



การวิเคราะห์ความต้องการจำเป็นในการเรียนทักษะการฟังและการพูดภาษาอังกฤษของนักศึกษาที่เรียน
ภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาต่างประเทศสาขาวิชาบริหารธุรกิจมหาวิทยาลัยอัสสัมชัญ

A NEEDS ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH AURAL/ORAL SKILLS OF EFL BUSINESS MAJORS AT
ASSUMPTION UNIVERSITY

ยิ่ง ลี่ *

Ying Li

รองศาสตราจารย์ ดร.สุมาลี ชินอกุล **

Associate Professor Dr. Sumalee Chinokul

บทคัดย่อ

การวิจัยครั้งนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อวิเคราะห์ความต้องการจำเป็นของทักษะการฟังและการพูดภาษาอังกฤษเชิงวิชาการจากนักศึกษาระดับปริญญาตรีในสาขาวิชาธุรกิจ ได้แก่ ภาษาอังกฤษธุรกิจ ดูนตรีธุรกิจ เศรษฐศาสตรธุรกิจ และสารสนเทศธุรกิจ จำนวน 66 คน และอาจารย์ที่สอนทางธุรกิจจำนวน 10 คน ในมหาวิทยาลัยอัสสัมชัญ เครื่องมือที่ใช้ในการเก็บรวบรวมข้อมูลคือ 1) แบบสอบถามที่ใช้ระบุความต้องการจำเป็นที่แท้จริงของทักษะการฟัง-พูดภาษาอังกฤษ สำหรับนักศึกษา และสำหรับใช้ประเมินระดับความเห็นพ้องของทั้ง 2 กลุ่ม 2) แบบสัมภาษณ์กับโครงสร้างที่ใช้เพื่ออธิบายปัญหาทักษะการฟังและการพูดภาษาอังกฤษสำหรับนักศึกษา

ผลการวิเคราะห์เชิงปริมาณพบว่า: 1) กลุ่มตัวอย่างมีความรู้สึกว่าทักษะการอภิปรายและการสัมภาษณ์กับเจ้าของภาษา มีความจำเป็นอย่างมากต่อการประสบความสำเร็จในหลักสูตรธุรกิจ 2) มีความแตกต่างกันอย่างมากของระดับความเห็นพ้องตรงกันระหว่าง 2 กลุ่ม ในลำดับของความต้องการจำเป็นของทักษะการฟังและการพูดภาษาอังกฤษ ผลโดยทั่วไปคือ นักศึกษาที่มีปัญหาในทักษะการฟังและการพูดภาษาอังกฤษ มากกว่า อาจารย์ที่ความสำคัญมากสำหรับทักษะการฟัง การวิเคราะห์เชิงคุณภาพพบว่า: นักศึกษาที่มีปัญหาในทักษะการฟังและการพูดภาษาอังกฤษ มากกว่า อาจารย์ที่ความสำคัญมากสำหรับทักษะการฟัง การวิเคราะห์เชิงคุณภาพพบว่า: ภาษาอังกฤษ

* Master's Degree Student, Department of Teaching English as a Foreign Language (International Program)

Faculty of Education, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand

E-mail Address: lee263710168@163.com

** Division of Foreign Language Teaching, Department of Curriculum and Instruction

Faculty of Education, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand

E-mail Address: csumalee@chula.ac.th

ISSN1905-4491

Abstract

The objective of the current study is to report the results of academic English aural/oral skills needs analysis carried out at Assumption University among the business majors, Business English, Business Music, Business Economics and Business Information. In this study, the research participants consisted of 66 undergraduate students and 10 business-subject professors. The research instruments used included: 1) a questionnaire to identify the real needs of business majoring students on aural/oral skills currently at Assumption University and to assess the degree of agreement between the two groups of informants; 2) the semi-structured interview to examine the specific problems on aural/oral skills of the students.

The results of quantitative analyses reveal that: 1) the students strongly agreed that 'student-led discussion and interviews with native English speakers' were essential for success in the business course. 2) the two groups' responses differed dramatically in the rankings of aural/oral skills as well as other survey item. It seemed that the main differences was that the students paid more attention on oral (speaking) skills while the instructors focused more on the aural (listening) skills. The results of qualitative analyses reveal that the students encountered the problems in both aural/oral skills.

คำสำคัญ: ทักษะการฟัง/ ทักษะการพูด/ สาขาวิชาธุรกิจ/ การสอนภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาต่างประเทศ

KEY WORDS: AURAL SKILLS/ ORAL SKILLS/ BUSINESS MAJORS/ EFL

Introduction

Needs analysis is essential for planning and implementing an English for academic purposes (EAP) course and material (Johns, 1981; Robinson, 1991). Needs assessment may be even more fundamental for business majors since learners' needs may be more varied and skills less predictable. Furthermore, as English major students and business major students have different strengths, weaknesses and characteristics, for the instructors, design an appropriate curriculum according to students' real needs is crucially important (I-Chen Chen & Hung-Chang Wu, 2013). Thus, for business majors, instructors of EAP must be aware of the nature of the tasks prepared for students in business-subject classrooms.

From the literature review, it is not hard to find out that a great number of needs assessment researches in EAP have focused on the development of academic literacy skills (e.g., Leki & Carson, 1994, 1997; Horowitz, 1986; Bridgeman & Carlson, 1984; Kroll, 1979) or on the general language skills (e.g., Johns, 1981; Ostler, 1980) needed to succeed in academic settings. However, the investigation and description of academic listening and speaking tasks and skills are a few. With the publication of needs analysis research on instructors' expectations regarding aural/oral skills (Ferris & Tagg, 1996a, 1996b) and on students' view of academic aural/oral skills (Ferris, 1998), researchers have begun to address the gap in the EAP literature. Since then the primarily research on academic aural/oral skills has emphasized in three areas: the development of lecture comprehension and note-taking skills, of formal presentation skills, and of various pronunciation sub-skills. But the range of

listening and speaking tasks required of students in classrooms is clearly much broader, like asking students to participate in big or small sized group discussions, to take part in debates, to recite on assigned course materials, or to work collaboratively on class projects (Ferris & Tagg, 1996a, 1996b; Mason, 1995). Thus, there is clearly a need for additional research. Specially, until recently, a little attention has been paid to the investigation and description of academic listening and speaking tasks and skills expected and required on business majors in an EFL context.

Speaking and listening tasks of all types appear to be vitally important for business majors (Kaplan & Stefanopolous, 1994; Johns, 1981; Ostler, 1980). As Assumption University, one of the famous international universities in Thailand, the special characteristics are Business and English, which makes it outstanding among all Thailand universities. The present study, when considered with the previous research, will present the needs and difficulties of EFL students in business academic settings, with the implications for the improvement of business majors course design at Assumption University, and also for EAP instruction and for needs analysis research.

Research Objectives

- 1) To identify the EFL students' perceptions of the aural/oral skills requirements in their business courses and of their own difficulties in meeting these expectations and perceptions of the relative importance of specific aural/oral tasks and skills in their academic settings.
- 2) To examine the types of listening and speaking tasks do business instructors expect or require of university EFL students.
- 3) To observe the differences in the perception of business instructors and EFL students.

Research Methodology

Participants

Research participants in the present study were 66 undergraduate students from Assumption University who were purposely selected and voluntarily responded to the questionnaire written in English. Among the 66 participants, 15 students, spending around 10 minutes, voluntarily responded the semi-structured interviews in English. Besides, 10 native English speaking instructors from Assumption University were conveniently and purposely selected to answer the Part C, Part D and Part E of the questionnaire.

Instruments

Research instruments include questionnaire and semi-structured interview which were adapted from the existing instruments by Professor Dana Ferris' study (1998) to match

with the content of Business majors in Thailand. The adapted questionnaire included five parts: 1) the demographic information in part A of the survey; 2) specific business course information which the students had taken or were taking in part B of the survey; 3) the students' perceptions of the aural/oral skills requirements in their courses in part C of the survey; 4) the students' own difficulties with the academic aural/ oral skills requirements they have previously identified in part D of the survey; 5) ranking the 7 skills concerned with aural and oral areas in part E of the survey. According to Ferris & Tagg's (1996a,1996b) research, the chosen specific tasks and skills in the survey were representative because the types of activities often included in EAP texts and courses. Besides, in order to get more direct and clear views or perceptions from the students, the researcher adapted the open ended questions of written form of the previous research (Ferris, 1998) into semi-structured interview.

The objectives of the questionnaire in the current study were to identify the real needs of business majoring students on aural/oral skills currently at Assumption University and to assess the degree of agreement between the two groups of informants. The semi-structured interviews were employed as a supporting tool. There were 4 questions to examine the specific problems on aural/oral skills of the students. The interview questions were presented to 15 volunteer students.

The questionnaire and semi-structured interview were verified for content validity by three experts, two from Assumption University and one from Chulalongkorn University. The content validity verification which demonstrated by the Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) value was 0.9, which was above 0 indicating the acceptable range. For the reliability check of the quantitative data, the researcher calculated quantitative Cronbah's alpha. The result was 0.829, which was highly reliable (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007).

Data collection

The researcher collected the data from the beginning of November to the middle of December in 2014 at Assumption University in Thailand, the following procedures were pursued. Firstly, the researcher investigated all the business majors of undergraduate school from the official website of Assumption University. Then the researcher contacted 15 faculty members from the four business majors personally and selected 10 native English speaking instructors among them who have been taught business-subject over two years at Assumption university and also asked the instructors' permission to use one of their classes to do survey before the class break. Before administrating the instruments, the purposes and the importance of the study were clarified to instructors and students. After students finished the questionnaire, the researcher administered 10-minute semi-structured interview to students who volunteered to participate in the study.

Data analysis

Quantitative data was obtained from the students' response in Part C, Part D, and Part E of the questionnaire while the data from instructors were elicited from Part C, Part D, and Part E of the questionnaire. The data were reported with the descriptive and frequency statistics using SPSS. Qualitative data were taken from open-ended items consisting of Part A, Part B of the questionnaire and the semi-structures interviews. The analysis was done by using content analysis.

Results

Demographic data of the students participated in this study is reported in Tables 1 and 2. The research findings are presented according to the sequence of research objectives.

Table 1 Demographic Profile of Students (N=66)

| Character | N |
|---|------------------|
| Major attended | |
| Business English | 19 |
| Business Music | 25 |
| Business Economics and Business Information | 22 |
| Level | |
| Senior | 35 |
| Junior | 31 |
| Gender | |
| Female | 49 |
| Male | 17 |
| Time variables(years, N=66) | Mean |
| Age | 22 |
| Time in learning English | 11 |
| Mother tongue of language(%) | |
| Thai (85%) | Chinese (3%) |
| | Timor-Leste (2%) |
| | Vietnam (1%) |
| | Korea (1%) |
| | Japanese (1%) |

Table 1 provides a profile of the 66 students who responded to the part A in the survey. The students were fairly evenly spread in the three faculties. And all the respondents were EFL students. Of the total 66 students, 19 were Business English majors from the Faculty of Arts; 25 were Business Music majors from the Faculty of Music; and 22 were Business Economics and Business Information majors from the Faculty of Martin de Tours School of Management. Specially, the vast majority of the respondents were Thai students. There were 49 (Around 74%) female and 17 male (around 26%), their average age was 22 years old and they had been learning English for an average of 11 years.

Table 2 Overview of selected courses (N=66)

| Character | N | Percentage |
|---|----|------------|
| Level | | |
| A general education course | 33 | 50% |
| A lower-division major or minor course | 13 | 23% |
| An upper-division major or minor course | 20 | 33% |
| Class size | | |
| 1-15 | 15 | 23% |
| 16-30 | 35 | 53% |
| 31-60 | 15 | 23% |
| Native English speakers in class | | |
| Less than 10% | 63 | 95% |
| 10-25% | 2 | 3% |
| 26-50% | 2 | 3% |

The part B of the survey, the students selected one course they had taken or were taking and responded to 4 subsequent items with that class in mind. As Table 2 shows, most of the respondents selected either general education (GE, 50%) or upper-division major courses (33%), only 27% left selected lower-division major courses. The largest class sizes represented were 16-30 (53%), 1-15(23%), 31-60 (23%), and 61-99(1%). In the majority of classes, native English speaking students were less than 10%.

Findings in relation to research objective 1 are reported in Tables 3-5. Table 3 presents the result of students' perceptions of aural/oral skills expectations and requirements in their business courses, Table 4 reports the result of students' own difficulties in meeting these expectations. Table 5 reveals the result of students' views of the importance of specific aural/oral tasks and skills.

Research objective 1: To identify the EFL students' perceptions of the aural/oral skills requirements in their business courses and of their own difficulties in meeting these expectations and perceptions of the relative importance of specific aural/oral tasks and skills in their academic settings.

Table 3 Required Course Participation and Aural/Oral Skills

| Skills | Always | Often | Sometimes | Never | Total(N=66) | |
|----------------------------|----------|----------|-----------|---------|-------------|------|
| | N(%) | N(%) | N(%) | N(%) | Mean | SD |
| Class participation | 23(34.8) | 29(43.9) | 12(18.2) | 2(3) | 1.89 | 0.81 |
| Small-group work | 16(24.2) | 28(42.4) | 20(30.3) | 2(3) | 2.12 | 0.81 |
| Group projects | 20(30.3) | 22(33.3) | 21(31.8) | 3(4.5) | 2.11 | 0.90 |
| Formal speeches | 16(24.2) | 29(43.9) | 19(28.8) | 2(3) | 2.12 | 0.81 |
| Student-led discussions | 14(21.2) | 34(51.5) | 16(24.2) | 2(3) | 2.09 | 0.76 |
| Class debates | 11(16.7) | 19(28.8) | 30(45.5) | 6(9.1) | 2.48 | 0.88 |
| Interviews * | 9(13.6) | 32(48.5) | 18(27.3) | 7(10.6) | 2.35 | 0.85 |
| Note-taking skills | 15(22.7) | 27(40.9) | 22(33.3) | 2(3) | 2.18 | 0.82 |
| In-class questions | 9(13.6) | 30(45.5) | 26(39.4) | 1(1.5) | 2.29 | 0.72 |
| Attendance at office hours | 24(36.4) | 22(33.3) | 19(28.8) | 1(1.5) | 1.97 | 0.84 |

Note: * represents ellipsis, the complete phrase is interviews with native English speakers.

As seen from the results in the majority of students ranked the items as ‘often’ with the top three skills ranging from ‘student-led discussion’ (51.5%), ‘interview with native English speaker’ (48.5%), ‘in-class questions’ (45.5%). Only in the skills of ‘attendance at office hours’ the respondents ranked ‘always’ the most and it was about 36.4%. Among the ranking of ‘always’ the top 3 skills were chosen, 1) attendance at the office hours, 2) class participation, and group projects. Among the rankings ‘often’ the top 3 most selected skills were chosen, 1) student-led discussions, 2) interviews with native English speaker and in-class questions. Among the rankings of ‘sometimes’ the top 3 skills were chosen, 1) class debates, 2) in-class questions and note-taking skills. Among the rankings of ‘never’ the top 3 skills were chosen, 1) interviews with native English speaker, 2) class debates and group projects.

Table 4 Students reported difficulties with Aural/Oral skills

| Skills | 1 (Always) | 2 (Often) | 3 (Sometimes) | 4 (Never) | Total(N=66) | |
|----------------------------|---------------|--------------|------------------|--------------|-------------|------|
| | N(%) | N(%) | N(%) | N(%) | Mean | SD |
| Class participation | 11(16.7) | 17(25.8) | 26(39.4) | 12(18.2) | 2.59 | 0.98 |
| small-group work | 6(9.1) | 19(28.8) | 33(50) | 8(12.1) | 2.65 | 0.81 |
| Group projects | 10(15.2) | 14(21.2) | 34(51.5) | 8(12.1) | 2.61 | 0.89 |
| Formal speeches | 11(16.7) | 15(22.7) | 35(53) | 5(7.6) | 2.52 | 0.86 |
| Student-led discussions | 6(9.1) | 16(24.2) | 33(50) | 11(16.7) | 2.74 | 0.85 |
| Class debates | 4(6.1) | 17(25.8) | 34(51.5) | 11(16.7) | 2.79 | 0.79 |
| Interviews * | 4(6.1) | 14(21.2) | 38(57.6) | 10(15.2) | 2.82 | 0.76 |
| Note-taking skills | 4(6.1) | 19(28.8) | 32(48.5) | 11(16.7) | 2.76 | 0.80 |
| In-class questions | 5(7.6) | 19(28.8) | 36(54.5) | 6(9.1) | 2.65 | 0.75 |
| Attendance at office hours | 11(16.7) | 12(18.2) | 30(45.5) | 13(19.7) | 2.68 | 0.98 |

Note: * represents ellipsis, the complete phrase is interviews with native English speakers which is the same as Table 6.

As for the difficulties with aural/oral skills, from Table 4 the majority highest ranks were for ‘sometimes’, which the top 3 highest rank being 1) interview with native English speakers, in-class questions and group projects, representing 57.6%, 54.4% and 51.5%, respectively. Among the ‘always’ rank, the top 3 skills of which 16.7% of the respondents chose are, class participation, formal speeches, and attendance at office hours. Among the ranking of ‘often’, the top 3 skills of which 28.8% of the respondents chose are, small-group work, note-taking skills, and in-class questions. Among the ranking of ‘never’, the top 3 skills of the respondents chose are, attendance at office hours, class participation, and the three same frequencies: student-led discussions, class debates and note-taking skills, representing 19.7%, 18.2% and 16.7%, respectively.

Table 5 Students reported ranking of specific academic aural/oral skills (N=63)

| Skills | Mean | SD |
|---------------------------------|------|------|
| Formal speaking | 2.95 | 2.10 |
| General listening comprehension | 2.75 | 1.54 |
| Pronunciation | 4.24 | 1.99 |
| Communication with peers | 4.00 | 1.73 |
| Class participation | 4.43 | 1.82 |
| Lecture note-taking | 5.19 | 1.75 |
| Communication with professor | 4.40 | 1.96 |

Students ranked the skills from 1 (most important) to 7 (least important). The results are shown in Table 5. Because some students failed to complete the rankings (e.g., ranking three skills 1–3 and leaving the remaining items blank), the total number of responses was 63. Respondents were asked to imagine that they could give advice to their teachers about the relative importance of seven specific aural or oral skills by ranking the seven areas. Also report the lowest mean score was general listening comprehension (2.75), followed with Formal speaking (2.95). The highest mean score was lecture note-taking skill (5.19).

Research Objective 2: To examine the types of listening and speaking tasks do business instructors expect or require of university EFL students.

Table 6 Professors' Responses on Course Requirements and Problem Areas

| | 1 (Always) | 2 (Often) | 3 (Sometimes) | 4 (Never) | Total (N=10) |
|----------------------------|---------------|--------------|------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Class participation | 90/- | -/30 | 10/70 | -/- | 100/100 |
| Small-group work | -/- | 100/20 | -/80 | -/- | 100/100 |
| Group projects | -/10 | 90/10 | 10/80 | -/- | 100/100 |
| Formal speeches | 30/10 | 30/40 | 20/30 | 20/20 | 100/100 |
| Student-led discussions | -/- | 50/60 | 50/30 | -/10 | 100/100 |
| Class debates | 10/20 | 40/30 | 50/50 | -/- | 100/100 |
| Interviews * | 20/10 | 70/60 | -/- | 10/30 | 100/100 |
| Note-taking skills | 90/- | -/40 | -/60 | 10/- | 100/100 |
| In-class questions | 90/10 | 10/40 | -/50 | -/- | 100/100 |
| Attendance at office hours | 10/10 | 70/10 | 10/80 | 10/- | 100/100 |

Note: /' the left side refers to course requirement, and the right side refers to problems.

As seen from the results of the ten instructors' response on course requirement in Table 6, the majority of instructors ranked the items as 'often' with the top three skills ranging from 'small-group work' (100%), 'group projects' (90%), and the same frequencies of 70%: 'interviews with native English speakers' and 'attendance at office hours'; Among the ranking of 'always' the top 3 skills were chosen 'class participation', 'note-taking skills' and 'in-class questions'; Among the ranking of 'sometimes' the top 3 skills were chosen 1) student-led discussions and class debates, 2) formal speeches; among the ranking of 'never' the top skill was chosen 'formal speeches', followed by 'interviews with native English speaker', note-taking skills and attendance at office hours. As for the instructors' response to the difficulties with aural/oral skills, from Table 6 the majority highest ranks were for

‘sometimes’, which the top 3 highest rank being 1) small-group work, group projects and attendance at office hours, representing 80% at the same time; among the ‘always’ rank, the highest rank was only 20%, which was class debates; among the ranking of ‘often’, the top 3 skills of the respondents chose are 1) ‘student-led discussions’ and ‘interviews with the native English speakers’ with 60% each, 2) ‘formal speeches’, ‘note-taking skills’ and ‘in-class questions’ with 40% each; among the ranking of ‘never’, the top 3 skills of the respondents chose are ‘interviews with native English speakers’, ‘formal speeches’ and ‘student-led discussions’, representing 30%, 20% and 10% respectively.

Table 7 Professors’ Aural/Oral Skills Rankings

| Skills | Mean Ranking (N=10) |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|
| General listening comprehension | 1.7 |
| Class participation | 2.3 |
| Lecture note-taking | 2.3 |
| Communication with professor | 4.1 |
| Communication with peers | 5.1 |
| Formal speaking | 6.1 |
| Pronunciation | 6.1 |

Table 7 shows the rank-ordered responses of instructors on the importance of the seven class activities. The instructors ranked the skills from 1 (most important) to 7 (least important). From the results, it shows the best score is 1.7 for item general listening comprehension, followed by class participation and lecture note-taking skills. However, the worst score is 6.1, which formal speaking and pronunciation got it.

Research objective 3: To observe the differences in the perception of business instructors and EFL students.

Table 8 Comparison of Students’ and professors’ Responses on Course Requirements

| Items | Requirements comparison | | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------|---------|---------|
| | students(% N=66)/professors(% N=10) | | | |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Class participation | 34.8/90 | 43.9/- | 18.2/10 | 3/- |
| Small-group work | 24.2/- | 42.5/100 | 30.3/- | 3/- |
| Group project | 30.3/- | 33.3/90 | 31.8/10 | 4.5/- |
| Formal speeches | 24.2/30 | 43.9/30 | 28.8/20 | 3/20 |
| Student-led discussion | 21.2/- | 51.5/50 | 24.2/50 | 3/- |
| Class debates | 16.7/10 | 28.8/40 | 45.5/50 | 9.1/- |
| Interviews* | 13.6/20 | 48.5/70 | 27.3/- | 10.6/10 |
| Note-taking skills | 22.7/90 | 40.9/- | 33.3/- | 3/10 |
| In-class questions | 13.6/90 | 45.5/10 | 39.4/- | 1.5/- |
| Attendance at office hours | 36.4/10 | 33.3/70 | 28.8/10 | 1.5/10 |

Note. Respondents rated the items in part C and D of the survey 1 (always), 2 (often), 3 (sometimes) or 4 (never).

**refers to no one chose the frequency.*

Table 8 summarizes the two groups' responses to the 10 items in Parts C. For the similarities of the course requirements, both the majority of students and instructors ranked highly on 'often', lowly on 'never' as a whole; to be specific, students and instructors have the significant agreement on 'formal speeches' and 'class debates'. And for the differences between the two groups, 'class participation' almost all the instructors selected *always*, but 43.9% students choose *often*, only 34.8% *always*; all the instructors agreed that item 'small-group work' was *often* required, but students was 42.5%; 'note-taking skills' 90% instructors thought it required *always*, for students, they held that it was required *often* or *sometimes*; about 'in-class question' they also held different ideas, which 90% instructors selected *always*, but students with 45.5% *often* and 39.4% *sometimes*.

Table 9 Comparison of Students' and professors' Responses on Course Problem Areas

| Items | Problems comparison | | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| | students(%;N=66)/professors(%;N=10) | | | |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Class participation | 16.7/- | 25.8/30 | 39.4/70 | 18.2/- |
| Small-group work | 9.1/- | 28.8/20 | 50/89 | 12.1/- |
| Group project | 15.2/10 | 21.2/10 | 51.5/80 | 12.1/- |
| Formal speeches | 16.7/10 | 22.7/40 | 53/30 | 7.6/20 |
| Student-led discussion | 9.1/- | 24.2/60 | 50/30 | 16.7/10 |
| Class debates | 6.1/20 | 25.8/30 | 51.5/50 | -/- |
| Interviews* | 6.1/10 | 21.2/60 | 57.6/- | 15.2/30 |
| Note-taking skills | 6.1/- | 28.8/40 | 48.5/60 | 16.7/- |
| In-class questions | 7.6/10 | 28.8/40 | 54.5/50 | 9.1/- |
| Attendance at office hours | 15.7/10 | 18.2/10 | 45.5/80 | 19.7/- |

Note. Respondents rated the items in part C and D of the survey 1 (*always*), 2 (*often*), 3 (*sometimes*) or 4 (*never*).

*- refers to no one chose the frequency.

From the problem side (see in Table 9), the similarities of the two groups were that the highest ranks overall were both *sometimes*, and at the same time, both groups has only a few supporters on 'group project', 'formal speeches', 'class debates', 'interviews with native English speakers', 'in-class questions' and 'attendance at office hours', and neither of the two chose *never* for class debates. And the two groups differs in the following aspects: 1) the results reports that for most items, no instructors chose *never*, excepting 'formal speeches', 'student-led discussion' and 'interviews with native English speakers', for students, only 'class debates'; 2) 'class participation', 25.8% students chose *often*, 39.4% *sometimes* and 18.2% *never*, but 70% instructors held *sometimes* and another 30% *often*; 3) the majority of instructors thought students *sometimes* would have problems on 'small-group work' and 'group projects' and 60% Instructors also reports that students *often* met problems on 'interviews with native English speakers', but the majority of students chose *sometimes*; 4) 80% teachers selected *never* on attendance at office hours, however, 16.7% students chose *always*, 18.2% *often*, 45.5% *sometimes* and only 19.7% *never*.

Table 10 Comparison of Professors' and Students' Aural/Oral Skills Rankings

| Students (N=63) | Mean | Professors (N=10) | Mean |
|---------------------------------|------|---------------------------------|------|
| General listening comprehension | 2.75 | General listening comprehension | 1.7 |
| Formal speaking | 2.95 | Class participation | 2.3 |
| Communication with peers | 4 | Lecture note-taking | 2.3 |
| Pronunciation | 4.24 | Communication with professor | 4.1 |
| Communication with professor | 4.4 | Communication with peers | 5.1 |
| Class participation | 4.43 | Formal speaking | 6.1 |
| Lecture note-taking | 5.19 | Pronunciation | 6.1 |

Note: The instructors ranked the skills from 1 (most important) to 7 (least important).

Comparisons between the instructors' and the students' rankings of the seven specific aural/oral skills are shown in Table 10. The instructors' and the students' ranking were dramatically different. Students ranked formal speaking as the 2nd important place, but instructors as the 6th. The teachers gave the pronunciation the least important place, but students put it in the 4th. For students, they ranked class participation into the 6th, but teachers gave it the 2nd important place.

Table 11 Comparison of different majors' Aural/Oral Skills Rankings

| Field and skill | M Rank | Field and skill | M Rank | Field and skill | M Rank |
|---------------------------------|--------|---------------------------------|--------|--|--------|
| Business English (N=19) | | Business Music (N=25) | | Business Economics and Business Information (N=19) | |
| General listening comprehension | 2.74 | General Listening comprehension | 2.48 | Formal speaking | 2.84 |
| Formal speaking | 3.11 | Formal speaking | 2.92 | General listening comprehension | 3.11 |
| Pronunciation | 3.58 | Communication with peers | 3.60 | Class participation | 4.21 |
| Communication with peers | 4.05 | Communication with professor | 4.00 | Communication with professor | 4.26 |
| Class participation | 4.21 | Pronunciation | 4.68 | Pronunciation | 4.32 |
| Communication with professor | 5.05 | Class participation | 4.76 | Communication with peers | 4.47 |
| Lecture note-taking | 5.26 | Lecture note-taking | 5.44 | Lecture note-taking | 4.79 |

Note. Respondents ranked the skills from 1 (most important) to 7 (least important).

Table 11 presents that among the four majors from three different faculties. The results were similar but also has certain difference little among the different business majors. For Business English, pronunciation Ranked the 3rd, but Business Music and Business Economics and Business Information put it into the 5th; Communication with peers was ranked very low by only Business Economics and Business Information (6th), and only the respondents of Business English ranked Communication with professors very low (6th).

Results from Interview

Table 12 reports the result from semi-structured interview from the 15 students.

Table 12 Students reported semi-structured interview: Summary of Comments (N=15)

| Area of concern | No. of comments | Area of concern | No. of comments |
|---|-----------------|--|-----------------|
| ESP class | (%) | Pronunciation | (%) |
| Need to offer more help with oral skills | 7 (46.7) | Need to improve articulation | 8 (53) |
| Need for work on formal presentations | 7 (46.7) | Lack of clarity in content/organization | 2 (13.3) |
| No aural/oral problem | 2 (13.3) | Need to allow students more time to speak | 1 (6) |
| Struggles with note-taking | 2 (13.3) | Struggles with lecture comprehension | 7 (46.7) |
| Interaction | (%) | Lecture comprehension and note-taking | (%) |
| Lack of confidence inhibits class | 3 (12.6) | Struggles with note-taking | 2 (13.5) |
| Native speakers talk too fast | 3 (12.6) | Struggles with lecture comprehension | 7 (46.7) |
| Participation and communication with native speakers | 4 (26) | | |

Table 12 showed the summary of interview comments from the 15 student volunteers. Respondents told that they struggled with lecture comprehensive, interaction with their instructors or English native speaking classmates, pronunciation for understanding the lecturers or on ESP classes. There were 53% (8 out of 15) respondents complained that their business subject instructors need to improve articulation. 46.7% students themselves thought they want to receive help on oral skills and formal presentations and also the same number of students struggled with lecture comprehension.

Students report their difficulty in studying as follows:

I think I don't have listening problems, I also think our teachers' teaching style is very good, but I have my own problem is that I am afraid of speaking in front of class.

(S1 from Business English)

In-class oral presentation, I hope our teachers can let us work in pairs rather than alone.

(S2 from Business Music)

I hope our professors can correct or sometimes warn us our pronunciation, because we are not native speakers. And we are business majors, it's important for us to have a more native sound English. But they didn't pay much on this, maybe they think it's our high school or after-school business. We actually need their advice in class time also.

(S3 from Business Economics)

Discussion and Recommendation for Future Research

EFL business students perceived that the aural/oral skills are required for their success in business courses. The majority of them identified 'student-led discussion' as the most needed skill. At the same time they reported that they sometimes encountered difficulties, being struggled with all the general skills. While the findings in the previous research, such as a study contacted by Ferris (1998), note-taking skills were identified as

essential to success for the courses by the ESL students. This might be because the research participants of the study conducted by Ferris were from Business, Engineering and Science, which Science major students were the majority respondents. Different discipline may require different study skills. In this current study the students were from business related major. Student-led discussions focus on students expressing their idea freely or speaking was thought significant for them. It implies that business major students regard speaking/oral skills as more important.

In the instructors' view, the skills on general listening were the most important skills for business majors, which correspond well with the research by Ferris (1998). Two skills were identified as needed skills for the students were 'good listening' and 'strategies for listening comprehension. The fact that the business instructors at Assumption University regarded the note-taking skills as essentially important does not correspond with the result from Ferris and Tagg's (1996) research. In their study, the finding showed that in business classes, which appeared to have the greatest degree of interaction, strong note-taking skills appeared to be somewhat less important than in the other fields, like Science and Engineering. The different found in the current research seems to imply that the main form to present the knowledge is lecture for business majors at Assumption university, and the teachers there are the main speakers in class.

It is important to note that the result of the two groups, students and the lectures, differed dramatically in the aural/oral rankings as well as on the most survey items. The differences found between the perception of students and the lectures were similarly found in Ferris (1998). It is interesting to note that it's very common to find the mismatch between the perceptions of students and lectures which regard to the academic speaking and listening skills. They seem to have different focus. Note-taking skills were ranked high by the professors and very low by the students. The only area of real agreement between students and professors was the importance of general listening comprehension. From the interviews' comments, it is not difficult to find out that students themselves focus more on oral/speaking area, because the complaints or worries were related to it, like pronunciation, presentation, communication with native speakers. But teachers concerned more about listening skills, class participation or note-taking. Differences between the two groups of respondents may be attributable to the subjects' varying perceptions and firsthand knowledge of the different items on the survey (Ferris & Tagg, 1996a). It implied that Instructors may not always be the best judges of the ways in which their students are struggling.

Recommendation for Future Research

Instructors should not completely neglect students' responses in the areas with which they are less familiar because the students themselves are the best sources of

information on their own difficulties. This study revealed that the main reason for causing the business majors' students and the instructors' different perceptions on almost aural/oral skills is that for students. They worries and focus more on speaking area, but teachers goes to the listening/aural area. It also revealed the relative importance of general listening comprehension for students' success in academic settings. Thus, instructors can provide students explicit instructions for coping with them, including identifying main points, repeating or clarifying what they have said. Meanwhile, the business majoring students should also acknowledge their responsibility and cooperate with their instructors more actively. From the interview's feedback, students appeared to have problems on their fluency and their pronunciation. In response to this, instructors should focus on encouraging their students to come to them more frequently for assistance and advice. It is also strongly recommended that the future research on this area conducts a research on more varied groups of students or narrow down the research for deeper studying on specific aural/oral skills for Business English majors.

References

Bridgeman, B., & Carlson, S. B. (1984). Survey of academic writing tasks. *Written Communication*, 1, 247–280.

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2007). *Research methods in education*. NY: Routledge.

Ferris, D. (2002). Students' views of academic aural/Oral skills: A comparative needs analysis. *TESOL Quarterly*, 25, 112-135.

Ferris, D., & Tagg, T. (1996a). Academic listening/speaking tasks for ESL students: Problems, suggestions, and implications. *TESOL Quarterly*, 30, 297–320.

Ferris, D., & Tagg, T. (1996b). Academic oral communication needs of EAP learners:What subject-matter instructors actually require. *TESOL Quarterly*, 30, 31–58.

Flowerdew, J. (Ed.). (1995). *Academic listening: Research perspectives*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Horowitz, D. M. (1986). What professors actually require: Academic tasks for the ESL classroom. *TESOL Quarterly*, 20, 445–461.

I-Chen Chen & Hung-Chang Wu. (2013). ESP Teachers' Perceptions of Business English Courses. *Taiwan International ESP Journal*, Vol. 5(1), 19-44.

Johns, A. M. (1981). Necessary English: A faculty survey. *TESOL Quarterly*, 15, 51-57.

Kroll, B. (1979). A survey of the writing needs of foreign and American college freshmen. *English Language Teaching Journal*, 33, 219–227.

Leki, I. (1995). Coping strategies for ESL students in writing tasks across the curriculum. *TESOL Quarterly*, 29, 235–260.

Ostler, S. E. (1980). A survey of academic needs for advanced ESL. *TESOL Quarterly*, 14, 489–502.

Robinson, P. c. (1991). *ESP today: A practitioner's guide*. New York: Prentice Hall.