reading	N 52 % 33.8%	39 25.3%	22 25.3%	22 14.3%	19 14.3%	2.54	1.401	1	1-2 times/week
Writing	N 39 % 25.5 %	42 27.5%	18 27.5%	22 11.8%	32 14.4%	2.22	1.497	3	3 Once/2 weeks
Listening	N 42 % 27.5 %	48 31.4%	17 31.4%	21 11.1%	25 13.7%	2.40	1.434	2	2 Once/2 weeks
Speaking	N 31 % 20.3%	39 25.5%	23 25.5%	22 15.0%	38 14.4%	2.02	1.489	4	Once/2 weeks

Table 4 presents the information on the frequency of English use. From the means (M), it was found that participants used reading skill once or twice a week. But for writing, listening, and speaking, they used less, which was once every two weeks. Among the frequency of the three skills, listening came first, followed by writing and speaking respectively. In addition to the mean values, the number of participants shown in each column could tell a great deal about frequency of English use. For example, over 52 participants used English reading skill everyday; on the contrary, almost 40 participants never used English speaking skill.

The Instrument

The questionnaire was designed to gather information from respondents in three aspects: demographic data, data on the use of reading materials, and information on their reading problems. In addition to the basics like, gender, age, education, and career, demographic data

included self-rated English grade, opinion on the necessity of English both at work and at school, and frequency of the use of the four skills (writing, reading, speaking, and listening). The part of reading materials consisted of 11 items (see Table 5 for detail). The part of reading problems contained 10 items (see Table 6 for detail). The participants were required to answer questions on the use of reading materials on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (never read) to 4 (read every day). For the part of reading problems, the Likert scale ranges from 1 (the least) to 5 (the most). The questionnaire was written in Thai. The pilot study was conducted on 19 participants to test the questionnaire's reliability. The result showed that each scale within the questionnaire was reliable; all scales had Cronbach's Alpha value above .90.

The Survey Procedure

This survey research was conducted at Burapha Univerisity, Chon Buri, Thailand,

during the beginning of the first semester of 2006 (June). The researcher had requested assistance from teachers of EN500 course and academic officials in the Department of Business Administration, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences to administer the questionnaires to the graduate students. Most questionnaires were collected immediately after the participants had finished responding to them, but some questionnaires were collected in the later weeks. The completed questionnaires were later tallied and analyzed.

Data Analysis

Demographic information of the participants was mostly analyzed by using frequency, except the information on their grade which was resolved by using mean. In order to identify the most and the least used reading materials and the extent of reading problems, the mean score from each of the item on the scales was calculated and ranked order. The one-way analysis of variance was

also used to determine the significant difference in mean of reading materials used by the participants with executive positions, supervising, operation staff, and 'others'. As well, reading problems between students who had been trained abroad and those who had never been trained was compared by using one-way ANOVA. The probability level of significance for one-way ANOVA was set at .05. After the statistical analysis, the discussion and conclusion of the results based on the four research questions is presented.

Results

This section presents the results of the survey. It starts with findings related to the types of reading materials used by the research participants. Then, it moves on to describe the research outcome responding to the research questions stated previously.

Table 5 Types of english reading materials/sources read the most

Types of Materials	Every day	1-2 times week	Once/ 2 weeks	Once a Month	Never	N	\bar{X}	S.D.	No.	Frequency of Use
1. E-mails	N 56	32	22	18	25	154	2.50	1.483	1	1-2 times/ week
	% 36.4%	20.8%	14.9%	11.7%	16.2%					
2. Newspapers	N 12	22	17	28	75	154	1.14	1.345	10	Once a Month
	% 7.8%	14.3%	11.0%	18.2%	48.7%					
3. Journals/ Magazines	N 10	19	19	36	70	154	1.11	1.288	11	Once a Month
	% 6.5%	12.3%	12.3%	23.4%	45.5%					
4. Websites	N 34	49	33	22	16	154	2.41	1.269	2	Once/2 week
	% 22.1%	31.8%	21.4%	14.3%	10.4%					
5. Letters	N 29	20	14	21	70	154	1.46	1.607	8	Once/2 week
	% 18.8%	13.0%	9.1%	13.6%	45.5%					
6. Academic text/articles	N 22	42	24	22	44	154	1.84	1.459	5	Once/2 week
	% 14.3%	27.3%	15.6%	14.3%	28.6%					
7. Manuals	N 22	30	25	37	40	154	1.72	1.412	6	Once/2 week
	% 14.3%	19.5%	16.2%	24.0%	26.0%					
8. Product details	N 28	44	30	32	20	154	2.18	1.312	4	Once/2 week
	% 18.2%	28.6%	19.5%	20.8%	13.0%					
9. Reports/ Memos	N 25	36	10	29	54	154	1.67	1.550	7	Once/2 week
	% 16.2%	23.4%	6.5%	18.8%	35.1%					
10. Short notes	N 38	36	34	22	24	154	2.27	1.391	3	Once/2 week
	% 24.5%	22.5%	22.5%	14.6%	15.9%					
11. Graphs/ Diagrams	N 16	24	18	25	71	154	1.28	1.436	9	Once a Month
	% 10.4%	15.6%	11.7%	16.2%	46.1%					

The result regarding the most-often read materials can be seen in Table 5. As the table shows, e-mails are the leading materials that participants read. The second most read material is web site, followed by short notes, which is the third most read material. Product

details ranks fourth. Academic texts/articles, manuals, and reports/memos rank closely as the fifth, sixth, and seventh, respectively. It is worthy to note that even though all participants are graduate students, they do not read academic texts/articles as much as other materials such as

web sites and product details. Probably because these students are working-students, they use English for work more often than for study.

In addition to finding the types of reading materials used most by graduate students of

business and management, this research also compared the frequency of use of reading materials among participants who are executives, supervisors, operation staff, and 'others'. The result on this part is shown in Table 6.

Table 6 Means, Standard Deviations, and One-way ANOVA of reading materials used among positions of graduate students

Materials	Position	N	Mean	S.D.	F	Sig.
E-mails	Executive	13	3.46	1.127	4.891	.003
	Supervisor	47	2.83	1.307		
	Operation	66	2.39	1.518		
	Others	8	1.25	1.581		
	Total	134	2.58	1.478		
Newspapers	Executive	13	2.23	1.739	3.542	.017
	Supervisor	46	1.13	1.392		
	Operation	67	.96	1.199		
	Others	8	.75	1.389		
	Total	134	1.13	1.373		
Magazines	Executive	13	2.31	1.601	4.741	.004
	Supervisor	47	1.11	1.355		
	Operation	67	.97	1.154		
	Others	8	.50	1.069		
	Total	135	1.12	1.322		
Websites	Executive	13	2.92	1.256	2.232	.088
	Supervisor	47	2.55	1.265		
	Operation	67	2.36	1.299		
	others	8	1.50	1.414		
	Total	135	2.43	1.308		
Letters	Executive	13	2.69	1.653	6.811	.000
	Supervisor	47	1.91	1.692		
	Operation	65	1.12	1.463		
	Others	8	.25	.707		
	Total	133	1.50	1.636		

Table 6 (continued)

Materials	Position	N	Mean	S.D.	F	Sig.
Books	Executive	13	2.54	1.266	2.108	.102
	Supervisor	47	1.83	1.494		
	Operation	67	1.69	1.427		
	Others	8	1.00	1.414		
	Total	135	1.78	1.454		
Manuals	Executive	13	2.85	1.405	6.808	.000
	Supervisor	47	1.87	1.469		
	Operation	67	1.48	1.260		
	Others	8	.38	.518		
	Total	135	1.68	1.407		
Products	Executive	12	3.08	1.084	2.937	.036
	Supervisor	46	2.15	1.366		
	Operation	67	2.00	1.303		
	Others	8	1.50	1.414		
	Total	133	2.12	1.343		
Reports	Executive	13	2.62	1.660	6.587	.000
	Supervisor	46	2.13	1.558		
	Operation	66	1.36	1.474		
	Others	8	.25	.463		
	Total	133	1.68	1.578		
Short Notes	Executive	13	3.00	1.291	3.427	.019
	Supervisor	45	2.44	1.486		
	Operation	67	2.03	1.381		
	Others	8	1.25	1.165		
	Total	133	2.22	1.437		
Charts/Graphs	Executive	13	2.46	1.664	5.060	.002
	Supervisor	46	1.46	1.516		
	Operation	66	.94	1.276		
	Others	8	.75	1.035		
	Total	133	1.26	1.455		

Table 7 Post Hoc Test Multiple Comparisons of English materials used among levels of career position

Materials	Position	Executive	Supervisor	Operation	Others
Emails	Executive	1.00	.632	1.068*	2.212*
	Supervisor		1.00	.436	1.580*
	Operation			1.00	1.144*
	Others				1.00
Newspapers	Executive	1.00	1.100*	1.276*	1.481*
	Supervisor		1.00	.175	.380
	Operation			1.00	.205
	Others				1.00
Magazines	Executive	1.00	1.201*	1.338*	1.808*
	Supervisor		1.00	.136	.606
	Operation			1.00	.470
	Others				1.00
Letters	Executive	1.00	.777	1.569*	2.442*
	Supervisor		1.00	.792*	1.665*
	Operation			1.00	.873
	Others				1.00
Manuals	Executive	1.00	.974*	1.369*	2.471*
	Supervisor		1.00	.395	1.497*
	Operation			1.00	1.103*
	Others				1.00
Product Details	Executive	1.00	.931*	1.083*	1.583*
	Supervisor		1.00	.152	.652
	Operation			1.00	.500
	Others				1.00
Reports	Executive	1.00	.485	1.252*	2.365*
	Supervisor		1.00	.767*	1.880*
	Operation			1.00	1.114*
	Others				1.00

Table 7 (continued)

Materials	Position	Executive	Supervisor	Operation	Others
Short Notes	Executive	1.00	.556	.970*	1.750*
	Supervisor		1.00	.415	1.194*
	Operation			1.00	.780
	Others				1.00
Charts/Graphs	Executive	1.00	1.005*	1.522*	1.712*
	Supervisor		1.00	.517	.707
	Operation			1.00	.189
	Others				1.00

When comparing the frequency of English reading among the four groups (executive staff, supervising staff, operation staff, and 'others'), it was found that executives have the highest mean values in all types of materials. Supervisors have higher mean values than operation staff. 'Others' have the lowest mean values in most of the materials. The one-way ANOVA found that participants who have executive positions, supervising staff, operation staff and 'others' read e-mails, newspapers, magazines, letters/memos, manuals, short notes, product details, reports, and charts/graphs differently at a significant level of .05. There is no significant difference between the mean values of executive staff, supervising staff, operation staff, and 'others'

on only the reading of websites and academic texts/articles.

The information on participant's English reading problems can be found in Table 8. As can be seen, the biggest English reading problems for graduate students of business is that they possess limited vocabulary. Idioms and expressions are the second factor that causes problems for the participants. Moreover, the fact that they do not have sufficient reading speed was the third biggest problem. Apart from these three problems, participants revealed that they have moderate problems in finding main ideas, finding supporting ideas, understanding sentence structure, understanding the author's view point, concluding or inferring, understanding paragraph structure, and understanding the author's purpose, respectively.

Table 8 English Reading Problems

Problems in	\bar{X}	S.D.	No.	Level of Problem
1. finding the main idea	3.28	1.013	5	Moderate
2. finding supporting details	3.28	.942	4	Moderate
3. concluding or inferring	3.18	.952	8	Moderate
4. interpreting idioms and expressions	3.41	1.042	2	Moderate
5. understanding the author's view point	3.24	.929	6	Moderate
6. understanding the author's purpose	3.02	.973	10	Moderate
7. understanding sentence structure	3.24	.936	7	Moderate
8. understanding paragraph structure	3.09	.959	9	Moderate
9. limited vocabulary	3.59	1.045	1	High
10. insufficient reading speed	3.40	1.045	3	Moderate

The one-way ANOVA found that the mean values of reading problems of participants who used to be trained abroad are not different from

those of participants who have never been trained abroad at a significant level of .05. The result on this part is shown in the following table.

Table 9 The comparison between reading problems of participants who have been trained abroad and those who have never been trained abroad

Reading Problems	Graduate Students Who Have					
	Been Trained Abroad (N=25)			Never Been Trained Abroad (N=128)		
	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D.	F	Sig.
Main idea	2.96	.935	3.34	1.023	3.023	.084
Supporting idea	3.04	.841	3.33	.960	1.990	.160
Inference	3.04	.978	3.22	.946	.766	.383
Expression	3.24	1.012	3.44	1.051	.772	.381
Point of View	2.92	.812	3.30	.944	3.624	.059
Purpose	2.76	.926	3.08	.977	2.254	.135
Sentence structure	2.96	.889	3.30	.935	2.885	.091
Paragraph structure	3.04	.978	3.11	.958	.109	.742
Vocabulary	3.40	1.155	3.63	1.027	.963	.328
Reading Speed	3.24	1.012	3.44	1.056	.742	.390

Discussion

This research was trying to identify the types of English reading materials that graduate students of business read the most, find out their reading problems, compare the materials that students with executive positions, supervising positions, and those who are operation staff read, and compare reading problems of the students who have been trained abroad and those who have never been.

The research results indicate that most of the graduate students of business were female, aged between 25 and 35, possessing a bachelor's degree in business, were employed, and had not been trained abroad. Almost all working-graduate students view English language as an important part of both work and study. They use the reading skill the most; this finding corresponds to the research of Chirapan (1987). Most of the materials they read are related to their business and personal life, for example, e-mails, short notes, and web sites. The fact that they read materials that are related to computers often is similar to the finding of Nomsiri (2005) and Poimane and Sinsuwan (2001). Some materials are, however, related particularly to business, such as product details and reports or memos. The students do not read academic texts/articles often. This finding implies that English instruction in the EN500 (Reading) class should gear toward English for business and everyday life. The materials should be related to reading and writing e-mail messages. In addition, the inclusion of web site contents, articles, vocabulary about online selling and e-commerce will make a wonderful match with

the needs of the students. However, although the students do not read academic texts/articles that often, it should not be excluded from the course content because this course aims at building reading skills for students to apply to their studies. An instructor should strike a balance between practicing students to read for business purposes and for academic studies.

Another noteworthy outcome from this research is the finding that executives read English materials more often than operation staff. Instructors may apply this finding to the class in the form of pair work, team work, or peer mentor. The students who are executives may be able to provide guidance for the students who are operation staff because they have more experience with English-language materials. Students' background may contribute to class activities as well because the research shows that students with humanities and social sciences degree are better at English than others. It might be helpful to assign them to work with other education backgrounds, such as business, science and engineering so that they can help their peers.

The finding on reading problems shows that the students still have troubles in English reading. The results suggest that reading instructors should introduce students to vocabulary building approaches, for limited vocabulary is the biggest problem among them. Furthermore, they should learn how to tackle difficult idioms and expressions. An instructor may provide authentic texts that contain business idioms and expressions in order to alleviate this

problem. This research also found that the students still had other kinds of English reading problems (e.g. finding main ideas and supporting details) at a considerable level. Strategies, such as, scanning, skimming, identifying text patterns, and guessing words in context, are recommended to be the fundamental substance of the course.

The comparison of English reading problems of students who have been trained abroad and reading problems of those who have never been trained abroad yielded no significant difference. This means that having a chance to be abroad for a certain period of time did not improve English reading skills of the graduate student of business. It is very crucial that an instructor should accentuate the importance of reading skill practice and establish a measurement method to evaluate students' reading skills. Since the class aims to instill reading ability and strategies, students should understand the strategies and be able to apply them to the reading task effectively. On the other hand, students should also do their part in dedicating their time and effort to practice using the strategies. The combination of these may make the instruction successful.

Recommendation for Further

This research suffers several limitations. Although its data was collected from a reasonable size of samples (68%), the number is quite small, especially when categorizing the samples into groups according to educational background, level of career position, and training experience. In addition, the data came from only questionnaires. Further research may obtain data from questionnaires, interviews, and document inspection because data triangulation may provide more detailed insights into students' reading behaviors. In addition, further research should study effectiveness of using reading strategies in class by experimentally comparing performances of the group which take the traditional EN500 course and the course which accentuates reading strategy practice. Furthermore, qualitative research that investigates the detailed features and characteristics of the frequently read materials such as e-mails, product details, and short notes can offer instructors a better view on the class materials they need to prepare.

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Appendix : Questionnaire

The Survey of Reading Materials Used by and Reading Problems of Graduate Students of Business and Management

Part 1: Demographic Information, Part 2: Use of Reading Materials, Part 3: Reading Problems

Part 1 : Demographic Information

1. Sex : Female Male
2. Age 20-25 26-30 31-35 36-40 41-45 46-50 51-55 56 up
3. Education Bachelors' Degree in.....
4. Have you ever been trained abroad? Yes No
5. Are you employed Yes No
6. The level of your position is executive supervisor operation other.....
7. You are studying in the Faculty ofMajoring.....
 Special Program Regular Program
8. Have you taken the EN 500 (Reading) course? Yes I am taking Not Yet
9. Please evaluate yourself by checking on the grade the match your English ability.

Excellent ←————→ Very Poor

Grade	A ▶	B	C	D	E	F	
Your self-assessed English ability	▶						

10. Your opinion on English language

1. Is English necessary for your career?
 Very necessary Necessary Necessary sometimes Not necessary
2. Is English necessary for your graduate studies?
 Very necessary Necessary Necessary sometimes Not necessary
3. What is your attitude towards English?
 Very like Like Don't mind Don't like
4. Do you want to learn English reading strategies?
 Really want Yes don't mind studying I don't want

11. How often do you use the following English skills?

Skills ↓	Frequency of Use →	Everyday	Once or Twice a Week	Once/2 Weeks	Once a Month	Never
1. Reading						
2. Writing						
3. Listening						
4. Speaking						

Part 2: Use of Reading Materials

12. How often do you read the following materials? Put / in the column that match your frequency of reading.

Materials ↓	Frequency of Use →	Everyday	Once or Twice a Week	Once/2 Weeks	Once a Month	Never
1. E-mails						
2. Newspapers						
3. Journals/Magazines						
4. Website/Internet						
5. Letters						
6. Textbooks/articles						
7. English Manuals						
8. Product Details						
9. Reports/Memos						
10. Short Notes						
11. Graphs and Charts						

Part 3: English Reading Problems

13. What is your English reading problem do you have? Put / in the column that match your level.

Problems ↓	Level of problems highest →	high	moderate	low	the lowest
1. finding the main idea					
2. finding supporting details					
3. concluding or inferring					
4. interpreting idioms and expressions					
5. understanding the author's view point					
6. understanding the author's purpose					
7. understanding sentence structure					
8. understanding paragraph structure					
9. limited vocabulary					
10. insufficient reading speed					



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