

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

English is used all over the world by people to communicate with each other. In Thailand, the status of English has been that of a foreign language (FL) which means the language in the classroom is English while the language outside of the classroom is the students' native language. Studying English in Japan, China, Mexico, Korea and Thailand are examples of foreign language learning context. English as a second language (ESL) contexts are those countries in which the language both inside and outside the classroom is English, so learning English by immigrants or international students in the United States, Australia, and Britain are second language learning contexts, for example. It is generally accepted among Thai people that English has been used for years mainly in the academic and occupational fields. English is more highly valued in Thailand since the Thai government announced the Amazing Thailand years in 1998-1999. Many foreigners have been coming to visit our country. Thai people in every field of work have a mission to welcome tourists and foreigners as good hosts. Since then English has been more widely used as a medium throughout the different professional and vocational fields, such as in the travel industry, banking, entertainment, and even Thai theatrical performing arts, which is one of the essential parts of Thai culture. Consequently, personnel in such fields need to develop their English language skills in order to be more successful in their fields.

Thai dance instructors from the College of Dramatic Arts are among the group of people who face this situation. They use the language with school visitors, native and non-native speakers of English who are performing arts experts and tourists. The College of Dramatic Arts is a secondary education institution where both Thai and Western performing arts are taught. The curriculum of the school includes practical, theoretical and general subjects. It was founded in 1934 by the Ministry of Education in order to promote and preserve Thai dance and to make the status of Thai artists equivalent to that of international artists. After the National Reform in 1999, the school was transferred to the Ministry of Culture. The students are trained to become

dance performers, musicians or vocalists. Each year some of the outstanding graduates become instructors at the school in their field.

Traditionally, English has not been a major component of Thai dance instructors' education. Frequently, students graduate as qualified instructors with only two courses of English in their undergraduate curriculum in the performing arts field. However, because of the increasing use of English in Thailand, the growth of the tourism industry, and also the increased number of official dance tours abroad, it has become more and more important for Thai dance instructors to use English in their professional lives. Consequently, these personnel should develop their English proficiency.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

According to the above reason for the need for using English by Thai dance instructors (and the researcher herself is an English teacher who is responsible for syllabus design for developing human resources of the school) it is necessary to know the needs of Thai dance instructors in order to design a professional development course for Thai dance instructors.

Therefore, this research is an attempt to answer the following questions:

1.2.1 What areas of English are necessary in order to prepare Thai dance instructors to meet their professional needs?

1.2.2 Specifically, what problems do Thai dance instructors have in using English in their professional lives?

1.2.3 How do Thai dance instructors want the course to be organized?

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The goal of this research is to assess the specific English language needs of current instructors of Thai dance at the College of Dramatic Arts.

1.4 DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

Definition of the terms of this study are the following:

1.4.1 **Thai dance instructors** refers to the current instructors of Thai dance department at the College of Dramatic Arts.

1.4.2 **Needs** refers to

1.4.2.1 The English language requirements of the Thai dance instructors.

1.4.2.2 Problems and difficulties in using English skills in their occupational lives.

1.4.2.3 The students' personal preferences and desires concerning content, activities, scheduling and conduct of the course relative to the course design.

1.4.3 **English course** refers to an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) course especially for adult learners.

1.5 **SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

The scope of this study covers only Thai dance instructors of the College of Dramatic Arts, Bangkok. The total population is 82 instructors. This survey of the needs of the Thai dance instructors specifically focuses on their needs in using English skills in their occupational lives.

1.6 **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

This research will reflect the needs of Thai dance instructors, which will be the basis for course design. It is expected that this course will be taught to the current instructors at the College of Dramatic Arts. This course will be submitted to the director of the College for assessment for possible future use.

1.7 **ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY**

The study is divided into five chapters as follows:

Chapter one introduces the research paper, which consists of background, statement of the problem, research questions, objectives of the study, definition of terms and significance of the study.

Chapter two reviews research and literature relevant to the study.

Chapter three describes the research method along with the population and subjects of the study, the instrument construction, the collection of data, and the data analysis.

Chapter four reports the outcomes of the research study.

Chapter five contains discussion, the conclusion of the study and recommendations.