

English Skills Problems of Airline Business Students of North Bangkok University During Taking Internship Programs

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Abstract

In this paper, the researcher examines the problems about English skills of airline business students during they're taking internship program outside university, to examine how the airline business students solve the problems when they're working and to explore the assistance from the instructors how to help students prepare themselves before they take the internship programs. In selecting members of the sample population, the researcher interviewed forty five-participants; thirty four for students and eleven participants for instructors regarding the problems of English skills that airline business students facing, the solution when the airline business student have the problems during working, and the assistance which they need from their instructors before they taking internship programs. Findings are as follows: With regard to the English problems, the results show that many of them have problems about speaking and listening skills. A lot of students have to use English language to communicate with the foreigners at the airport. They revealed that sometime they did not understand and they did not know how to speak English with the foreigners. In some situations they have to work with Chinese passengers and they try to speak with them. According to solution when they're having the problems about English skills, the participants revealed that they try to speak clearly and slowly. Sometime they use body language to communicate with the passengers and most of them revealed that they have problems in listening skill because accent of passengers are different so this is difficult for them to understand. According to the data concerning the assistance in order to help students prepare themselves before taking internship program, the participants revealed that proving a special course is a need and necessary before students taking internship program.

ปัญหาด้านทักษะภาษาอังกฤษของนักศึกษาสาขาธุรกิจการbinระหว่างฝึกประสบการณ์วิชาชีพ มหาวิทยาลัยนอร์ทกรุงเทพ

งานวิจัยเล่มนี้ ผู้วิจัยมีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อสอบถามถึงปัญหาการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษของนักศึกษาสาขาธุรกิจการbin มหาวิทยาลัยนอร์ทกรุงเทพ ขณะที่กำลังฝึกงาน การแก้ปัญหาขณะที่กำลังปฏิบัติงาน อีกทั้งวิจัยเล่มนี้ยังศึกษาถึงแนวทางความช่วยเหลือจากอาจารย์ในการให้ความช่วยเหลือแก่นักศึกษา เครื่องมือที่ใช้ในการวิจัยคือ การสัมภาษณ์ ผู้วิจัยได้สัมภาษณ์นักศึกษาสาขาธุรกิจการbin ชั้นปีที่ 4 มหาวิทยาลัยนอร์ทกรุงเทพ รวมทั้งสิ้น 34 คน เกี่ยวกับปัญหาที่เจอด้านทักษะภาษาอังกฤษและการแก้ปัญหาขณะทำงาน นอกจากนี้ผู้วิจัยได้ทำการสัมภาษณ์อาจารย์สาขาธุรกิจการbin และอาจารย์สาขาอังกฤษธุรกิจเกี่ยวกับความช่วยเหลือที่อาจารย์ให้แก่นักศึกษาหลังทราบถึงปัญหา ผลการวิจัยพบว่า ในด้านปัญหาด้านทักษะภาษาอังกฤษของนักศึกษาสาขาธุรกิจการbin มีปัญหาเกิดขึ้นทั้ง 4 ทักษะคือ ฟัง พูด อ่าน เขียน ซึ่งทักษะการพูดและการฟังพบในนักศึกษาที่ปฏิบัติงานที่ต้องติดต่อโดยตรงกับผู้โดยสาร เช่น สำเนียงของผู้โดยสารบางประเทศยากที่จะเข้าใจ ผู้โดยสารบางคนสอบถามข้อมูลที่นักศึกษาไม่คุ้นชิน ทำให้ไม่เข้าใจและยากที่จะพูดเพื่อตอบคำถาม ซึ่งปัญหาด้านนี้กระทบกับปัญหาด้านการพูดของนักศึกษาเช่นกัน ส่วนปัญหาด้านทักษะการอ่านและการเขียนส่วนใหญ่พบกับนักศึกษาที่ฝึกงานในออฟฟิตของสายการบิน เช่น การอ่านออกเสียงไม่ถูกต้องอาจจะสื่อความหมายผิดได้ในบางโอกาส และนอกจากนี้การเขียนอาจจะเกิดข้อผิดพลาดในงานออฟฟิตที่ต้องติดต่อกับเพื่อนร่วมงานต่างชาติในการเขียนอีเมลล์เป็นต้น แต่อย่างไรก็ตามนักศึกษาทั้งหมดพยายามที่จะแก้ปัญหาที่เกิดขึ้น เช่น นักศึกษาที่ต้องพูดคุยกับผู้โดยสารชาวต่างชาติพยายามจะพูดให้ชัดและพูดให้ช้าเพื่อให้เกิดความเข้าใจมากขึ้น นักศึกษาบางคนใช้ວຽນภาษามาแก้ปัญหาในการสื่อสารเพื่อให้การทำงานเสร็จสิ้นด้วยดี สำหรับการแก้ปัญหาของนักศึกษาในออฟฟิตส่วนใหญ่ นักศึกษาจะขอความช่วยเหลือจากพนักงานผู้ดูแลนักศึกษาฝึกงานในองค์กรนั้นและนำความผิดพลาดมาแก้ไข เช่น การตอบอีเมลล์ที่ต้องใช้ภาษาอังกฤษ เป็นต้น อีกทั้งการสัมภาษณ์อาจารย์สาขาธุรกิจการbin และอาจารย์ภาษาอังกฤษในการยื่นความช่วยเหลือแก่นักศึกษาฝึกงานพบจากปัญหาที่เกิดขึ้นกับนักศึกษารุ่นปัจจุบันทางสาขาธุรกิจการbin เตรียมพร้อมให้ความช่วยเหลือแก่นักศึกษาฝึกงาน โดยทางสาขาธุรกิจการbin จะเปิดคอร์สพิเศษสำหรับนักศึกษาที่จะไปฝึกงาน โดยจะเปิดคอร์สอบรมเสริมทักษะด้านการพูดและการฟัง ให้กับนักศึกษาที่จะไปฝึกงาน นักศึกษาที่ต้องติดต่อประสานงานกับผู้โดยสารชาวต่างชาติโดยตรง อีกทั้งจัดเตรียมกิจกรรมที่

Background

English is used not only for communication by native speakers but also is used between native speakers and non-native speakers. 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 Kitao (1996). 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. English is the central language of people who come from different destinations around the world. So English is the language for communication. 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 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 is country that located in the middle of South East Asian so the country 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, transportation industry might be the main factor the increase revenue for our country. Therefore, 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. More importantly, students who study in this major must have good English skills because in the future they need work with the foreigners and they need to use English for communication with their passengers. At the present time many airlines requires TOEIC score from students who want to take internship

program and also who want to work in airline industry. 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 students both male and female, Airline business instructors and English lectures of North Bangkok university universities. All participants totally are 45; thirty-four for are airline business students, five instructors are airline business instructors and six instructor are English lectures.

The Research Instrument

The in depth interview was used for investigating. They are asked to all participants; this approach is designed for airline business instructors, airline instructors and English lecturers. The interview questions are on the basis of the purpose of the study, which mainly focused on the problems of English skills which airline business students engage in during taking internship program, the solution, and future plan of the instructors in order to improve their English competence for students before taking internship program. 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 airline business students have problem in English skills including four skills; listening, speaking, writing and speaking skill. For instance; students who took internship program concerning communicating with the foreigners have problems in listening and speaking skills. The participants revealed that when they have to communicate with the foreigners at the airport they didn't understand in some words because they didn't familiar with the question. So in some situations they can't answer the questions from the foreigners. Moreover, a lot of participants said that the accent of the foreigners is the problems for them because it is very difficult to understand. They revealed that in the airport there are a lot of foreigners coming from different countries. They said that Indian passenger' accent is some time make they get wrong understanding. Concerning speaking problems, the participants revealed that speaking problems may occur after they have listening skill problems. The participants said that in some situations the foreigners ask them the questions that they didn't familiar with so this is the cause that makes them have speaking problems together in the same time. Concerning the questions of the interview, it can be seen that speaking and listening skills problem were found in the participants who have to communicate with the foreigners. However, reading and writing skill problems were found with participants who work in the office of the airlines. The participants revealed that they have reading skill problem when they have to work with airline staff in the office. For example, some participants stated that when they were assigned from airline staff to read telex and message sometime they pronounced it wrong. According to writing skill problems, the participants stated that they also have writing skill when they're working in the office. The participants revealed that they were assigned by airline staff to write e- mail in English but it is difficult for them and they do it slowly. Additionally, some participants said that sometime the airline staffs assigned them to write memo in English but they can't do it. So they try to write it in Thai and translate it in English later. Concerning the solution when the airline business students have problems in English skills the participants revealed that they try to fix it suddenly to make communication goes smoothly. The participants revealed that in case that they have problems in listening and speaking skill they try to use body language to communicate with the foreigners in order to make communication goes on. And some time when the participants have problems in reading skill in the office the airline staffs try to help them. For example, some participants stated that when they were assigned from airline staff to read telex and message sometime they pronounced it wrong. So the airline staffs teach them to pronounce it correctly. Concerning writing skill problems was found with the students who work in the office. Some participants revealed that sometime they have to write e- mail in English but they still wrote it wrong in some sentences. And in some situation that they have to write the memo in meeting they can't do it because they never do it before so they to write it in Thai and they try to write it in English later. However, some participants revealed the airline staffs try to help them and teach them in some situations.

According to the data concerning the assistance from the instructors both airline business instructors and English lectures found that many participants said that the instructors must help them to prepare English skills before students taking internship program. Some participants revealed that a special course is need and necessary. For example, the instructors have to know the position before the students taking internship program so that they

may set a course that match with the position that students are going to work in the near future. Some participants said that actually, English instructors may set the program that make the students learning in the class which concerning internship programs such as reading telex that use a special word that it quite difficult for them. So if the students can read it in the class they might work well in reality. Some instructors said that launching some programs promoting communicative English skill may be beneficial.

Additionally, some participants said that instructors may put more English activity in class not only in English but also others class. For example, in ground passenger service class the instructors may use English in teaching them and give students a lot of assignments in English. Students may come to present about the airline, job description, and general information in English. More importantly, all instructors agree that next year airline business department will add more English subject in this curriculum in order to improve English skills for airline business students. Moreover, TOEIC course is very important for students in every major because after students graduate in university can use TOEIC score to apply a job in airline industry.

Conclusion

It can conclude that airline business students have problems in English skill including four skills; listening, speaking, writing and speaking skill. Students who took internship program concerning communicating with the foreigners have problems in listening and speaking skills. When they have to communicate with the foreigners at the airport they didn't understand in some words because they didn't familiar with the question. So in some situations they can't answer the questions from the foreigners. Moreover, a lot of participants said that the accent of the foreigners is the problems for them because it is very difficult to understand. It was found that in the airport there are a lot of foreigners coming from different countries. Especially, Indian passenger' accent is some time make they get wrong understanding. Concerning speaking problems, it was found that speaking problems may occur after they have listening skill problems.

In some situations the foreigners ask them the questions that they didn't familiar with so this is the cause that makes them have speaking problems together in the same time. It can be seen that speaking and listening skills problem were found in the participants who have to communicate with the foreigners. However, reading and writing skill problems were found with participants who work in the office of the airlines. They have reading skill problem when they have to work with airline staff in the office. For example, some participants stated that when they were assigned from airline staff to read telex and message sometime they pronounced it wrong. According to writing skill problems, the participants stated that they also have writing skill when they're working in the office. When they were assigned by airline staff to write e- mail in English but it is difficult for them and they do it slowly. Additionally, some participants said that sometime the airline staffs assigned them to write memo in English but they can't do it. So they try to write it in Thai and translate it in English later. Concerning the solution when the airline business students have problems in English skills the participants revealed that they try to fix it suddenly to

make communication goes smoothly. However, in case that they have problems in listening and speaking skill they try to use body language to communicate with the foreigners in order to make communication goes on. And some time when the participants have problems in reading skill in the office the airline staffs try to help them. For example, some participants stated that when they were assigned from airline staff to read telex and message sometime they pronounced it wrong. So the airline staffs teach them to pronounce it correctly. Concerning writing skill problems was found with the students who work in the office. Some participants revealed that sometime they have to write e- mail in English but they still wrote it wrong in some sentences. And in some situation that they have to write the memo in meeting they can't do it because they never do it before so they to write it in Thai and they try to write it in English later. However, some participants revealed the airline staffs try to help them and teach them in some situations. According to the data concerning the assistance from the instructors both airline business instructors and English lecturers found that the instructors need to help them to prepare English skills before students taking internship program. Some participants revealed that a special course is need and necessary. For example, the instructors have to know the position before the students taking internship program so that they may set a course that match with the position that students are going to work in the near future.

More importantly, English instructors may set the program that make the students learning in the class which concerning internship programs such as reading telex that use a special word that it quite difficult for them. So if the students can read it in the class they might work well in reality and launching some programs promoting communicative English skill may be beneficial for them. Additionally, adding more English activity in class not only in English but also others class. For example, in ground passenger service class the instructors may use English in teaching them and give students a lot of assignments in English. Students may come to present about the airline, job description, and general information in English. More importantly, all instructors agree that next year airline business department will add more English subject in this curriculum in order to improve English skills for airline business students. Moreover, TOEIC course is very important for students in every major because after students graduate in university can use TOEIC score to apply a job in airline industry. More importantly, at the present time airline business major has the policy that airline business students have to get 550 score before they graduate from university.

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 students in North Bangkok university, 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 and the head of English department.

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 students, future research should be done with the students 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 airline business students and the foreigners in the airport. This would be greatly beneficial for English communication curricula.

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