

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

In the past centuries, in order for Thailand to be developed and not to be colonized by European countries, new technologies of the moment, including English language, were introduced into the kingdom. Particularly, English was studied first by royal family members and noblemen. It was considered so important that English teachers were hired to teach in the royal courts of that time. And it was evident that some royalty could speak English impeccably. (Syamananda, 1990, p. 124) This led to the inception of encouraging the descendants of upper circles to study abroad which could make a substantial contribution to the country.

So far, the importance of English has never decreased, but on the contrary enormously augmented. Especially, with the advent of a new epoch: globalization-borderless information era, the governments of many countries emphatically accord high priority to English; therefore, the demands of second language learners advanced and the demands for teachers are also eminently ever-burgeoning.

The abovementioned two parties – learners and teachers- are involved.

On the part of “**learners**”, as mentioned, English is more beneficial to all in these days; individuals have their own grounds for learning English. It is indispensable for touching on the reasons of them. Harmer (1991, p. 1-3) has propounded reasons for learning English.

1. School curriculum

The English course is compulsory; all students must study in order to complete the curriculum. It follows that they sometimes feel neutral or negative about English.

2. Advancement

Since English becomes an international language, some people can gain a better chance for professional lives, if they can contrive to learn it, in comparison with those mastering only their mother tongue.

3. Target language community

It is sometimes that some people need to live, either temporarily or permanently, in a community where English is used as a medium. They must learn English so as to survive in that community.

4. English for Specific Purposes

As demonstrated by its name, English for Specific Purposes, those who take this course must have a specific reason for wanting to learn the language consistent with their domains of profession, interests and goals in lives. With this reason, English can be separated into EOP (English for Occupational Purposes), EAP (English for Academic Purposes) and EST (English for Science and Technology).

5. Culture

The culture of some countries may engage the attention of some people ; this becomes the grounds for studying the language of that country. They may want to gain not only knowledge of language but also of people, of the writing system and of other aspects.

6. Miscellaneous

There are, certainly, other reasons for studying English; people can do it for fun, tourism, friendship and so forth.

On the part of “**teachers**”, the foremost and requisite responsibilities of teachers are to teach and how to teach. Apart from this, they are required to advance incessantly their teaching strategies in classroom. All of these must be centered upon particular principles.

With this reason, the English language has significantly been incorporated into the curriculum of the education system in Thailand. According to Arunee Wiriyachitra, in the curriculum, English is a compulsory foreign language subject starting from level 1 in primary education (6 years of age). It is one of the eight compulsory strands that students will have to take in the core and elective courses. It is to be divided into four levels. Level 1 (Preparatory Level) and 2 (Beginning Level) are in primary education; level 3 (Expanding Level) is in lower secondary education and level 4 (Expanding Level) is in upper – secondary education.

At university level, English is taught all around the country; English is introduced in the education system as required courses and elective courses. Both

General English and English for Specific Purposes (ESP) are offered by many universities. The English language pedagogy at Thammasat University also follows this rule; one of the ESP course offered by Language Institute Thammasat University is Communicative Business English II, a course for students passing EL 221: Communicative Business English I, in which reading and writing skills in Business practice are taught. EL 321 Communicative Business English II aims to develop students' proficiency in business English with an emphasis on oral communication. Students are expected to participate in discussions, role plays and other simulated activities and make presentations on business related topics.

To fulfill the needs of the students taking this course, this study was conducted . At least, in addition to the teaching, there may be other unknown needs which may be able to throw light on the education process. This survey study may be able to lead to the fulfillment of needs of learners. The findings of this survey study are expected to be a guidance for teaching and learning at Thammasat University and in Thailand.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Currently, lots of people from various fields have acknowledged the importance of English and English has become a compulsory subject in the curriculum of the education system in Thailand so that students, in Thailand, are required to study English. Some of them start to study it at their kindergarten and some of them have studied since grade ninth. Even though English, as mentioned, is a compulsory subject at schools and universities, the English proficiency of Thai student is not satisfactory comparing with other countries, particularly, the countries in the same region; in others words, Thai students' English four skills still lag behind those of students in neighboring countries. The record in English examinations demonstrates the failure of English learning and teaching in Thailand. Although, some of those students major in English at university, their skills of English are too far behind. This is a crucial concern among scholars in the country. To solve this problem, there must be many parts in education system to co-operate with each other.

With this reason, I would like to do a survey study in order to know the real needs of students studying Communicative Business English II. In doing so, the students of the third year at Thammasat University were selected to be subjects

because they have been studying at Thammasat University for two years and they may already know their needs more definitely. This may help to contribute to the English proficiency development in Thailand.

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

1. What are the needs of learning listening English?
2. What are the needs of learning speaking English?
3. What are the needs of learning reading English?
4. What are the needs of learning writing English?

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

To identify the needs of third year students studying Communicative Business English II, at Thammasat University so as to answer research questions;

- 1.3.1 What are the needs of learning listening English?
- 1.3.2 What are the needs of learning speaking English?
- 1.3.3 What are the needs of learning reading English?
- 1.3.4 What are the needs of learning writing English?

1.4 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

1.4.1 This survey study was conducted with subjects selected from the third year students studying Communicative Business English II, in the academic year 2009, Thammasat University. The total number of subjects was 172 students.

1.4.2 This study was carried out to determine the needs in the four separate skills of third year students studying Communicative Business English II, in the academic year 2009, Thammasat University.

1.5 DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

Definitions of terms of this research study are as follows;

1. Needs refers to English proficiency requirements for third year students studying in Communicative Business English II, in the academic year 2009, Thammasat University.

2. Third year students refers to students who were studying Communicative Business English II in the third year, in the academic year 2009, Thammasat University.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

1.6.1 This survey study can make evident the needs of third year students studying Communicative Business English II, Thammasat University.

1.6.2 The results of this survey study can become a guide to implement efficient curriculum in English education in Thailand.

1.6.3 Therefore, if English pedagogy development is advanced, it can lead to help improve the economy, social and education problems of the country.

1.7 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

This survey study is shown in the following orders.

Chapter One contains background, statement of problems, objectives of the study, definitions of terms, scope of the study, significance of the study and organization of the study.

Chapter Two reviews need analysis, English for specific purposes and business English and related literature.

Chapter Three explains populations, materials, procedures and data analysis.

Chapter Four shows and describes the result of the survey study involved with the questionnaires.

Chapter Five gives a summary of the study, discussions, conclusions and recommendations of further research.