# English communication strategies among Thai logistics professionals

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**ABSTRACT:** Proficiency in English as a foreign language (EFL) holds significant importance in various professional domains, including the field of logistics. However, not all individuals proficient in EFL possess effective English communication skills. Hence, the objective of this research is to investigate the English communication strategies employed by Thai professionals working in the logistics industry. To receive participants' perspectives, a comprehensive approach involving questionnaires and focus-group interviews was employed. The survey results revealed that the most frequently utilized strategies encompassed rechecking, revising, identifying key concepts, and employing dictionaries, while the least commonly used strategies were self-development, guessing, word coinage, and the use of all-purpose words, respectively. Furthermore, the in-depth insights derived from the interviews revealed that participants employed English communication for diverse purposes, including email correspondence, meetings, ordering processes, and purchasing, thereby necessitating the utilization of distinct strategies for each of the four language skills. Remarkably, website translation tools emerged as vital resources for Thai logistics professionals, forming an integral component of their digital strategy. Ultimately, the findings of this study bear relevance to both pedagogical practices and business English training programs, with specific implications for the logistics industry.

*KEYWORDS:* communication strategies; English as a foreign language; Thai logistics professionals; business English

## 1. Introduction

Proficiency in English communication skills as a foreign language holds immense importance in academic and professional settings. This is because employing communication strategies serve as a valuable means to overcome learners' knowledge gaps (Popescu and Cohen-Vida, 2014). Moreover, these strategies play a significant role in addressing communication challenges or difficulties that arise when using a foreign language, enabling learners and professionals to effectively convey their messages, fostering language acquisition, and attaining proficiency in communication competence (Ahmed and Pawar, 2018; Oweis, 2013).

However, not all foreign language learners, particularly those studying English as a foreign language (EFL), possess a comprehensive understanding of useful and appropriate strategies to employ when faced with communication difficulties. Consequently, various reasons contribute to the challenges and issues encountered by EFL learners in their communication efforts. One perspective emphasizes that learners

may primarily focus on aspects such as grammar and semantics, dedicating less time to practice and refining their English communication skills. Another factor relates to the pressure associated with real-time communication and the limited time available for reflection (Popescu and Cohen-Vida, 2014). Moreover, learners may experience embarrassment or discomfort regarding their communication performance, opting to remain silent or avoid engaging in communication to prevent making mistakes or errors (Littlewood, 1991). Additionally, limited opportunities to utilize the foreign language, particularly English, in their daily lives due to learning English as a foreign language and living within a culture that predominantly employs their native language, further contribute to these challenges. Consequently, individuals may find it difficult to participate in classroom discussions and may resort to inadequate approaches when completing language assignments, leading to unsatisfactory communication outcomes (Chuanchaisit and Prapphal, 2009).

Furthermore, employees with limited proficiency in a foreign language, particularly English, may encounter difficulties when interacting with foreign customers, colleagues, or agents, thereby missing out on potential opportunities, or encountering challenges. In such instances, communication strategies serve as an important tool for facilitating effective workplace communication among professionals who employ English as their medium of interaction in real-world scenarios. The significance of honing exceptional communication skills lies in its ability to enhance employability and increase prospects for career advancement (Ting et al., 2017). Consequently, the utilization of communication strategies becomes vital for navigating and addressing these challenges effectively.

As a result, there is a need for research focusing on the examination of communication strategies among professionals who actively apply them in real-world contexts. Such research is crucial as it enables professionals to comprehend the significance of these strategies in their respective fields. Simultaneously, EFL students can also benefit by recognizing and adapting the strategies employed in authentic situations to their studies and potential future careers, especially in relation to English for specific purposes that align with their specific vocational aspirations.

The objective of the present study is to investigate the English communication strategies employed by professionals in the logistics industry who are English as a Foreign Language (EFL) speakers in Thailand.

This study offers several notable advantages: Firstly, it introduces professionals to a broader range of strategies that can enhance their effectiveness in workplace communication. Secondly, it provides students with valuable opportunities to acquire practical English skills and learn strategies specifically relevant to the logistics industry. Lastly, the findings serve as a valuable foundation for lecturers in designing and developing English courses tailored to the needs of individuals in the logistics business.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. The importance of logistics for international trade

The effectiveness of trade support systems such as logistics services is critical to the continued expansion of global commerce. According to the findings of a study on the logistics performance effect on international commerce, continuous investment in logistics infrastructure and services can have a favorable influence on international trade (Gani, 2017).

According to several logistics academics, the global logistics sector has developed dramatically, and logistics has become an important aspect of the commercial economic system. Logistics operations promote economic development and productivity while increasing competitiveness. Erkan (2014) and Kherbach and Mocan (2016) emphasize the importance of efficient logistics service in moving the

country forward. According to Pomlaktong et al. (2005), logistics plays a crucial role in the promotion of national commerce and adds to economic success. It also boosts industry competitiveness, which boosts the nation's industrial competitiveness. However, the employees in the logistics industry, especially in Thailand, continue to lack adequate English-language communication skills, resulting in ineffective operations and inefficiency. According to Phuyathip (2019), Thai logistics personnel should improve their English abilities, such as speaking, listening, reading, writing, technical words, grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation.

## 2.2. The importance of English for logistics business

Two previous studies have suggested that English plays an important role in the logistics industry. Firstly, Puteri Zarina et al. (2020) proposed that workers in the logistics business employed English with a variety of individuals at work by discovering that oral communication skills were required while dealing with management, subordinates, and consumers. Youngyuensin (2015) then stated that English is important in the logistics business since it is utilized to give clients information about products and services. More specifically, English writing was the most critical ability to develop for Thai personnel to be more successful communicators. Then, students should have the opportunity to practice and utilize the language while studying to successfully enhance their communication abilities.

## 2.3. Definition of communication strategies

Many academics have addressed the definition of communication strategies. Initially investigated in the 1970s, the definition of "communication strategies" referred to strategies delivered when the learner encountered difficulties while presenting his or her thoughts to their interlocutor (Corder, 1978; Tarone, 1977). Later in the 1980s, the term was expanded to include the effective or beneficial methods, approaches, or plans that learners used when confronted with communicative issues in L2 contact (Canale and Swain, 1980; Faerch and Kasper, 1983; Poulisse and Schils, 1989; Tarone, 1980). In the 1990s, communication strategies were defined as the skills, tactics, or even mechanisms that non-fluent learners who lack knowledge of the L2 or linguistic competence use when confronted with communicative problems to receive communicative achievement (Brown, 1994; Ellis, 1994; Khanji, 1996; Mitchell and Myles, 1998; Oxford, 1990; Kasper and Kellerman, 1998). In the 2000s, Foster-Cohen (2004) defined communication strategies as a learner's systematic attempt to articulate meaning in a target language in which the appropriate systematic target language norms have not been created.

In the current study, communication strategies relate to the techniques that people employ when they encounter obstacles or difficulties while interacting with a foreign interlocutor at work.

## 2.4. Taxonomies of communication strategies

Many scholars presented communication strategy taxonomies after determining what communication strategies mean from various perspectives. Tarone (1977) first offered avoidance, paraphrasing, conscious transfer, appeal for assistance, and mime. Then, Faerch and Kasper (1983) introduced formal reduction, functional reduction, and achievement strategies. Bialystok (1983) later presented L1-based strategies, L2-based strategies, and non-linguistic strategies. In addition, Willems (1987) presented reduction strategies and achievement strategies. Next, Oxford (1990) suggested six strategies namely memory strategies, cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies, compensation strategies, affective strategies, and social strategies.

## 2.5. Taxonomy of communication strategies of the present study

Because of its goals, which are connected to accomplishment methods and are perceptive and well-refined, the current study adopted the taxonomy of Faerch and Kasper (1983), Willems (1987), Oxford (1990), Dornyei and Scott (1997), and the findings of prior relevant studies. The criteria for choosing the strategies to be included in the taxonomy used in the present study is considering those that were mostly employed by the participants from the previous studies. **Table 1** shows the taxonomy adopted for the presented study.

**Table 1.** Taxonomy of communication strategies of the present study (F&K = Faerch and Kasper (1983); W = Willems (1987); O = Oxford (1990); D&S = Dornyei and Scott (1997)).

| Strategy | Description (scholars) |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Circumlocution | Exemplifying, illustrating or describing the properties of the target object or action. (F&K, W) |
| 2. Approximation | Using a single alternative lexical item, such as a superordinate or a related term, which shares semantic features with the target word or structure. (W) |
| 3. Use of all-purpose words | Extending a general, "empty" lexical item to contexts where specific words are lacking. (W) |
| 4. Word-coinage | Creating a non-existing L2 word by applying a supposed L2 rule to an existing L2 word. (F&K, W) |
| 5. Literal translation | Translating literally a lexical item, an idiom, a compound word or structure from L1/L3 to L2. (F&K, W) |
| 6. Foreignizing | Using a L1/L3 word by adjusting it to L2 phonology (i.e., with a L2 pronunciation) and/or morphology. (F&K, W) |
| 7. Code switching | Including L1/L3 words with L1/L3 pronunciation in L2 speech; this may involve stretches of discourse ranging from single words to whole chunks and even complete turns. (F&K, W) |
| 8. Self-repair | Making self-initiated corrections in one's own speech. (D&S, W) |
| 9. Mime | Describing whole concepts nonverbally, or accompanying a verbal strategy with a visual illustration. (F&K, W) |
| 10. Direct appeal for help | Turning to the interlocutor for assistance by asking an explicit question concerning a gap in one's L2 knowledge. (D&S, F&K, O, W) |
| 11. Indirect appeal for help | Trying to elicit help from the interlocutor indirectly by expressing lack of a need L2 item either verbally or nonverbally. (D&S, F&K, O, W) |
| 12. Asking for repetition | Requesting repetition when not hearing or understanding something properly. (D&S) |
| 13. Asking for clarification | Requesting explanation of an unfamiliar meaning structure. (D&S, W) |
| 14. Asking for confirmation | Requesting confirmation that one heard or understood something correctly. (D&S, W) |
| 15. Guessing | Guessing is similar to a confirmation request, but the latter implies a greater degree of certainty regarding the key word, whereas guessing involves real indecision. (D&S, O) |
| 16. Interpretive summary | Extended paraphrase of the interlocutor's message to check that the speaker has understood correctly. (D&S, W) |
| 17. Comprehension check | Asking questions to check that the interlocutor can follow you. (D&S, O, W) |
| 18. Own-accuracy check | Checking that what you said was correct by asking a concrete question or repeating a word with a question intonation. (D&S) |
| 19. Response: repeat | Repeating the original trigger or the suggested corrected form (after an other-repair). (D&S) |
| 20. Response: expand | Putting the problem word/issue into a larger context. (D&S) |
| 21. Response: confirm | Confirming what the interlocutor has said or suggested. (D&S) |
| 22. Background knowledge | Thinking about what you have already known about the topic. (O) |
| 23. Purposeful mind | Having a purpose in mind when you communicate. (O) |
| 24. Using context clues | Using context clues for effective communication. (O) |
| 25. Finding the main idea | Finding the main idea for more understanding. (O) |
| 26. Using dictionary | Finding out the difficult words in the dictionary. (O) |

## 2.6. Previous studies

Several previous studies have been conducted to explore communication strategies among Thai people. The initial study aimed to identify and compare the frequency of communication mobility and communication techniques utilized by Thai human resources specialists employed in a global firm based in Bangkok. The major findings indicated that Thai professionals employed workplace communication methods with considerable frequency, surpassing the employment of communication mobility strategies (Rajprasit and Hemchua, 2018). Another study investigated the communication strategies adopted by low-ability students, which may impede their oral communication skills. The findings demonstrated that low-ability students employed risk-averse tactics, particularly time-gaining methods while requiring assistance in developing risk-taking strategies such as social-affective, fluency-oriented, help-seeking, and circumlocution strategies (Chuanchisit and Prapphal, 2009). A subsequent study explored the spoken

communication skills of Thai undergraduate students, revealing that message reduction, change, and meaning negotiation were the most frequently reported strategies employed during speaking and listening activities (Metcalfe and Noom-Ura, 2013). Another investigation aimed to examine the English communication skills of Thai engineering students. The findings suggested that the participants exhibited a moderate level of proficiency in their communication strategies with nonverbal techniques being the most used, while accuracy-oriented strategies were employed with lesser frequency (Phonhan, 2019). In a study conducted by Sutthinaraphan and Wasanasomsithi (2017) that focused on Thai undergraduate students majoring in science, it was found that most participants utilized the "nonverbal strategy" as their predominant approach, whereas the "attempt to think in English" strategy was the least frequently employed. These findings highlight the importance of training students to utilize a broader range of achievement strategies.

Moreover, prior research has explored communication strategies employed by individual across various regions worldwide for specific purposes involving the English language. The first study focused on the utilization of communication methods among Indonesian students from a linguistic perspective. The findings revealed that students with higher levels of proficiency employed five types and ten subtypes of communication strategies, whereas students with lower proficiency levels employed four types and nine subcategories. This suggests that students with greater proficiency levels employed a wider range of communication strategies compared to those with lower proficiency level (Masithoh et al., 2018). Subsequently, a study investigated the communication strategies employed by undergraduate students during oral presentation within an oral communication skills course. The data analysis demonstrated that proficient presenters utilized a greater number of oral communication strategies compared to average presenters. Proficient students, when confronted with speaking challenges, more frequently employed social-affective, fluency-oriented, and nonverbal methods. In contrast, average students employed social-emotional and nonverbal techniques to a lesser extent (Idrus, 2016). Pratama and Zainil (2020) then examined communication strategies in relation to speaking performance. The findings indicated that participants employed a variety of strategies, with "pause fillers" and "hesitation devices" being the most frequently used, while "comprehension check", "non-linguistic strategy", and "literal translation" were the least utilized. Furthermore, language competency and communication apprehension were found to influence the selection of communication strategies. Additionally, Ka-J (2017) investigated the communication strategies of English learners with different level of language proficiency. The results indicated that low-proficiency learners employed achievement, direct and indirect strategies to a greater extent, while highly proficient learners relied more on avoidance strategies. Moreover, Maldonado (2016) examined the communication strategies employed by L2 English learners of different proficiency levels. The findings indicated a relationship between learners' proficiency levels and their usage of communication strategies. Detailed analysis confirmed this association and revealed that learners' linguistic competence not only influenced the frequency but also the types of communication strategies used.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1. Participants

Sample size should be at least 100 participants according to Dornyei (2007). However, the participants in this research study could not exceed because of the limited numbers of logistics staff who have qualified for their daily used of English. Then 79 Thai logistics staff were randomly selected. These individuals held responsibilities associated with various operational tasks within the logistics industry,

encompassing areas such as customer service, warehousing, and import and export coordination. The entire sample completed the administered questionnaire, following which a subgroup of 20 participants was randomly recruited to participate in a series of focus-group interviews, conducted across five distinct groups.

### 3.2. Research instruments

### 3.2.1. Questionnaire

The questionnaire was developed in both English and Thai languages, with the primary objective of investigating the attitudes regarding communication strategies among the participants. The questionnaire employed a Likert scale from 1 to 5 (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree), allowing for the collection of quantitative information. It consisted of two distinct sections, namely personal information, and communication strategies. The initial segment encompassed personal information, whereby participants provided details such as gender, age, educational background, job experience, as well as their level of fluency and regularity in utilizing English for daily work coordination. The subsequent segment comprised the communication strategies questionnaire, in which participants were tasked with expressing their objectives and practices pertaining to each specific tactic employed during business interactions. The questionnaire encompassed a total of 38 closed-ended items, and all participants were requested to provide their preferred rating on a scale of 1 to 5, signifying their degree of agreement or disagreement with the effectiveness and utilization of each technique. Moreover, the measure of reliability for the present study was computed utilizing Cronbach's alpha within the Excel Program, resulting in a coefficient value of 0.88. This finding indicates that the questionnaire employed in the current research possesses an acceptable level of reliability.

### 3.2.2. Interview

To gather comprehensive information from the participants, the focus-group interview was delivered. This approach aimed to validate and gain deeper insights into the subject matter, building upon the quantitative data obtained from the administered questionnaires. Each interview, conducted in Thai language to lessen potential misinterpretations, had a duration of 30 min. The sessions were documented through video recording and audio recording, and subsequently transcribed for subsequent analysis and examination.

## 4. Data collection

### 4.1. Collection procedure

1) Prior to starting data collection, the research proposal underwent submission to an institutional review board (IRB) for its formal approval. Following the receiving IRB approval, all participants duly equipped their informed consent before being involved in the study, with participation being entirely voluntary in nature. The mode of consent obtained was of the oral variety. Moreover, participants were afforded the freedom to withdraw from the study at their choice. Furthermore, obvious assurance was provided that all gathered data would be treated with utmost confidentiality and solely employed for the purpose of advancing the research objectives.

2) The questionnaire was distributed via the utilization of Google Forms, owing to its convenience, allowing participants to complete it at their own choice during their available leisure time. A time frame of seven consecutive working days was allocated to participants for the purpose of completing the questionnaire.

3) Across the five groups, participants engaged in an online focus-group interview for a duration of 30 min, wherein they actively contribute their perspectives pertaining to communication strategies employed within their respective workplaces. The data generated during these interactions was captured by the recording application of a smart phone.

## 4.2. Analysis procedure

1) The collected data from questionnaires was subjected to descriptive analysis utilizing the Excel application, with the purpose of ascertaining key statistical parameters including usage, mean values, and standard deviation.

2) The collected data from interviewing underwent thorough examination employing content analysis methodology, wherein the frequency of occurrences was quantitatively measured to extract meaningful insights from the collected data. Subsequently, the interview data was transcribed, systematically coded, and classified according to relevant thematic categories.

# 5. Results

## 5.1. Results from self-perception

### 5.1.1. The most frequently used strategies are as follows

**Table 2.** The most frequently used strategies.

| Ranking no. | Perception | Strategy | Mean score (level) |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | I read an email to check its correctness before sending it. | Recheck (self-repetition) | 4.43 (much) |
| 2 | I revised an email before sending it to assure that it contained all the information that I would like to address. | Revise (own-accuracy check) | 4.42 (much) |
| 3 | When I communicate, I always present or find out the main idea to get a clear understanding. | Finding the main idea (cognitive) | 3.79 (much) |
| 4 | If I don't know the meaning of English words, I find it out at the dictionary. | Using dictionary (cognitive) | 3.78 (much) |
| 5 | When writing an email, I pay attention to the details, e.g., the main idea, topic, or supporting ideas. | Purposeful mind (meta-cognitive) | 3.72 (much) |
| 6 | When writing, I adjust the form of the expression if I'm not sure whether it is correct or not. | Circumlocution (paraphrase)—verbal communication strategies | 3.69 (much) |
| 7 | When writing, I used conjunctions, e.g., *thus*, *however*, *so*, and *but*, to make the readers understand what I would like to address. | Using conjunction (meta-cognitive) | 3.67 (much) |
| 8 | I use my background knowledge to comprehend when communicating English with foreigners./When communicating in English with foreigners, I always focus on the point that I would like to address. | Background knowledge (meta-cognitive)/Purposeful mind (meta-cognitive) | 3.62 (much) |
| 9 | When I have no idea in writing, I use various resources to find out the idea. | Using other resources (cognitive) | 3.60 (much) |
| 10 | I request that the foreigners repeat the word that I can't hear or understand. | Asking for repetition | 3.59 (much) |

**Table 2** shows Thai logistics personnel's perceptions on the most frequently employed strategies. Many of the top ten strategies were employed by the participants, including rechecking, revising, discovering the main idea, utilizing a dictionary, having a purposeful mind, using paraphrase, using conjunction, using background knowledge, using external resources, and asking for repetition.

### 5.1.2. The least frequently used strategies

**Table 3** presents the perception of the least frequently used strategies reported by Thai logistics staff. The participants used less in literal translations and approximation, whereas they employed moderately in the strategies of self-development, guessing, word-coinage, circumlocution, responding by repeating and expanding, direct appealing for help, and using all-purpose words, respectively.

**Table 3.** The least frequently used strategies.

| Ranking no. | Perception | Strategy | Mean score (level) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | If I don't know English words, I translate word by word from Thai (L1) to English (L2), e.g., "You come from where?" or "You go where next?". | Literal translation (transfer) | 2.03 (less) |
| 2 | If I don't know the English words, I'll use the word that has the closest meaning, e.g., "watermelon" instead of "fruit". | Approximation (compensation) | 2.39 (less) |
| 3 | I read works of famous writers to improve my writing skill. | Self-development | 2.54 (moderate) |
| 4 | I guess I should use the words if I have no idea how to use them. | Guessing (compensation) | 2.60 (moderate) |
| 5 | I make up new words in case I don't know the correct ones in English. | Word-coinage (compensation) | 2.65 (moderate) |
| 6 | If I don't know the English words, I describe it, e.g., "It is like..." or "It looks like...". | Circumlocution (paraphrase, explanation) | 2.84 (moderate) |
| 7 | I responded by repeating the unknown English words. | Response: repeat | 2.87 (moderate) |
| 8 | I responded by expanding the issue into a larger context. | Response: expand | 2.92 (moderate) |
| 9 | If I don't understand, I'll ask the interlocutor frankly, e.g., how to say that word. | Direct appeal for help (social) | 2.93 (moderate) |
| 10 | I use general words like "thing" or "it" to refer to English words that I don't know. | Use of all-purpose words (compensation) | 2.94 (moderate) |

## 5.2. Results from the interview

In this section, the results from the in-depth group interview were presented.

First, it is about the purpose of utilizing English in their daily work. It was indicated that English served various functions in the domains of writing and reading. Specifically, participants reported employing English for activities such as emailing, attending meetings, placing orders, and making purchases. However, when it came to speaking and listening, the primary application of English was observed in facilitating coordinating and interaction with clients, colleagues, and agents located abroad.

Second, the strategies used when listening were identified. These included directing attention towards identifying and comprehending keywords, requesting the speaker to repeat information, seeking confirmation of understanding from the interlocutor, paying attention to the accent and studying the specific accent of the speaker, utilizing online platforms such as YouTube (specifically Vlogs) to become familiar with diverse accents, inferring meaning from contextual cues, engaging in regular practice during daily work, seeking explanations from the speaker when necessary, memorizing technical terms, taking notes during meetings, and reviewing grammar principles.

Third, it is about the strategies used when facing some problems related to listening. Participants reported that the primary source of difficulty stemmed from the accents of the speakers. Subsequently, they disclosed several strategies they utilized to address this issue. These strategies encompassed requesting repetition from their interlocutors, seeking assistance from colleagues or supervisors to listen attentively, directly communicating their lack of comprehension to their interlocutors, employing Google Translate, soliciting the summarization of discussions via email, seeking clarification from their interlocutors, focusing on key words, researching the meanings of challenging words on the internet, and requesting a slower speech pace.

Then, it is about the strategies employed by participants when engaging in speaking activities. The respondents reported adopting various approaches, including the utilization of basic, simple, and easily comprehensible vocabulary. Furthermore, they expressed a lesser concern for strict adherence to grammatical rules, particularly pertaining to verb tense. An additional strategy entailed emulating expressions derived from movies as a means of language acquisition. Participants also disclosed that they practiced speaking with individuals of foreign nationality, actively committed vocabulary to memory, and reused previously learned words. A noteworthy aspect was the willingness to speak without reservation, regardless of potential errors, relying on the interlocutor's feedback for correction. Supplementary

methods encompassed practicing verbal communication while driving, engaging in audible self-practice, attempting to think in English, seeking instructional resources on platforms such as YouTube, focusing on essential keywords, and initiating communication via email before transitioning to phone calls.

Next, it is about the strategies used when facing some problem when speaking. Participants employed a variety of strategies to overcome difficulties encountered during speaking tasks. These strategies encompassed the utilization of non-verbal cues and body language to enhance communication effectiveness, the attempt to provide additional explanations or clarifications to ensure comprehension, the deployment of alternative phrases that conveyed the same intended meaning, the use of simpler or easier vocabulary to facilitate understanding, and the deliberate de-emphasis on grammatical accuracy while formulating their responses. These strategies were implemented as means to effectively address and navigate challenges encountered during the process of speaking.

Moreover, regarding the strategies used when writing, participants reported employing various strategies to enhance their writing skills. These strategies included referencing example patterns sourced from the internet to ensure a more professional writing style, focusing on the main point before initiating the writing process, verifying correct word usage or sentence structures through online resources, seeking assistance from their managers when needed, utilizing simple or concise vocabulary (such as background information, details, requests, and concluding statements) to facilitate clarity, opting for brevity as lengthy emails were deemed less favorable, employing key phrases relevant to the topic, studying grammar principles to improve writing proficiency, utilizing websites to validate appropriate verb tense usage, drawing upon previously encountered terms or sentences from other writers, cross-checking translations with Google Translate and subsequently reviewing for accuracy, referring to old emails from colleagues for guidance, and relying on computer auto-correct features.

Also, it is about the strategies used when facing some problem when writing. Participants outlined several strategies employed to address writing difficulties. These strategies included utilizing online dictionaries to ensure accurate word usage, consulting internet resources to identify appropriate writing patterns, employing Google Translate for language assistance, retaining and incorporating aesthetically pleasing words, acquiring knowledge from online sources such as Google, seeking input and feedback from colleagues or managers to review their written work prior to sending it, expanding on explanations by increasing the amount of written content, actively seeking confirmation from readers to ensure comprehension, and leveraging relevant websites as resources for writing assistance.

In addition, it is about the strategies used when writing. Participants provided insights into their approaches to enhance their reading comprehension. The reported strategies encompassed identifying keywords or the main idea to grasp the central theme of the text, employing skimming and scanning techniques to quickly gather relevant information, seeking assistance from colleagues to clarify any uncertainties, utilizing Google Translate to aid in the understanding of unfamiliar words or phrases, directing attention towards vocabulary comprehension, and studying the structure of sentences to decipher their intended meaning.

Finally, it is about the strategies employed when confronted with a reading problem. Participants shared several strategies they utilized to address challenges encountered during the reading process. These strategies included actively seeking key words within the text to facilitate comprehension, leveraging personal background knowledge or relevant contextual information to enhance understanding, employing translation applications to decipher unfamiliar content, seeking assistance and clarification from the writer, colleagues, or managers when faced with difficulties, reaching out via email to request

further clarification on ambiguous points, utilizing Google as a preliminary source for obtaining a general understanding of the content, subsequently relying on their background knowledge to further comprehend the text, engaging in active learning by taking notes and remembering difficult words encountered during the reading process, attempting to utilize synonyms or advanced vocabulary that conveyed the same intended meaning, actively remembering and incorporating those words into their own communication, and seeking confirmation or verification from colleagues to ensure accurate comprehension.

The researcher additionally sought feedback on the impact of technology on language. Participants expressed diverse viewpoints, highlighting both the advantages and drawbacks associated with technology. Those who acknowledged its influence on language underscored that technology facilitates independent problem-solving by offering resources such as Google Translate or language websites, thereby assisting in language processing. Furthermore, they emphasized that technology aids in language learning by providing a means to verify correct language forms. Conversely, some participants held contrasting views. This group expressed skepticism regarding the reliability and imperfection of technology, necessitating additional effort to evaluate or confirm the accuracy of language provided by technological tools. They argued that such verification processes represent a significant time investment. Moreover, concerns were raised that excessive reliance on technology could hinder language learning and usage, as it may lead to a lack of habitual practice.

## 6. Discussion

### 6.1. The most frequently used strategies

The present study focuses on an analysis of the top 10 frequently employed strategies used by participants, shedding light on their extensive utilization. Among these strategies, the earliest and most frequent approach identified is "rechecking or self-repetition". This observation is consistent with prior research in the field. For instance, Binhayeearong (2009) discovered that self-repetition was employed by speakers to buy time for formulating their thoughts while engaging in conversation with their interlocutor. The utilization of self-repetition in such instances serves to alleviate potential feelings or embarrassment or anxiety arising from communication difficulties. Moreover, Spromberg's (2011) findings revealed that learners employed self-repetition as an indirect coping mechanism. Similarly, Tabula et al. (2014) proposed that self-repetition was employed to lessen communication anxiety during oral presentations. Subsequently, Kovac (2016) discussed how repetitions functioned as a communication strategy in second language (L2) contexts, allowing speakers to prevent breakdowns in communication. While repetition causes a type of speech disfluency, it serves as a resource that learners may utilize to participate in discussions despite their limited language proficiency. Even brief repetitions offer sufficient time for sufficient time for organizing linguistic units in advance or retrieving specific words or phrases. As a result, repeats serve as a communication method enables individuals to secure additional time and sustain their participation in conversations, regardless of their linguistic constraints. Furthermore, Utami (2018) discovered that self-repetition was defined as repeating a word or a string of words immediately after they were said. When a communication gap arises owing to the speaker's loss of thought due to poor linguistic expertise or while they are thinking about the next word, one of the communication tactics utilized is repetition. Finally, Yakut (2022) suggests that self-repetition, as a compensatory strategy, may significantly contribute to maintaining communication in both first language (L1) and L2 English contexts. The study's findings indicate that self-repetition occurs in both L1 and L2 speech, serving distinct purposes, thereby highlighting that self-repetition should not be regarded as a disfluency unless it

hinders the flow of speech.

The second most frequently employed strategy was "Revise (your own accuracy check)", which aligns with the findings reported by Nizar et al. (2018) and Mareza et al. (2021). Previous studies have defined the own-accuracy check as a technique whereby the speaker evaluates the accuracy of their statement by posing a specific query to the interlocutor or by restating the assertion in the form of question. This method involves verifying the correctness of the speaker's utterance through interrogative questioning and repetition of key words with an inquisitive intonation. Subsequently, the latter research demonstrated that the own-accuracy check involves assessing a phrase and rectifying it using appropriate grammatical rules.

The strategy "finding the main idea (cognitive)" emerged as the third most used strategy, a finding that aligns with the research findings reported by Ezeh et al. (2022). The study revealed that proficient learners often relied on the central concept to generate predictions. In the process of making educated guesses, learners heavily relied on contextual cues, such as the association between the unfamiliar word and other words within the sentence, as well as the relationship between the words and conjunctions present in the sentence. The study suggests that learners who possess a solid understanding of the main idea of a text are better equipped to comprehend the meaning of unfamiliar terms. These findings underscore the crucial role of the central theme in vocabulary acquisition, thereby emphasizing the importance for educators to encourage learners to leverage the main concept of a text as a tool for interpreting the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary.

The method "using the dictionary (cognitive)" emerged as the fourth most frequently used strategy, corroborating the findings reported by Eslami and Huang (2013) and Ezeh et al. (2022). Previous studies indicate that many students resort to dictionary usage for self-directed study, particularly to enhance vocabulary, spelling, pronunciation, and other language-related activities. Amongst these purposes, the most common application of dictionaries by students was for acquiring the pronunciation of unfamiliar words, while the least common usage was for understanding the frequency of use and appropriate usage of unknow terms. Participants predominantly relied on the main concepts within the paragraph and their background knowledge to infer the meaning of words. Least-utilized guessing tactics included deriving meaning from specific components of compound words (e.g., "notebook") and identifying the part of speech of a new term. This finding underscores the prevalence of using dictionaries primarily for pronunciation learning among these students, highlighting the importance of dictionary use in decoding, specifically in accurately enunciating English words.

The method "purposeful mind (meta-cognitive)" emerged as the fifth most frequently employed strategy. Bohn and Myklevold (2018) provide a definition of this approach as the conscious awareness and reflective examination of one's knowledge, experiences, emotions, and learning process. This finding indicates that the study participants exhibited a level of metacognitive awareness. Extensive evidence supports the notion that learner metacognition can directly influence the process and outcomes of their learning endeavors. By incorporating metacognitive instruction into the educational process, raising metacognitive awareness can enhance student performance and facilitate the achievement of desired educational objectives (Rahimi and Katal, 2012).

## 6.2. Interview

Within the context of professional environments, participants actively engaged in English communication across all four competencies, encompassing a diverse range of business interactions with multiple stakeholders, both internal and external. This observation underscores the significance of the

four essential abilities—namely, speaking, listening, writing, and reading—for effective business communication (Youngyuensin, 2015). Consequently, it implies the ongoing necessity for EFL professionals to continually enhance their proficiency in these four English language skills (Phuyathip, 2019).

A range of strategies were utilized during discussions on the topic of listening. Firstly, participants employed various cognitive approaches, including accent recognition, self-improvement, contextual cue utilization, note-taking, and grammar revision. Secondly, social strategies were observed, such as seeking assistance from others. Furthermore, memory strategies such as focusing on key terms or technical vocabulary were employed. Additionally, a compensation strategy involving the use of online translation services was identified.

Regarding speaking, participants demonstrated diverse communication styles. They utilized cognitive tactics such as self-practice and self-preparation, employed mime techniques involving body language, and implemented affective strategies that emphasized the importance of not being overly concerned about making mistakes.

When it came to writing, participants utilized a combination of cognitive, social, and compensation strategies in their endeavors. Cognitive strategies encompassed a focus on the central concept of the writing task and utilizing online resources for learning purposes. Social strategies involved seeking assistance from others to aid in the writing process. Compensation strategies included employing concise yet impactful sentences and utilizing online translation tools. The significance of internet resources, such as website translation tools, played a notable role in participants' writing activities. This finding aligns with the research conducted by Zhou and Wei (2018), who proposed that the landscape of language acquisition has rapidly and significantly transformed due to the widespread integration of technology in individuals' daily interactions.

When engaging in the reading tasks, participants employed a diverse range of reading techniques. These encompassed the utilization of memory strategies, such as focusing on keywords through the application of scanning techniques. Compensation strategies were employed, facilitated by the utilization of online resources. Cognitive strategies were also observed, including reviewing grammar and identifying the main idea within the text. Furthermore, participants utilized social strategies, seeking support and assistance from others. Lastly, meta-cognitive strategies were employed, which involved drawing upon background knowledge to enhance comprehension and interpretation during the reading process.

In relation to the domain of language learning technology, participants expressed the utility of online resources, specifically website translation tools, for facilitating the translation process in both directions—L1 to L2 and vice versa—in receptive skills such as listening and reading. In the realm of productive skills, particularly writing, online translation machines were employed for tasks such as translating texts, verifying the meaning of challenging vocabulary, and reviewing grammatical accuracy. However, it is worth noting that the utilization of technology for enhancing speaking abilities was not reported by the participants.

## 7. Conclusion and implications

The current study explored Thai logistics personnel's English communication strategies. As research tools, questionnaires and focus-group interviews were used. According to the results of the questionnaire, the top five methods used by Thai logistics workers were rechecking, revising, discovering the key idea,

consulting a dictionary, and purposeful mind, whereas the least used strategies included self-development, guessing, word-coinage, and all-purpose words. The interviews revealed that individuals use English for emailing, meetings, ordering, and purchasing, and that distinct strategies including cognitive, social, memory, compensation, meta-cognitive, affective, and mime, were utilized in all four language skills. Website translation tools are also useful for EFL employees as part of their digital strategy.

Finally, the present findings shed light on a neglected aspect of second language (L2) communication within the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), highlighting its significant pedagogical implications in the domain of EFL teaching and learning. Educators can incorporate the insights collected from this study into their instructional practices, with the aim of equipping their students with the ability to select and employ the most suitable communication strategies in an effective manner. Moreover, educators can allocate greater attention to fostering student engagement in authentic communicative activities and emphasize the development of students' communication skills. Likewise, students themselves can benefit from the knowledge derived from this research by employing it as a resource when encountering challenges in English language acquisition. By providing students with ample opportunities to employ communication strategies within the classroom, guided by their instructors as an integral part of the curriculum, the utilization of such strategies can be facilitated.

## Author contributions

Conceptualization, PS and KP; questionnaire and computations, PS; validation, PS and KP; sample preparation, KP; investigation, KP; writing—original draft preparation, PS; writing—review and editing, PS and KP; visualization, PS and KP; supervision, PS. Both authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

## Conflict of interest

Authors state no conflict of interest.

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