

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

It has been said for a while that the world is non-stationary specifically in the sense of business interactions between people of different languages. To function well in this business environment, office workers have to keep up with the changes and possess a good command of English as it is the conventional medium of communication throughout the world.

As the world economy is expanding continuously, logistics services are relatively growing to serve the need in transporting manufactured products or general goods locally and internationally. The movement of goods from manufacturers to consumers is highly significant in the current world business environment in that the exchange of goods might not be possible unless logistic providers come in the middle and transport goods from manufactures to their consumers wherever they are in the world.

DHL, which is one of the world's leading logistic service providers was founded in San Francisco almost 40 years ago. As described in DHL Web Publication (2009), DHL has been serving the business community in Thailand for over 30 years. Established in 1973, DHL (Thailand) Co., Ltd. was the first air express operator to provide overnight delivery from Thailand to Europe and Asia and has become number one in express and logistics in Thailand by offering customers a comprehensive range of logistics solutions through three business units: DHL Express, DHL Global Forwarding and DHL Supply Chain. Customers can use a one-stop-shop service, from shipping documents to containers, delivered by 1,100 DHL staff. Currently there are 25 DHL service locations covering 76 provinces in the country. With over 30 years of experience in Thailand, the company has gained the understanding of the local market. At the moment, DHL is the market leader with more than 30,000 customers around the country. As a trade facilitator, DHL has been supporting Thailand's importers and exporters by leading them supply chain

management expertise so that they can focus on their core business. DHL has been facilitating business in Thailand for over three decades. The company offers every step in the logistics process, upstream from raw materials to manufacturing, as well as downstream from the production line to store shelves, and further, to even the ultimate end-user anywhere on the world map.

As indicated on DHL Web Publication (2009a), DHL core business can be divided into four specialist divisions in order to cover all of the extensive service needs of the customers with the right level of focus and expertise.

The first division is mail; DHL Global Mail provides mail and communication services with direct connections to more than 200 countries around the world as well as offering integrated solutions for corporate communications.

The next division is DHL Express which is one of the leading global providers of international road, air and rail-based courier and express services for business and private customers. The company works with the world's most expansive network covering more than 220 countries and territories in Europe, the Americas, Asia-Pacific and emerging markets.

The third division is global freight forwarding; this division comprises international air and ocean freight as well as European overland transportation services. DHL Global Forwarding is the international market leader in the air and ocean freight business. The company transports goods and merchandise to an agreed destination at an agreed delivery time and price. In addition, the company offers customized solutions for major logistics projects and comprehensive customs services. DHL Freight is one of the largest freight forwarders in the European overland transportation business. This business unit aims to provide flexible, individualized solutions: national and international full-container-load and less-than-container-load services via road, rail or intermodal transportation. In addition, the company claims that their comprehensive customs brokerage services ensure smooth cross-border shipments.

The last division is supply chain or corporate information solutions **which is the focus of this research**. It comprises contract logistics services and Corporate Information Solutions provided by Williams Lea, a subsidiary company. Both business units focus on tailor made customer solutions. The business unit Supply Chain provides warehousing and warehouse transportation services as well as value-added solutions along the entire supply chain for customers from various sectors of industry, including the key automotive, life sciences, technology, fast-moving consumer goods, retail and fashion sectors. The subsidiary Williams Lea is the heart of the business unit Corporate Information Solutions. The company's document-based outsourcing process gathers, digitalizes, prints, stores, sorts, addresses, envelopes, dispatches and archives documents of all types. Williams Lea also provides electronic invoicing and marketing services. The division provides comprehensive global logistics solutions which involve the flow of goods, information and finance. It typically starts by sourcing raw materials or semi-finished goods, which are scheduled and transported into factories to be made into finished products and then pass through warehouses or distribution centers and are delivered to retailers, wholesalers or direct to consumers' homes or business premises. Finally, aftermarket activities involve the maintenance and repair, or the return and recycling, of products at the end of their life. Supply chain planning optimizes overall flows and inventories, by balancing resources with demand at all stages. There are four sub-division under supply chain section which are:-

- Supply Chain Planning; Supply chain planning typically covers production, sourcing and procurement, demand and supply planning, logistics network design, inventory optimization, supply chain visibility and data management.
- Inbound / Manufacturing; A wide variety of inbound logistics services, usually offered as a package tailored to customers' needs including supplier management, consolidation, inbound transport, storage, vendor managed inventory, kitting and sequencing with line-side feed and in-plant logistics. Suppliers and manufacturers are increasingly being affected by shorter product life cycles and longer and more complex supply chains (created through the migration of production to low-cost factories in developing

countries). These changes are intensifying the business challenge of delivering the right products to the right customers at the right time in the most cost-efficient manner to satisfy consumer demand.

- Warehousing / Distribution; Finished goods storage, order management and fulfillment plus distribution to the end-customer or into the sales channel. The division tries to optimize product flows and supply chain costs therefore customers can reduce their stockholdings and increase service levels, while maintaining the flexibility required to meet fast-changing market demands.
- Delivery & Installation / Aftermarket; the division offers a delivery and installation service that covers business equipment as well as home delivery direct to consumers. The division also supplies equipment and materials to field engineers, along with taking responsibility for the management of returns and repairs. For example, the delivery and installation of electronic equipment will include configuration, on-site commissioning, user training, equipment return, asset recovery and even disposition.

The Supply Chain or Corporate Information Solutions, contains a sub division named Business Development which currently has 8 employees working excluding the manager. The department was formed to find customers who need supply chain service and the department works out how find supply chain solutions to meet the business requirements of the customers. The employees have a high requirement be able to communicate well in English in many circumstances. Since the department is serving many customers who are multinational companies, the business interactions usually take place in English. The department is responsible to deal with customers in several ways, for example, the employees are expected to obtain the supply chain requirements from customers, they would discuss within the department to find the right solution to offer to their customers and they would also have to conduct presentations to clarify those solutions and give the customers confidence in the business solutions that the department is offering namely logistic service, warehouse service and IT solution within the warehouse. Those interactions are sometimes

conveyed in English in order to make sure all the people involved understand as they are from multinational backgrounds.

As English is one of the two main mediums to communicate in the business environment of the Business Development personnel, English training programs would be beneficial to improve language competency and enable the staff to convey their ideas understandably in the business interactions. This language training could be named English for specific purposes. English for specific purposes is an approach of English teaching that can contribute to the need of language that is essential for those office employees to function effectively in a specific workplace. The learners' needs are then the key factors to be considered in designing a language course or curriculum to meet with the required language components that are there in the target situations where general English instruction cannot completely do so. However, needs analysis itself does not distinguish ESP from general English, since every English course has its own needs. As pointed out by Hutchinson, T and Waters, A. (1987), what distinguishes ESP from general English is not the existence of a need but rather an awareness of the need. If involved parties know why learners need English, that awareness will have an influence on what will be acceptable as reasonable content in the language course and also what potential can be exploited. Since needs analysis has a significant influence on a language course by directing and determining the content of the course, needs analysis as to the case of the study should be executed to sound out and see the specific needs that will lead to a tailored English course that will benefit the learner the most.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Since all English teachers require to know the specific needs of their students, an analysis to discover the learners' needs should be conducted to answer these below questions:

1.2.1 What English language skill(s) do the employees in the Business Development Department, a sub-division of DHL (Thailand) Co., Ltd. need to learn the most?

1.2.2 Why do the employees in the Business Development Department need to learn those skills?

1.2.3 What are the perceived English language functions the employees in the Business Development Department want to be taught?

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

To conduct a survey on the perceived needs of English language programs for the office personnel in the Business Development Department of DHL to reveal the needed language skills and the reasons behind the skills need, and also to investigate the specific language functions that they need to learn.

1.4 DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

Definitions of the terms in this study are the following:

1.4.1 DHL refers to Deutsche Post DHL (Thailand), the multinational company that provides mail service, express courier service, freight forwarding service and supply chain solution service.

1.4.2 Business Development Department refers to a department under the service division of supply chain solution of DHL (Thailand) Co., Ltd.

1.4.3 Employee refers to office personnel or workforce within Business Development Department of DHL (Thailand) Co., Ltd.

1.4.4 Needs analysis refers to the learners' perceived needs of the language instruction that they wish to receive in order to perform effectively in their target situations.

1.4.5 ESP refers to a language teaching approach that focuses on learners as a center of the curriculum by designing the course responsive to the needs of the learners.

1.5 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study focused on the office personnel of the Business Development Department of the DHL Company (Thailand) during December 2009 and the study particularly targeted on the English needs analysis perceived by the subjects only.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

1.6.1 The company provides services to several customers in an international business setting. Employees are encouraged to use all language skills in the office in dealing with people inside and outside of the company. Therefore, the result of the needs analysis will benefit teachers to design the English courses that directly respond to the needs of the students of DHL.

1.6.2 The needs analysis result from this department could possibly give an indication to the needs of other companies in the similar business environment. ESP teachers who have no record of needs analysis in this area could make use of the needs analysis of this study in order to get a general guideline to set their own English program at the beginning if opportunity does not allow them to conduct their own survey

1.7 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

The study of Business Development Department in this paper is divided into five chapters. The first chapter introduces the background of the study which consists of the company history and general business operations and also the general use of English of the subjects in the DHL Company. The second chapter is the reviewing of literatures that are related to the study particularly on needs analysis and ESP. The third chapter presents the methodology of how the data were collected and analyzed. The fourth chapter displays the findings of the study. The fifth chapter discusses and interprets the results of the research, and also makes a conclusion of the study and gives recommendations for further study that might come in the future.