

# Learner Variables Revisited As Barriers To English Language Learning and Achievement

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## บทคัดย่อ

รายงานวิจัยฉบับนี้นำเสนอผลจากการณีศึกษาแบบมองย้อนหลังในชั้นเรียนภาคฤดูร้อน ในปีการศึกษา 2550 ของนิสิตไทยระดับปริญญาตรีจำนวน 17 คนที่มีความสัมฤทธิ์ผลทางภาษาอังกฤษในหลายระดับ วัตถุประสงค์ของการวิจัยนี้เพื่อสำรวจว่า ปัจจัยใดที่เป็นอุปสรรคต่อการเรียนและความสัมฤทธิ์ผลทางภาษาอังกฤษ โดยการแสดงแนวความคิดของนิสิตไทยซึ่งไม่ได้ใช้ภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาแม่

โดยพื้นฐานสภาพชั้นเรียนที่แตกต่างไปจากลักษณะแบบดั้งเดิมในเชิงความหลากหลายทางภูมิหลังด้านการศึกษาของผู้เรียนในแง่ของ ชั้นปีที่เรียน, คณะ และระดับ ความสัมฤทธิ์ผลทางภาษาอังกฤษจากภาคเรียนที่แล้ว นิสิตฯได้รายงานผลในด้านทัศนวิสัยที่แตกต่างกันในแง่ของอุปสรรคต่อการเรียนและความสัมฤทธิ์ผลทางภาษาอังกฤษอย่างมากในรูปแบบของปัจจัยตัวแปรแบบภายนอก (อันได้แก่ เจตคติ, แรงจูงใจ, ความเชื่อมั่น และความรอบรู้ทางภาษา) และภายนอก (อันได้แก่ เวลา, ความสนใจที่ขัดแย้งกัน, บุคคลและสภาพแวดล้อม และปัญหาทางการเงินและครอบครัว) ของผู้เรียน

ผลการวิจัยนี้ชี้ประเด็นให้เห็นถึงบทบาทของปัจจัยตัวแปรของผู้เรียนที่สำคัญต่อการเรียนและความสัมฤทธิ์ผลทางภาษาอังกฤษ เนื่องจากแง่คิดมุมมองในด้านอุปสรรคต่อการเรียนและความสัมฤทธิ์ผลทางภาษาอังกฤษของผู้เรียนเป็นที่เปิดเผยให้ทราบดังนั้นปัจจัยตัวแปรแบบภายนอกและภายนอกของผู้เรียนจึงเป็นสิ่งที่สำคัญต่อการพิจารณาเป็นอย่างยิ่งและยังเป็นสิ่งที่ท้าทายต่อการกำหนดและพัฒนาหลักสูตรภาษาอังกฤษในโลกแห่งการสอนภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาต่างชาติ

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## **Abstract**

This paper presents the findings from a retrospective case study conducted with a summer-session class of 17 multi-leveled Thai undergraduate learners of English in the 2007 academic year. The purpose of the study was to investigate which variables were barriers to English language learning and achievement through the actual perceptions of Thai undergraduates as non-native English undergraduates.

Based upon a diverse range of learners' academic backgrounds varying in years of study, disciplines, and levels of prior-semester English achievement in an unconventional classroom setting, the undergraduates reported their different perspectives on the barriers to English language learning and achievement in terms of internal (i.e. attitudes, motivation, linguistic confidence, and language mastery) and external (i.e. time, conflicting interests, significant others, learning environment, and financial-family problems) learner variables.

The findings of the study point to the roles of learner variables noteworthy to English language learning and achievement. As the learners' standpoints of the obstacles to English language learning and achievement have been revealed, both internal and external learner variables appear to be evidently crucial for attention and challenges in English language curriculum design and development in the world of EFL pedagogy.

**Keywords:** learner variables, English language learning, English language achievement, Thai university undergraduates, EFL pedagog

## BACKGROUND

In most of the university bachelor's degree English - language curricula in Thailand, first-year Thai university students are required to complete compulsory English courses prior to taking further English language courses for academic purposes. By and large, in a conventional Thai academic context, an English class normally contains undergraduates of roughly homogeneous aspects in terms of year of study and / or discipline in their first year of study.

If students drop or obtain an 'F' grade in a compulsory English course, they need to re-enroll to repeat that course for the next semester. In the summer session, it is frequently the case that most of the students enrolled either failed to complete the compulsory English course or obtained an 'F' grade. Thus, it is inevitable that the undergraduates in summer - session classes are heterogeneous in terms of years of study, disciplines and level of English achievement.

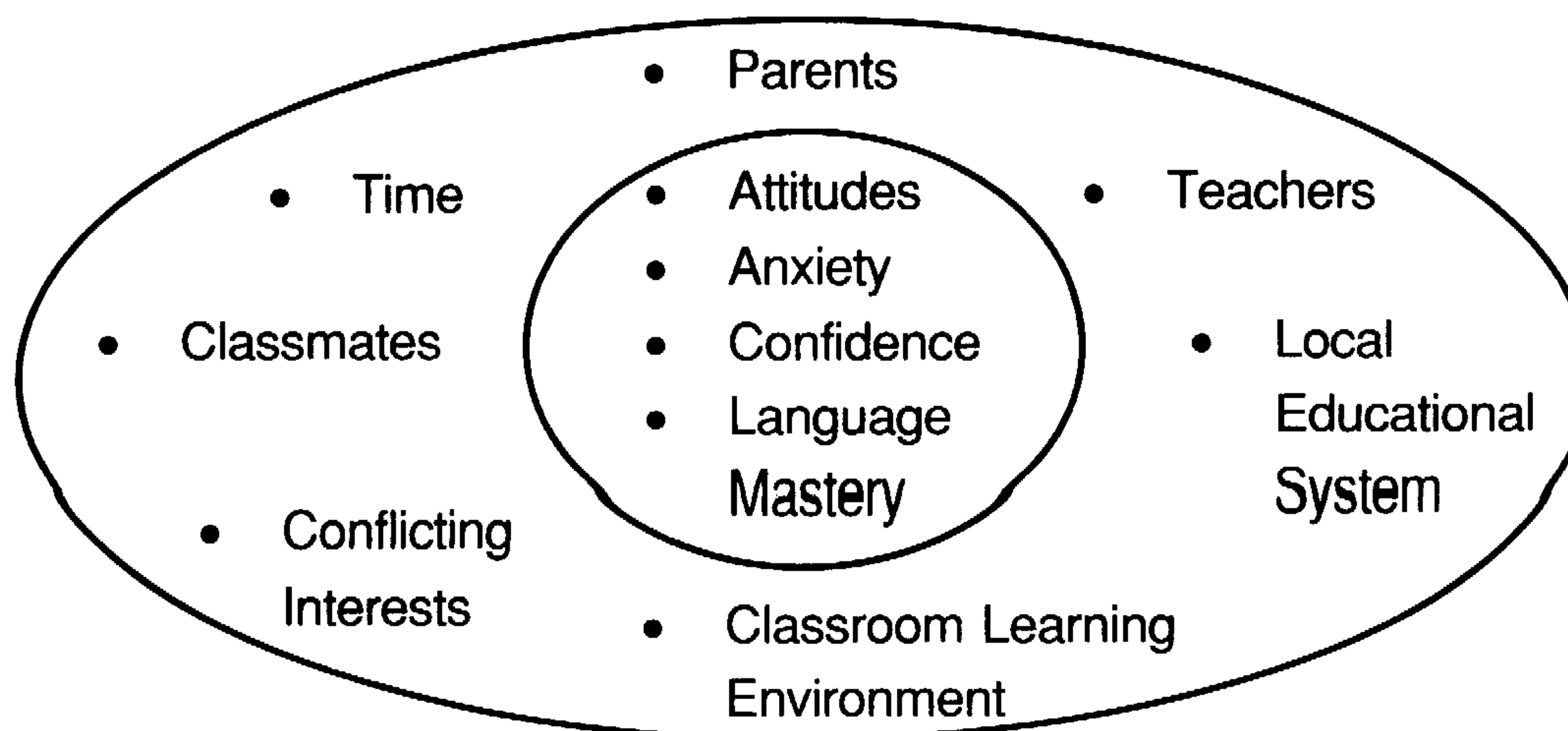
It has been assumed that undergraduates who enroll in a compulsory English course during the summer session are those who have more difficulties in their English language skills than those enrolled during the semesters. These students are even characterized as weak or lazy since they were required to re-enroll during the summer session. Such beliefs, however, are only assumed and have perhaps been over-generalized. More importantly, other variables or legitimate reasons may not have been seriously observed. To bring the better insight into this issue, this study investigated the actual perceptions of Thai university undergraduates enrolled in a summer session compulsory English course as to the causes of their difficulties in English language learning.

## INTRODUCTION

Individual differences or learner variables (e.g. attitudes, motivation, anxiety, confidence, teachers, parents, and learning environment) never miss a place in classroom language learning, and have been widely discussed in the way of affecting learners' language learning and performance over more than three decades (e.g. Lukmani, 1972; Bailey, 1983; Hortwitz et al., 1986; Oxford and Shearin, 1994; Dörnyei, 2002; Lightbown and Spada, 2003; Brown, 2007).

The inter-correlations among learner variables can be synthesized based upon the adaptation of Oxford and Shearin's (1994) and Williams and Burden's (1997; cited in Dörnyei, 2002) frameworks as in Figure 1.

In Figure 1, learner variables are classified into internal and external variables. *Internal variables* are derived from learners' own desire to study a target language. There can be categorized as psychological variables which are a learner's attitudes, anxiety toward English, and linguistic self - confidence. Besides, the learner's language mastery, involving feelings and awareness of competence in developing language skills, is also categorized into internal variables affecting the learner's language learning motivation. On the



**Figure 1.** Learner Variables (Adapted from Oxford and Shearin, 1994; Williams and Burden, 1997 in Dörnyei, 2002)

other hand, *external variables* evolve from other factors outside of the learners' own desire to study the language (e.g. parents, teachers, peers / classmates, classroom learning environment, time, conflicting interests, and local educational system). The learner's internal and external variables are associated with motivation and language learning achievement.

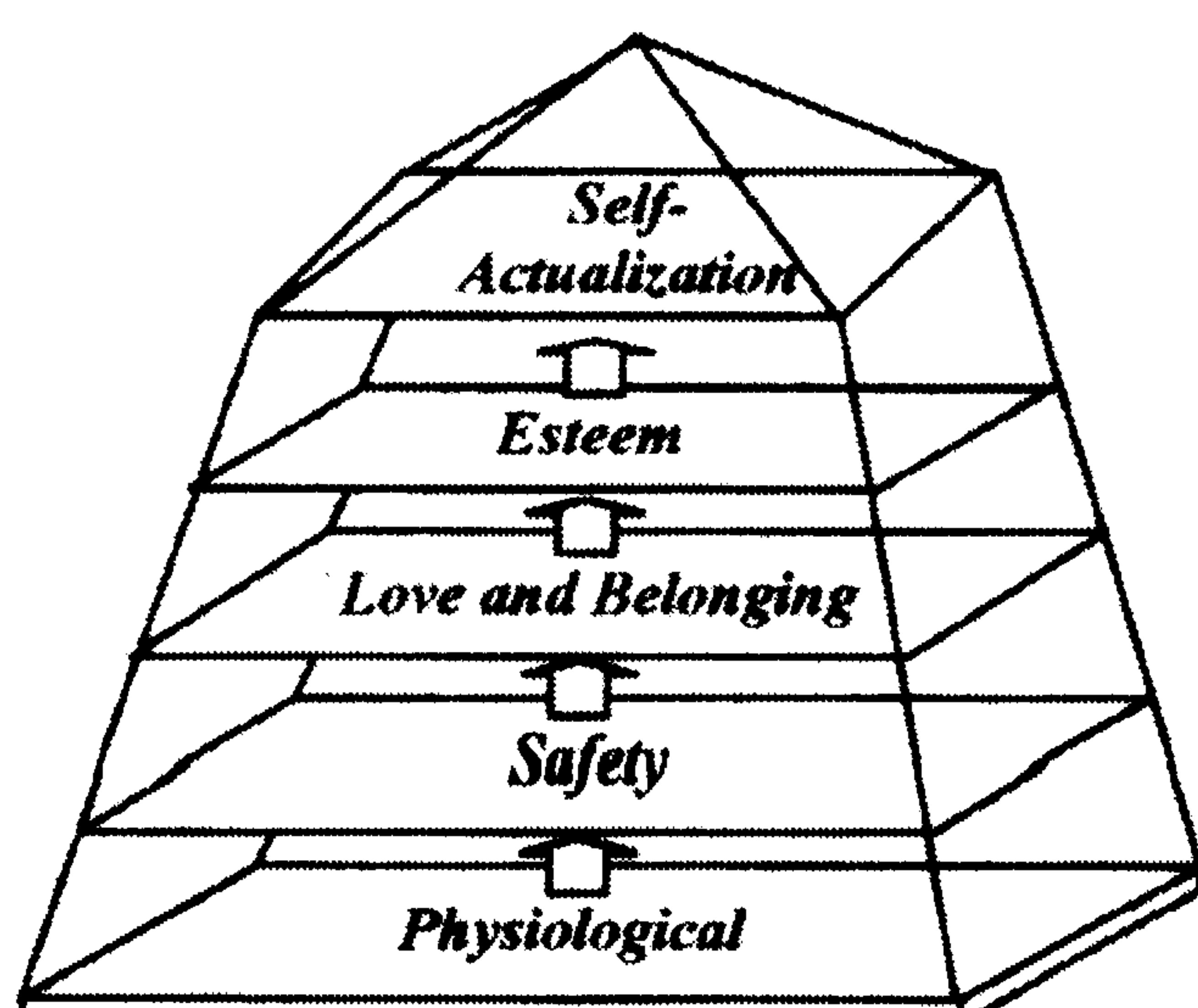
It is believed that learners with high motivation, positive attitudes, or a low level of anxiety are mainly well - equipped for success in language learning and achievement (Bailey, 1983; Gardner, 1985 in Ellis, 1989; Hortwitz et al., 1986; Oxford and Shearin, 1994; Dörnyei, 2001 and 2002; Masgoret and Gardner, 2003; Gardner et al., 2004; Rahman, 2005; Brown, 2007). In general, positive attitudes facilitate the language learning process (Rahman, 2005). Moreover, positive attitudes and motivation are relevant to success in foreign language learning (Gardner, 1985 in Ellis, 1989). Noticeably, successful learners are those who are motivated to learn the target language and have favorable attitudes towards the language learning (Masgoret and Gardner, 2003). Considering language anxiety, some researchers and scholars state the importance of foreign/second language learners' low level of anxiety facilitative to their learning outcomes. Learners with high motivation and a low level of anxiety generally have chances to be successful in second language acquisition (Krashen, 2002 in Rahman, 2005). In addition, in the EFL context, learners with lower levels of foreign language anxiety mostly receive higher language scores than their more anxious classmates (Horwitz et al., 1986).

Levels of motivation are directly correlated with success in

language learning which is measured through levels of language achievement. Language learners with a higher level of motivation are more successful than those with lower motivation (Lightbown and Spada, 2003). Learners' motivation can be explained through Maslow's hierarchy of human needs (Dörnyei, 2001; Groundwater - Smith et al., 2007; Huddleston and Unwin, 2008) as illustrated in Figure 2.

Maslow (1968; cited in Groundwater-Smith et al., 2007; Huddleston & Unwin, 2008) explains a hierarchy of needs that learners move up the levels when their need in each level is satisfied. Each level of the need satisfaction (Figure 2) was perceived as the basis of motivational processes to achieve a learning goal. Each level of five classes of needs (i.e. physiological, safety, love and belonging, esteem, and self - actualization) is to be basically attained before moving up to higher levels of needs.

The most basic needs for survival are 'Physiological' (e.g. food and warmth) which can be converted into guidelines for making the learning environment pleasant; 'Safety' refer to non - threatening classrooms; 'Love and belonging' covers openness of communica-



**Figure 2.** Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Adapted from Maslow, 1968 in Groundwater-Smith et al., 2007; and in Huddleston & Unwin, 2008 ; Maslow, 1970 in Dörnyei, 2001)

tion, recognition of different learning styles and valuing learners' life histories; 'Esteem' (e.g. respect, approval and recognition) relates to setting achievable tasks, giving positive feedback and support for learner autonomy; and 'Self - actualization' is concerned with supporting progression and transfer of learning in learners' achievement of their full potential (Groundwater - Smith et al., 2007: 85; Huddleston & Unwin, 2008: 106). As noted in Maslow (1968; cited in Groundwater - Smith et al., 2007: 85, and Huddleston & Unwin, 2008: 106) for a language teacher, "*students are individuals with emotional, intellectual and physical needs.*"

Should the relevant learner variables — internal or external — be obstructive to learners' language learning (e.g. negative attitudes towards English language learning, high anxiety levels, inadequate linguistic self - confidence, non - supportive teachers or classmates), the learners will likely acquire a target language with more difficulty, and this possibly results in unfavorable language learning achievement. But if the learner variables are facilitative to learners' language learning, the learners will possibly acquire the language easily and subsequently achieve favorable language learning achievement.

## THE STUDY

This study was conducted as a case study at a public university in Thailand during the summer session in a compulsory English course which had been provided for two hours on weekdays from March 31 to May 8, 2008. The study attempts to explore the non - native English speaking Thai undergraduates' actual perceptions of barriers to their prior English language achievement taken in

last semester of the 2007 academic year. With the unsatisfactory outcomes of the achievement, the undergraduates were required to re-enroll in the subsequent summer session of the 2007 academic year.

### **Research question**

The study aims to answer the following research question:

*What are Thai university undergraduates' actual perceptions of the barriers to their English language learning and achievement?*

### **Participants**

The participants in the study were seventeen ( $n = 17$ ) Thai undergraduates from a public university in Thailand who had enrolled in one of the total two sections ( $N = 33$ ) of a compulsory English course during the summer session of the year 2008. Those participants who enrolled in compulsory English in the summer session were from non-English majors with the various levels of success as seen in their grades in previous compulsory English I or II courses (i.e. range from B+ to F).

### **Data gathering method**

A student questionnaire was utilized as the instrument to obtain data for the study. The ten - item questionnaire, developed by the researcher, consists of two parts. Part 1 contains six items asking about the participants' general information and background on English language learning and

previous English language achievement. Part 2 contains four open-ended statements asking about the participants' perceptions of barriers in their English language learning experience (See Appendix).

## **Data analysis**

The data was analysed using both quantitative and qualitative measures. In the quantitative analysis, the data about the participants' general information and background on English language learning and achievement gathered from the seventeen of eighteen questionnaires returned (about 95%) were analyzed using descriptive statistics (e.g. percentages, frequency distributions, and arithmetic means). Participants' responses to the open-ended section of the questionnaire regarding perceptions on barriers to their English language learning and achievement were analysed qualitatively through content analysis.

## **Findings**

The results of the research question were determined from the participants' responses to the questionnaire regarding their perceptions of the barriers in the English language learning experience. The results are interpreted as follows.

The responses from the questionnaire are discussed into two parts: first, background information about the learners' English language learning and achievement, and second, their perceptions on the barriers to English language learning and achievement.

## ***1) Background Information about the Learners' English Language Learning and Achievement***

Referring to the data gathered from the first part of the questionnaire, the seventeen participants were eight males (47%) and nine females (53%). They were heterogeneous in terms of years of study (i.e. three were in the first-year of study, one from the second year, nine from the third year, three from the fourth year, and one from the fifth year of study) and disciplines (i.e. six from Fine and Applied Arts, six from Sports Science, three from Science, one from Engineering, and one from Veterinary Science).

Their responses to the questionnaire indicated that they had decided to re-enroll in the summer session for fear that they would obtain unsatisfactory or even 'F' grades in the previous semester. This led to their withdrawal from the previous course, in an attempt to obtain better grades. Others stated time conflict in their course schedules from the previous semester as the reason for re-enrollment.

## ***2) Learners' Perceptions on Barriers to English Language Learning and Achievement***

Regarding the second part of the questionnaire, the participants' responses are categorized and illustrated in Table 1.

**Table 1. Barriers to English Language Learning and Achievement**

Barriers	Participants (P)	Grades in Previous Compulsory English Courses	Questionnaire Responses (Part 2)
1) Learners themselves	P1	C, C+	<i>I never like studying English when I was young. Additionally, my basic English knowledge is not rather good.</i>
	P2	B, B+	<i>I have problems in vocabulary and grammar at some extent.</i>
	P3	B, B+	<i>I didn't pay much attention to grammar.</i>
	P4	C, C+; F	<i>I didn't attend the class at the beginning of the semester at all, and this made me hard to understand the lessons.</i>
	P5	F	<i>I didn't have much basis on English and was not interested in studying English during secondary and high schools. These are my problems in English language learning.</i>
	P6	D, D+	<i>My English knowledge is still weak. Besides, I don't have much time for reviewing lessons because I have to practice playing rugby.</i>
	P7	F	<i>I didn't attend the class nor review the lessons. I am sometimes absent-minded and unenthusiastic.</i>
	P8	F	<i>I didn't pay much attention to the studying of English.</i>
	P9	C, C+	<i>I didn't like English since I was at high school. At that time, I hardly understood English and was not confident to pose a question to my teacher.</i>
	P10	D, D+	<i>I had inadequate knowledge of English and couldn't write in English well.</i>
	P12	C, C+; F	<i>I didn't have enough time studying English or entering any tutoring course.</i>

Barriers	Participants (P)	Grades in Previous Compulsory English Courses	Questionnaire Responses (Part 2)
1) Personal Factors	P13	D, D+; F	<i>As I am a student from the special project for Art talent, my knowledge of English is very weak. However, I have to study academic English which was not specified in the university application form for the special project.</i>
	P14	B, B+	<i>I don't have good basis of English.</i>
	P15	F	<i>I didn't have a chance to use English, particularly grammar, in my daily life. That is, my grammatical knowledge was easily gone because I lack practicing them.</i>
	P16	D, D+; F	<i>I have little vocabulary knowledge and have no confidence in making a conversation.</i>
	P17	D, D+; F	<i>I have little vocabulary knowledge and have no confidence in making a conversation.</i>
2) Course Instructor	P2	B, B+	<i>There was no review of the previous lessons before starting a new lesson.</i>
	P9	C, C+	<i>The instructor from the previous English course didn't teach but only assigned tasks for students' self-study. This made the weak students dislike English and obtain a low score of English.</i>
	P10	D, D+	<i>The previous instructor spoke English without translating into Thai. The students who didn't understand would continue not to understand as long as the instructor didn't translate English into Thai.</i>
	P12	C, C+; F	<i>Teachers created learning pressure on students. This made me anxious and didn't want to study and attend the class.</i>
3) Classmates	P6	D, D+	<i>Some of my classmates could easily understand the lesson, whereas I could neither understand nor follow the class.</i>
	P9	C, C+	<i>I felt that there were only excellent students in the class. This made me hesitate to ask a question when I didn't understand.</i>

Barriers	Participants (P)	Grades in Previous Compulsory English Courses	Questionnaire Responses (Part 2)
	P11	D, D+	<i>I don't like one of my classmates, and this made me absent from the class.</i>
	P16	D, D+; F	<i>I hardly knew the classmates. So, I rarely discussed with them.</i>
4) Classroom Atmosphere	P2	B, B+	<i>There was no classroom participation. So, I didn't feel encouraged to participate in the class.</i>
	P3	B, B+	<i>Sometimes, the classmates didn't participate or were unenthusiastic to the classroom activities. This made the classroom atmosphere quiet and not interesting.</i>
	P9	C, C+	<i>I didn't feel confident in expressing myself because there were too many students in the class.</i>
5) Financial-Family Problem/s	P4	C, C+; F	<i>I needed to earn money so I didn't attend the class at the beginning of the semester.</i>
	P11	D, D+	<i>I'm facing the financial-family problems on these days.</i>
	P17	C, C+; F	<i>As I have a financial problem in family, I need to earn money myself for tuition fees at the same time of studying. This frequently obstructs me to attend the class. Or, I often attended a class late and couldn't follow the class.</i>

Based on the questionnaire responses in Table 1, all the participants perceived *their own attitudes* as the main barrier impeding previous attempts at English language learning. The main factors that the participants perceived as reasons for failure in English language learning are shown as follows. 47% of the participants reasoned that they had inadequate knowledge of vocabulary, grammar and writing (P2, P5, P6, P9, P10, P13, P14, and P17). 24% of the participants reported their negative attitudes toward English language learning (P1, P5, P9, and P13), while 18% of them revealed their lack of motivation to learn English (P5, P7, and P8). In addition, 12% perceived themselves lacking confidence on using English (P9 and P17) and adequate exposure to English language use (P15 and P16). 6% also revealed time conflict in their course schedule (P6) as well as conflicting studying interests within the educational system (P13).

A minority noted the course *instructor* as a contributor to the participants' failure in English language learning. To illustrate, 24% of the participants (P2, P9, P10, and P12) responded that the instructor's teaching style and use of English, without Thai translation, in English language teaching could affect the learner's attitudes, anxiety level, motivation to learn, and subsequent English language achievement. *Classmates* were also perceived as a factor affecting the success of 24% of the participants' (P6, P9, P11, and P16) English language learning. *Classroom atmosphere* was another variable influencing 18% of the participants' (P2, P3, and P9) motivation to learn and confidence in English language use.

Last but not least, *financial-family problems* were revealed as a significant barrier to 18% of the participants' (P4, P11, and P17) English language learning success.

## DISCUSSION

### ***What are Thai University Undergraduates' Actual Perceptions of the Barriers to Their English Language Learning and Achievement?***

The interpretation of data from the questionnaire responses revealed the undergraduates' perceptions derived from both internal and external learner variables affecting their English language learning and achievement.

#### **(1) Internal Learner Variables**

##### **(a) Attitudes, Motivation and Linguistic Confidence**

With respect to internal learner variables, the results from the questionnaire responses on the participants' perceptions of *themselves* showed *negative attitudes* toward English language learning were a significant factor for the participants whose previous English course grades ranged from C+ to F. The participants with an 'F' grade in their previous English language achievement also revealed their lack of motivation to learn English, while the participants whose previous English grades ranged from C+ to F reported they experienced a lack of linguistic self-confidence. The results of this study support the studies of Scovel (1978, in Bailey, 1983), Bailey (1983), Gardner (1985, in Ellis, 1989), Hortwitz et al. (1986), Oxford and Shearin (1994), Williams and Burden (1997, in Dörnyei, 2002), Dörnyei (2002), Masgoret and

Gardner (2003), Krashen (2002, in Rahman, 2005), Gardner et al. (2004), Rahman (2005), and Brown (2007).

### **(b) Language Mastery**

The participants whose previous achievement grades were D, D+ and F admitted that they had *no exposure to English language use*. Moreover, the participants whose previous English grades ranged from B+ to F perceived themselves as still having an *inadequate knowledge* of vocabulary, grammar and writing in English. It is notable that the results of the study are consistent with the issue of language *mastery* which deals with a learner's feeling and awareness of language competence (Dörnyei, 2001; Williams and Burden, 1997 in Dörnyei, 2002; Lightbown and Spada, 2003).

In brief, the results of this survey are in accordance with many studies on the inter-relationship between individual differences and language achievement in so far as negative attitudes, lack of motivation, lack of linguistic self - confidence and of mastery in language learning can bring about a decline in English language achievement (Scovel, 1978 in Bailey, 1983; Bailey, 1983; Gardner, 1985 in Ellis, 1989; Hortwitz et al., 1986; Oxford and Shearin, 1994; Williams and Burden, 1997 in Dörnyei, 2002; Dörnyei, 2001 and 2002; Lightbown and Spada, 2003; Masgoret and Gardner, 2003; Krashen, 2002 in Rahman, 2005; Gardner et al., 2004; Rahman, 2005; Brown, 2007).

## **(2) External Learner Variables**

### **(a) Time and Conflicting Interests**

The participant whose grade in the previous

compulsory English course was at the D or D+ level reported that he did have a *time conflict* in his language learning schedule with his university sports activities owing to being a university athlete. Furthermore, the participant whose previous English grades ranged from D+ to F admitted that the educational program provided for the students in the special project for artistically talented students she was studying in *conflicted with her understanding and interests*. That is, she didn't perceive the necessity of English with respect to the Art program she was studying. Such barriers to the learner's time and interest influenced negatively the participants' language learning achievement. These findings also support Williams and Burden's (1997, in Dörnyei, 2002) framework.

### **(b) Significant Others (Teachers and Classmates) and Learning Environment**

The participants whose previous grades ranged from B+ to F also viewed *course instructors* as barriers to their language learning and achievement in English (See Table 1). In these cases, that the course instructor was perceived to be an obstructing factor to students' language learning success is in accordance with the study of Williams and Burden (1997; cited in Dörnyei, 2002) categorizing teachers as a variable affecting learners' motivation to learn a target language that later influences their language achievement.

*Classmates* and *classroom atmosphere* were also voted as barriers to language learning and achievement by the participants whose grades ranged from B+ to F. The results of this study also support the conclusion of Williams and Burden (1997; cited in Dörnyei, 2002) categorizing classmates and

classroom learning environment as external learner variables affecting learners' motivation to learn a target language and their ultimate language proficiency.

### **(c) Financial-Family Problems**

The *financial - family problems* of the participants whose previous mark ranged from C+ to F were perceived as another barrier impeding their English language learning and achievement. They revealed that they needed to work during their studying time to earn money to support themselves and their families. The participants' responses on their financial - family problems in this study could be explained by the hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1968; cited in Groundwater - Smith et al., 2007 and Huddleston & Unwin, 2008; and 1970; cited in Dörnyei, 2001). In the study, some of the participants explained that financial - family constraints affected their English language learning and previous grades achieved (Williams and Burden, 1997 in Dörnyei, 2002). A psychological explanation for this could be that the students would not choose to attain their higher level of needs (e.g. learning English or developing their English skills) unless their basic material needs, such as money, could first be met (Groundwater-Smith et al., 2007; Huddleston & Unwin, 2008; Dörnyei, 2001).

## **IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The results of this study may provide some useful information that EFL teachers need to consider when teaching non-native English university students who have different backgrounds of English language achievement in the Thai context. The implications and recommendations are presented as follows.

1. The results of the study reveal that the previous assumption that poor achievement in English of the undergraduates enrolled in the summer session was due to laziness is little more than an uninformed generalization. In fact, other important factors have been revealed instead. Based on the results of this study, some of the undergraduates obtained good grades of B or B+ in their previous English language learning experiences. However, due to financial-family problems revealed in some of the low achieving undergraduates, the issues of societal expectations or cultural norms of this group of students need to be further examined.

2. The undergraduates' perceptions of their course instructors could raise questions for a teacher's teaching style and have implications for the use of L1 or Thai in English language instruction in the classroom. L1 might be used to build up positive attitudes and motivation to learn English and simultaneously reduce anxiety levels in learners and lead to a subsequent increase in English language achievement (e.g., Krieger, 2005). This question is worth investigating in future studies.

3. Based upon undergraduates' responses relating to their perception of how their classmates and classroom atmosphere affected their language learning achievement, it is worth examining the effect of cooperative or collaborative language learning to minimize the negative influence of classroom atmosphere and to promote undergraduates' English language achievement.

4. Other barriers—lack of exposure to natural English

language use, inadequate knowledge of English, time or scheduling conflicts with university activities, and individual study interests that conflict with the educational system – to the participants' English language learning achievement should be taken into consideration in forward planning of universities' English language curricula in the Thai EFL context. To have solid evidence supported in the curricula planning, future studies are also suggested to examine the relationships or the effects of the relevant variables found in this study on Thai learners' English language achievement for the sake of the development of contemporary and corresponding English language curricula with the learners' needs.

## CONCLUSION

Investigation into individual differences or learner variables has become more significant in holistic research on language learning in ESL / EFL contexts over time. The results of this study reveal the complexity and sensitivity of internal and external learner variables intertwined as some of the causes of barriers to English language learning and achievement in EFL Thai university undergraduates. The study could also provide some useful information from the learners' perspectives for language teachers and scholars as a useful step to create more effective pedagogical English - language course designs with the goal of enhancing EFL Thai undergraduate students' English language learning and achievement. 

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**APPENDIX**  
**Student Questionnaire**  
**Perceptions on Barriers to English Language Learning**  
**and Achievement**

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**Part I : General Information and Background on English Language Learning and Achievement**

**Directions:** Please tick (✓) in the appropriate box and give answers for the information below that identifies yourself.

1. Gender ..... Male ..... Female
2. Faculty ..... Year of Study .....
3. I have been studying English since my first year until now for ..... semesters.
4. I gotA B, B+ C, C+ D, D+ F in Compulsory English I  
A B, B+ C, C+ D, D+ F in Compulsory English II
5. I decided to enroll Compulsory English II in this summer session because -
  - 5.1 ..... I got 'F' grade in the subject/s in the item no. 4
  - 5.2 ..... I withdrew  Compulsory English I  
 Compulsory English II
6. I decided to withdraw the subject/s in the item no. 5.2 because  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

## **Part II : Perceptions on Barriers to English Language Learning and Achievement**

7. In my opinion, I think that the barrier/s or problem/s in my English language learning and achievement is/are from:

Myself. That is: .....

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Instructor/s. That is: .....

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.....  
.....  
.....

Classmate/s. That is: .....

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.....  
.....  
.....

Classroom atmosphere. That is: .....

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Financial-Family problem/s. That is: .....

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.....  
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.....  
 Others (please specify): .....

.....

.....

.....

8. In my opinion, I think the strategies to improve my English language performance (i.e. grades) is/are:.....

.....

.....

.....

9. I think that my current level of English proficiency is:

Very good  Good  Average  Weak  Very weak

10. In my opinion, I think the content of the university English language courses (e.g. Compulsory English II) –

Benefits me because .....

.....

.....

.....

Does not benefit me because .....

.....

.....

.....

Thank you for your cooperation.