

# COMMUNICATION APPREHENSION AMONG THAI MONKS IN BANGKOK

## ความประหม่าในการสื่อสารของพระสงฆ์ในกรุงเทพฯ

Associate Professor Dr.Sucharat Rimkeeratikul

รองศาสตราจารย์ ดร.สุชาร์ช ริมเกียรติกุล

สถาบันภาษา มหาวิทยาลัยธรรมศาสตร์

sucharat.tu@gmail.com

### Abstract

This research study compared communication apprehension (CA) in L1 (Thai) and CA in L2 (English) in various contexts, i.e., group discussions, interpersonal conversations, meetings, and public speaking, among 57 Thai Buddhist monks from a total of 70 Ph.D. students studying Buddhist philosophy in a temple university in Bangkok, Thailand. The research results revealed that there was no difference in their CA when using L1 compared to when using L2. However, the research results revealed that their CA when using English differed significantly with respect to the number of years they had been in the monkhood.

**Keywords:** Communication Apprehension, Buddhist Monks, Years in the Monkhood, L1, L2

### บทคัดย่อ

การศึกษาวิจัยนี้เป็นการเปรียบเทียบความประหม่าในการสื่อสารเมื่อใช้ภาษาไทยกับเมื่อใช้ภาษาอังกฤษของพระสงฆ์ในวาระต่างๆ ได้แก่ การอภิปรายกลุ่ม การสนทนา การประชุมอย่างเป็นทางการ และการสื่อสารต่อหน้าสาธารณชน โดยศึกษากับพระสงฆ์ในพระพุทธศาสนาที่กำลังศึกษาอยู่ในระดับปริญญาเอก ในมหาวิทยาลัยสงฆ์ในกรุงเทพฯ จำนวน 57 รูป จากกลุ่มพระนักศึกษาระดับปริญญาเอกทั้งหมดจำนวน 70 รูป การวิจัยครั้งนี้พบว่าไม่มีความแตกต่างในความประหม่าในการสื่อสารเมื่อพระสงฆ์นักศึกษานักศึกษาใช้ภาษาไทยกับเมื่อพระสงฆ์นักศึกษานักศึกษาใช้ภาษาอังกฤษและพบว่าเมื่อพระสงฆ์นักศึกษานักศึกษาใช้ภาษาอังกฤษในการสื่อสารพระสงฆ์ที่ครองความเป็นพระด้วยจำนวนพรรษาต่างกันมีความประหม่าในการสื่อสารต่างกัน

**คำสำคัญ:** ความประหม่าในการสื่อสาร พระสงฆ์ อายุพรรษา ภาษาไทย ภาษาอังกฤษ

## Introduction

Communication is very important for everyone in all walks of life. Meanwhile, the English language has become one of the most powerful languages, as it is used by peoples around the world. In Thailand, as in most countries, graduate level education plays a vital role in society. In light of the above, Thai monks in Dheravas are required to use English as part of a Ph.D. program at a temple university in Bangkok.

According to the curriculum of the monk university, among the many subjects in the curriculum, the Ph. D. monk students in this research were required to give two presentations in English as a partial requirement to complete one compulsory English course. In each presentation, individual monks were required to summarize a piece of current news from an English language newspaper and briefly give some comments by integrating Dharma, or the Buddha's words, into the presentation. However, the monk Ph.D. students were seen to have different reactions towards this activity. Some of them were very confident, while others demonstrated reluctance or even informed the instructor that they were sick on the day of the presentations, which raised a question regarding the reasons for this. The researcher surmised that CA could have been the culprit.

Furthermore, most monk students seemed to enjoy speaking in Thai in most contexts, as they had to do teaching and chanting for people in their communities. Most of the time, those communicative behaviors were done through the Thai language. Thus, it was questionable whether these Thai monks felt different when they had to communicate using the English language. In addition, some monks seemed to be more confident when they used the English language for presentations in front of the classroom while others looked more tense and anxious. Although the monk students were quite similar overall, one factor that seemed to differentiate their CA was the number of years they had been in the monkhood.

With the impact of globalization, cultures and beliefs tend to flow from one part of the world to other parts. As a result, Thai monks are required to be able to help share a correct understanding of the Buddha's teaching to peoples of various cultures and beliefs. They should be able to communicate well enough in the English language, which is a lingua franca, in order to spread the Buddha's teachings to fellow human beings.

If English language instructors understand the feelings of anxiety that occur in monks with different backgrounds, the instructors may be able to adapt their lessons and teaching methodology to suit them.

## Aims

This study examined the CA in all dimensions and the trait-like CA of Thai monks in a Ph.D. program in a public university in Thailand when they communicate in the Thai language (L1) and when they communicate in the English language (L2). Moreover, this study investigated whether the number of years in the monkhood led to disparities in their CA in all dimensions and in trait-like CA.

## *Research Questions*

The research questions are as follows:

- RQ 1: Is there any difference in trait-like CA or CA in any dimension when using L1 and when using L2 among the Thai monk Ph.D. students?
- RQ 2: Is there any difference in trait-like CA in L2 among the Thai monk Ph.D. students who have been in the monkhood a different length of time?

## **Theoretical Background**

This research was conducted based on the concepts of communication apprehension (CA) in Thai culture. As a result, the following part covers communication apprehension as a construct, its causes, its effects, and Thai culture.

### ***Communication Apprehension (CA)***

Communication apprehension (CA) is an individual's level of fear or anxiety associated with real or anticipated communication with another person or persons (McCroskey, 1984). An individual's orientation toward communication across varied contexts and situations is defined as trait-like CA. Trait-like CA is rather enduring (McCroskey and Beatty, 1998). According to McCroskey, Daly, and Sorensen (1976), trait-like CA is a "predisposition to avoid communication if possible, or suffer from a variety of anxiety-type feelings when forced to communicate" (p. 376). Trait-like CA is composed of CA in four various contexts: group discussions, interpersonal conversations, meetings, and public speaking.

### ***Causes of CA***

CA is commonly seen as an internal and cognitive state centered on the fear of communicating (McCroskey and Beatty, 1998). However, scholars have different perspectives on the causes of CA. From a cultural perspective, CA in collectivistic cultures tends to be higher than in individualistic cultures because collectivistic cultures emphasize harmony and an obligation towards the goals of the group rather than the goals of each individual (Triandis, 1994). According to Beatty and McCroskey (2001), when CA is considered as part of genetics, or it is seen through the communibiological paradigm, this communicative characteristic is likely to vary among people from different genetic backgrounds.

Some scholars consider demographic data as the cause of CA. Butler, Pryor, and Marti (2004) see differences in age, sex, and disparities in identified abilities as sources of CA. Moreover, CA levels may be affected by individual, social, cultural, and socio-economic factors (Alley-Young, 2005). According to Buss (1980), CA arises from the newness of a situation, formal situations, subordinate status, being conspicuous, unfamiliarity, dissimilarity, and excessive attention from others. People with lower self-esteem are also likely to have higher CA (Richmond and McCroskey, 1985).

### ***Effects of CA***

In terms of education, people with low CA tend to be more successful than those with high CA (Anderson and McCroskey, 1976; Boothe-Butterfield, McCroskey, and Payne, 1989). According to Richmond & McCroskey (1985), people with lower levels of CA tend to have lower anxiety, tolerate ambiguous situations, have a higher level of self-control, have more emotional maturity, and are more extroverted, adventurous, and innovative.

### ***Thai Culture***

According to Hofstede and Hofstede's (2005) Table of Individualism Index (IDV), Thailand scores 20 and is ranked 56-61, whereas the USA is ranked first (pp. 78-79). This means that Thai culture exhibits a high degree of collectivism and high context. Neuliep (2000) indicates that people from collectivistic and high-context cultures with a high power distance tend to be stricter with hierarchical role stratification.

Based on Hofstede and Hofstede's (2005) Table of Power Distance Index (PDI), Thailand is ranked 34-36, which suggests that it has a high degree of power distance. This means that most Thai people tend to tolerate disparities in the distribution of power, and they are likely to respect and obey people in higher positions.

### ***Relevant Research***

McCroskey et al. (1983) and Richmond et al. (2008) found that students' levels of CA in L1 were significantly lower than their levels of CA in L2. In a research study by McCann, Hecht, and Ribeau (1986), it was discovered that in terms of teaching English as a second language, (ESL), second language input was negatively related to communication apprehension. That is, the more people are exposed to comprehensible input of L2, their levels of communication apprehension when using L2 can be reduced. Also, it can be interpreted that low level of CA can lead to more exposure to input of L2. Kaur, Suleiman, and Sidhu (2012) note in their article that in their study, CA in L2 of the majority (70.4%) of 125 tertiary students was found at the average level. However, CA in L2 of all contexts as well as trait-like CA of 18.4% was found at high levels. They also reported that their findings had important implications for the curriculum universities in their study. There is a research study by Rimkeeratikul (2016) indicating that CA in L2 across four dimensions among MA students majoring in English at a public university in Bangkok was at the moderate levels, and there was no significant difference in CA in L2 of any dimension between first year and second year students of this MA program.

## **Materials and Methods**

### ***Research Design***

This research study was a quantitative one conducted with Thai monk Ph.D. students in the area of Buddhism at a temple university in Bangkok, Thailand. The participants in this study were 57 first-year students. This target group was chosen for two reasons. First of all, it was convenient to gather the data, as the researcher has been teaching English courses for this program for some years. Secondly, it is a partial requirement of this course for the students to give two presentations using English. However, all the classes, including the English foundation courses taught in this program, are conducted in the Thai language. Most of all, the participants were Thai monks with various backgrounds, e.g., biological age and length of time in the monkhood; meanwhile, they were putting great effort toward obtaining the highest degree in education.

### ***Subjects***

The sample in this study was comprised of 70 first-year Thai monk Ph.D. students who were taking a compulsory English course. They were from two classes of the English foundation course offered in a monk university in Bangkok, Thailand. The average number of students per class was 35. The number of participants was 57.

### ***Research Tools***

The instrument employed was a questionnaire containing three parts: (1) demographic data; (2) the PRCA-24 when using the Thai language or L1; and (3) the PRCA-24 when using the English language or L2. The PRCA-24 (McCroskey, 1982) is the most widely accepted tool for measuring communication apprehension (CA) in people.

The PRCA-24 used in the study was translated into the Thai language and back translation was done by two bilingual English instructors of the Language Institute, Thammasat University, Bangkok, Thailand and the construct validity when used with Thai people has already been verified (Rimkeeratikul, 2008). The PRCA-24 is a personal report of communication apprehension composed of 24 items asking how an individual feels when they perform or think of performing oral communication in four dimensions: group discussions, interpersonal conversations, meetings, and public speaking. When all dimensions of CA are summed up, the result is trait-like CA.

### ***Procedures***

In the last week of the semester, the researcher asked for cooperation from a monk who was the course liaison of the monk university to distribute the questionnaires to the monk Ph.D. students. The researcher also asked him to explain the nature of the study to the participants. Self-administered questionnaires were distributed to 70 students in the two classes of the same foundation English course on the same day at the same time.

In the questionnaire, there were instructions explaining how to complete it and a sentence stating that the students had the right to either give answers or abstain from doing so. When the questionnaires were completed, the monk liaison brought them back to the researcher. All in all, 57 questionnaires were completed and returned, representing an 81.4% rate of return.

### ***Data Analysis***

Descriptive statistics in the form of means and standard deviations were calculated for the general background of the respondents. In addition, the CA scores of the monk students of this public university were calculated from the PRCA-24 in order to determine their communication apprehension (CA) when they use the Thai language and the English language.

The mean scores of CA when they use the Thai language (CA in L1) and when they use the English language (CA in L2) were calculated. Then, a *t-test* was opted for as this statistical test can assess whether the means of two groups are really different from each other by determining statistical significance. In this

study, one purpose was to find out whether there was a significant difference between CA in L1 and CA in L2 among these Thai monks. The significance level was set at  $p \leq 0.05$ .

ANOVA is used to determine whether there are any statistically significant differences between the means of three or more independent groups. In this research, ANOVA tests were applied to determine whether CA differed depending on the amount of time the monk students had been in the monkhood. The time in the monkhood was divided into three groups: (1) 15 years and under; (2) 16-25 years; and (3) longer than 25 years. The significance level was also set at  $p \leq 0.05$ .

## Results

The results of the research are reported according to the two research questions. The result of the first research question is that, based on *t-test* analysis, there was no difference in CA in all dimensions and total CA when Thai monks in the Ph.D. program communicated face-to-face using the Thai language (L1) and the English language (L2). Table 1 shows the mean differences between CA in L1 and CA in L2 among the Thai monk Ph.D. students in every dimension and total CA.

**Table 1.** Means of CA in L1 and L2 of the Thai monk Ph.D. students

Paired Samples Statistics					
		Mean	N	SD	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Thai: Group Discussions	16.91	52	4.19	.58
	English: Group Discussions	16.27	52	3.16	.44
Pair 2	Thai: Meetings	16.25	52	3.12	.43
	English: Meetings	16.71	52	3.77	.52
Pair 3	Thai: Interpersonal Conversations	16.80	56	3.24	.43
	English: Interpersonal Conversations	16.61	56	3.57	.48
Pair 4	Thai: Public Speaking	17.11	56	5.30	.71
	English: Public Speaking	16.05	56	3.76	.50
Pair 5	Thai: Total CA	67.96	46	11.03	1.63
	English: Total CA	66.28	46	12.24	1.81

Table 2 reveals that a statistically significant difference was not found between the CA in L1 and CA in L2 among Thai monk Ph.D. students in any dimension of face-to-face communication or in their trait-like CA.

**Table 2.** Paired Sample *t*-test of CA in L1 and L2 in all dimensions and total CA

Paired Differences								
Dimension of	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
				Lower	Upper			(2-tailed)
Communication Apprehension	.63	3.81	.53	-.43	1.70	1.20	51	.24
Thai: Group Discussions								
English: Group Discussions								
Thai: Meetings	-.46	3.00	.42	1.30	-.37	1.10	-51	.27
English: Meetings								
Thai: Interpersonal Conversations	.20	2.94	.39	-.59	.98	.50	55	.62
English: Interpersonal Conversations								
Thai: Public Speaking	1.05	4.93	.66	-.27	2.37	1.59	55	.12
English: Public Speaking								
Thai: Total CA	1.67	8.42	1.24	-.83	4.18	1.34	45	.19
English: Total CA								

( $p \leq 0.05$ )

The respondents in this research study varied in terms of the number of years they had been in the monkhood. The details of the differences are shown in tables 3 and 4 below. Table 3 indicates that the minimum years of being in the monkhood in this study was about eight years (7.83) and the highest number of years being in the monkhood for these monks was 57 years, which means that this monk must have entered the monkhood when he was quite young.

**Table 3.** The number of years in the monkhood of the Thai monk Ph.D. students

	<i>N</i>	Minimum	Maximum	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Years in the Monkhood	50	7.83	57.00	23.14	9.29

Table 4 shows that the number of years in the monkhood was divided into three categories. The majority of the monks had been in the monkhood between 16 and 25 years (47.4%).

**Table 4.** Range of time in the monkhood of the Thai monk Ph.D. students

	Number of Years in the Monkhood	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	15 years and under	7	12.3	14.6	14.6
	16-25 years	27	47.4	56.2	70.8
	Over 25 years	14	24.6	29.2	100.0
	Total	48	84.2	100.0	
	Missing	9	15.8		
	Total	57	100.0		

Table 5 shows the overall mean scores of CA across the four dimensions: group discussions, meetings, interpersonal conversations, and public speaking, including the mean scores of the total CA of the Thai monk Ph.D. students with three different ranges of time spent in the monkhood: under 15 years, 16-25 years, and over 25 years.

Across the four categories of CA, all of the average scores were moderate. According to McCroskey (1982), scores in the four contexts (groups, meetings, interpersonal conversations, and public speaking) can range from a low of six to a high of 30. Any score above 18 indicates some degree of apprehension.

According to McCroskey (1982), CA scores above 72 indicate that one is generally more apprehensive about communication than the average person. Scores above 85 indicate a very high level of trait-like communication apprehension. Scores below 59 indicate a very low level of apprehension. Extreme scores (below 59 or above 85) are abnormal (p. 24).

**Table 5.** Means of CA across dimensions and total CA in L2 of Thai monk Ph.D. students with different numbers of years in the monkhood

		<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
English Group Discussions	15 years and under	7	16.57	3.46	1.31	13.37	19.77	13.00	23.00
	16-25 yrs.	27	16.81	2.39	.46	15.87	17.76	11.00	22.00
	Over 25 yrs.	12	13.67	3.03	.87	11.74	15.59	10.00	19.00
	Total	46	15.96	3.00	.44	15.06	16.85	10.00	23.00
English: Meetings	15 years and under	6	17.33	2.34	.95	14.88	19.79	14.00	21.00
	16-25 yrs.	24	17.75	2.47	.50	16.71	18.79	12.00	22.00
	Over 25 yrs.	14	14.21	5.13	1.37	11.25	17.18	7.00	22.00
	Total	44	16.57	3.81	.57	15.41	17.73	7.00	22.00

(continue)



Table 5. (continue)

		<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
English: Interperson al Conversatio ns	15 years and under	7	18.00	2.58	.98	15.61	20.39	14.00	22.00
	16-25 yrs.	27	17.61	2.57	.50	16.61	18.65	12.00	22.00
	Over 25 yrs. Total	14 48	14.50 16.77	4.72 3.59	1.26 .52	11.78 15.73	17.22 17.81	6.00 6.00	22.00 22.00
English: Public Speaking	15 years and under	7	16.86	3.08	1.16	14.01	19.70	13.00	22.00
	16-25 yrs.	27	17.30	2.77	.53	16.20	18.39	11.00	22.00
	Over 25 yrs. Total	14 48	14.00 16.27	4.35 3.59	1.16 .52	11.49 15.23	16.51 17.31	8.00 8.00	22.00 22.00
English: Total CA	15 years and under	6	68.83	11.03	4.50	57.25	80.41	59.00	88.00
	16-25 yrs.	24	69.54	9.41	1.92	65.57	73.52	49.00	85.00
	Over 25 yrs.	12	56.00	16.22	4.68	45.69	66.31	31.00	80.00
	Total	42	65.57	13.14	2.02	61.48	69.67	31.00	88.00

Table 6 indicates that based on the ANOVA test, there were statistically significant differences in CA across the four dimensions and also in the trait-like CA among the monk subjects when they used English in oral face-to-face communication with respect to the different length of time they had been in the monkhood.

**Table 6. Results of the mean comparison of CA across dimensions and total CA in L2 of Thai monk Ph.D. students with different numbers of years in the monkhood**

ANOVA		Sum of Squares	<i>df</i>	Mean Square	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
English: Group Discussion	Between Groups	85.46	2	42.73	5.73	.01*
	Within Groups	320.46	43	7.45		
	Total	405.91	45			
English: Meetings	Between Groups	114.61	2	57.30	4.61	.01*
	Within Groups	510.19	41	12.44		
	Total	624.80	43			

(continue)

**Table 6.** (continue)

ANOVA		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
English:	Between Groups	102.68	2	51.34	4.60	<b>.02*</b>
Interpersonal	Within Groups	501.80	45	11.15		
Conversation	Total	604.48	47			
English:	Between Groups	102.99	2	51.50	4.61	<b>.02*</b>
Public	Within Groups	502.49	45	11.17		
Speaking	Total	605.48	47			
English:	Between Groups	1541.49	2	770.75	5.43	<b>.01*</b>
Total CA	Within Groups	5540.79	39	142.07		
	Total	7082.29	41			

(p&lt;0.05)

Table 7 indicates that through post-hoc analysis, the CA means across the four dimensions between those monks who had been in the monkhood between 16-25 years and those who had been in the monkhood over 25 years showed significant differences in CA across dimensions, including total CA when they used English in communication or even when they imagined using the English language.

**Table 7.** Post-hoc Analysis

Scheffe							
Dependent Variable	Years in Monkhood	Years in Monkhood	Mean Difference	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
English: Group Discussion	15 years and under	16-25 yrs.	-.24	1.16	.98	-3.18	2.69
		Over 25 yrs	2.90	1.30	.09	-.39	6.20
	<b>16-25 yrs.</b>	15 and Under	.24	1.16	.98	-2.70	3.18
		<b>Over 26 yrs</b>	3.15*	.95	<b>.01*</b>	.75	5.55
<b>Over 25 yrs.</b>	15 and Under	-2.90	1.30	.09	-6.20	.39	
	<b>16-25 yrs.</b>	-3.15*	.95	<b>.01*</b>	-5.55	-.75	

(continue)

Table 7. (continue)

Scheffe							
Dependent Variable	Years in Monkhood	Years in Monkhood	Mean Difference	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
English: Meetings	15 years and under	16-25 yrs.	-.42	1.61	.97	-4.51	3.67
	<b>16-25 yrs.</b>	Over 25 yrs.	3.12	1.72	.21	-1.25	7.49
		15 and Under	.42	1.61	.97	-3.67	4.51
	<b>Over 25 yrs.</b>	Over 25 yrs.	3.54*	1.19	.02*	.52	6.55
		15 and Under	-3.12	1.72	.21	-7.49	1.25
	<b>16-25 yrs.</b>	16-25 yrs.	-3.54	1.17	.02*	-6.55	-.52
English: Interpersonal Conversation	15 years and under	16-25 yrs.	.37	1.42	.97	-3.21	3.96
	<b>16-25 yrs.</b>	Over 25 yrs.	3.50	1.55	.09	-.41	7.41
		15 and Under	-.37	1.41	.97	-3.96	3.22
	<b>Over 25 yrs.</b>	Over 25 yrs.	3.13*	1.10	.02*	.35	5.91
		15 and Under	-3.50	1.55	.09	-7.41	.41
	<b>16-25 yrs.</b>	16-25 yrs.	-3.13	1.10	.02*	-5.91	-.34
English: Public Speaking	15 years and under	16-25 yrs.	-.44	1.42	.95	-4.03	3.15
	<b>16-25 yrs.</b>	Over 25 yrs.	2.86	1.55	.19	-1.06	6.77
		15 and Under	.44	1.42	.95	-3.15	4.03
	<b>Over 25 yrs.</b>	Over 25 yrs.	3.30	1.10	.02*	.51	6.08
		15 and Under	-2.86	1.55	.19	-6.77	1.06
	<b>16-25 yrs.</b>	16-25 yrs.	-3.30*	1.10	.02*	-6.08	-.51

(continue)

Table 7. (continue)

Scheffe							
Dependent Variable	Years in Monkhood	Years in Monkhood	Mean Difference	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
English: Total CA	15 years and under	16-25 yrs.	-.71	5.44	.99	-14.55	13.14
		Over 25 yrs.	12.83	5.96	.11	-2.33	28.00
	16-25 yrs.	15 and Under	.71	5.44	.99	-13.14	14.55
		Over 25 yrs.	13.54*	4.21	.01*	2.82	24.27
Over 25 yrs.	15 and Under	-12.83	5.96	.11	-28.00	2.33	
	16-25 yrs.	-13.54*	4.21	.01*	-24.27	-2.82	

( $p < 0.05$ )

With reference to Table 5 on the previous page, the mean scores of CA across the four dimensions and that of the total CA of the monks who had been in the monkhood over 25 years were lower than those of the monks who had been in the monkhood between 16 and 25 years. That is, in this study, the ANOVA results revealed that the Thai monks who had been in the monkhood longer than 25 years had significantly lower trait-like CA and lower CA across the four contexts than the Thai monks who had been in the monkhood between 16 to 25 years.

## Discussion

### *CA in L1 and L2 among Thai monk Ph.D. students*

Based on the results from *t-test* analysis, there was no difference between the CA when using Thai (L1) and CA when using English (L2) across dimensions; moreover, there was no difference between the total CA or trait-like CA when using Thai (L1) and CA when using English (L2) among the Thai monk Ph.D. students.

### *CA when using English among Thai monk Ph.D. students with respect to the different number of years in the monkhood*

Based on the results from the ANOVA tests, the CA when using the English language of the Thai monk Ph.D. students differed depending on the number of years in the monkhood. Those who had been monks for more than 26 years were found to have lower CA across the dimensions when compared to those who had been monks between 16 and 25 years. Moreover, the trait-like CA of the monks who had been in the monkhood for more than 25 years was lower than that of those who had been in the monkhood between 16 and 25 years old. These results may be explained as follows.

First of all, monks who had been in the monkhood for a longer period of time had gained more experience in terms of dealing with problems and difficulties. They may have better skills in terms of cognitive handling, leading to a calmer and more positive way of thinking. This may explain why their CA scores when using English as a whole were found to be lower. Buss (1980) states that the newness of a situation, subordinate status, and unfamiliarity can lead to higher CA.

Second, monks with more years in the monkhood may have higher self-esteem due to the greater recognition they have earned from people in society over a longer period of time. Senior Thai monks in particular receive great respect from society as the heirs of the Buddha, who is the Buddhist prophet. Low self-esteem may lead to higher CA (Richmond and McCroskey, 1985).

Third, in Thai temples, the organization is rather bureaucratic and hierarchical. Thus, monks with fewer years in the monkhood have less authority and must show deference towards monks who have been in the monkhood longer, as the seniority system is still seen in most of the temples in Thailand. This might be because Thailand has a very high degree of power distance (Hofstede and Hofstede, 2005).

### **Implications and pedagogy**

The research results can be useful for the instructors teaching English courses for this unique program for monks. Also, the program administrators can design an appropriate course for the Thai monks by utilizing the understanding that Thai monks with a different number of years in the monkhood are not the same in terms of their communication apprehension when the monks have to use the English language in various contexts. However, this research can be considered as a preliminary study of CA among Thai monks, as there may be many other factors that determine the effectiveness of learning and teaching English. As a result, the research results from this study should be applied with understanding and care.

### **Limitations**

This research study was done with a small number of Thai monks in a Ph.D. program in only one institution. For this reason, the generalizability might be limited to this monk university only.

### **Recommendations for further research**

The recommendations for further research are presented as follows:

1. Qualitative methodology could be used to obtain more insight into the underlying reasons why the communication apprehension of some Thai monk Ph.D. students is very high when they use English in various situations. Such qualitative data may be derived from interviews and observations.
2. Future studies may investigate the differences in CA among Thai monks with respect to their birth order and years in the monkhood, in addition to their ages, employing a bigger sample size.

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