

English Skills of Airline Business Instructors at Universities in Pattumtani Province

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Abstract

In this paper, the researcher examines the types of English skills which airline business instructors frequently engage in, to determine what the airline business instructors plan to do themselves to improve their English competence and to explore the assistance which the airline instructors need. In selecting members of the sample population, the researcher interviewed twenty five participants regarding the types of English skills which airline business instructors engage in, the plan for improving English skills, and the assistance which they need. Findings are as follows: With regard to their competence in each English skill, the results show that they use speaking, listening and reading skill for their daily working life more frequently than writing skills. Some airline business instructors revealed that they tried to use English for teaching their students in some subjects. According to the data concerning their intention of improving their English skills and the ways to enhance their English skills the results show that they take part in many activities to enhance their communicative English skills, and most of them tried to joint in international conference and many of them tried to do the research in English. According to the data concerning the assistance for improving their English skills and the ways to enhance their English skills, the results show that seminar and international conference may help them to exchange their knowledge. Moreover, taking English courses for special purpose may help such as TOEIC course. Additionally, preparing English course for instructors should be taken in the reason that preparing instructors continue to study in Professional degree. This is very significance such as IELTS or TOEFL.

ทักษะทางภาษาอังกฤษของอาจารย์สาขาธุรกิจการบินในมหาวิทยาลัยจังหวัดปทุมธานี

งานวิจัยเล่มนี้ ผู้วิจัยมีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อสอบถามโอกาสในการใช้ทักษะภาษาอังกฤษแต่ละประเภทของอาจารย์สาขาธุรกิจการบินรวมทั้งสอบถามอาจารย์สาขาธุรกิจการบินถึงแผนที่จะพัฒนาตัวเองด้านการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษ อีกทั้งงานวิจัยเล่มนี้ยังวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อสอบถามความคิดเห็นของอาจารย์สาขาธุรกิจการบินถึงความช่วยเหลือที่ต้องการเพื่อพัฒนาตัวเองในการพัฒนาทักษะด้านภาษาอังกฤษ เครื่องมือที่ใช้ในการวิจัยคือ การสัมภาษณ์ ผู้วิจัยได้สัมภาษณ์อาจารย์สาขาธุรกิจการบินในจังหวัดปทุมธานีจำนวน 5 มหาวิทยาลัยได้แก่ มหาวิทยาลัยนอกรุงเทพ มหาวิทยาลัยรังสิต มหาวิทยาลัยกรุงเทพ มหาวิทยาลัยอีสเทิร์นเอเชีย มหาวิทยาลัยวิทาลัยราชภัฏวไลยอลงกรณ์ รวมทั้งสิ้น 25 คน ผู้วิจัยได้ทำการสัมภาษณ์อาจารย์สาขาธุรกิจการบิน เกี่ยวกับโอกาสในการใช้ทักษะทางภาษาอังกฤษทั้ง 4 ทักษะคือ ฟัง พูด อ่านและเขียน การวางแผนในการพัฒนาด้านภาษาอังกฤษของตัวเองของอาจารย์สาขาธุรกิจการบิน และ ความช่วยเหลือที่ทางอาจารย์ต้องการเพื่อจะนำมาพัฒนาทักษะด้านภาษาอังกฤษ ผลการวิจัยพบว่า อาจารย์สาขาธุรกิจมีโอกาสใช้ทักษะทางภาษาอังกฤษทั้ง 4 ด้าน อาจารย์สาขาธุรกิจการบินใช้ทักษะการฟัง พูด และ อ่าน เป็นส่วนมากในชีวิตประจำวัน ซึ่งมากกว่าทักษะการเขียน โดยปกติแล้วจะใช้ทักษะการ ฟังและการ พูดในห้องเรียนอีกด้วย แต่อย่างไรก็ตามบางวิชาจำเป็นต้องใช้ภาษาไทย เนื่องจากเนื้อหาค่อนข้างจะยากในการอธิบายและยากที่นักศึกษาจะเข้าใจ นอกจากนี้อาจารย์บางท่านยังมีการใช้ทักษะการเขียนในการทำวิจัยอีกด้วย อีกทั้งผลการวิจัยพบว่าอาจารย์มีการวางแผนที่จะพัฒนาตนเองในการพัฒนาทักษะภาษาอังกฤษ เช่น มีการเรียนสมัครเรียนภาษาอังกฤษนอกมหาวิทยาลัย เช่น TOEIC TOFEL และ IELTS อีกทั้งอาจารย์บางท่านได้เข้าร่วมการสัมมนาต่างๆ เป็นประจำ ผลการวิจัยพบว่าการเข้าร่วม international conference นอกจากจะทำให้อาจารย์ได้รับความรู้ใหม่ๆแล้ว ยังเป็นสิ่งที่ช่วยทำให้อาจารย์พัฒนาภาษาอังกฤษละกระตือรือร้นที่จะพัฒนาตัวเองอีกด้วย นอกจากนี้ผลการวิจัยยังพบว่าอาจารย์สาขาธุรกิจการบินยังต้องการความช่วยเหลือเพื่อพัฒนาตนเองในด้านภาษาอังกฤษ เช่น อาจารย์ทางสาขาธุรกิจการบินอยากให้ทางมหาวิทยาลัยเปิดอบรมหลักสูตร TOEIL และ IELTS เพราะอาจารย์บางท่านมีการวางแผนที่จะศึกษาต่อปริญญาเอก ซึ่ง โครงการอบรมหลักสูตร TOEIL และ IELTS จะเป็นประโยชน์อย่างมากต่ออาจารย์ในอนาคต อีกทั้ง การเปิดอบรมหลักสูตรเหล่านี้ทำให้อาจารย์กระตือรือร้นที่จะพัฒนาตนเองต่อไป

Background

Kitao (1996) stated that, “English is not the most widely spoken language in the world in terms of the number of native speakers but English is the most widely spoken language from people around the world. In fact, English is used not only for communication by native speakers but also is used between native speakers and non-native speakers. Additionally, English is used broadly and it has been a powerful language for many years because of the British imperialism around the world and the big influence of the United States in the world economy in the 20th century. Furthermore, Wisanu Sa-nguandee (2009) mentioned that English is the most commonly used language among foreign language speakers, when people from different nationalities want to communicate, they commonly use English language. Therefore, English is called “the language of communication”. Moreover, speaking English will enable people to contact each other from all over the world and to travel more easily. The main purpose of using English is to make understanding in the same way of people who speak different languages and it will lead all those people to the success they hope for. Indeed, there is no denying that English language is playing increasingly influential roles in ASEAN Community and Thailand’s economic as English is the language that will be used to communicate among ASEAN people. So, building ASEAN Community in 2015, Thai people must improve ability in using English for communication. Kasiness (2016) stated that globalization is a crucial changer of the world. The world is in the era of unlimited information, thanks to the development of information technology. People in almost every corner of the world can communicate easily and swiftly, so the countries around the world are closer. The world is changing in every dimension-society, economics, politics, and technology. As a result of information technology development and the adaptation of the economic structure of world politics, many countries around the world must rely on each other and communicate more than in the past. Additionally, globalization makes the world smaller. People in remote areas can contact to each other within a second, like a “global village”. It seems that natural obstacles, which are the natural borders, cannot block the communication of people anymore. However, all people need a tool in the form of language to translate their needs of communication, so English, which is used as this tool, may be called a world language. (Kasinee, 2016). At

the present, Thailand is taking in a part of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC). The purposes of AEC are building up international cooperation and economic growth, as well as with promoting peace and stability in the region (Amer, 2003). The ASEAN Economic Community consists of 10 countries: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam; so people in each country need to use English as official language or working language to communicate in the community. More importantly, English has played an important role for Thai economic development in term of import, export, transportation, etc. More importantly, Thailand might be the hub of transportation because economic activities of AEC also comes with free flow of capital, goods -services, investments and labors (Association of Southeast Asian Nations, 2015). Hence, airline business industry seems to play important roles for Thai economic. Nowadays, a lot of Thai students are interesting to study in airline business major because a lot of them dream to work for airline industry. Especially, many of them want to be a flight attendant, a pilot, and other careers. Therefore, we can't deny that they need to have good English skills. Airline business instructors seem to be the key factor that may help them succeed in the near future. This means that airline business instructors must have good English skill and they should use English fluently. Therefore, this study aims to explore what types of English communication airline business lectures frequently engage in, to determine what the airline business instructors plan to do themselves to improve their English competence and to explore the assistance which the airline instructors need .The analysis of the data will help complete this study and may bring benefits for airline business instructors, so it will be helpful

Methodology

Population

The population of the study comprises of airline business instructors both male and female at universities in Patumtani: North Bangkok university, Rangsit university, Bangkok university, Eastern Asia university, Rachapat Walailongkorn university. All participants totally are 25.

The Research Instrument

The in depth interview was used for investigating. They are asked to all participants; this approach is designed for airline instructors. The interview questions are on the basis of the purpose of the study, which mainly focused on the types of English skills which airline business instructors engage in, the future plan of the airline business instructors in order to improve their English competence and the assistance which the airline instructors need. Moreover, the tape recording is used to record the interviews with the participants

Interview Analysis

After the data was gathered, the researcher listened to the tapes and wrote transcripts of the interviews. The data gained by interview was re-read in order to provide useful information. This part was analyzed and interpreted using a qualitative approach. The results of the interview data would be beneficial in terms of discussion and further explanation from the participants.

The Findings

According to findings from the interview, it was found that all participants use four skills of English, the results indicate that overall use was only occasional in the classroom with their students but they sometimes use English for communication outside the classroom. With regard to their competence in each English skill, the airline business instructors sometimes use speaking, listening, reading and writing skill.

Concerning the questions of the interview, it can be seen that speaking, listening and reading skill were used for their daily working life more frequently than writing skills. Some airline business instructors revealed that they tried to use English for teaching their students in some subjects, even though it still fell into the “sometimes” range because a lot of their students preferred Thai Language in difficult subject. However, listening skill was used in the class. Many instructors said that they used listening skill while their students come to present in front of the class such as English for ground service, English for inflight service but other subjects they use Thai. This is an interesting result that was correlated with other data that the researcher

obtained from the study. In contrast, the airline business instructors revealed that they sometimes use writing skill outside the class room such as some airline business instructors have been doing research in English. Moreover, a few participants revealed that they have been writing English book using in the specific subject such as English for airline business and English for ground passenger service. In addition, a lot of airlines business instructors said that they also used writing skill when they need to contact with their coworkers by writing e-mail.

According to the data concerning their intention of improving their English skills and the ways to enhance their English skills all the airline business instructors said that they take part in activities to enhance their communicative English skills, and most of them tried to joint in international conference and many of them tried to do the research in English. Additionally, some of them like watching soundtrack movies, used the Internet, listened to or sang English songs, and watched news or programs in English in order to enhance their English skills. Additionally, a few participants revealed that they are taking English course outside university because they plan to study in PH.D so this is very benefit. They said that TOEIC, IELTS and TOEFL course are advantages for instructors in the university because all instructors need to take the test if they plan to study in the future.

According to the data concerning the assistance for improving their English skills and the ways to enhance their English skills all the airline business instructors said that seminar and international conference may help them to exchange their knowledge. In addition, taking English course is also benefit for them because some participants plan to study in PH.D. They said that TOEIC, IELTS and TOEFL course are advantages for instructors in the university because all instructors need to take the test if they plan to study in the future. However, there is challenging for some of them to use English in the class because some students are still poor in English. The participants revealed that before they become the instructors they use to work for many airlines. Therefore, using English is not the problem for them. However, the challenging thing is using English for teaching in every subject is very difficult. However, a few participants said that preparing English course may benefit for some instructors in the way that they can use English doing their research and

present their research to international stage such as they can go abroad to present their research on academic seminar. Additionally, preparing English course for instructors should be taken in the reason that preparing instructors continue to study in Professional degree. This is very significance such as TOEIC, IELTS or TOEFL.

Conclusion

It can conclude that speaking, listening and reading skill were used for airline business instructors in their working life more frequently than writing skills. Some airline business instructors revealed that they tried to use English for teaching their students in some subjects, even though it still fell into the “sometimes” range because a lot of their students preferred Thai Language in difficult subject. However, listening skill was used in the class. Many instructors said that they used listening skill while their students come to present in front of the class such as English for ground service, English for inflight service but other subjects they use Thai. This is an interesting result that was correlated with other data that the researcher obtained from the study.

However, the airline business instructors revealed that they sometimes use writing skill outside the class room such as some airline business instructors have been doing research in English. Moreover, a few participants revealed that they have been writing English book using in the specific subject such as English for airline business and English for ground passenger service. In addition, a lot of airlines business instructors said that they also used writing skill when they need to contact with their coworkers by writing e-mail. Regarding to the Airline instructors’ intention of improving their English skills and the ways to enhance their English skills are based on their daily activities. Most of them tried to joint in international conference and many of them tried to do the research in English. Additionally, some of them like watching soundtrack movies, used the Internet, listened to or sang English songs, and watched news or programs in English to enhance their English skills. Additionally, a few participants revealed that they are taking English course outside university because they plan to study in PH.D so this is very benefit. They said that TOEIC, IELTS and TOEFL course are very important for instructors in the university because all instructors need to take the test if they plan to study in the future. Concerning to the assistance for improving their English skills and the ways to enhance their

English skills all the airline business instructors may conclude that seminar and international conference may help them to exchange their knowledge. The participants revealed that before they become the instructors they use to work for many airlines. Therefore, using English is not the problem for them. However, the challenging thing is using English for teaching in every subject is very difficult.

However, a few participants said that preparing English course may benefit for some instructors in the way that they can use English doing their research and present their research to international conference or seminar. Additionally, preparing English course for instructors should be taken in the reason that preparing instructors continue to study in PH.D. This is very essential such as TOEIC, IELTS or TOEFL.

Limitations of the Study

There are some limitations evident and they have to be considered because they impact the findings of this study. These limitations are as follows:

1. The limited number and locations of the subjects. The subjects of this study were limited to airline business instructors in Patumtani province, so these subjects might not represent the all over Thailand.
2. The second limitation is that a few instructors were not comfortable to be interviewed because at that time they were teaching. However, the researcher gathered more information from the heads of airline business departments.

Recommendations for Further Study

Regarding the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made for future studies in this field.

First, owing to the fact that this research is limited to subjects who are airline business instructors, future research should be done with the instructors in other departments of universities; doing so will help to establish the reliability of the findings of this study. Second, future researchers may also want to study the competence of language use among instructors in the universities and find out the appropriate ways to design English courses for them. This would be greatly beneficial for English communication curricula. Lastly, future

researchers may want to study how the university can support the instructors to improve their English skills or do the university plan to help the instructors improve English competence.

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