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The CEFR Level of Undergraduate Students of a University in Northern Thailand for the Academic Year 2017

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Abstract: This study aims to gauge and compare the levels of English reading and listening of undergraduate students of a university in northern Thailand in accordance with the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). Comparisons were made on the levels scored by gender, cluster and faculty. The study was conducted on 7500 respondents from 17 faculties. The respondents composed of 2115 males and 5385 females who were students of Naresuan University Academic Year of 2017. It utilized the Cambridge English Placement Test which is an online CEFR Test developed and administered by Cambridge English. The findings of the study recorded respondents scoring from below A1 to C1 or above where only 0.2% scored C1 or above. The majority of male and female students scored A1 to A2. It is recommended that CEFR books such as Cambridge KET, Cambridge Preliminary and Cambridge First Books should be used to assist teachers and students. The second suggestion is to use CEFR tests to monitor the progress of students and continually gauge their level of English. This process acts as a checker or reminder to promote greater levels of English in higher education.

Keywords: CEFR, CEPT, English level, Faculty

Introduction

Literature related to EF English Proficiency Index survey showed that Thailand has low English proficiency ranking 64 out of 88 countries. It has dropped 11 spots in the proficiency rankings for non-native English speaking countries. Among Asians countries, Thailand ranked 16 out of 21. In Southeast Asian Nations, Thailand outdoes Cambodia and Myanmar (EF English Proficiency Index, 2018). There was no specific study on the level of Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) among the students of a major university in northern Thailand. Thus, this study is aimed to identify the current levels of English found among the students of a major university in northern Thailand in accordance to the CEFR levels. This study utilised a simple quantitative approach and descriptive analysis on respondents from Naresuan University. The detailed literature review, method of the study and conclusions were provided below.

Literature Review

There were four literatures covered in this section. The first one is the English Language Reform in 2014 by the Ministry of Education in Thailand (The Ministry of Education, 2014). Next is the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Thirdly, it elaborated on some information on English performance in Thailand that is related to the study. And finally, this is followed by information on Cambridge English Placement Test which is used by Naresuan University.

English Language Reform in 2014 by the Ministry of Education in Thailand

With the arrival of ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) in 2015 and to solve Thailand's English language problem, the Ministry of Education introduced the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) in 2014 in the Thai educational system and created guidelines for the implementation of the CEFR in English teaching reform. The decision was made as steps to lift the English proficiency of Thai students and improve the quality of Thai education.

The targeted area for this study is the CEFR for students particularly B2 which is equal to the ability of university students. This was to ensure every university student is proficient in the English language.

The Ministry of Education's latest policy was to boost all students' proficiency in English and to improve the standard of English learning and teaching in Thailand's schools. The aim was to provide a Thai labor force that will have economic competitiveness in the establishment of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) in 2015.

Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) is an international standard for describing language ability or proficiency developed by the Council of Europe. It describes language ability on a six-point scale, from A1 for beginners, up to C2 for those who have mastered a language. This makes it easy for anyone involved in language teaching and testing, such as teachers or learners, to see the level of different qualifications. It also means that employers and educational institutions can easily compare learners' qualifications to other exams in their country.

A candidate with a C2 level is highly proficient and can use English very fluently, precisely and sensitively in most cases while a candidate with an A1 level has a basic ability to use English language. According to CEFR experts these levels can be applied across schools, higher education institutions and in businesses. The scores ranging from 180 to 230 are for Proficient users of English. The scores ranging from 140 to 179 are for independent users of English and lastly scores ranging from 100 to 139 are for Basic users of English where the pupils or students who scored below 99 were required to study at a Pre A1 level for English.

In April 2014, the English Language Institute (ELI), a branch of the Ministry of Education (MoE) overseeing English language teaching in Thailand, had announced a policy of basing all aspects of English language curriculum reform on the CEFR framework. The CEFR framework will be wedded with the Communicative Language Teaching as a teaching method.

In a study conducted by Yan, Gu and Khalifa (2014) regarding the impact of CEFR Key English Test (KET) for Schools in Beijing, China, they found that the CEFR KET for Schools had exerted a positive impact on young learners' motivation to learn English. KET for Schools helped increased students' awareness of their own learning strengths and weaknesses and had assisted in their English proficiency. The parents interviewed revealed that the main factors contributing to this positive impact were the coverage of the four skills (reading, listening, writing and speaking) in KET for schools, the step-by-step learning approach offered by the examination, the relatively higher test difficulty of the exam compared with the tests at school, encouragement of young learners' self-esteem, and the trained teachers' teaching methods.

Cambridge English Placement Test (CEPT)

The Cambridge English Placement Test (CEPT) is an online adaptive test which can be used to group learners by their English level, place them on the right courses, in the right classes, or enter them for the right exams (Cambridge Assessment English, 2018). The test covers Reading and Listening skills as well as Language Knowledge. The test features a variety of accents and texts from a range of English-speaking countries. The test can take as little as 30 minutes, and the questions formats are both multiple-choice and type-in items. When finished, accurate results are given instantly and presented in the form of total score out of 50 and the CEFR level.

English performance in Thailand

Research studies conducted after the implementation of the CEFR by the Ministry of Education revealed that most students and teachers averaged A2. A study by Sinlapachai, Surasin, and Augkanurakbun (2016) investigated the use of online standard tests as indicators of English Proficiency according to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) at the English Program of Chonkanyanukoon School, Chonburi, Thailand. The study revealed that the average level of the students' proficiency was at A2 level using the Cambridge English Placement Test and Oxford Online Placement Test. A study by Chongdarakul (2015) measured English listening level of 42,712 English language teachers who were under the supervision of the Office of the Basic Education Commission. It was found that the majority of Thai teachers' average level was at A2 level. A study by Ketamon (2016) who measured senior high school students in the lower south of Thailand and teachers under the supervision of the Office of Basic Education Commission in Pattani Province revealed that most teachers and students' average scores were at the A2 level. A study by Franz and Teo (2017) found that the majority of English teachers in the south of Thailand had A2 level using an online placement test for teachers.

Research Methodology

The method of the study was a simple and straightforward quantitative study. The following sections described the respondents and the research design used for the study.

The respondents were the undergraduate students of Naresuan University Academic Year 2017 who had to take the CEFR Level test particularly CEPT. It was conducted in the Computer Laboratory of the university from August 2017 to July 2018. The research started with quantitative data collection of the respondents' online CEFR Test scores. The results calculated and generated by the online test were printed for analysis. The demographic information collected were gender and faculty. This is consecutively followed by the descriptive data analysis for frequencies. This is depicted in Figure 3.1 below.

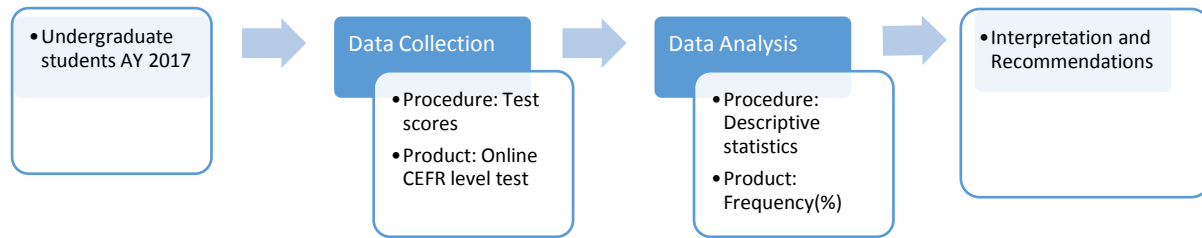


Figure 3.1: The research study

There is a need to gauge the CEFR level of English among the university students as previous studies in the past were conducted mostly on secondary schools and teachers. A good beginning towards it was to focus on one of the universities here in northern Thailand.

Once the general level of user of English is identified for these university students, a set of CEFR books could be suggested for the university students.

Findings, Analysis and Recommendations

This section reports and analyse the findings. It begins with details on the respondents followed by the findings and analysis that were guided by five research questions. These were as follows.

- (i) What are the CEFR levels of Naresuan University undergraduates Academic Year 2017?
- (ii) What are the CEFR levels between genders?
- (iii) What are the CEFR levels among clusters?
- (iv) What are the CEFR levels among faculties?
- (v) What are the CEFR levels between genders in each faculty?

The section ends with some recommendations before concluding.

The respondents

The respondents took the CEPT test from August 2017 to July 2018 in the Computer Laboratory of Naresuan University. The total attendance of the test takers was 7,500 from 3 clusters. All of the 7,500 respondents agreed to participate and attempted the CEFR level test. The 7,500 respondents for the study comprised of 2,349 from Health Sciences Cluster, 1,894 from Science and Technology Cluster and 3,257 from Social Sciences Cluster. There were 478 males and 1871 females in Health Sciences, 779 males and 1,115 females in Science and Technology and 858 males and 2,399 females in Social Sciences totalling to 2115 males and 5385 females. The details on the respondents are shown in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1: The respondents

Gender	Health Sciences Cluster	%	Science and Technology Cluster	%	Social Sciences Cluster	%	Total	%
Male	478	20	779	41	858	26	2115	28
Female	1871	80	1115	59	2399	74	5385	72
Total	2349	100	1894	100	3257	100	7500	100

The majority (80%) of the Health Science Cluster, (59%) of the Science and Technology Cluster and (74%) of the Social Sciences Cluster were females. It seemed that more females prefer to study here at Naresuan University.

4.2 English level of the test takers in the Academic Year 2017

This section responded to the five questions that guided the study. The first question is represented by Table 4.2. The second question is represented by Table 4.3 and the third and the fourth questions are represented by Table 4.4 and Table 4.5 respectively. The final question is represented by Table 4.6 to Table 4.23.

The CEFR level of AY 2017 test takers

The first question was on the CEFR levels scored in English by the test takers AY 2017 respondents. Frequency count from Table 4.2 below showed that the percentage of C1 or above proficient users of English was 0.2% for the test takers AY 2017. The independent B2 users for the test takers AY 2017 were 1.3%. The B1 users of English were 7.8%. The A2 basic users of English were 42.8%. The A1 basic users were 44.2% and below A1 users were 3.7%.

Table 4.2: CEFR score and percentage of students

CEFR Level	Undergraduate students AY 2017	%
C1 or above	14	0.2
B2	96	1.3
B1	584	7.8
A2	3210	42.8
A1	3313	44.2
Below A1	283	3.7
Total	7500	100

The CEFR scores shown in Table 4.2 indicated that there were very few C1 or above proficient users. There were more B1 users compared to B2 independent users. The majority of the test takers for AY 2017 was A1 to A2 basic users of English at 44.2% and 42.8%. The A2 users had an ability to deal

with simple, straightforward information and begin to express oneself in familiar contexts. The A1 users of English had the basic ability to communicate and exchange information in a simple way.

The CEFR levels by gender

The second question was regarding the differences between male and female respondents' CEFR levels in their ability to use English. This is depicted in Table 4.3 below.

Table 4.3: CEFR score and percentage between male and female

	Male	%	Female	%
C1 or above	8	0.4	6	0.1
B2	41	1.9	55	1
B1	184	8.7	400	7.4
A2	860	40.7	2350	43.6
A1	935	44.2	2378	44.2
below A1	87	4.1	196	3.6
TOTAL	2115	100	5385	100

Data showed 0.4% of the males were at the C1 or above level, 1.9% at the B2 level, 8.7% at the B1 level, 40.7% at the A2 level, 44.2% at the A1 level and 4.1% at below A1 level. In contrast 0.1% of the females were at C1 or above level, 1% at B2, 7.4% at B1, 43.6% at A2 level, 44.2% at A1 level and 3.6% at below A1 level.

At the level B1 to C1 or above, the percentage of independent users to proficient English users was almost the same between genders. More females were at A2 level 43.6% than males at 40.7%. The percentage for A1 was the same between males and females at 44.2%. At below A1 there were 4.1% males compared to 3.6% females. The majority of males and females were at A1 at 44.2%.

In conclusion, based on the CEFR user levels in the finding, the majority of the respondents in this study were A1 to A2 users of English where the females were better than the male English language users.

The ability to use English among clusters

The third question was whether there was a difference in the ability to use English among clusters. In total there were 7,500 respondents from 3 clusters where 2,349 were from Health Sciences (HS), 1,894 were from Science and Technology (ST) and 3,257 were from Social Sciences (SS). The findings are displayed in Table 4.4 below.

At C1 level or above the HS and SS had the same proficient user of English language at 0.2%. The ST had 0.1%. At B2 level HS at 2%, ST at 0.2% and SS at 1.4%. At B1 level there were 10.9% for HS, 2.1% for ST and 8.9% for SS. At A2 level there were 47.9% HS, 60.7% ST and 46.6% SS. At A1 level there were 36.7% HS, 60.7% ST and 40% SS. There was below A1 level user of English for HS at 2.3%, 7.1 for ST and there was 2.9% for SS.

Table 4.4: CEFR score and percentage by cluster

CEFR	Health Sciences Cluster	%	Science and Technology Cluster	%	Social Sciences Cluster	%
C1 or above	5	0.2	1	0.1	8	0.2
B2	47	2	4	0.2	45	1.4
B1	256	10.9	39	2.1	289	8.9
A2	1125	47.9	567	29.9	1518	46.6
A1	861	36.7	1149	60.7	1303	40
below A1	55	2.3	134	7.1	94	2.9
Total	2349	100	1894	100	3257	100

Overall the three clusters had 0.5% C1 or above proficient language users, 12.9% B1 to B2 independent users of English among HS Cluster and 12.6% on both ST and SS Clusters, and an 86.9% below A1 to A2: Basic English users in HS Cluster, 97.7% in ST Cluster and 89.5% in SS Cluster. Hence there is a difference in ability to use English among the three clusters and the majority of the students in the HS Cluster were the best users of English language among the three clusters.

The ability to use English among faculties

The fourth question was whether there was a difference in the ability to use English among faculties. There were 17,500 respondents from 17 faculties where 350 were from the Faculty of Agriculture, 135 from the Faculty of Dentistry, 312 from the Faculty of Law, 1,053 from the Faculty of BEC, 601 from the Faculty of Nursing, 329 from the Faculty of Medicine, 176 from the Faculty of Pharmacy, 809 from the Faculty of Humanities, 527 from Naresuan University International College, 806 from the Faculty of Science, 419 from the Faculty of Medical Science, 520 from the Faculty of Engineering, 220 from the Faculty of Education, 218 from the Faculty of Architecture, 417 from the Faculty of Allied Health Sciences, 336 from the Faculty of Social Science and 272 from the Faculty of Public Health. The findings are revealed in Table 4.5 below.

Table 4.5: CEFR score and percentage among students in different faculties

Faculty	CEFR	C1 or above	B2	B1	A2	A1	Below A1	Total
Agriculture	1	0	5	76	234	34	350	
%	0.3	0	1.4	21.7	66.9	9.7	100	
Dentistry	0	4	31	84	16	0	135	
%	0	3	23	62	11.9	0	100	
Law	0	0	5	116	181	10	312	
%	0	0	1.6	37.2	58	3.2	100	
Business Adm.	1	0	30	430	541	51	1053	
%	0.1	0	2.9	40.8	51.4	4.8	100	

Nursing	0	2	13	230	328	28	601
%	0	0.3	2.2	38.3	54.6	4.7	100
Medicine	3	28	109	167	21	1	329
%	0.9	8.5	33.1	50.8	6.4	0.3	100
Pharmacy	0	8	35	109	24	0	176
%	0	4.5	19.9	61.9	13.6	0	100
Humanities	2	16	106	418	249	18	809
%	0.2	2	13.1	51.7	30.8	2.2	100
International College	5	24	115	324	57	2	527
%	0.9	4.6	21.8	61.5	10.8	0.4	100
Science	0	4	14	235	502	51	806
%	0	0.5	1.7	29.2	62.3	6.3	100
Med. Science	0	0	14	188	203	14	419
%	0	0	3.3	44.9	48.4	3.3	100
Engineering	0	0	14	193	283	30	520
%	0	0	2.7	37.1	54.4	5.8	100
Education	0	5	19	101	90	5	220
%	0	2.3	8.6	45.9	40.9	2.3	100
Architecture	0	0	6	63	130	19	218
%	0	0	2.8	28.9	59.6	8.7	100
Allied Health Sciences	2	5	46	248	113	3	417
%	0.5	1.2	11	59.5	27.1	0.7	100
Social Science	0	0	14	129	185	8	336
%	0	0	4.2	38.4	55.1	2.4	100
Public Health Science	0	0	8	99	156	9	272
%	0	0	2.9	36.4	57.4	3.3	100

There were 6 faculties at C1 or above namely: Agriculture at 0.3%, Business Administration at 0.1%, both Medicine and International College at 0.9%, Humanities at 0.2% and Allied Health Sciences at 0.5%. At B2 level there were 9 faculties namely: Dentistry at 3%, Nursing at 0.3%, Medicine at 8.5%, Pharmacy at 4.5%, Humanities at 2%, International College at 4.6%, Science at 0.5%, Education at 2.3% and AHS at 1.2%. There were below A1 to B1 levels from all the faculties.

Data showed that majority of the test takers in Agriculture were A1 level at 66.9%, A2 in Dentistry at 62%, A1 in Law at 58%, A1 in Business Administration at 51.4%, A1 in Nursing at 54.6%, A2 in Medicine at 50.8%, A2 in Pharmacy at 61.9%, A2 in Humanities at 51.7%, A2 in International College at 61.5%, A1 in Science at 62.3%, A1 in Medical Science at 48.4%, A1 in Engineering at 54.4%, A2 in Education at 45.9%, A1 in Architecture at 59.6%, A2 in Allied Health Sciences at 59.5%, A1 in Social Science at 55.1% and A1 in Public Health Science at 57.4%.

The ability to use English between genders in each faculty

The final question was regarding the differences between male and female respondents' CEFR levels in their ability to use English in each faculty. These are shown from Tables 4.6 to 4.22.

The ability to use English between genders in the Faculty of Agriculture

There were 350 students from this faculty. The male Agriculture represented 23% of the respondents and the female Agriculture represented 77%. The findings are shown in Table 4.6 below.

Table 4.6: CEFR score and percentage between male and female in the Faculty of Agriculture

	Male	%	Female	%
C1 or above	0	0	1	0.4
B2	0	0	0	0
B1	2	2.5	3	1.1
A2	19	23.7	57	21.1
A1	50	62.5	184	68.1
below A1	9	11.3	25	9.3
TOTAL	80	100	270	100

At C1 or above there was only 1 female proficient English language user in Agriculture and no male user. Both had no B2 level or independent users in Agriculture. At B1 level there was 2.5% independent users among the males whereas there was 1.1% among female users in Agriculture. At A2 level there was 23.7% male users compared to 21.1% female users. At A1 level there was 62.5% male users compared to 68.1% female users. Lastly 11.3% male users were below A1 compared to 9.3% among the female users. Thus, there is a difference in ability to use English between the female and male respondents in the Faculty of Agriculture. The female Agriculture were better users of English compared to the male at proficient level.

The ability to use English between genders in the Faculty of Dentistry

There were 135 students in this study. The male Dentistry represented 31% of the respondents and the female Dentistry represented 69%. The findings are shown in Table 4.7 below.

Table 4.7: CEFR score and percentage between male and female in the Faculty of Dentistry

	Male	%	Female	%
C1 or above	0	0	0	0
B2	3	7.1	1	1.1
B1	9	21.4	22	23.7
A2	27	64.3	57	61.3
A1	3	7.1	13	13.9
below A1	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	42	100	93	100

Both had no C1 or above and below A1 level in the Faculty of Dentistry. At B2 level there was 7.1% independent users from the male whereas 1.1% from the female. At B1 level there was 21.4% from <http://www.gentefl.org/gen-tefl-journal.html>

the male users compared to 23.7% from the female. At A2 level there was 64.3% basic users of English among the male compared to 61.3% among the female. At A1 level there was 7.1% basic users in English among the male compared to 13.9% among the female users. Hence there is a difference in ability to use English between male and female in the Faculty of Dentistry since the majority of the male Dentistry were better users of English language than the female Dentistry at an independent level.

The ability to use English between genders in the Faculty of Law

There were 312 students from this faculty. The male Law represented 36% of the respondents and the female Law represented 64%. The findings are shown in Table 4.8 below.

Table 4.8: CEFR score and percentage between male and female in the Faculty of Law

	Male	%	Female	%
C1 or above	0	0	0	0
B2				
B1	2	1.8	3	1.5
A2	40	36	76	37.8
A1	65	58.6	116	57.7
below A1	4	3.6	6	3
TOTAL	111	100	201	100

Both had no C1 or above and B2 level in the Faculty of Law. At B1 level there was 1.8% independent users from the male whereas 1.5% from the female. At A2 level there was 36% basic users from the male compared to 37.8% from the female. At A1 level there was 58.6% among the male compared to 57.7% among the female. At below A1 level there was 3.6% from the male compared to 3% from the female. Hence, there is a difference in ability to use English between the male and the female in the Faculty of Law. The male Law were better users of English compared to the female Law at an independent level.

The ability to use English between genders in the Faculty of Business Administration

There were 1,053 students from this faculty. The male Business Administration represented 27% of the respondents and the female Business Administration represented 73%. The findings are shown in Table 4.9 below.

Table 4.9: CEFR score and percentage between male and female in the Faculty of Business Administration

	Male	%	Female	%
C1 or above	1	0.3	0	0
B2	0	0	0	0
B1	9	3.2	21	2.7
A2	117	40.9	313	40.8
A1	142	49.7	399	52
below A1	17	5.9	34	4.4
TOTAL	286	100	767	100

At C1 or above there was only male proficient English language user in Business Administration and no male user. Both had no B2 level or independent users. At B1 level there was 3.2% independent

users among the male whereas there was 2.7% among the female users. At A2 level there was 40.9% basic users from the male compared to 40.8% from the female. At A1 level there was 49.7% male users compared to 40.8% female users. Lastly, 5.9% male users were below A1 compared to 4.4% female users. Thus, there is a difference in ability to use English between the female and male respondents in the Faculty of Business Administration. The male BA were better users of English compared to the female BA at proficient level.

The ability to use English between genders in the Faculty of Nursing

There were 601 students from this faculty. The male Nursing represented 10% of the respondents and the female Nursing represented 90%. The findings are shown in Table 4.10 below.

Table 4.10: CEFR score and percentage between male and female in the Faculty of Nursing

	Male	%	Female	%
C1 or above	0	0	0	0
B2	1	1.7	1	0.2
B1	1	1.7	12	2.2
A2	24	40.7	206	38
A1	33	55.9	295	54.4
below A1	0	0	28	5.2
TOTAL	59	100	542	100

Both had no C1 or above in the Faculty of Nursing. At B2 level there was 1.7% independent users from the male whereas 0.2% from the female. At B1 level there was 1.7% users from the male compared to 2.2% from the female. At A2 level there was 40.7% basic users among the male compared to 38% among the female. At A1 level there was 55.9% from the male compared to 54.4% from the female. There were no below A1 from the male whereas the female had 5.2%. Hence there is a difference in ability to use English between the female and male respondents in the Faculty of Nursing. The male Nursing were better users of English compared to the female Nursing at independent level.

The ability to use English between genders in the Faculty of Medicine

There were 329 students from this faculty. The male Medicine represented 44% of the respondents and the female Medicine represented 56%. The findings are shown in Table 4.11 below.

Table 4.11: CEFR score and percentage between male and female in the Faculty of Medicine

	Male	%	Female	%
C1 or above	1	0.7	2	1.1
B2	12	8.3	16	8.6
B1	43	29.9	66	35.7
A2	73	50.7	94	50.8
A1	14	9.7	7	3.8
below A1	1	0.7	0	0
TOTAL	144	100	185	100

At C1 or above there was 0.7% proficient English language user from the male Medicine whereas 1.1% from the female. At B2 level or independent users there was 8.3% from the male compared to 8.6%

from the female. At B1 level there was 29.9% independent users among the male whereas there was 35.7% among the female users. At A2 level there was 50.7% basic users from the male compared to 50.8% from the female. At A1 level there was 9.7% male users compared to 3.8% female users. Lastly 0.7% male users were below A1 and no female users. Thus, there is a difference in ability to use English between the female and male respondents in the Faculty of Medicine. The female Medicine were better users of English compared to the male Medicine from independent level to proficient level.

The ability to use English between genders in the Faculty of Pharmacy

There were 176 students from this faculty. The male Pharmacy represented 19% of the respondents and the female Pharmacy represented 81%. The findings are shown in Table 4.12 below.

Table 4.12: CEFR score and percentage between male and female in the Faculty of Pharmacy

	Male	%	Female	%
C1 or above	0	0	0	0
B2	5	14.7	3	2.1
B1	8	23.5	27	19
A2	18	52.9	91	64
A1	3	8.8	21	14.8
below A1	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	34	100	142	100

Both had no C1 or above and below A1 level in the Faculty of Pharmacy. At B2 level there was 14.7% independent users from the male whereas 2.1% from the female. At B1 level there was 23.5% from the male users compared to 19% from the female. At A2 level there was 52.9% basic users of English among the male compared to 64% among the female. At A1 level there was 8.8% basic users in English among the male compared to 14.8% among the female users. Hence there is a difference in ability to use English between male and female in the Faculty of Pharmacy since the majority of the male Pharmacy were better users of English language than the female Pharmacy at an independent level.

The ability to use English between genders in the Faculty of Humanities

There were 809 students from this faculty. The male Humanities represented 22% of the respondents and the female Humanities represented 88%. The findings are shown in Table 4.13 below.

Table 4.13: CEFR score and percentage between male and female in the Faculty of Humanities

	Male	%	Female	%
C1 or above	1	0.6	1	0.2
B2	6	3.3	10	1.6
B1	26	14.4	80	12.7
A2	82	45.3	336	53.5
A1	63	34.8	186	29.6
below A1	3	1.6	15	2.4
TOTAL	181	100	628	100

At C1 or above there was 0.7% proficient English language user from the male Humanities whereas 0.2% from the female. At B2 level or independent users there was 3.3% from the male compared

to 1.6% from the female. At B1 level there was 14.4% independent users among the male whereas there was 12.7% among the female users. At A2 level there was 45.3% basic users from the male compared to 53.5% from the female. At A1 level there was 34.8% male users compared to 29.6% female users. Lastly 1.6% male users were below A1 compared to 2.4% from the female. Thus, there is a difference in ability to use English between the female and male respondents in the Faculty of Humanities. The male Humanities were better users of English compared to the female Humanities at proficient and independent level.

The ability to use English between genders in the Faculty of International College

There were 527 students from this faculty. The male International College represented 23% of the respondents and the female International College represented 77%. The findings are shown in Table 4.14 below.

Table 4.14: CEFR score and percentage between male and female in the Faculty of International College

	Male	%	Female	%
C1 or above	3	2.5	2	0.5
B2	9	7.5	15	3.7
B1	39	32.5	76	18.7
A2	67	55.8	257	63.1
A1	2	1.7	55	13.5
below A1			2	0.5
TOTAL	120	100	407	100

At C1 or above there was 2.5% proficient English language user from the male International College whereas 0.5% from the female. At B2 level or independent users there was 7.5% from the male compared to 3.7% from the female. At B1 level there was 32.5% independent users among the male whereas there was 18.7% among the female users. At A2 level there was 55.8% basic users from the male compared to 63.1% from the female. At A1 level there was 1.7% male users compared to 13.5% female users. Lastly 0.5% female users were below A1 and no male users. Thus, there is a difference in ability to use English between the female and male respondents in the Faculty of International College. The male International College were better users of English compared to the female International College at proficient level.

The ability to use English between genders in the Faculty of Science

There were 806 students from this faculty. The male Science represented 34% of the respondents and the female Science represented 66%. The findings are shown in Table 4.15 below.

Table 4.15: CEFR score and percentage between male and female in the Faculty of Science

	Male	%	Female	%
C1 or above	0	0	0	0
B2	1	0.4	3	0.6
B1	9	3.3	5	0.9
A2	85	31.1	150	28.1

A1	166	60.8	336	63
below A1	12	4.4	39	7.3
TOTAL	273	100	533	100

Both had no C1 or above in the Faculty of Science. At B2 level there was 0.4% independent users from the male whereas 0.6% from the female. At B1 level there was 3.3% from the male users compared to 0.9% from the female. At A2 level there was 31.1% basic users of English among the male compared to 28.1% among the female. At A1 level there was 60.8% basic users in English among the male compared to 63% among the female users. Lastly there was 4.4% below A1 from the male compared to 7.3% from the female. Hence there is a difference in ability to use English between male and female in the Faculty of Science since the majority of the male Science were better users of English language than the female Science at an independent level.

The ability to use English between genders in the Faculty of Medical Science

There were 419 students from this faculty. The male Medical Science represented 16% of the respondents and the female Medical Science represented 84%. The findings are shown in Table 4.16 below.

Table 4.16: CEFR score and percentage between male and female in the Faculty of Medical Science

	Male	%	Female	%
C1 or above	0	0	0	0
B2	0	0	0	0
B1	2	3	12	3.4
A2	28	42.4	160	45.3
A1	33	50	170	48.2
below A1	3	4.6	11	3.1
TOTAL	66	100	353	100

Both had no C1 or above and B2 level in the Faculty of Medical Science. At B1 level there was 3% independent users from the male whereas 3.5% from the female. At A2 level there was 42.4% basic users from the male compared to 45.3% from the female. At A1 level there was 50% among the male compared to 48.2% among the female. At below A1 level there was 4.6% from the male compared to 3.1% from the female. Thus, there is a difference in ability to use English between the female and male respondents in the Faculty of Medical Science. The female Medical Science were better users of English compared to the male Medical Science at independent level.

The ability to use English between genders in the Faculty of Engineering

There were 520 students from this faculty. The male Engineering represented 68% of the respondents and the female Engineering represented 32%. The findings are shown in Table 4.17 below.

Table 4.17: CEFR score and percentage between male and female in the Faculty of Engineering

	Male	%	Female	%
C1 or above	0	0	0	0
B2	0	0	0	0
B1	8	2.3	6	3.6
A2	129	36.4	64	38.6

A1	194	54.8	89	53.6
below A1	23	6.5	7	4.2
TOTAL	354	100	166	100

Both had no C1 or above and B2 level in the Faculty of Engineering. At B1 level there was 2.3% independent users from the male whereas 3.6% from the female. At A2 level there was 36.4% basic users from the male compared to 38.6% from the female. At A1 level there was 54.8% among the male compared to 53.6% among the female. At below A1 level there was 6.5% from the male compared to 4.2% from the female. Thus, there is a difference in ability to use English between the female and male respondents in the Faculty of Engineering. The female Engineering were better users of English compared to the male Engineering at independent level.

The ability to use English between genders in the Faculty of Education

There were 220 students from this faculty. The male Education represented 30% of the respondents and the female Education represented 70%. The findings are shown in Table 4.18 below.

Table 4.18: CEFR score and percentage between male and female in the Faculty of Education

	Male	%	Female	%
C1 or above	0	0	0	0
B2	2	3.1	3	1.9
B1	5	7.7	14	9
A2	29	44.6	72	46.5
A1	27	41.5	63	40.6
below A1	2	3.1	3	1.9
TOTAL	65	100	155	100

Both had no C1 or above in the Faculty of Education. At B2 level there was 3.1% independent users from the male whereas 1.9% from the female. At B1 level there was 7.7% from the male users compared to 9% from the female. At A2 level there was 44.6% basic users of English among the male compared to 46.5% among the female. At A1 level there was 41.5% basic users in English among the male compared to 40.6% among the female users. Lastly there was 3.1% below A1 from the male compared to 1.9% from the female. Hence there is a difference in ability to use English between the male Education and the female Education since the male Education were better users than the female Education at independent level.

The ability to use English between genders in the Faculty of Architecture

There were 218 students from this faculty. The male Architecture represented 33% of the respondents and the female Architecture represented 67%. The findings are shown in Table 4.19 below.

Table 4.19: CEFR score and percentage between male and female in the Faculty of Architecture

	Male	%	Female	%
C1 or above	0	0	0	0
B2	0	0	0	0
B1	2	2.8	4	2.7
A2	20	27.8	43	29.5

A1	42	58.3	88	60.3
below A1	8	11.1	11	7.5
TOTAL	72	100	146	100

Both had no C1 or above and B2 level in the Faculty of Architecture. At B1 level there was 2.8% independent users from the male whereas 2.7% from the female. At A2 level there was 27.8% basic users from the male compared to 29.5% from the female. At A1 level there was 58.3% among the male compared to 60.3% among the female. At below A1 level there was 11.1% from the male compared to 7.5% from the female. Hence there is no difference in ability to use English between the male and the female in the Faculty of Architecture since their differences are very close at independent level.

The ability to use English between genders in the Faculty of Allied Health Sciences

There were 417 students from this faculty. The male AHS represented 23% of the respondents and the female AHS represented 77%. The findings are shown in Table 4.20 below.

Table 4.20: CEFR score and percentage between male and female in the Faculty of Allied Health Sciences

	Male	%	Female	%
C1 or above	2	2.1	0	0
B2	2	2.1	3	0.9
B1	12	12.8	34	10.5
A2	57	60.7	191	59.1
A1	19	20.2	94	29.1
below A1	2	2.1	1	0.3
TOTAL	94	100	323	100

At C1 or above there was only male proficient English language user in Allied Health Sciences and no female user. At B2 level there was 2.1% independent users among the male whereas there was 0.9% among the female users. At B1 level there was 12.8% from the male whereas 10.5 from the female. At A2 level there was 60.7% basic users from the male compared to 59.1% from the female. At A1 level there was 20.2% male users compared to 29.1% female users. Lastly 2.1% male users were below A1 compared to 0.3% female users. Thus, there is a difference in ability to use English between the female and male respondents in the Faculty of Allied Health Sciences. The male AHS were better users of English compared to the female AHS at proficient level.

The ability to use English between genders in the Faculty of Social Sciences

There were 336 students in this study. The male Social Sciences represented 28% of the respondents and the female Social Sciences represented 72%. The findings are shown in Table 4.21 below.

Table 4.21: CEFR score and percentage between male and female in the Faculty of Social Science

	Male	%	Female	%
C1 or above	0	0	0	0
B2	0	0	0	0
B1	5	5.3	9	3.7
A2	32	33.7	97	40.3

A1	55	57.9	130	53.9
below A1	3	3.1	5	2.1
TOTAL	95	100	241	100

Both had no C1 or above and B2 level in the Faculty of Social Science. At B1 level there was 5.3% independent users from the male whereas 3.7% from the female. At A2 level there was 33.7% basic users from the male compared to 40.3% from the female. At A1 level there was 57.9% among the male compared to 53.9% among the female. At below A1 level there was 3.1% from the male compared to 2.1% from the female. Hence there is a difference in ability to use English between male SS and female SS since the majority of the male SS were better users of English language than the female at an independent level.

The ability to use English between genders in the Faculty of Public Health Science

There were 272 students from this faculty. The male PHS represented 14% of the respondents and the female PHS represented 86%. The findings are shown in Table 4.22 below.

Table 4.22: CEFR score and percentage between male and female in the Faculty of Public Health Science

	Male	%	Female	%
C1 or above				
B2				
B1	2	5.2	6	2.6
A2	13	33.3	86	36.9
A1	24	61.5	132	56.6
below A1			9	3.9
TOTAL	39	100	233	100

Both had no C1 or above and B2 level in the Faculty of Public Health Science. At B1 level there was 5.2% independent users from the male whereas 2.6% from the female. At A2 level there was 33.3% basic users from the male compared to 36.9% from the female. At A1 level there was 61.5% among the male compared to 56.6% among the female. At below A1 level there was only for female at 3.9%. Hence there is a difference in ability to use English between male PHS and female PHS since the majority of the male PHS were better users of English language than the female PHS at an independent level.

CONCLUSION

This study measured the ability to use English among undergraduate students in one of the northern universities in Thailand by using a reading and listening CEFR online test. The findings indicated that the males from the Faculties of Dentistry, Law, Business Administration, Nursing, Humanities, International College, Science, Architecture, Education, Allied Health Sciences, Social Sciences and Public Health Science had better English user ability level according to the CEFR test compared to the female. In other faculties, the females recorded better English user ability than the males in the Faculties of Agriculture, Medicine, Medical Science and Engineering. It also showed that the majority of the undergraduate test takers in the university were basic users of English at the A2 and A1 levels. This means they had an ability to deal with simple, straightforward information and begin to

express oneself in familiar contexts and a basic ability to communicate and exchange information in a simple way. Thus, the most suitable CEFR books for the university students are probably the Cambridge First series for B2 and above, the Cambridge Preliminary series for B1 and the Cambridge KET for A2 and below from the Cambridge's General and Higher Education sets of books.

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