

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

The Government Savings Bank is well-known for providing a saving service and has taken great pride in being the people's bank. It has tried to develop its services to compete in the growing banking sector for the last decade. The establishment and history of the Government Savings Bank is stated in the GSB website (2007):

His Majesty King Vajiravudh (Rama VI) introduced savings services to Thailand in 1913. The main purpose was to educate Thai people on banking services and to promote savings habit among them. King Vajiravudh issued an act, effective from 1 April 1913, to formally set up the Savings Office which began its operation under the Royal Treasury since then. In 1929, the Savings Office was transferred to be under the Post and Telegraph Department and then found the public favor. After the end of World War II, the government foresaw the benefits of savings as well as the important role that the Savings Office played in developing the country, therefore, the Savings Office was set up as a juristic person, to be operated independently under the supervision of the Board of Directors appointed by the Finance Minister under the Government Savings Bank Act B.E. 2489 (1946) and the Office was renamed the Government Savings Bank (GSB), effective from 1 April 1947.

Recently, the Government has issued a Royal Decree on the Modification of the GSB's Functions to allow the expansion of the GSB's operations to accommodate the development of financial instruments and businesses as well as the emergence of recent financial innovations. The Decree has allowed the GSB to be engaged in such non-traditional services as foreign exchange, financial consulting, issuing of letters of

guarantee and agreement, with the aim to better serve the growing needs of its customers.

Rational of the Study

It is now widely accepted that the English language has become the language of international communication. Therefore, English plays a prominent role in all careers including in the banking sector. The Government Savings Bank of Thailand now gives greater importance to the English language since the bank intends to provide the best quality services to its customers to locally and internationally respond to rapidly changing circumstances.

According to Sukwiwat (1985), ‘more than a century ago, English was needed for national survival, today it is needed for economic survival’. This statement implies that English now is crucial in the process of economic development.

The bank has just established an international trade department and provided a money exchange service. This highlights that necessary improvements are being made consistently. The bank not only tries to enhance its efficiency but also its employees’ efficiency as the staff are the most important mechanism for gearing towards improvement. Hence, the bank training department has included English language courses into the training programme in order to expand its staffs’ knowledge of English.

Accordingly, knowing the needs of the English language of the Government Savings Bank staff will be beneficial to the organization in order to prepare and provide training material to suit the employees’ needs. It is also necessary to analyse the needs of the bank staff in order to obtain useful information before providing appropriate training.

Objective of the Study

The purposes of this research are to explore:

1. The needs of English language skills improvement of the Government Savings Bank staff.
2. The English language problems that occur during their work.

Research Questions

1. To what extent do the Government Savings Bank staff need to use English in their work?
2. What problems in using English do these staff encounter during their work?

Benefit of the study

The results obtained from this research will be beneficial to the training course designers of the Government Savings Bank. The research findings will provide some useful information to efficiently update, set up and improve its English language courses to meet the different needs of the Bank staff. The results will also help the staff to be aware of their needs and problems, and then try to adapt and solve the problems in order to successfully achieve their working tasks.

Scope of the study

The participants in this study were confined to the Government Savings Bank staff. Moreover, this research did not focus on the staff's background knowledge and language proficiency level but concentrated on the needs and problems of the Government Savings Bank staff in using English.

Terminology Used in this Study and Abbreviations

‘Needs’ refers to what learners lack and want to accomplish

‘Learners’ needs’ refers to what learners want to learn and gain from a particular language training course.

‘Needs analysis’ refers to an instrument used to find learner needs

‘The bank’ and **‘GSB’** refers to the Government Savings Bank

‘The staff’ refers to the employees of the Government Savings Bank

‘The staff’s needs’ refers to what the Government Savings Bank staff want to learn and gain from a particular English training course.

‘Speaking’ refers only to the talking part of a situation

‘Interacting’ refers to the communicative exchange that occurs between two or more participants

ESP English for Specific Purposes

EAP English for Academic Purposes

EOP English for Occupational Purposes

EBP English for Business Purposes

NA Need(s) Analysis or Need(s) Assessment

Outline of the Thesis

The present study is presented in five chapters. The present chapter is an introduction to the study. Chapter Two reviews definitions of key terms, theoretical concepts (related theories), conceptual framework which was constructed for this study, and previous studies. Chapter Three discusses the design of the research. Chapter Four presents the results of the study. The final chapter provides a discussion of the results, the implications, the limitations of the study, recommendations for future research and conclusion of the thesis.