



**THE NEEDS OF ENGLISH COMMUNICATION SKILLS  
OF CUSTOMER SERVICE EMPLOYEES AT A  
TELECOMMUNICATION COMPANY IN THAILAND**

**BY**

**CHAYANIN SRISAWAT**

**AN INDEPENDENT STUDY PAPER SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL  
FULFILLMENT OF  
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF  
ARTS IN TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE  
LANGUAGE INSTITUTE  
THAMMASAT UNIVERSITY  
ACADEMIC YEAR 2015  
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ENTITLED

THE NEEDS OF ENGLISH COMMUNICATION SKILLS  
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was approved as partial fulfillment of the requirements for  
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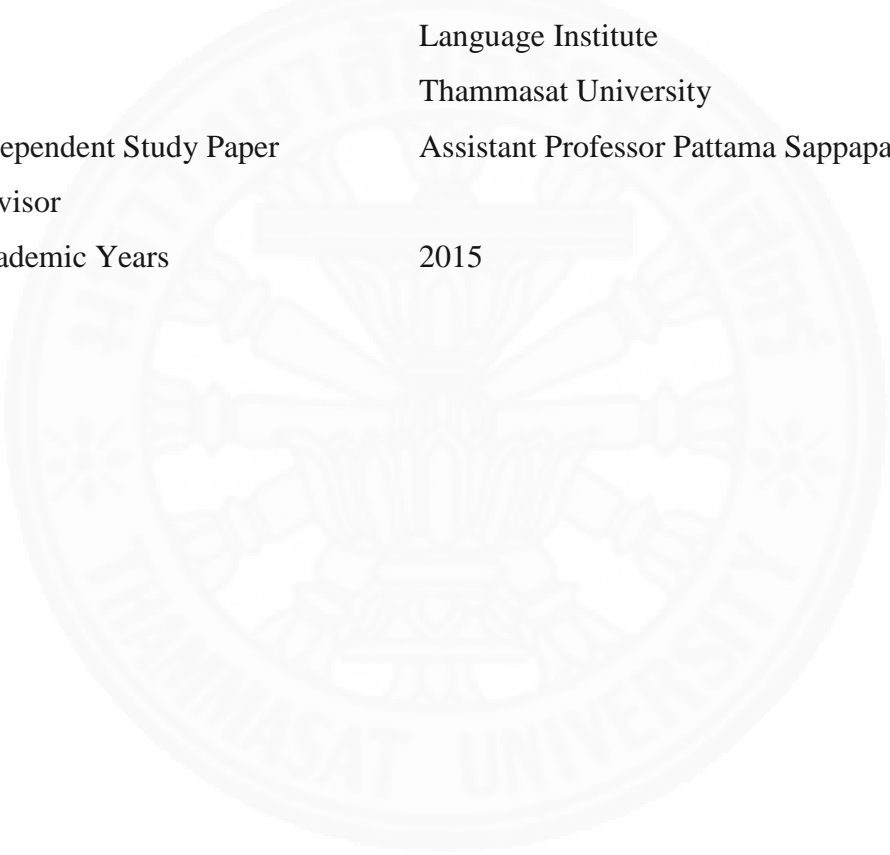
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## ABSTRACT

Due to the globalization, English has become a global language, the common language spoken by people of different language background. There has been an increasing demand of international communication, especially in the business communities where the customers' national languages are extremely diverse. The employees of the company of which tend to encounter difficulties in communication due to the lack of English communication skills needed at work. The purposes of this study were to explore the employees' perception toward their English communication skills and the importance of each communication skills at work as well as the needs for improving their English communication skills. The participants were 30 English-speaking customer service employees working at a call center of one of the leading cellular network providers in Thailand. The 4 points Likert scale questionnaires were used as the instrument. The results showed the employees perceived that they have mastered most of the important skills required for their duty. However, the customer service employees remain in need of improving their English communication skills.

**Keywords:** Needs, English communication skills, Call center, Customer service

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Chayanin Srisawat

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

English has become an accepted international language since after World War II. One of the reasons for this is that the United States has become more powerful in their politics, economy, technology, and culture. Additionally its language, English, has become the language for international communication. The main cause of this is globalization. As a result of the increasing demand of international communication in the academic and business communities, English has earned the status of a global language, the common language spoken by people of different language background.

Hutchinson and Walter (1987) stated that “The effect was to create a whole new mass of people wanting to learn English, not for the pleasure or prestige of knowing the language, but because English was the key to the international currencies of technology and commerce.” They also suggested that people are determined to learn English because they know why they want to learn it and what they can do with it. As there was a growing amount of English language learning, a revolution in linguistics also emerged. Widdowson, 1978 (as cited in Hutchinson and Walter, 1987) suggested that the trend in linguistics has changed from studying the grammar rules of the language to studying how the language is actually used in the communication in real situations.

The company in this study is one of the leading cellular network providers in Thailand. There has been an increasing workforce demand recently, especially for English speaking employees to work as customer service agents at the call center in order to serve and handle the growing numbers of foreign customers. According to the information from the websites of Department of Tourism and Ministry of Tourism and Sports, in 2015 there were nearly thirty million tourists visiting Thailand from all over the world. The majority of these tourists were from East Asia (66.5%), including China, Japan, and ASEAN countries, as well as tourists from the European countries (18.84%). As the national language of each country is extremely diverse, English has become the main language used for communication in international tourism. From this reason, the

company sees the opportunity to attract tourists as well as the foreign expats' attention by launching special promotions for these foreigners. As expected, there has been tremendously increased numbers of foreign customers in the recent years. In addition, the company has been perceived as the best among the three network providers in Thailand in terms of customer services. This is confirmed by the large number of awards the company has received. The Consumer Protection Thailand Call Center Award 2015 was given to them by the Office of the Consumer Protection Board (OCPB) in cooperation with the Management System Certification Institute (Thailand) for the second time. Following the Chief Executive Officer's operating strategy "Because We Care", one of the goals is to maintain high standards and a reputation of good and caring services. The CEO also wants the company to "...not only focus on providing information service, but also make customers feel well taken care of whenever they need assistance". Also, the company has aimed to improve the level of customers' satisfaction toward the service provided by the company. It is believed by the company that improving the customer service employees' language could help in this situation.

For other Thai-speaking customer service employees of other departments, they are provided with the appropriate wordings, scripts, or guidelines of responses. It is quite convenient for them to scan through the scripts and respond to the customers almost immediately. Unfortunately, for English-speaking customer service employees, there is no English version of those scripts provided. Inevitably, regardless of their years of working experience, putting the customers on hold to read the information provided in Thai and translate that into English based on their own understandings occurs quite frequently. However, some of these translated versions of responses can be ambiguous and/or incorrect, which could lead to misunderstandings and several other drawbacks. This directly affects the employees' performances. For instance, such situations could elevate customer complaints, result in longer talk-time taken for each call, longer hold-time taken to follow serious cases, and eventually lead to lower number of incoming calls per hour. These issues are critical because quality assurance standards focus on the appropriateness of the language use of the customer service employees, holding time, number of incoming calls per hour and NPS score. NPS score or Net Promoter Score is the score that each customer service employee will receive from the customers'

feedback on a customer survey at the end of each conversation. The scores represent the level of customer satisfaction based on how well the service was. This NPS score accounts for 30 percent of the Key Performance Index or KPI. The employee may need to improve their English communication skills in order to improve their performance. According to the previous studies of Friginal (2007) and Lockwood (2011), it is implied that as non-native speakers of English, customer service employees may need to have the knowledge of cultural awareness and cultural sensitivity, alongside with the improvement of English pronunciation, grammar and communication skills.

Moreover, the majority of the customers are non-native speakers of English, and therefore difficulties in communication often arise. Because of the diversity of customers' nationality, language and culture, it would be helpful if the customer service employees had the communication skills as well as the knowledge and awareness in terms of different varieties of the English language.

## **1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Working at a call center as an English-speaking customer service employee requires multiple communication skills, especially when most of the communication takes place through the telephone. Although the new employees were recruited and selected based on their TOEIC scores as one of the criteria, as well as an interview in English to primarily assess the potential employees' English speaking ability, these cannot guarantee that the new employees will be able to carry on conversations with foreign customers effectively in different situations without any difficulties. Currently, part of the training process is to expose the new employees to the language used in the working context in order to be familiar with the wordings and phrases that are often used. Some technical vocabulary and terms are introduced and explained in Thai. However, there are no English courses offered to the new employees during training. As a result, some of the new employees have reported facing stress and anxiety during conversations with customers. This could also result in their low performances and loss of confidence and motivation as they were not provided with the English wordings, vocabulary, and appropriate phrases required to respond to the customers effectively. It was also found that not only the new employees, but also the current customer service employees have reported difficulties in communicating with foreign customers.

### 1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of this study are the following:

- 1) To explore the employees' perception toward their English communication skills at work
- 2) To identify the employees' perception toward the importance of English communication skills at work
- 3) To specify the skills the employees want to improve
- 4) To gather the information of how the course should be arranged

### 1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study aims to answer these 4 questions:

- 1) What is the employees' perception toward their English communication skills at work?
- 2) What is the employees' perception toward the importance of English communication skills at work?
- 3) What communication skills do the employees want to improve?
- 4) How should the course be arranged?

### 1.5 DEFINITION OF TERMS

The definitions of the terms in this study are as follows:

1. **Communication skills** refer to the ability to listen, speak, as well as to understand the message in order to respond with appropriate language.
2. **Customer service employee** refers to the staff who work in a call center whose duties are to provide relevant information related to the companies' services, and respond to customers' inquiries and requests as well as to resolve problems reported by the customers.
3. **Soft skills** refer to the abilities to communicate to others in an appropriate manner.

4. **Hard skills** refer to the skills specifically required in each step of the conversations that customer service employees will encounter during their shift.
5. **Interpersonal skills** refer to the ability to include verbal and non-verbal skills as well as other aspects of communication skills which promote positive feelings.
6. **Needs** refer to the necessities, the wants, and the lacks of the employees' ability in terms of English communication skills at work.
7. **Telecommunication Company** refers to the company which provides cellular network for mobile phones and mobile internet.

## **1.6 SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

This study is limited to finding out the customer service employees' perception toward their English communication skills in relation with their perception toward the importance of the skills needed in working in the customer service context. The study will also focus on the needs of the 30 Thai customer service employees working in the International Service Unit at a call center of one of the leading cellular network providers in Thailand. The emphasis is on the English communication skills required in handling conversations with foreign customers through the telephone where the employees also need to build a good relationship with the customers at the same time. The English communication skills focused on in this study are speaking, listening and presentation skills. However, the interpersonal skills are considered as parts of the speaking skills as well since the main duty of the customer service employees also includes providing good service and increasing the customers' overall satisfaction.

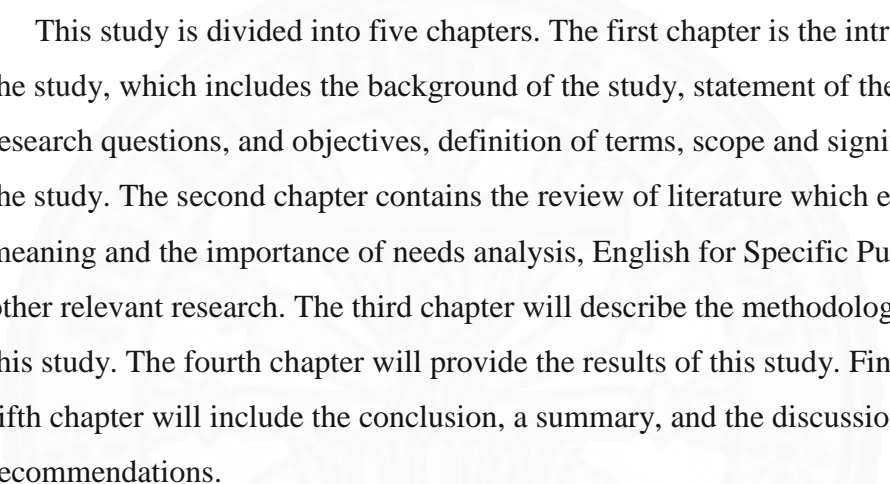
## **1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The significance of this study lies in the aspects of the pedagogical implications on English for Specific Purposes. As this study aims to explore the employees' perception toward their English communication skills and the importance of each skill needed at work where most of the communication takes place through the

telephone. Considering this particular form of communication, the findings will inform the Training Department in its decision whether or not a specific English course is needed for the customer service employees to improve their communication skills in order to elevate the level of customers' satisfaction toward the service.

## **1.8 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY**

This study is divided into five chapters. The first chapter is the introduction to the study, which includes the background of the study, statement of the problem, research questions, and objectives, definition of terms, scope and significance of the study. The second chapter contains the review of literature which explores the meaning and the importance of needs analysis, English for Specific Purposes and other relevant research. The third chapter will describe the methodology used in this study. The fourth chapter will provide the results of this study. Finally, the fifth chapter will include the conclusion, a summary, and the discussion and the recommendations.





## **CHAPTER 2**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

#### **2.1 COMMUNICATION SKILLS**

Communication, as defined by Stewart, Zimmer, and Clark, (1985) is the process of transmitting information through messages, back and forth between human beings. There are several ways of sending and receiving messages. Speaking, writing, body movement, and facial expression are the methods of sending out messages while listening, reading, and observing are the methods of receiving messages. The process of communication is not always as easy as it seems. Miscommunication could easily take place if the information the sender gives is inadequate, which could lead to the situation where the receiver mistakenly establishes the assumption of the intended message. For effective communication, one has to understand the communication process and practice his/her verbal skills and develop the abilities to speak, write, and read accordingly.

In daily life, one cannot avoid communicating to others since communication is fundamental to any aspect of social interaction. Accordingly, in a work place, communication skills are always one of the most important requirements in job descriptions due to the fact that people need interaction and effective communication in order to collaborate with each other and to accomplish the given tasks. Additionally, Stewart, Zimmer, and Clark, (1985) stated that “Almost all occupations require some kind of writing skills, and virtually all occupations require oral communication skills” and “That is why it is important for you to improve your personal communication skills constantly.” (pp. 4-8). Moreover, successful communication should consists of both verbal and non-verbal elements. Fisher, Adam, and Fisher (1993) discussed language-in use and stated that “No one can use language in social context without using nonverbal behaviors which are conventional within that context” (p. 153). In the aspect of verbal signals, successful communication is based on how the words are selected to portray logical and positive meaning in a clear manner. Also, the selection of words should be concise and appropriate for the receiver. For the non-verbal aspect, the signals

which are related to communication through the telephone includes the voice and silence (Peel, 1995, pp.177-179). On the other hand, as Leathers and Eaves (2007) discussed the term of vocalic communication and stated that the sound that we produce can communicate meanings. It can communicate emotional state, personality characteristics, and can convey impressions toward the conversation partners. These vocal cues or the attributes of sound consist of loudness, pitch, rate, duration, quality, regularity, articulation, pronunciation, and silence which can also convey specific meanings.

The nature of working as customer service employees in this study requires effectiveness in the communication between the sender and the receiver of the message. Therefore, there is a strong importance placed on verbal communication, as the communication only takes place through telephone channel where the speaker and the listener do not see each other, therefore, the customer service employees need to possess not only effective communication skills but also need to consider applying some aspects of interpersonal skills.

## **2.2 ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES (ESP)**

English for Specific Purposes or ESP has been defined by many scholars in the field into several definitions. According to Hutchinson and Walter 1987 (as cited in Dudley-Evans and St. John 1997), ESP is an approach to serve the learners' needs and purposes of requiring the English language used in specific disciplines. Strevens 1988 (as cited in Dudley-Evans and St. John 1997) defined one of the characteristics of ESP as being a contrast to General English. Moreover, Robinson 1991 (as cited in Dudley-Evans and St. John 1997) defined ESP characteristics as goal-directed and the ESP courses can be developed from analyzing learners' need through needs analysis. ESP courses are also characterized as a courses for adults with similar professions or what had been defined as homogenous. Dudley-Evans and St. John (1997) compiled the definitions and suggested the absolute characteristics of ESP are that "ESP is designed to meet specific needs of the learner" (p. 4) and that "ESP is centered on the language (grammar, lexis, and register), skills, discourse and genres appropriate to these activities." (p. 5). From

their view, they stated that the methodology and activities of the ESP course are drawn from the specific discipline of its origin. In other words, the activities and materials used in the ESP course are most likely to be authentic. Also, Dudley-Evans and St. John suggested the variable characteristics of ESP may be designed for specific disciplines for adult learners, but it contains language that is not difficult for learners of other levels. Overall, the methodology of an ESP course is likely to be different from that of a general English course.

Dudley-Evans and St. John (1997) suggested the classification of ESP into two separate areas, which are, English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Occupational Purposes (EOP). Looking closely into the English for Occupational Purposes (EOP), it can also be divided into more specific units according to professional area. Dudley-Evans and St. John (1997) also mentioned that “This classification places English for Business Purposes (EBP) as a category within EOP” (p.7). Therefore, the English used within the context of a call center would be categorized as ESP that is more specifically focused on English for Business Purposes (EBP) in terms of the situation and the language use.

### **2.3 NEED ANALYSIS**

The definition of needs has been defined differently by many scholars depending on their different perspectives. According to Dudley-Evans and St. John (1997), needs can be described from the view of both outsiders and insiders. From the outsiders’ view, needs can be seen as objective or perceived ability, while from the insiders’ view, needs can be seen as subjective or felt, which can also depend on the different situations. Moreover, Dudley-Evans and St. John (1997) stated that “Needs analysis is the process of establishing the *what* and *how* of a course.” (p. 121). From the view of Hutchinson and Walter (1987), needs can be categorized into two categories, which are target needs or “what the learners need to do in the target situation” and learning needs or “what the learner needs in order to learn” (p. 54). For the target needs, they can be divided into three terms, which are necessities, lacks and wants. According to Robinson (1991), needs can be categorized into three types. In the aspect of what is expected from the students at the end of the course, this is called goal-oriented. In the situation where the focus is on the matter of what

the learner needs to do in order to achieve the goal of learning, this can be called process-oriented. In the process of need analysis, the target situation and the present situation are considered to assess the learners' current ability and decide what to do for them to acquire the knowledge and meet the requirements at the end of the course.

## **2.4 RELEVANT RESEARCH**

Lockwood (2011) explained in the article that many multinational companies had considered outsourcing their customer support to countries with lower labor costs in order to lower the companies' expenses. Primarily, companies consider Asian countries whose second language or official language is English. For example, Singapore, Philippines, or India. However, their concerns are mainly on the outsource employees' English speaking abilities and skills in handling phone calls. From the outsiders' perspectives, the problems of communication breakdown could happen as a result of the mistakes in pronunciation and grammar. However, according to Forey and Lockwood 2007 (as cited in Lockwood, 2011) the results of the previous research shows that "It appears that communication failure has less to do with the traditional notion of poor language skills ... more to do with poor interactional and discourse skills and cultural appreciation of the nuance of what the customer is saying." It is common for many companies to provide a training course for new employees before they actually start working. Mostly, the training topics would touch on the appropriate language use, such as responding techniques that focus on clarity, accuracy, and effectiveness. However, Lockwood suggested a need in training of cross cultural competence to be included in the syllabus or course design offered to new customer service employees as well.

Friginal (2007) conducted research on problems of outsourced call centers in the Philippines, which is considered a bilingual (English & Tagalog) environment. He pointed out the issue of integrating cross-cultural awareness into the training program of customer service employees. In his study, the context of his research revolves around the Filipino customer service industry and their education background. As he mentioned, the Philippines is one of the popular destinations for

outsourcing customer service from the United States. One of the reasons of this could be, like other Asian countries, the Philippines offers an abundance of capable workers with lower labor costs. Moreover, the Filipinos are friendly and seem to have a natural service orientation. What makes the Philippines one of the top choices of outsourcing destinations is their high level of English language proficiency. As they speak English as a second language, most of their English education is based on standard American English with accommodation of English-based textbook and materials. (Acuna 1994 as cited in Friginal, 2007). In this regard, the education in the Philippines is considered to be bilingual. According to Friginal, there has been an increasing number of speech training centers or “call center academies” in the past decade. Mostly, they provide preparation courses, especially for English conversation training with accent neutralizing. Despite the well-prepared training and well-established background of English in the Filipino customer service industry, there has been some reported failure of communication in real situations. D’ Ausilio, 1998 (as cited in Friginal, 2007) stated that “In term of factors related to cultural sensitivity and language proficiency, the non-native English speaker engaged in service transactions needs to have effective cultural understanding of customer needs, proficiency in English, and successful communicative strategies in transferring information.” Moreover, Korhonen, 2003 (as cited in Friginal, 2007) also suggested that “In addition to proficiency in the target language, the role of intercultural competence should not be discounted in service interactions involving speakers from different language background.” This implies that in customer service training programs intercultural communicative strategies should be included in the syllabus design in order to provide these customer service employees with effective language strategies to ready them for real-life situations.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This chapter provides the information of (1) the participants of the study, (2) the data collection and the procedure, and (3) the analysis of the data collected from the participants.

#### **3.1 THE PARTICIPANTS**

The participants of this study were 30 Thai employees working as customer service staff in the International Service Unit at a call center of one of the leading cellular network providers in Thailand located in Bangkok. Their main duty is to answer telephone calls from foreign customers using the English language. The communication skills performed are mainly speaking and listening. The participants' age ranges from their twenties to over thirties with the duration of working experience at the company from less than 1 year to over 8 years. The questionnaire was distributed to all 40 customer service employees in the International Service Unit but only 30 of the responses were randomly selected from all respondents to analyze.

#### **3.2 DATA COLLECTION**

The research design of this study is a survey which aimed to explore the employees' perception toward their English communication skills at work and their perception toward the importance of each skill.

The instrument used in the data collection procedure of this study was a questionnaire designed to find out the answers to the research questions. The questionnaire was adapted and drafted after the researcher had reviewed similar studies. The completed version of the questionnaire was assessed for the reliability by means of the Index of Item Objective Congruence (IOC).

The language in the questionnaire was provided only in English with no Thai translation supplied as the participants already possessed a degree of knowledge of the English language and were familiar with the English used in the call center context.

The questionnaire was divided into 4 parts as follows:

Part 1: Demographic Information

Part 2: Self-Assessment on English Communication Skills at Work

Part 3: Employees' Perception toward the Importance of English Communication Skills at Work

Part 4: The Needs for Improving English Communication Skills and Training Preference

At the end of part 2, 3, and 4 open-ended questions were included where the participants could elaborate with further opinions and suggestions.

### **PART 1: Demographic Information**

This part of the questionnaire aims to collect the data relevant to the participants' demographic information. The information includes participants' age, gender, education, job position, years of working experience, and TOEIC score.

### **PART 2: Self-Assessment on English Communication Skills at Work**

This part of the questionnaire is a self-assessment that aims to obtain information regarding the participants' perception toward their own ability to perform each skill needed in an ideal manner in the different situations they often encounter at work. The skills embedded in the questions follow the four aspects of communication skills which are verbal communication skill, interpersonal skill, listening skill, and presentation skill. The participants were asked to assess themselves on a 1-4 point Likert scale as follows:

- 4 – Exactly like me
- 3 – Very like me
- 2 – A little like me
- 1 – Not like me at all

### **PART 3: Employees' Perception toward the Importance of English Communication Skills at Work**

This part of the questionnaire is expected to obtain the data relevant to the perception of the employees toward the importance of each communication skills in English at work. The participants were asked to rate the importance under the following scale:

- 1 – Not important
- 2 – Somewhat important
- 3 – Important
- 4 – Very important

#### **PART 4: The Needs for Improving English Communication Skills and Training Preference**

The questions in this part of the questionnaire were asked in order to gain the data relevant to the participants' needs for improving English communication skills at work. The data retrieved from this part will also be used as part of the consideration for arranging English training courses designed especially for the customer service employees at the company.

### **3.3 DATA ANALYSIS**

Microsoft Excel and SPSS were the statistical software used in the process of analyzing the data received from the respondents. The survey data analysis technique used was descriptive statistics, which include the mean, standard deviation, frequencies and percentage. The results from the analysis using SPSS were then interpreted in order to explore whether there is any relationship between the participants' perception toward their own performance and the importance of each skill being asked about in the questionnaire. Each aspect of the participants' demographic information was also part of the interpretation.

The 4-point Likert Scale was calculated and divided to assign a range to define the level of the performance and the importance of the communication skills in the study. The mean scores were defined by the following criteria:

***Table 1 Weighted mean scores***

Scale	Weighted Mean	Level of Performance	Level of Importance
4	3.26 – 4.00	Excellent	Very important
3	2.51 – 3.25	Good	Important
2	1.76 – 2.50	Fair	Somewhat Important
1	1.00 – 1.75	Poor	Not Important



The methodology mentioned in this chapter will be utilized in collecting the data using the questionnaire as the instrument. The results of each section from the questionnaire will be presented in the next chapter.



## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents results of the data collected from the participants by means of questionnaires. The questionnaires were distributed to the customer service employees who work in the International Service Unit at the call center of one of the leading cellular network providers in Thailand. In total, 30 out of 40 completed questionnaires were selected to be analyzed in this study. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics including frequency (F), percentage (%), mean, and standard deviation (S.D.). The results presented here in this chapter will be divided into 5 main parts as follows: (1) the demographic information of the participants, (2) the findings of participants' self-assessment on English communication skills at work, (3) the findings of the employees' perception toward the importance of English communication skills at work, (4) the findings of the employees' needs for improving English communication skills and training preference, and (5) the suggestions which were given by the participants in the open-ended questions at the end of each part of the questionnaire.

#### 4.1 RESULTS

##### 4.1.1 DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF THE PARTICIPANTS

This part of the chapter presents the overall demographic information of the participants. The data includes gender, age, highest level of education, current positions, years of working experience at the company, and TOEIC scores.

**Table 2 Gender**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Male	9	30
Female	21	70
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

As shown above in Table 2, the majority of the customer service employees working in the International Service Unit at the call center were female (n=30,

Frequency=21, 70%). However, there were a few male employees as well (Frequency=9, 30%).

**Table 3 Age**

Item	Frequency	Percentage (%)
22 or under	1	3.3
23 – 27	15	50.0
28 – 32	8	26.7
Over 32	6	20.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

As shown in Table 3 above, most of the respondents were those with an age range of 23 – 27 years old (n=30, Frequency=15, 50%). The respondents' age range of 28 – 32 were the second large group (Frequency=8, 26%) followed by those with an age over 32 (Frequency=6, 20%). The smallest category was the age range of 22 or under (Frequency=1, 3.3%).

**Table 4 Highest Education**

Item	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Bachelor's Degree	26	86.7
Master's Degree	4	13.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

As presented in Table 4 above, most of the respondents in this study had graduated with a Bachelor's degree (n=30, Frequency=26, 86.7%), while only a few had earned a Master's degree (Frequency=4, 13.3%).

**Table 5 Current Position**

Item	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Staff	21	70.0
Senior staff	5	16.7
Supervisor	3	10.0
Manager	1	3.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

The majority of participants responded that they were "staff" when asked about their current position, (n=30, Frequency=21, 70%) as shown in Table 5 above. Senior staff (Frequency=5, 16.7%) and supervisors (Frequency=3, 10%) were the second and

third largest groups respectively. The smallest number of respondents held a managerial position (Frequency=1, 3.3%).

**Table 6 Working Experience at the Company**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
0 – 2 years	14	46.7
3 – 5 years	7	23.3
6 – 8 years	3	10.0
Over 8 years	6	20.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

As can be seen in Table 6, most of the participants in this study have been working at the company for less than 2 years (n=30, Frequency=14, 46.7%). The second and third largest groups were those who have been working at the company for 3-5 years (Frequency=7, 23.3%) and those for over 8 years (Frequency=6, 20%). The minority were those who have been employees for 6-8 years (Frequency=3, 10%).

**Table 7 TOEIC Score**

<b>TOEIC Score</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
505 - 700	6	20.0
705 - 900	19	63.4
905 - 990	5	16.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

The informants' TOEIC scores are presented in the table above. The majority of the informants had a TOEIC score in the range of 705-900 (n=30, Frequency=19, 63.4%). The second largest group was those who had a score of 505-700 (Frequency=6, 20%) while those who had a score of more than 900 were smallest group (Frequency=5, 16.7%).

#### 4.1.2 THE FINDINGS OF PARTICIPANTS' SELF-ASSESSMENT ON ENGLISH COMMUNICATION SKILLS AT WORK

*Table 8 Participants' Self-Assessment on English Communication Skills at Work*

No.	Statement for Self-Assessment	4		3		2		1		Performance Score		Level of Performance
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	Mean	S.D.	
1.	I can speak English with pleasant and clear manner.	10	33.3	17	56.7	3	10	0	0	3.23	0.63	Good
2.	I use correct grammar when speaking English.	2	6.7	18	60.0	10	33.3	0	0	2.73	0.58	Good
3.	I adjust the level of my language to suit each customer.	15	50.0	14	46.7	1	3.33	0	0	3.47	0.57	Excellent
4.	I can handle serious customers.	9	30.0	14	46.7	7	23.3	0	0	3.07	0.74	Good
5.	I can keep my pleasant voice even when I feel angry.	10	33.3	14	46.7	6	20.0	0	0	3.13	0.73	Good
6.	I vary my tone in different situations.	11	36.7	16	53.3	3	10.0	0	0	3.27	0.64	Excellent
7.	I can speak faster or slower when needed.	14	46.7	13	43.3	2	6.7	1	3.3	3.33	0.76	Excellent
<b>Sum</b>										<b>3.18</b>	<b>0.66</b>	<b>Good</b>
8.	I listen carefully and pay attention to details.	16	53.3	13	43.3	1	3.3	0	0	3.50	0.57	Excellent
9.	I wait until the customers finish speaking without interrupting.	5	16.7	21	70.0	4	13.3	0	0	3.03	0.56	Good

(Table continued)

No.	Statement for Self-Assessment	4		3		2		1		Performance Score		Level of Performance
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	Mean	S.D.	
10.	I understand the customers' key points.	10	33.3	20	66.7	0	0	0	0	3.33	0.48	Excellent
11.	I have no problems understanding customers' different accents.	6	20.0	19	63.3	5	16.7	0	0	3.03	0.61	Good
12.	I attentively give appropriate responds while customers are speaking	13	43.3	16	53.3	1	3.3	0	0	3.40	0.56	Excellent
13.	I ask for clarification when what the customers is not clear.	19	63.3	9	30.0	1	3.3	1	3.3	3.53	0.73	Excellent
<b>Sum</b>										<b>3.30</b>	<b>0.59</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
14.	I organize the information I have before delivering it in a logical sequence.	9	30.0	20	66.7	1	3.3	0	0	3.27	0.52	Excellent
15.	I know how to present and explain promotion packages in an interesting way.	5	16.7	19	63.3	6	20.0	0	0	2.97	0.61	Good
<b>Sum</b>										<b>3.12</b>	<b>0.57</b>	<b>Good</b>

The data presented in Table 8 above were the findings of participants' self-assessment on English communication skills at work, where the participants were asked to assess themselves on how well they can perform in different situations. Each situation could be put into groups that represented the skills of speaking, listening and presentation. The points on the Likert scale were assigned, in which 4 means *Exactly like me*, 3 as *Very like me*, 2 as *A little like me*, and 1 as *Not like me at all*. The mean scores were later calculated in order to define the range of the level of performance with the following criteria:

Weighted Mean	Level of Performance
3.26 – 4.00	Excellent
2.51 – 3.25	Good
1.76 – 2.50	Fair
1.00 – 1.75	Poor

According to the results shown above, overall the participants assessed themselves as Excellent in most of the skills (n=15, Frequency=8, 53.3%) while some skills were assessed as Good (Frequency=7, 46.7%). However, none of the skills were assessed as Fair or Poor. Taking into consideration each specific skill, the first 7 items were meant to represent the speaking skill as follows.

First, in *speaking English with pleasant and clear manner*, the respondents assessed themselves as Good (Mean=3.23, S.D. = 0.63). Second, in *using correct grammar when speaking English*, the respondents assessed themselves as Good (Mean=2.73, S.D. = 0.58). Third, in *adjusting the level of the language to suit each customer*, the respondents assessed themselves as Excellent (Mean=3.47, S.D. = 0.57). Forth, in *handling serious customers*, the respondents assessed themselves as Good (Mean=3.07, S.D. = 0.74). Fifth, in *keeping pleasant voice even when they feel angry*, the respondents assessed themselves as Good (Mean=3.13, S.D. = 0.73). Sixth, in *varying their tone in different situations*, the respondents assessed themselves as Excellent (Mean=3.27, S.D. = 0.64). Seventh, in *speaking faster or slower when needed*, the respondents assessed themselves as Excellent (Mean=3.33, S.D. = 0.76).

Overall, the respondents assessed themselves their speaking skills as Good (Average Mean = 3.18, S.D. = 0.66).

For listening skills, the respondents assessed themselves as Excellent in *listening carefully and paying attention to details* (Mean=3.50, S.D. = 0.57), *understand the customers' key points* (Mean=3.33, S.D. = 0.48), *attentively giving appropriate responses while customers are speaking* (Mean=3.40, S.D. = 0.56), and *clarifying information* (Mean=3.53, S.D. = 0.73). Overall, the respondents assessed themselves on their listening skill as Excellent (Average Mean = 3.18, S.D. = 0.66). Finally, for the presentation skill, specifically, *organizing the information before delivering in a logical sequence*, the respondents assessed themselves as Excellent (Mean=3.27, S.D. = 0.52). On the other hand, the skill of *presenting and explaining promotion packages in an interesting way* was assessed as Good (Mean=2.97, S.D. = 0.61). Overall, the presentation skills were assessed as Good (Average Mean=3.12, S.D. = 0.57).

#### **4.1.3 THE FINDINGS OF EMPLOYEES' PERCEPTION TOWARD THE IMPORTANCE OF ENGLISH COMMUNICATION SKILLS AT WORK**

In this part of the questionnaire, the participants were asked to rate the importance of English communication skills at work which was divided into two sub-skills: soft skills and hard skills. The 1 to 4-point Likert scale was assigned to measure the degree of importance in which 1 means Not important, 2 means Somewhat important, 3 means Important, and 4 Very important. The weighted mean scores were then used in defining the range of the importance as follows:

Scale	Weighted Mean	Level of Importance
4	3.26 – 4.00	Very important
3	2.51 – 3.25	Important
2	1.76 – 2.50	Somewhat Important
1	1.00 – 1.75	Not Important



**Table 9 Soft Skills**

No.	How are the following communication skills important to you?	1		2		3		4		Score		Level of Importance
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	Mean	S.D.	
1.	Communicating in English effectively through the telephone	0	0	0	0	2	6.7	28	93.3	3.93	0.25	Very important
2.	Adjusting the language to suit the listener	0	0	0	0	9	30.0	21	70.0	3.70	0.47	Very important
3.	Building a good relationship with customers	0	0	0	0	14	46.7	16	53.3	3.53	0.50	Very important
4.	Dealing with serious customers	0	0	0	0	9	30.0	21	70.0	3.70	0.47	Very important
5.	Listening carefully and pay attention to details	0	0	0	0	3	10.0	27	90.0	3.90	0.30	Very important
6.	Listening without interrupting	0	0	2	6.7	11	36.7	17	56.7	3.50	0.63	Very important
7.	Listening for main ideas	0	0	0	0	6	20.0	24	80.0	3.80	0.40	Very important
8.	Understanding different accents	0	0	3	10.0	8	26.7	19	63.3	3.53	0.68	Very important
9.	Giving appropriate response	0	0	1	3.3	8	26.7	21	70.0	3.67	0.54	Very important
10.	Clarifying information	0	0	0	0	4	13.3	26	86.7	3.87	0.35	Very important
11.	Organizing information before speaking	1	3.3	1	3.3	9	30.0	19	63.3	3.50	0.86	Very important
<b>Sum</b>										<b>3.69</b>	<b>0.50</b>	<b>Very important</b>

*Table 10 Hard skills*

No.	How are the following communication skills important to you?	1		2		3		4		Score		Level of Importance
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	Mean	S.D.	
1.	Greeting and initiating assistance	0	0	4	13.3	11	36.7	15	50.0	3.67	0.71	Very important
2.	Providing package details	0	0	2	6.7	10	33.3	18	60.0	3.53	0.63	Very important
3.	Reporting charges and bills details	0	0	2	6.7	13	43.3	15	50.0	3.43	0.63	Very important
4.	Giving payment details	0	0	1	3.3	13	43.3	16	53.3	3.50	0.57	Very important
5.	Explaining technical issues	0	0	5	16.7	9	30.0	16	53.3	3.37	0.76	Very important
6.	Negotiating	0	0	1	3.3	4	13.3	25	83.3	3.80	0.48	Very important
7.	Apologizing	0	0	2	6.7	4	13.3	24	80.0	3.73	0.58	Very important
8.	Offering compensation	0	0	5	16.7	11	36.7	14	46.7	3.30	0.75	Very important
9.	Giving instructions	0	0	2	6.7	10	33.3	18	60.0	3.53	0.63	Very important
10.	Selling packages and promotions	1	3.3	5	16.7	12	40.0	12	40.0	3.17	0.83	Important
11.	Showing empathy	0	0	4	13.3	14	46.7	12	40.0	3.27	0.69	Very important
12.	Thanking and responding to thanks	1	3.3	1	3.3	10	33.3	18	60.0	3.50	0.73	Very important
13.	Ending conversation	0	0	4	13.3	12	40.0	14	46.7	3.33	0.71	Very important
<b>Sum</b>										<b>3.47</b>	<b>0.67</b>	<b>Very important</b>

As illustrated in Table 9, significantly, the participants rated all of the soft skills as Very important (Average Mean=3.69, S.D. = 0.50). However, the highest score was given to the skill of *Communicating in English effectively through the telephone* (n=30, Frequency=28, 93.3%) while the skill of *Organizing information before speaking* was rated as Not important by only one person (Frequency=1, 3.3%).

Table 10 reveals that most of the hard skills were rated as Very important (N=13, Frequency=12, 92.3%) while the only skill rated as Important was *Selling packages and promotions* (Frequency=1, 7.7%, Mean=3.17, S.D. = 0.83).

#### 4.1.4 THE FINDINGS OF THE NEEDS FOR IMPROVING ENGLISH COMMUNICATION SKILLS AND TRAINING PREFERENCE

This part of the questionnaire aims at finding out the needs of the participants for improving the English communication skills at work as well as the training preference. The results are presented below.

**Table 11** *The Needs for Improving English Communication Skills and Training Preference*

Item	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>1. Do you want to improve your English communication skills for your current job?</b>		
Yes	30	100.00
No	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>2. Which of the following skills do you want to improve most?</b>		
Listening	1	3.3
Speaking	8	26.7
Both	17	56.7
Other	4	13.3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>3. Who should be attending the training?</b>		
All customer service employees	21	70.0
Interested employees	8	26.7
Low performance employees	1	3.3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100.0</b>

(Table continued)

Item	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>4. When should the training be arranged?</b>		
On day off	1	3.3
During working hours	17	56.7
Before working shift	1	3.3
After working shift	3	10.0
E-Learning	7	23.3
Other	1	3.3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>5. How often should the training be arranged?</b>		
Once a month	7	23.3
Every 3 months	14	46.7
Every 6 months	8	26.7
Once a year	1	3.3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100.00</b>

As shown in Table 10 above, all of the respondents want to improve their English communication skills for their current job (N=30, Frequency=30, 100%).

Most of the respondents (N=30) would like to improve not only listening skills (Frequency=1, 3.3%) or speaking skills (Frequency=8, 26.7%) separately but would like to improve both of the skills (Frequency=17, 56.7%) simultaneously. Additionally, only a few respondents (Frequency=4, 13.3%) would like to improve other skills, namely reading and writing.

As revealed in the table above, most of the informants (N=30, Frequency=21, 70%) thought that if the training course was to be offered, *All customer service employees* should be attending. A smaller number of informants (Frequency=8, 26.7) thought that the training should be arranged for only *Interested employees* while only a few (Frequency=1, 3.3%) thought that specifically *Low performance employees* should be attending the training.

The majority of the respondents (N=30, Frequency=17, 56.7%) preferred that the training should be arranged *during working hours* while the second largest group (Frequency=7, 23.3%) preferred the training through *E-Learning*. The third largest group (Frequency=3, 10%) thought that the training should be arranged *After working shift* while the rest of the respondents preferred *On day off*, *Before working shift*, and *Other* (Frequency=1, 3.3%) each.

The data concerning how often the training should be arranged is presented. Most of the employees (N=30, Frequency=14, 46.7%) preferred that the training be arranged *every 3 months*. Relatively similar numbers of respondents preferred the training to be arranged *every 6 months* (Frequency=8, 26.7%) and *once a month* (Frequency=7, 23.3%). Only a few (Frequency=1, 3.3%) preferred the training to be *once a year*.

**Table 12 Aspect of Listening Skills**

Which aspect of <i>listening</i> would you like to improve?	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Listening for main ideas	6	20.0
Understanding different accents	11	36.7
Giving appropriate response	16	53.3
Clarifying information	11	36.7

This item in the questionnaire asked the participants to choose which aspect of the listening skills they would like to improve. The participants were allowed to select more than one skill that they prefer. As displayed in Table 12, the skill that the respondents would like to improve most was *Giving appropriate response* (Frequency=16, 53.3%) while *Understanding different accents* and *Clarifying information* were equally selected (Frequency=11, 36.7%). The skill that received the least selections was *Listening for main ideas* (Frequency=6, 20%). Additionally, no participant suggested other skills they would like to improve (Frequency=0, 0%).

**Table 13 Aspect of Speaking Skills**

Which aspect of <i>speaking</i> would you like to improve?	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Greeting and initiating assistance	0	0
Providing package details	2	6.7
Reporting charges and bills details	4	13.3
Giving payment details	4	13.3
Explaining technical issues	20	66.7
Negotiating	17	56.7
Apologizing	9	30
Offering compensation	10	33.3
Giving instructions	2	6.7
Selling packages and promotions	8	26.7
Showing empathy	5	16.7

(Table continued)

Which aspect of <i>speaking</i> would you like to improve?	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Thanking and responding to thanks	0	0
Ending conversation	1	3.3
Adjusting the language to suit the listener	4	13.3
Building a good relationship with customers	9	30
Dealing with serious customers	26	86.7

Table 13 disclosed the findings of the aspect of speaking skills the participants would like to improve. The selections choices in this question included both soft skills and hard skills. The skill chosen most frequently by the participants was *Dealing with serious customers* (Frequency=26, 86.7%). The second most requested skill selected was *Explaining technical issues* (Frequency=20, 66.7%) followed by the third highest which was *Negotiating* (Frequency=17, 56.7%).

#### 4.1.5 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: SUGGESTIONS FROM THE RESPONDENTS

This part of the chapter presents further information extracted from the open-ended questions at the end of each part of the questionnaire. The researcher would like to assemble and highlight parts of the suggestions given by the respondents that are relevant to the study.

The additional skills the respondents had suggested that they would like to improve can be divided into four main topics as follows.

Firstly, besides the listening and speaking skills emphasized in the questionnaire, the other two aspects of communication skills: reading and writing were also suggested by the participants as the skills they would like to improve.

Secondly, not only the aspects of communication skills in English alone, but the English language itself was also suggested by the participants as an overall skill to be improved. From the responses in the open-ended questions regarding the English language, vocabulary and grammar were also highlighted. In terms of vocabulary, the participants mentioned that they would like to improve this skill in relation to (1) adjusting the level of the language to suit each customer and (2) understanding the variety of language used in different countries. In terms of improving grammar, the participants reported that this skill should be improved because speaking English with

the correct grammar would help them to be better understood. Moreover, apart from the grammar, fluency and pronunciation could also play a part in understanding.

Thirdly, one interesting point raised was cultural issues. As the customers' nationality could be quite diverse, knowing how the language should be used could help avoiding cultural conflicts that may occur during the conversations.

Finally, the fourth topic suggested concerned the flexibility in terms of time and how the training should be arranged. As the working hours of customer service employees were shift-based, it was suggested that the employees should have the options in choosing to attend the training provided in different timeslots. Moreover, one participant suggested that the trainer of the course should have well-established knowledge and be familiar with the language used within the call center context specifically.

## **4.2 DISCUSSION**

In this part of the chapter, the following discussion is informed by the information derived from the analysis of the findings in relationship to the objectives of this study.

From the self-assessment portion of the questionnaire, the results reveal that the participants assessed themselves as Excellent for most of the statements. This implies that most of the customer service employees in this study were quite confident and perceived themselves as those with a high level of English proficiency. This was especially true concerning the ability to communicate in English over the telephone using listening skills, which requires focus and attention to details. Also, in performing each communication skill at work, the customer service employees may have obtained a certain level of confidence which could also reflect on how they deliver the language. However, most of the employees reported that they would like to improve the aspect of communication skills that are parts of the company's Key Performance Index.

For the importance of English communication skills at work, the trend indicates that most of the employees think that soft skills and hard skills are both very important. It can be interpreted that both skills are highly needed in communication over the telephone. The English-speaking customer service employees encounter not only native speakers of English, but also, mostly, the non-native speakers. The diversity of the

customers' nationalities, as well as the differences in the language and cultural background leads to opportunities for misunderstandings in the communication. Moreover, the variations of the English language (i.e. vocabulary and pronunciation) could be a cause for misunderstanding information, which possibly could bring about more problems in the conversation. For this reason, a better ability to perform the soft skills could also facilitate a better performance of the hard skills. As Forey and Lockwood 2007 (cited in Lockwood, 2011) have suggested, it is important not only to have knowledge of communication skills, but also an understanding of cultural differences. With this in mind, how the language is delivered should also be considered.

However, due to time constraints during each call, as well as the pressure mounted by either the customers or the customer service employees themselves, the importance of the accuracy, especially grammar, were sometimes overlooked. The emphasis was placed on the effectiveness of the communicated messages rather than accuracy and structure of extended information.



## **CHAPTER 5**

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This chapter presents a summary of the study, a summary of the findings, a discussion of the English communication skills of the, the conclusions, and recommendations for further studies.

#### **5.1 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY**

This section summarized the present study regarding objectives, subjects, materials, and procedures in order to give readers overall pictures as follows:

##### **5.1.1 Objectives of the Study**

This study aims at finding out the information needed for arranging training that can improve the customer service employees' English communication skills needed at work according to the following objectives:

1. To explore the employees' perception toward their English communication skills at work.
2. To gain the employees' perception toward the importance of English communication skills at work
3. To specify the skills the employees want to improve.
4. To gather the information of how the course should be arranged.

##### **5.1.2 Subjects, Materials, and Procedures**

The subjects of this study were the customer service employees working in the International Service Unit at the call center of one of the leading cellular network providers in Thailand located in Bangkok. Their main duty was to answer telephone calls from foreign customers in which the main language used is English

The research instrument used in this study was a questionnaire that consists of four parts. Each respective part of the questionnaire was designed to extract information concerning the employees' demographic information, their perception toward their English communication skills at work, their perception toward the importance of each skill, as well as information regarding arranging the training course.

Moreover, open-ended questions were provided for further suggestions on the skills the participants would like to improve. The questions in the questionnaire were asked with the intention to answer the four research questions of the study.

Forty questionnaires were distributed to the customer service employees at the call center. The completed questionnaires were returned three days later. A total of 40 completed questionnaires were collected and 75% (30) of those questionnaires were selected for analysis.

The data obtained from the questionnaires was analyzed by utilizing the statistical program within Microsoft Excel and SPSS. The results of frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation were illustrated in tables.

## **5.2 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS**

### **5.2.1 Participants' Demographic Information**

The majority of the respondents in this study were female (70%). Half of the respondents were those within the age range of 23 – 27 years old (50%). Most of them (86.7%) graduated with a Bachelor's degree. Most of the respondents stated that their current position was that of "staff" (70%). Also, the findings show that most of them have been working at the company for less than 2 years (46.7%). A majority of the participants in this study possessed a TOEIC score in the range of 705-900 (63.4%).

### **5.2.2 Participants' Self-Assessment on English Communication Skills at Work**

In the questionnaire, the participant were asked to assess themselves under the Likert scale of 1 to 4 in which 4 means *Exactly like me*, 3 as *Very like me*, 2 as *A little like me*, and 1 as *Not like me at all*. The statements in the questionnaire were designed to assess their perceived ability in performing the skills of speaking, listening, and presenting. The mean scores were later calculated to define a range that represents the level of performance as Excellent, Good, Fair, or Poor in each skill. Overall, the participants assessed themselves as Excellent in most of the statements asked in the questionnaire.

### **5.2.3 Employees' Perception toward the Importance of English Communication Skills at Work**

According to the findings, significantly, both soft skills and hard skills were overall assessed and perceived as Very important. For soft skills, the highest amount of scores were given to the skill of *Communicating in English effectively through the telephone* while the skill of *Organizing information before speaking* was assessed as Not important by only one person. On the hand, for hard skills, the greatest amount of scores were given to *Negotiating* skill which was assessed as Very important while *Selling packages and promotions* were assessed as Important.

### **5.2.4 The Needs for Improving English Communication Skills and Training Preference**

This part of the findings reveals that all of the participants would like to improve their English communication skills at work and most of them would like to improve both listening and speaking skills. For listening, the skill the participants would like to improve most was *Giving appropriate response*, while *Dealing with serious customers* was the aspect of speaking skills which was most often selected. Most of the participants thought that *all customer service employees* should be attending the training. For the training's duration and frequency, the majority of the participants preferred the training to be arranged *during working hours, every three months*.

## **5.3 CONCLUSIONS**

From this study, the following conclusions can be drawn.

5.3.1 Since the customer service employees need to communicate with foreign customers through the telephone using the English language, they tend to have the knowledge and the skills of English communication at an advanced level. The TOEIC scores as well as their self-assessment indicated that they perceived themselves as excellent in performing the skills relevant to their job. However, problems in communication during real situations still persist. Therefore, all the customer service employees remain in need of improving their English communication skills.

5.3.2 As the channel of communication is through the telephone, the communication skills in English revolve heavily on listening and speaking. In terms of listening, the focus is mainly on the details required in analyzing customers' needs. For

speaking, apart from the specific vocabulary used within the call center context, the correct and clear pronunciation as well as the appropriate tone also are factors which help build good relationships with the customers and increase the level of customers' satisfaction.

5.3.3 The speaking skill that the employees would like to improve most is dealing with serious customers, whereas for listening, giving appropriate responses was rated highly. Conversations would run more smoothly if customer service employees had the ability to manage the two skills equally. Hence, if the training course is to be arranged, the content should aim at improving both listening and speaking skills in English in general. However, more specific focus on the language used which helps avoiding conflicts within the communication as well as creating positive feeling toward the service should be highlighted.

#### **5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES**

From the findings and the conclusions of this study, some recommendations for further research studies can be made as follows:

5.4.1 For generalization, further studies should be conducted with similar groups belonging to the same profession with a larger number of participants.

5.4.2 For more in-depth information in further research, an interview should be included in the procedure in order to obtain more information from the participants.

5.4.3 It would be interesting if the further studies were conducted to acquire the correlation of the information from two perspectives: one from the employees' view and the other from the employer's view.

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**APPENDIX A**  
**QUESTIONNAIRE IN ENGLISH**  
**Questionnaire for International Service Unit Staff at Call Center**

This questionnaire is part of an independent study which is in partial fulfillment of the requirement for Master of Arts in Teaching English as a Foreign Language, Language Institute, Thammasat University. The purpose of this questionnaire is to explore employees' perception toward communication skills in English as well as the importance of communication skills needed at work. This questionnaire also aims to obtain any pedagogical implications for specific training course regarding the language use within the call center context. Therefore, please answer each question which truly corresponds to your information and sentiment. Please be informed that your answers will be treated strictly confidential and will be used only for academic purposes. This will not be taken as any parts of your performance evaluation.

**This questionnaire is divided into 4 parts:**

**PART 1: Demographic Information**

**PART 2: Self-Assessment on English Communication Skills at Work**

**PART 3: Employees' Perception toward the Importance of English Communication Skills at Work**

**PART 4: The Needs for Improving English Communication Skills and Training Preference**

## PART 1: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

**Instructions:** Please check (✓) in the box that corresponds to your answer or write in the space provided.

1. Gender:  Male  Female
2. Age:  22 or under  23-27  
 28-32  Over 32
3. Highest Education:  Bachelor's Degree in \_\_\_\_\_  
 Master's Degree in \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other (Please specify \_\_\_\_\_)
4. Current Position:  Staff  Senior staff  
 Supervisor  Manager
5. Working Experience at This Company:  
 0-2 years  3-5 years  
 6-8 years  Over 8 years
6. TOEIC Score:  
 405 – 500  505 – 600  
 605 – 700  705 – 800  
 805 – 900  905 – 990

## PART 2: SELF-ASSESSMENT ON ENGLISH COMMUNICATION SKILLS AT WORK

**Instructions:** These statements below are the English communication skills in the situation you may encounter at work. Please rate how well you can performance by checking (✓) under the scale of which you feel best describes you.

- 4 – Exactly like me**
- 3 – Very like me**
- 2 – A little like me**
- 1 – Not like me at all**



No.	Statement for Self-Assessment	Exactly like me	Very like me	A little like me	Not like me at all
		4	3	2	1
7.	I can speak English with pleasant and clear manner.				
8.	I use correct grammar when speaking English.				
9.	I adjust the level of my language to suit each customer.				
10.	I can handle serious customers.				
11.	I can keep my pleasant voice even when I feel angry.				
12.	I vary my tone in different situations.				
13.	I can speak faster or slower when needed.				
14.	I listen carefully and pay attention to details.				
15.	I wait until the customers finish speaking without interrupting.				
16.	I understand the customers' key points.				
17.	I have no problems understanding customers' different accents.				
18.	I attentively give appropriate responds while customers are speaking				
19.	I ask for clarification when what the customers is not clear.				
20.	I organize the information I have before delivering it in a logical sequence.				
21.	I know how to present and explain promotion packages in an interesting way.				

22. Are there any other skills that you want to improve? Why? Please explain.

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### PART 3: EMPLOYEES' PERCEPTION TOWARD THE IMPORTANCE OF ENGLISH COMMUNICATION SKILLS AT WORK

**Instructions:** Please rate the importance of the following communication skills in English you need at work by checking (√) under the following scale:

- 1 – Not important
- 2 – Somewhat important
- 3 – Important
- 4 – Very important

No.	How are the following communication skills important to you?	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important
		1	2	3	4
<b>Soft Skills</b>					
23.	Communicating in English effectively through the telephone				
24.	Adjusting the language to suit the listener				
25.	Building a good relationship with customers				
26.	Dealing with serious customers				
27.	Listening carefully and pay attention to details				
28.	Listening without interrupting				
29.	Listening for main ideas				
30.	Understanding different accents				
31.	Giving appropriate response				
32.	Clarifying information				
33.	Organizing information before speaking				

No.	How are the following communication skills important to you?	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important
		1	2	3	4
<b>Hard Skills</b>					
34.	Greeting and initiating assistance				
35.	Providing package details				
36.	Reporting charges and bills details				
37.	Giving payment details				
38.	Explaining technical issues				
39.	Negotiating				
40.	Apologizing				
41.	Offering compensation				
42.	Giving instructions				
43.	Selling packages and promotions				
44.	Showing empathy				
45.	Thanking and responding to thanks				
46.	Ending conversation				

47. Are there any other skills that you find important? Why? Please explain.

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#### PART 4: THE NEEDS FOR IMPROVING ENGLISH COMMUNICATION SKILLS AND TRAINING PREFERENCE

**Instructions:** If the training is to be arranged, please check (✓) in front of the options which most correspond to your preference.

48. Do you want to improve your English communication skills for your current job?

- No       Yes

49. Which of the following skills you want to improve most?

- Listening       Speaking  
 Both       Other (Please specify \_\_\_\_\_)

50. Which aspect of **listening** would you like to improve?

(You can choose more than one)

- Listening for main ideas       Understanding different accents  
 Giving appropriate response       Clarifying information  
 Other (Please specify \_\_\_\_\_)

51. Which aspect of **speaking** would you like to improve?

(You can choose more than one)

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Greeting and initiating assistance          | <input type="checkbox"/> Apologizing                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Providing package details                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Offering compensation             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reporting charges and bills details         | <input type="checkbox"/> Giving instructions               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Giving payment details                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Selling packages and promotions   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Explaining technical issues                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Showing empathy                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Negotiating                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Thanking and responding to thanks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adjusting the language to suit the listener | <input type="checkbox"/> Ending conversation               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Building a good relationship with customers | <input type="checkbox"/> Dealing with serious customers    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify _____)                |  |

52. Who should be attending the training?

- All customer service employees  
 Interested employees  
 Low performance employees  
 Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

53. When should the course be arranged?

- On day offs
- During working hours
- Before working shift
- After working shift
- E-Learning
- Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

54. How often should the course be arranged?

- Once a month
- Once a year
- Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_
- Every 3 months
- Every 6 months

55. Other suggestions

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\*\*\* THANK YOU FOR YOUR KIND COOPERATION \*\*\*

## **BIOGRAPHY**

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