

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the results and discussion from the analyses of the data based on the research questions of the study. They are shown in the following sequences.

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4.1 Results of the Study

4.1.1 The Subjects' English Language Proficiency

Research question 1: What is the English language proficiency of the subjects?

To answer the first research question on what the subjects' English language proficiency is, the subjects' TOEIC scores obtained from the official TOEIC examination taken from January 30th to February 1st, 2006 are taken as indicators of their English language proficiency as shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 The Subjects' English Language Proficiency (TOEIC Scores)

Number of Subjects (N)	Range		Average English Proficiency (Mean)	SD
	Minimum Score	Maximum Score		
80	250	880	462	117.90

From Table 4.1, out of the 990 possible maximum TOEIC score, the research subjects' average score was 462 (SD = 117.90) with a range of 250 to 880 (See Appendix B, page 105). The English proficiency of all the 80 subjects can be classified and interpreted based on the ranges of TOEIC scores adapted from Rogers (2003), Rymniak (1997), and the TOEIC Examinee Handbook as shown in Tables 4.2.

Table 4.2 The Subjects' English Proficiency and Score Interpretation

Subjects (N = 80)	TOEIC Score Range	Proficiency Level	Proficiency Description	Position
25 (31%)	200-395	Elementary Proficiency	Able to satisfy basic survival requirements.	hotel room-service order taker, hotel waiter/waitress/bartender
47 (59%)	400-595	Intermediate Proficiency	Can initiate and maintain face-to-face conversations; satisfy limited social demands.	airport information clerk, bookkeeper, hotel head waiter, shipping and receiving clerk
6 (7.5%)	600-795	Working Proficiency	Able to satisfy limited work requirements and routine social demands.	accountant, assistant hotel manager, engineer, coordinator, logistics engineer, corporate secretary officer, sales manager, system analyst
2 (2.5%)	800-990	Advanced Working Proficiency	Able to satisfy most work requirements with acceptable and effective language usage.	executive manager, executive secretary, general manager, logistics coordinator, marketing manager, senior accountant

According to the interpretation of the English proficiency levels in Table 4.2, it was found that the subjects' average English proficiency of 462 was classified as intermediate proficiency level, suggesting that with such a level of proficiency, the subjects could initiate and maintain predictable face-to-face conversations, and satisfy limited social demands in workplaces. In other words, if they were to work, their English proficiency was only sufficient for positions with domestic and multinational companies in the Thai workforce such as airport information clerk, bookkeeper, hotel head waiter, and shipping and receiving clerk. When the subjects' TOEIC scores in Table 4.2 were examined in details, it was found that 59% of the subjects possessed the intermediate level of English proficiency with scores ranging from 400-595. 31% of the subjects had proficiency in English at the elementary

level, indicating that this group of subjects could undertake only basic survival conversations and could only work in limited positions such as hotel room-service order taker, and hotel waiter/waitress/bartender, whereas only 7.5% of the subjects had a working language proficiency level and only 2.5% had an advanced working proficiency level qualified to work in positions such as accountant, corporate secretary officer, coordinator, flight attendant, system analyst, or marketing manager.

In order to see whether there was any significant difference between the subjects' English proficiency and the factors such as the subjects' general background and their English-language learning background, further analyses were performed on two sections: the comparison of the subjects' English proficiency by their general background, and that of the subjects' English proficiency by their English-language learning background.

4.1.1.1 The Comparison of English Proficiency by General Background

The information on the subjects' general background includes gender, major fields of study, and future plans after graduation. The results from data analyses of gender, major fields of study, and future plans after graduation, together with their English proficiency, interpreted with reference to the designation in Table 2.1 (page 12) and Table 4.2 (page 35), are presented as follows.

The subjects were the fourth-year Management Sciences PSU students: 65 females (81%) and 15 males (19%) out of 80. The result from the data analysis of gender through independent sample *t*-test shows that there was no significant difference between gender and English proficiency. That is, no significant difference in the level of English proficiency was found between male and female subjects since both male and female subjects scored relatively the same on the average TOEIC scores (465 and 461, respectively) (See Table 1 in Appendix A, page 84).

Regarding the subjects' major fields of study, the largest proportion of the subjects (28%) majored in Marketing, the second largest group (24%) in Business Computing, and the rest (19%, 17%, and 12% respectively) in Accounting, Public Administration, and Finance. The result from the analysis of the subjects' major

fields of studies through a one-way ANOVA indicates that no statistically significant difference between the subjects' major fields of study and their English proficiency was found. Although those subjects majoring in Marketing had the highest average English-proficiency score (491), their English proficiency was classified like that of most other majors, as of intermediate level. Thus, no significantly different level of the subjects' English proficiency was found in their major fields of study (See Table 2 in Appendix A, page 84).

Referring to the subjects' future plans after graduation, 87% of the subjects reported that they planned to find jobs, while only 13% planned to further their studies when completing their Bachelor's degrees in March 2006. The result of the *t*-test analysis on the difference between the subjects' future plans after graduation and their English proficiency was found not to be significant. Although the majority of them planned to find jobs, while the minority planned to further their studies, their English proficiency was generally at the same intermediate level. That is, whether the subjects planned to find jobs or to further their studies did not differentiate the level of their English proficiency (See Table 3 in Appendix A, page 85).

4.1.1.2 The Comparison of English Proficiency by English Language Learning Background

The information on the subjects' English-language learning background entails two different aspects: (1) English-language learning experience (the subjects' length of time spent on formal English language learning, achievement in compulsory English courses, the number of the elective English courses taken, experience in English speaking countries, and out-of-class English learning activities) and (2) experience on TOEIC. The results from data analyses of the subjects' English-language learning background together with the subjects' English proficiency, interpreted with reference to the designation in Table 2.1 (page 12) and Table 4.2 (page 35), are presented as follows.

Regarding the length of time the subjects had spent on formal English language learning, out of 80 subjects, 37 had studied English as a foreign language for about seventeen years and 43 for about fifteen years. The result of the analysis through *t*-test shows that there was no significant difference between the lengths of time the subjects had spent on formal English language learning and their English proficiency. Whether the number of years the subjects spent on learning English in their formal classroom settings was fifteen or seventeen years, the level of their English proficiency was the same. This implies that the length of time spent on English language learning did not significantly differentiate the attainment of their proficiency in English (See Table 4 in Appendix A, page 85).

An investigation was also carried out to establish the difference between the subjects' achievement in compulsory English courses and their English proficiency. According to the Faculty of Management Sciences curricula, the subjects were required to take 4 courses for 12 credits: two compulsory English courses (6 credits), namely Foundation English I (FE I) and Foundation English II (FE II), and another two elective foreign-language courses (6 credits) which can be any language courses (e.g. Chinese, French and Japanese). In the study, the achievement in compulsory English courses is reflected on the subjects' grades on the courses: FE I and FE II. Table 4.3 presents the subjects' achievement in compulsory FE I and FE II, and the differences with their English proficiency.

Table 4.3 Achievement in Compulsory English Courses and English Proficiency

Subjects' Grades	TOEIC Scores						Proficiency Level
	FE I (N = 78)			FE II (N = 76)			
	Mean	SD	F	Mean	SD	F	
A	601 N = 10 (13%)	179.26		622 N = 13 (17%)	149.67		High intermediate/ Working
B, B+	466 N = 40 (51%)	86.44		441 N = 43 (57%)	78.73		Intermediate
C, C+	416 N = 24 (31%)	87.35	10.11*	410 N = 18 (24%)	77.24	16.45*	Intermediate
D, D+	331 N = 4 (5%)	51.38		325 N = 2 (2%)	84.85		High beginner/ Elementary

* Significant at .05 level

As is apparent from Table 4.3, the statistical analyses through one-way ANOVA show that there were significant differences between the subjects' achievement in both compulsory English courses and their English proficiency. In the table, the mean scores of the English proficiency of the subjects who completed FE I and FE II closely corresponded with their achievement in compulsory English courses. The proficiency of the subject group who obtained A grade on both FE I and FE II was classified at the "working proficiency level", those who got B/B+ and C/C+ grades on both FE I and FE II were at the "intermediate proficiency level", and those with D/D+ grade on FE I and FE II were at the "elementary proficiency level." (See Tables 5 and 7 in Appendix A, pages 86 and 88). Moreover, the levels of achievement in compulsory English courses of the subjects were related to their levels of English proficiency (See Tables 6 and 8 in Appendix A, pages 87 and 89). The subjects with high grades on compulsory English courses (FE I and FE II) obtained high scores of English proficiency (TOEIC scores), while those with low grades on compulsory English courses had low scores of English proficiency.

The comparisons in the subjects' English proficiency by the number of elective English courses taken are also presented below. Apart from the two compulsory English courses: FE I and FE II which all of the subjects were required to take, it was found that the subjects took a different number of elective English courses. The findings regarding the number of elective English courses show that most of the subjects (44%) took two elective English courses. Thirty percent of the subjects took an English course as one of their elective foreign-language courses, while 22.5% of the subjects enrolled in more than two elective English courses which was more than is required in the curriculum. Only 3.5% of the subjects took none of the elective English courses.

To examine if there was any significant difference between the number of the subjects' elective English courses taken and their English proficiency, the results from data analyses through a one-way ANOVA are presented in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4 Number of the Elective English Courses Taken and English Proficiency

Number of Elective English Courses (N = 57)	TOEIC Score		Proficiency Level	F
	Mean	SD		
None N = 2 (3.5%)	425	42.43	Intermediate	2.12 ^{NS}
1 course N = 17 (30%)	436	96.54	Intermediate	
2 courses N = 25 (44%)	449	92.63	Intermediate	
3 courses N = 8 (14%)	504	205.56	Intermediate	
4 courses N = 3 (5%)	592	34.03	High Intermediate	
More than 4 courses N = 2 (3.5%)	645	247.49	Working	

^{NS}
Non-significant

The results, in Table 4.4, show that there was no statistically significant difference between the number of the elective English courses the subjects took and their English proficiency. This means that the increasing number of the elective English courses in which the subjects enrolled in their formal English-language learning did not significantly enhance their levels of English proficiency. However, it can be seen from the table that there is correspondence, though not significant, between the number of the elective English courses and the subjects' English proficiency since the more elective English courses the subjects took, the higher the subjects' English proficiency were (See Table 9 in Appendix A, page 90). For supplementary information about the subjects' elective English courses, the data on the subjects' reasons for choosing the elective English courses are presented in Table 10 in Appendix A (pages 91).

The other possible factors included in the subjects' English language learning experience were the subjects' experience in English speaking countries and their out-of-class English learning activities. In the study, there were ten out-of-class English learning activities which the subjects did in their leisure time with different frequencies: 'very often' (everyday/many times per week), 'often' (one time per week/many times per month), 'seldom' (one time per month), and 'never' (not at all). The data analysis on the frequency of the out-of-class English learning activities was conducted through the rating scales ranging from 4 (very often) to 1 (never).

To find out if there were any significant differences between the subjects' English proficiency and their experience in English speaking countries and their out-of-class English learning activities, an independent sample *t*-test was used to analyze the data on the subjects' experience in English speaking countries and a one-way ANOVA was performed on the data of the subjects' out-of-class English learning activities. Table 4.5 demonstrates the differences between the subjects' English proficiency and their experience in English speaking countries and out-of-class English learning activities.

Table 4.5 Other Possible Factors on English Language Learning and English Proficiency

Other Possible Factors on English Language Learning	TOEIC Score		Proficiency Level	t		
	Mean	SD				
a) Experience in an English-speaking Country (N = 80)						
- Yes (N = 24, 30%)	538	147.96	Intermediate	4.13*		
- No (N = 56, 70%)	429	84.98	Intermediate			
b) Out-of-class English Learning Activities	Frequencies on English Language Use					F
	Very Often (%)	Often (%)	Seldom (%)	Never (%)	Total (%)	
(1) Using English with English-speaking friends	3	7	34	56	100	3.10*
(2) Searching information in the Internet	33	52	15	-	100	1.90 ^{NS}
(3) Seeing English soundtrack movies	24	40	32	4	100	1.83 ^{NS}
(4) Listening to English news/songs	13	46	30	11	100	1.42 ^{NS}
(5) Playing computer games	12	23	39	26	100	1.16 ^{NS}
(6) Watching English TV programmes	8	33	47	12	100	.16 ^{NS}
(7) Self-study from other sources (e.g. library, self-access centre)	3	5	60	32	100	3.04*
(8) Reading English newspapers/magazines/novels	4	19	60	17	100	1.24 ^{NS}
(9) Writing e-mails in English	3	16	53	28	100	3.98*
(10) Using English with family members	2	4	28	66	100	2.71 ^{NS}

* Significant at .05 level

^{NS}

Non-significant

The data analyses presented in Table 4.5 indicate that there were significant differences of the subjects' English proficiency with their experience in English speaking countries and three of their out-of-class English learning activities (interaction with English-speaking friends: item 1; self-study: item 7; and e-mail writing: item 9).

From Table 4.5, the significant difference between the subjects' experience in an English speaking country and their English proficiency also shows that the subjects' experience in an English speaking country was significantly related to their English proficiency (See Table 11 in Appendix A, page 92) since the 30% of the subjects who had visited English speaking countries had higher TOEIC score than those (70%) who had not visited English speaking countries.

Regarding the subjects' out-of-class English learning activities in Table 4.5, no significant difference were found between the subjects' English proficiency and their seven out-of-class English learning activities (See Tables 12.1 to 12.7 in Appendix A, pages 94 to 97). However, it was found that there were significant differences between the subjects' English proficiency and their three out-of-class English learning activities (i.e. the subjects' interaction with English-speaking friends, self-study, and e-mail writing activities). Three significant differences are shown as follows. First, a significant difference was between the subjects' interaction with English-speaking friends and their English proficiency (See Table 13 in Appendix A, page 98). Moreover, the subjects' interaction with English-speaking friends was significantly related to their English proficiency. That is, the subjects who used English with their native English-speaking friend/s had a higher average level of English proficiency than those who did not (See Table 14 in Appendix A, page 99). Second, the significant difference was between the subjects' self-study activity and their English proficiency (See Table 15 in Appendix A, page 100). Additionally, there was a significant relationship between the subjects' self-study activity and their English proficiency. This shows that the more frequently the subjects studied English by themselves in the university library or self-access center, the higher level of English proficiency they had (See Table 16 in Appendix A, page 101). Third, the data on the significant difference between the subjects' e-mail writing activity and their English proficiency indicates that the more frequently the subjects wrote e-mail in English, the higher level of proficiency in English they had (See Table 17 in Appendix A, page 102). It could be said that these three out-of-class English learning activities could have helped the subjects master the English language, and were related to their English proficiency (See Table 18 in Appendix A, page 103).

Another aspect of English-language learning background, under investigation, is the subjects' experience on TOEIC: their previous experience on the TOEIC tutoring course and the TOEIC test-taking. 68% of the subjects never took any TOEIC tutoring course, while 32% of them took the tutoring course. 91% of the subjects never took any TOEIC examination, while only 9% had the TOEIC test-taking experience before the TOEIC examination (January 30th to February 1st, 2006). The results of the analyses through *t*-test demonstrate no significant difference between the subjects' English language proficiency and their experiences on the TOEIC. The subjects' experience on TOEIC did not significantly differentiate their levels of English proficiency: the subjects who attended the TOEIC tutoring course or had previous test-taking experience had the same level of the average English proficiency as did those who never took any of the TOEIC courses or examinations (See Table 19 in Appendix A, page 104).

In brief, the findings on the first research question examining the subjects' English language proficiency show that their English language proficiency was at the intermediate level, scoring 462 out of the 990 possible maximum TOEIC score. In addition, there was no significant difference between their English proficiency and gender, major field of study, future plans after graduation, length of time spent on formal English language learning, and their experience on TOEIC. However, there were significant differences and relationships of the subjects' English proficiency with their achievement on compulsory English courses, their experience in English speaking countries, their interaction with English-speaking friends, their self-study, and their e-mail writing activities. A close correspondence, though not significant, was also found between the number of the elective English courses taken and the subjects' English proficiency in this study.

4.1.2 The Relationships among the Subjects' Motivation, Motivational Variables and their English Language Proficiency

Research question 2: What are the relationships among motivation, motivational variables, and English language proficiency of the subjects?

To answer the second research question, the questionnaire using the five-point rating scales ranging from 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree) was analyzed for means and standard deviations of the subjects' overall motivation and overall motivational-variable levels. Criteria for the rating scale interpretation of the mean scores were: 1.00-1.80 (strongly disagree), 1.81-2.60 (disagree), 2.61-3.40 (neutral), 3.41-4.20 (agree), and 4.21-5.00 (strongly agree). Table 4.6 shows the mean scores of the overall motivation and motivational variables from the question item numbers 14 to 38 in the questionnaire.

Table 4.6 The Subjects' Overall Motivation and Motivational Variables

Factors	Question Item No.	Mean	SD	Rating Scale Interpretation
Motivation	14-15, 18-22, 24-28, 37-38	4.21	.52	4.21-5.00 (strongly agree)
Motivational Variables	16-17, 23, 29-36	3.87	.49	3.41-4.20 (agree)

The mean score of overall motivation was analyzed from the items asking about the subjects' intrinsic, extrinsic, integrative and instrumental motivation (item numbers 14-15, 18-22, 24-28, and 37-38), while the mean score of overall motivational variables was analyzed from the items asking about the subjects' attitudes and anxiety towards English language learning (item numbers 16-17, 23,

and 29-36). As can be seen in Table 4.6, the mean of the overall motivation (4.21) was ranked at the high level of the rating scales (4.21-5.00: strongly agree), and that of the overall motivational variables (3.87) was ranked at the high level of the rating scales (3.41-4.20: agree). The subjects' overall motivation on their English language learning was higher than their overall motivational variables.

The results from the investigations on whether the subjects' overall motivation and overall motivational variables were related to their English proficiency are summarized in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7 Correlations among Motivation, Motivational Variables and English Language Proficiency

Factors	Motivation	Motivational Variables	English Language Proficiency
Motivation		.388**	.191 ^{NS}
Motivational Variables	.388**		.220 ^{NS}
English Language Proficiency	.191 ^{NS}	.220 ^{NS}	

** Significant at .01 level

NS

Non-significant

From Table 4.7, there was a positive, but not significant, relationship between overall motivation and English proficiency, and between overall motivational variables and English proficiency. In other words, the level of the subjects' motivation and motivational variables was not significantly related to their English language proficiency, and vice versa.

However, a significant and positive correlation between the subjects' motivation and motivational variables was found despite the weak correlation ($r = .388, p < .01$). That is, the subjects' overall motivation was significantly related to

their overall motivational variables at the relatively low level of the relationship. This indicates that the subjects' high level of motivation was positively related to their high level of motivational variables, and vice versa.

To further investigate the relationships among each aspect of motivation, motivational variables, and English language proficiency, the correlations of the subjects' four aspects of motivation (i.e. intrinsic, extrinsic, integrative, and instrumental motivation) and those of the two aspects of motivational variables (i.e. attitudes and anxiety) are compared in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8 Correlations among Each Aspect of Motivation, Motivational Variables and English Language Proficiency

Factors	Motivation			Motivational Variables		English Language Proficiency	
	Intrinsic	Extrinsic	Integrative	Instrumental	Attitudes		Anxiety
Motivation:							
- Intrinsic		.592**	.861**	.570**	.738**	.253*	.286*
- Extrinsic			.581**	.884**	.481**	.095	.158
- Integrative				.585**	.453**	.037	.080
- Instrumental					.400**	-.041	.160
							NS
							NS
							NS
							NS
Motivational Variables:							
- Attitudes							.254*
- Anxiety							.115
							NS
							NS
English Language Proficiency							

* Significant at .05 level

** Significant at .01 level

NS

Non-significant

The figures in Table 4.8 show that among each aspect of motivation and motivational variables, the subjects' English language proficiency was significantly and positively correlated only with intrinsic motivation and with attitudes ($r = .286$ and $.254$ respectively, $p < .05$). These correlations indicate that the subjects' positive attitudes and high intrinsic motivation on English language learning contributed to their high level of English proficiency, and vice versa. There were, however, no significant relationships of English proficiency with other aspects of motivation (extrinsic, integrative, and instrumental) and anxiety. This means that the subjects' extrinsic, integrative and instrumental motivation and anxiety did not significantly influence their English proficiency.

Table 4.8 also demonstrates significant relationships between most aspects of motivation and motivational variables at .01 and .05 levels. At the .01 level of significance, the study found significant and positive correlations of intrinsic motivation with integrative motivation at .861, with attitudes at .738, with extrinsic motivation at .592, and with instrumental motivation at .570. There were also significant and positive correlations of extrinsic motivation with instrumental motivation at .884, and with integrative motivation at .581. In addition, the significant and positive correlations of attitudes were with extrinsic motivation at .481, with integrative motivation at .453, with instrumental motivation at .400, and with anxiety at .296. What is more, the study also found a significant and positive correlation between instrumental motivation and integrative motivation ($r = .585$). At the .05 level of significance, there was only a positive but weak correlation between intrinsic motivation and anxiety ($r = .253$).

In sum, the findings of the second research question indicate significant relationships among intrinsic motivation, attitudes, and English language proficiency. Moreover, most of the relationships between motivation and motivational variables were significant and positive although there were weak and strong relationships among these factors. It should be noted that although no statistically significant relationship was found between the subjects' anxiety and English proficiency, their anxiety was indirectly related to their English proficiency since their anxiety was significantly related to their intrinsic motivation and attitudes, both of which were significantly related to English proficiency at .05 ($p < .05$) and .01 ($p < .01$) levels of significance, respectively.

4.1.3 The Differences in Motivation and Motivational Variables between the High and Low Proficiency Subjects

Research question 3: Are there any differences in motivation and motivational variables between the high and low proficiency subjects?

The subjects in this study were classified into the high and low proficiency groups by using the 27% technique (Hughes, 1989). The English proficiency of the high and low proficiency subjects are shown in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9 English Language Proficiency of the High and Low Proficiency Subjects

Subjects	Range		Mean	SD
	Minimum Score	Maximum Score		
High Proficiency Group (N = 21)	520	880	610	98.67
Low Proficiency Group (N = 21)	250	390	332	40.70

The results in Table 4.9 indicate the average TOEIC score of the high proficiency group at 610 out of 990, representing high intermediate or working proficiency level, and that of the low proficiency group at 332 out of 990, representing elementary proficiency level.

To determine whether motivation and motivational variables between high and low proficiency groups were significantly different, the mean scores of the high and low proficiency groups' responses to each item asking about motivation and

motivational variables in the questionnaire were calculated and compared by using an independent sample *t*-test as shown in Tables 4.10 and 4.11.

Table 4.10 Differences in Motivation and Motivational Variables between the High and Low Proficiency Subjects

Motivation / Motivational Variables	High Proficiency Group (N = 21)		Low Proficiency Group (N = 21)		t
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Motivation	4.43	.41	4.15	.42	2.23*
Motivational Variables	4.09	.51	3.91	.41	1.24 ^{NS}

* Significant at .05 level

^{NS}
Non-significant

The results in Table 4.10 demonstrate that there was a significant difference in the overall motivation between the high and low proficiency groups of the subjects ($t = 2.23$, $p < .05$), while there was no significant difference in overall motivational variables between the high and low proficiency groups. In other words, the high proficiency subjects had a higher level of motivation on English language learning than did the low proficiency subjects. But the high and low proficiency subjects did not have different levels of motivational variables on English language learning.

Although there was no significant difference in overall motivational variables between the high and low proficiency groups, the mean scores of each motivational variable between high and low proficiency subjects needed to be examined to determine if there was any significant difference among each aspect of motivation and motivational variables between the high and low proficiency groups. To do so, the mean scores of each aspect of motivation and of motivational variables were calculated and compared in Table 4.11.

Table 4.11 Differences in Each Aspect of Motivation and Motivational Variables of the High and Low Proficiency Subjects

Motivation / Motivational Variables	High Proficiency Group (N = 21)		Low Proficiency Group (N = 21)		t
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Motivation					
- Intrinsic	4.45	.48	4.05	.47	2.69* NS
- Extrinsic	4.39	.41	4.14	.52	1.74 NS
- Integrative	4.19	.68	4.00	.56	.99 NS
- Instrumental	4.70	.34	4.39	.60	2.06
Motivational Variables					
- Attitudes	4.64	.42	4.37	.47	2.01 NS
- Anxiety	3.54	.76	3.46	.59	.39

* Significant at .05 level

NS

Non-significant

Table 4.11 shows that the high and low proficiency groups were significantly different in intrinsic motivation ($t = 2.69$, $p < .05$), but not different in other aspects of motivation (i.e. extrinsic, integrative, and instrumental motivation). This indicates that the high proficiency subjects had a significantly higher level of intrinsic motivation than the low proficiency subjects.

Despite the fact that no significant differences in attitudes and anxiety were found between the high and low proficiency groups, the levels of attitudes and anxiety of the high proficiency group were higher than those of the low proficiency group.

In brief, the findings of the third research question demonstrate that there was a significant difference between high and low proficiency groups in the overall motivation, but not the overall motivational variables. The high proficiency group had a significantly higher level of intrinsic motivation than the low proficiency group.

4.1.4 The Relationships among Motivation, Motivational Variables, and English Language Proficiency of the High and Low Proficiency Subjects

Research question 4: What are the relationships among motivation, motivational variables, and English language proficiency of the high and low proficiency subjects?

To investigate the relationships among overall and each aspect of motivation, motivational variables, and English language proficiency of the high and low proficiency groups, the data of the relationships are separately presented in two sections.

4.1.4.1 The Relationship among Motivation, Motivational Variables, and English Language Proficiency of the High Proficiency Subjects

4.1.4.2 The Relationship among Motivation, Motivational Variables, and English Language Proficiency of the Low Proficiency Subjects

4.1.4.1 The Relationship among Motivation, Motivational Variables, and English Language Proficiency of the High Proficiency Subjects

The relationships among overall and each aspect of motivation, motivational variables, and the English proficiency of the high proficiency subjects are shown in Tables 4.12 to 4.13, respectively.

Table 4.12 Correlations among Motivation, Motivational Variables, and English Language Proficiency of the High Proficiency Group

Factors	Motivation	Motivational Variables	English Language Proficiency
Motivation		.499*	.151 ^{NS}
Motivational Variables	.499*		.424 ^{NS}
English Language Proficiency	.151 ^{NS}	.424 ^{NS}	

* Significant at .05 level

^{NS}

Non-significant

As shown in Table 4.12, though positive, relationships were found between overall motivation and proficiency in English, and between overall motivational variables and English proficiency, the relationships were not statistically significant. However, a significant and positive relationship between motivation and motivational variables was found ($r = .499$, $p < .05$). In other words, the motivation of the high proficiency subjects was related to their motivational variables. This means that the high proficiency subjects who had the high level of motivation tended to have high level of motivational variables. In the same way, the high proficiency subjects who had the low level of motivation tended to have low level of motivational variables.

To further investigate the relationships among each aspect of motivation and motivational variables, and English language proficiency of the high proficiency group, the findings of the relationships are demonstrated in Table 4.13.

Table 4.13 Correlations among Each Aspect of Motivation, Motivational Variables and English Language Proficiency of the High Proficiency Group

Factors	Motivation			Motivational Variables		English Language Proficiency
	Intrinsic	Extrinsic	Integrative	Attitudes	Anxiety	
Motivation:						
- Intrinsic		.582**	.912**	.674**	.434*	.228 ^{NS}
- Extrinsic			.519*	.647**	.233 ^{NS}	.192 ^{NS}
- Integrative				.428 ^{NS}	.253 ^{NS}	-.022 ^{NS}
- Instrumental				.426 ^{NS}	.152 ^{NS}	.216 ^{NS}
Motivational Variables:						
- Attitudes					.440*	.396 ^{NS}
- Anxiety						.350 ^{NS}
English Language Proficiency						

* Significant at .05 level

** Significant at .01 level

NS

Non-significant

According to the figures in Table 4.13, there exist no significant relationships between each aspect of motivation and proficiency of English, nor between each aspect of motivational variables and proficiency of English of the high proficiency subjects. However, a positive, though not significant, relationship between anxiety and English proficiency was found in the high proficiency subjects. This means that within the high proficiency group of the subjects, high level of anxiety tended to be related to high levels of English language proficiency.

Nevertheless, Table 4.13 indicates significant and positive relationships between all aspects of motivation and some aspects of motivational variables of the high proficiency group. The highly significant relationships were found between intrinsic motivation and integrative motivation, between extrinsic motivation and instrumental motivation, between intrinsic motivation and attitudes, between extrinsic motivation and attitudes, and between intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation ($r = .912, .764, .674, .647, \text{ and } .582$ respectively, $p < .01$). Significant and positive relationships were also found between extrinsic motivation and integrative motivation, between intrinsic motivation and instrumental motivation, between integrative motivation and instrumental motivation, between attitudes and anxiety, and between intrinsic motivation and anxiety ($r = .519, .465, .456, .440, \text{ and } .434$ respectively, $p < .05$).

To sum up, in the high proficiency group of the subjects, there were no significant relationships between overall motivation and English proficiency, nor between overall motivational variables and English proficiency. Similarly, no significant relationships of English proficiency with each aspect of motivation and motivational variables were found. However, significant and positive relationships were found between overall motivation and overall motivational variables. In addition, significant and positive relationships were also found between most individual aspects of motivation and motivational variables, and the highest significant relationship was between intrinsic motivation and integrative motivation.

4.1.4.2 The Relationship among Motivation, Motivational Variables, and English Language Proficiency of the Low Proficiency Subjects

With reference to the low proficiency group of the subjects, the relationships among overall and each aspect of motivation, motivational variables, and their English proficiency are shown in Tables 4.14 to 4.15, respectively.

Table 4.14 Correlations Among Motivation, Motivational Variables and English Language Proficiency of the Low Proficiency Group

Factors	Motivation	Motivational Variables	English Language Proficiency
Motivation		^{NS} .429	^{NS} .286
Motivational Variables	^{NS} .429		^{NS} .082
English Language proficiency	^{NS} .286	^{NS} .082	

^{NS}
Non-significant

The data from Table 4.14 show that there were no significant, though positive, relationships among overall motivation, overall motivational variables and English proficiency of the low proficiency subjects. The results indicate that the levels of motivation and motivational variables of the low proficiency subjects were not related to their levels of English proficiency. Likewise, the level of the motivation of the low proficiency subjects was not related to their level of motivational variables.

To further find out the relationships among each aspect of motivation and motivational variables, and English language proficiency of the low proficiency group, the results were demonstrated in Table 4.15.

As shown in Table 4.15, the relationships between each aspect of motivation and proficiency of English, and between each aspect of motivational variables and proficiency of English were not found to be significant. In particular, a negative, though not significant, relationship between anxiety and English proficiency was found in the low proficiency subjects. This inverse relationship demonstrates that within the low proficiency group, the high levels of anxiety tended to be related to the low levels of English language proficiency.

In addition, significant and positive relationships were found between some aspects of motivation and motivational variables of the low proficiency group. The three significant relationships were between extrinsic motivation and instrumental motivation, between intrinsic motivation and attitudes, and between intrinsic motivation and integrative motivation ($r = .907, .817, \text{ and } .800$ respectively, $p < .01$). Significant and positive relationships were also found between integrative motivation and attitudes, and between extrinsic motivation and attitudes ($r = .529$ and $.484$ respectively, $p < .05$).

In brief, in the low proficiency subject group, there were no significant relationships between overall motivation and English proficiency, and those between overall motivational variables and English proficiency. Besides, there were no significant relationships of English proficiency with each aspect of motivation and motivational variables. However, there were positive and significant relationships between some individual aspects of motivation and motivational variables. Among those individual aspects of motivation and motivational variables, the highest significant relationship was between extrinsic motivation and instrumental motivation.

In all, to summarize the findings of research question 4, as are apparent from Tables 4.12 to 4.15, there were no significant relationships of the overall motivation and the overall motivational variables with English language proficiency of both high and low proficiency groups of the subjects. However, there were

significant and positive relationships between most individual aspects of motivation and those of motivational variables in both high and low proficiency groups.

4.2 Discussion of the Results

This study aims at investigating the English language proficiency and its relationship to motivation and motivational variables of the fourth-year Management Sciences students at Prince of Songkla University (PSU). Based on the research questions of the study, the findings are discussed as follows.

4.2.1 The Subjects' English Language Proficiency

The subjects' English language proficiency which was measured by the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) was at an average score of 462 out of 990. The score of 462 can be generally classified as at an intermediate level (Rogers, 2003; Rymniak, 1997). At this average English proficiency, their choices of careers may be limited to positions such as airport information clerk, bookkeeper, or shipping clerk, particularly in multinational companies where English is used as a means of communication. When compared with other Thai test takers of TOEIC, the subjects' average English proficiency of 462 achieved in the present study was lower than that of the Thai test takers whose average TOEIC score was 524 in the previous studies (The Weekly Manager, 2005; Educational Testing Service, 2005; and http://www.nationmultimedia.com/2005/08/10/headlines/data/headlines_18305734.html).

In a wider perspective of Thai graduates' English proficiency, Prapphal (2001, cited in Chantarasorn et al., 2003 and Prapphal, 2003) found that Thai graduates' English proficiency was lower than those of test takers in other ASEAN countries like Burma, Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore, and Vietnam. The results of Prapphal's (2003) study of the English proficiency of 9,154 Thai university graduates in science and non-science programs showed that the average English proficiency of the Thai graduates who took the Chulalongkorn University

Test of English Proficiency (CU-TEP) – claimed to be equivalent to a TOEFL score (Prapphal, 2003) – in 2001 was lower than that of 377,947 graduates from other ASEAN countries who took the TOEFL in 1993-1996 and 1999.

Although the English proficiency of the subjects in the present study and that of the Thai students in the previous studies were measured by different criteria: an average TOEIC score used in the present study and the average TOEFL scores used in the previous studies, it could be said that the subjects of the present study and the students of the previous studies had relatively low levels of average English proficiency when compared to the international standards of TOEIC and TOEFL scores. The results of the present study and those of Prapphal (2003) seem to indicate that Thai graduates are not as qualified as those graduates in neighboring countries both in career and further study opportunities if English language proficiency is used as one of the prominent criteria for admission. From the previous studies, it can imply that most Thai graduates could not qualify at the international standard required either for their career prospects or for graduate studies in an English speaking country or even in an international graduate programme in Thailand.

There may be some possible factors such as general background and English language learning background behind the relatively low English-proficiency levels of the subjects in the present study and of Thai students in the previous studies. Learners' general background and their English language learning background will be looked into and discussed in the following section.

An investigation into the subjects' English proficiency and their general background showed no significant differences of English proficiency with gender, major fields of studies, and future plans after graduation. Similarly, the investigation into the subjects' English proficiency and their English-language learning background showed no significant differences of their English proficiency with their length of time the subjects spent in formal English-language learning, nor their experience in taking the TOEIC nor having tutoring courses for TOEIC. However, the factors in the subjects' learning background that showed positive and significant relationships with English proficiency were their achievement in two compulsory

English courses, their experience in an English speaking country, and some of their out-of-class English learning activities. Moreover, there was a clear correspondence, though not significant, between the subjects' English proficiency and the number of elective English courses they took during their university years. These main issues

found to have positive relationship to the subjects' English-language proficiency are discussed below.

First, the finding that the subjects' levels of achievement in compulsory English courses were related to their level of English proficiency was consistent with the finding of Chantarasorn, et al.'s (2003). In the present study, the subjects who achieved high grades on the compulsory English courses had high level of English proficiency, and those who obtained low grades on the compulsory English courses had low level of English proficiency. In Chantarasorn et al.'s (2003) study on the English proficiency of the 117 first-year Medical Thai students of Mahidol University, it was found that the students gained greater English proficiency after completing the two compulsory English courses provided by the Department of Foreign Languages, Faculty of Science, Mahidol Univeristy.

The findings of the present study and the previous study on the significant relationships seem to be parallel although they were derived from different learner variables such as Thai students' high-school programs of study, their English learning contexts, and the tests used to measure English proficiency. That is, in the present study, the subjects were Management Sciences students whose high-school programs of study were mainly in Mathematics and English, while the participants in Chantarasorn et al.'s (2003) study were Medical students whose high-school programs of study were mainly in Science and Mathematics. This means that the subjects of the present study had more exposure to English than the participants of the previous study since the former had to study more school English courses required in the Mathematics-English programs of studies than did the latter whose major courses of study were Science and Mathematics. In addition to the different English learning background of the students in both studies, the English learning contexts of the subjects and the participants in the studies were geographically different. The subjects of the present study had studied English in Hat Yai located in the south of Thailand, while the participants of the previous study had studied

English in Bangkok, the capital of Thailand. Thus, the richness of English teaching-learning information resources provided to the Thai students in both studies might be different. Moreover, the English proficiency tests used in both studies were different: TOEIC developed by ETS (2006) was used in the present study while Quick

Placement Test Version II developed by Oxford University (2001) was used in the previous study. The first issue which arises from the positive and significant relationship in the two studies between learners' achievement in compulsory English courses and their English proficiency despite the above-noted different learner variables would support the necessity of compulsory English courses in university curricula. Thus, Thai learners of English need to be aware of the significance of their universities' compulsory English courses.

Second, in the present study, the positive relationship between the number of the elective English courses the subjects enrolled in and the subjects' levels of English proficiency was clearly correlated though not statistically significant since the subjects who enrolled in more elective English courses had a higher level of English proficiency than those who enrolled in fewer courses. The result of the relationship in the current study seemed to be similar to the results of Mason's (1971), Light et al.'s (1987), and Krieger's (2005) studies. According to Mason (1971), there was a significant difference between 9 out of 24 university foreign students' English proficiency and their higher semester hour credits gained from English courses. Similarly, Light et al.'s (1987) study revealed that the English proficiency (TOEFL score) of 376 international graduate students at the State University of New York was significantly correlated to the English course credits they earned. In addition, Krieger (2005) concluded in his study of Japanese students, that the compulsory English courses the students took did not offer enough exposure to the English language since EFL settings often involved limited studying hours per course. Thus, the students who enrolled in more English courses had relatively more exposure to English, and this enhanced their levels of English language proficiency. The second issue in the positive relationship between the number of elective English courses learners took and their English language proficiency noted in the previous and the present studies is that this should at least point out the importance of the

number of elective English courses which Thai universities should provide in their curricula to promote their students' English language proficiency.

Third, the significant relationship between the subjects' experience in an English speaking country and their English proficiency was also found in the present study. This result was similar to the finding of Prapphal's (2003) study. In

her study, it was found that the students from English speaking countries, such as Malaysia, Singapore, and the Philippines, scored higher than those who studied English as a foreign language in EFL countries. She also concluded that exposure to the English language promoting high motivation was a key factor in enhancing the students' English proficiency. Moreover, the results of the present study also indicate the significant relationships between the subjects' English proficiency and some of the out-of-class English learning activities they performed such as interaction with their English-speaking friends, e-mail writing and self-study at university library or self-access center. The subjects' experience in an English speaking country and their interaction with native English speaking friends could refer to the subjects' integrative motivation since integrative motivation referred to a genuine interest in learning a target language in order to come closer to the target language community (Gardner, 2001; cited in Lifrieri, 2005). Integrative motivation in monolingual societies constituting EFL contexts could be understood as the adoption of a self identity which was closely related to intrinsic motivation (Lamb, 2004; and Dörnyei and Csizér, 2002). In other words, intrinsic and integrative motivation are interrelated when language learners wish to integrate themselves with the target-language culture or to have English-speaking friends (Brown, 1994 and 2000). Then, the subjects' e-mail writing and self-study activities could also refer to their integrative motivation since the subjects had a personal interest (intrinsic motivation) in learning English through e-mail writing and self-study activities, and this could naturally make the subjects expose themselves to the English language. Therefore, these results on the significant relationships between the subjects' English proficiency and their experience in an English speaking country, their interaction with native English speaking friends, their e-mail writing and self-study activities could account for the significant relationship between the subjects' English proficiency and their integrative motivation. As most of the subjects in the present

study did not have any experience in integrating themselves with English in any English speaking country, in interacting with native English speaking friends, or in using English through e-mail writing and self-study activities, they had very few chances to communicate in English. This possibly showed their relatively low level

of integrative motivation, and this resulted in their relatively low English language proficiency.

4.2.2 The Relationships among the Subjects' Motivation, Motivational Variables, and English Language Proficiency

Turning to the investigation into the relationships among motivation, motivational variables, and English proficiency, the results of this study indicated that the subjects' English proficiency was positively, though not significantly, related to their overall motivation and overall motivational variables. One factor which could help to explain this positive relationship is the positive relationship between the number of elective English courses taken by the subjects and their English proficiency. It was noted that the TOEIC scores of the subjects were obviously higher when the number of elective English courses taken by the subjects increased. The subjects who took a larger number of elective English courses had higher levels of motivation and motivational variable (attitudes) towards English than those who did not. This might illustrate that the more the subjects liked English (possessed more positive attitudes towards English), the more they were interested in English and were motivated (had higher motivation) to enroll in more elective English courses than they were required to do by the curriculum. This higher exposure to the English language through the increasing number of elective English courses could facilitate the development of the subjects' English language proficiency.

With regard to the relationships of each aspect of motivation (intrinsic, extrinsic, integrative, and instrumental motivation) and motivational variables (attitudes and anxiety) to English proficiency, the subjects' attitudes and intrinsic motivation were found to be significantly related to their English proficiency. In

other words, the subjects, who liked to learn English (possessed positive attitudes) for their personal interest (had intrinsic motivation) in order to communicate with people from other countries in their daily lives, possibly achieved higher levels of English proficiency than those who did not like English or did not learn English as a result of their intrinsic motivation. The subjects' intrinsic

motivation and positive attitudes were demonstrated by the elective English courses they enrolled in and their reasons for choosing the courses. The elective English courses the subjects took were English Conversation, Consolidating Listening and Speaking Skills, and English Grammar for Real Life Communication. The subjects' enrollment in these elective English courses could explain that besides the subjects' personal interests in the courses, they also considered the courses useful to their studying or daily lives. Additionally, some of the main reasons for choosing elective English courses were in order to develop English language skills and because they preferred English to other subjects (See Table 10 in Appendix A, page 91). The results of the present study were consistent with the studies of intrinsic motivation conducted by Ellis (1989), Oxford and Shearin (1994), Deci and Ryan (1985, cited in Noels, 2000), and Vallerand et al. (1992, 1993, 1997, cited in Noels, 2000). Their studies reveal that intrinsic motivation consist of innate needs for competence and for the development of knowledge which exist when learners are free to choose their own courses of learning.

It is notable that in countries where English is learned as a foreign language (EFL), instrumental orientation is the dominant motivation for learners as pointed out by Lukmani (1972), Dörnyei (1988, cited in Takakubo, 2002), Kachru (1992), Warden and Lin (2000), Runmei (2002), Rahman (2005), and Krieger (2005). Since the era of globalization, instrumental motivation and integrative motivation have become closely related because English has become more relevant to learners' studying, and learners are influenced by communicative media and information technology, which are provided in English through the Internet, English newspapers, or English movies (Lamb, 2004; Brown, 2000; Benson, 1991). In the same way, the finding of the current study of a significant relationship between integrative and instrumental motivation was quite similar to Lamb's (2004), Brown's (2000) and Benson's (1991) studies previously cited. It was found in the present

study that the subjects' integrative motivation and their instrumental motivation were mutually related, particularly in their out-of-class English learning activities. The subjects' instrumental motivation to develop communicative competence was demonstrated through their searching for information on the Internet, watching English soundtrack movies, and listening to English news and songs to attain goals

assigned in English language learning activities; at the same time, their integrative motivation was derived from a desire to gain English-language knowledge through communicative English (listening, speaking, reading and writing) skills. Therefore, the significant relationship between the subjects' integrative and instrumental motivation in the present study could challenge teachers to adapt their teaching techniques or to create English learning tasks capable of exploiting the extensive role played by learners' motivation and the way in which this affects learners' proficiency of English.

4.2.3 The Relationships among Motivation, Motivational Variables, and English Language Proficiency of the High and Low Proficiency Groups

The results of this study show a significant difference in overall motivation between high and low proficiency groups. The high proficiency group had a significantly higher level of motivation than the low proficiency group. The significant difference between high and low proficiency groups was particularly apparent in their intrinsic motivation. This might be because the high proficiency group of subjects experienced a feeling of achievement in their English language learning and felt their learning to be more meaningful to them. Thus, they had a stronger desire to learn English for their personal interests or for self-efficacy than did the low proficiency group (Ellis, 1989). The results of the present study also support the study of Aida (1994) who pointed out that in an EFL setting, high proficiency learners focused more on intrinsic motivation and were more future-oriented in their future careers or studies, while low proficiency learners focused more on external rewards and immediate goals like passing examinations.

It is worth noting that certain types of motivation and language anxiety were revealed in the present study in the high and low proficiency groups of the subjects. In relation to motivation, the highest significant relationship between intrinsic motivation and integrative motivation was found in the high proficiency group, while the highest significant relationship between extrinsic motivation and instrumental motivation was found in the low proficiency group of the subjects. These findings support the studies of Brown (2000) and Irie (2003, cited in Krieger, 2005). According to Brown (2000), intrinsic motivation is closely related to integrative motivation since both aspects of motivation come from aspects of the internal state of the language learners like self-interest, while extrinsic and instrumental motivation come from sources external to the learners like parents, peers, or teachers. Irie (2003, cited in Krieger, 2005) also found a relationship between extrinsic and instrumental motivation. She found that instrumental motivation was like extrinsic motivation since it came from a desire to get such external rewards as getting good grades because of their existing low English-language scores.

In relation to the typical anxiety found in both high and low proficiency groups, the current study found a positive, though not significant, relationship between anxiety and English proficiency in the high proficiency group, and a negative relationship between anxiety and English proficiency in the low proficiency group. Interestingly, the level of anxiety of the high proficiency group was higher than that of the low proficiency group. Normally, high proficiency in English is related to a low level of learner anxiety towards English. It is worth noting that the findings of a relationship between FL anxiety and English proficiency in the low proficiency group in the present study were basically similar to those referred to in several studies and theories of FL anxiety like those of Horwitz et al. (1986), MacIntyre and Gardner (1991, cited in Ganschow et al., 1994), Brown (1994), and Horwitz (2001). These studies noted a strong negative correlation between FL anxiety and measures of FL proficiency; that is, the higher the level of FL anxiety, the lower the level of FL proficiency demonstrated by higher grades in foreign language courses. However, another aspect of FL anxiety, namely facilitative anxiety, was more relevant when learners' anxiety contributed to, rather than

impeded, their high level of English proficiency (Scovel, 1978; cited in Bailey, 1983; Bailey, 1983; Horwitz et al., 1986; and Brown, 2000). These would suggest that in the present study, “facilitative anxiety” was likely to have been a feature of the high proficiency group, while “debilitative anxiety” was more likely to have been presented in the low proficiency group since, though the high proficiency group had

a higher level of anxiety than the low proficiency group, their level of English proficiency was higher than that of the low proficiency group. This may be because the high proficiency subjects were normally more critical of their own English abilities and more anxious about getting low grades. Their anxiety then motivated them to study English harder, and they could subsequently achieve a higher level of proficiency in English. In contrast, the low proficiency subjects might fail to get good grades. Their past failure on their English abilities probably created their anxiety which did not stimulate them to study hard, which in turn, diminished their level of English proficiency.

The findings of the present study, therefore, provide some insights into the role of learner variables – experience in English speaking countries and out-of-class English learning activities, as well as intrinsic motivation and attitudes towards English, which were significantly related to the subjects’ level of English language proficiency. How to increase Thai learners’ English language proficiency is a challenge to teachers, scholars, researchers, and to educational institutions. Some useful implications and recommendations derived from the results of this study are presented in Chapter 5.