



**NEEDS ANALYSIS IN ENGLISH COMMUNICATION
SKILLS AMONG THAI EMPLOYEES OF
YUSEN LOGISTICS (THAILAND) CO., LTD.**

BY

MR. NUTTAPOL YOUNGYUENSIN

**AN INDEPENDENT STUDY PAPER SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL
FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH FOR CAREERS
LANGUAGE INSTITUTE
THAMMASAT UNIVERSITY
ACADEMIC YEAR 2015
COPYRIGHT OF THAMMASAT UNIVERSITY**

**NEEDS ANALYSIS IN ENGLISH COMMUNICATION
SKILLS AMONG THAI EMPLOYEES OF
YUSEN LOGISTICS (THAILAND) CO., LTD.**

BY

MR. NUTTAPOL YOUNGYUENSIN

**AN INDEPENDENT STUDY PAPER SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
OF MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH FOR CAREERS**

LANGUAGE INSTITUTE

THAMMASAT UNIVERSITY

ACADEMIC YEAR 2015

COPYRIGHT OF THAMMASAT UNIVERSITY



THAMMASAT UNIVERSITY
LANGUAGE INSTITUTE

INDEPENDENT STUDY PAPER

BY

MR. NUTTAPOL YOUNGYUENSIN

ENTITLED

NEEDS ANALYSIS IN ENGLISH COMMUNICATION SKILLS
AMONG THAI EMPLOYEES OF
YUSEN LOGISTICS (THAILAND) CO., LTD.

was approved as partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts in English for Careers

on July 16, 2016

Chairman




(Assistant Professor Wattjana Suriyatham, Ed.D.)

Member and Advisor



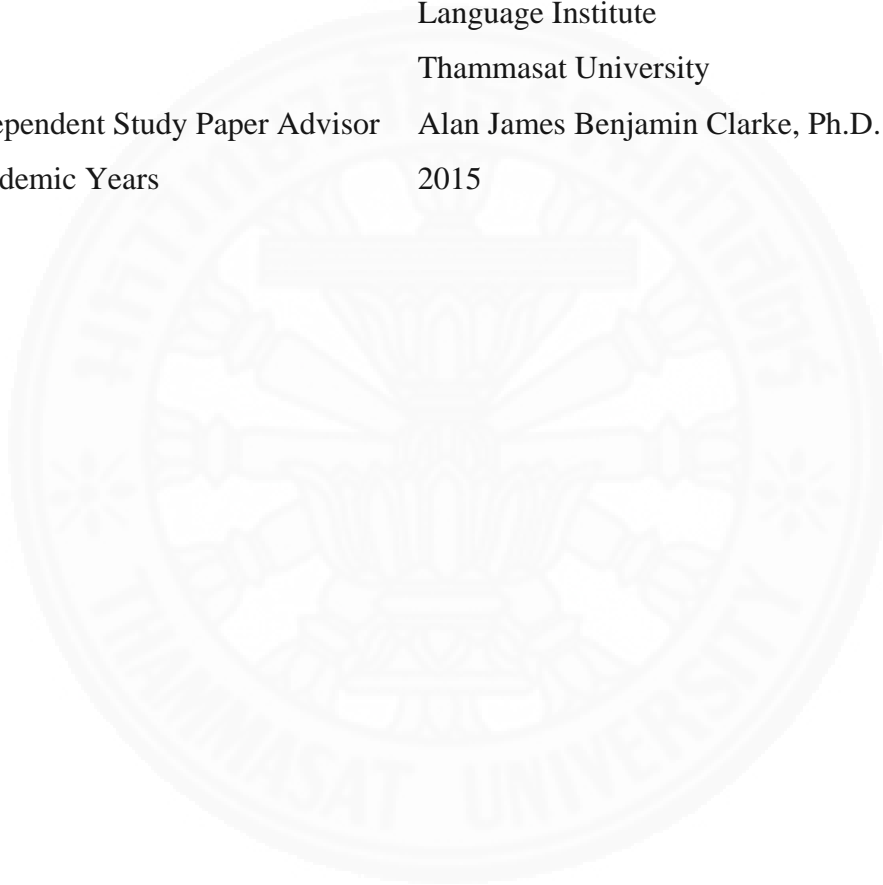
(Alan James Benjamin Clarke, Ph.D.)

Dean



(Associate Professor Pornsiri Singhapreecha, Ph.D.)

Independent Study Paper Title	NEEDS ANALYSIS IN ENGLISH COMMUNICATION SKILLS AMONG THAI EMPLOYEES OF YUSEN LOGISTICS (THAILAND) CO., LTD.
Author	Mr. Nuttapol Youngyuensin
Degree	Master of Arts
Major Field/Faculty/University	English for Careers Language Institute Thammasat University
Independent Study Paper Advisor	Alan James Benjamin Clarke, Ph.D.
Academic Years	2015



ABSTRACT

With the dynamic change of the business environment in the logistics industry, effective English communication can give a competitive advantage in business transactions and allow the employees to accomplish their tasks. This study aimed to assess the needs in English communication skill perceived by the employees working in Ocean Freight Forwarding Group of Yusen Logistics (Thailand) Co., Ltd. in order to set up an appropriate training course that suits the learners' needs.

The respondents were 40 Thai employees working in OFFG division. The research instrument used was a survey questionnaire and a semi-structured interview. The questionnaire consisted of four parts, including background information, English background, difficulties concerning English skills, and the needs to improve English skill. The interview was completed one week later and the questions were based on the result of the questionnaire.

The findings of the study revealed that the respondents perceived writing as the most problematic skill followed by speaking. In addition, they still had the need to improve their English skills, especially in the areas related to business writing, grammar, and vocabulary in order to do their work. The organization should consider the learners' needs when setting up the training course so that the employees can work effectively and efficiently.

Keywords: Needs analysis, assessment, English communication, ESP, logistics, Thailand

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study would not have been completed without the help and patience of many people to whom I would like to express my sincere gratitude.

First of all, I feel deeply grateful to my supervisor, Dr. Benjamin Clarke, for his kind supervision, valuable advice and continuous warm encouragement. I am impressed by the good cooperation from my friends who work in Yusen Logistics (Thailand) for helping in collecting the data although they are very busy. Also, I would like to give my thanks to my MEC friends who helped me successfully study through these two academic years. Last but not least, I feel profoundly indebted to my body, mind and spirit which are always strong and tolerant of the tough and challenging situations while studying for a master's degree and working at the same time.

Nuttapol Youngyuenin



TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	(1)
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	(2)
LIST OF TABLES	(5)
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background of the study	1
1.2 Research questions	3
1.3 Objectives of the study	4
1.4 Scope of the study	4
1.5 Significance of the study	4
1.6 Organization of the study	5
CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE	6
2.1 Communication and language barriers	6
2.1.1 The importance of communication in business	6
2.1.2 The impact of language barriers	8
2.2 Needs analysis and English for specific purpose	9
2.2.1 The history and role of needs analysis	9
2.2.2 English for specific purpose	12
2.3 Relevant research	14
CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	16
3.1 Respondents	16
3.2 Research instrument	17

	(4)
3.3 Procedures	18
3.4 Data analysis	19
CHAPTER 4 RESULTS	20
4.1 English background of respondents	20
4.2 Problems and difficulties concerning English language skill	22
4.3 Needs of English skill improvement	26
4.4 Short interviews	28
CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	31
5.1 Summary of the study	31
5.1.1 Objectives of the study	31
5.1.2 Respondents, materials and procedures	31
5.2 Summary of the findings	32
5.2.1 Questionnaire results	32
5.2.2 Interview results	34
5.3 Discussion	35
5.4 Conclusions	38
5.5 Recommendations for further research	39
REFERENCES	41
APPENDICES	
APPENDIX A	46
BIOGRAPHY	50

LIST OF TABLES

Tables	Page
3.1 Background information of respondents	16
4.1 English at university and extra study of English	20
4.2 Frequency of English usage in work	21
4.3 Degree of problem and importance of respondents' English skill	22
4.4 Score rating of level of agreement	23
4.5 Difficulties related to listening skill	23
4.6 Difficulties related to speaking skill	24
4.7 Difficulties related to reading skill	24
4.8 Difficulties related to writing skill	25
4.9 Score rating of level of need	26
4.10 Needs in English skill improvement	27

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

English language obviously plays a very important role as a communication tool in the global community. English language is not only needed by native speakers for communication but also required by many people who are non-native speakers for several purposes in their daily lives such as communicating with people from different countries, doing business in the international setting, and catching up with the news around the world. In addition, English is used as a means of communication in order to send and receive information as well as to share thoughts and ideas and build good relationships between people in different countries. Consequently, it has become an international language and is widely used for understanding as well as exchanging information among people all over the world.

English language has become an essential skill in various fields and occupations. Numerous fields of business such as the medical industry, the airline industry as well as many logistics and supply chain industries also use English as a channel of communication to deliver products and services to the customers. A person's success in their career may depend on having adequate language skills and the ability to communicate in English, which can help them to understand the needs of customers and provide the right level of services to them. If a person is successful in their job, it means the company where that person working will gain more customers and improve their reputation as well. Therefore, it can be said that good language skill in communication is a factor to determine the business success and customer satisfaction.

With increasing business pressure in a global market place, efficient and effective English communication can provide a real competitive advantage as more and more companies put more focus on operating in an international environment. The supply chain and logistics industry is also one of the businesses that operate to

serve the customers wherever they are in the world. Since the nature of the work is the management of the movement and storage of goods and services in different locations and countries, it requires an international coordination with the related parties to ensure the smooth flow of goods, information and other resources from the manufacturers to the end clients. Therefore, English has become the means of communication to form a connection between people who work in different countries in order to manage and keep track of information. This makes English an essential skill for people working in this kind of business.

Yusen Logistics (Thailand) Co., Ltd. (YLTH) is one of the leading logistics service providers in Thailand. The head office is at Ocean Insurance building which is located on Surawong road. Apart from the head office, the company also has many sub-branches and warehouses throughout Bangkok area as well as in Rayong province. Established since 1980, YLTH has extensive experience in providing inclusive worldwide logistics services in land transportation, air and ocean freight services, licensed customs brokerage, warehousing, container yards, container maintenance and repair, non-vessel operating common carriers as well as total logistics solutions tailored to the needs of customers. Following the recent increase of demands for a one-stop service for the whole distribution process, the company always seeks to develop and adapt the strategy that can quickly respond to customers' needs and ensure the best quality of service to customers (Yusen Logistics Web Publication, 2010a).

According to Yusen Logistics Web Publication (2010b), the company divides their core services into six areas which are air freight forwarding, ocean freight forwarding, transportation, customs house brokerage, origin cargo and vendor management, and warehousing. Freight forwarding service is one of the key businesses that the company focuses on. Freight forwarding is also regarded as one of the important links in the global supply chain as it provides the international shipments for customers around the world (Helk, 2013). Employees who work in this function are required to use English to communicate with both internal and external parties that are related to the work process such as communicating with carriers for

booking and vessel management, contacting warehouse people for cargo receipts and loading, as well as getting in touch with oversea agents to ensure the smooth flow of the process. Moreover, they need to know the rules and regulations in various countries in order to prepare the booking documents, shipping instructions and the data entry in tracking systems in response to the customer requirements.

As English language is operated as an important link to connect both manufacturers and customers in the international business environment, employees who work in the freight forwarding area should also have effective English skill to act as the agent in order to coordinate with the internal and external parties to ensure the smooth flow of communication. Thus, English training programs could be helpful to improve their language competency and enable the staff to confidently communicate with the customers. Since the learners' needs are the key factors to be considered in designing an appropriate language course that can meet their expectations, the results of need analysis in this study can help to determine and focus on the specific needs that will be used as a baseline to create a productive English course that will benefit the learners the most.

The main purpose of this study was to investigate which English language skills are the most problematic for the employees in YLTH in addition to determining the reasons behind those problems. An equally important aim was to investigate the required skills perceived to be most beneficial to the employees' work in order that a future English training course could be developed.

1.2 Research questions

Since English language is required to ensure the smooth flow of international communication, this study was conducted to answer the following questions:

1.2.1 Which English language skill(s) do the employees at YLTH perceive as the most problematic skills?

1.2.2 What are the difficulties that the employees at YLTH face in English communication skills?

1.2.3 Which are the English language skills the employees at YLTH most need to improve in order to support their work roles?

1.3 Objectives of the study

The objectives of this study are as follows:

1.3.1 To explore which English language skills the employees at YLTH perceive as the most problematic skills as well as the difficulties in performing those skills.

1.3.2 To investigate the specific language skills that the employees at YLTH need to learn to support their work roles.

1.4 Scope of the study

The study focuses on the English communication skills needed by the employees who work in the Ocean Freight Forwarding Group at YLTH during a certain period in order to determine which language skills are problematic and perceived as the required skills to support their careers. The population in this study is fifty employees who work in the Ocean Freight Forwarding Group section.

1.5 Significance of the study

Since the company provides various services to different types of customers in an international business setting, the employees are encouraged to use English language skills in communicating with both internal and external parties. Therefore, the findings of the needs analysis will be useful for the management in order to find

the appropriate training course to improve the English language skills of the employees at YLTH.

In addition, this study may also be beneficial to the needs of other companies in similar types of business settings. The management or the training manager of a similar company may be able to make use of the needs analysis in this study as a general guideline to set up their own training program, especially if the time for conducting a thorough needs analysis is limited.

1.6 Organization of the study

The study of needs analysis in English communication skills in this paper is divided into five chapters. The first chapter introduces the background of the study which describes the importance of English communication and the company overview. The second chapter is the review of literature that is particularly related to needs analysis. Then, the third chapter presents the methodology of how the data is collected and analyzed. The fourth chapter displays the results of the information obtained from the respondents. Finally, the summary of the study including discussion, conclusion, and recommendations are presented in the fifth chapter.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter presents the literature review concerning the importance of communication in business, the impact of language barriers, the role of needs analysis and English for specific purposes. Previous related studies are also mentioned in the final section.

2.1 Communication and language barriers

2.1.1 The importance of communication in business

Communication is regarded as a part of daily life. Everybody needs to communicate to share their knowledge and information with others. However, effective communication depends on individual communication skills. The better are the communication skills, the better the message can be conveyed. The purposes of communication can be varied due to the situations but the most important part is to understand how to communicate effectively. The most basic forms of communication are verbal communication and written communication. According to Hoffmann (2010), communication is the act of transmitting a message, either giving or receiving, of any kind of information. In order to communicate effectively, adequate communication skills are an essential requirement needed for success in life.

Effective communication is a crucial part of successful organizations. Even the most splendid idea is meaningless if it cannot be shared with others (Agarwal & Garg, 2012). Better communication skill in the workplace enables both employees and employers to work together smoothly and effectively, which can result in improving performance and increasing productivity. The importance of having effective communication often seems to be neglected by people in the organization which can lead the organization into many critical situations and difficulties in several aspects. For example, think of a place where none of the employees communicates with each other. It would be soundless, as if nobody could care what is really going on

and it would be impossible to work together in such a circumstance. In other words, a lack of communication can cause serious problems to the business which can damage the relationship with both internal and external parties. Those misunderstandings may create conflicts between organizations as well as lead the business to go bankrupt. Good communication can build unity within the company and prevent all these issues. It is also a way to add value and meaning into people's action as well as develop a relationship between people (Dance & Larson, 1976). Therefore, it is essential for every company to put more concern on communication skills.

When communication is focused, it creates an open environment where employees feel comfortable and confident to express their ideas and opinions to each other within the company as well as with the clients in different organizations. Once the communication is formed, feedback is generated. Wherever the communication takes place, giving effective feedback is a very important thing to do (Dignen, 2014). It can make employees feel confident to provide the information and to show attention to customers, and the customer can feel the employees' determination in working and continue to be a loyal customer.

It is unquestionable that no business would succeed without customers. The health of the organization can be described through the way employees communicate with the customers. It can ensure the customers' satisfaction since they can share their needs and make suggestions on what can be done to better serve them. When the customers' requests or suggestions are turned into action and completed, the business reputation will grow along with the increasing of the number of customers.

Communication is perhaps even more essential when it comes to providing excellent customer service. The customers may not be satisfied with the given response or information for some reasons. However, if the employees can communicate their concerns, any bad situation can turn into a positive experience. By communicating clearly, the finest customer service can be delivered and it can build strong customer relationships.

Clearly, communication is very necessary in every business and gives many benefits to both employees and organizations. It can be said that one of the most important factors of a successful business is effective communication regardless of the size of the organization. On the other hand, communication can be interrupted by cultural and language differences. Employees who have difficulty in communication may have problems giving information or reacting to customers' requests which can result in the loss of business and damage to a company's reputation. Next, the details of language barriers will be discussed in order to identify the types of problems that can occur in order to improve communication.

2.1.2 The impact of language barriers

Business communication is critical although it can be interrupted with a variety of barriers. Many companies develop difficulties within their organization due to communication issues. The larger the organization, the more complex these issues are. These barriers can be the factor that can distort or prevent communication both inside and outside the organization. Wishom (2008) stated that communication barriers could refer to various things but most of them include such things as poor grammar, word mispronunciation, incorrect word usage, misreading of body language, and cultural differences. On the other hand, Longest, Rakich, and Darr (2000) classified the communication barriers into two categories which were environment barrier and personal barrier. In addition, Guo and Sanchez (2005) gave more details about the environment barriers as the obstacles that resulted from the difficult environmental setting in the organization, while the personal barriers arose from individual hardships and difficulty in interacting with others. Thus, in today's diverse workforce, language plays the important role in communication while the language barrier makes it more difficult to share ideas or give feedback to others.

According to a survey commissioned by EF Education First in conjunction with the Economic Intelligence Unit (EIU), 49% of almost 600 executives around the world thought of communication misunderstanding as a barrier that prevented them from doing business and therefore resulted in significant losses for their companies.

Language and cultural differences turn out to be major barriers to the business success on an international level (Bailey, 2012).

In short, language barriers can have a profound impact on the business which companies are often unaware of. The risks and challenges associated with language barriers will continue to increase as the workforce and customers are more culturally diverse and global markets are more tightly integrated. English language skill has become a significant business problem for companies that try to remain competitive and successful in an international marketplace. There are many ways to overcome the language barriers in business. However, the most important thing is to get to know the root cause of the problems that affect communication and the need of language skill. Therefore, conducting needs analysis may help in identifying those problems and needs in order to find the best solution to improve the communication skill of the employee in order to communicate with people in the global environment.

2.2 Needs analysis and English for specific purpose

2.2.1 The history and role of needs analysis

The term *needs analysis* was coined in the 1920s. It was first mentioned in a survey report published in 1926 by Michael West in the field of language teaching (White, 1988). According to West (1977), the term was only used to refer to the needs of language learners who just wanted to know English. The term arose again during the 1970s as a result of thorough research conducted by the Council of Europe. The objective of this research was to create a language syllabus by analyzing the complexity of grammatical structure. However, it failed as it was not related to the learners' needs (Haque, 2014). Later, the needs of the learners became the main focus of interest in creating the course among several syllabus designers.

Needs analysis can be explained through several approaches. Richterich (1972) put forward a systemic method for identifying the needs of learning a foreign language. He pointed out that the learning activity which responded to the learners'

needs could become a needs analysis if feedback and consultation were built into the learning cycle. It could also be modified based on the feedback from the learners. Afterwards, the Threshold Level was proposed by Van Ek (as cited in Cunningsworth, 1983) in which the purpose was to help the learners in order to deal with the situations that might occur in their work. The idea was to define the target group as well as the situations in which the learners needed to use English. The focus of this approach was mainly on the language used and target needs. Munby (1978) also developed the model for determining target situation needs known as *Communicative Needs Processor (CNP)*. It was believed to be the most conventional method for the analysis of needs in order to specify communicative competence (Fatihi, 2003).

Munby's Communicative Needs Processor model used the target situation as an instrument in order to examine the target needs and level of performance. In addition, the area of needs analysis was also set up based on the target center. In the model, the factors that had the effect on the communication need were used to set up a framework in order to find a dynamic relationship to each component (Munby, 1978). There were seven elements in Munby's CNP model. The first element was *Participants* which referred to the background information and identity of the learners such as sex, age, nationality and the current level of target languages. The second element was *Communication Needs Processor* which was used to inspect the communication needs related to the cultural factors and situations the learners interacted with. Then, the *Profile of Needs*, which was the third element, was created through the result of data processing in the previous stage. The fourth element, *Meaning Processor*, was referred to as a stage in which the learners' profile of needs was interpreted in terms of the micro function related to the target needs and attitudes that were required to achieve the goal. The fifth element, *Language Skills Selector*, was a component that was used to interpret the profile of needs in terms of the specific language skills, both receptive and productive. The sixth element, *Linguistic Encoder*, was used to choose the level of the appropriateness of the content once the encoding stage was done. *Communicative Competence Specification* was the last element in the model that specified the communicative competence of the learners and was shown in the profile of needs.

The purpose of Munby's CNP was to observe the linguistic patterns that the learners tended to use in various working environment. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) stated that the result of the processing would determine what the learner needed to know in order to work effectively in the target situation. Many researchers in the field of target situation needs analysis followed this model as it offered comprehensive data banks and target performance (Robinson, 1991). In addition, Hutchinson and Waters (1987) also gave a comprehensive target situation analysis structure which consisted of a list of questions the analyst should find answers to. The heart of target situation needs analysis was to ask about the target situation and attitudes towards that situation of various participants in the learning process.

According to Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998), there are six common methods used to collect data on needs analysis: checklists and questionnaires, structured interviews, observation, analysis of authentic texts, assessment, and discussion. McKillip (1987) pointed out that a popular method to collect the data on needs was a survey as it provided flexibility in assessing the needs of the target population. The survey method is widely accepted and used in many varieties of scope, content and length. It focuses on problems, solutions, descriptions and forecasts. In addition, a great deal of information can be generated from the needs survey such as attitudes, opinions, behaviors as well as population characteristics.

Over the past years, the scope of need analysis has been broadened from a narrow approach to a broader one through many significant shifts which resulted in a wide range of frameworks. Recently, different types of structures have been designed to identify different types of needs in order to construct the language learning program related to the learners' needs; for example, English for specific purpose (ESP), which will be mentioned in the next section.

2.2.2 English for specific purposes

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) can be described as the way of teaching and learning English as a second or foreign language for the purpose of using it in a particular field of work or activity. As English has become a medium of communication in the international environment, the rising trend in teaching and learning English has resulted in different reasons for obtaining the language proficiency whether it is for daily communication, academic aims or business purposes. Therefore, ESP was created in response to these views.

There are many definitions for ESP given by scholars. According to Harmer (1983), ESP referred to situations where the students had some specific reasons to learn a language. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) gave a more specific meaning to ESP in which it was an approach to the language teaching in which the content and methods of learning were designed based on the learners' reasons for learning. Later on, Dudley-Evan and St. John (1998) also gave the most recent and precise definition to ESP. They proposed that ESP had three absolute characteristics and four variable characteristics. The absolute characteristics were that (1) ESP was designed to meet specific needs of the learner; (2) ESP made use of the fundamental methodology and activities of the subjects it served; (3) ESP was centered on the language, skills, conversations and styles appropriate to these activities. The variable characteristics were that (1) ESP might be related to, or designed for, specific trainings; (2) ESP might use the specific teaching method in particular situations that differed from general English; (3) ESP was likely to be designed for adult learners, either in university level or in a professional work situation but it also could be used for learners at secondary school level; (4) ESP was generally designed for intermediate or advanced students, but it might also be used with beginners.

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) indicated further that the recognition of the need itself was the thing that could distinguish ESP from general English. If teachers and learners knew why English was needed, that perception would be a main influence on what would be used to design the appropriate content in the language training course. As ESP courses were based on needs analysis, the learning objectives

were the most important thing and it could be assumed that the learners would be highly motivated in learning about topics and texts which were related to their study or work areas.

As proposed by Stern (1992), the objectives of ESP teaching can be divided into four types: proficiency, knowledge, affective and transfer. Proficiency objectives referred to the competence of language skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing while the knowledge objectives concerned the individual ownership of linguistic and cultural information. In addition, language analysis and understanding in a language system could be used to define linguistic knowledge; meanwhile, the ability to acknowledge social rules as well as culturally significant events was referred as cultural knowledge. Affective objectives were about the growth of positive feelings or emotions toward the subject of study and transfer objectives involved the ability to generalize from what had been learned and apply it into one particular situation or others. Based on the above definition, it is obvious that ESP focuses on the relationship between the teaching or learning objective and the learners' needs. If the learners' needs are clearly identified, the content of the course and the teaching process will be suitably adjusted and implemented in response to those needs.

In short, it can be concluded that needs analysis is the basic requirement in order to design the training course as it is concerned with the understanding of the target in any particular situation and a definable need to communicate in English. The needs analysis results can be used to pinpoint the learners' potential needs and deficiencies related to language skills, as well as select the materials that meet the needs and objectives of the learners. Therefore, it can be said that needs analysis is regarded as the groundwork to be used in order to develop the most appropriate curriculum or content, as well as the teaching materials which can respond to the learners' needs and increase their learning motivation.

2.3 Relevant research

Needs analysis has been considered to be an effective method in designing the English training course due to its flexibility and adaptation for various scopes and contents. Li So-mui and Mead (2000) found that Hong Kong textile and clothing merchandisers perceived English language as the international language used in their businesses. Writing was the most often used skill in their workplaces. Similarly, a need analysis study of staff working in a metal packaging provider conducted by Boonyodom (2005) showed that English was important for their present jobs. In addition, reading was the most essential skill and frequently used in their routine jobs.

Related to these studies, Chenaksara (2005) conducted a need analysis study to find out the problems of English communication skills among Thai cabin crew. The result showed that listening and speaking were perceived as their problematic skills due to a variety of language accents used by the passengers. In addition, the findings in Sangsook's (2007) research also revealed that speaking was the most necessary skill for staff working in an electronic manufacturing company. They believed that language training could help them improve their communication skills.

Moreover, a study on intercultural communication problems in Thailand carried out by Srisitanon (2009) reported that writing was the biggest obstacle skill followed by reading skill. The cause of the problem was the inability to use correct grammar, technical words, idiomatic expressions, slang and unfamiliarity with pronunciation. The appropriate training course was needed to improve the lack of these skills. In addition, a study conducted by Watanamongkol (2010) revealed that speaking and writing skill were perceived as the productive skills that needed to be considered to set up the training course. It should focus on the learners' needs in order to increase efficiency.

The literature review as reported above confirms that needs analysis can help pinpoint the exact needs as well as the problems in English communication skills in order to design the suitable English training course which can help the learners achieve their needs and improve their skills. In addition, all the related studies

mentioned used the survey method to collect the data on need analysis. The needs and problems of the learners can be varied according to the business setting and the scope of work. As pointed out by McKillip (1987), the survey method is the best approach to need analysis. Therefore, this study will be conducted based on the needs analysis process and use the questionnaire survey to find out the needs and problems in English communication skills of employees working at YLTH.



CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides the information about the general background of the respondents, research instruments, procedure and the data analysis. A questionnaire was employed as the primary research instrument for investigating the problems and needs of the respondents on their English communication skills. Then, a semi-structured interview was conducted to obtain further information on the questionnaire's result.

3.1 Respondents

The population was 50 employees working in Ocean Freight Forwarding Group at Yusen Logistics (Thailand) Co., Ltd. All employees were Thai native speakers. The questionnaire was distributed to all employees in this division. However, only 40 questionnaires (80%) were returned. Among the respondents, 25 were female and the remaining 15 were male. Over half of respondents were aged between 20-30 years old. The majority of the respondents held a bachelor's degree and was in an officer rank. In terms of working experience, 22 respondents (55%) reported to have been working in this company for 1-5 years. Additional details on the background information of the respondents can be seen in Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1. Background information of respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage
20 - 30 years old	22	55.0
31 - 40 years old	15	37.5
41 - 50 years old	2	5.0
above 50 years old	1	2.5
Education	Frequency	Percentage
Vocational School	3	7.5
Bachelor's Degree	29	72.5
Master's Degree	8	20.0

Position	Frequency	Percentage
Officer	33	82.5
Assistant Manager	5	12.5
Manager	2	5.0
Work experience	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 1 year	13	32.5
1 - 5 years	22	55.0
6 - 10 years	3	7.5
More than 10 years	2	5.0
n	40	100.0

3.2 Research instrument

A self-developed questionnaire was created based on the frequency of English usage of the respondents and the difficulties found in using English skills while performing their work as well as the basic requirement for skill improvement (see Appendix A for the full questionnaire). The questionnaire was divided into four parts as follows:

Part I: Background information

This part was designed to find out the general background information of the respondents such as gender, age, education level, working position, and working experience. There were five close-ended questions in this part. The information was already displayed in Table 1 in the previous section.

Part II: English language background

This part was designed to assess respondents' English language background, frequency of English usage in their job, how they felt towards their own English ability and the need to take additional English courses. There were seven close-ended questions in this section. Respondents were required to rate the degree of problems and importance of English skill in the workplace (e.g., *please rate how problematic/important each English skill is in your work*).

Serious problem / Very important	=	4
Moderate problem / Moderately important	=	3
Minor problem / Slightly important	=	2
Not at all a problem / Not at all important	=	1

Part III: Problems and difficulties concerning English language skill

This part was designed to explore the level of respondents' agreement with problems and difficulties concerning their English language skills in the workplace. There were 20 items in this section (e.g., *writing descriptive business reports is hard*), and respondents made ratings using a 5-point Likert scale (5 = *strongly agree*, 1 = *strongly disagree*).

Part IV: Needs of English skill improvement

The final section of the questionnaire was designed to find out the level of respondents' agreement on the needs of English skill improvement. There were 15 items in this section (e.g., *vocabulary, grammar, writing business report*), and respondents made ratings using a 5-point Likert scale (5 = *strongly agree*, 1 = *strongly disagree*).

3.3 Procedures

The questionnaires were delivered to the Human Resources department and then distributed to the employees in Ocean Freight Forwarding Group the next day. The respondents were allowed to complete the questionnaire at their own pace during their lunchtime. Forty questionnaires were returned. The researcher checked for the completeness of the questionnaires. The data was first coded in the statistical software, then interpreted and analyzed in the next stage. After computing the initial results, a short semi-structured interview was conducted one week later to obtain more specific information on the responses in the questionnaire. Three volunteer respondents agreed to be the interviewees in the interview session. For example, *What was the most problematic and important skill you perceived in doing your work?* and *What were the skills needed to be improved?* The respondents were probed further with follow-up questions when they responded.

3.4 Data analysis

The data collected from the questionnaire was processed and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) program. The findings are presented and explained in terms of frequency and descriptive analysis using frequency distributions, percentages, means, and standard deviations.



CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This chapter presents the results of the data collected from the questionnaires which are divided into four parts. The first part further discusses the English language background of respondents. The second part presents the findings concerning the problems and difficulties with English language skills, while the third part presents the data concerning the needs of English skill improvement. The information obtained from the interviews is discussed in the final section of Chapter 4. Summary tables are used to display the quantitative data.

4.1 English background of respondents

The results in this section come from the second part of the questionnaire that elicited information about the English background of the respondents. Table 4.1 below presents the number and percentage of the respondents who studied English at university and took extra study of English as well as the period of studying. All of the respondents reported studying English at university in which almost half of them took English as an elective subject. In addition, more than half of the respondents revealed that they have taken extra study of English. The period of extra study varied from less than three months to more than one year.

Table 4.1. English at university and extra study of English

Did you study English at university?	Frequency	Percentage
Studied English as a major.	14	35
Studied English as a minor.	9	22.5
Studied English as an elective subject.	17	42.5
n	40	100
Have you ever taken English courses as extra study?	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 3 months	7	17.5
3 - 6 months	6	15
7 - 12 months	4	10
More than 1 year	7	17.5
Never	16	40
n	40	100

The frequency of respondents' English usage in the workplace is shown in Table 4.2. The results indicate that the majority of the respondents used English in their daily work. Over half them reported to use English more than 50% of the work week communicating with clients. However, there were 5% of respondents who never used English in their work.

Table 4.2. Frequency of English usage in work

How often do you use English in your job?	Frequency	Percentage
More than 50% per week	21	52.5
30% - 40% per week	12	30
10% - 20% per week	5	12.5
Never	2	5
n	40	100

Table 4.3 below represents the degree of problem and importance in each English skill which the respondents perceived while performing their works. As can be seen, a half of respondents perceived writing skill as a moderate problem followed by speaking and listening in a slightly lower percentage while reading was perceived as minor problem.

Over half of respondents revealed that writing was the most important skill in their workplace. Speaking was ranked in the second place followed by reading and listening with a smaller percentage.

Table 4.3. Degree of problem and importance of respondents' English skill

Degree of problem	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing
Not at all a problem	5%	2.5%	22.5%	7.5%
Minor problem	47.5%	42.5%	52.5%	32.5%
Moderate problem	42.5%	47.5%	22.5%	52.5%
Serious problem	5%	7.5%	2.5%	7.5%
n = 40	100%	100%	100%	100%
Degree of importance	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing
Not at all important	0%	0%	0%	0%
Slightly important	27.5%	15%	22.5%	2.5%
Moderately important	45%	50%	47.5%	40%
Very important	27.5%	35%	30%	57.5%
n = 40	100%	100%	100%	100%

In addition, almost all of the respondents (92.5%) reported that they still wanted to improve their English skill proficiency in order to support their works whereas the remaining few did not.

4.2 Problems and difficulties concerning English language skill

This section of the questionnaire was designed to elicit information about the problems and difficulties concerning each English skill the respondents might face in their workplace. The respondents were asked to rate the level of agreement on each statement. The data obtained in this section were computed into means which were interpreted into the score range by using the equation as shown in Table 4.4 below (Ruangprapun, 1996).

$$\text{Class interval} = \frac{\text{max score} - \text{min score}}{\text{number of class}}$$

Table 4.4. Score rating of level of agreement

Mean Score	Level of Agreement
1.00 - 1.80	Strongly Disagree
1.81 - 2.60	Disagree
2.61 - 3.40	Neutral
3.41 - 4.20	Agree
4.21 - 5.00	Strongly Agree

Table 4.5 below illustrates the respondents' difficulties relating to listening skill. The majority of the responses were neutral. Most of the respondents agreed that they could listen and understand all information related to work. However, some respondents revealed to have the concerns regarding listening to different accents and dialects as well as complex conversations although the response rate was neutral.

Table 4.5. Difficulties related to listening skill

Listening Skills	Mean	S.D.	Level
1. Able to understand only simple conversations.	2.90	1.18	Neutral
2. Able to listen to different accents and dialects.	2.80	0.81	Neutral
3. Able to understand all news and information related to work.	3.47	0.81	Agree
4. Able to listen to customers' queries by phone.	2.95	0.77	Neutral
5. Able to understand superiors' commands when complex language is used.	2.93	0.91	Neutral
n = 40	3.01	0.90	Neutral

As shown in Table 4.6 below, the respondents' feedback regarding the difficulties related to speaking skill are also at the neutral level. The respondents revealed that they could offer advice on simple job-related matter in English. However, speaking with customers and expressing opinions on unfamiliar topics were still the problem for them.

Table 4.6. Difficulties related to speaking skill

Speaking Skills	Mean	S.D.	Level
6. Able to use simple words and sentences when speaking.	3.40	0.98	Neutral
7. Speaking with customers is easy.	2.70	0.85	Neutral
8. Able to provide information about products and services confidently.	3.33	0.76	Neutral
9. Able to express opinions on unfamiliar topics to my work area.	3.13	0.93	Neutral
10. Able to offer advice on simple job-related matters.	3.43	0.78	Agree
n = 40	3.20	0.86	Neutral

The respondent's opinions on difficulties related to reading skill are displayed in the Table 4.7 below. The results showed that most of respondents considered they had sufficient skill on reading for their work. Meanwhile, the responses on the problem related to the reading time of simple vocabularies as well as the job-related matter were rated in neutral level.

Table 4.7. Difficulties related to reading skill

Reading Skills	Mean	S.D.	Level
11. Able to read simple e-mails in English from customers.	3.85	0.95	Agree
12. Able to understand a fair range of job-related news and information.	3.63	0.77	Agree
13. Able to understand complex ideas and information in business reports.	3.60	0.84	Agree
14. Spending less time to read and understand information when simple vocabularies are used.	3.25	0.78	Neutral
15. Able to read complex key words and phrases on familiar matters relating to work.	3.23	0.89	Neutral
n = 40	3.51	0.85	Agree

As can be seen in Table 4.8, the majority of the respondents' opinions regarding the difficulties related to writing skill were neutral. According to the result, the respondents agreed that they could write short and simple e-mail as well as familiar types of formal letters. Besides, it might appear that the respondents had some concerns on lacking of skill in writing descriptive business reports, accurate notes of meetings or seminars as well as using appropriate vocabulary and word forms to effectively communicate with customers although the responses were all in neutral level.

Table 4.8. Difficulties related to writing skill

Writing Skills	Mean	S.D.	Level
16. Able to write short and simple e-mails to customers on work-related topics.	3.88	0.76	Agree
17. Writing descriptive business reports is easy.	2.78	0.83	Neutral
18. Able to write full and accurate notes of meetings or seminars.	3.08	0.83	Neutral
19. Able to use appropriate vocabulary and word forms to effectively communicate with customers.	2.78	0.95	Neutral
20. Able to write formal letters of familiar types (e.g. enquiry, complaint, request and application).	3.50	0.88	Agree
n = 40	3.20	0.85	Neutral

In summary, the majority of the responses from the respondents regarding the difficulties concerning these four English skills were neutral. However, when comparing the average score of each skill, reading got the highest score following by writing, speaking and listening. Based on the findings, the respondents tended to agree that reading did not cause as many difficulties for them in comparison to other skills. For writing and speaking, the respondents had the basic knowledge of writing and speaking in doing their jobs but still had the concerns in vocabulary and communicative area in order to work effectively. Listening was reported to have the lowest score which the main concern was about listening to different accent and

dialect as well as the complex conversation. Although, most of the results on the skill scales were neutral, there was still a need in improving those skills as displayed in the next section.

4.3 Needs of English skill improvement

This fourth part of the questionnaire was designed to elicit information about the needs of English skill improvement of the respondents. However, since the results in the previous section illustrated that most of the responses to questionnaire items were neutral, an exploratory analysis was performed here in order to ascertain whether needs differed according to whether respondents had taken English as extra study after completing university (see also Table 4.1). In the questionnaire, the respondents were asked to rate the level of agreement on each item which needed improvement. The results are displayed in terms of the mean score and are interpreted as shown in Table 4.9 below. The equation used for the class interval was the same as in previous section.

Table 4.9. Score rating of level of need

Mean Score	Level of Need
1.00 - 1.80	Not needed
1.81 - 2.60	Low need
2.61 - 3.40	Moderate need
3.41 - 4.20	Strong need
4.21 - 5.00	Extreme need

As can be seen in Table 4.10 below, the results showed that the group of respondents who had taken the English extra study had strong need on improving skills related to vocabulary, grammar and writing function. On the other hand, the group that did not take English as extra study only had strong needs on improving vocabulary skill followed by writing and grammar as moderate need. Since the respondents mainly used writing skill in their work, the improvement on these related functions could help enhance their performances. The improvement on writing skills

included writing business letters, descriptive business reports as well as appropriate emails for communication.

In terms of other areas, both groups also reported to have moderate need of improvement on listening, speaking, and reading skill. The scores among these skills of both groups were relatively close to each other as they were not usually used on daily basis. The improvement on listening, speaking, and reading functions also concerned with the fundamental skill which could be use while communicating with the client such as speaking on the telephone, giving presentation, listening during meeting, and reading customers' requests or any business-related document.

Table 4.10. Needs in English skill improvement

Extra English Study	Skill Function	Mean	S.D.	Level
Yes	Grammar	3.58	0.78	Strong need
No		3.25	1.06	Moderate need
Yes	Vocabulary	3.79	0.83	Strong need
No		3.50	1.03	Strong need
Yes	Listening	3.39	0.80	Moderate need
No		3.04	0.90	Moderate need
Yes	Speaking	3.39	0.87	Moderate need
No		3.03	0.81	Moderate need
Yes	Reading	3.31	0.68	Moderate need
No		3.06	0.91	Moderate need
Yes	Writing	3.57	0.88	Strong need
No		3.27	1.06	Moderate need

Note. For 'yes', N = 24; for 'no', N = 16.

According to the result from the table, there did seem to be a moderately greater need in grammar and writing function in the group that had taken extra study comparing to other group. Meanwhile, the need on other functions was in the same level. The difference might arise from the interest of taking the extra study in the past

and those skills could benefit more in doing their work which would be discussed later in the next chapter. Therefore, it could be summarized that the respondents from both groups still had the need to improve their English skills in all functions which allowed them to work more effectively and efficiently.

4.4 Short interviews

Three of the respondents were randomly selected to take part in a short interview to get further information apart from the questionnaire. All of them worked in an officer rank. The interview questions were mainly based on the results of the questionnaire as most of the responses were neutral. The purpose of the interview was to delve deeper into the questionnaire results. Interview questions were probed the most problematic and important skill in performing the task as well as the underlying difficulties and the needs to improve English language skills. Then, the interviewees were quizzed further when they responded.

The interview results showed that all interviewees perceived writing as their most problematic skill. They all thought that it was sometimes difficult to choose the appropriate words to convey the message to the related parties and it took time for them to write an effective e-mail. Two of the interviewees reported to have taken English as a major subject while the other studied English as an elective subject. J.P. mentioned that business writing had a different style from normal writing and the range of vocabulary known also had the impact on the writing. "It is always troublesome for me to write a good email with a little knowledge of grammar and vocabulary and I end up using around 10 minutes in writing a simple email", J.P. said. S.Y. also added that writing was used on a daily basis for internal and external communication with the clients as well as the local agents and vendors so they need to make sure every message was clear and concise. In addition, K.C. revealed that writing required a mixture of knowledge including grammar, vocabulary and writing style. "The lack of knowledge in these functions could also cause the problem and made it very difficult in writing", K.C. added. These were the reasons why writing was rated as the most important skill.

According to the result in speaking skill from the questionnaire, it showed speaking was the second problematic skill while most of the responses regarding the difficulties on speaking skill were neutral. Regarding this, S.Y. gave the reason that most of the staff rarely spoke with the customers on their daily works and they normally spoke Thai when communicating with each other. Besides, only some employees were required to speak with the clients as a direct point of contact to avoid any confusion for specific information or urgent matter. Therefore, the response rate was in neutral level. When asking about individual speaking problem, K.C. stated that speaking required some degree of real-time interaction to the listener and could create the discomfort when speaking for the non-native speaker like us. "I occasionally feel anxious on the responses I will get whether the listeners will understand what I have spoken or not", K.C. said. "Sometimes, I even forget what I really want to speak and make a mistake although I am familiar with the information I have due to uneasiness", S.Y. added. J.P. reported to have only a small concern regarding grammatical problems when speaking.

For listening and reading skill, the interviewees stated to have only minor problem for these two skills. For listening, the only concern was that they sometimes could not follow the conversation due to the nature of different speaker accents. J.P. gave the examples of Japanese and Indian accents as the ones most difficult to listen to. "For Japanese, they often add the final sound into each word so it is very difficult to know the words while Indian always speak very fast and connect each word together that makes it difficult to catch the content," J.P. added. The other two interviewees also agreed on this. In terms of reading skill, they reported to have no problem as long as the words used and the content was not too complicated.

In terms of English skill improvement, the interviewees all reported that they wanted to improve the skill related to writing function the most including vocabulary and grammar. As they mainly used writing in their job, the improvement in these areas would help them work confidently and efficiently. J.P. said, "Vocabulary and grammar are basic knowledge needed for writing. It is sometimes difficult to write a sentence without knowing what you will write." S.Y. also mentioned that vocabulary knowledge was the one that they needed to keep updated all the time as there were a

lot of jargons and abbreviation in logistics industry such as cross-dock, intermodal, long-haul, lo-lo, TL/FTL, CWT, and so on. In addition, a variety of vocabulary was also necessary in order to give them more choice of writing. The interviewees appeared to have the skill in writing function. However, they still wanted to learn more about the writing style and technique. K.C. pointed out that a good business writing course would be a good idea so that they could learn not only how to write emails to communicate appropriately with customers but also how to write in a more professional way.

The interviewees revealed that they would like to build their confidence when it came to speaking skills. As they rarely spoke English in their work, they would like to practice speaking English in various situations. “It will be great if we can learn how to build confidence and be a good speaker. A presentation class or made-up situation can be a good option for practicing,” J.P said. Other interviewees also agreed with this idea. For listening, and reading skill, all the interviewees stated that they also wanted to improve these functions if they had a chance. In order to improve English skills, all aspects should be studied as well so that they can make use of it in their daily lives.

The overall findings of the study will be summarized and discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter introduces a summary of the study including the purpose of the study, the participants, the materials and procedures, a summary of the findings, the discussion of the results, the conclusions as well as the recommendations for further research.

5.1 Summary of the study

5.1.1 Objectives of the study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceived problems and needs on English communication skills of the employees in Ocean Freight Forwarding Group of Yusen Logistics (Thailand) Co., Ltd. The study was expected to discover the English language skill that was the most problematic skill along with the underlying difficulties as well as the skills needed to be improved to support their work roles.

5.1.2 Respondents, materials and procedures

The respondents of the study were 40 employees who worked in Ocean Freight Forwarding Group at Yusen Logistics (Thailand) Co., Ltd. As a normal business nature, the employees in this department are required to interact with various customers, especially foreign customers. Thus, those employees are expected to communicate effectively in English to provide the best service. In addition, since most of the document related to the work was often in English, they had to hold a good English academic background as well in order to perform the work.

A self-developed questionnaire was used as the primary research instrument in order to collect the information in this research. The questionnaire was divided into four parts including background information, English background, problems and difficulties concerning English language skill, and needs of English skill

improvement. The questions were a mixture of closed-ended questions along with 5-point Likert scale. Forty questionnaires were returned out of fifty questionnaires which were considered to be 80% of the response rate. After the questionnaires were collected and the data compiled, a short interview was carried out on three randomly selected respondents in order to find out for more explanation underlying in the result of the questionnaire.

5.2 Summary of the findings

The summary of the findings can be summarized into two parts which are the questionnaire results and the short interview results as follows:

5.2.1 Questionnaire results

Based on the data collection from forty returned questionnaires, most of the respondents were female and were aged between 20 to 30 years old. The majority of the respondents held a bachelor's degree and was positioned in the officer rank in the department. Regarding working experience, most of respondents had worked in this company for one to five years.

In terms of the English background, all of the respondents had studied English while they were at university. Most of them reported to have either English as their major or an elective course. In addition, more than half of the respondents had taken English course as extra study in which the number of time spent on learning English was varied from less than three months to more than one year. Therefore, the English language skill in basic level could be expected from the respondents. However, some of them reported to have never taken any English course as an extra study.

With regards to the frequency of English usage in work, almost every respondent reported to use English in their works, and half of them used more than 50% of English during the week in their jobs. Additionally, most of the respondents agreed that English was necessary and normally used in their day-to-day work. They

also confirmed that they would like to expand and improve their current skills in order to work efficiently and effectively.

The respondents mostly rated writing as a “very important” skill while listening, speaking, and reading were rated as “moderately important”. As the respondents often used e-mail in communicating with the customers, writing was the most used skill in their workplace followed by speaking, reading, and listening.

Most of the respondents perceived writing and speaking as the problematic skills in their workplace with the level of “moderate problem” while listening and reading were rated as “minor problem”. In terms of writing skill, the respondents mostly agreed that writing descriptive business reports was hard. Some of them reported that they could not write full and accurate notes of meetings or seminars as well as could not use appropriate vocabulary and word forms to effectively communicate with customers. The difficulties underlying speaking skills were that almost half of respondents agreed that speaking with customers is always difficult, and a few of them could not express opinions if the topic was unfamiliar to their work areas.

From the results of listening and reading part, the majority of the respondents agreed that they needed basic knowledge and skills in order to perform their work. However, some of them agreed to have difficulties in listening to different accents and dialects, and a few of them could understand only simple conversations. As for reading skills, only a few agreed that they could read only simple key words and phrases on familiar matters relating to their work. Moreover, they agreed that they spent a lot of time in reading and understanding information even though simple vocabularies were used.

In term of the needs of English skill improvement, the respondents mostly agreed that they needed to improve the vocabulary areas that were related to their work in addition to writing skills, including how to write formal messages or business letters and emails to communicate appropriately with customers. Since writing was

the most used and necessary skill in performing work-related tasks, the improvement could help creating the effectiveness in communicating with the customers.

5.2.2 Interview results

Short interviews were conducted a week after the questionnaire collection and the feedback from the participants revealed that the most problematic English skill for them was writing since they usually communicated with the client through e-mail message. Starting from receiving the request from the client, the respondents would read through the requirements in the e-mail and identify the course of action. Normally, the respondents communicated with both local and international agents more frequently than the customers as it was more related to the operation work process. The requirements varied depending on the type of business. The most frequent requirements were about the information requests regarding the booking of the space in the cargo or warehouse, and also the cargo loading and shifting process from place to place. Following this process, the respondents started to contact the agents in the specific countries to request more detailed information before getting back to the client. The respondents would act as a point of contact in order to ensure the process flowed smoothly and to keep the client up to date. In addition, one of the respondents reported time was also very important in this business as there were many logistics providers competing in the same business. The client always wanted to get the best services with the fast turnaround time. This explains why writing was the effective way of communicating between agents and clients. The respondents also mentioned they sometimes spent too much time in composing the email and did not know how to select the appropriate words to use in order to write the effective e-mail for communication. Therefore, they needed to improve their writing and other skills related to writing the most in order to facilitate their works.

The respondents mentioned that listening, speaking, and reading did not have much impact on their works as they all have the adequate level of these skills in performing their works. However, they still wanted to improve all these skills to enhance their abilities and to be more efficient.

5.3 Discussion

This section discusses the major findings arising from the results presented above regarding the respondents' perceived problem concerning English language skills as well as the needs in English skill improvement in order to unlock the research questions in this study.

As the company YLTH aimed to become a global logistics provider, it could be expected that all the employees should have an adequate knowledge of English in all four skills while performing their works. However, in general practice, it could not be assumed in that way. From the results of the findings, it can be suggested that the employees in Ocean Freight Forwarding Group at YLTH perceived writing as the most problematic skill among all of the four skills. Since the respondents often used writing skill for communication in their work, writing became the main focus to be used in interacting with the agents and the customers. The result of the ratings part in the questionnaire as well as the interview result also supported that the employees saw writing as their important and problematic skill, though it might be different in other departments and businesses. Therefore, it can be said that writing skill is the important skill for the employees in Ocean Freight Forwarding Group and they considered it as the most problematic skill while doing their work, which addresses the first research question. This particular result was also consistent with Li So-mui and Mead's (2000) findings in which writing was regarded as the most often used skill in the business. An effective business writing course can be a good solution to fill in the gap in writing skill.

The difficulties that the employees at YLTH face in English communication skills are clearly seen in the results from the third part in the questionnaire. The majority of the respondents reported that the difficulties concerning their writing problems were that they could not use appropriate vocabulary and word forms to communicate, and writing accurate meeting notes or business reports was hard for them. These particular findings address the second research question regarding the problems and difficulties in English communication in the workplace. The interview result also supported these particular questionnaire results in that the respondents

were more concerned with vocabulary and grammar in order to write effectively. In addition, the findings corresponded to the study conducted by Srisitanon (2009) which reported that writing was the biggest obstacle. The cause of the problems in this particular study was the lack of understanding in grammar, word selections as well as the limitation of vocabulary. However, the findings of this study were less consistent with the study in need analysis among Thai cabin crew conducted by Chenaksara (2005) which showed that listening and speaking were perceived as the problematic skills. The problem was about a variety of language accents used by the passengers. From the result, it can be implied that the problems and difficulties the respondents may face depend on the nature of the business and work environment. For example, work in the service industry may require greater and more effective speaking and listening skills, while employees working in other fields may often use reading and writing skills more often. Since the need analysis can identify the problems and difficulties of respondents in various fields of work, its result can be used to design the training course that can help improve the respondents' efficiency.

With regards to listening, speaking, and reading skills, the respondents considered them as minor problems—although speaking was perceived as the most important skill among these skills. The main concerns were that they thought speaking with the customers was always difficult and they could not express opinions confidently if they were off topic. Since their routine work did not require many speaking skills, the lack of practice and usage might lead to the lack of efficiency. Still, the respondents believed that writing and speaking were the productive skills that needed to be improved in order to increase the communication efficiency. This particular outcome was also consistent with Watanamongkol's (2010) study that speaking and writing were the productive skills that could develop the language competence and increase productivity.

Regarding the needs on English skill improvement, the results drawn from the fourth part of the questionnaire are used to address the third research question. The findings showed that the employees at YLTH needed to improve the skill related to vocabulary, grammar and writing functions the most in order to facilitate their work. However, there seemed to be a moderately greater need in grammar and writing

between the employees who took and did not take extra study in the past. It could be assumed that the difference might result from the interest of the employees who used to take extra study and still had the greater need in continuing their studies. As to the reason why there was the difference only in these two functions, it might result from their work in which grammar and writing were often used to communicate with the customers. Clearly, additional research is needed in order to determine what is behind the differences here. In addition, all of the respondents also had studied English while they were at university and some of them even took English as extra study; most of them still wanted to extend their English studies and polish their skills. It can be implied that English communication skills are very important in their works, especially writing skills as they use them every day. However, other skills are also important as they are more like a stepping stone to becoming more professional. Every function can serve as an integral part each skill to achieve the best result. Therefore, the English training course should be designed to well suit the learners as some of them already had the basic knowledge of English skill. In addition, the course should put more focus on the practical skills that can help the learners become familiar with the real situations relating to their business environment and also benefit them to interact better and more efficiently with other people using English. The results of need analysis survey could be used as a baseline for a course designer in order to create the effective English course as the need analysis was the awareness of target situation itself. Once the learners know why it is needed, it would have an influence on what should be the appropriate content (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). It can be assumed that the learners will be highly motivated in learning the topics that suit their needs in performing their work and help improve their language efficiency for overall career advancement.

Overall, the results from the questionnaire can be used to support the implications above. As the respondents rated writing as their most important and problematic skill in their work, it is quite clear that their main concerns relate to writing skills. The level of agreement concerning writing skill in the questionnaire also showed that the respondents were worried about how to use appropriate vocabulary as well as business writing. These problems resulted in the outcome of the

needs of skill improvement in next part which showed that the respondents needed to improve skills in vocabulary, grammar, and writing the most. In addition, the results of the interview also supported the questionnaire findings. That is, all the interviewees perceived writing as their most problematic skill which was consistent with the questionnaire results. Besides, they provided further insight on why writing was important as well as problematic for them. Since they always used writing for communicating with the related parties, they were somewhat concerned whether the words or content in their written message was understandable and sufficiently clear. In the worst cases, misinterpretation in communication can bring losses to the company. According to Bailey (2012), communication misunderstanding and language difficulties are the barriers that prevent company success at the international level. Therefore, these results into the needs of the interviewees to improve their skills related to writing and vocabulary which are necessary to help them develop their writing efficiently. It could be used to confirm the need result on the questionnaire as well. It can be implied that the improvement in writing can help them be more confident and competent in their work.

In terms of the weaknesses and limitations, the current research instrument might need improving as it could not address the real problem and intention of the respondents. The creation of the questionnaire items might not be taping exactly what information needed from the respondents which led to the overall neutral response rates. It would be better if a short interview could be initially conducted in order to better define the specific scopes of the work and the problems faced in the current situation.

5.4 Conclusions

The respondents of the study were employees who worked in Ocean Freight Forwarding Group and their work was mainly to communicate and provide the information to the clients according to the requirements including cargo space booking and vessel management, contacting warehouse people for cargoes receipt and

loading as well as getting in touch with overseas agents to ensure the smooth flow of the process. As a result, the respondents were required to use English language as a means of communication in order to provide the information on products and services to the clients. The overall results showed that most of the respondents perceived writing as the most problematic skill because they mostly use this skill to communicate with agents and clients and the needs in improving vocabulary, grammar and writing skill came prior to the others. The nature of the learners' business transactions should be taken into account as well when designing the English course. It should give the learners a chance to practice and use the language in their normal business in order to effectively improve their communication skills.

5.5 Recommendations for further research

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations are made for future research.

As the main function of English skill that the respondents used was writing to communicate with the local agents or the customers by using email correspondence, the assessment on the respondents' writing composition should be studied further to find the general pattern of writing and vocabulary used so that the course designer can create the lessons to suit the learners. Writing techniques should also be studied in order to know how the learners will response to each request and how they can deal with the large amount of texts that contain complex structures.

Before they start writing anything, the learners will have to know what they need to write. Therefore, a study on reading strategy should not be neglected as well to check whether the learners have an adequate understanding of the text and content. Course designers should consider adding some language features into the lessons to help the learners write effectively in response to the received message and ensure the quality of their service to the customers. In addition, there should be further research on email correspondence to find all possible situations that can occur in their email interactions. Then the course designer can use the data to set up a situation analysis to

help the learners in practicing writing based on the real situation and assist them to effectively correspond to the email and send messages that best deliver their thoughts and ideas.

A follow-up study should also be carried out to evaluate any proposed English training course in terms of the content and appropriateness in order to determine whether the course is best suited to the learners' needs.



REFERENCES

- Agarwal, S., & Garg, A. (2012). The importance of communication within organizations: a research on two hotels in Uttarakhand. *Journal of Business and Management*, 3(2), 40-49.
- Bailey, A. (2012, May 2). Language barriers and miscommunications are stifling growth. *CNBC*. Retrieved from <http://www.cnbc.com/id/47251632>
- Boonyodom, V. (2005). *Needs analysis of English language use of office workers at a Thai company* (Unpublished master's thesis). The National Institute of Development Administration: Bangkok.
- Cunningsworth, A. (1983). Needs analysis-a review of the state of the art. *System*, 11(2), 149-154.
- Chenaksara, P. (2005). *Needs analysis of English communication skills of Thai Airways International cabin crew* (Unpublished master's thesis). Faculty of Humanities, Kasetsart University: Bangkok.
- Dance, E. X., & Larson, C. E. (1976). *The functions of human communication: a theoretical approach*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston Publisher.
- Dignen, B. (2014). Five reasons why feedback may be the most important skill. *Cambridge*. Retrieved from <http://www.cambridge.org/elt/blog/2014/03/five-reasons-feedback-may-important-skill/>
- Dudley-Evans, T., & St. John, M. J. (1998). *Developments in English for specific purposes: A multi-disciplinary approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Fatihi, A. R. (2003). The role of needs analysis in ESL program design. *South Asian Language Review*, 13(1&2), 40-59.

- Guo, L. C., & Sanchez, Y. (2005). Workplace communication. In N. Brkowski (Ed.), *Organizational Behavior in Health Care*, 77-110. Massachusetts: Jones and Bartlett publications.
- Haque, N. (2014). A brief study on needs an analysis. *Express, an international journal of multi disciplinary research*, 1(1), 36-41. Retrieved from <http://express-journal.com/pdf/NA.pdf>
- Harmer, J. (1983). *The practice of English language teaching*. New York: Longman.
- Helk, T. (2013). *Freight forwarder roles in the transaction*. Retrieved from <http://www.bdpinternational.com/wp/wp-content/uploads/Role-of-the-freight-forwarder-August-2013.pdf>
- Hoffmann, D. (2010, September 10). The definition of communication. *Ezine Articles*. Retrieved from <http://ezinearticles.com/?The-Definition-of-Communication&id=5015669>
- Hutchinson, T., & Waters, A. (1987). *English for specific purposes: a learning-centered approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Li So-mui, F., & Mead, K. (2000). An analysis of English in the workplace: the communication needs of textile and clothing merchandisers. *English for Specific Purposes*, 19, 351-368.
- Longest, B.B., Rakich, J.S., & Darr, K. (2000). *Managing health services systems and organisations*. Baltimore: Health Professions Press.
- McKillip, J. (1987). *Need analysis: tools for the human services and education*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Munby, J. (1978). *Communicative syllabus design*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Richterich, R. (1972). *A model for the definition of language needs of adults learning a modern language*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

- Ruangprapun, C. (1996). สถิติพื้นฐาน. ขอนแก่น: โรงพิมพ์คลังนานาวิทยา.
- Sangsook, S. (2007). *Needs of employees for English communication in careers at Bangkok Produce Merchandising Public Company Limited*. (Unpublished master's thesis). Language Institute, Thammasat University: Bangkok.
- Srisitanon, P. (2009). *Intercultural communication problems of Thai employees of Precious Shipping Public Company Limited (PSL)*. (Unpublished master's thesis). Language Institute, Thammasat University: Bangkok.
- Stern, H. H. (1992). *Issues and options in language teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Stevens, P. (1988). The learner and teacher of ESP. In Chamberlain, D. & Baumgardner, R. J. (Eds.). *ESP in the Classroom: Practice and Evaluation*, 39-44. Modern English Publications and the British Council.
- Watanamongkol, N. (2010). *A needs analysis survey of the business development department of DHL (Thailand) Co., Ltd.* (Unpublished master's thesis). Language Institute, Thammasat University: Bangkok.
- West, R. (1997). Needs analysis: state of the art. In Howard, R. & Brown, G. (ed). *Teacher Education for Languages for Specific Purposes*, 68-79. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- White, R. (1988). *The ELT curriculum: design, innovation and management*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd.
- Wishom, L. (2008, February 29). Understanding communication barriers. *Ezine Articles*. Retrieved from <http://ezinearticles.com/?Understanding-Communication-Barriers&id=1018559>
- Yusen Logistics Web Publication. (2010a). *Company profile*. Retrieved from <http://www.yusen-logistics.com/en/south-asia/thailand>

Yusen Logistics Web Publication. (2010b). *Local services*. Retrieved from
<http://www.yusen-logistics.com/en/south-asia/thailand/local-services/en>





APPENDICES

Yes, I studied English as an elective subject.

No

7. Have you ever taken English courses as extra study? (If no, skip to question 9)

Yes

No

8. How long have you studied English as extra study?

less than 3 months

3 – 6 months

7– 12 months

more than 1 year

9. How often do you use English in your job?

Never

10% - 20% per week

30% - 40% per week

More than 50% per week

10. Please rate how problematic each English skill is in your work.

1 = Not at all a problem

2 = Minor problem

3 = Moderate problem

4 = Serious problem

Listening Speaking Reading Writing

11. Please rate how important each English skill is in your workplace.

1 = Not at all important

2 = Slightly important

3 = Moderately important

4 = Very important

Listening Speaking Reading Writing

12. Do you want to improve your English skills?

Yes

No

Part III: Problems and difficulties concerning English language skills

Instructions: Please read each statement carefully and rate the level of agreement with each by marking “X” in the box for the answer that you think is most suitable.

(1) Strongly disagree (2) Disagree (3) Neutral (4) Agree (5) Strongly agree

Listening skills		1	2	3	4	5
1	I can understand only simple conversations.					
2	Listening to different accents and dialects is hard for me.					
3	I can understand all news and information that is related to my work.					
4	Listening to customers’ queries by phone is difficult for me.					
5	I can understand superiors’ commands only when simple language is used.					
Speaking skills		1	2	3	4	5
6	I can use simple words and sentences when speaking.					
7	Speaking with customers is always difficult for me.					
8	I am able to provide information about products and services confidently.					
9	I cannot express opinions if the topic is unfamiliar to my work area.					
10	I can offer advice on simple job-related matters.					
Reading skills		1	2	3	4	5
11	I can read simple e-mails in English from customers.					
12	I can understand a fair range of job-related news and information.					
13	I can understand complex ideas and information in business reports.					
14	I spend a lot of time to read and understand information though simple vocabularies are used.					
15	I can read only simple key words and phrases on familiar matters relating to my work.					
Writing skills		1	2	3	4	5
16	I can write short and simple e-mails to customers on work-related topics.					
17	Writing descriptive business reports is hard for me.					
18	I can write full and accurate notes of meetings or seminars.					

Writing skills		1	2	3	4	5
19	I cannot use appropriate vocabulary and word forms to effectively communicate with customers.					
20	I can write formal letters of familiar types (e.g. enquiry, complaint, request and application).					

Part IV: Needs of English Skill Improvement

Instructions: Please read each statement carefully and rate the level of agreement with each by marking “X” in the box for the answer that you think is most suitable.

(1) Strongly disagree (2) Disagree (3) Neutral (4) Agree (5) Strongly agree

Item	Needs of English Skill Improvement	1	2	3	4	5
1	Grammar					
2	Vocabulary related to work					
3	Listening to requests or orders from customers by phone					
4	Listening to news and information related to work					
5	Listening during meetings					
6	Speaking with customers on the telephone					
7	Speaking in meetings or group discussions					
8	Giving presentations during meetings					
9	Providing information to customers or related parties face-to-face					
10	Reading business-related documents					
11	Reading customer requests					
12	Reading journals or articles related to work					
13	Writing emails to communicate appropriately with customers					
14	Writing descriptive business reports					
15	Writing formal messages or business letters to customers					
16	Other. Please specify. (.....)					

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

Your anonymity is assured.

BIOGRAPHY

Name	Mr. Nuttapol Youngyuensin
Date of Birth	October 19 th , 1987
Educational Attainment	2009: B.A. in English at Bangkok University, Thailand
Work Position	Trade and Processing Specialist UBS Securities (Thailand) Ltd.
Work Experiences	Trade and Processing Specialist UBS Securities (Thailand) Ltd. Foreign Settlement Assistant Manager Finansia Syrus Securities (Thailand) PCL.