

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 BACKGROUND**

English is not only a foreign language, but also an international language “used for international purposes” (Harrison, 1973, p.17). English speaking foreigners including native English speakers generally work in all organizations such as offices and schools. Many schools in Thailand such as Saint Gabriel, Montford and Assumption College Bangkok have turned to bilingual schools or have an English program. English is used in one of their curriculums and programs to raise the standard of the school to the international levels and to produce students who have good English skills.

Due to there being many bilingual schools in Bangkok and its suburbs, competition among these schools is high. Not only do a number of English native speakers teach in schools, but also Thai teachers are supposed to have good ability at English to help educational institute progress. Thus it is necessary to train Thai teachers in English to develop their English skills. Most schools offer their teachers in-service English training courses or programs and/or in-service teaching courses.

It is crucial to evaluate the in-service course to assess the value or/ and to search for drawbacks in order to improve the programs or courses (Davidson 2005, p.14) for Thai trainees who are teachers to benefit the most. This leads to competent students who are the finished results of the schools.

Assumption College Samutprakarn has been completely a bilingual school for two years since 2005, so it is just a new member among the bilingual schools in Thailand. Most subjects taught in the school are divided into two groups. The first group is

taught in the Thai medium, whereas the second one is taught in the English medium. For example, there are two courses for social studies. One is taught in Thai and the other is conducted in English, which is called the Modern Language Program or the MLP subject. Besides English, most of the subjects in the program - - mathematics, science, social studies, computer, and physical education are taught in English except music, crafts, arts and Thai. Each MLP subject is taught by two teachers, a Thai and a foreign teacher who may not be an English native speaker. Both teachers have an equally important role in teaching classes and preparing activities and materials.

Besides the bilingual program or MLP, the English program or EP is also available in the school. Only a native English teacher can teach a class. The other who is a Thai teacher cannot do so. He or she can only control the class and prepare the lessons and materials with the foreign teacher. Only in some cases students do not understand lessons does the Thai assistant teacher teach or explain the lessons to students. This shows that most of the Thai teachers in Assumption College Samutprakarn have to communicate in English for the main purpose which is teaching and inevitably for communicating with some foreigners in the school.

Due to one of Assumption College Samutprakarn's main goals is to develop teachers and staff members to have knowledge in the international level. Thus training all teachers in English also supports the school in meeting its goal.

The objective of providing English training or an in-service English training course to Thai teachers is to develop their English skills. This enables teachers at Assumption College Samutprakarn to communicate in at least two languages- - Thai and English and for the teachers to apply this knowledge to their work.

However, a problem was that some teachers did not have good English skills. Thus an in-service English training program was provided from the mid of May to the end of November 2007 to all teachers in the school under some conditions. All Thai teachers except those passing the TOEIC test at scores of 600 points or above took an English placement test produced by an English language institute in Thailand which was hired by the school to grade the level of Thai teachers. Those who did not pass the TOEIC or the above mentioned test at the passing rate of 70 % had to attend the English training program. These teachers who did not pass the test were divided into three main groups - -the beginner, the lower-intermediate and the special. The first main group called the beginner group is for teachers having scores less than 50% of the test produced by the external institute. Thirty Thai teachers including support staff members were at this group. The second group or the lower-intermediate is for those having scores less than 70%. There were ninety Thai teachers and support staff members in the group. The last one or the special group is for only Thai teachers in MLP and EP programs who did not pass the TOEIC and the other test of an external language institute. Twenty Thai teachers participated in the group. There were one hundred and forty Thai teachers including supporting staff members who joined the program.

However, the teachers in the MLP and English program were not focused because they had already been in the settings where they used English and they had generally practiced by themselves as well. The teachers teaching in Thai are likely to join the MLP or even English program due to the continuous growth of the programs. Eighty-eight trainees from beginner and the lower-intermediate group were the respondents in this research.

Teachers in the beginner group were randomly divided into two classes, that is fifteen teachers in each class. Those in the lower-intermediate were divided into five classes- - eighteen people in each class. There was only one class for the special group. Every class was held twice a week on Tuesday and Thursday or Monday and Wednesday after working hours from 5 pm to 6 pm. Trainees who studied on Saturday attended the class only once from 12.30 pm. to 2.30 pm. It was a 48 hour program held from December 9, 2006 to November 27, 2007. Each group did not start on the same days and sometimes the classes were not held due to school holidays and some important school activities.

Due to Assumption College Samutprakarn being a bilingual school having two main programs - - MLP and English program, The English improvement of teachers is important. Also, the programs have been growing. It is necessary to have more teachers to work in the program. Thus Thai teachers who have taught in Thai and staff members need to be prepared for the growing programs. This survey will explore trainees' attitudes towards the in-service English training course for Thai teachers using Thai as a teaching medium and for support staff members.

## **1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The study is conducted to answer the questions as follows:

### **Main question**

1. What are trainees' attitudes towards the in-service English training program?

### **Sub-questions**

1. What are the trainees' attitudes towards the course content, the instruction, teaching materials, timings, evaluation and progress and knowledge application?
2. To what extent the trainees can apply the knowledge studied in the program in their work and communication?

## **1.3 OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

### Main Objective:

1. To explore the trainees' attitudes towards the in-service English training program.

### Sub objectives:

1. To evaluate the effectiveness of the in-service English program through the trainees' attitudes towards the course content, the instruction, teaching materials, timings and evaluation
2. To investigate the application of the English knowledge in trainees' work, communications and career paths.

## **1.4 VARIABLES AND DEFINITIONS**

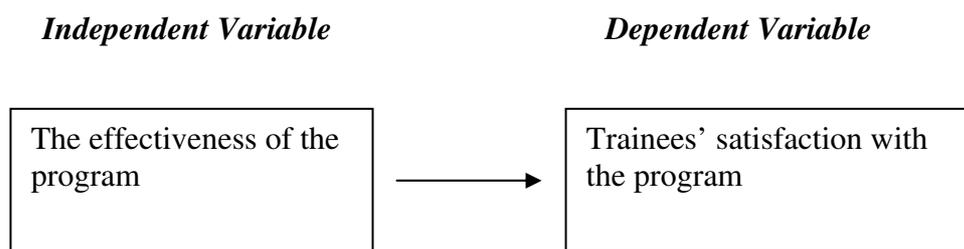
### **1.4.1 Variables**

#### Independent Variable

- The effectiveness of the program

#### Dependent Variable

- Trainees' satisfaction with the program



***Figure 1:*** Conceptual framework showing the relationship between independent and dependent variables.

### **1.4.2 Definitions**

The definitions of terms used in the study are defined as follows:

Attitudes refer to the trainees' feelings towards the in-service English program in the following areas:

- Trainees' attitudes towards the in-service English program on the course content can be measured by some issues as follows:

- Relation between the course content and the course objectives
- Usefulness of the course content
- Interest in the course content
- Appropriateness of the difficulty level of the course content
- Trainees' requirements from the course content
- Satisfaction with the overall course content

- Trainees' attitudes towards the in-service English program regarding the instruction can be measured by some issues as follows:

- Preparations for the class
- Competence in English showed through his/her explanations
- Answering trainee's questions satisfactorily
- Organizing interesting activities

- Using supplementary sheets and teaching aids
  - Explaining the content and assignments clearly
  - Beginning classes on time
  - Getting most trainees involved in class activities
  - A good rapport with the trainees
- Trainees' attitudes towards the in-service English program regarding the teaching materials can be measured by some issues as follows:
- Relation between the textbook and the course objectives
  - Relation between the supplementary and teaching aids and the course objectives
  - Interest of the textbook
  - Usefulness of the supplementary sheets and the teaching aids
  - Interest of supplementary sheets and the teaching aids
  - Overall satisfaction with the textbook, supplementary materials and teaching aids
- Trainees' attitudes towards the in-service English program regarding the timings can be measured by some issues as follows:
- Satisfaction with the days (Mon. & Wed, Tue. & Thu, Sat)
  - Satisfaction with time schedules (5 pm.- 6 pm. 12.20 pm -2.30 pm.)
  - Satisfaction with the length of the class the trainees attended (5 pm.- 6 pm. 12.20 pm -2.30 pm.)
- Trainees' attitudes towards the in-service English program regarding the evaluation can be measured by some issues as follows:
- Appropriateness of the frequency of the evaluation.

- Appropriateness of the evaluation methods
- Appropriateness of the level of difficulty of the evaluation
- Trainees' attitudes towards the in-service English program regarding the progress and knowledge application can be measured by some issues as follows:

- Trainee's improvement of English skills
- Trainees' more confidence in English communication
- Trainee's knowledge application for communication
- Trainee's knowledge application for his/her work
- Trainee's knowledge application for career path

English Program (EP) is a program at Assumption College Samutprakarn in which the teachers are native English speakers and Thai teachers are responsible for controlling the classes and they work together on preparing class activities and materials.

Modern Language Program (MLP) is a program in which the teachers are Thai teachers and foreign teachers who are both native or nonnative English speakers. In the class, a Thai and a foreign teacher have to co-operate with each other in teaching and controlling the class as well as preparing teaching materials and lesson plans.

In-Service English training course is a course that the director of the school has arranged for the teachers failing the school English test and or the TOEIC test.

Teachers are Thai teachers teaching classes at Assumption College Samutprakarn who did not pass the school's test, having a score less than 70%

Staff members are Thai staff members at Assumption College Samutprakarn who do not teach classes but work in offices and did not pass the school's test, having a score less than 70%

Trainers are foreigners some of those are native English or non native English speakers teaching at Assumption College Samutprakarn.

Trainees are Thai teachers who use Thai as a teaching medium and Thai staff members who participate in the in-service English training program at Assumption College Samutprakarn

### **1.5 SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

The survey was conducted in a group of Thai teachers using Thai as a teaching medium and the support staff members who attended the in-service English training course at Assumption College Samutprakarn . Also, this study ascertained the trainee's attitudes towards the in-service English training program regarding the course content, the teaching materials, the instruction, the timings, evaluation ,and progress and knowledge application.

### **1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

This study was to find out the effectiveness of the course through trainees' attitudes in order to

1. ascertain what trainees were satisfied with
2. improve or develop the program
3. find out the comments and suggestions from trainees

### **1.7 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY**

The study is divided into five chapters. Chapter one consists of the background to the in-service English training course of Assumption College Samutprakarn, the

statement of the problem, the objectives, the scope of the study, and the significance of the study. Chapter two comprises the review of literature concerning, in-service programs and evaluation. Chapter three provides procedures including subjects, instruments, data collection, and data analysis. Chapter four presents the findings of the study. Chapter five consists of the summary, the findings, discussions, conclusion, and recommendations for further study.

In the appendixes, the questionnaire in Thai used in data collection and its English version are shown.