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**THESIS**

**NEEDS ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH FOR  
THAI HEALTH CLUB'S INSTRUCTORS  
IN BANGKOK**

**ARITSARA TRANANTASIN**

**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of  
the Requirements for the Degree of  
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Aritsara Tranantasin 2011: Needs Analysis of English for Thai Health Club's Instructors in Bangkok. Master of Arts (English for Specific Purposes), Major Field: English for Specific Purposes, Department of Foreign Language. Thesis Advisor: Assistant Professor Chamaipak Tayjanant, Ed.D. 120 pages.

The objectives of this research were 1) to collect data concerning present needs and problems that health club trainers encounter in using English in their jobs; 2) to reveal useful language skills and functions for the trainers in the workplace.

The data of this research were analyzed from the answers from questionnaires, interviews and observations. The sets of survey questionnaires were used with thirty principals or a hundred percent of the population. After considering the data, especially their English needs and problems, the trainers who provided personal training services to the foreigners were collected to be the study participants. As a result, the sample size of the present study was ten from the population size of thirty. The last procedure was a non-participant observation. The researcher asked for tape recording while the informants were training their foreign customers. In addition, note taking was also employed in this part. The researcher observed and made notes about the problems occurring when the informants and foreign members were communicating in English. Then, all the analyzed data were ranked and interpreted.

The results of the research indicated that 1) English was necessary and most used when providing a personal training service to foreign customers 2) the command of English in listening and speaking skills was greatly useful and required in order to increase the quality of the service 3) the participants had problems in both listening and speaking skills 4) dealing with vocabulary was the most problematic for listening skill 5) the most problematic issues for speaking skill was not being confident to speak 6) the participants strongly agreed to have both listening and speaking skill improvement. This study concludes with implications for development of several prospective English courses in response to the demands of each particular situation.

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Student's signature

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Thesis Advisor's signature

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Last but not least, I would like to dedicate this work to my family for their generous and undying support at all levels. Without their belief in my ability, the work on this dissertation project would never have happened.

Aritsara Tranantasin  
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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on describing the reason why this study is worthwhile to be conducted by describing the rationale of the study, scope of the study, search aims and questions. Moreover, the definition of the key terms will be provided in order to make a clear picture of the study.

### Statement of the Problem

Nowadays, English is spreading around the world. As Strevens (1977, cited in Aum and Luisa, 1991: 15) stated that English is the most potent international language, especially for the developing countries, and its status as the principal international language is universally accepted. In addition, being the official language for educational, government and business purposes in many countries, it is also the common language of trade, travel, international conferences and education throughout the world.

In Thailand, as a foreign language, English is widely accepted and has been introduced in the education and business sectors. Since Thailand has become more and more popular with foreign tourists and as the country continues to trade more and more in the international market place, so too has the ability to use English become even more important to Thai people and the country. In addition to the number of Thais working in positions within the health service industry or other industries that require the use of English, there is an increasing demand for the use of the English language. These days, the health service industry in Thailand has become very popular. It was mentioned in the industry news by Mrs. Yearayong Chairut, Assistant Executive Director in the Product Promotion Department of the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) on the website “<http://www.hospitalitynet.org>”

Bangkok, Thailand (1 May 2007) A steadily growing number of foreigners seeking medical services in Thailand has proven the country's vast potential in the health service sector while adding another appeal as a favorite tourist destination in Asia... impressive growth which now averages over a million annual tourist arrivals and recording some 40 billion Baht per year from health tourism

This might be because of concerns about health as Mrs. Chairut expressed confidently that Thailand is more than ready to meet and address the health needs of the world. To achieve this, English language is required in this particular field because of the growing number of foreigners in this area. Therefore, it will be worth investigating the needs of English for health club instructors in order to find useful information for curriculum design and the development of suitable English courses to meet the needs for health club instructors so that the instructors can be more effective communicators in the workplace. This may encourage high quality service for international customers.

### **Objectives of the Study and Research Questions**

This study is carried out in an attempt to collect data concerning present needs and problems that health club trainers encounter in using English in their jobs, and to reveal useful language skills and functions for the trainers in the workplace. The present study thus attempts to answer the following research questions:

- 1) What are the present English language needs of health club instructors in their jobs?
  - 1.1) What are useful language skills for health club instructors in their jobs?
  - 1.2) What are the language forms and functions frequently used for health club instructors in the workplace?
- 2) What kinds of problems do health club instructors encounter when communicating with foreign customers?

### **Significance of the Study**

The results of the present study will be useful for developing a curriculum or designing an ESP (English for Specific Purposes) course to meet the needs of health club instructors. In addition, as these instructors become more effective communicators in the workplace, high quality service for international customers will be encouraged. Significantly, the research findings will help any organizations concerned with health care and services, and universities in designing appropriate English language training to meet the needs of health club or fitness center trainers and people who work in the field of sport science and health service industries.

### **Scope of the Study**

This study is a qualitative research study. It will be restricted to studying the present needs and problems in using English by health club's Thai instructors in Bangkok. Data will be collected from seven trainers at one health club and twenty-three trainers at another. The researcher will then select only beneficial samplings from those people. The selected informants will be interviewed and observed in order to receive quality data to answer the research questions. This study focuses on the group of Thai instructors who work in fitness centers which are health clubs in Bangkok, Thailand. The findings may not be generalized to other groups of Thai trainers in other settings.

### **Definition of Key Terms used in the Study**

To ensure understanding of the specific terms of the particular field applied in this study - fitness centers, the following words need to be clarified.

**Fitness center** or **Health club** is a place where people have paid to become members can go to do physical exercise (Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, 2003), and also to acquire the club's privileges.

**Health club instructor** or **health club trainer** is a person who teaches, coaches and trains practical skills of physical exercises, for instance aerobic dancing, muscle building or body toning by using weight machines or equipment.

**Personal trainer** is a person who does a particular program called ‘personal training’. In this program, he has to train a member individually. A personal trainer has to set the program based on each member’s purpose or goals.

**Personal Training** (PT) is a one on one approach to physical training to achieve the target goal, in this case, customers’ results as quickly as possible. It incorporates an array of fitness and holistic approaches, for instance goal setting, resistance training, core training, training stabilizer muscles, stretching and aerobic exercise programming. PT is a personal trainer design with workouts around one’s personal goals. Personal trainers go beyond simply motivating one to exercise. They intensify one’s workout to build cardiovascular endurance, maximize one’s calorie expenditure and bring one to a new level of physical resistance through resistance training. (What’s up, 2005).

**Observation Checklist** is the list of pinpointed safety practices which forms the basis for an observation checklist. Checklists can have a variety of formats; some that are more useful than others for particular situations. Different formats also facilitate the coach’s job of observation and recording under different circumstances. The goal is to develop a checklist format that is reliable and easy to use. Checklists may allow the observer to score each pinpointed practice as either safe or as a concern. Other formats may involve a frequency count of safe practices or concerns, a rating scale for each practice, marking a map of an area, or some combination of these (Terry, 1995).

### **Outline of the Thesis**

The present study is presented in five chapters. This chapter is an introduction to the study. Chapter Two mainly reviews definitions, theories, and frameworks related to needs analysis from previous studies. Chapter Three discusses the design of

the present study. Chapter Four illustrates the results of the study. The last chapter discusses the results to answer the research questions of the study, identify limitations of the study, the implications of the study, the recommendations for future research and the conclusion of the thesis.



## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

In this chapter, a review of related literature with respect to needs analysis in the field of English for Specific Purposes will be presented. This review will serve as a basis for conducting the study, analyzing, and discussing the findings. It is composed of three subjects: English for Specific Purposes (ESP), Conceptualization of Needs Analysis, Oral Communication skills, and A Review of Related Research which will be revealed as follows.

#### **English for Specific Purposes (ESP)**

##### **The Origin of ESP**

The emergence of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) was in the early 1960s. This subject has grown to become a major developmental focus of English as a Foreign language (EFL) teaching today (McDonough, 1984; and West, 1994).

Hutchinson and Waters, (1987) mention that emergence of all ESP was concluded by three common reasons: economics, linguistics, and learner's particular language needs.

##### **Economic development**

There were two key historical periods that brought life into ESP. First, the end of the Second World War brought with it an " ... age of enormous and unprecedented expansion in scientific, technical and economic activity on an international scale for various reasons, most notably the economic power of the United States in the post-war world, the role [of international language] fell to English" (ibid.: 6). Second, the Oil Crisis of the early 1970s resulted in Western money and knowledge flowing into

the oil-rich countries. The language of this knowledge became English. The general effect of all this development was to exert pressure on the language teaching profession to deliver the required goods. Whereas English had previously decided its own destiny, it now became subject to the wishes, needs and demands of people other than language teachers (ibid.; 7).

### **A Revolution in Linguistics**

Revolutionary pioneers in linguistics began to focus on the ways in which language is used in real communication, not only to set out to describe the features of language as traditional linguists did. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) mention that one significant discovery was in the way of the changes and the fluctuations of spoken and written English. In other words, big changes in English occur because of the particular contexts in which English is used. In conclusion, it can be stated that if language in different situations varies, then tailoring language course designing and training to meet the needs of learners in specific contexts is also necessary.

### **The Learner's Particular Needs**

Hutchinson and Waters, (ibid.) emphasize that rather than just concentrating on the method of language delivery, more attention was given to the ways in which learners acquire language and the differences in the ways language is acquired. The language has changed, so learners were seen to employ different learning strategies, use different skills, encounter different learning schemata, and be motivated by different needs and interests. As a result, focusing on the learners' needs became as important as the methods employed to disseminate linguistic knowledge. Designing specific courses to better meet these individual needs was a natural extension of this thinking.

## Definitions of ESP

Such ESP interpretations were common in the 1970s and 1980s when needs analysis in ESP contexts was widespread in language teaching (Nunan, 1988; Strevens, 1988). However, the meaning and significance of the term ESP has undergone changes over the past 30 years and is continuing to undergo further modifications. There still are not any very clear-cut definitions that will clearly characterize all the various contexts in which ESP has come to be practiced (Meemark, 2003: 12). As Robinson (1991: 1) states that ESP stands for 'English for Specific Purposes', and it would imply that what is specific and appropriate in one part of the globe may not be elsewhere. Thus, it is impossible to produce a universally applicable definition of ESP. Therefore, descriptions of ESP are numerous. Even many scholars have attempted to clarify the term 'ESP'; Meemark, (ibid: 13) claims that most linguists would agree with the one of Strevens (1980: 90):

ESP courses are those in which the aims and the content are determined, principally or wholly, not by criteria of general education as when English as a foreign language is a subject in school but by the functional and practical English language requirements of the learners.

Additionally, he (ibid, 1977: 1-3) also emphasizes that ESP is in contrast to General English. Significantly, it is clearly concerned with meeting the learner's particular needs related in content to particular disciplines, occupations and activities. As the explanations above, the supported definitions of the term 'ESP' are clarified as follows:

According to Hutchinson and Waters (1987:19), ESP is "an approach to language teaching in which all decisions as to content and method are based on the learner's reason for learning".

Munby (1978: 2) explains that ESP courses focus ultimately on the communication needs of the learner rather than by non-learner-centered criteria: the teacher's or institution's predetermined preference for General English.

Referring to Coffey (1984: 3-4), ESP is not a special language but it is only a principle of selection from the language to meet the purposes defined. Remarkably, ESP course features and syllabi are the selection from the corpus of the language parts that are relevant to the designer's intention and the student's needs.

According to Robinson (1991: 1-5), ESP is an activity involving education, training and practice. Besides, it is normally goal directed; that is, most of the language learners study English because of the needs of English for educational or occupational purposes. As a consequence, English skills should be directed towards the goal of the learner. Additionally, Robinson (ibid) mentioned that all the students in ESP courses have to be involved in the same kind of work or specialist studies or have the same or similar areas of interest.

Additionally, Mackay (1978; cited in Robinson, 1980: 6) mentions that "it (ESP) is generally used to refer to the teaching/learning of foreign language for a clearly utilitarian purpose of which there is no doubt. This utilitarian purpose is generally conceived of as successful performance in work, work in which the English language plays an auxiliary role. Thus, by ESP is meant the teaching of English, not as an end in itself but as an essential means to a clearly identifiable goal."

According to all above definitions, it can be concluded that ESP is the common term used to classify the area of English teaching and learning for any particular and appropriate goals rather than universal or general purposes. Those scholars agree that ESP courses clearly require appropriate selections of the language mainly focused on the stakeholders' needs and wishes.

## Characteristics of ESP

Anthony (1997) notes that there has recently been considerable recent debate about what ESP means despite the fact that it is an approach which has been widely used over the last three decades. At a 1997 Japan Conference on ESP, Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) offered clear ESP characteristics by modifying the original definition of Strevens (1988). They define ESP by identifying its absolute and variable characteristics. This definition makes a distinction between three absolutes by removing the idea that 'ESP is in contrast with General English', and five variable characteristics:

**Absolute Characteristics;** ESP is defined to meet specific needs of the learner. ESP makes use of the underlying methodology and activities of the discipline it serves. ESP is centred on the language (grammar, lexis, and register), skills, discourse and genres appropriate to these activities.

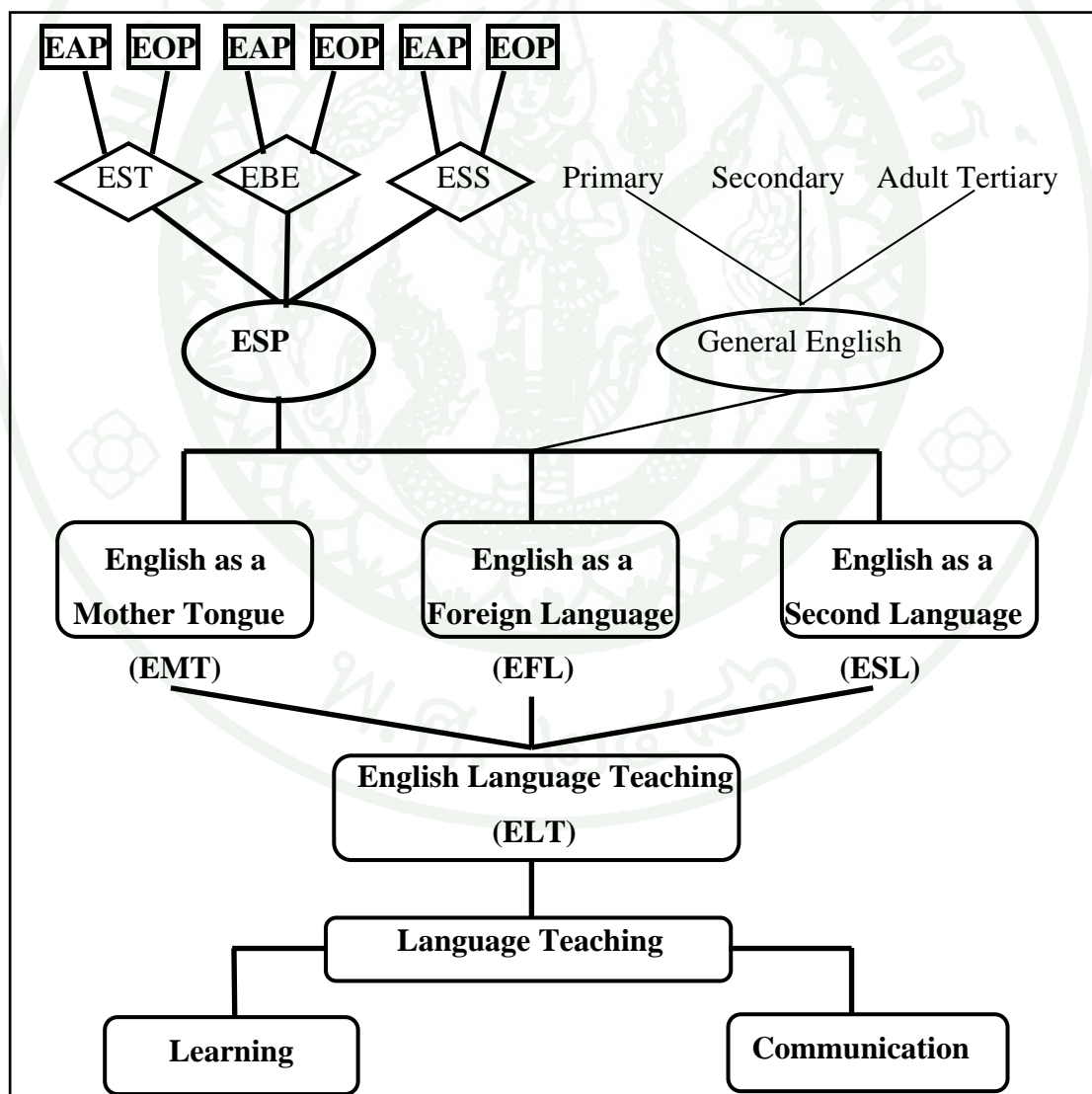
**Variable Characteristics;** ESP may be related to or designed for specific disciplines. ESP may use, in specific teaching situations, a different methodology from that of general English. ESP is likely to be designed for adult learners, either at a tertiary level institution or in a professional work situation. It could, however, be for learners at secondary school level. ESP is generally designed for intermediate or advanced students. Most ESP courses assume some basic knowledge of the language system, but it can be used with beginners.

(ibid: 4-5)

Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) have removed the idea from the absolute characteristic that 'ESP is in contrast with General English', and added more for variable one. They emphasize that ESP is 'not necessarily related to a specific discipline'. Furthermore, ESP is 'likely to be used with adult learners'.

## Types of ESP

With regard to the type of ESP course, a number of people (for example Robinson, 1991; Aum and Luisa, 1991; Hutchinson and Waters, 1987) have discussed and clarified its varieties in various ways depending on the purpose for which the learners need an English course. Remarkably, in the 'Tree of ELT' (Adapted from Hutchinson and Waters, 1989: 150), ESP is divided into 3 branches: English for Science and Technology (EST), English for Business and Economics (EBE) and English for Social Sciences (ESS). Each of these branches falls into two categories: English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Occupational Purposes (EOP).



**Figure 2.1** Tree of ELT

Source: adapted from Hutchinson and Waters (1989: 150)

According to the framework of this study, the researcher will clarify ESP into two types: English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Occupational Purposes (EOP).

**English for Academic Purposes (EAP)** refers to an English course designed to accomplish the learners' specific academic requirements and objectives. The course will be beneficial to the learners who need English to succeed in their studies

**English for Occupational Purposes (EOP)** refers to an English course which is provided to meet the specific professional or occupational needs of learners. In an EOP course, according to Aum and Luisa (1991), learners learn the English needed to fulfill their intended profession or occupation or perform job-related tasks. However, the courses will be designed differently depending on the basis of the specific needs of professions and learners. In short, as the criteria and type of ESP mentioned previously, it can be concluded that needs analysis of the learners is a key element for ESP programs because designing an ESP course depends on the learners' needs.

To view clearly how an ESP course can be organized, conceptualization of 'needs analysis' needs to be considered.

### **Conceptualization of Needs Analysis**

#### **Background of Needs Analysis**

The term needs analysis was originated by Michael West in India in the 1920s when teaching Indian civil servants. It was applied in order to establish why and how learners should learn English (Muntana, 2002: 19). In contrast, Nunan (1988: 43-45), points out that the emergence of 'Needs Analysis' was in the 1970s within the field of language teaching and learning. In addition, he (ibid.) mentions that Needs Analysis is 'a set of procedures for specifying the parameters of a course of study'. The term 'parameters' means the criteria and rationale to group the learners, to select and

sequence the course content, methodology, course length, intensity as well as duration. Significantly, in a learner-centered system or curriculum, course designers and learners have to collaborate in order to produce such parameters. People say that an ESP programme is always based on needs analysis because without needs analysis teachers will not know the learning destination. Morrison (1994:34) points out: “Needs analysis, therefore, needs to provide answers to two kinds of question: what language does the learner need to learn and how it can be most effectively learned?” The answers to these linguistics and pedagogic questions can help ESP teachers to design a course for specific purposes. In this case, the course design is for English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) or in other words, English for scientists and the main objective of the course design is to solve the scientists’ oral skill problem encountered in the learners’ work situation.

### **Definitions of Needs Analysis**

Needs analysis is neither unique to language teaching nor within language training but it is often seen as being “the corner stone of ESP and leads to a very focused course” (Dudley-Evans and St. John, 1998: 122). Conducting needs analysis research mainly concerns learners’ needs. Although there are various ways of interpreting ‘needs’, the concept of ‘learner needs’ is often interpreted in two ways: as what the learner wants to do with the language (goal-oriented definition of needs) which relates to terminal objectives or the end of learning; and what the learner needs to do to actually acquire the language (a process-oriented definition) which relates to transitional/means of learning.

Traditionally, the first interpretation was widely used and accepted. However, in today’s globalized teaching and learning contexts, ESP courses tend to relate to both at the same time but tend to focus on the process-oriented approach in aligning students’ needs with their present working scenarios.

Therefore, by collecting information on learners, it is essential to identify the definitions of the term 'Needs Analysis'. Since there are many definitions of needs analysis given by many practitioners. The following are some outstanding examples:

Needs Analysis is "a procedure starting from the standpoint that is not 'general English' and that the learner (or his sponsor) can apply comprehensive information about the aims, purposes, needs, wants, roles, and functions for which English is required in his or her circumstances".

Stevens (1980: 109)

Needs Analysis is "the requirement for fact-finding or the collection of data from various sources, for example, the data about the learners, the materials, and so on. The goals of the needs-analysis phase of curriculum planning are to determine what a particular group of learners expect to use English for and what their present level of competence is. "

Richards (1985: 6)

Additionally, Ellis and Johnson (1995: 222) support that needs analysis is a method which mainly concerns learners' needs. It focuses on collecting the information learner's needs or a group of learner's needs. It will take into account the specific purposes for which the learner will use the language, the kind of language to be used, the starting level, and the target level which is to be achieved.

Referring to Brindley (1989: 63) needs analysis is a procedure of finding out as much as possible before learning begins about the learners' current and future language use.

With regard to the role of needs analysis, Richards (1984 cited in Nunan, 1988:43) additionally states that it plays the significant role in language curriculum development. As can be seen in the following, needs analysis serves three main purposes:

- It provides a mechanism for acquiring a wider range of input into the content, design and implementation of a language program through involving such people as learners, trainers, teachers, sponsors, administrators and employers in the planning process.

- It can be used in developing goals, objectives and content for a language program.

- It provides data that can serve as the basis for evaluating and developing an existing program.

Needs analysis is the systematic basis for decisions about how to respond the learners' need influencing their performance. Significantly, it is an approach used to collect the information or detailed description of the learners' needs clearly focusing on specific purposes for which the learners use the language. In theory, the key is to seek the gap between the current situation and the desired situation and then to focus resources where they are most needed. Consequently, it can be concluded that 'Needs Analysis' is a very beneficial tool for identifying the learners' current situation as well as the learners' desired situation.

As for ESP field, needs analysis is a very crucial tool in setting up an ESP course. The reason for this is that it is essential to gather as much information obtained from a needs analysis as possible about the learners in order to establish realistic and acceptable objectives. As the result, the information will enable a course designer to design a suitable course for the students' or learners' needs in their studies or occupations.

With regard to the present study, there are different ways in which health club instructors use English, so the needs analysis is worth conducting. The needs analysis in this study serves as a valuable instrument for gathering information on the health club trainers' language needs.

## **Types of Needs Analysis**

In this study, Language Needs Analysis will be mainly employed, so the types of needs and needs analysis will have to be clearly explained. There are many scholars (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987; Brindley, 1989; Mackay and Mountford, 1978; Berwick, 1989; Nunan, 1990; and West, 1994) specifying the types of language need in various ways which should be taken into consideration. With regard to the framework of the present study, the first two types of needs taken into account for needs analysis of ESP course design are target needs and learning needs (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987) will be clarified.

1. Target needs refers to what the learner needs to do in the target situation. Hutchinson and Waters describe the target needs in terms of necessities, lacks and wants. Necessities are what the learner has to know in order to perform effectively in the target situation. Thus, it is a matter of observing the existing proficiency of the learners. However, to identify necessities alone is not enough; we also need to know what the learner knows already in order to decide which of the necessities the learner lacks. Lacks are what the learners already know that are the gaps between the target proficiency and the existing proficiency of the learners. Wants can be considered to be the perception of the needs of the learners. In other words, wants are what the learners feel they need. It is concerned with asking questions about target situation and the attitudes towards situation of the various participants in the learning process.

2. Learning needs can be considered as what the learner needs to do in order to learn. Learning needs covers all of the factors connected with the process of learning, such as attitudes, motivation and awareness, personality, learning styles and strategies and social background.

Both target situation needs and learning needs are important to ESP course design. They can guide the direction of ESP course design to meet the learners' needs since they influence on the nature of the syllabus, materials, methodology, and evaluation procedures.

In research studies, the researcher can examine the needs, problems, wants and other implementation factors by investigating the target situation and learning situation in order to adjust the new information for learners.

In summary, both target situation and learning needs are important. They can guide the direction of ESP course design to meet learner's needs. The researcher concentrates on target needs which are the English language needs of the health club instructors in order to provide the services for the foreign customers.

### **Oral Communication Skills**

Oral communication is an interactive process in which an individual alternately takes the role of speaker and listener, and which includes both verbal and nonverbal components. Being able to be clearly understood when you speak, and the ability to listen to and understand what others say are clearly important, particularly given that speech remains the form of communication most often used. The nature of oral communication is considered a two-way process between speaker and listener. This process involves the productive skill of speaking and the receptive skill of listening. A speaker has to encode the message in appropriate language which is a complicated skill and involves more than just pronouncing words. Listening, on the other hand, refers to a process of understanding spoken language. A listener has to decode the message in order to accomplish communication. (Bygate 2001; Byrne 1976; Rost 2001). English communication skills are ultimately for the workplace. The more opportunities you take to practice these skills, the more confident you will become. It is worth remembering that you will develop these skills in a variety of contexts. These include activities you undertake outside the curriculum, and the mix of verbal, interpersonal and physical strategies needed to interact confidently and effectively with a range of audiences. A skilful communicator draws on a number of different means (e.g., graphical, visual, statistical, audio-visual and technological) to get the point across.

According to Bygate (1987 cited in Nunan, 1998: 40) the oral mode of communication can be classified broadly in terms of two routines: ‘Information routines’ and ‘Interaction routines’. The former routines deal with ‘frequently recurring types of information structures’, and some examples are narration, description, instruction, explanation, prediction, and so on. Interaction routines, on the other hand, can be either social or service matters, such as a job interview or a conversation in a convention party. Mostly, oral communication in fitness centers, between the customers and health club staff, can be regarded as interaction routines in which face-to-face communications take place. Both sides have to take turns in being speaker and listener. Nunan (ibid.) further identifies that most interaction routines are related to the contents of discourse or text types, ranging from ‘predictable’ to ‘unpredictable’ patterns. Predictabilities are due to various factors, including the language itself and the contexts of situations. Nunan points out that transactional encounters, such as the exchange of goods and services are fairly restricted and hold highly predictable patterns. Interpersonal encounters, however, focus on the maintenance of social relationships, and then are less predictable.

Defining the domain of knowledge, skills, or attitudes to be measured is at the core of any assessment. Most people define oral communication narrowly, focusing on speaking and listening skills separately. The relationships among four skills can be presented by two parameters in the following chart:

<b>Skills</b>	<b>Oral</b>	<b>Written</b>
Receptive skills	Listening	Reading
Productive skills	Speaking	Writing

**Figure 2.1** The relationships among four skills of language

Source: Adapted from Byrne (1976)

## Speaking Skills

Traditionally, when people describe speaking skills, they do so in a context of public speaking. Recently, however, definitions of speaking have been expanded (Brown, 1981). One trend has been to focus on communication activities that reflect a variety of settings: one-to-many, small group, one-to-one, and mass media. Another approach has been to focus on using communication to achieve specific purposes: to inform, to persuade, and to solve problems. A third trend has been to focus on the basic competencies needed for everyday life -- for example, giving directions, asking for information, or providing basic information in an emergency situation. Those mentioned approaches are mainly concerned with oral communication skills needed for the Thai personal trainers of the study. Generally, there are three kinds of speaking situations which are: interactive, partially interactive, and non-interactive.

Interactive speaking situations in which the health club instructors find themselves include face-to-face conversations and telephone calls, in which interlocutors are alternately speaking and listening. In addition, there are chances to ask for elucidation, repetition, or slowing speech from a conversation partner. Some speaking situations are considered as partially interactive, such as a speech given to public, where the listeners do not normally interrupt. Nevertheless, the speaker can see the audiences and judge from the expressions on their faces and body language whether the audiences understand. Few speaking situations may be totally non-interactive, such as when recording a speech for a radio broadcast.

Moreover, many researchers (Brown, 1994; Burns and Joyce, 1997) mention that speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing and receiving and processing information. Its form and meaning are dependent on the context in which it occurs, including the participants themselves, their collective experiences, the physical environment, and the purposes for speaking. It is often spontaneous, open-ended, and evolving. However, speech is not always unpredictable. Language functions (or patterns) that tend to occur in certain discourse

situations (e.g., declining an invitation or requesting time off from work), can be identified and charted (Burns and Joyce, 1997). For example, when an instructor asks, “May I help you?” the expected discourse sequence includes a statement of need, response to the need, offer of appreciation, acknowledgement of the appreciation, and a leave-taking exchange. Speaking requires that learners not only know how to produce specific points of language such as grammar, pronunciation, or vocabulary (linguistic competence), but also that they understand when, why, and in what ways to produce language (sociolinguistic competence). Finally, speech has its own skills, structures, and conventions different from written language (ibid; Carter and McCarthy, 1995; Cohen, 1996). A good speaker synthesizes this array of skills and knowledge to succeed in a given speech act. However, a speaker’s facial and body movements are also helpful for a listener to interpret the message. It should be noted that, in fact, a speaker does not always initiate the message, but a speaker also responds to what he or she has heard. At the same time, a listener does not remain silent because he or she has to make some sort of response to the speaker. In addition, on many occasions spoken language is characterized by incomplete and ungrammatical utterances, false starts and repetitions. These characters are in contrast to written language, in which sentences are carefully structured (Byrne: 1976).

### **Listening Skills**

Listening, like reading comprehension, is usually defined as a receptive skill comprising both a physical process and an interpretive, analytical process. However, this definition is often expanded to include critical listening skills (higher-order skills such as analysis and synthesis) and nonverbal listening (comprehending the meaning of the tone of voices, facial expressions, gestures, and other nonverbal cues.) The expanded definition of listening also emphasizes the relationship between listening and speaking. Therefore, listening is a demanding process, not only because of the complexity of the process itself, but also due to factors that characterize the listener, the speaker, the content of the message, and any visual support that accompanies the message (Brown and Yule, 1983).

According to Powers (1984), Rubin and Mead (1984), and Stiggins (1981), the method used for assessing oral communication skills depends on the purpose of the assessment. A method that is appropriate for giving feedback to students who are learning a new skill is not appropriate for evaluating students at the end of a course. However, any assessment method should adhere to the measurement principles of reliability, validity, and fairness. The instrument must be accurate and consistent, it must represent the abilities we wish to measure, and it must operate in the same way with a wide range of students. In conclusion, English communication skills for this study concern the English language needs for health club instructors. As a fitness trainer English oral communication skills are important for fitness instructions, personal training and general conversations.

### **A Review of Related Research**

According to the English for Specific Purposes (ESP) literature previously discussed, needs analysis is advantageous for course design and development in specific contexts. The researcher has observed that there is a quantity of research on the needs analysis. Consequently, in order to limit the overwhelming related research, the related study in this research will focus on the needs analysis concerning English for Occupational Purposes only.

Sonsa-ardjit (1980) surveyed the English language needs of officials and government enterprise personnel. Questionnaires and structured interview techniques were used to obtain data. The study results revealed that officials, government enterprise and business company personnel had lower English language proficiency than the requirements. The participants also realized that English language ability was considered to be important and necessarily wanted by every function especially in business.

Plensaisurb (1984) studied the needs, wants and problems of medical students at Mahidol University in using the four skills in their studies and in their future occupation. The participants consisted of first-year medical students, third-year

medical students, lecturers, interns, residents, and administrators. Four different questionnaires were employed with first-year medical students, third-year medical students, interns, residents and some of lecturers. The rest of the lecturers and the administrators participated with the structured interviews. The results found that the medical students and the residents needed reading skills most. Nevertheless, listening and speaking skills were needed to be included in the English course.

Jungsatitkul (1988) conducted an analysis of taxi's drivers' needs of English language used in Bangkok metropolis. The problems in communicating with foreigners were also investigated in the study. Questionnaires and interview forms were employed as research tools. The results indicated that the participants needed English to communicate with foreign customers. Listening and speaking were the greatest used skills. The taxi drivers wanted to improve speaking skill the most. The main purpose to use English most was to introduce tourist spots to foreign tourists. The problem the participants faced the most was that the tourists and they could not understand each other.

Dibakanaka (1989) conducted an analysis of English language use of employees in first-class hotels in Bangkok. A questionnaire was mainly employed in the study. The participants consist of 96 employees of front office and food and beverage departments from seven hotels. The results indicated that the neutral level of language was rated to be the most used, followed by the informal level, and the formal level. The relationship between the confidence and competence of language use by the employees could be divided into three groups from the most confident to the least. These three groups of employees used the neutral level of language more than any other levels

Kongjaroen (1991) studied the problems of English use at work among graduates from the Hotel and Tourism Training Institute, Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) as perceived by themselves and immediate chiefs. The findings concluded that the graduates and immediate chiefs perceived that the graduates from the Restaurant and Bar Departments, the Kitchen Department, and the House-keeping

Department had problems at the low level of English skills even though they could use grammatical English correctly in different situations, albeit not fluently. The graduates and immediate chiefs from the Front Office Department perceived that they had problems at the lowest level of English skills. That is, they could not use grammatical English correctly and fluently to communicate in different situations.

Boonjaipet (1992) investigated the English needs and the problems in using the language by officers at the counters of the post offices in Bangkok metropolis. Interview techniques and questionnaires were used in the study. The research results were that the officers needed speaking and listening skills the most. Both the supervisors and the officers accepted that they wanted speaking and listening skills training. They revealed that the problems they faced were about listening and speaking skills.

Poon (1992) carried out an analysis in Hong Kong of language needs among professional accountants and company administrators. Research instruments employed in the study were questionnaires and face-to-face interviews. The findings revealed that English remained the major language for written communication within the workplace. Written skill was rated to be the most important skill, followed by spoken English, written Chinese and Putonghua. The language skills in order of importance were spoken English, written English, written Chinese and Putonghua, written Chinese, and spoken Cantonese.

Tsui (1992) conducted a survey of English business communicative skills training needs of non-native English speaking managers. Questionnaires were employed with 800 managers in various departments of all companies in the science-based industrial park in Hsinchu, Taiwan. The results showed that the non-native managers needed to improve their English business communicative skills in English as a language for Wider Communication: ELWC. The most needed English functions and courses were those in conversation and telephoning, followed by English for oral presentation, letter-writing, visitor reception communication, office communication, and report writing.

Akkakoson (1994) conducted a survey of the role and importance of English in Thai business communication. The population consisted of 17 human resource management representatives of 15 sampled companies divided into three levels: high-level companies, middle-level companies, and low-level companies. The results showed that English was an important tool for business communication. They needed all four skills; listening, speaking, reading, and writing. English was very useful for most of the employees. The human resource management representatives of the high-level group perceived that all four skills were very important to supervisory level staff while only listening and speaking skills were very significant for junior level staff. The human resource management representatives of the middle-level status thought that only listening and reading skills were of importance to the supervisory level whereas the human resource management representatives of the low-level group considered that listening, speaking, and writing were useful to the supervisory level.

Maneerat (1994) investigated the needs and problems in using English to gain more knowledge and modern technology of members of progress farmers with an emphasis on reading for specific purposes. The results concluded that the most needed purpose of reading was to read instructions to use pesticides and the training most needed was to develop their technical vocabulary in agriculture.

Jiranapakul (1996) studied the language needs of Thai engineers. Interviews were employed with both twenty-one operational and twenty-one managerial engineers. The results indicated that English is an important tool for communication, and it is an important factor in the level of job performance and career advancement. The participants perceived their reading skills to be better than the others. The operational engineers rated English speaking and comprehension as the greatest need for training, while the managerial engineers rated writing and speaking as the most needed course training.

Ketkaew (1997) surveyed the cabin attendants' English language needs by collecting data from questionnaires. The subjects consisted of 317 Thai Airways International cabin attendants; of which 278 were air stewards and air stewardesses

and 39 were air pursers and in-flight managers. The findings revealed that English was highly important to both groups. Listening and speaking skills were the most needed. Problems in using the four skills were moderate for both groups. Air stewards and air stewardesses needed to improve their listening and speaking skills most, while air pursers and in-flight managers needed to improve all four skills in moderate to high levels.

Keyoonwong (1998) conducted a survey of needs and wants of English in tourism careers. The results revealed that the tourism personnel in Chiang Mai rated speaking and listening the most important and necessary skills, followed by reading, writing, and translation. The tourism staff were not satisfied with their English language proficiency and nor were the employers. The staff needed to practice listening, speaking, reading, and translation skills.

Sucompa (1998) undertook a survey of current needs and problems of English language for use in the tourism industry in Thailand on various Rajamangala Institute of Technology (RIT) campuses. Four sets of questionnaires were used with the participants including 394 tourism workers, 95 employers or owners of travel agencies, 20 English language teachers, and 135 tourism students. The results showed that tourism workers regard reading, speaking, and listening to be somewhat more important than writing and translation, while tourism students regarded translation as the most important, followed by reading, listening, speaking, and writing. All participants needed the English course for tourism to be developed.

Suwaroporn (1998) surveyed the professional needs and problems in the English language of the nursing staff at King Chulalongkorn Memorial Hospital. Questionnaires were used mainly to obtain data from all subjects; the 291 nurses. The findings concluded that all nursing staff perceived that their English skills were insufficient for the proper performance of their duties. Reading comprehension and writing were rated as the greatest needs. The participants were required to read technical documents and journals related to medicine and nursing. Written skills were required for laboratory investigations regarding individual nursing care plans and

reports associated with patients' physical examinations. Nursing staff believe that lack of adequate speaking ability was also an impediment to their proper performance.

Boonyawattana (1999) undertook needs analysis of English in the tourism business. The results found that listening and speaking skills were more important in tourism business careers than reading and writing skills. Speaking was needed most, followed by listening, reading, and writing. The most encountered problem of using English was in listening skills, followed by speaking, writing, and reading.

Yutdhana (2000) surveyed the English language in business communication needs of businesspersons in Chiang Mai. The English in business communication in this study categorized into seven types; real estate and decoration, tourism, agriculture and agro-industries, finance and banking, handicraft, health and education, and trading. The results concluded that the listening skill was the greatest need. English language training for the businesspersons in Chiang Mai should concentrate on conversational skills; courses about the use of English for business contacts were necessary.

Li So-mui and Mead (2000) investigated the English language needs of textile and clothing merchandisers in the international marketplace. The research aim was the development of teaching and educational materials that met the needs of the workplace. Data were obtained on the type of communication demanded in the industry. The findings revealed that the participants required English language skills to communicate with customers. Facsimile was the most needed channel of communication.

Kuen (2001) investigated the communicative needs of sales personnel in the business context of a Malaysian owner-managed group of companies. The study focused on the productive skills of speaking and writing which the participants needed in their workplace, and the types of communicative events sales personnel were involved in and needed. The results indicated that speaking and written skills were

needed by sales personnel. Thus, they needed to be equipped with a repertoire of communication skills in English in order to perform effectively in their jobs.

Meemak (2002) conducted 'An analysis of needs and problems of English for tourist police'. The questionnaires were employed to obtain data from 159 tourist police who work in Tourist Police Division: Sub-Division 1 and Sub-Division 2. The results indicated that all sections of the tourist police strongly needed all four English language skills. Listening is considered the most important. They all realized the importance of English and needed to improve all four skills. They also needed English training courses emphasizing on listening and speaking skills, together with vocabulary.

Aunruen (2005) analyzed the present needs of English and problems in the workplace of travel agents in Chiang Mai. The main research instrument used was a questionnaire. The participants consisted of 365 travel agents from 109 registered travel agencies in Chiang Mai. The results showed that the English language was perceived as important for the travel agents. The participants perceived that the language was mostly needed to communicate effectively with their clients. Speaking was rated as the skill they used most in their routine jobs. Listening, writing, and reading were also needed. The travel agents perceived that grammar and appropriate expressions and pronunciation were the lowest needs. Speaking was rated to be the skill with which they faced most problems, followed by grammar and appropriate expressions, listening, and translation respectively. The participants hardly encountered problems in vocabulary in tourism and reading skills.

Dejkunjorn (2005) studied the English language needs of Thai Pilots. The participants consisted of 262 Thai Airways International pilots; of which 89 were captains and 173 were flight officers. Data were obtained by using questionnaires and observations. The study concluded that most of the pilots assessed their English language abilities as moderate. The participants rated English as highly important. Speaking and listening skills were mostly needed and the problems of using the four skills; listening, speaking, reading, and writing were moderate. Pilots needed to

improve their listening and speaking skills most, and made some mispronunciations during their flight duties.

Viboolphant (2005) studied the needs for the English communicative competence of non-native English speaking front-line staff of international airlines in Thailand. A questionnaire survey and oral interviews were employed in the study with 220 customers who use English as a means of communication. A tape recorder was used to record the authentic English communicative skills between the 15 non-native staff and customers. A self-evaluation form was employed with the other 30 non-native staff to evaluate their speaking and listening skills. The results showed that the speaking and listening skills of the front-line staff were at a very good level. The problem they faced was that the staff could not grasp the whole message when the customer spoke using long statements.

Chew (2005) conducted an investigation in Hong Kong of the English language needed by new bank employees. Four banks were involved in the study. English language skills were rated as the most important and needed tool for the performance of duties in various departments. Interviews and questionnaires were employed for gathering data. The findings indicated preliminary conclusions about the language divide between spoken and written discourse in banks in Hong Kong. English used in written discourse and Cantonese used in spoken discourse, and the need for larger numbers of bank staff who were fluent in both languages so as to achieve maximum productivity.

Lertanant (2006) conducted an independent study, a study of Thai restaurant staff's Problems and Needs in English Speaking Skill, which carried out to answer research questions regarding the problems and needs of English for Thai restaurant staff. The data were collected by means of English speaking tasks, the researcher's observation check sheet and semi-structured interviews. The findings from English speaking tasks and the researcher's observation check sheet showed that vocabulary, grammar and appropriate expressions (accent and pronunciation) were core points of the subjects' problems. The finding from semi-structured interviews showed that

vocabulary was the most problematic, followed by speaking, listening, and grammar respectively. As suggested by the findings concerning the subjects' problems and needs in English speaking skills and identified the subjects themselves in conversations and interviews, the researcher reported that speaking skills was their main problem, and clearly defined that Thai restaurant staff would like to improve their speaking to enable them to perform their jobs more effectively.

Tangniam (2006) explored the English language needs of Thai Airways ground staff. The majority of them considered that an English training course helped them improve English skills to communicate with passengers more fluently. As for English skills needs, listening and speaking were rated extremely needed skills. Based on the findings, English 24 training courses were recommended mainly to have emphasized on listening and speaking skills.

Based on the review of related research on needs analysis for English language, a number of studies have been investigated the needs and problems in English usually related to the field of tourism. Listening and speaking skills were most considered to be significant in their workplaces.

In conclusion, this study will explore needs and problems in English listening and speaking skills of the health club instructors in Bangkok. This study will be beneficial for the health club staff to understand the English problems in listening and speaking skills. Consequently, to avoid the problems in communication, the health club staff should be trained in the effective training program before they effectively communicate and provide the services for foreign customers.

## CHAPTER III

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter reviews the research methodology and describes the approaches used in the present study. The chapter is divided into six main parts. The first part introduces the objective of the study and research questions. The research type of the present study is then discussed. In the third part, different sampling theories and a description of sampling in the study are revealed. The fourth part deals with the discussion of data collection methods and procedures. In the fifth part, data analysis is presented. The last part is the explanation of core criteria such as validity, reliability, and generalisability of research methods and findings as well as ethical consideration of the present research.

#### Objectives of the Study and Research Questions

This study is carried out in an attempt to collect data concerning present needs and problems that health club's trainers encounter in using English on their job, and to reveal useful and desired language skills and functions for the trainers in the workplace. This study thus attempts to answer two main research questions:

1) What are the present English language needs of the health club instructors on their job?

There were two sub-questions in this item which were:

1.1) What are useful language skills for the health club instructors in their job?;

1.2) What are the language forms and functions frequently used for the health club instructors in the workplace?;

2) What kinds of problems do the health club instructors encounter while communicating with foreign customers?

This chapter is divided into three parts: data obtained from survey questionnaires; data obtained from semi-structured interviews; and researcher's observation field notes. These questions provide a scope for the design of research methods for this study.

## **Research Types**

### **Overview of Research Types and Their Characteristics**

There are two main types of research generally employed in conducting a study: qualitative research; and quantitative research.

### **Characteristics of Qualitative and Quantitative Research**

Both qualitative and quantitative designs are said to be systematic. In fact having a system or following a process is a defining principle of research. However, they differ in concepts, approaches in collecting data, and goals. In the role of the researcher, quantitative research is thought to be deductive by the researcher. In other words, it tests theory. This is in contrast to most qualitative research, which tends to be inductive. In other words, it generates theory. It is thought that in gaining, analyzing and interpreting quantitative data, the researcher can remain detached and objective or tends to remain objectively separated from the subject matter. Often this is not possible with qualitative research where the researcher may actually be involved in the situation of the research. Miles and Huberman (1994), mention that the qualitative researcher is the data gathering instrument and individuals' interpretation of events is important. Noticeably, qualitative and quantitative research approaches to the research can be divergent, contrasting and complimentary. Both of these two types or researches seek to describe and explain phenomena, but have differing epistemological positions. According to Jacob (1988), qualitative research is

a generic term for investigative methodologies described as ethnographic, naturalistic, anthropological, field, or participant observer research. It emphasizes the importance of looking at variables in the natural setting in which they are found. Interaction between variables is important. In contrast, quantitative research is widely used in both the natural and social sciences, from physics and biology to sociology and journalism. The objective of quantitative research is to develop and employ mathematical models, theories and hypotheses pertaining to natural phenomena. Regarding research sample size, qualitative research involves a small group of people intensively over a long period of time whereas, quantitative research generally involved a large population. The process of measurement is central to quantitative research because it provides the fundamental connection between empirical observation and mathematical expression of quantitative relationships.

At the stage of generalization of the results, quantitative designs of research tend to produce results that can be generalized and the results of the quantitative study tend to hold true. Providing, of course, that the research was conducted in an appropriate manner using appropriate sampling techniques. However, qualitative studies tend to produce results that are less easy to generalize. This has to do with the problem of the sample used at the time. Even if the researcher encountered the same group of clients on another day, they may find different results. Generally, it is more difficult to generalize with qualitative results. Wright (1995) describes qualitative research to mean any research where number counting and statistical techniques are not the central issues, but it always involves the collection of data in the form of words and images and that is why it is interpretable. In other words, quantitative research always uses data that are structured in the form of numbers or that can be immediately transported into numbers, which can be measured so it is measurable in nature. Therefore, if the data cannot be structured in the form of numbers, they are considered qualitative. Regarding research data collection, qualitative research often involves the field observation, interviews, the intensive case studies, the narrative analysis, and the methods of constant comparison. Moreover, a researcher is a primary instrument. In contrast, quantitative research always deals with inanimate

instruments such as; scales, tests, surveys, questionnaires, computers whose findings may be expressed numerically, and are amenable to mathematical (statistical) manipulation enabling the researcher to estimate (forecast) future events or quantities.

From the different characteristics of qualitative and quantitative research as shown in the previous statement, the researcher will present the characteristics of qualitative and quantitative research in Table 3.1 as followed.

**Table 3.1** Characteristics of Qualitative and Quantitative Research

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Qualitative Research</b>	<b>Quantitative Research</b>
<b>Research design</b>	Systematic	Systematic
<b>Focus of research</b>	Quality (nature, essence)	Quantity (how much/many)
<b>Researcher</b>	Subjective	Deductive
<b>Philosophical roots</b>	Phenomenology, symbolic interaction	Positivism, logical empiricism
<b>Associated phrases</b>	Fieldwork, ethnographic, naturalistic, grounded, subjective	Experimental, empirical, statistical
<b>Goal of investigation</b>	Understanding, description, discovery, hypothesis generating	Prediction, control, description, confirmation, hypothesis testing
<b>Generalization of the results</b>	Not generalized	Generalized
<b>Design characteristics</b>	Flexible, evolving, emergent	Predetermined, structured
<b>Setting</b>	Natural, familiar	Unfamiliar, artificial
<b>Sample</b>	Small, non-random	Large, random, representative

**Table 3.1** Characteristics of Qualitative and Quantitative Research (continued)

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Qualitative Research</b>	<b>Quantitative Research</b>
<b>Data collection</b>	Researcher as primary instrument, interviews, observations	Inanimate instruments (scales, tests, surveys, questionnaires, computers)
<b>Data form</b>	Words	Numbers
<b>Mode of analysis</b>	Inductive (by researcher)	Deductive (by statistical methods)
<b>Findings</b>	Comprehensive, holistic, expansive	Precise, narrow, reductionism

Source: Adapted from Merriam (1988:18)

In conclusion, the type of the data generated in the course of conducting research depends very much on the method used to collect it. Therefore, it is necessary for a researcher to consider whether a qualitative or quantitative approach would be more appropriate whilst devising a research plan. When a researcher selects their approach to a study, it should be a reflection of which approach is most suitable for the topic under consideration. However, it is reasonable to suggest that it also reflects the bias of the researcher.

### **Type of Research in the Present Study**

The present study employed qualitative research methods to describe the particular in-depth understanding of fitness personal trainers' behavior and needs of English in the workplace. The instruments used in the study were survey questionnaires, interviews and observations. The participants of the research were selected from a probability sampling procedure (See sampling procedures section). The data were then analyzed based on a qualitative theory approach where number counting and statistical techniques are not the central issues, and where an attempt is made to get close to the collection of data in their natural setting with the form of

words. Since this study is a qualitative research study, the interpretation of the research findings cannot be generalized to the whole population.

## Sampling Procedures

### Types of Sampling Procedures

Cohen and Manion (1994) explain that the type of correspondence between the sample and the larger population is most important when a researcher wants to know what proportion of the population has a certain characteristic – like a particular behavior, opinion or a demographic feature. Public opinion polls that try to describe the percentage of the population that plans to vote for a particular candidate, for example, require a sample that is highly representative of the population. The sample reflects the characteristics of the whole population. There are two typical types of sampling procedures: probability sampling and non-probability sampling. Table 3.2 shows two main types of research samplings with their sub-groups.

**Table 3.2** Categories of **Probability and Non-Probability Research Sampling**

Probability Sampling	Non-Probability Sampling
Simple Random Sampling	Purposive Sampling
Systematic Random Sampling	Convenient/Availability/Accidental Sampling
Stratified Random Sampling	Chain /Snowball Sampling
Cluster Random Sampling	Quota Sampling

**Probability Sampling** involves selecting individuals using accepted non-biased procedures, thereby helping to ensure that the sample is typical of the larger group (population) from which it is drawn. This is accomplished by using one of a variety of established procedures for drawing sample members at random. Therefore,

some form of random selection is utilized (Cohen and Manion, 1994) which can be categorized to four main clusters as shown in Table 3.2. The most widely known and the most important type of a random sample is the Simple Random Sample (SRS). This is characterized by the fact that the probability of selection is the same for every case in the population. A simple random sampling is a method of choosing elementary units in such a way that each unit in the population has an equal chance of being selected by a researcher. Therefore, this sample method is free from sampling bias. In real-world social research, designs that employ simple random sampling are difficult to come by. A Systematic random sample is usually used with large population sizes. It is obtained by selecting one unit on a random basis and choosing additional elementary units at evenly spaced intervals until the desired number of units is obtained. According to Stratified random sample, in this form of sampling, the population is first divided into two or more mutually exclusive segments based on some categories of variables of interest in the research. It is obtained by independently selecting a separate simple random sample from each population stratum. Significantly, stratified random sample is designed to organize the population into homogenous subsets before sampling, then drawing a random sample within each subset. In random sampling consists of a group or cluster of smaller units. A Cluster random sample is obtained by selecting clusters from the population on the basis of simple random sampling. Regularly, cluster sampling is an efficient method for selecting a sample representative of the population.

**Non-probability sampling** non-probability sampling does not involve random selection because it is not possible to list the population, and cannot depend upon the rationale of probability theory. It may be appropriate when a sample of interest for audit purposes can be identified and the auditor does not intend to reach conclusions about other cases than those in the sample. Furthermore, it may also be appropriate when general statements are qualitative rather than quantitative in nature. Cohen and Manion (1994) categorize this sampling procedure into four main clusters as shown in Table 3.2. Purposive sampling selects information rich cases for in depth study. Size and specific cases depend on the study purpose (Patton, 1990: 169). Moreover, it can be very useful for situations where you need to reach a targeted sample quickly and

where sampling for proportionality is not the primary concern. With a purposive sample, you are likely to get the opinions of your target population, but you are also likely to overweight subgroups in your population that are more readily accessible (Trochim, 2000). Convenient, haphazard, availability, or accidental sampling is a method of choosing subjects who are available or easy to find. The primary advantage of the method is that it is very easy to carry out, relative to other methods. Researchers or field workers have the freedom to choose whomever they find. While a convenience sample has no controls to ensure precision, it may still be a useful procedure (Botha, 2006). This sampling is useful in getting general ideas about the phenomenon of interest and also saves time, money and effort. Snowball sampling design is used when respondents are difficult to identify and usually located through referral networks. In the initial stage individuals are discovered and may or may not be selected through probability methods. This initial group then is used to locate others (ibid). Quota sampling is not a single method. As Stephen and McCarthy (1958, cited in Doherty, M., 1994) say, "It is not sufficient to state that quota sampling was used in a survey, and expect anyone to have more than a very general idea how the sample was drawn". Quota sampling is designed to overcome the most obvious flaw of availability sampling. Rather than taking just anyone, a researcher sets quotas to ensure that the chosen sample represents certain characteristics (e.g. age, gender, working experience) in proportion to their prevalence in the population.

To reiterate, the primary difference between probability methods of sampling and non-probability methods is that in the latter you do not know the likelihood that any element of a population will be selected for study. Therefore, when using procedures that ensure randomness, the auditor can estimate statistically the amount of error and the likelihood that error is greater than acceptable limits. This in turn assists judgments as to the appropriateness of the survey evidence.

### **Sampling Procedure in the Present Study**

In response to the objective of the present study, the researcher needs to investigate the needs and problems that health club trainers encounter in using English

on their job, and to reveal useful language skills and functions for the trainers in the workplace. The researcher used various methods of sampling. The first method was the use of convenience sampling the researcher used this sampling for collecting the setting of the study. As a result, the researcher would make a group of manageable sample by choosing fitness trainers from two health clubs, where the researcher was interested in obtaining an inexpensive approximation of the truth. The population in the present study was the fitness instructors who worked in the very well-known fitness centers in Bangkok. They usually performed face-to-face communications with foreign customers. Thus, non-probability purposive sampling method was used as the second procedure. Accordingly, based on the total number of the instructors from both the Health Club A and B, the questionnaires were distributed in selecting the present research samplings based on the characteristics of a population. Therefore, non-probability stratified purposive sampling was employed as the third method in the study. For this reason, the sample size of the participants of the present study consisted of seven trainers from Health Club A and three from Health Club B who provided personal training tasks for foreign customers. The number of the subjects from those two health clubs is shown in Table 3.3.

**Table 3.3** The Number of the Subjects from the Health Club A and B

Health Club	Population	Sample size
A	23	7
B	7	3

### Data Collection Methods and Procedures

#### Research Methods

A variety of methods can be used in conducting needs analysis. However, as several researchers; Hutchinson and Waters (1987), Nunan (1992) argue, the most frequently used and popular methods are questionnaire, interview and observation.

## Questionnaires

A questionnaire is a written or printed form used in gathering information on some subject or subjects consisting of a list of questions to be submitted to one or more persons. This research instrument is one of the most popular methods of conducting scholarly research because it is a means of eliciting the feelings, beliefs, experiences, perceptions, or attitudes of a sample of individuals. As a data collecting instrument, it could be structured or unstructured. They provide a convenient way of gathering information from a target population. However, the questions used in a questionnaire can be open-ended and close-ended question.

According to many scholars (Bachrack and Scoble, 1967; Benson, 1946; Hochstim and Athanasopoulos, 1970; Moser and Kalton, 1971; Seitz, 1944), questionnaires are easy to analyze, and most statistical analysis software can easily process them. They are cost effective when compared to face-to-face interviews, mostly because of the costs associated with travel time. This is especially true for studies involving large sample sizes and large geographic areas (Clausen and Ford, 1947; Goode and Hatt, 1962; Ruckmick, 1930). Written questionnaires become even more cost effective as the number of research questions increases. In contrast, questionnaires are less intrusive than telephone or face-to-face surveys. When respondents receive a questionnaire, they are free to complete it on their own timetable (Cahalan, 1951; Jahoda, et al., 1962). Unlike other research methods, the respondent is not interrupted by the research instrument. On the other hand, questionnaires are simply not suited for some people. For example, a written survey to a group of poorly educated people might not work because of reading skill problems. More frequently, some people are turned off by written questionnaires because of misuse (Deutcher, 1956; Norton, 1930). Written questionnaires reduce interviewer bias because there is uniform question presentation (Jahoda, et al., 1962). On the other hand, the lack of an interviewer limits the researcher's ability to probe responses. Structured questionnaires often lose the "flavor of the response", because respondents often want to qualify their answers (Walonick, 1993). By allowing frequent space for comments, the researcher can partially overcome this disadvantage.

## Interviews

An interview is a direct face-to-face attempt to obtain reliable and valid measures about a particular issue (or set of topics) in the form of verbal responses from one or more respondents. It can include exploring their knowledge, feelings, attitudes, opinions, past experiences and expectations for the future. Besides, it is a conversation in which the roles of the interviewer and the respondent change continually. In fact, there are many types of interview. Hitchcock (1989:79) lists nine types: structured interview; survey interview; counseling interview; diary interview; life history interview; ethnographic interview; informal/unstructured interview; and conversations. Cohen and Manion (1994), on the other hand, prefers to group interviews into four kinds, including the structured interview, the unstructured interview, the non-directive interview, and the focused interview. However, it can be summarized that there are three major categories of interviews: standardized (directive, structured or formal), unstandardized (nondirective, unstructured or informal), and semi standardized (semi-structured) (Fontana & Frey, 1998; Mutchnick and Berg, 1996).

According to Tarantino (1988, cited in Robinson, 1991), a semi-structured interview is very beneficial because the interviewer is able to help the respondents with linguistic clarification and to record their answers and explanations. In addition, the interviewer can pursue any interesting new line of enquiry that develops, while at the same time having a planned agenda to refer to. Moreover, employing the interviews can help the researcher obtain data in depth because it is an interactive communication between the interviewer and the interviewee. Furthermore, it is suitable for a small group of subjects because the interviewer does not have to take as much time to administrate the whole data. However, in-person interviewing, there are no verbal or visual clues to influence a respondent to answer in a particular way. Many investigators have reported that interviewer voice inflections and mannerisms can bias responses (Barath and Cannell, 1976; Benson, 1946; Boyd and Westfall, 1965, 1970; Cahalan, 1951; Collins, 1970; Dohrenwend, Colombotos, and Dohrenwend, 1968; Franzen and Lazarsfeld, 1945).

## Observations

In research, observation is “a fundamental method of gathering data which aims to gather first hand information in a naturally occurring situation” (Burns and Grove, 1999). There are two basic methods of observation: participant observation and non-participant observation. The participant observer will take part in the situation being studied, rather than simply acting as a researcher. In contrast, the non-participant observer, unsurprisingly, will not take part in the situation being studied, but may well be present in the environment. The choice between participant and non-participant observation is one that must be made based on the circumstances of the individual research project. In many cases it will be a compromise, based on the nature of the study environment, the background of the researcher, the nature of the data to be collected, and the ethical issues that may arise. In most observation sessions, note-taking is appropriate and necessary. Jotting down what has been observed is not only an aid for memory but also a way to focus the attention of the observer on issues directly relevant to the problem(s) for which the action research is being done. Pre-set observational check-lists can be used, but they are more controversial. The advantages are standardization and systematization of observing specific items. They will need to be weighed against the risks of losing an open-ended, discovery-oriented and relaxed approach which is a basic strength of participant observation. However, it is important to note that there are some disadvantages that the researcher bears in mind about audio recording; it can be interpreted and analyzed later in several of ways. Moreover, this technique may make humans fail to conduct their natural communication (Saville-Troike, 1998 cited in Johnson D.M. 1992). As mentioned earlier, participant observation is usually combined in action research with various individual interviewing and group discussion techniques. Indeed, verbal interaction on the spot, specifically, talking with the people who happen to be there, can help to elicit insider interpretations of an observed behavior, event or situation.

## **The Methods and Procedures Used in the Present Study**

### **Main Study**

In this study, three instruments were employed: questionnaires, interviews and observations. The first method of the main study, a survey questionnaire was conducted in May 2007 in order to test the effectiveness of the questions for the interview, and in order to identify and remove ambiguity. Once the questionnaire was revised and developed, the researcher contacted the Club General Managers and also observed the instructor's job tasks in order to provide information about the purposes of the study and to ask for permission and cooperation to collect the data from their employees. Subsequently, the researcher provided a Thai version of the questionnaires to all instructors at the Health Club A and B which was straightforward to the populations understanding. Therefore, there were thirty population members from those fitness centers being asked to fill out the questionnaires. After considering the data, especially their English needs and problems, the researcher selected the informants by focusing on their work functions dealing with English problems and needs. Therefore, the trainers who provided personal training services to the foreigners were collected to be the study participants. As a result, the sample size of the present study was ten from the population size of thirty. The next procedure was a non-participant observation. The researcher asked for tape recording while the informants were training their foreign customers. In addition, note taking was also employed in this part. The researcher observed and made notes about the problems occurring when the informants and foreign members were communicating in English. However, the data collection procedures of each research instrument in the present study will be described in the following part.

### **Survey Questionnaires**

The researcher applied several methods in constructing the questionnaire in order to ensure its reliability and validity. Firstly, the researcher reviewed a large number of research study related to needs analysis and English for Specific Purposes

(ESP), and then, studied examples of several questionnaires in order to determine their framework. Next, the draft questionnaire was constructed in English based on the information gathered and other guidelines from the earlier questionnaires of the previous related studies. Besides, the questionnaire was constructed under the scope of the research questions and the objective of the study which aimed to identify the participant's English needs in the workplace and the problems of using English while communicating with foreign customers. Next, the first draft was revised and developed. Finally, the final questionnaire was checked by the thesis advisor and experts to ensure reliability, and was translated into Thai before data collection was carried out.

The questionnaire questions were close-ended and the population was asked to put ticks in boxes. However, there were many patterns of asking the questions in this research instrument. The questions in the first part aimed to gather the participants' biographical information included five questions: gender, age, educational background, faculty of graduation and work experience in the health club. They were asked to fill out the answers in the pattern of multiple choices. In the second part, the researcher intended to perceive the population's general opinions concerning the use of English. In this part, the informants were mainly asked about their English skills ability included five rating scale questions. In the third part, the researcher aimed to determine their English needs. There were ten questions with three patterns of asking the questions: rating scales; weight ranks; and multiple choices. Finally, the problems of using English in the workplace were asked in the fourth part including six questions with multiple choices and rating scales pattern of answering the questions. In the stage of data collection, the researcher provided thirty sets of the questionnaire to the research population who were all instructors at the Health club A and B. They were asked to complete the questionnaire. Then, after thirty sets of the questionnaire were returned, the researcher considered and interpreted all the data, especially their English skills and function needs and problems, and work functions dealing with foreign members, which would be mainly focused on as variables of the study. This research instrument was used as a beneficial guideline to conduct the interview questions for the research participants. (For the questionnaire see Appendix B)

### **Semi-structured interviews**

A semi-structured interview was used as the second research method which was the most effective instrument in the present study. The reason for employing this type was because the researcher aimed to interact and clarify the subjects through all questions in order to help them understand and respond straight to the point concerning and focusing on their needs and problems in using English. The informants were encouraged to express their thoughts freely. This type of interview allowed the interviewer (the researcher) to observe the verbal and non-verbal behavior of the respondents and was a means of obtaining personal information, attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs. Besides, the interviews were based on a more or less organized and standardized sequence of questions whose answers are richer than a plain 'yes' or 'no' statement, a numerical figure (e.g., nine years) or a categorical judgment (e.g., 'good' or 'bad'). The research questions aimed at discovering elements of the insiders' perceptions of the topic under investigation, which were likely to be almost unknown to the interviewer. Consequently, they were thus a powerful means to obtain 'qualitative information' in the present study.

With reference to gathering the population's information from the first research instrument, survey questionnaire, the researcher classified and selected the number of health club instructors purposively. The researcher determined the essential criteria to find the best answers for the research questions. The variation linked to the scope of the interview questions was in the third part in the questionnaire. All of the population was unanimous that English was used, required and very important when providing personal training services to foreign customers. There were ten trainers chosen as the research participants: seven people from health club A; and three from health club B. Consequently, the open-ended interview questions were conducted concerning needs and problems when providing a service, especially providing personal training to foreign clients. The participants were interviewed individually for ten minutes approximately. The interview was divided into three parts. In the first part, the participants were asked seven questions about their general information concerning the use of English as a personal trainer. Next, there were three questions in

the second part. Firstly, the question was about the participants' needs for English skills when providing a service to a foreign client. Secondly, the participants were asked about the English language functions for which English skills are required. Thirdly, the question was the participants' needs of English skills improvement. Lastly, the informants were asked to explain the importance of having English skills improvement. In part three, the three questions aimed to determine the participants' English problems while communicating with a foreigner as a health club personal trainer. The first question concerned the problematic situation when using English when providing a service to foreign customers. The second question was about the English skills needed the most for any language functions for specific purposes. The last question was about the way the participants solve the problems. This research instrument was useful for the researcher to double-check the information with the last research instrument, non-participant observation in order to answer the research questions effectively. (For the interview see Appendix D)

### **Non-Participant Observation**

According to Cooper, Lewis, and Urquhart (2004), participant and non-participant observation have been used to study the information needs of various groups of people, often in work settings. The researcher employed the non-participant observation to study the information needs and the problem in using English of fitness instructors in their workplace. The non-participant observation has proved to be especially useful in the framework of participatory action research. It is useful for understanding the local social environment (health club instructors), with special emphasis on status, roles and behaviors related to gender, age, social status and ethnic differentials. It also facilitates analysis of daily, weekly, monthly or yearly patterns of activities and the time allocated by local actors to perform them. Therefore, it was applied as an effective and beneficial research tool to compare the findings of the interview in order to cover the valid and reliable answers of the research questions.

The researcher applied several methods in constructing the observation field note in order to ensure its reliability and validity. Firstly, the researcher reviewed a

large quantity of research study related to needs analysis and English for Specific Purposes (ESP), and then, studied examples of several observation field notes in order to find their framework and patterns. Next, the observation field notes were created and used in this section. The top part of the field note contained the details of the observational situation including the period of time in observing (beginning time and ending time), the observational date, the settings, observer, participants and observational frame. The researcher created the content of the observation note by divided the table into three columns. In the first one, the researcher recorded the times when the conversation or the coding happened or occurred in the field note. The second column was the part of narrative writings or note takings about what was happening at a point in time. The last column was the researcher's comments and the researcher's opinions on what was interpreted. The informants for this research method were ten participants who were interviewed. As for the data collection, the researcher first asked the club manager, the participants and also the foreign clients to record in audio while the informants were training their foreign customers.

With respect to the data obtained from non-participant observation and observational tape recording, the researcher observed and took notes about the English needs and problems which occurred while the informants and foreign members were communicating in English. Next, the obtained data in the field notes were put into coded segments, and categorized into the coherent group classifications as shown in the observational check lists (See Table 4.22, 4.23, and 4.24 in the next chapter) which show the data of each participant and the total amount. The observation check lists of each participant consisted of three main parts. The first one was in relation to the frequency of the language functions used and what happened in the observations. The second check list was on the subject of the frequency of the language functions which were presented as problematic when happening in the observations. Next, the frequency of problem solutions the trainers used when providing services in English was presented. Finally, the third check list was on the frequency of problem solutions the trainers used when providing services in English. The check lists were constructed based on the interview data. In concluding and

analyzing, the data obtained from observational check lists were interpreted and compared to the interview data in order to check the reliability of the findings.

In fact, the tape recording process helped to gather real situations during the subjects' conversations in order to allow closer analysis of the language functions used and also the problems. The period of time for doing observations was suggested or recommended by both the club general manager and the participants. Therefore, each informant was observed and tape recorded for one hour of the training. Then, the observation check sheet (See Table 4.22, 4.23, and 4.24 in the next chapter) was used to help the researcher categorize the findings easier. Accordingly, the researcher showed the data both in verbal and non verbal form in the check list (See the definition in the definition of key terms used in the study in chapter 1). Finally, the researcher presented the data in the form of passages in order to achieve concrete results.

## **Data Analysis**

### **Data Analysis Methods**

Lewins et al (2005) states that Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA) is the range of processes and procedures whereby we move from the qualitative data that have been collected into some form of explanation, understanding or interpretation of the people and situations we are investigating. QDA is usually based on an interpretative philosophy. The idea is to examine the meaningful and symbolic content of qualitative data. For example, by analysing interview data the researcher may be attempting to identify someone's interpretation of the world, the reason of someone's point of view, the way someone conveys their view of their situation, the way someone identifies or classifies themselves and others in what they say, etc. The process of QDA usually involves two things, writing and coding (the identification of themes). As Creswell (1998) states that qualitative study may be classified as a study conducted in a natural setting where the researcher, a research method of data collection and procedure, gathers words or pictures, analyzes them inductively,

focuses on the meaning of participants, and describes a process that is both expressive and persuasive in language.

William (2000) stated that a qualitative "approach" is a general way of thinking about conducting qualitative research. It describes, either explicitly or implicitly, the purpose of the qualitative research, the role of the researcher(s), the stages of research, and the method of data analysis. As Lewins et al (2005) mentioned that the process of QDA, writing and coding usually involving QDA would be described. In qualitative data analysis on narrative description, the writing involves writing about the data you obtained from the research instrument(s) and what you interpret. In many cases the writing may be analytic ideas. As for coding, there are many researchers, Miles and Huberman (1994), Graham R. Gibbs and Celia Taylor (2005) describing the characteristics of coding in the same way. Coding is the process of combing the data for themes, ideas and categories and then marking similar passages of text with a code label so that they can easily be retrieved at a later stage for further comparison and analysis. Coding the data makes it easier to search the data, to make comparisons and to identify any patterns that require further investigation. Codes can be based on: themes or topics, ideas or concepts, terms or phrases, and keywords found in the data. Usually it is passages of text that are coded but it can be sections of an audio or video recording or parts of images. All passages and chunks that are coded the same way – that is given the same label – have been judged (by the researcher) to be about the same topic, theme, concept etc. The codes are given meaningful words that give an indication of the idea or concept that underpins the theme or category. As the researcher reads through their data set the number of codes they have will evolve and grow as more topics or themes become apparent. The list of codes thus will help to identify the issues contained in the data set.

### **Data Analysis Method Used in the Present Study**

First the data obtained from the present study were qualitative. However, the processes of analyzing data were both in narrative form and numerical or quantitative

form, that is, in the form of numbers. If they were not in numerical form, then the researcher could still carry out qualitative analyses based on the experiences of the individual participants. On the other hand, when the data were in numerical form the researcher started by working out some descriptive statistics to summarize the categories of findings. These descriptive statistics included three rating scales: weight, ranks and simple percentage. However, when the researcher had got some indications of the size of average or typical scores and that of the extent to which the scores cluster around the average or are spread out, the data in numerical or quantitative form were categorized, interpreted and written down as a qualitative narration. Moreover, when the researcher reported the findings, some raw data (e.g. direct quotations from participants) would be often included as well as analyses of the data based on the categories.

According to the similarity and differences of the subjects' responses, the data obtained were grouped as shown in Table 3.4 below:

**Table 3.4** Data Types and Data Analysis of the Present Study

<b>Instruments</b>	<b>Data types</b>	<b>Data Presentation</b>	<b>Data analysis</b>
Survey Questionnaires	Qualitative data	Percentage	Coding, rating scale and qualitative interpretation
Semi-structured interview	Qualitative data	Passages and Table of frequency	Coding and qualitative interpretation
Observation	Qualitative data	Observational check lists	Coding and qualitative interpretation

### **The Analysis of the Survey Questionnaires**

The data from the survey questionnaires were considered by the researcher. Due to various patterns of answering the questions; putting ticks in boxes and crossing pre-coded numbers, multiple choices and rating scales, there would be a

variety of analyzing procedures. Firstly, the data were analyzed by collecting the amount of the selected answers in the form of numbers. And then, the researcher put the data in the categorized tables, and also showed them in percentage form. Next, the researcher interpreted, described and categorized the percentages in tables and the results were expressed as narrative descriptions. The findings from the questionnaire were means of eliciting the feelings, beliefs, experiences, language capabilities, perceptions, or attitudes of the sample of individuals. (See obtained data and data presentation in chapter 4).

### **The Analysis of the Semi-Structured Interviews**

The data obtained from semi-structured interviews were analyzed by many processes. First, the researcher listened to the recorded interviews in order to understand and get the concepts of the data. Second, the recordings were written down as the conversation scripts and transcribed. Third, the researcher reviewed the purposes and identified the key questions of the present study. Fourth, a coding method was employed in order to find the meaning of the answers. The transcribed interviews were put into coded segments and were categorized into the coherent group classifications. Finally, the identified and categorized data were interpreted and written down as passages. Moreover, the researcher also showed the interpreted data in the figures. (See obtained data and data presentation in chapter 4).

### **The Analysis of the Non-Participant Observations**

The data obtained from non-participant observation were analyzed by many processes. First, the researcher considered the raw data the researcher wrote down in the observation field notes and listened to the observational tape recorded in order to understand and get the concepts of the data. Second, the written data in the field notes including observational notes (memos) and observer comments and the recordings were considered and transcribed. Third, the researcher reviewed the purposes and identified the key questions of the present study and the data from the interviews in order to categorize and check the validity of the data showing the problems and needs

in using English of the trainers. Fourth, a coding method was employed in order to find the meaning of the answers. The transcribed interviews and data in the field notes were put into coded segments, and were categorized into the coherent group classifications in the observational check list which the format involved a frequency count of safe practices. It is important to keep written notes that are meaningful to a researcher, during the coding process (Gibbs, 2002). The researcher used memos to record longer definitions of the codes and to note any analytic thoughts the observer had about the significance and relationship to others of the code in question. Next, the identified and categorized data both from the observational tape recordings and memos were presented in the tables of the check lists. Subsequently, the data were compared to the data obtained from the interviews. As a final point, the data were identified validly and reliably based on the research questions (See obtained data and data presentation in chapter 4).

### **Reliability and Validity in Qualitative Research**

Patton (2001) states that validity and reliability are two factors which any qualitative researcher should concerned about while designing a study, analyzing results, and judging the quality of the study. Moreover, these elements will be used for the verification of the analysis in this study. In the broadest sense, reliability and validity address issues about the quality of the data and appropriateness of the methods used in carrying out a research project. The quality of the data and the appropriateness of the methods employed are particularly important in the social sciences because of the different philosophical and methodological approaches to the study of human activity. Black (1993:1) considers that "social science research involves investigating all aspects of human activity and interactivity". As such, the social science body of knowledge is enriched by many different disciplines like education, psychology, sociology etc. all of which come from different philosophical traditions and all contribute different aspects or perspectives to the study of human activity. However, just as there are many ways to crack a nut, there are different ways of studying human activity, and it is not unusual to have very similar research questions studied by several disciplines with diametrically opposed methodologies.

As research is not an entirely precise science when one studies human interactions, the question for researchers and consumers of research (i.e. students, policy makers, administrators, other researchers) is to be able to evaluate the veracity of results and the soundness of the research conclusions based on the appropriateness of the methodology and the quality of the data upon which the conclusions are based. Although reliability and validity issues apply mostly to research results and conclusions, one must consider those issues at the time of the design of the research, i.e. at the earliest stages of the research process, because if you consider them only at the end, it will be too late to gather data on a research question that is of any relevance and quality at all.

### **Reliability Issues**

Establishing the credibility of a research method and subsequent findings can be achieved through numerous strategies built into data collection and analysis. Common types of data collection techniques for qualitative research include observation, interview, and document analysis. Qualitative methods usually research a question through several methods. Regardless of the reasons, the use of multiple methods in the present research was with the intention to corroborate data sources increases the reliability of the study. The use of several data sources and different methods is called triangulation. The idea behind triangulation is that the more agreement of different data sources on a particular issue, the more reliable the interpretation of the data (Nahid, 2003). For example, consent to mention an independent study of Lertanant (2007) carried out to answer research questions regarding the problems and needs of English for Thai restaurant staff. The data were collected by means of English speaking tasks, researcher's observation check sheet and semi-structured interviews. The findings from English speaking tasks and researcher's observation check sheet showed that vocabulary, grammar and appropriate expression (accent and pronunciation) were core points of the subjects' problems. The finding from semi-structured interviews showed that vocabulary was the most problematic, followed by speaking, listening, and grammar respectively. As suggested by the findings concerning the subjects' problems and needs in English

speaking skills and identified the subjects themselves in conversations and interviews, the researcher would therefore be more confident in reporting that speaking skill was their main problem, and clearly defined that Thai restaurant staff would like to improve their speaking to enable them to perform their jobs more effectively.

Reliability addresses how accurate your research methods and techniques produce data. Within a conventional research background one speaks of the reliability of the "research instrument". Researchers in the qualitative tradition sometimes refuse to speak of "research instruments", but it is possible to do field-work within a qualitative tradition and design "data recording sheets" to guide analysis of in-depth interviewing or of participant observation events. It is also possible to design "data sheets" to facilitate document analysis, so it is possible to address reliability issues regarding the consistency of your methods for recording data. These methods will influence the type of data you have access to, and the way you can interpret and analyze the data. For example, the researcher decided to record observation events with a tape recorder. This gave the observer access to codes which helped to gather real situations during the subjects' conversations in order to examine more closely the language functions used and also the problems. The researcher then needed to determine the way in which the observer was going to turn those codes into "data" and the way the observer was going to interpret those codes. Then the researcher would need to consider how consistent the interpretations would be.

In all cases interpretations are subjective. This is entirely acceptable within the qualitative research tradition as researchers cannot separate their own feelings and opinions from the research question and the data. Some sources of recording data allow for specific ways of increasing the reliability of interpretations, for example, if you are doing observation field notes, you might give a selected portion of the memos to other researchers and ask them to interpret the notes. Then the counting function can be used to count the degree of agreement of the interpretation by different researchers. However not all qualitative methods are conducive to this type of double checking. In this case, reliability issues should address demonstrating to the research audience that the data have not been invented or misinterpreted.

## Validity Issues

Validity addresses whether a research explains or measures what the researcher would be measuring or explaining. It therefore deals with the appropriateness of the method to the research question. Nunan (1992: 14) mentions that validity has to 'do with the extent to which a piece of research actually investigates what the researcher purports to investigate'. Thus, validity deals with the trustworthiness of the data analysis and interpretation. As can be seen in the reliability section, all interpretations are subjective, so the issue here lies in tracing the ways by which the researcher have arrived at this particular interpretation. In other words, the examiners are responsible for showing that interpretations were not "invented" by anyone, but that they are the product of conscious analysis. This involves a constant justification of the investigator's interpretation and a relentless internal evaluation of the researcher's motives for interpreting in a particular way. The exact nature of 'validity' is a highly debated topic in both educational and social research since there is no single or common definition of the term. Therefore, in order to understand something of the range of meanings attached to 'validity', it is essential to review a selection of the range of definitions given by leading authors.

A much cited definition of 'validity' is that of Hammersley's (1987, p. 69): "An account is valid or true if it represents accurately those features of the phenomena, that it is intended to describe, explain or theorize." Although this would seem to be an all-encompassing and reasonable description, many other definitions fail to envisage such a 'realist approach' (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p. 282). The fact that there are so many possible definitions, and replacement terms for 'validity' suggests that it is a concept entirely relative to the person and belief system from which it stems. Moreover, in Mason's (1996: 147) words, the researcher should be asking yourself "how well matched is the logic of the method to the kinds of research questions you are asking and the kind of social explanation you are intending to develop". However, it also deals with justifying the appropriateness of the research method to the research question. Although some qualitative researchers have argued that the term validity is not applicable to qualitative research, at the same time, they have realized the need for

some kind of qualifying check or measure for their research. For example, Creswell & Miller (2000) suggest that the validity is affected by the researcher's perception of validity in the study and his/her choice of paradigm assumption. As a result, many researchers have developed their own concepts of validity and have often generated or adopted what they consider to be more appropriate terms, such as, quality, rigor and trustworthiness (Davies & Dodd, 2002; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Seale, 1999; Stenbacka, 2001).

### **Reliability and Validity in the Present Study**

In the present study, the researcher is concerned with both reliability and validity in terms of the research instruments and procedures. The following factors were employed:

- A draft questionnaire was constructed based on the information gathered and other guidelines from the questionnaires of previous related studies. Moreover, the first draft of the questionnaire was constructed under the scope of the research questions and the objectives of the study. Finally, the draft and the final questionnaire were checked by the thesis advisor and experts to ensure reliability before data collection was carried out.
- Extensive quotations from field notes, transcripts of interviews, and observational tape recordings were employed. The researcher increased the validity of the present study by showing the research subjects excerpts of the interpretation of their interviews. The idea behind this way of increasing validity was that research subjects were in a position to corroborate or disapprove of the interpretations.
- The use of convergence with other sources of data. The researcher used variation kinds of triangulation and comparisons with the literature.
- The participants were checked at the completion of the study, and were asked if the researcher was accurate or needed correction/elaboration on constructs,

findings, etc. Some took this to the point of the researcher and those researched working together in the planning, and analysis of results.

### **Generalisability of the Present Study**

This study utilized a qualitative approach with three established needs analysis frameworks, sampling, reliability and validity checking. Therefore, the obtained findings could be generalized to the target population, the Thai health club staff in Bangkok.

### **Ethical Issues in the Present Study**

There are a number of key phrases that describe the system of ethical protections that the contemporary social and medical research establishment has created to try to protect better the rights of their research participants. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), there are various points of view of ethical theories that every single researcher should bear in mind. With respect to ethical concerns, this study relied heavily on qualitative research. This study recognized the following as fundamental ethical concerns:

- Voluntary participation - the research informants were not be coerced into participating in research.
- Gaining access - the researcher first asked the health club's general managers of both places for permission to approach the trainer staff who participated in fitness center A and B.
- Informed consent - it is closely related to the notion of voluntary participation. In the present study, the prospective research participants were fully informed about the procedures and risks involved in research and gave their consent to participate.

- The guarantees of the participants' confidentiality - The researcher assured that identifying information was not made available to anyone who was not directly involved in the study.
  
- The principle of anonymity - the research participants remained anonymous throughout the study. Clearly, the anonymity standard is a stronger guarantee of privacy, but it is sometimes difficult to accomplish, especially in situations where participants have to be measured at multiple time points (e.g., a pre-post study).
  
- Information owner - the researcher believes that the findings or the consequences of this study would be beneficial for other researchers, the public or other people who are working in this particular field.

This chapter has dealt with research methodology and describes the approaches used in the present study. The objectives of the study and research questions, research type, research sampling, data collection methods and procedures, the explanation of reliability, validity, and generalisability of research methods and findings as well as ethical consideration of the present research were also discussed. The next chapter will discuss the study findings, implications, limitations, recommendations and the conclusion of the thesis.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

This chapter presents the data analysis and interpretation of the investigation of Needs Analysis of English for Thai Health Club Instructors in Bangkok. There were two major issues in this study. The first issue was to present needs and problems that health club trainers encounter in using English in their jobs. The second issue was to identify particular needs regarding to job-related language skills and knowledge essential for their jobs. This chapter will discuss the findings from the following research questions:

- 1) What are the present English language needs of health club instructors in their jobs?
  - 1.1) What are useful language skills for health club instructors in their jobs?
  - 1.2) What are the language forms and functions frequently used for health club instructors in the workplace?
- 2) What kinds of problems do the health club instructors encounter while communicating with foreign customers?

This chapter is divided into three parts: data obtained from survey questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and data obtained from researcher's observation diary sheet.

#### **Data Obtained from Survey Questionnaires**

The survey questionnaires of the present study aim to gather data concerning the population's general information, the English needs and problems in the workplace. All the instructors were asked to complete the questionnaire. Then, the

researcher considered all the data, especially their English needs and problems, work experience in the workplace, and work functions dealing with foreign member.

The questionnaire is divided into four parts: general information about the participants; general information about the participants concerning language ability; English needs of the participants while communicating with foreign customers; English problems of the participants while communicating with foreign customers.

### Part I General Information

This part presents general information on the twenty-three participants from health club A and seven participants from health club B, who took part in the questionnaire, consisting of personal information; their gender, ages, academic graduation, and working experience and educational background.

**Table 4.1** General information about the participants (health club A)

	Frequency	Percent
(n = 23)		
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	18	78.26
Female	15	21.74
<b>Age</b>		
21-25	5	21.74
26-30	16	69.56
31-35	1	4.35
Over 35	1	4.35
<b>Academic Graduation</b>		
Diploma	0	0.00
Bachelor's degree	23	100.00
Master's degree and over	0	0.00

**Table 4.1** (Continued)

(n = 23)

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Graduated Faculty</b>		
Sport Science	22	95.65
Physical Education	1	4.35
Other	0	0.00
<b>Working Experience (year)</b>		
Less than 1	1	4.35
1-2	11	47.82
3-5	8	34.78
6-10	2	34.80
Over 10	1	4.35
<b>Providing Personal Training Services to Foreigners</b>		
Yes	18	78.26
No	5	21.74

Most of the participants were male with the majority age of twenty-one to twenty-five years old. All informants graduated with bachelor's degrees in faculties of Sport Science. Most of participants were employed in health club industries with more than one year's work experience. There are eighteen of twenty-three trainers providing personal training services to foreigners.

**Table 4.2** General Information of the Participants from Health Club B

(n = 7)

	Frequency	Percent
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	6	85.71
Female	1	14.29
<b>Age</b>		
21-25	3	42.86
26-30	3	42.86
31-35	0	0.00
Over 35	1	14.28
<b>Academic Graduation</b>		
Diploma	1	14.29
Bachelor's degree	6	85.71
Master's degree and over	0	0.00
<b>Graduated Faculty</b>		
Sport Science	6	85.71
Physical Education	1	14.29
Other	0	0.00
<b>Working Experience (year)</b>		
Less than 1	4	57.15
1-2	0	0.00
3-5	2	28.57
6-10	0	0.00
Over 10	1	14.28

**Table 4.2** (Continued)

	Frequency	Percent
(n = 7)		
<b>Providing Personal Training Services to Foreigners</b>		
Yes	3	42.85
No	4	57.15

A large number of the participants were male with the majority aged twenty-one to twenty-five and twenty-six to thirty years old. Most of the informants graduated with bachelor's degrees from faculties of Sport Science. All participants were employed in health club industries with less than one year's work experience. There are three of seven trainers providing personal training services to foreigners.

### **Part II General Information about the Participants Concerning Language Ability**

This part presents general information concerning the use of English of the twenty-three participants from health club A and seven participants from health club B. The questions consist of their English skills level and their capabilities in listening, speaking, reading and writing.

**Table 4.3** General Information about the Participants Concerning Language Ability (health club A)

	Frequency	Percent
(n = 23)		
<b>English Proficiency Level</b>		
Elementary	0	0.00
Beginner	13	56.52
Intermediate	10	43.48
Upper-Intermediate	0	0.00
Advanced	0	0.00

**Table 4.3** (Continued)

(n = 23)

	Frequency	Percent
<b>Listening Ability</b>		
Advanced	0	0.00
Moderate	10	43.48
Poor	13	56.52
<b>Speaking Ability</b>		
Advanced	0	0.00
Moderate	10	43.48
Poor	13	56.52
<b>Reading Ability</b>		
Advanced	0	0.00
Moderate	17	73.91
Poor	6	26.09
<b>Writing Ability</b>		
Advanced	0	0.00
Moderate	17	73.91
Poor	6	26.09

Table 4.3 reveals that most of the trainers from health club A considered themselves as beginners regarding their English proficiency. 43.48% saw themselves as intermediate. None of the participants rated themselves as elementary, upper-intermediate or advanced. 56.52% of the informants rated their listening skills as poor. 73.91% rated their reading or writing skills as moderate, and 26.09% considered themselves poor regarding these two skills. None of the participants from health club A evaluated themselves as advanced at any of the English skills.

**Table 4.4** General Information about the Participants Concerning Language Ability  
(health club B)

(n = 7)

	Frequency	Percent
<b>English Proficiency Level</b>		
Elementary	0	0.00
Beginner	4	57.14
Intermediate	3	42.86
Upper-Intermediate	0	0.00
Advanced	0	0.00
<b>Listening Ability</b>		
Advanced	0	0.00
Moderate	3	42.86
Poor	4	57.14
<b>Speaking Ability</b>		
Advanced	0	0.00
Moderate	3	42.86
Poor	4	57.14
<b>Reading Ability</b>		
Advanced	0	0.00
Moderate	5	71.43
Poor	2	28.57
<b>Writing Ability</b>		
Advanced	0	0.00
Moderate	5	71.43
Poor	2	28.57

Similar to health club A, Table 4.4 shows that 57.14% of health club B trainers rated themselves as beginners and 42.86% as intermediate. None of them saw themselves elementary, upper-intermediate or advanced. 71.43% of the participants rated their reading or writing skills as moderate, while 28.57% graded those skills levels as poor. None of the participants from health B evaluated themselves as advanced at any English skills.

### **Part III English Needs of the Participants while Communicating with Foreign Customers**

This part presents the use of English in the workplace of the twenty-three participants from health club A and seven participants from health club B, who completed the questionnaire.

**Table 4.5** English Needs of the Participants while Communicating with Foreign Customers (health club A)

	Frequency	Percent
(n = 23)		
<b>Frequency of English Language Used</b>		
Regularly	12	52.17
Moderately	9	39.13
Not very often	2	8.70
<b>The Significance of English in the Workplace</b>		
Highly	23	100.00
Moderately	0	0.00
Slightly	0	0.00

Table 4.5 (Continued)

	Frequency	Percent
(n = 23)		
<b>English Roles with the Job Functions</b>		
Personal Training	23	100.00
Exercise instructions	0	0.00
Gym programs	0	0.00
General conversation	0	0.00
<b>The Required Skills</b>		
Listening	23	100.00
Speaking	23	100.00
Reading	0	0.00
Writing	0	0.00
<b>The Most Used Skill</b>		
Listening	23	100.00
Speaking	23	100.00
Reading	0	0.00
Writing	0	0.00
<b>The Significance of Listening</b>		
Highly	23	100.00
Moderately	0	0.00
Slightly	0	0.00
<b>The Significance of Speaking</b>		
Highly	23	100.00
Moderately	0	0.00
Slightly	0	0.00

**Table 4.5** (Continued)

(n = 23)

	Frequency	Percent
<b>The Significance of Reading</b>		
Highly	0	0.00
Moderately	0	0.00
Slightly	23	100.00
<b>The Significance of Writing</b>		
Highly	0	0.00
Moderately	3	13.04
Slightly	20	86.96

From Table 4.5, it can be seen that a hundred percent of the informants needed English to provide personal training services. It was noticeable that the highest percentage of the trainers reported that English was regularly used in the workplace. However, some revealed that English was moderately used or not very often used. Also, all of the informants from health club A confirmed that English was highly significant for their job. They indicated that speaking and listening were required and rated as the most frequently used for communication in the work place. Overall, all of the instructors stated that listening and speaking were highly significant for their job while, reading and writing were slightly significant.

**Table 4.6** English Needs of the Participants while Communicating with Foreign Customers (health club B)

(n = 7)

	Frequency	Percent
<b>Frequency of English Language Used</b>		
Regularly	3	42.86
Moderately	4	57.14
Not very often	0	0.00

**Table 4.6** (Continued)

(n = 7)

	Frequency	Percent
<b>The Significance of English in the Workplace</b>		
Highly	7	100.00
Moderately	0	0.00
Slightly	0	0.00
<b>English Roles with the Job Functions</b>		
Personal Training	7	100.00
Exercise instructions	0	0.00
Gym programs	0	0.00
General conversation	0	0.00
<b>The Required Skills</b>		
Listening	7	100.00
Speaking	7	100.00
Reading	0	0.00
Writing	0	0.00
<b>The Most Used Skill</b>		
Listening	7	100.00
Speaking	7	100.00
Reading	0	0.00
Writing	0	0.00
<b>The Significance of Listening</b>		
Highly	23	100.00
Moderately	0	0.00
Slightly	0	0.00

**Table 4.6** (Continued)

(n = 7)

	Frequency	Percent
<b>The Significance of Speaking</b>		
Highly	7	100.00
Moderately	0	0.00
Slightly	0	0.00
<b>The Significance of Reading</b>		
Highly	0	0.00
Moderately	0	0.00
Slightly	7	100.00
<b>The Significance of Writing</b>		
Highly	0	0.00
Moderately	0	0.00
Slightly	7	100.00

Similar to health club A, Table 4.6 shows that most health club B trainers who moderately used English was slightly greater than the number of those who regularly used the language. However, all of the informants confirmed that the use of English was highly significant for their job, especially in conducting personal training services. All informants indicated that speaking and listening were required, highly significant for their job, and rated as the most used for communication in the work place.

#### **Part IV Participants' problems of using English**

This part presents the problems of using English to communicate with foreigners of the twenty-three participants from health club A and seven from health club B.

**Table 4.7** English Problems of the Participants while Communicating with Foreign Customers (health club A)

(n = 23)

	Frequency	Percent
<b>The Most Problematic Skill</b>		
Listening	10	43.48
Speaking	13	56.52
Reading	0	0.00
Writing	0	0.00
<b>The Frequency of Having Problems when Listening</b>		
Highly	13	56.52
Moderately	10	43.48
Slightly	0	0.00
<b>The Frequency of Having Problems when Speaking</b>		
Highly	13	56.52
Moderately	10	43.48
Slightly	0	0.00
<b>The Frequency of Having Problems when Reading</b>		
Highly	0	0.00
Moderately	0	0.00
Slightly	100	100.00
<b>The Frequency of Having Problems when Writing</b>		
Highly	0	0.00
Moderately	3	13.04
Slightly	20	86.96

Table 4.7 shows that most health club A trainers had problems with speaking in English, followed by listening. In contrast, reading and writing were regarded as

slightly significant as they were not needed much in the workplace. As can be seen, the majority of the participants rated listening and speaking as highly difficult.

**Table 4.8** English Problems of the Participants while Communicating with Foreign Customers (health club B)

(n = 7)

	Frequency	Percent
<b>The Most Problematic Skill</b>		
Listening	0	0.00
Speaking	7	100.00
Reading	0	0.00
Writing	0	0.00
<b>The Frequency of Having Problems when Listening</b>		
Highly	4	57.14
Moderately	3	42.86
Slightly	0	0.00
<b>The Frequency of Having Problems when Speaking</b>		
Highly	4	57.14
Moderately	3	42.86
Slightly	0	0.00

**Table 4.8** (Continued)

(n = 7)

	Frequency	Percent
<b>The Frequency of Having Problems when Reading</b>		
Highly	0	0.00
Moderately	0	0.00
Slightly	7	100.00
<b>The Frequency of Having Problems when Writing</b>		
Highly	0	0.00
Moderately	0	0.00
Slightly	7	100.00

As can be seen from Table 4.8, it was noticeable that all informants from health club B rated speaking as the most problematic skill. More than 50% of the participants reported that they regularly had problems in listening and speaking English while not having problems very often in reading and writing.

In conclusion, the findings of the questionnaire indicate that the majority of the informants were concerned about their English speaking and listening skills. The personal training job function was determined unanimously as needing the most English skills. The difficulties of both listening and speaking were the highest regarding personal training. Most of the informants mentioned that speaking was the most important or the most needed language skill because of its potential benefits to their future professional career.

### **Interviews Findings**

The semi-structured interview of the present study aims to gather data about general information of the participants, the language use of the participants, and the English needs and problems in the workplace as a personal trainer. According to the questionnaires, the first research instrument, survey questionnaires employed in

selecting the present research samplings based on the characteristics of a population. Personal training services were determined unanimously to be the job function that most needed English as most health clubs employ personal trainers who are accessible to members for training/fitness/nutrition/health advice and consultation. Personal trainers can devise a customized fitness routine, sometimes including a nutrition plan, to help clients achieve their goals. They can also monitor and train with members. Therefore, the researcher selected research informants who provided personal training services to foreign customers. Therefore, there were ten participants: seven trainers from club A; and three trainers from club B providing personal training tasks for foreign customers being interviewed.

The interview was divided into three parts: general information concerning the language use of the health club instructors; English needs of health club instructors while providing services to foreign customers; and English problems of health club instructors while providing services to foreign customers.

### **Part I General Information Concerning the Language Use**

This part presents general information regarding the language use of the research participants. The general information included five questions on the subjects of: the language skill levels; listening skills ability; speaking skills ability; the language needs in the workplace; and the frequency of the language use.

**Table 4.9** English Skills Level of the Health Club Participants

Language Skills Level	English Skills Level of Informant										Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Unskillful	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Beginner	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Intermediate	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	10
Upper-intermediate	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Advanced	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0

Table 4.9 shows that the all informants ranked their English skills as intermediate. Informant 5 and 9 revealed that the language they used was at intermediate level, and agreed that as far as language was concerned, to be efficient in instructing exercise to meet the needs of the customers was most important.

**Table 4.10** Listening Skills Ability of the Health Club Participants

Listening Skills Ability	Listening Ability of Informant										Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Advanced	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Moderate	X	X	X	X	X	-	X	X	X	X	9
Poor	-	-	-	-	-	X	-	-	-	-	1

As can be seen from Table 4.10, there were nine out of ten participants ranking their listening ability as moderate. However, there was only one informant grading his ability as poor. Therefore, the advanced ability was not mentioned on this interview question. Informant 6 mentioned that “when I trained a foreign customer I mainly instructed or told the member what to do, so that I did not have to listen much. However, when I found listening difficult, I usually asked the customer to speak slowly or even show me gestures”. The Informant 2 said that “Listening is fine for me. I mostly understand what the customers want to communicate, but of course problems happen sometimes if the conversation is too complicated or not about fitness”.

**Table 4.11** Speaking Skills Ability of the Health Club Participants

Speaking Skills Ability	Speaking Ability of Informant										Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Advanced	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Moderate	X	-	X	-	-	X	X	X	X	-	6
Poor	-	X	-	X	X	-	-	-	-	X	4

Regarding speaking ability as shown in Table 4.11, the most frequent response reported for the participants regarding their speaking skills ability was moderate. The second most frequent response by the health club instructors was poor ability.

Noticeably, none reported their speaking ability as advanced. Informant 4 and 5 both revealed that their speaking was poor because they were not confident to speak, and they found English vocabularies and pronunciation were difficult.

**Table 4.12** The English Needs of the Health Club Participants for Providing Services for Foreign Customers

Requirement	English Needs of Informant										Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Desirable	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	10
Undesirable	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0

Regarding the English needs for providing services for foreign customers, the total number of the participants revealed that English was absolutely desirable for their job. Informant 1 mentioned that he strongly agreed that English was used, required and very important when providing a service to foreign customers, especially providing personal training services. He added that in doing so he needed more language functions and skills than other tasks.

**Table 4.13** The Frequency of English Use of the Health Club Participants for Providing Services for Foreign Customers

The Frequency	English Use of Informant										Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Regularly	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	10
Moderately	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Slightly	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0

In consideration of the frequency of English use for providing services for foreign customers, the total number of the participants reported that English was regularly used in the workplace. Informant 7 stated that “I speak English every day in providing personal training services; at least 2 hours a day”. Informant 8 and 9 also mentioned that they frequently use English both in the exercise classes and personal training services.

## Part II Needs of English for the Participants while Providing Services to Foreign Customers

This part included three main questions: language skills needs; needs for skills improvement; and the language functions use relating to the job tasks.

**Table 4.14** The Language Skills Needs of the Health Club Participants for Providing Services for Foreign Customers

Language Skills	Needs of Language Skills of Informant																Total					
	1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8				9		10	
	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
Listening	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	10	0
Speaking	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	10	0
Reading	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	0	10
Writing	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	0	10

Responses to the question concerning the language skills needs of the participants for providing services for foreign customers indicated that all of the trainers needed listening and speaking skills for their job. On the other hand, Table 4.14 reveals that reading or writing was not required for the samples. Informant 10 mentioned that “Working as a personal trainer, writing and reading are rarely used. On the other hand, speaking and listening are essential and are used every day. So, they are needed for all trainers for training all members”.

**Table 4.15** The Most Needed Language Skills of the Health Club Participants for Providing Services for Foreign Customers

Language Skills	The Most Skill Needs of Informant										Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Listening	-	-	-	-	-	X	-	-	-	-	1
Speaking	X	X	X	X	X	-	X	X	X	X	9
Reading	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Writing	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0

As can be seen from Table 4.15, the most frequent response reported for the participants regarding the English skills needs for offering services to the foreigners was speaking. The second most frequent response was listening. Noticeably, none reported that reading or writing was necessary. Informant 8 stated that speaking was the most needed skill in a customer service field. He explained that “I would like to have a lot of English speaking capability, so that I can provide a quick and professional service to foreign customers”.

**Table 4.16** The Needs for Language Skill Improvement of the Health Club Participants

Language Skills	Needs of Language Skills Improvement of Informant																Total					
	1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8				9		10	
	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N		
Listening	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	10	0
Speaking	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	10	0
Reading	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	0	10
Writing	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	0	10

In regard to the needs of language skills improvement of the participants shown in Table 4.16, the total number of the participants reported that they needed improvement of listening and speaking skills. On the other hand, none of the participants required reading or writing improvement for their job.

**Table 4.17** The Language Skill that Needs the Most Improvement for Health Club Instructors

Language Skills	The Most Improvement Needs of Informant										Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Listening	-	-	-	-	-	X	-	-	-	-	1
Speaking	X	X	X	X	X	-	X	X	X	X	9
Reading	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Writing	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0

As can be seen from Table 4.17, there were nine out of ten participants reporting that speaking was the skill in most need of improvement. In contrast, there was only one informant rating that listening was the skill that most needed improvement. Speaking was the skill informant 7 needed to improve the most. He stated that “If I could speak English more efficiently and more professionally or has the skill improvement (sic), it would help me to provide better services in expeditious time. Moreover, I would make customers more cheerful and satisfied”. In contrast, he claimed that reading and writing were not used much in the workplace, so that he experienced considerably fewer problems for these two skills.

**Table 4.18** The Language Functions Related to the Job Tasks of the Health Club Participants

Language Functions	The Employments of Informant										Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Greetings	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	10
Giving exercise instructions	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	10
Introducing personal training services	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	X	X	9
Asking and perceiving customers' personal information	X	X	X	-	X	X	X	X	X	X	9
Asking and perceiving customers' goals or objectives	X	-	X	-	X	X	X	X	X	X	8
Offering help and services	-	-	-	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	7
Expressing training encouragement	X	X	X	X	-	X	X	-	-	X	7
Making appointments	X	-	X	X	-	X	X	X	-	X	7
Giving fitness advice	-	-	-	X	-	X	X	X	X	X	6
Giving explanations about weight machines and equipments benefits	X	X	X	-	X	-	X	X	-	-	6
Perceiving customers' complaints and requests	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	-	-	4
Negotiation for mutual understanding	X	X	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Describing muscle functions	-	X	X	-	-	-	X	-	-	-	3

Considering the language functions related to the job tasks of the health club participants, the most frequent response reported for the participants regarding the language functions used was greetings, and giving exercise instructions. The second frequent response by the health club instructors was introducing personal training services, and asking for customers' personal information. The third frequent response was asking about and understanding customers' goals or objectives, followed by offering help and services, expressing encouragement, giving fitness advices, making appointments, giving explanations about weight machines and equipment benefits,

understanding the customers' complaints and requests, negotiation for mutual understanding, and describing muscle functions respectively (See Table 4.18).

### Part III English Language Problems of the Participants while Providing Services to Foreign Customers

This part presents the problems of English use for the research participants. There were three main questions containing in this part: the problematic language functions; the problematic situations concerning the language use; and the problem solutions.

**Table 4.19** The Problematic Language Functions of the Participants

Language Functions	The Problematic Functions of Informant										Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Giving exercise instructions	-	X	X	X	-	X	X	-	X	X	7
Introducing personal training services	X	-	-	-	X	-	-	X	-	-	3
Greetings	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Asking and perceiving customers' personal information	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Asking and perceiving customers' goals or objectives	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Offering help and services	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Expressing training encouragement	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Making appointments	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Giving fitness advice	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Giving explanations about weight machines and equipments benefits	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Perceiving customers' complaints and requests	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Negotiation for mutual understanding	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Describing muscle functions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0

With regards to the most problematic language functions for the participants shown in Table 4.19, it was noticeable that there were only two functions being chosen: giving exercise instructions; and introducing personal training services. The most response ranked by seven informants was giving exercise instructions. The latter function was ranked by the rest three participants as the most problematic language functions when English is concerned for the Thai health club trainers in Bangkok.

**Table 4.20** The Problematic Situations or Reasons of English Use of the Health Club Participants

Problematic Situations	Problematic Reasons of Informant										Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
<b>Listening</b>											
- The customers make a long sentence/conversation	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	10
- Being unable to understand if the information is in details	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	X	X	X	9
- Being unable to understand the meaning of vocabularies	X	X	-	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	8
- Being unable to catch the conversation when the customers talk to you on the phone	X	X	X	X	-	-	-	X	X	X	7
- The customers have got a high speed of speaking	-	X	-	X	X	X	-	-	X	-	5
- Being unable to get used to the customer's pronunciation	-	-	X	X	-	X	-	-	X	-	3
- Being unable to understand what the customer is talking about at all	-	-	X	X	-	X	-	-	-	-	3
- The customers do not talk about fitness or exercise topics	X	-	-	-	-	-	X	-	-	-	2
- The customers change the topic immediately	-	-	X	-	-	X	-	-	-	-	2
<b>Speaking</b>											
- Can not talk and explain things in details	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	10
- Lack of vocabularies	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	8
- To be not confident to speak/Lack of confidence	X	-	-	X	X	X	-	X	X	X	7
- Being unable to make the customers' understandings	X	X	X	-	X	-	-	X	X	X	7
- Being unable to make long conversations	X	X	-	-	X	-	X	X	X	X	7
- Being unable to convey the message	X	X	X	X	-	X	-	-	X	-	6
- Being unable to make a full or a proper sentence	-	X	X	-	X	-	-	X	X	X	6
- Lack of pronunciation skills	-	-	-	-	X	-	-	X	-	X	3
- Being afraid of producing a wrong message	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	X	-	X	2

Considering the problematic situations or reasons in using English by the health club participants shown in Table 4.20, the most response concerning listening skills ranked by all of the informants was making long sentences or long conversations with the foreign client, followed by being unable to understand when the foreigners talked or asked for in-depth information, which was ranked by nine people. Next, being unable to understand the meanings of vocabulary was graded by eight informants, followed by making a conversation via the phone with the customers (ranked by seven participants), the high speed of speaking of the customers (ranked by five participants), the complicated pronunciation of the clients (ranked by three participants), being unable to understand the customers' messages (ranked by three participants), being unable to understand if the message was not about fitness or exercise topics, and a change of the conversation topic by the clients which both were ranked by two informants. Concerning the problematic situations in speaking, the

most response ranked by all of the informants was giving information in detail, followed by the lack of vocabulary which was graded by eight participants. Next, there were three situations ranked by seven informants which were lack of confidence, being unable to make the customers' understand, and being unable to make a long conversation. As can be seen in Table 4.20, there were two topics which were ranked by six participants as the next problematic situations in speaking: being unable to convey a message; and being unable to make a full or a proper sentence. Lack of pronunciation skills was ranked by three participants as the next problematic situation, followed by being afraid of producing a wrong message which was graded by two informants.

**Table 4.21** The Solutions of Problem in English Language Use of the Health Club Participants

Problem Solutions	The Employments of Informant										Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Using body language	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	10
Mixing Thai and English language	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	10
Asking for repetitions	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	10
Informing the customers honestly that you do not understand	X	X	-	X	X	X	-	X	X	X	8
Asking another staff or customer to help	-	X	X	-	X	X	-	X	X	X	7
Writing down a word or drawing a picture	-	X	-	-	X	-	-	X	X	-	4
Showing the customers an example; brochures, etc	X	-	-	X	-	X	X	-	-	-	4

Regarding the problem solutions in using English by the participants, there were three highest responses which were evaluated by the total number of the participants: using body language; mixing Thai and English; and asking for repetitions. Informing the customers honestly about the lack of ability to understand was graded by eight informants, followed by asking another staff or customer for help (ranked by seven samples), writing down a word or drawing a picture, and showing the customers an example: photo, brochure. The last two topics were identified by four participants.

### Non-Participant Observation Findings

The observational data are presented in the observational checklists of the informants' English needs and problems which are divided into three parts: the frequency of English used in performing language functions; the frequency of the problematic situations in using English; and the frequency of the problem solutions used by the participants.

#### Part I The Frequency of English Used in Performing Language Functions

This part presents the frequency in using of English language functions all participants to crosscheck with the topics the participants mentioned in the interviews.

**Table 4.22** Observational Check List on the Frequency Per Hour of English Language Functions Performance of the Participants

Language Functions	The Frequency of Informant										Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Giving exercise instructions	28	22	29	23	20	20	15	20	21	26	224
Expressing training encouragement	18	25	22	6	22	18	25	17	13	14	180
Giving fitness advices	18	17	12	20	18	19	19	20	20	15	178
Greetings	1	2	4	3	2	2	5	3	1	4	27
Asking and perceiving customers' personal information	1	1	3	2	2	1	3	2	0	1	16
Giving explanations about weight machines and equipments benefits	0	0	2	2	3	0	1	3	0	4	15
Making appointments	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10
Offering help and services	0	1	2	1	2	0	1	0	0	2	9
Asking and perceiving customers' goals or objectives	1	0	1	3	0	0	2	0	0	0	7
Negotiation for mutual understanding	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2
Describing muscle functions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
Introducing Personal Training services	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Understanding customers' complaints and requests	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Other Further Functions Occurred in the Observations</b>											
Counting numbers: counting the time set of the training	30	21	26	29	30	28	27	25	23	30	269
Informing the benefits of the exercises	1	3	5	5	6	2	4	4	0	1	31

As can be seen in Table 4.22, most of the functions that the informants mentioned in the interviews were highly used, except the function about understanding customers' complaints and requests. However, it was noticeable that there were other two functions: counting numbers; and informing the benefits of the exercises arising from the observations. Significantly, the function performed the most by all the trainers was counting numbers, which was 269 times in total, followed by giving exercise instructions (224 times), expressing training encouragement (180 times), giving fitness advice (178 times), informing the benefits of the exercises (31 times), greetings (27 times), and making appointments (10 times). The other functions: asking and perceiving customers' personal information; giving explanations about weight machines and equipment benefits; offering help and services; asking and perceiving customers' goals or objectives; negotiation for mutual understanding; describing muscle functions; introducing personal training services were performed less by only some informants in the one-hour-observation.

## **Part II The Frequency of the Problematic Situations in Using English Occurrence**

This part presents the frequency of the problematic situations in using English from observing all the participants to crosscheck the interview data. The situation topics were determined from what the participants mentioned in the interviews. The data from the observation are presented in the observational check list (See Table 4.23).

**Table 4.23** Observational Check List on the Frequency of the Problematic Situations Requiring English by the Participants

Problematic Situations	The Frequency of Informant										Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
<b>Listening</b>											
- Being unable to understand the meaning of vocabulary	4	2	5	3	2	2	2	4	3	4	31
- The customers have got a high speed of speaking	2	1	3	2	2	2	1	4	2	1	20
- The customers make a long sentence/conversation	2	1	0	0	2	0	0	1	1	3	10
- being unable to understand the customers' messages at all	2	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	7
- Being unable to understand if the information is in details	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	4
- Being unable to get used to the customer's pronunciation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
- Being unable to catch the conversation when the customers talk to you on the phone	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
- The customers do not talk about fitness or exercise topics	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
- The customers change the topic immediately	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Speaking</b>											
- Being unable to make a full or a proper sentence	29	22	32	27	29	38	19	28	27	18	269
- Being unable to make long conversations	17	22	18	27	33	26	14	29	30	12	228
- Lack of vocabulary knowledge	18	15	10	6	18	15	6	13	17	11	129
- Lack of pronunciation skills	15	20	5	2	15	15	13	20	5	15	125
- Being unable to convey messages	5	3	5	6	2	4	3	7	5	2	42
- Being unable to make the customers' understandings	4	3	1	4	2	3	2	4	4	2	29
- Being unable to talk or explain things in details	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
- To be not confident to speak/Lack of the confidence	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
- Being afraid of producing a wrong message	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Considering listening problems, the most problematic situation for the participants was being unable to understand the meanings of the vocabulary (31 times), followed by being unable to understand the customers' speed of speaking (20 times), being unable to understand long conversations or long sentences (10 times), being unable to understand the customers' messages at all (7 times), and being unable to understand in-depth information (4 times). The other four situations for listening: being unable to get used to the customers' pronunciation; being unable to understand the conversation when talking to the customers on the phone; being unable to understand if the topics are not about fitness; and a quick change of topic, did not occur during the observations. Regarding problematic situations in speaking, being

unable to make a full or a proper sentence occurred the most (269 times), followed by being unable to make a long conversation (228 times), lack of vocabulary knowledge (129 times), lack of pronunciation skills (125 times), being unable to convey messages (42 times), being unable to make the customers' understanding (29 times), and being unable to talk or explain in-depth information (2 times) respectively. During the observation period, lacking of confidence; and being afraid of producing a wrong message were not shown at all.

### Part III The Frequency of the Problem Solutions Use of the Participants

This part presents the frequency of the problem solutions that the total number of the health club participants (30 people) performed or used while being observed. The problem solution topics have been determined from what the participants mentioned in the interviews.

**Table 4.24** Observational Check List on the Frequency of the Problem Solutions Employment of the Participants

Problem Solutions	The Frequency of Informant										Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Using body language	25	21	33	24	38	44	23	31	22	35	296
Mixing Thai and English language	16	14	10	12	12	17	14	19	22	19	155
Asking for repetitions	5	2	6	6	6	5	6	3	4	3	46
Asking another staff or customer for help	1	0	0	2	2	0	1	2	3	0	11
Showing the customers an example; brochures, etc	1	1	0	1	0	1	2	0	2	2	10
Informing the customers honestly that you do not understand	2	2	0	1	0	0	1	2	0	0	8
Writing down a word or drawing a picture	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Other Solutions Occurred in the Observations</b>											
Saying short or easy words instead of making full sentences	17	8	10	7	12	18	15	17	22	16	142
Sending texts instead of calling to make appointments	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

Table 4.24 shows that using body language was the most frequently used solution when the participants got into trouble in using English. The informants performed this solution for two hundred and ninety-six times in total. Mixing Thai

and English language was the second most used, which happened up to one hundred and fifty-five times, followed by one hundred and forty-two times of saying short or easy words instead of making full sentences, forty-six times on asking for repetitions, eleven times asking for help from another member or customer, ten times for showing the customers an example: brochures, eight times in informing the customers honestly about missing the point, and one time of sending texts instead of calling to make an appointment. 'Writing down a word' or 'drawing a picture' was not found in the observations.

This chapter has reviewed the data from three research instruments: the survey questionnaire; the semi-structured interview; and non-participant observation with tables, passages and figure presentations. The next chapter will discuss the study findings, implications, limitations, recommendations and the conclusion of the thesis.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **DISSCUSSION**

This chapter will discuss the interview findings with reference to the research questions and previous studies, comparisons between the responses to the research questions, the implications, limitations and recommendations of the study.

#### **Discussions of Research Findings**

This study was carried out to collect the data concerning the present English needs and problems of health club trainers. The second issue was to identify particular needs regarding job-related language skills and the knowledge essential for their jobs. This chapter will discuss the findings from the following research questions:

- 1) What are the present English language needs of health club instructors in their jobs?
  - 1.1) What are useful language skills for health club instructors in their jobs?
  - 1.2) What are the language forms and functions frequently used for health club instructors in the workplace?
- 2) What kinds of problems do the health club instructors encounter while communicating with foreign customers?

#### **The Present English Language Needs of the Health Club Instructors in Their Job**

It is evident that according to this group of health club trainers, English played an important role in their job, which is a kind of service business, when serving foreign customers, This outcome is supported by many researchers; for example, Sonsa-ardjit (1980), Jungsatitkul (1988), Boonjaipet (1992), Jiranapakul (1996),

Ketkaew (1997), Yutdhana (2000), Li So-mui and Mead (2000), Meemak (2002), Aunruen (2005), and Lertanant (2007). They also state that English is an important tool for communication, especially in business, and it is an important factor in the level of job performance and in career advancement. Also, English is mostly needed to communicate effectively with the clients.

The trainers revealed that during their time of service in a particular health club, they saw an increasing number of foreign customers, and realized that the majority of those foreigners prefer taking a personal training course to working out on their own. The trainers estimated that ten percent of customers at the time of the study were non-Thai speaking, and attributed this increase to the health club's reputation. Those were tourists, housewives, international university students and business persons, including Korean, Taiwanese, Chinese, Malaysian, Singaporean, Australian, Canadian, German, French, British, and American customers. It could be seen that the participants had to deal with both native and non-native English speakers. Noticeably, the common language of choice was English. Most participants revealed that their English language proficiency was still limited due to many reasons. They often found it problematic or difficult when speaking English with foreign customers. Hence, they believed that learning more English and taking an English course relating to their job skills were necessary for them. This supports the findings of studies of Thai nationals who work in other service industries and experience similar problems. Aunruen (2005) found that travel agents in Chiang Mai believed that learning English was very necessary to them. Lertanant (2007) discovered that Thai restaurant staff would like to improve their speaking by having a communication English course in order to enable them to perform their jobs more effectively. The informants in this study pointed out that they had to use English regularly in communicating with foreign customers and the language was highly important in the workplace, especially in providing the personal training tasks. The informants indicated that speaking and listening were required. Speaking was rated as the most frequently used skill for communication in the work place, followed by listening. This was similar to Keyoonwong (1998), who discovered that speaking skill is the greatest need among tourism personnel in Chiang Mai. Jungsatitkul (1988) indicated that listening and speaking were the greatest used

and needed skills for the taxi's drivers in Bangkok metropolis who needed English to communicate with foreign customers. Boonjaipet (1992) maintained that the officers at the counters of the post offices in Bangkok metropolis needed speaking and listening skills the most. Both the supervisors and the officers accepted that they wanted speaking and listening skills training. Overall, all of the instructors stated that listening and speaking were highly significant for their job while, reading and writing were slightly significant.

The findings of the study indicate that the English for specific purposes perceived needs of the participants in both health club A and B were greetings and leave takings, expressing thanks, asking for personal information and making requests, expressing appreciation, offering help and services, giving an exercise instruction, giving fitness advice, giving an explanation about weight machines and instrument benefits, explaining service process and functions, making an appointment on the phone and face-to-face, requesting to be excused, expressing an apology, expressing regret, introducing a personal training service, negotiation for mutual understanding, showing understanding, taking the customers' complaint, taking the customers' request, taking a customer's information, and expressing encouragement. There were some descriptions from most of the informants that giving an exercise instruction was complicated because it needed a lot of English skills; especially, vocabulary. Therefore, body language was required where some exercises were difficult to explain, so that the trainer preferred performing the movements or the steps of the exercise and let the customer follow the steps. Furthermore, some of the participants found difficulty in giving fitness advice. This function needs information in detail. However, every single informant mentioned that experience is an important factor in providing a proactive and efficient personal training service. The research findings show that some of the informants would like to be more confident to give a service to a foreign customer because they found that if they could be confident in using English in their job, they would get greater benefits than other staff. The results indicate that if they perform a good service by using English, it will be possible to get more personal training referrals. Consequently, it can be mentioned that by having more working experience leads to the being more professional, and confident. Every

participant agreed that having confidence in using English is very important for providing a proactive and efficient personal training service. All informants revealed that one of the greatest difficulties in using English was shyness. They would like to have more confidence, so that English could be used effectively and professionally in the workplace. Moreover, many participants reported that when they first met a customer they found most of the job functions were difficult to them because had just met for the first time. Some trainers mentioned that the most important and most used functions were greetings and leave takings because they could make a good first impression.

Every informant agreed that English was necessary and very important when providing a personal training service to foreign customers. All participants reported that they had to provide a personal training service almost every day. Significantly, they all agreed that English was most used when offering training for foreign customers. They emphasized that English was normally required for every job function of a health club instructor: personal training services, class instructions, gym programs, and general conversations. Due to the fact that the personal training task was a one hour face-to-face participation and communication with a foreigner, the language in specific purposes concerning fitness training tasks was highly required and more significant than the others. Moreover, the command of English in listening and speaking skills was greatly useful and required in order to increase the quality of the service and also to advance the staff's skills potential development to meet the needs of the customers.

### **Problems the health club instructors encountered when communicating with foreign customers**

The findings of the study indicated that the perceived participants' level of English proficiency were beginner or lower intermediate. All of the fitness instructors still had some difficulties and problems in some English skills at work. They all realized the importance of English and needed to improve their English skills. In the stage of participants' problems of using English in communicating with foreign

customers who used their service, it can be seen that the greatest problematic task was providing a personal training service. Also, the results reveal that the participants had problems in both listening and speaking skills which supports the findings of Ketkaew (1997) who indicated that air stewards and air stewardesses needed to improve their listening and speaking skills most. Noticeably, from this study, speaking skill was more problematic when it was required in providing a training service. The most problematic reasons for listening skill were misunderstanding the meaning of vocabulary, understanding long sentences/conversations, and when customers call and talk on the phone. It is noticeable that dealing with vocabulary was the most problematic because it could lead to miscommunication. Talking on the phone by using English was another problem the participants encountered because they are unable to use or see body language. Besides, some informants revealed that producing a long conversation caused misunderstandings in listening. For speaking skill, the most problematic issues were not being confident to speak, being afraid of producing a wrong message, lack of vocabulary, and being afraid of mispronouncing a word. The needs for language improvement must be considered. The greatest number of the participants strongly agreed to have both listening and speaking skill improvement.

In general, it is important for a person in a service job to satisfy customers and make them feel important. In their job, the subjects had to be able to understand as well as to respond to customers' enquiries. If both sides cannot understand each other due to language problems, communication definitely fails. Language is one of the key factors in achieving the goal of customer satisfaction.

### **Implications of the Study**

The present needs analysis study investigated the needs and problems that health club trainers encounter in using English on their job, and attempted to identify particular needs regarding job-related language skills and the knowledge essential for their jobs. The need analysis enabled the researcher to justify assumptions and make recommendations that might be useful for designing an English course relating to

personal training services course to be responsive to the needs of the fitness trainers. The findings could be generalized to the previous group of fitness instructors suggest needs of following groups, and provide useful information for similar programs. Also, it could be used as resource information together with the English needs for health club trainers in further research. Essential data useful for this program was determined. The suggestions drawn from the analysis of data are applicable in the design and implementation of English for specific purposes curriculum, and for the preparation of textbooks in response to English conversation needs for fitness trainers. Furthermore, the results of this research study will be a useful resource to designers and health clubs, to develop training materials that match the specific needs of fitness instructors. Based on the findings of this study, English training courses were recommended to be offered to health club trainers, either as a core requirement to their job functions or as elective courses. A majority of the study group stated that this kind of program was essential. A pre-session course in English was also recommended, providing in-coming trainers with a basic understanding of the how to train a customer effectively in English. Such a course should focus on speaking and listening instruction. The content in the course should be relevant to the specific needs of the fitness trainers. Learner needs should be considered in the process of planning the content of a program.

### **Limitations of the Study**

Qualitative analysis is often more influenced than quantitative analysis by the biases and theoretical assumptions of the investigator. In addition, it offers the prospect of understanding the participants in a study as rounded individuals in a social context. This contrasts with quantitative analysis, in which the focus is often on rather narrow aspects of behaviour. The greatest limitation of the qualitative approach is that the findings that are reported tend to be unreliable. This study was based upon the use of two main instruments – an interview and an observation. The questionnaires were used in this study to support and give a clearer picture of the fitness trainers' needs. Consequently, the choice of responses was unavoidably limited to the responses of the

participants. However, the interviews allowed participants to respond to the questions and provide opinions and suggestions.

This study was conducted using only two language skills – listening and speaking. The other two skills (reading and writing) were beyond the scope of this study, due to the additional complexity and time limitations. However, use of a semi-structured interview which is a direct face-to-face attempts to obtain reliable and valid measures about a particular issue (or set of topics) in the form of verbal responses from the respondents. This is not a sentence allowed the researcher to interact and clarify the subjects through all questions in order to help them understand and respond directly concerning and focusing on their needs and problems in using English.

Regarding the limitation of time and funding for the research, the present study was completed in two health clubs. This research could have been expanded in scope, range and size. The number of people interviewed for this study was quite small. However, the sample size was based upon a simplified formula by Yamane (1973) for proportions used to calculate a finite population. The researcher used a confidence level of 95%, which is standard for most research studies.

### **Recommendations for Further Study**

The topic of this study was based on Thai fitness instructor problems and their needs in English, particularly in speaking and listening skills. The findings enabled the researcher to identify possible problems and needs that occur when Thai health club trainers have a conversation with foreign customers. The findings are also useful for devising English language courses or materials for health club service particularly in terms of speaking skill, vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and non-verbal language functions (not an English language issue). Students in this field can make use of the analyses of this study for their further studies. This study might also serve as a further topic of investigation for any person wishing to learn more about English for the Health Club Trade.

This study could also be used as a base for investigation in social language and the development of social skills in English, such as language of introductions, demonstrations, and polite phrases.

Only twenty-four subjects were selected for investigation. Further studies should involve a greater number of subjects to find out the use of other language skills, for example reading and writing skills, which were not included in this study.

On the basis of this study, it is recommended that in order to increase the effectiveness of English courses offered to people working in the health club business, the emphasis of such courses should focus on the following:

1. More job-related vocabulary and role-playing tasks. These speaking practices would help Thai fitness trainers to develop and focus on their conversational skills because they have to conduct business based on speaking and listening skills. Practicing would help them to gain more confidence and to be more effective in real-life situations.
2. Additional English materials, such as focus language tasks related to essential vocabulary, polite language, correct grammar and pronunciation should be used as supplements to the core handbook.
3. Fitness personnel should utilize standardized English tests to measure the English skills of their staff.

Prior to this study, there was research related to the hotel and airline industry; however, none of them was directly related to English for the health club trade. This study is actually a stepping stone to the study of other fields in similar contexts. In the researcher's view, the extension of this study into other areas would be useful because there are still some innovative points to investigate: 1) the appropriate use of social language; 2) the development of social skills in English.

Humans use social skills to interact and communicate with each other in society. Social skills are created, communicated, and presented in both verbal and

nonverbal ways. In hospitality services, some examples of social skills are language of introductions, demonstration, polite speech, etc.

Interaction skills in health club service are mostly face-to-face communications between customers and service staff. They are related to the contents of discourse which range from 'predictable' to 'unpredictable' patterns. Predictable patterns include the language of introduction, nutrition recommendation, dealing with the machines and exercise. These patterns are highly predictable. Unpredictable encounters, however, include dealing with complaints, dealing with other matters not related to the jobs where the patterns are unpredictable and usually do not appear in their routine conversations.

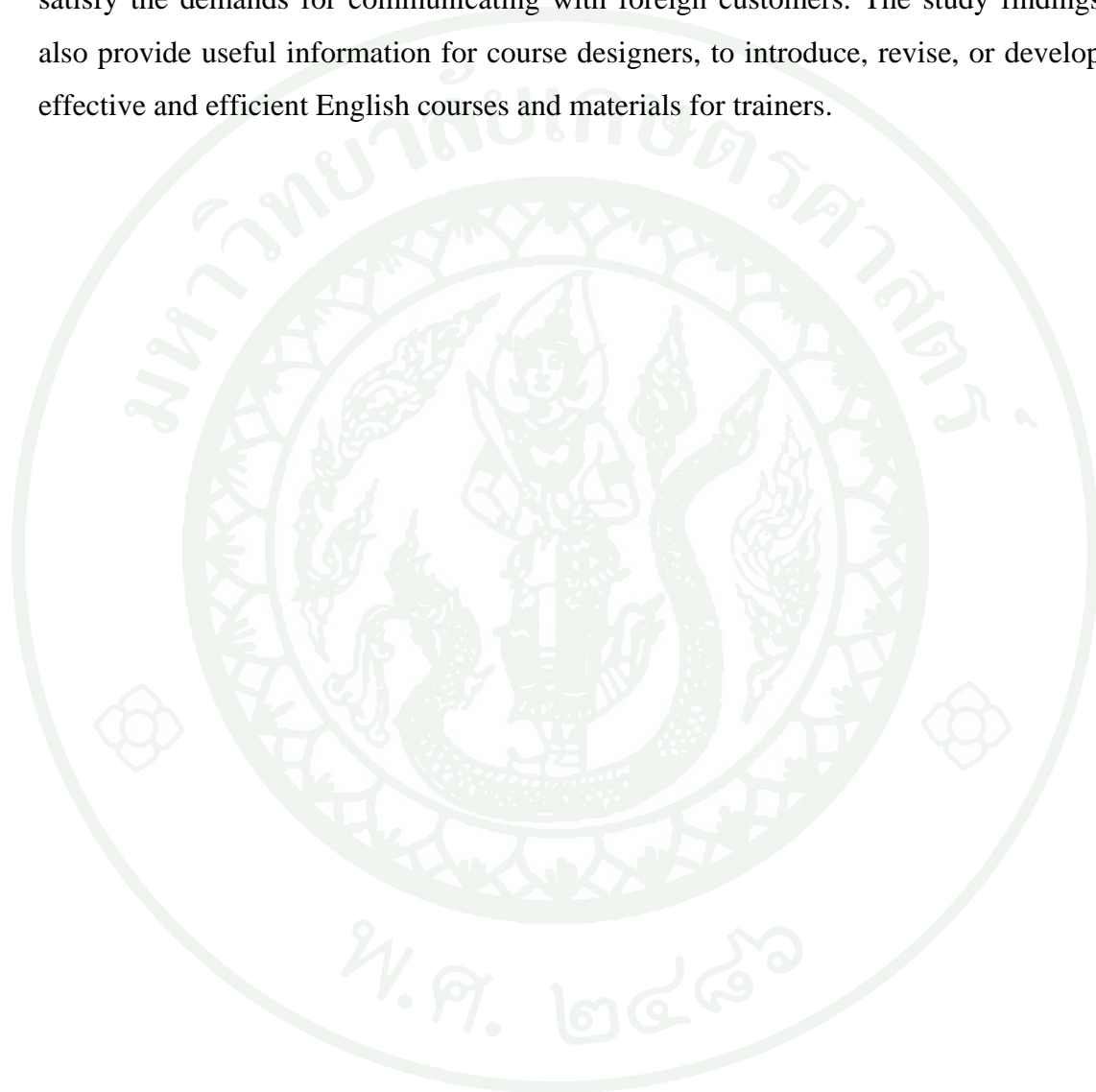
### **Conclusion of the Thesis**

The present study was conducted to answer research questions regarding the language needs and problems for Thai health club trainers in Bangkok. The data were collected by means of an observation, interview and a questionnaire and analyzed qualitatively.

This study determined that the trainers share specific needs and objectives in using English. The needs included using English for routine job tasks such as providing a personal training. Trainers need to communicate specific types of communication in order to satisfy the customers. Therefore, many areas need to be investigated to balance EOP and general English language proficiency for trainers in order to ensure maximum effectiveness in expanding their knowledge of general communication to occupational communication.

Considering the opinions and suggestions of health clubs toward their job tasks, 'self' was the greatest obstacle in acquiring the necessary communication skills, and the solution was to practice speaking and listening. Apart from equipping the instructors with the right skills, the findings also support the need for courses that will help motivate trainers to develop their communication skills according to their needs.

The findings of this study provide a useful resource for curriculum development and material design for English for occupation course for Thai health club instructors. The skills developed in this course would allow trainers to better satisfy the demands for communicating with foreign customers. The study findings also provide useful information for course designers, to introduce, revise, or develop effective and efficient English courses and materials for trainers.



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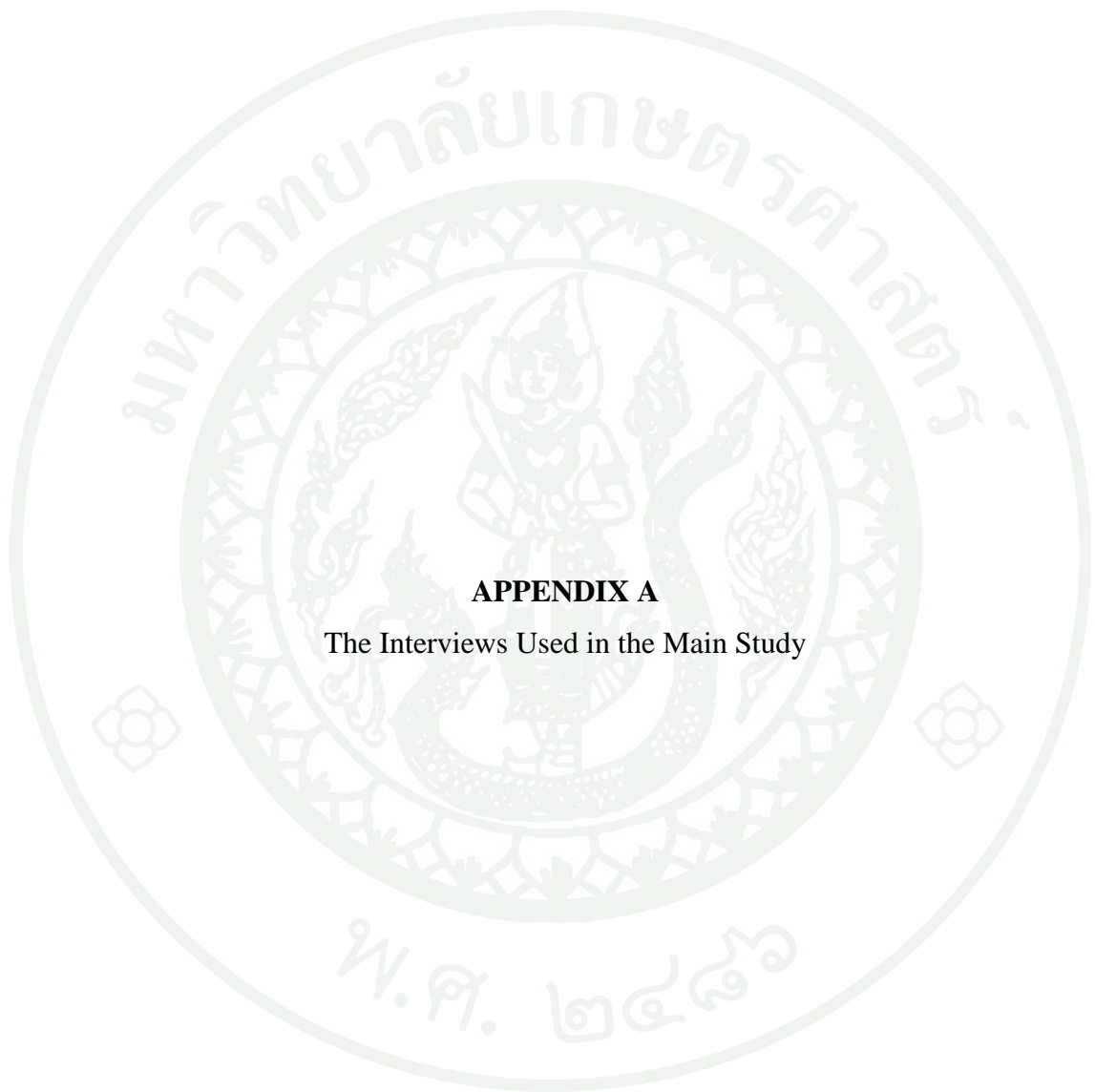
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**APPENDICES**



**APPENDIX A**  
The Interviews Used in the Main Study

## Interview Questions

### **Title: Needs Analysis of English for Thai Health Club Instructors in Bangkok**

#### **Part 1 General Information Concerning the Language Use of the Health Club Instructors**

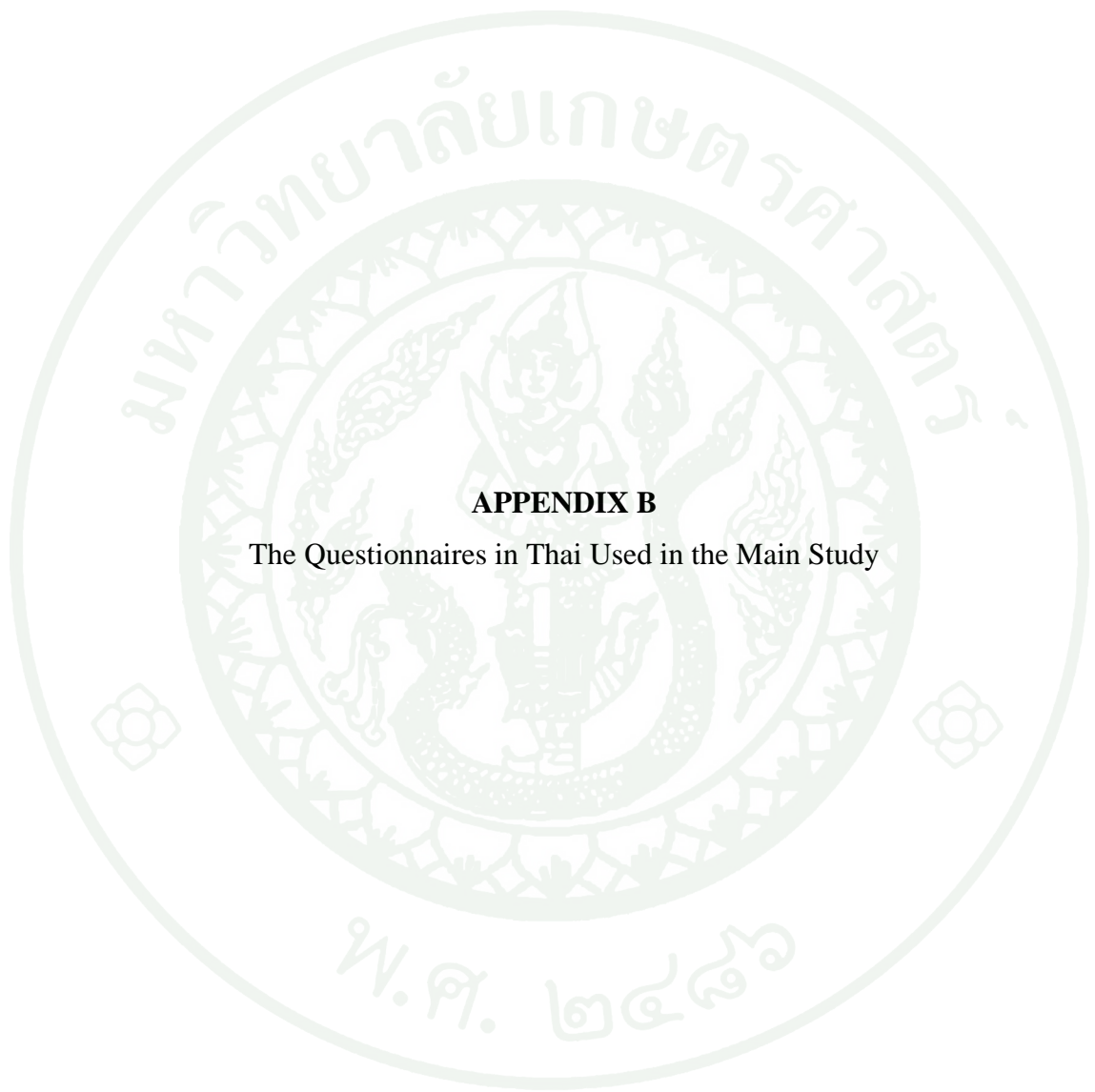
1. How do you rate your English skills?
2. How do you rate your listening skills?
3. How do you or rate your speaking skills?
4. Do you use English to provide a service for foreign customers?
5. How often do you use English with foreign customers?

#### **Part 2 English Needs of Health Club Instructors while Providing Services to Foreign Customers**

1. What is/are the language skill(s) you need when offering a service to a foreigner?  
And please explain what skill is the most needed, and why.
2. Would you like to improve your English skills? And please explain which skill needs the most improvement and why.
3. Which language functions relate to your job tasks where English skills are required when providing a service to foreigners?

#### **Part 3 English Problems of Health Club Instructors while Providing Services to Foreign Customers**

1. What language functions do you find problematic when offering services to foreigners? And please explain what function is the most problematic, and why (do health instructors know what a language function is)?
2. What difficulties do you encounter when using English while providing services to foreign customers?
3. How do you solve these problems?



**APPENDIX B**

The Questionnaires in Thai Used in the Main Study

## แบบสอบถาม

เรื่อง การวิเคราะห์ความต้องการทางด้านภาษาอังกฤษของครูฝึกศูนย์สุขภาพ (Health Club) ในกรุงเทพมหานคร

คำชี้แจง แบบสอบถามนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อทราบข้อมูลเกี่ยวกับความต้องการและปัญหาในการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษ และความต้องการทักษะ รวมถึงรูปแบบการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษในสถานการณ์หน้าที่เฉพาะของครูฝึกศูนย์สุขภาพ คำตอบของท่านจะเป็นประโยชน์อย่างยิ่งในการนำมาวิเคราะห์เพื่อหาแนวทางในการจัดทำ และปรับปรุงพัฒนาหลักสูตรเพื่อการทำให้สอดคล้องกับความต้องการพัฒนาทักษะภาษาอังกฤษในการทำงานของครูฝึกศูนย์สุขภาพ

กรุณาเลือกคำตอบที่ตรงกับข้อมูลและความคิดเห็นของท่าน หวังเป็นอย่างยิ่งว่าจะได้รับความร่วมมือจากท่านเป็นอย่างดี และขอบคุณมา ณ โอกาสนี้

แบบสอบถามประกอบด้วย 3 ส่วน

ส่วนที่ 1 ข้อมูลทั่วไปเกี่ยวกับผู้ตอบแบบสอบถาม

ส่วนที่ 2 ความคิดเห็นทั่วไปเกี่ยวกับการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษ

ส่วนที่ 3 ความต้องการการใช้ภาษาของครูฝึกศูนย์สุขภาพ

ส่วนที่ 4 ปัญหาการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษของครูฝึกศูนย์สุขภาพเพื่อติดต่อสื่อสารกับสมาชิกชาวต่างประเทศ

ส่วนที่ 1 ข้อมูลทั่วไปเกี่ยวกับผู้ตอบแบบสอบถาม

กรุณาใส่เครื่องหมาย X ลงในช่อง  ที่ตรงกับข้อมูลส่วนตัวของท่าน

- 1.1 เพศ  ชาย  หญิง
- 1.2 อายุ  21 – 25 ปี  26 – 30 ปี  
 30 – 35 ปี  60 ปีขึ้นไป
- 1.3 ระดับการศึกษา  อนุปริญญา  ปริญญาตรี  
 สูงกว่าปริญญาตรี
- 1.4 สาขาวิชาที่จบ  วิทยาศาสตร์การกีฬา  พลศึกษา  
 อื่นๆ (โปรดระบุ) \_\_\_\_\_

1.5 ท่านทำงานอยู่ศูนย์สุขภาพมาแล้วเป็นเวลา

- น้อยกว่า 1 ปี  1 - 2 ปี  
 3 - 5 ปี  5 - 10 ปีขึ้นไป  
 10 ปีขึ้นไป

## ส่วนที่ 2 ความคิดเห็นทั่วไปเกี่ยวกับการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษ

2.1 ท่านคิดว่าระดับความรู้ความสามารถในการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษของท่านอยู่ในระดับใด (เลือกเพียง 1 ข้อ)

- ไม่มีความรู้ความเข้าใจภาษาอังกฤษเลย
- มีความรู้ความเข้าใจภาษาอังกฤษระดับเริ่มต้นหรือพื้นฐาน
- มีความรู้ความเข้าใจภาษาอังกฤษระดับปานกลาง
- มีความรู้ความเข้าใจภาษาอังกฤษระดับดี
- มีความรู้ความเข้าใจภาษาอังกฤษระดับดีมาก

2.2 ท่านคิดว่าท่านมีความรู้ความสามารถในการใช้ทักษะด้านการฟังภาษาอังกฤษเพียงใด

- มาก  ปานกลาง  น้อย

2.3 ท่านคิดว่าท่านมีความรู้ความสามารถในการใช้ทักษะด้านการพูดภาษาอังกฤษเพียงใด

- มาก  ปานกลาง  น้อย

2.4 ท่านคิดว่าท่านมีความรู้ความสามารถในการใช้ทักษะด้านการอ่านภาษาอังกฤษเพียงใด

- มาก  ปานกลาง  น้อย

2.5 ท่านคิดว่าท่านมีความรู้ความสามารถในการใช้ทักษะด้านการเขียนภาษาอังกฤษเพียงใด

- มาก  ปานกลาง  น้อย

## ส่วนที่ 3 ความต้องการการใช้ภาษาของครูฝึกศูนย์สุขภาพ

3.1 ท่านใช้ภาษาอังกฤษในการทำงานมากน้อยเพียงใด

- มาก  ปานกลาง  น้อย

3.2 ท่านคิดว่าใช้ภาษาอังกฤษมีความสำคัญต่อการทำงานของท่านในปัจจุบันมากน้อยเพียงใด

- มาก  ปานกลาง  น้อย

3.3 สำหรับรูปแบบการทำงานตามหัวข้อดังกล่าวด้านล่าง หัวข้อใดต้องใช้ความสามารถด้านภาษาอังกฤษมากที่สุดเป็นอันดับแรก

- การฝึกแบบตัวต่อตัว (Personal Training)
- การแนะนำการออกกำลังกายในท่าทางต่างๆในห้องกิจกรรม
- อิมโปรแกรม (Gym Program)
- บทสนทนาทั่วไป
- อื่นๆ (โปรดระบุ) \_\_\_\_\_

3.4 ในการทำงานในศูนย์สุขภาพ ท่านใช้ทักษะภาษาอังกฤษด้านใดบ้าง (กรุณาเรียงลำดับ 1 – 4 จากมากไปน้อย โดย 1 = มากที่สุด)

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3.5 ท่านคิดว่าทักษะด้านการฟังภาษาอังกฤษมีความสำคัญมากน้อยเพียงใดต่อการทำงานในศูนย์สุขภาพ

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| <input type="checkbox"/> มาก | <input type="checkbox"/> ปานกลาง | <input type="checkbox"/> น้อย |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|

3.6 ท่านคิดว่าทักษะด้านการพูดภาษาอังกฤษมีความสำคัญมากน้อยเพียงใดต่อการทำงานในศูนย์สุขภาพ

- |                              |                                  |                               |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> มาก | <input type="checkbox"/> ปานกลาง | <input type="checkbox"/> น้อย |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|

3.7 ท่านคิดว่าทักษะด้านการอ่านภาษาอังกฤษมีความสำคัญมากน้อยเพียงใดต่อการทำงานในศูนย์สุขภาพ

- |                              |                                  |                               |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> มาก | <input type="checkbox"/> ปานกลาง | <input type="checkbox"/> น้อย |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|

3.8 ท่านคิดว่าทักษะด้านการเขียนภาษาอังกฤษมีความสำคัญมากน้อยเพียงใดต่อการทำงานในศูนย์สุขภาพ

- |                              |                                  |                               |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> มาก | <input type="checkbox"/> ปานกลาง | <input type="checkbox"/> น้อย |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|

**ส่วนที่ 4 ปัญหาการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษของครูฝึกศูนย์สุขภาพเพื่อติดต่อสื่อสารกับสมาชิกชาวต่างประเทศ**

4.1 ในการทำงานในศูนย์สุขภาพ ท่านพบปัญหาในการใช้ทักษะภาษาอังกฤษด้านใดบ้าง (กรุณาเรียงลำดับ 1 – 4 จากมากไปน้อย โดย 1 = มากที่สุด)

- |                                  |                                   |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> การฟัง  | <input type="checkbox"/> การพูด   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> การอ่าน | <input type="checkbox"/> การเขียน |

4.2 ท่านคิดว่าทักษะด้านการฟังภาษาอังกฤษมีความยากมากน้อยเพียงใดต่อการทำงานในศูนย์สุขภาพ

- |                              |                                  |                               |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> มาก | <input type="checkbox"/> ปานกลาง | <input type="checkbox"/> น้อย |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|

4.3 ท่านคิดว่าทักษะด้านการพูดภาษาอังกฤษมีความยากมากน้อยเพียงใดต่อการทำงานในศูนย์สุขภาพ

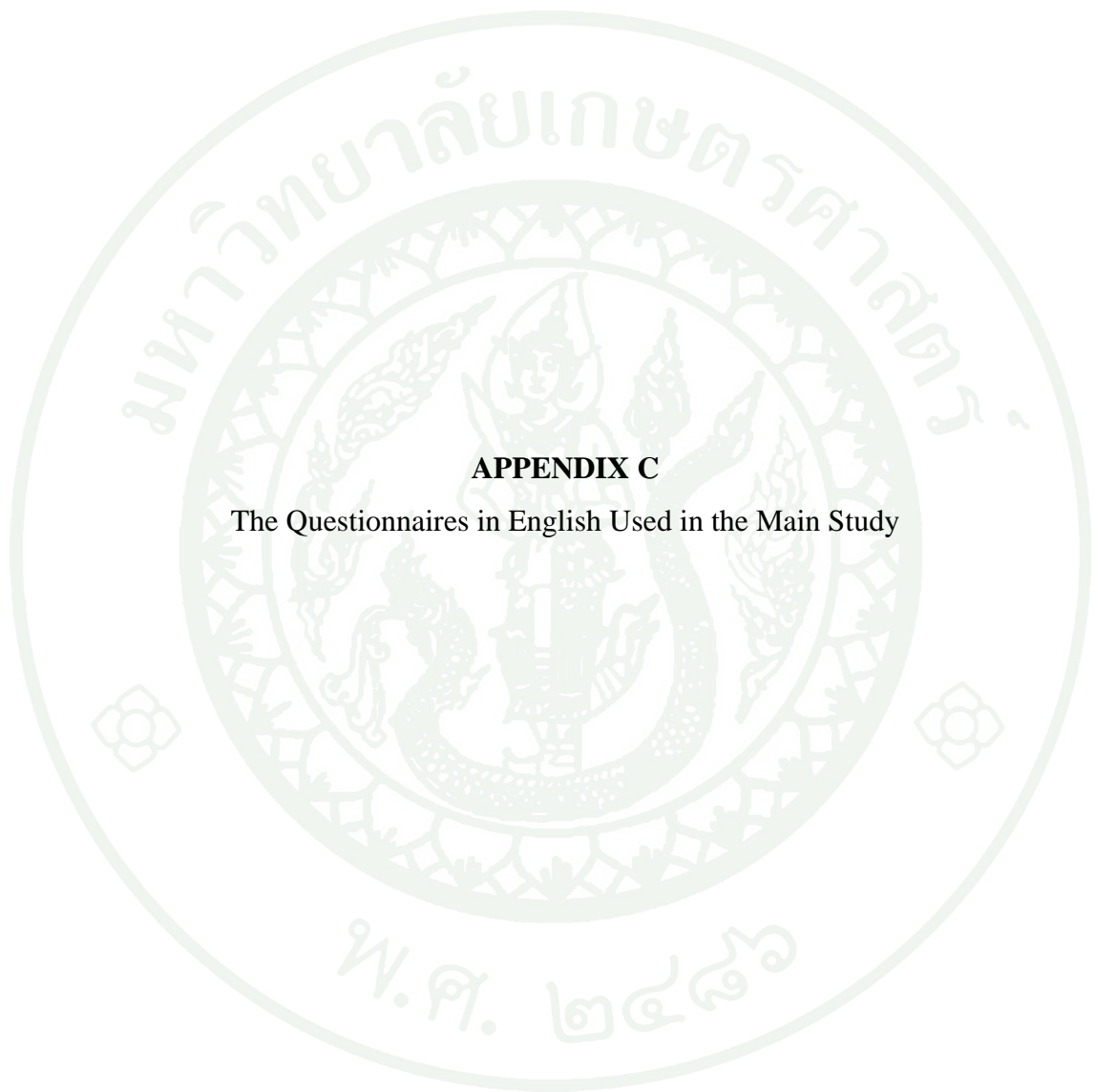
- |                              |                                  |                               |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> มาก | <input type="checkbox"/> ปานกลาง | <input type="checkbox"/> น้อย |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|

4.4 ท่านคิดว่าทักษะด้านการอ่านภาษาอังกฤษมีความยากมากน้อยเพียงใดต่อการทำงานในศูนย์สุขภาพ

- |                              |                                  |                               |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> มาก | <input type="checkbox"/> ปานกลาง | <input type="checkbox"/> น้อย |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|

4.5 ท่านคิดว่าทักษะด้านการเขียนภาษาอังกฤษมีความยากมากน้อยเพียงใดต่อการทำงานในศูนย์สุขภาพ

- |                              |                                  |                               |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> มาก | <input type="checkbox"/> ปานกลาง | <input type="checkbox"/> น้อย |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|



**APPENDIX C**

The Questionnaires in English Used in the Main Study

## Questionnaires

### Title: Needs Analysis of English for Thai Health Club Instructors in Bangkok

#### Description:

The objective of this questionnaire is to investigate Thai health club instructors' needs and problems in using English, including the English skills needs, and the use of English in the particular situation as a personal trainer. Your valuable answers will be beneficial for the researcher in order to represent and develop English courses for Sport Science concerning the needs of English skills improvement for work as a health club personal trainer. Please choose the best answer which matches your opinions. The researcher hopes to get your sincere co-operation. Thank you very much. The questionnaire is divided into four parts:

**Part 1** General Information about the Participants

**Part 2** General Information about the Participants Concerning Language Ability

**Part 3** English Needs of the Participants while Communicating with Foreign Customers

**Part 4** English Problems of the Participants while Communicating with Foreign Customers

**Procedure:** Please make a mark (X) in the box  that best matches your personal information

#### Part 1 General Information of the Participants

- 1.1 Gender  male  female
- 1.2 Age  21-25 years  26-30 years  
 31-35 years  over 35 years
- 1.3 Educational background  undergraduate  Diploma  
 Bachelor's degree  Master's degree

- 1.4 Faculty  Sport Science  Physical Education
- Another (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

1.5 Working experience in the health club industry

- Less than 1 year  1-2 year(s)
- 3-5 years  5-10 years
- Over 10 years

**Part 2 General Information about the Participants Concerning Language Ability**

2.1 How do you rate your English skills? (Please choose only one answer)

- Unskillful  Upper-intermediate
- Beginner  Advanced
- Intermediate

2.2 How do you rate your listening skill according to the options below?

- Advanced  Moderate  Poor

2.3 How do you rate your speaking skill according to the options below?

- Advanced  Moderate  Poor

2.4 How do you indicate your reading skill according to the options below?

- Advanced  Moderate  Poor

2.5 How do you rate your writing skill according to the options below?

- Advanced  Moderate  Poor

**Part 3 English Needs of the Participants while Communicating with Foreign Customers**

3.1 How often do you use English in the workplace?

- Regularly  Moderately  Not very often

3.2 How is English significant to your job?

- Highly  Moderately  Slightly

3.3 According your job functions, can you rank the job tasks in which English is required? (1 = the most needed)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personal training             | <input type="checkbox"/> Exercise instruction |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gym programs                  | <input type="checkbox"/> General conversation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Others (please specify) _____ |   |

3.4 Which English skills are required in your workplace?

- |                                    |                                   |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Listening | <input type="checkbox"/> Speaking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reading   | <input type="checkbox"/> Writing  |

3.5 Which English skills do you use the most often in your workplace?

- |                                    |                                   |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Listening | <input type="checkbox"/> Speaking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reading   | <input type="checkbox"/> Writing  |

3.7 How is listening significant to your job?

- |                                 |                                     |                                   |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Highly | <input type="checkbox"/> Moderately | <input type="checkbox"/> Slightly |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|

3.8 How is speaking significant to your job?

- |                                 |                                     |                                   |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Highly | <input type="checkbox"/> Moderately | <input type="checkbox"/> Slightly |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|

3.9 How is reading significant to your job?

- |                                 |                                     |                                   |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Highly | <input type="checkbox"/> Moderately | <input type="checkbox"/> Slightly |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|

3.10 How is writing significant to your job?

- |                                 |                                     |                                   |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Highly | <input type="checkbox"/> Moderately | <input type="checkbox"/> Slightly |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|

#### **Part 4 English Problems of the Participants while Communicating with Foreign Customers**

4.1 Which English skills do you find the most problematic?

- |                                    |                                   |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Listening | <input type="checkbox"/> Speaking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reading   | <input type="checkbox"/> Writing  |

4.4 How often do you find listening problematic when it is required in your workplace?

- |                                    |                                     |   |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Regularly | <input type="checkbox"/> Moderately | <input type="checkbox"/> Not very often |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|



## BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

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